

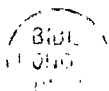
The second section (of the actual exegesis of this tantra), indicating how the mandalas of both the peaceful and wrathful deities emanate from that (natural mandala of the ground-- see p. 331) has two parts: a teaching on the spontaneously present mandala of peaceful deities (Chs. 4-14), and an exegesis of the mandala in which the wrathful deities emerge (Chs. 15-21).

The former has three aspects, namely: the creation of the mandala of the ground and the granting of empowerment (Chs. 4-10); a teaching on the creation and perfection stages of the path (Chs. 11-13); and a eulogy to the resultant nature of buddha-body and pristine cognition (Ch. 14).

The first of these aspects includes both a general teaching on the nature of the three mandalas (of speech, body, and mind; Chs. 4-9) and a particular exegesis of the skillful means through which empowerment is granted (Ch. 10).

The former (concerning the three mandalas) is threefold: it reveals the mandala of the cloud-mass of syllables which is the causal basis (Chs. 4-5), it reveals the mandala of contemplation which emerges therefrom (Chs. 6-8), and it reveals the mandala of images which are the radiance thereof (Ch. 9).

The first of these sections also comprises both the mandala-array of the cloud-mass of syllables (Ch. 4) and the sequence of attainment which accords with it (Ch. 5).



Chapter Four

Cyclical Array of the Garland of Syllables

Root-text:

Then all the tathāgatas became of a single intention, and, in the expanse of indestructible reality which is a mode of great sameness, without straying from the contemplation that all things are primordial buddhahood, the so-called "cyclical garland of syllables", through which all things abide simply as nominal syllables, emerged from the indestructible buddha-body, speech and mind. [1]

ĀH The steadfast white syllable A

Emanates tiny syllables A

Which radiate and fill the ten directions.

It (re-)absorbs them, and yet remains constant,

Without increase or decrease.

From it, the nominal clusters (of consonants)

All then radiate and blaze forth.

They are emanated and reabsorbed in the same way. [2]

This is the causal basis of pristine cognition

Through which the accomplishments

Of indestructible reality firmly emerge. [3]

A KA KHA GA GHA NA

CA CHA JA JHA NA

TA THA DA DHA NA

.

TA THA DA DHA NA
 PA PHA BA BHA MA
 YA VA RA LA
 SA SA SA HA KSA
 I I U U
 E AI O AU [4]

By the emergence of these (syllables), the infinite ten directions of the six world-systems vibrated in six ways, further vibrated, and absolutely vibrated, whereafter all things became mere nominal characteristics. Ho! [5]

Then all the tathāgatas uttered this meaningful expression. [6]

The syllable A does not objectively refer
 To emptiness, non-emptiness, or even to their middle ground.
 According to all buddhas, all things are merely names,
 Abiding in the garland of syllables itself. [7]

The syllable A itself, which diversely appears,
 Subsumes all things in forty-two
 Consonantal & vocalic syllables, beginning with KA--
 The manifestly perfect king itself is ascertained. [8]

Astonishing, wondrous and amazing
 Is the great miraculous ability,
 Or the forty-five syllables
 In which all names and words
 Are apprehended, without exception.
 They propound and reveal great diverse meanings. [9]

Without substantiality, the nature of the syllables, the mind,
Is selflessness, free from extremes and without objective
referent.

Yet through a diversity of shapes, colours and names
It emanates and reveals its display in all ways. [10]

Emerging in the ten directions and four times,
The body, speech and mind of the Being of Pristine Cognition,
Which comprise forty-five mandalas,
Are perfected in the syllables from the initial one to KSA. [11]

The nature of mind is the syllable.
The syllable is without substantial existence. [12]

This nature without objective referent, diverse,
Comprises the great wheels of buddha-body, speech and mind.
Body, speech and mind summon forth this great miracle
Which is wondrous and amazing. [13]

Written in the expanse by the expanse,
The so-called syllables are thus described: [14]

The initial punctuation mark is the unerring path.
The final punctuation dots are discriminative awareness
Through which names are applied.
The punctuation stroke is great skillful means
Which demarcates phrases. [15]

The syllable A is the uncreated real nature. [16]

THA is the indestructible reality of magical emanation.

.
TA is the apparitional magical emanation.

.
DA is the wish-fulfilling magical emanation.

.
DHA is the pure magical emanation.

.
NA is the absolute magical emanation. [17]

.
THA is the manifestly perfect net.

TA is the secure net.

DA is the illuminating net.

DHA is the embracing net.

NA is the absolute net. [18]

KA is the supreme buddha-mind of buddha-eye.

KHA is the supreme buddha-mind of buddha-ear.

GA is the supreme buddha-mind of buddha-nose.

GHA is the supreme buddha-mind of buddha-tongue.

.
NA is the buddha-mind, yet also the destroyer. [19]

CA is the supreme buddha-body of buddha-eye.

CHA is the supreme buddha-body of buddha-ear.

JA is the supreme buddha-body of buddha-nose.

JHA is the supreme buddha-body of buddha-tongue.

NA is the buddha-body, yet also the destroyer. [20]

PA is the supreme buddha-speech of buddha-eye.

PHA is the supreme buddha-speech of buddha-ear.

BA is the supreme buddha-speech of buddha-nose.

BHA is the supreme buddha-speech of buddha-tongue.

MA is the buddha-speech, yet also the destroyer. [21]

YA is pure with respect to creation.
VA is pure with respect to abiding.
RA is pure with respect to destruction.
LA is pure with respect to emptiness.
SA is pure with respect to eternalism.
SA is the absence of nihilism.
SA is free from extremes and without self.
HA is itself without sign. [22]

KSA is the spirituality of pristine cognition, the
buddha-mind.

I is for the gods, numerous as atomic particles.
I is for the antigods, numerous as atomic particles.
U is for the human beings, numerous as atomic particles.
U is for the animals, numerous as atomic particles.
E is for the tormented spirits, numerous as atomic particles.
AI is for the denizens of hell, numerous as atomic particles. [23]

O is the destroyer of all.
AU is the destructor of all. [24]

This great cyclical mass of syllables
Subsumes the garlands of body, speech and mind.

--So they said. Aho! [25]

Then this secret description of these very mandalas, where the
assembled host of tathāgatas and their queens are without
duality, emerged from the indestructible body, speech, mind,
attributes, and activities. [26]

Aho! This wheel is a joyous cloud of
Skillful means and discriminative awareness.
It is the causal basis of the provision of enlightened mind.
Its result is the maturation and accomplishment of the conquerors.
These wondrous forty-two consonantal syllables,
Not compounded by nature,
Are the compounded indestructible reality
Which discloses the mandalas.
Their commitment to do so is not transgressed--
Dependent are they on the great force
Of their accumulated causes and conditions.

Aho! Such are the words of secret indestructible reality which
emerged. [27]

At these words, all the tathâgatas were transformed into the
wheel of syllables. This completes the fourth chapter from the
Secret Nucleus Definitive With Respect To The Real, entitled the
Cyclical Array of the Garland of Syllables. [28]

Commentary (170.1-207.2):

The mandala-array of the cloud-mass of syllables includes both an overview and interlinear commentary.

Overview (170.5-176.2)

This comprises a general teaching and a particular exegesis. The former (170.6-172.2) has three aspects: a verbal definition of the term "syllable"; its characteristic nature; and its classifications.

i. The term "syllable" (Tib. yi-ge) is derived from (the Sanskrit) aksara-- a signifying negation and ksara signifying change. Thus a "syllable" is the unchanging essence, which can support the clear revelation of meaning.

Now, in this context sound is held to comprise both syllables and their subsequent representations. The syllables are the attributes of sound in general, which manifest in all their modes to any speaker or listener. The subsequent representations are held to be the forms in which these (sounds) are written down. This is because, when these are read aloud, the syllables with all their modes of sound and meaning are visualised and become manifest.

ii. The characteristic nature (of syllables) is that they are compounded of non-relational conditions and arise as general modes of sound and meaning (which are apprehended) by individual beings.

iii. As for their classification, they comprise sixteen vowels and thirty-four consonants, which are either short, long or diphthong in quantity. The short category includes those verbally quantified in a single syllable such as KA. The long category includes those quantified in two (syllables) such as KĀ. The diphthongs² include those quantified in three syllables, i.e. the heavy sounds such as AI and AU. Moreover, syllables are also classified into three types or genders-- masculine, feminine and neuter.³

From where, one may ask, do these syllables emerge? They emerge from the lips, the tongue, the palate, and from within-- exemplified (respectively) by PA, CA, YA, and A. Concerning the causal basis for their emergence, it says in the Sword at the Gateway to Language (T. 4295):

The conditions of speech are universally created
By its places of articulation and action,
By conceptual thought, vital energy and their coemergence,
And by vowels, consonants, and their (symbolic) manifestation.

According to this text, the syllables emerge through these seven causal bases. Explaining each of these individually it continues:

The places of articulation are the basic cause,
Action is the cause for emission (of sound).
Similarly, conceptual thought is the cause which stimulates (sound)
Vital energy is the cause which gives motility to the action,
In the manner of wind which activates trees.
Breath is the coemergence of these,⁴

Which resembles (the coemergence of) life and youth.
Vowels and consonants are the causes
Of the all-pervasive motion (of sound),
And their (symbolic) manifestation or representation
Is said to be the cause through which
Those of equal fortune (perceive them).

The latter is the particular exegesis (172.2-176.2) which has three parts: the essence of the syllables; their classification; and their purpose.

i. The essence is that mind-as-such, the originally pure nature, appears in the form of syllables which support the inexhaustible wheels of adornment, i.e. the buddha-body, speech and mind. As to the locations in which it abides: These syllables are present distinctly and dependent on the seminal points within the energy channels in the four centres of individual buddhas and sentient beings. When the colours and attributes (of these syllables) are radiant, the consciousness of living beings is clear and their sense faculties are keen and most illustrious. Conversely, those in whom the forms of the syllables are not radiant are deluded and defective. Through meditation on (the syllables) in the heart-centre and so forth, the colours and attributes of these syllables increase, and indeed cause accomplishment to emerge.

ii. When classified, they comprise the syllables of the energy channels present within the body, the syllables of the deities in their palaces, the syllables which are miraculous emanations, and the syllables of sound which are illustrative.

Concerning the first of these: there are according to the different classes of tantra many ways in which the syllables are said to abide within the centres of the energy channels. In this context (of the Secret Nucleus) the syllables are said to number one hundred and three: In the crown, throat and heart centres respectively there are the three syllables OM, ĀH, and HŪM. These are then combined with the syllables of the body, speech and mind of the Hundred Enlightened Families, namely, the syllables of the Forty-two Peaceful Deities in the heart-centre, and the syllables of the Fifty-eight Blood-drinkers in the crown centre. Provisionally the six impure seed-syllables of the six classes of living beings are revealed as the ground to be purified, and the syllables of those deities are explained to be the inherently pure skillful means. The syllables of the six classes of living beings are respectively Ā in the crown-centre between the eyebrows, TR in the throat centre, NR in the heart centre, SU in the navel centre, PRE in the secret centre, and DV in each of the soles of the feet. It is explained that the deeds and propensities which differently give rise to the six classes of living beings do so dependent on these (syllables). Thus those six, which are the ground to be purified, and the one hundred and ⁶ three syllables which purify them are present in the body.

The syllables of the deities in their palaces are visually created, during meditation on the deity, in the different locations of the mandala. The syllables of emanation are the cloud-mass of syllables which comes forth from the body, speech

and mind of the buddha-body of perfect rapture and acts on behalf of living beings by a diffusion of many emanations. Finally, the syllables of sound are the different sounds which are expressed during the recitation of mantras.

iii. The purpose (of these types of syllable) is to accomplish their respective goals: The syllables of the energy channels support the buddha-body and pristine cognition, without conjunction or disjunction. The syllables of the deity are the ground for the emanation of different deities, who accomplish the purpose of the pure creation and perfection stages. The syllables of emanation act on behalf of immeasurable sentient beings; and the syllables of sound are the causal basis for the accomplishment of the secret mantras.

Now, among these syllables, it is from within the syllable A that the others are emanated. It says in the Sūtra of All Gathering Awareness (T. 831):

A emerges from the expanse.

From the syllable A

The mass of syllables emanates, none excepted.

In this (Secret Nucleus), the consonants are completely present, whereas the vowels are incomplete-- subsumed and applied corresponding to the number of the deities. The long (medial) syllable Ā is subsumed in the punctuation stroke or danda (ghad). The final AH or visarga is subsumed in the punctuation dots (isheg). The long initial Ā and the nasalised AM or anusvāra are combined in the syllable Q, and then A and Q are both subsumed in the

syllable QM. The four neuter syllables R, R, L, L are subsumed in the consonants RA and LA respectively. In this way, (the syllables are reduced to) forty-two. The initial syllable A is the emanational basis for the remainder of the syllables, but when described in the context of syllabic conjunction, it is combined with Q and then included in the syllable QM (or AUM).

If one were to ask from which places of articulation (in the deity) these garlands of syllables have emerged, the Precious Tantra of All-Gathering (Awareness, T. 831) says:

The five syllables beginning with KA
Are the natural expression of his guttural speech.
The second set of five beginning with CA
Are the natural expression of his tongue,
Which is shaped like a half-moon.
The third set of five beginning with TA
Are the natural expression of the tip of his tongue.
The fourth set beginning with PA
Is explained to emerge from his lips.
The seed-syllable YA, which abides in samsâra,
Is derived from the eyebrows of this great being.
The seed-syllable VA, which dispels delusion,
Is derived from the sides of this great being.
The seed-syllable RA, which burns desire,
Is derived from the hips of this great being.
The syllable LA, which subdues thought,
Is derived from the shoulders of this great being.
The syllable SA, which purifies signs,

Is derived from the heart-orb
 Which spins within his buddha-mind.
 The syllable SA, which reveals miraculous display,
 Is derived from the light-rays of his wheel-marked hands.
 The syllable SA, which is the source of desire,
 Is derived from the cubit-sized navel of his buddha-body.
 The seed-syllable HA, which burns obscuration,
 Is derived from the light-rays of his wheel-marked feet.
 The syllable KSA, which is the source of miraculous display,
 Is derived from the nature of his secret centre.
 The two syllables I and I are the natural expressions
 Derived from the two eyes of this great being.
 The two syllables II and II are natural expressions
 Derived from the two ears of this great being.
 The two syllables E and AI are natural expressions
 Derived from the two feet of this great being;
 And the syllable of the conquerors, AUM,
 Arises from the crown of this great being.

These syllables emanate as a cloud-mass of syllables from the buddha-body, and they are the seeds from which the mandala is visually created. They naturally abide within the energy channels of sentient beings.

Now, Rong-zom Pandita has said that (the syllables number) forty-five because, in addition to those forty-two, he separately counts three of the syllables which are present within (the forty-two), namely: the medial I, which is shaped like an

elephant's trunk: the long ā, which is shaped like an arrow; and the final punctuation dots or ΔH visarga, which are shaped like the eyes of Maheśvara.⁷ There are also some who claim that (there are forty-five) syllables when those of buddha-body, speech and mind are included.⁸ In terms of the syllables themselves, the former position is correct, while the latter is indeed held to be correct with reference to the deities. However, in this context (of the Secret Nucleus), these (additional three syllables) are recognised respectively as: the initial punctuation mark (mgo), which introduces the syllables and is shaped like an elephant's trunk; the final punctuation dots (tsheg), shaped like the eyes of a wrathful deity; and the punctuation stroke (shad), which is shaped like an arrow. This concludes the overview.

Interlinear Commentary (176.2-207.2)

The interlinear commentary (on Ch. 4) has three parts: the background motivation; the exegesis of the meaning of its words, and a synopsis of the chapter.

The first (comments on Ch. 4, 1):

Once spirituality had been emanated from the disposition of the spontaneously present ground and the establishment of all things had been revealed, then (de-nas) all the tathāgatas (de-bzhin gshes-pa thams-cad) of the ten directions and four times became of a single intention (dgongs-pa gcig-tu gyur-nas) with regard to the meaning of primordial buddhahood, in whose nature there is a magical display of syllables. And, in the expanse of indestructible reality which is (rdo-rie'i dbyings-su) the nature of great

buddha-body, speech, mind, attributes, and activities, or a mode of great sameness (mnvam-pa chen-po'i tshul) where all things are indivisible, the so-called (zhes-bya-ba 'di) natural "cyclical garland of syllables" (yi-ge 'phreng-ba'i 'khor-lo) through which all things (chos thams-cad) originally abide (gnas-pa'i) simply as nominal syllables (ming-tsam-du) without actually existing, emerged from the indestructible buddha-body, speech and mind (sku-dang rsung-dang thugs rdo-rie-las phyung-ngo) of the tathâgata himself. This occurred in order to reveal the meaning of the sameness and Great Perfection of reality, without (mi) straying (gyo-bar) from the contemplation (ting-nge-'dzin-las) that all things (chos thams-cad) of phenomenal existence, samsâra and nirvâna, are primordial buddhahood (ye-nas sangs-rgyas-pa'i) in the essence of the syllables.

Exegesis of the Meaning of Its Words (176.6-206.2):

The second part, the exegesis of the meaning of its words has three sections, namely: a general teaching on the nature of the wheel of syllables; a detailed and distinct exegesis of them in conjunction with their respective deities; and a summary of these two sections.

The first, the general teaching on the nature of the wheel of syllables (177.1-189.1) is threefold: the meditation on the syllables; the emanation of the cloud-mass of syllables; and an exegesis of the nature of the syllables.

The Meditation On The Syllables (177.2-179.5)

This includes both the actual meditation and a teaching on its beneficial attributes. The former has three parts, namely the meditation of the creation stage, the meditation of the perfection stage, and the meditation of the rites and feast-offerings which are applied in this context.

1. The first of these (comments on Ch. 4, 2):

From the disposition of one who has gone for refuge, cultivated the enlightened mind, and reflected on emptiness, the syllable AH (A) emerges steadfast (rab-tu bṛtan) and unwavering on a lotus and moon cushion. In this natural expression, the immaculate white syllable A (A dkar-po) is clear and resplendent. It emanates (-las spro) countless tiny syllables A (shin-tu phra-ba'i A-rnams), white in colour and the size of a hundredth part of a mustard seed, which radiate (gsal-gyur-nas) the form of the syllable A throughout phenomenal existence with their light-rays, and completely fill (gang-bar) all world-systems of the ten directions (phyogs-bcu). It (re-)absorbs (bsdug) all of them, causing them to vanish in the original syllable A itself; and yet (kyang), this syllable A itself is instantly equipoised in a disposition that remains constant (bṛtan), without (med-par) increase ('phel) or decrease ('grib) in relation to the past. From that (de-las) original syllable A, the thirty-four nominal clusters or consonants (ming-tshogs) beginning with KA, and the vowels or vocalic syllables all then (kun) radiate (gsal) in their syllabic forms, (illuminating) all the sentient beings with

light which diffuses in the ten directions; and they blaze forth ('bar) in a single mass of light-rays. Thereafter, they are re-absorbed and vanish into the syllable A; and then, issuing forth again, they are emanated (spro) and reabsorbed (-zhing bsdu-ba'ang) as before, in the same way (de-bzhin-no). Then, once again on sun and moon cushions at the centre of a lotus flower, the seed-syllables from A to KSA are sequentially arrayed and visually created as the deities. This is the cloud-mass of syllables which forms the causal basis of the creation stage. ⁹

ii. The second, (meditation on the perfection stage, comments on same verses as follows:

The deity is radiantly visualised, and, on a lotus and moon-cushion in its heart-centre, there is the steadfast white syllable A. It emanates countless syllables A which fill all world-systems of the ten directions. After transforming all sentient beings into the form of the syllables, the syllable A of the heart-centre reabsorbs them, causing them to vanish into itself, while it remains equipoised in a disposition without increase or decrease. From that A, the surrounding syllables and nominal clusters or consonants are then emanated and reabsorbed in the same way, so that one becomes equipoised in the disposition of reality, where samsâra and nirvâna are without duality, without increase or decrease. This is the cloud-mass of syllables according to the perfection stage. ¹⁰

iii. The third, (meditation on the rites and feast-offerings which are applied in this context, comments on the same verses as follows):

During the rites of pacification, enrichment, subjugation and wrath, the syllable A and the nominal clusters or consonants emanate (respectively) in the colours white, yellow, red and dark-blue. Disease and elemental spirits are pacified. The life-span and merit are enriched. Objects of attainment are summoned and subjugated. Venomous spirits are eradicated. Then (the syllables) are finally equipoised in a disposition without increase or decrease, as is (explained) in detail in Chapter Five. That is the cloud-mass of syllables through which the rites and feast-offerings are attained.

11

The latter section (of the meditation on the syllables discloses the beneficial attributes of this (meditation). It comments on Ch. 4, 3):

This ('di) mode of meditation is the causal basis of pristine cognition (ye-sheṣ rgyu-vin-no), through which the nature of all the desired excellent accomplishments (dnṅos-grub) of Samantabhadra, the indestructible reality (rdo-rie) of the body, speech, mind, attributes and activities of all the buddhas, firmly emerge (bṛtan-'byung). So it is that all excellent accomplishments, supreme and common, are attained.

There are some who teach that, from (the time when) the syllable A becomes steadfast and as long as it remains constant without increase or decrease, there is but a single syllable, and who teach that that multitude (of syllables) is formed by the nominal clusters or consonants and so forth, which derive from it. In this way, they hold (the syllables) to be auspicious marks whereby the buddha-body of reality and the buddha-body of form are respectively made into the path. This however is but a part of the correct view because the cloud-mass of syllables has to be explained as the ground of everything.¹²

Emanation of the Cloud-Mass of Syllables 179.5-182.3:

Secondly (see p. 558), the emanation of the cloud-mass of syllables includes both the emanation of the syllables and the wondrous extraordinary omens which appear.

1. The former (comments on Ch. 4, 4):

A (Δ) is the source of the syllables and their emanational basis. Therefore, it comes forth as a natural expression which emerges from within (the buddha-body). Just as all elemental forms arise as attributes of the great elements,¹³ all syllables indeed arise as attributes of the syllable A. Thus, the ground of speech is the syllable A.

However, through the conditions of speech, the syllable A is also enunciated as three basic (syllables). These include I, which is formed by the upward contraction of the syllable A, and U, which is formed by its downward contraction.¹⁴ Thence, E is formed by

the phonetic conjunction of A and I, and O is formed by the phonetic conjunction of A and U. The syllable R is formed by retroflexion (of A), and the syllable L is formed by lateral action.¹⁵ Each of these vowels is classified into long and short forms, so that there are fourteen vocalic syllables; or sixteen with the addition of the nasalised AM or anusvāra and the aspirated AH or visarga.

Now, (the velar consonants) emerge from the vase of the buddha-throat: From the contact of this same syllable A with the throat (as a hard unaspirate), KA (KA) is formed. When that is slightly lower pitched (zhum) and cerebral contact is made (as a hard aspirate), KHA (KHA) is formed. When slightly lower pitched than that (as a voiced unaspirate), GA (GA) is formed. When that makes contact with the chest (as a voiced aspirate), GHA (GHA) is formed; and when nasal contact is made, NA (NA) is formed.

One should know that the other (classes of consonants) are also calculated in this sequence. The (palatal) syllables CA (CA), CHA (CHA), JA (JA), JHA (JHA), and NA (NA) emerge from the buddha-tongue through the contact of this syllable A with the hard palate and the blade of the tongue.¹⁶ The (retroflex) syllables TA (TA), THA (THA), DA (DA), DHA (DHA), and NA (NA) emerge from the tip of the buddha-tongue because they are cerebral (mūrdhānya) sounds derived from the contact of the syllable A with the edge of the palate close to the tip of the tongue.¹⁷ The (dental) syllables TA (TA), THA (THA), DA (DA), DHA (DHA), and NA (NA) emerge from the tip of the buddha-tongue and the buddha-

teeth because they derive from the contact of the syllable A with the tip of the tongue and the teeth. And, the (labial) syllables PA (PA), PHA (PHA), BA (BA), BHA (BHA), and MA (MA) emerge from the buddha-lips because they derive from the contact of the syllable A with the lips. The particular (alterations of pitch) within these classes are similar to those (of the velars), beginning with KA.

As to the remaining nine (consonants): (The semi-vowel) YA (YA) and (the sibilant) SA (SA) are classified as palatals according to their place of articulation. (The semi-vowel) VA (VA) is classified as labial. (The semi-vowel) RA (RA) and (the sibilant) SA (SA) are classified as cerebral (or retroflex). (The semi-vowel) LA (LA) and (the sibilant) SA (SA) are classified as dentals. The syllable HA (HA) is classified as velar; and the syllable KSA (KSA) is included within the velars and the cerebrals. Although they emerge (phonetically) from these (places of articulation), with reference to their emanational modes on behalf of those to be trained, YA emerges from the buddha-eyebrows, VA from the buddha-sides, RA from the buddha-hips, LA from the buddha-shoulders, SA from the buddha-heart, SA from the wheel-marked buddha-hands, SA from the buddha-navel, HA from the wheel-marked buddha-feet, and KSA from the secret centre. In all these syllables the sound of A is pervasive, just as the melodious sound of a lute pervades all the tones of a lute-- high & low, strong & weak.

Furthermore, the syllables I (I) and I (I) emerge from the two buddha-eyes, U (U) and U (U) from the two buddha-ears, E (E) and AI (AI) from the two buddha-nostrils, and AUM, i.e. O (O) and AU

(AU) from the crown of the buddha-head.

ii. The latter, concerning the wondrous extraordinary omens which appear, (comments on Ch. 4, 5):

By the emergence (phyung-bas) of these ('di-dag) syllables from the buddha-body, speech and mind, a great apparitional cloud-mass of syllables vibrated (gyos) slightly throughout all the infinite ten directions of the six world-systems ('lig-rten drug-gi phyogs-bcu mtha'-yas-pa). This occurs in (tu) six ways (rnam-pa drug) of transformation, namely, when the eastern side (of the syllables) is ascendant the western side is low, when the western side is ascendent the eastern side is low, when the southern side is ascendent the northern side is low, when the northern side is ascendant the southern side is low, when their extremes are ascendent their centre is low, and when the centre is ascendent the extremes are low.

Thereby, all appearances were purified in the nature of a reflected image. Then they further vibrated (rab-tu gyos) with moderate strength, so that all emptiness became radiant as the nature of pristine cognition; and then they absolutely vibrated (kun-tu gyos) in a most intense manner, whereafter (nas) all things (chos thams-cad) of samsâra and nirvâna became mere nominal characteristics (ming-gi mtshan-nyid tsem-du gyur-to) in the disposition of the non-dual natural Great Perfection, without existing independently in any respect. Because the tathâgata himself supremely rejoiced in these (signs), the exclamation Ho! (Ho) was uttered to indicate the establishing of (all things) in the disposition of sameness.

Exegesis of the Nature of the Syllables (182.3-189.1):

Thirdly (see p. 558), there is the enunciation of the nature of the syllables. It has six sections, namely: a description of the causal basis for the enunciation of the syllables; a teaching that the wheel of the uncreated syllable is the body of reality because all intentions of the buddhas are gathered therein; a teaching that the manifestly perfect syllables are the body of perfect rapture because the forty-two syllables are gathered in the nature of that syllable A; a teaching that the syllables are themselves the emanational body because they are the source of everything, arising as a diverse display; a teaching on the perfect nature of the forty-five mandalas because the intention of the conquerors is gathered in these (syllables); and an exegesis of the sound and meaning of the syllable, through which mind-as-such is without duality of appearance and emptiness.

i. The first, (the description of the causal basis for the enunciation of the syllables, comments on Ch. 4, 6):

Once the cloud-mass of syllables had emanated, then (de-nag) all the tathāgatas (de-bzhin gshegs-pa thams-cad-kvis) uttered this meaningful expression (ched-du briod-pa 'di briod-do) concerning the cloud-mass of syllables.

ii. The second (comments on Ch. 4, 7):

The syllable A (A-ni) does not exist as an extreme emptiness (stong) because, as the source of the syllables, its own apparitional mode is not abandoned. Nor does it refer to non-

emptiness (dang mi-stong) because it is without substance or sign. Indeed, it does not (vod ma-yin) objectively refer (dmigs-su) even to their middle ground (dbu-ma'ang), which in this context is said to be the non-duality of these two (extremes). This is because its perspective transcends both appearance and emptiness. So it is that all things are merely names (thams-cad ming-tsam), and apart from that, are without the independent existence which has been attributed, thought, conceptually elaborated, and expressed. According to the intention of all the buddhas (sangs-rnyas kun), this reality is abiding in (la-gnas) the disposition of the garland of syllables itself (yi-ge 'phreng-ba-nyid). The abiding nature of this (syllable A) is the nature of the spontaneously present buddha-body of reality.

iii. The third (comments on Ch. 4, 8):

The syllable A itself (A-nyid), the source of all syllables, has a nature which diversely appears (sna-tshogs-par snang-ba'i) through conditions in the forms of the syllables. As previously explained, the syllable I emerges through the upward contraction of the basic syllable A, and U emerges from its downward contraction. From these three (basic syllables), E emerges through the conjunction of A and I; and O emerges through the conjunction of A and U; making five vowels in all. Then there is the syllable R which emerges through retroflexion and the syllable L which emerges through lateral action. These (seven) vowels also come to number fourteen through their subdivision into skillful means and discriminative awareness (i.e. long and

short forms). Collectively they are known as A-li (the "vowels")-- the syllable I clearly indicative of skillful means and the syllable A clearly indicative of discriminative awareness.

The syllable A may itself be enunciated dependent on the throat, the palate, the tip of the tongue, the teeth, and the lips, giving rise respectively to the syllables KA, CA, TA, TA, and PA. When these sounds are then hardened (or aspirated) they emerge respectively as KHA, CHA, THA, THA, and PHA. When softened (or voiced) they emerge respectively as GA, JA, DA, DA, and BA; and when these are voiced with aspiration they emerge respectively as GHA, JHA, DHA, DHA and BHA. Then, when nasalised, they emerge respectively as NA, NA, NA, NA, and MA; making five phonetic categories in all. In conformity with these, YA and SA are palatal, RA and SA are retroflex, LA and SA are dental, VA is labial, HA is velar, and KSA is cerebral.

Through its contact with the throat and so forth, the sound of the syllable A subsumes all things (thams-cad bsdus) that can be expressed in the forty-two (bzhi-bcu gnvis) consonantal & vocalic syllables (sgra-yi ming-gis) of the alphabet (â-li kâ-li), beginning with KA (KA-la-sogs-pa). The uncreated syllable A is the king (rgyal-po) of primordial manifestly perfect (mngon-rdzogs) enlightenment, the attainment of buddhahood in the body of reality. Thus, just as A is the attainment of buddhahood, the nature of the forty-two syllables which emanate from the disposition of A itself is (de-nvid) also ascertained (nges) to be the attainment of buddhahood. For, they are a display of that

single essence. Actually, the syllable A is the expanse of Saman-
tabhadri, and the forty-two syllables are the forty-two buddhas
who emanate from the disposition of that (expanse). It is in
accordance with the latter that the syllables are revealed to be
the buddha-body of perfect rapture.

iv. The fourth comprises both a teaching on the syllables as the
source of words, and a teaching on the arising of the diverse
display of the syllables.

The former (comments on Ch. 4, 9):

The cyclical cloud-mass of syllables is astonishing (e-ma-ho)
because it abides as the essence, the buddha-body of reality. It
is wondrous (ngo-mtshar) because it appears as the natural
buddha-body of perfect rapture; and it is amazing (ya-mtshan)
because it arises as the spirituality of the emanational body.
This is the great miraculous ability (gyi 'phrul-chen) or
inconceivable nature comprising the clusters of the forty-five
syllables (bzhi-bcu rtsa-lnga'i) where the three diacritics,
namely, the initial punctuation mark, the final punctuation dots,
and the medial punctuation stroke, are included in addition to
the forty-two syllables; and in which all names and words are
apprehended without exception (ming tshig-rnams ma-lus 'dzin-pa'i
gnas).

When this apprehension occurs, it resembles, for example, the
apprehension of atomic particles which are the conclusive nature
of form. A material mass is produced from the gathering of atomic
particles, and the atomic particles are then apprehended as a

mass. Similarly, the conclusive nature of name is the syllable. Syllables are formed which contain a single vowel through phonetic conjunction, and it is through a combination of these that the names of substantial objects such as "pillar" and "vase" are formed. It is through the combination of these in turn that strings of words are without exception formed. So it is that the syllables are the foundation of names and words. Thereby, they propound (smra) and (-zhing) reveal (ston) to others the great (chen) meanings (don) of diverse (sna-tshogs) doctrines belonging to the vehicle. Therefore, the syllables exist primordially as the source of all words and meanings, without exception.

The latter (comments on Ch. 4, 10):

Without (med) existing as a coarse substantiality (dnagos), the nature of the syllables (yi-ge'i rang-bzhin) is the intrinsic, inwardly radiant mind (sems) itself. It is the selflessness (bdag-med) of individuals and phenomena, the reality free from (bral) all extremes (mtha') of conceptual elaboration, and it is primordially without objective referent (mi-dmigs) in terms of substantial or designated phenomena. Yet (kyang) its apparitional nature is without duality, in the manner of the moon's reflection in water.

The shapes of the syllables appear and abide, without independent existence, in the centres within the energy channels of the buddha-body and of sentient beings. The syllable A is shaped like a yawning lion, the KA is shaped like a flag-waving battlement,
21
and so forth. With respect to their colours also, the vowels

are naturally red and the consonants are naturally white. The action of these internal syllables is such that, by meditation on them, the path of the yogin and the resultant goal are indeed perfected.²²

Then, in the circumstance of the buddhas, the cloud-mass of syllables through a diversity ([snal-tshogs-kvis])²³ of shapes (dbyibs-dang), colours (kha-dog), names (ming), and words, emanates (sprul) its display (rol-pa) of emanations in all ways (cir-vang) and (cing) reveals (ston) immeasurable enumerations of the doctrine, corresponding to the fortune of living beings.

This action of the wheel of syllables is also one which correspondingly acts on benefit of living beings through the mass of its shapes, colours, names and words which are contained within books and their representational syllables. Furthermore, the secret mantras which are formed from these syllables during meditation on the seed-syllables of the deities are also emanations of this wheel of syllables. So it is that the cloud-mass of syllables indeed abides in an emanational nature.

v. The fifth (comments on Ch. 4, 11):

As for the teaching on the perfection of the forty-five mandalas: Emerging (gshegs-pa'i) for the sake of living beings of the past, future and present in the ten directions and four times (phyogs-bcu dus-bzhir), the mandala of the body (sku) of the being of pristine cognition (ye-shes sems-dpa'i) of all the buddhas, naturally present and secret, comprises the body-aspect of buddha-body, the speech-aspect of buddha-body, and the mind-aspect of

buddha-body. Each of these aspects also has five subdivisions when two further subdivisions of enlightened attributes and activities are added (to those of body, speech and mind); making fifteen subdivisions (of the body-mandala) in all. Similarly, his speech and mind (gaung-thugs) each have their fifteen subdivisions. These comprise (nvid) the forty-five mandalas (dkvil-'khor bzhi-bcu rtsa-lnga) of the five enlightened families, which are perfected (rdzogs) in the syllables (vi-ga) from the initial one (mgo-nag) A to KSA (KSA-la), the final one. However many subdivisions there are of the mandala of the enlightened family, they are complete and gathered in the wheel of the syllables ²⁴ itself. This is the basis of all mandalas.

In this respect, there are some who in their explanations of the forty-five syllables have not even partially seen this exposition that the enlightened family of the mandala is gathered in the wheel of syllables. ²⁵

vi. The sixth (see p. 566) verbally defines the appearance of mind-as-such as the syllables. It has three parts, namely: a teaching on the meaning of the uncreated syllable or mind-as-such; the spontaneous presence of enlightened attributes through their appearance as syllables from the disposition of that uncreated nature; and the written representations and arrays of those syllables in which appearance and emptiness are without duality.

The first (comments on Ch. 4, 12):

The nature of mind (sems-kyi rang-bzhin), inner radiance itself, is the syllable (yi-ge-ste) spontaneously present in nature. The syllable (yi-ge) itself is without (yod-ma-yin) substantial (dnegos-po) or designated existence. Accordingly, the Litany of the Names of Mañjuśrī (T. 360) says:

A is supreme among all seed-syllables.
Emerging from within, the uncreated
Sacred syllable of great meaning,
The supreme causal basis of all expressions,
Illuminates thoroughly all words.

26

And in a sūtra:

Subhūti, the syllables are ultimately uncreated. They are the essential nature of A. That which is the essential nature of A is the nature of mind. It genuinely transcends all things, substantial and non-substantial.

The second (comments on Ch. 4, 13):

This nature (de-nyid), or syllable which is the ultimate mind-as-such, is without objective referent (dmigs-med) because of its diverse (sna-tshogs-pa'i) elements of inner radiance. It comprises the great wheel ('khor-lo che) of supportive buddha-body (sku), the great wheel of grammatical buddha-speech (gsung), and the great wheel of equipoised buddha-mind (thugs-kyi), along with the wheel of omniscient enlightened attributes and the great wheel of unimpeded enlightened activities. These natural

inexhaustible wheels of adornment-- the body, speech and mind (sku-gsung-thugs) of all the buddhas themselves-- illuminate in oneself and summon forth (rab-'gug-pa'o) this great miracle ('phrul-chen) which is wondrous (ngo-mtshar-kvi) because their excellent enlightened attributes are primordially and spontaneously present, and amazing (ya-mtshan) because it is the intention of supreme buddha-body and pristine cognition, without conjunction or disjunction. The point is that through meditation, the three buddha-bodies indeed arise in oneself.

The third (comments on Ch. 4, 14):

The syllables which actually appear as such are written (bris-paste) primordially in (la) the disposition of mind-as-such, the unchanging expanse (dbyings) of primordially pure reality by the expanse (dbyings-kvis) of pristine cognition, spontaneously present and effortless. The so-called syllables (vi-ge zhes-ni), which are a name for the never-changing naturally radiant reality, have not been and are not newly fabricated. Thus (de-phyir) they are described (brjod) as the cyclical cloud-mass of spontaneous syllables in which all samsâra and nirvâna primordially and effortlessly abide.

Detailed and Distinct Exegesis of the Syllables in Conjunction with their Respective Deities (189.1-202.2)

The second section (of the exegesis of the meaning of the words-- see p. 558) is a detailed and distinct exegesis (of these syllables) in conjunction with their respective deities. It has three parts, namely: a general teaching on the meaning of the (first) three syllables; a detailed exegesis on the meaning of the forty-two syllables; and a synopsis.

1. General Teaching on the Meaning of the First Three Syllables (189.2-191.5):

This (comments on Ch. 4, 15):

The initial punctuation mark (ngo-ni) which precedes the syllables is drawn in the shape of a staff (ber-ka-ris) and exemplified by the nose-shaped syllable I. ²⁷ It is the unerring (ma-nor) indestructible reality of buddha-mind which reveals the meaning of skillful means and discriminative awareness without duality. In the manner of a wagon-driver, it activates the path (lam) because it is the leading or initial (mark) which precedes all the syllables of the texts and so forth.

The final punctuation dots (tig) or tsheg which accompany each syllable resemble the eyes of Maheśvara, as in the syllable AH (AH). They are the nature of nirvâna in which signs are quiescent, the discriminative awareness (shes-rab) indicative of the indestructible reality of inexpressible buddha-speech which does not abide in the two extremes. The form of that syllable AH

conveys the sense of the perfection of discriminative awareness, and its action is one through which names are (ming-du) differentiated and applied (smra) to objects. If each syllable A were not demarcated (by the dots), no consonantal syllables, demarcated by a single vowel, would be formed; and if these were not formed the names of objects such as "pillar" and "vase" would not be formed. Therefore in this context the action (of the dots) is to form the names of different objects.

The punctuation stroke (shad-ni) which accompanies the syllables, shaped like the syllable A in the form of a straight arrow (I), is the great (chen) miracle of skillful means (tshabs), the indestructible reality of buddha-body which indicates that living beings are protected by great spirituality. Its action is one which demarcates phrases (tshigs-su gcod) out of distinct syllables.

In this context, there are those blind to all the meanings of the well-structured treatises, thoroughly ignorant of the nature of the textual traditions of the sūtras and tantras, who profess this to be an imperfect mode (of explanation), saying, "It is incorrect for you to speak of the initial punctuation mark, the punctuation dots and stroke. Because they are absent in the Sanskrit books they were created by the Tibetans". It should be explained (in response to this argument) that, although you were born in Tibet, you have not seen the texts of the great Tibetan pitakas; and even though you have been to India, you have not thoroughly studied the well-composed (Indian) treatises or seen the books preserved in different provinces, according to each of

which these (three punctuation features) are authentic. The accuracy of this statement is also to be pinpointed to some extent by literary transmissions: It says in the Sûtra Requested By Sridatta (T. 77):

The initial punctuation mark indicates the beginning.
As the head-letter, it should be elegantly drawn.
Because it is at the head of the syllables
It is said to be in front,
In the design of a staff.

And in the Sûtra at the Invitation of Bimbisâra (T. 289):

The first of the syllables is a dot.
Among the forty-two syllables,
The unerring path is the punctuation dot.
Thus one who knows the path
Arrives at the syllables from that dot.

And in the Sûtra Requested By Ugra (T. 63):

The punctuation point gives form to words.
By syllabic conjunction names are applied
And the essential meaning is easily examined.
So it is that it is called the punctuation point or dot.

And in the Holy Ornament (P. 4735):

Because they gather (syllables) together,
The points are punctuation dots
Which apply names by drawing dispersed (syllables) together.
When these have the action of a full stop
They appear in form of the punctuation stroke.

And in the Sūtra Requested by Subāhu (T. 805):

Without neglecting the four vowels I U E O (gug-skved) and the anusvāra circle (klad-skor), or the final punctuation dots (visarga)...

Thus, such genuine transmitted precepts have indeed been passed down in Tibet.

The malign disputations (mentioned above) are the controversies of those who depreciate (the teaching), totally ensnared by the unbearable darkness of jealousy. Since their comments actually have no foundation (in the texts) they do not even merit rejection at this juncture. The Ascertainment of Valid Cognition (T. 4211) appropriately says:

Because the erroneous paths are inconclusive
They should not be elaborated here.

However, (this statement of mine) has been set forth in order to clarify certain doubts to some extent. Those (erroneous) ideas naturally occur because the intellect is more foolish than Māra and the extremists who debated with the Transcendent Lord, than malicious guard-dogs who even inflicted pain on a universal monarch, or than the cowherds who scorned the nature of the Omniscient One. The intellect indeed conforms with the saying,
29
"The herdsman is worse than the beast!"

Exegesis on the Meaning of the Forty-Two Syllables (191.5-201.6):

The second, (the exegesis on the meaning of the forty-two syllables), includes an overview and interlinear commentary,

The former (191.5-197.3) has three parts: the implication of (the syllables) being out of order; an explanation of the symbolic meaning of their names; and a description of the glow (of the deities) which arises (from these syllables).

1. As to the first: Although in this chapter of the text the sequence of the syllables appears to be somewhat out of order, the present sequence does refer to the abiding nature of the respective deities. Now, the initial syllable A is the nature of emptiness, the expanse of reality or Samantabhadri; and the syllable KSA, which follows those of the four female gatekeepers, is the essence of appearance, the pristine cognition or Samantabhadra. These two are the glowing male & female consorts Samantabhadra (dangs-kvi kun-bzang yab-yum). Here they are not said to be in union, but they are explained to be the first and the last (of the deities in the mandala), with the exception of the six sages. The purpose is to reveal that the self-manifesting buddha-bodies of perfect rapture are a display which arises from the disposition of Samantabhadra, the very ground where appearance and emptiness are without duality. Now mind-as-such or the inner radiance of the ground is the original Samantabhadra, the conclusive ground of liberation. Its apparitional and emptiness aspects are respectively the glowing male & female consorts Samantabhadra. In this way the body of perfect rapture is

revealed to arise, manifest in and of itself, from the disposition of inner radiance, the body of reality.

The seed-syllables of the male & female consorts of the five enlightened families are then revealed because, from the disposition of reality, the male & female consorts of the five enlightened families, pure and self-manifesting, abide within the mandala in the manner of rainbow colours.

..

Then the seed-syllables of the four inner male spiritual warriors are revealed in order to indicate that the four male spiritual warriors of buddha-mind arise from the mental energy of these deities. Then the seed-syllable of Yamântaka is revealed from the glow of these four male spiritual warriors of buddha-mind in order to illustrate that through their apparition they subdue the obscuration of the knowable, which clings to the mind defiled by conflicting emotions. Then, the seed-syllables of their consorts are revealed, illustrating that the four objects which are the perceptual range of these spiritual warriors appear as their respective female consorts. Then Mahâbala appears from the energy of these (consorts) and his seed-syllable is revealed in order to illustrate that they subdue the obscuration of conflicting emotions, which clings to these four objects of appearance.

Furthermore, from the energy of the buddha-speech of the five basic enlightened families, the four spiritual warriors of buddha-speech appear and reveal their seed-syllables. Then, Hayagrîva arises and reveals his seed-syllable to illustrate that obscurations of speech are subdued by this buddha-speech. The

four female spiritual warriors of time who are the apparitional objects appraised by these (male spiritual warriors) also appear throughout the four times as unobscured buddha-speech, so that the seed-syllables of these four female consorts are revealed. Then, the seed-syllables of the four female gatekeepers are revealed because the four female gatekeepers also appear, illustrating that the nature of these (female spiritual warriors) transcends the stains of the four extremes.

30

Then, as previously indicated, there is the syllable KSA which reveals that all these apparitional images arise from the disposition of Samantabhadra.

Then, from the energy of the buddha-body of these deities, the six sages appear in their respective world-systems and their seed-syllables are revealed, illustrating that their emanational nature is endowed with excellent enlightened activities. The seed-syllable of Amrtakundalin is then revealed because he appears from the glowing enlightened activity of the central deity, from whose nature of buddha-body this enlightened activity arises. Then, in order that the buddhafield of the wrathful deities might be self-manifestingly revealed from the glow of all these (deities), the seed-syllable of Buddha Heruka is finally revealed as its essence, illustrated by the syllable AUM.

11. As for the explanation of the symbolic meaning of the syllables: The symbolic meanings of the "uncreated nature" and of the "buddha-mind" describe respectively the female & male consorts Samantabhadra (kun-bzang yab-yum). From their disposition of the expanse or uncreated mind-as-such and of pristine cognition which reveals naturally present unimpeded spirituality, the mandalas are understood to have their arising ground. The male consorts of the five enlightened families are (symbolically) described by the term "Magical" (sgyu-'phrul); for they reveal the magical nature of skillful means according to which the five self-manifesting components are inherently pure. The five female consorts are (symbolically) described by the term "Net" (dra-ha), illustrating that they are associated with non-dual discriminative awareness, and revealing the five elements to be pure in the expanse. The four inner male spiritual warriors are (symbolically) described by the term "buddha-mind" (thugs), illustrating that the nature of consciousness is purity. The four female spiritual warriors who are their objects are (symbolically) described by the term "buddha-body" (sku), illustrating that the apparitional objects which arise to the sense-organs and coarsely appear are inherently pure. The four outer male spiritual warriors are (symbolically) described by the term "buddha-speech" (gsung), illustrating that the sense-organs are clear and the selves which are conceived are inherently pure. The four female spiritual warriors of time are (symbolically) described by the term "pure" (dag-pa), illustrating that all the four times are inherently pure-- transcending existence, non-existence, eternalism and nihilism. The four male gatekeepers are

(symbolically) referred to by the term "destroyer" ('lig-pa). They symbolise the subjugation and inherent purity of the four kinds of Māra and their disputations, i.e. the nature of conflicting emotion which apprehends substances and signs. The four female gatekeepers are (symbolically) depicted by terms which mean "reality" (chos-nvid),³¹ illustrating that the benefit of living beings is spontaneously accomplished through the primordially pure immeasurables, and that the possessor subject, possessed objects, and the apprehension of signs are inherently pure. The six sages are (symbolically) described by the term "numerous as atomic particles" (rdul-snyed), illustrating that they accomplish spontaneous acts of benefit in limitless worlds through countless emanations, and that the propensities of the six classes of living beings are inherently pure. Then, the nature of the wrathful deities is (symbolically) described by the term "destructor of all" (thams-cad zbig-pa), illustrating that arrogant beings to be trained are disciplined and apparitional objects are pure in pristine cognition.

iii. As for the glow (of the deities) who arise (from these syllables): In the self-manifesting spontaneous Bounteous Array of the buddhas, the central deity's visage is beheld from whatever direction (of the mandala) it is perceived. In the eastern direction there are the male & female consorts Aksobhya with their six-deity mandala which comprises the four encircling (spiritual warriors) Ksitigarbha, Maitreya, Lāsyā, and Dhūpā, with the gatekeepers Yamāntaka and Ankuṣā further to the east. In

the southern direction there are the male & female consorts Ratnasambhava with their six deity mandala which comprises the four encircling (spiritual warriors) Avalokiteśvara, Nivāranaviskambhin, Mālyā, and Puspā, with (the gatekeepers) Mahābala and Pāśā further to the south. In the western direction there are the male & female consorts Amitābha with their six-deity mandala which comprises the four encircling (spiritual warriors) Akāśagarbha, Samantabhadra, Gītā and Ālokā, with (the gatekeepers) Hayagrīva and Sphotā further to the west. In the northern direction there are the male & female consorts Amoghasiddhi with their six-deity mandala which comprises the four encircling (spiritual warriors) Vajrapāni, Mañjuśrī, Nartī and Gandhā, with (the gatekeepers) Amrtakundalin and Ganthā further to the north.

From the glow of natural radiance in these sixfold mandalas it is held that the buddhafields of the wrathful deities and of the countless emanations of the six sages become present in the zenith and nadir respectively, in a continuous perpetual cycle, emanating in a self-manifesting manner in all world-systems. It says in the Tantra of the Precious Gems of Pristine Cognition (ye-shes rin-po-che'i rgyud):

In the buddhafield of the Bounteous Array
 The self-manifesting buddha-body of perfect rapture
 Is surrounded by six retinues of six (deities).
 It emanates continuously as the mandala of wrathful deities
 And as the countless sages, who are its glow.
 Similarly, it constantly abides in living beings.

Within sentient beings also, (these deities) are held to be sustained in the heart-centre and in the crown-centre. The Tantra of the Coalescence of Sun and Moon (NGB. Vol. 9) says:

In the precious celestial palace of the heart
The bodies of the peaceful deities are perfectly present.
And in each individual crown centre
They radiate as the bodies of the wrathful deities.
The glowing buddha-bodies are inconceivable.

Subsequently, during the bar-do or intermediate state, these buddha-bodies arise sequentially in their mandala-clusters over five days of meditative concentration. ³² .. It is said in the Intention of the Nucleus of Esoteric Instructions (man-ngag snying-gi dgongs-pa):

During the bar-do, the buddha-body arises along with its six (mandala-clusters).

Now, this tantra-text (the Secret Nucleus) is said to belong to to the secret Great Perfection which reveals mind and pristine cognition to be self-manifesting. Because the higher teachings are gathered together within it, one may appropriately consider it in accordance with the Cycle of the Seminal Point (thig-le'i skor) which belongs to the Great Perfection. ³³ The present account set forth herein has been compiled from the great writings of the esoteric instructions which were composed by the great master Padmasambhava and Vimalamitra as the means for ³⁴ attaining the peaceful and wrathful deities. This overview is

most secret and precious. It is the conclusive intention of this tantra-text.

The interlinear commentary (concerning the forty-two syllables-- 197.3-201.6) is as follows: Although there is no contradiction when (the syllables) are classified as before according to their respective phonetic categories, (here) they are actually explained out of order with the result that it is not easy for the expositor to explain them and it is hard for the listener to understand them. The sequence of the syllables should therefore be revealed in five stages: the syllable of the expanse along with those of the male & female consorts of the five enlightened families; the syllables of the inner spiritual warriors along with their gatekeepers; the syllables of the outer spiritual warriors along with their gatekeepers; the syllable of pristine cognition along with those of the sages; and the syllables of the protectors of the gates with those of the wrathful deities.

i. The first has three aspects, namely, the syllable of Samantabhadrī the expanse, the syllables of the male consorts of the five enlightened families, and the syllables of their female consorts. The first (comments on Ch. 4, 16):

The syllable A (A-ni) is the real nature (de-bzhin-nvid) in which all things are uncreated (skye-med). It is the essence of Samantabhadrī, the transcendental perfection of discriminative awareness. It says in the Intermediate Mother (T. 9):

In this respect, the so-called syllable A is the approach to all things because it is uncreated from the beginning.

Texts such as the latter are identical in their explanation of the forty-two syllables.

The second (comments on Ch. 4, 17):

THA (THA-ni) is the seed-syllable of Vairocana, who is the real nature, the indestructible reality of (rdo-rié-nvid) consciousness or the buddha-mind. This is because, without arising from the expanse, his essential nature of diversified magical (sgyu) emanation ('phrul) appears as skillful means, i.e. a way into the comprehension of the real nature of consciousness. TA (TA-ni) is the seed-syllable of Aksobhya, the diversified magical (sgyu) emanation ('phrul-nvid) whose skillful means for comprehension of the real nature of form is apparitional (gnang-ba'i). DA (DA-ni) is the seed-syllable of Ratnasambhava, the wish-fulfilling (vid-bzhin-nvid) magical (sgyu) emanation ('phrul) who diversely manifests skillful means for comprehension of the real nature of feeling. DHA (DHA-ni) is the pure (rnam-dag-nvid) seed-syllable of Amitâbha, the diversified magical (sgyu) emanation ('phrul) of skillful means for comprehension of the real nature of perception. NA (NA-ni) is the seed-syllable of Amoghasiddhi, the magical emanation (sgyu-'phrul-nvid) absolute (kun-tu) with respect to time, i.e., the nature of skillful means for comprehension of the reality of habitual tendencies.

The third (comments on Ch. 4, 18):

THA (THA-ni) is the seed-syllable of Akāśadhātviśvari, the manifestly perfect net (dra-ba mngon-rdzogs-nvid) of enlightenment who combines skillful means and discriminative awareness without duality in her nature of space. TA (TA-ni) is the seed-syllable of Buddhalocanā, the secure net (dra-ba brtan-pa-nvid) of discriminative awareness. DA (DA-ni) is the seed-syllable of Pāṇḍaravāsini, the illuminating (lham-me-nvid) light-rays of the net (dra-ba) of pristine cognition. DHA (DHA-ni) is the seed-syllable of Māmaki, the embracing net (dra-ba 'khril-ba) of reality. NA (NA-ni) is ('gyur) the seed-syllable of Samayatārā, the net (dra-ba) of real nature which is absolutely (kun-tu) beautiful.

ii. The syllables of the inner spiritual warriors along with their gatekeepers comprise both the syllables of the four male spiritual warriors who are the consciousnesses of the sense-organs along with the gatekeeper of buddha-mind, and the syllables of the four female spiritual warriors who are their sense-objects along with the gatekeeper of buddha-body.

The former (comments on Ch. 4, 19):

KA (KA-ni) is the syllable of the supreme (mchog) Ksitigarbha, the buddha-mind of buddha-eye (snvan-gyi thugs-kvi) who purifies the consciousness of the eye in the expanse. KHA (KHA-ni) is that of the supreme (mchog) Vajrapāni, the buddha-mind of buddha-ear (snvan-gyi thugs-kvi) who purifies the consciousness of the ear. GA (GA-ni) is that of the supreme (mchog) Akāśagarbha, the

buddha-mind of buddha-nose (shangs-kvi thugs-kvi) who purifies the consciousness of the nose. GHA (GHA-ni) is that of the supreme (mchog) Avalokiteśvara, the buddha-mind of buddha-tongue (liags-kvi thugs) who purifies the consciousness of the tongue. NA (NA-ni) is (the syllable of) the gatekeeper Yamântaka, the buddha-mind (thugs) who apprehends those consciousnesses of the sense-organs, and yet also (kyang) is the destroyer ('lig-byed-pa'o) who purifies attachment to the three media (of body, speech and mind).

The latter (comments on Ch. 4, 20):

CA (CA-ni) is (the syllable of) the supreme (mchog) Lâsyâ, the buddha-body of buddha-eye (spyan-gvi sku-vi) who is pure form. CHA (CHA-ni) is that of the supreme (mchog) Gîtâ, the buddha-body of buddha-ear (spyan-gvi sku-vi) who is pure sound. JA (JA-ni) is that of the supreme (mchog) Mâlyâ, the buddha-body of buddha-nose (shangs-kvi sku-vi) who is pure fragrance. JHA (JHA-ni) is that of the supreme (mchog) Nartî, the buddha-body of buddha-tongue (liags-kvi sku-vi) who is pure taste. NA (NA-ni) is revealed as (the syllable of) Mahâbala, the wrathful deity of buddha-body who is the buddha-body (sku), and yet also (yang) the destroyer ('lig-byed-pa'o) who purifies grasping apprehension with respect to these objects and the three media (of body, speech and mind).

iii. The syllables of the outer spiritual warriors along with their gatekeepers comprise those of the four male spiritual warriors of the sense-organs with their gatekeeper of buddha-speech, and the four female spiritual warriors of time with their female gatekeepers.

The former (comments on Ch. 4, 21):

PA (PA-ni) is the syllable of the supreme (mchog) Maitreya, the buddha-speech of buddha-eye (spyan-gyi gsung-gi), the inherently pure organ of the eye. PHA (PHA-ni) is that of the supreme (mchog) Nivâranaviskambhin, the buddha-speech of buddha-ear (spyan-gyi gsung-gi) who is the pure organ of the ear. BA (BA-ni) is that of the supreme (mchog) Samantabhadra, the buddha-speech of buddha-nose (shangs-kvi gsung-gi) who is the pure organ of the nose. BHA (BHA-ni) is that of the supreme (mchog) Mañjuśrī, the buddha-speech of buddha-tongue (ljags-kvi gsung-gi) who is the pure organ of the tongue. MA (MA-ni) is (the syllable of) Haya-grīva, who is the buddha-speech (gsung), and yet also (yang) the destroyer ('lig-par-byed) who purifies egotism and attachment to the three media (of body, speech and mind).

The latter (comments on Ch. 4, 22):

YA (YA-ni) is (the syllable of) Dhūpā, the reality who is pure with respect to creation (skye-ba rnam-par dag) of things past. VA (VA-ni) is that of Puspā, the reality who is pure with respect to the abiding (gnas-pa dag-pa) of things present. RA (RA-ni) is that of Alokā, the reality who is pure with respect to destruction ('lig-pa dag-pa-ste) of the future. LA (LA-ni) is that of Gandhā, the reality who is pure with respect to emptiness (stong-pa dag-pa'o), manifesting in and of itself as the pristine cognition of sameness throughout the four times. As to the four female gatekeepers: SA (SA-ni) is (the syllable of) Ankuṣā, pure (dag-pa) with respect to the eternalism (rtag-pa) of all things because they are without independent existence. SA (SA-ni) is

that of Pāśā who is the absence of nihilism (chad-pa vod-ma-vin) with respect to all things. SA (SA-ni) is that of Sphotā who is free from extremes (mtha'-bral) of eternalism and nihilism with reference to all things, and is without self (bdag-med-pa). HA (HA-ni) is that of Ganthā who is without (med-pa) substance or sign (mtshan-ma) itself (nvid) in all respects.

iv. The syllable of pristine cognition and those of the six sages (comment on Ch. 4, 23):

KSA (KSA-ni) is the syllable of the male consort Samantabhadra who is the spirituality (thugs)³⁶ of (kvi) pure self-manifesting pristine cognition (ve-sheg), the buddha-mind (thugs) or naturally present pristine cognition, through which the cessation of reality (chos-nvid zad-pa)³⁷ is approached.

As to the six sages: I (I-ni) is (the syllable of) Śakra who grants instruction for (su) all the gods (lha-rnams) by emanating divine sages, numerous as the atomic particles (rdul-snyed) of oceanic world-systems in as many domains of the gods. Similarly, I (I-ni) is that of Vemacitra, the sage for the antigods (lha-ma-vin), numerous as atomic particles (rdul-snyed). U (U-ni) is that of Śākyamuni for the human beings (mi-rnams-su), numerous as atomic particles (rdul-snyed). Ū (Ū-ni) is that of Sthirasimha, the sage for the animals (byol-song-rnams), numerous as atomic particles (rdul-snyed). E (E-ni) is that of Jvālamukha, (the sage) for the tormented spirits (yi-dvags-su), numerous as atomic particles (rdul-snyed). AI (AI-ni) is the syllable of the ox-headed Yama who grants instruction for the denizens of hell (dmval-ba rnams), numerous as atomic particles (rdul-snyed).

These six syllables indeed release great spirituality, which enters into or assumes the voice of Brahmā.

v. The syllables of the protector of the gate and the wrathful deities (comment on Ch. 4, 24):

As to the protector of the gate: O (O-ni) is (the syllable of) Amrtakundalin, the wrathful deity of the northern gate, the destroyer ('iig-par-byed) of all (thams-cad) signs and all conceptual elaborations of the three media, who reveals great miracles.

The syllable of the wrathful deity, AU (AU-ni) is the destructor of all (thams-cad zhiq-pa vin) the subject-object dichotomy. It is the glow of the peaceful deities, the nature of the five pristine cognitions, which appears as the wrathful deities. Its superscript point (or circle) is the pristine cognition of reality's expanse, its superscript crescent is the mirror-like pristine cognition, its central form is the pristine cognition of sameness, its vibration is the pristine cognition of discernment, and its natural expression is the pristine cognition of accomplishment.
38

Now, those who make the last (syllable) out to be the nucleus of Amrtakundalin do not perceive exactly where the mandalas of peaceful and wrathful deities emanate from the cloud-mass of syllables. The cloud-mass of syllables abides as the seed-syllables of all the mandalas of deities. Thus the mandala of the wrathful deities emanates from AUM, the seed-syllable of Buddha Heruka, endowed with the five pristine cognitions.

Synopsis (201.6-202.2):

Third, the synopsis of these (syllables, comments on Ch. 4, 25):
Accordingly, this ('dis) cloud or great (chen) cyclical ('khori
lo) mass (tshogs) of syllables (yi-ge), spontaneously present in
nature, subsumes (bsdus) all the garlands (phreng-ba) of pristine
cognition of the body, speech and mind (sku-gsung-thugs-kvi) of
all buddhas without exception. So (zhes) the tathāgata himself
meaningfully said (brlod-do).

Then, Aho! (A-ho) is exclaimed with great delight, indicating the
wonder that this very cloud-mass of syllables abides primordially
as the essence of buddha-body and pristine cognition, without
conjunction or disjunction.

Summary of this Chapter (202.3-206.2)

The third section (of the exegesis of the meaning of its words--
see p. 558) is a summary of both (the above general teaching and
detailed exegesis of the syllables). It includes both the
emergence of this summary and its actual words.

The former (comments on Ch. 4, 26):

Once the syllables had been explained in detail, then (de-nas)
this ('di) great secret (gsang-ba) description (nyid) of the
cloud-mass of syllables, forming the nucleus of these very
mandalas (dkvil-'khor de-dag-nyid-kvi) where the assembled host
of (tshogs-dang) the self-manifesting tathāgatas and their queens
(de-bzhin gshes-pa btsun-mo'i) are naturally without duality

(gnvis-su med-pa'i), emerged from the indestructible body, speech, mind, attributes and activities (sku-gsung-thugs von-tan phrin-las rdo-rie-las byung-ngo) of all the tathāgatas.

The latter (comments on Ch. 4, 27):

Aho! (A-ho) is exclaimed in praise of the non-dual nature. From a disposition of skillful means (thabs) or naturally present great spirituality and (dang) natural discriminative awareness (shes-rab) beyond the two extremes, the teacher (the male & female consort Samantabhadra) is primordially endowed with this wheel of syllables or inexhaustible wheel ('khor-lo) of adornment. It is the superior pristine cognition, a joyous (dgves) cloud (sprin) mass of spirituality for the sake of those to be trained. It is the causal basis (rgyu) of the excellent provision (tshogs) of enlightened mind (byang-chub sems), and its result ('bras-bu) is the maturation (smin) of the great mandalas including those of the forty-two conquerors (rgyal-ba).
..
From this apparition, the emanational body comes forth as a spontaneous accomplishment (grub) for the sake of living beings.

In this way the causal basis comprising these wondrous (ngo-mtshar) syllables-- the forty-two consonantal syllables (ming-tshogs bzhi-bcu gnvis) and so forth-- becomes manifest. Their essence is the spontaneously present reality which primordially abides and is not newly compounded by nature ('dus ma-byas-nvid) from causes and conditions. From its disposition self-arisen spirituality appears for the sake of living beings. Thus, the cycles of (the syllables) are the indestructible reality (rdo-

rie) which is arrayed in a compounded ('dus-byag) manner and yet lacks duality because it is essentially unchanging.

This reality is the absolutely definitive nature which discloses (sbvin-pa'i) the forty-five mandalas (dkvil-'khor) of buddha-
body, speech, mind, attributes and activities, and so forth. 39

Its great commitment to do so (dam), which emanates and makes the mandalas manifest, is at all times not transgressed ('da'-bar mi-mdzad), just as the light-rays of the sun are committed to shine.

This apparitional nature of the mandalas indeed resembles the images which dependently arise when form is reflected in a mirror. For, when the naturally present pristine cognition arises from the wheel of syllables, both the self-manifesting mandala (of the body of perfect rapture) and the mandala (of the emanational body) which trains living beings dependently (dbang-med) arise in all their emanational forms throughout the ten directions. Such manifestations are (vin) derived from the great force (mthu-chen) of their accumulated (tshogs-pa'i) causes (rgyu), i.e. the cloud-mass of syllables, and conditions (rkven), i.e. the appearance of pristine cognition and beings to be trained. Aho! (A-ho) is therefore an exclamation of wonder. This is the explanation which accords with the buddhas' emanational nature.

Furthermore, this wheel of syllables may also be explained in accordance with its presence in the body and its meditation on the path. As to the former: Inside the bodies of all corporeal beings, the seed or provision of enlightened mind, a joyous cloud of white and red seminal points without duality, which

respectively indicate skillful means and discriminative awareness, is the causal basis of a relative nature. Abiding on the petals and at the centre of the four wheels (cakra) within the energy channels which are smooth and stalk-like, this seed appears in the form of syllables of pure-essence, radiant in the manner of a butter lamp; and the result (associated with them) is the maturation and accomplishment of the conquerors. In this way, the forty-two wondrous consonantal syllables naturally and primordially abide. They are the reality or inner radiance, not compounded by nature, from whose disposition emerges the compounded indestructible reality, i.e. the experience of the path which unites learning in skillful means with discriminative awareness. It is these syllables which manifestly disclose the mandalas of buddha-body and pristine cognition. Their great commitment to do so is not transgressed because the ground, or the syllables themselves, emerges dependently, radiating as the mandala of deities through the conditions of the path. In this way, the potential and force of their accumulated causes and conditions do emerge. The expression of wonderment, Aho!, is revealed because this (result) is present in the ground from the present moment.

40

Furthermore, there are two explanations (of this same passage) connected with the meditational modes of the path, among which (the first) refers to the creation and perfection stages of the path of liberation: When one has cultivated the enlightened mind of skillful means, meditated on the contemplation of the real nature or discriminative awareness, and meditated on the

41

contemplations associated with the universal appearance of the joyous cloud-mass (of syllables), and the causal basis or provision of enlightened mind, then one meditates, as previously indicated, on the wheel or cloud-mass of syllables. This has as its result the maturation and accomplishment of the mandalas of the conquerors: The wondrous forty-two consonantal syllables disclose the genuine mandalas of indestructible reality in which the non-compounded buddha-body of reality and the compounded body of form are without duality. Their commitment to do so is not transgressed because the force of their accumulated causes and conditions dependently arises. Aho! is an exclamation of great wonder (at the result) which emerges in the manner of a reflected image or of a magical apparition.

According to the path of skillful means: There is a joyous cloud, the essential nature of the four delights, in which are mingled without duality the "moon-fluid" (semen), indicative of the male consort or skillful means and the "sun-fluid" (ovum), indicative of the female consort or discriminative awareness. This is the seed, the provision of enlightened mind, the descent of which into the four wheels (cakra) gives rise to meditation on bliss and emptiness without duality. Its result is the maturation and accomplishment of the conquerors, the wondrous forty-two
42
consonantal syllables.

The essence of these (syllables) abides as the indestructible reality where skillful means and discriminative awareness are non-dual because the four non-compounded pristine cognitions are compounded by arousal, filling, extension and so forth (of the

43

seminal fluids). It is these (syllables) which disclose the genuine mandalas, the five spontaneously present buddha-bodies. Their commitment to do so is not transgressed because, by meditating on this pristine cognition, (the result) dependently emerges, and is achieved through the great might of accumulated causes and conditions, i.e. the auspicious coincidence of the male and female consorts. The expression Aho! indicates great wonder.

Although this (summary) is profound and difficult to fathom I have revealed it in some detail.

Such are the words (tshig-tu'o) which reveal this secret indestructible reality (rdo-rie gsang-ba'i), and whose meaning is without duality in respect of the identity of pristine cognition.

Synopsis of the Chapter (206.2-207.2)

The third part (of the interlinear commentary; see p. 557) is the synopsis or conclusion of the chapter (which comments on Ch. 4, 28):

All things are thus primordial buddhahood in the cloud-mass of syllables. At these words (zhes briod-pas), all the (thams-cad) self-manifesting tathāgatas (de-bzhin gshergs-pa) of the mandala of the five enlightened families were transformed (gyur-to) in a single savour into the expanse where they are primordially undifferentiated from the reality of the wheel of syllables, naturally pure in essence, and where they are without conjunction or disjunction with reference to the non-dual essence.

This is simply a movement in pursuit of their natural expression, free from conceptual elaboration, and apart from that no transformation or extraneous emanation is required. It says accordingly in the chapter on the geometric rites from the Purification of All Evil Destinies (T. 483):⁴⁴

All different doctrines are pursued,
And all doctrines, here and there, are pursued.
One who pursues all doctrines
Follows that which is free from extremes.

Similarly, when the mandala is said to radiate, it does not extraneously deviate from the self-manifesting mandala. One should know that (radiation) to be identical to reality. There are some who say that it does appear to change in the perception of those who require training. While one would not contradict that such appearances accord with the intelligence of those present when (the buddhas) array the lamp (of the teaching) in the world and so forth, in this context (of the self-manifesting mandala) there is no such connection because this mandala of the field of the spontaneous Bounteous Array is the reality which never changes.⁴⁵

This completes (-'o) and establishes the exegesis of the fourth chapter (le'u ste bzhi-pa) from (las) the primordial Secret Nucleus Definitive With Respect To The Real (gsang-ba'i snying-po de-kho-na-nvid nges-pa), the reality of the garland of syllables, entitled the Cyclical Array of the (-i 'khor-lo bkod-pa) great Garland ('pbreng-ba) of spontaneously present Syllables (yi-ge).

Chapter Five

Contemplation that Attains the Magical Net

Root-text:

Then, coming forth from the array of the cloud-mass which is the wheel of syllables, the Magical Emanation (sgyu-'phrul) uttered this meaningful expression. [1]

Mind-as-such without basis

Is the basis of all things.

Mind-as-such is the nature of the syllables.

The syllables are a cloud-mass of wish-fulfilling gems. [2]

By the manifest perfection of

The forty-two deity mandala of Magical Emanation

In the mandala of the Net,

All mandalas perfect throughout the ten directions

And four times will be accomplished. [3]

Nectar will be produced and extracted,

Removing the four hundred and four ailments.

Rapture will emerge, evil existences will be purified,

And the metamorphosis of all things will be accomplished. [4]

Space will emerge solid as indestructible reality.

That will burn, and then the fire too will be incinerated.

Turning into water, it will cascade in the appropriate way.

This world-system will be dispersed--

All will be emptied, and will collapse. [5]

Summons, expulsion, bondage, liberation,
Alleviation, killing, vanquishing, and victory
Will be accomplished by this contemplation. [6]

This pristine cognition will turn at will
Into the forms of its names, words and so forth,
Like the light which emerges in darkness,
Like alchemical transmutation into gold,
And like an efficacious medication. [7]

To persevere in making offerings to the teacher,
To have clear realisation,
To keep the commitments, (recite) the mantras,
And to know the seals without defect--
One who possesses these requisites will become accomplished.
One who lacks them will be unsuccessful and lost. [8]

The supreme nucleus of accomplishments
Comprehended by the conquerors of the three times,
Is a wish-fulfilling treasury, unexhausted in time.
It emerges without increase or decrease--
From the non-substantial there is a substantial cloud
Which emerges in diverse forms, and changes. [9]

Substantial things in reality are not substantial.
Contemplation is the mastery of that realisation. [10]

Whoever does not know the non-referential
Does not know the expanse of reality.

For this reason, one should know the non-referential
By destroying the substantial and the non-substantial. [11]

Mind-as-such, groundless and baseless,
Is neither male, nor female, nor neuter.
It is not signless, nor is it classified in families.
It is colourless and shapeless.
It is not an abode, nor is it anything at all.
This pristine cognition of the real expanse
Is the causal basis for all seals of skillful means. [12]

From skillful means emerges skillful means,
The unthinkable skillful means.
Not differentiated, it becomes differentiated
In the unthinkable inner and outer mandalas.
This is a display of pristine cognition,
The supreme seal of fearless Samantabhadra. [13]

When one whose mind resembles an enebriated elephant's
Has been tamed by means of meditative equipoise,
And has become very stable in the mantras and their seals,
That one will obtain amazing great accomplishment. [14]

So saying, the tathâgata himself was delighted by that vision.
This completes the fifth chapter from the Secret Nucleus
Definitive With Respect To The Real, entitled The Contemplation
that Attains the Magical Net. [15]

Commentary (207.3-224.4):

The sequence of attainment which accords with this (cloud-mass of syllables, see p. 543) has three parts, namely, the background motivation, an exegesis of the meaning of its words, and the conclusion of the chapter.

The first (207.3-207.4-- comments on Ch. 5, 1):

Once the nature of buddha-body, speech, and mind had been explained dependent on the display of the syllables, then (de-nas), coming forth (rnam-par 'phro-ba) in its sequence of attainment from the array of the cloud-mass which is the wheel of syllables (yi-ge 'khor-lo'i sprin bkod-pa-las), the Magical Emanation (sgyu-'phrul) in whom skillful means and discriminative awareness are non-dual again uttered this meaningful expression ('di ched-du briod-do).

Exegesis of the Meaning of Its Words (207.4-224.1)

The second part is threefold: It comprises the sequence of accomplishments which are attained; the nature of the cloud-mass of syllables through which these are attained, and a teaching on the actual skillful means of attainment.

1. Sequence of the Accomplishments which are Attained (207.5-213.2):

The first of these has four subdivisions, namely, a teaching on primordially pure mind-as-such which is the basis of accomp-

lishment, the supreme accomplishment which is achieved thereby, the common accomplishments which are its branches, and the similes which illustrate these accomplishments.

The first subdivision (comments on Ch. 5, 2):

It is said in the Supreme Continuum of the Greater Vehicle (T. 4024):

Earth indeed abides in water,
Water in air, and air in space.
Space does not abide in anything.
Similarly, the components and activity fields
Abide in deeds and conflicting emotions.
Deeds and conflicting emotions always abide
In inappropriate mental scrutiny.
Inappropriate mental scrutiny indeed abides
In the purity of mind.
But the nature of mind does not itself abide
In any of these things.

Accordingly, all things depend on mind, and mind depends on naturally pure inner radiance. Therefore, mind-as-such (sems-nvid), a space-like nature which is without (med-pa'i) ground or any basis (rtsa-ba), is the basis (rtsa-ba yin) of all (kun-gyi) diverse things (chos-rnams) of samsâra and nirvâna, pure and impure. The Dohâs (T. 2273) accordingly say:

Mind-as-such alone is the seed of all,
From which existence and nirvâna emanate.
Obeisance to mind which is like a wish-fulfilling gem,
Granting the desired result.

Just as fire and water emerge under different conditions from a single lump of crystal, the unique mind-as-such appears as samsâra and nirvâna through the action or inaction of the subject-object dichotomy, and through ignorance and awareness respectively. But actually there is no dichotomy. The primordial-ly pure mind-as-such (sems-nyid) therefore primordially arises in the nature of the syllables (yi-ge'i rang-bzhin-te) of inner radiance, and its appearance is without independent existence. If mind-as-such, comprising the syllables (yi-ge) which appear in this way, is realised, the two kinds of benefit are possessed, manifestly causing a cascade of adornments to fall. Even when unrealised, it is primordially present as the ground from which all that is desired emerges. Therefore (the syllables) are a cloud-mass (sprin) of wish-fulfilling (vid-bzhin) precious gems (rin-chen).

The second subdivision (comments on Ch. 5, 3):

In the disposition of inner radiant mind-as-such, the essence of the forty-two deity (bzhi-bcu gnyis) mandala of Magical Emanation (sgyu-'phrul dkvil-'khor) which appears in the form of the syllables, naturally and spontaneously present, has primordially attained the reality of manifest perfection (mngon-rdzogs) in the mandala of the Net (dra-ba'i dkvil-'khor), the discriminative awareness free from extremes of conceptual elaboration. By (-pas) virtue of this, when it is experientially cultivated according to the sequence of contemplation, all mandalas perfect (rdzogs-pa-yi dkvil-'khor thams-cad) in the unique enlightened family and

intention of all the buddhas throughout the ten directions and four times (phyogs-bcu dus-bzhi) will be ('gyur) completely accomplished ('grub-par). This is because the basis of the mandalas, the cloud-mass of syllables, will itself have been experientially cultivated without error.

The third subdivision, the common accomplishments, has three aspects: A teaching on the spontaneous accomplishment of the four rites which is a sign that the five pristine cognitions are accomplished; an exegesis of the means of attaining the consummation of the five elements which is a sign that the five components are inherently pure; and a description of the attainment of the eight accomplishments which is a sign that the eight aggregates of consciousness are pure in the expanse.¹

The first of these (comments on Ch. 5, 4):

When the mirror-like pristine cognition is accomplished, nectar (bdud-rtair), which is a medication for the relief of living beings, will even be produced ('gyur) from all that is poisonous; and (zhing) it will be extracted ('byung-ba-dang) for the benefit of oneself and others, thereby removing (sel-zhing) all the four hundred-and-four ailments (bzhi-brgya rtsa-bzhi'i nad) and causing happiness.

Concerning the four-hundred-and-four ailments, Caraka says (in the Carakasamhitâ):

One-hundred-and-one are ailments caused by imaginary spirits,

One-hundred-and-one are ailments caused by immediate conditions,

One-hundred-and-one are basic ailments

Which will be compounded in the future,

And one-hundred-and-one are naturally caused by past deeds.

Alternatively, it is explained that the four categories of wind, bile, phlegm, and their combination each possesses one hundred and one types (of ailment).²

When the pristine cognition of sameness is accomplished, the rapture (longs-spyod) of the celestial treasure-store, which does not know exhaustion because anything desired may be extracted from space, will spontaneously emerge ('byung-zhing) and fulfil hopes, surpassing the raptures of gods and humans. When the pristine cognition of reality's expanse is accomplished, the obscurations covering the minds of all living beings within the evil existences (ngan-song) will be purified (sbyong), and they will be established in celestial bliss. When the pristine cognition of discernment and the pristine cognition of accomplishment are accomplished, the miracle of the metamorphosis (gzhan-du 'gyur-ba) of all things (ci-yang) and their appearances will be accomplished ('grub). This is because there are miraculous abilities to make the apparitional invisible and the invisible apparent, to interchange the actual appearance assumed by an object-- as when fire is turned into water and earth revealed as space, to subjugate others, to resurrect the dead, and so forth. The Pagoda of Precious Gems (T. 45-93) accordingly says:

The perpetual range and also the miraculous abilities of mind,
That are accomplished in contemplation, are inconceivable;
The attributes of sacramental substances, medicines,
Mantras and gemstones too are inconceivable;
The temporal conjunction ³ and auspicious power
Of planets and stars are also inconceivable;
And the perceptual range of empowered bodhisattvas
And the tathâgatas is indeed inconceivable.

The second aspect (comments on Ch. 5, 5):

When the contemplation of the consummation of the earth element
has been obtained through the inherent purity of the component of
form, space (nam-mkha') will be consecrated and accordingly will
emerge ('byung-zhing) in a solid (gra) state, as the terrain of
indestructible reality (rdo-rie).

By obtaining power over the contemplation of the consummation of
the fire element when the component of feeling is inherently
pure, that fire will burn ('bar) in the body and then (nas) turn
all appearances into a mass of fire, so that the hottest fire (me)
of the sentient denizens of hell too will be incinerated (yang
'tshig-pa-dang), releasing them from that suffering.

When power has been obtained over the contemplation of the
consummation of the water element through the purity of
perception, all appearances, turning into water (chur-'gyur),
will pour down to earth, and everything will also be seen to
cascade ('bab-pa'ang) in a single stream of water, removing the
sufferings of others in the same way appropriate (de-bzhin-te) to

the action of the fire element. This is because these are emanations of contemplation in which there are no conflicting emotions.

When the contemplation of the consummation of the air element is mastered through purity of habitual tendencies, this world-system ('jig-rten khams-ni) of coarse and subtle appearances will be dispersed ('thor-ba-dang) into atomic particles, diffusing miracles and benefitting sentient beings. Then, when consciousness is pure and the contemplation of the space element has been obtained, all (thams-cad) world-systems will be emptied (stongs) and (shing) the sun and moon too will collapse (lhung-bar 'gyur) to earth. Such miraculous abilities will be manifestly acquired.

In this context, there are some who meditate that the five elements emerge in this manner from the heart-centres of the deities of the five enlightened families, but that is unconnected with the exegesis of the actual meaning of this text. The former is a particular means of attainment, whereas the present description is a general one.⁴

The third aspect (comments on Ch. 5, 6):

This concerns the attainment of the eight minor types of ritual which is a sign that the eight aggregates of consciousness are pure: When the eight aggregates including the consciousness of the ground-of-all have been purified and power has been obtained over awareness or pristine cognition, there will be a summons (drug-dang) (which draws) into one's presence the object of one's attainment; there will be an expulsion (btang-dang) or exorcism

(of negative forces) to another sphere; there will be **bondage** (bcing-dang) of enemies, thieves and so forth; there will be **liberation** (dgrol) from all imprecations and harmful forces; there will be **alleviation** (gso-dang) of plague, poison and so forth; there will be **killing** (bsad-dang) of hostile enemies and obstructors; there will be **vanquishing** ('pham-dang) of one's enemies' faction; and there will be **victory** (rgyal) of one's own faction. All these rituals will be accomplished by this **contemplation** (ting-'dzin 'di-vis byed-par 'gyur) of the cloud-mass of syllables.

The fourth subdivision (comments on Ch. 5, 7):

As for the similes illustrative of these accomplishments: There are outwardly visible miraculous images of this (de-nyid) accomplishment attained in contemplation, which arise as originally pure **self-manifesting pristine cognition** (ye-she rang-snang-ba'i). One who follows the ritual experiences the different forms of its (gzugs) respective garlands of syllables, i.e. the vowels and consonants represented in **names and words** (ming-tshig), and their colours, light-rays, and so forth (sogs). Consequently, the result of this contemplation is accomplished **at will** (vid-bzhin-gvis), and this wheel of syllables is seen as desired, like (ji-bzhin-du), for example, the **light which emerges in darkness** (mun-la snang-byung). It will turn ('gyur-ba) into nectar the outer and inner poisons, without renouncing them, and is thus known to be like **alchemical transmutation into gold** (gser-'gyur), and like an **efficacious medication** (sman-gyi tshul) which pacifies and alleviates distempers, right where they are.

ii. The Nature of the Cloud-Mass of Syllables through which these Accomplishments are Attained (213.2-215.6):

The second (see p. 603) concerns the nature of the cloud-mass of syllables through which these (accomplishments) are attained. It comprises both the individuals who attain them and the essence which is attained.

The former (comments on Ch. 5, 8):

The first branch for accomplishing the syllables is to persevere in making offerings (mchod-brtson) to the teacher (ston-pa), the master of indestructible reality and the deities of the mandala, (who have revealed) the path to liberation dependent on some extraordinary object (i.e. their own gurus). Now the guru is the supreme genuine being of the (buddha-)field. As is said in the

Sûtra Which Gathers All Intentions (T. 829):

One should know the guru to be more awesome
Than the buddhas of a hundred thousand aeons;
For the buddhas of those aeons emerge
Dependent on their gurus.
I have not explained that a buddha emerges
Who has previously not had a guru.

And:

Even though one is ignorant and unrealised
With respect to all doctrines,
When one has greatly served a genuine guru with veneration,
The ocean of samsâra will be traversed.

For seeds vastly multiply when planted in excellent fields,
And even a sesame seed in an excellent field of genuine merit
Is not dispersed, but will multiply and ripen.

And in the Vows of the Magical Net (dra-ba sdom-pa):⁵

The guru is the central deity of all mandalas.

When offerings have been made with veneration,

All mandalas are delighted.

It goes without saying that (offerings are made)

To the mandala which is at hand!

The second (branch for accomplishing the syllables) is to have clear (gsal) unwavering realisation (rtogs-pa gsal) of the meditation associated with the deities and syllables. Accordingly, the Introduction to the Conduct of a Bodhisattva (T. 3871) says:

All the recitations and austerities
Of one who has practised
With a mind which deviates extraneously
Are correctly said to be pointless.

The third (branch for accomplishing the syllables) is to keep the basic and ancillary commitments (dam-tshig). Accordingly, the Cakrasamyara (T. 368) says:

Keeping the commitments, all mantras will be accomplished.

The fourth branch (for accomplishing the syllables) is to recite the secret mantras (snags) purely-- not too swiftly or slowly, without omissions or additions, and not too loudly or too quiet-

6

ly. Accordingly, it says in the Supreme Commitment (dam-tshig mchog):

Mantra will indeed be verbally accomplished

By one endowed with its six aspects.

The fifth branch (for accomplishing the syllables) is to know (shes-shing) the seals (phyag-rgya-rnams), i.e. those of doctrine, action, commitment, and the great seal, and to know and secure their branches without defect (ma-nyams), in accordance with the truth.⁷ Accordingly it says in the Supreme Conqueror (rgyal-mchog):

Accomplishment will be attained

By one who possesses the four seals.

One who possesses (ldan) these five, with their subsidiary branches -- the (appropriate) place, time and requisites (yo-byad)⁸ for attainment, will become accomplished ('grub-'gyur) in these (syllables). But it is said that the individual who lacks them (mi-ldan) will be lost (brlag) because, even though he would attain these (syllables), he would be unsuccessful (don-med), and, moreover, roasted in evil existences. Accordingly, the Secret Seminal Point (thig-le gsang-ba) says:

One who does not venerate the guru,

Who has not obtained empowerment,

Who is without commitments and devoid of mantras,

And whose supreme branches of attainment are defective,

Will assuredly have no accomplishment in this world.

That one will be roasted in future evil existences.

The latter, concerning the essence which is attained, (comments on Ch. 5, 9):

The supreme nucleus (mchog-gi snying-po ni) of supreme and common accomplishments (dnegos-grub), comprehended by the conquerors of the three times (dus-gsum rgyal-bas thugs-chud-pa'i), past, future and present, is the wheel of syllables. Therefore its essence is a genuine wish-fulfilling treasury unexhausted in time (zad-pa'i dus-med yid-bzhin mdzod), whereby all that is desired emerges spontaneously in the manner of precious gemstones. Now, the essence is naturally pure-- the buddha-body of reality is without increase ('phel) in the manner of space, the buddha-body of perfect rapture is without decrease ('grib-med-par) in the manner of rainbow colours; and, from this disposition, there emerges ('byung-ba- ste) the diversified emanational display of the emanational body. Thus, from the (lag) disposition of the non-substantial (dnegos-po med) buddha-body of reality, there is a substantial cloud (dnegos-po'i sprin) of ostensible appearances, i.e. the two apparitional buddha-bodies of form, which emerges (-par 'byung) in diverse (sna-tshogs) forms (rnam) of enlightened activity for the sake of living beings, corresponding to the intelligence of those to be trained; and this changes ('gyur) into a spontaneously present display. This is the essence of the cloud-mass of syllables.

iii. A Teaching on the Actual Skillful Means of Attainment
(215.6-224.1):

The third (see p. 603) is a teaching on the actual skillful means of attainment. It has three parts, namely, a brief teaching on contemplation, a detailed exegesis of its nature, and a synopsis concerning the unique meditative equipoise.

The brief teaching (216.1-216.4, comments on Ch. 5, 10):

While all things of phenomenal existence, samsâra and nirvâna, appear to be substantial (dnagos), illustrated by the appearance of the cloud-mass of syllables during the creation stage, the reality (nvid) of these things (rnams) is naturally uncreated. This nature, in (na) which things are not substantial (dnagos-med-par), is known to refer to the primordially pure perfection stage. Once the emanation & absorption (of the mandala) has been refined from the disposition of the creation stage, which appears but is not recognised (to exist inherently), and without attachment to true existence, there follows the contemplation (ting-'dzin) of the wheel of syllables. This is (vin) one which entails repeated training in contemplation or realisation (rtogs-pa'i) of the emanation & absorption of syllables corresponding to a specific ritual; and the display or mastery (dbang-sgyur) of that in awareness.

The second (the detailed exegesis of the nature of contemplation; 216.4-222.5) comprises both the contemplation which is a meditation on discriminative awareness, the buddha-body of reality or emptiness, and the contemplation which is a meditation on skillful means, the buddha-body of form or appearance.

The former (216.4-218.6) includes a general teaching of instruction on the non-referential truth and a detailed exegesis of the non-dual pristine cognition.

1. This (comments on Ch. 5, 11):

Whoever (gang-gis) as an individual does not know the (mi-shes-pa) nature of all things to be non-referential (dmigs-med) and signless, does not know (mi-shes) the abiding nature of the expanse of reality (de-vis chos-kvi dbyings), free from conceptual elaboration. It says in the Sûtra Which Gathers All Intentions (T. 829):

Without seeing the inconceivable,
The child who sets his intellect
On the unthinkable is foolish.
That one will turn to an activity field of darkness.

And in the Great Bounteousness of the Buddhas (T. 44):

Without knowing phenomena and their nature,
He does not know the expanse of reality.

For this reason (de-phvir) it is taught that one should know (shes-par-gvis) the non-referential (dmigs-med) reality, the nature of all things, by (-pas) analysing and destroying ('lig) deluded ideas which apprehend the subject-object dichotomy. For,

when the dreamlike and diverse substantial (dnngos-dang) objects which appear to the mind are investigated and analysed, they do not exist, either externally or internally, and are similar to space; and (dang) when the non-substantial (dnngos-med-pa) colourless consciousness which makes that realisation is analysed, the subject too is essenceless because it is not found anywhere, externally or internally. At this juncture there is no reference to anything apart from the mind and mental appearances. The Introduction to the Conduct of a Bodhisattva (T. 3871) accordingly says:

When the substantial and non-substantial
 Are not present before the intellect,
 There are no extraneous forms.
 Thus, one is quiescent in the non-referential.

The detailed exegesis of non-dual pristine cognition (comments on Ch. 5, 12):

Mind-as-such (sems-nyid-ni), primordially groundless and baseless (gzhi-rtsa med-pa'i) like space does not exist as any substance or sign. This is the case because it is neither (ma-yin) called male (pho), nor female (mo), nor (min) is it referred to as neuter (ma-ning). Mind-as-such exists from the present moment without samsâra or nirvâna, good or evil. This nature is not (ma-yin) even referred to as signless (mtshan-med) because it transcends extremes of being and non-being. Nor, in this respect, is (min) mind-as-such classified (rgyud) into the different spiritual families (rigs) of buddhas and sentient beings, or social families (rigs) of ksatriyas, candâlas and so forth. It is

colourless (kha-dog ma-yin) in terms of white and so forth, and shapeless (dbyibs ma-yin) in terms of square and so forth, because it is essentially empty and signless. Furthermore, mind-as-such is not (ma-yin) existant as a buddhafield or as an abode (gnas-su) of sentient beings. Nor is it (min) existant as anything at all (gang-yang) which can be positively identified. The Sûtra of the King of Contemplation (T. 127) accordingly says:

Mind, essentially non-referential, is not within thought.
Naturally pure and essentially empty,
It is the primordial, selfless, profound reality,
Profound, quiescent, and unelaborate as space.

This mind-as-such is reality, the pure pristine cognition (ye-shes-te) of the real expanse (de-bzhin-nvid dbvings). Through its abiding nature, it is the causal basis for (rgyu) accomplishing all the seals of skillful means (thabs-kvi phvag-rgya) and it is the causal basis for all (kun-gvi rgyu) discriminative awareness. It brings about auspicious connections and all genuine results associated with the expanse where all excellencies are accomplished. This is because there are no divergent doctrines which have a ground, path and result extraneous to the truth of naturally pure mind-as-such.

The latter (218.6-222.5) is the contemplation which is a meditation on skillful means, the buddha-body of form or the apperitional nature. It includes an overview and interlinear commentary.

1. The overview concerns both the attainment of the wheel of syllables and the attainment of their ritual feast-offerings. As to the former: After one has meditated in the above manner on the emanation & absorption from the syllable A, preceded by the three kinds of contemplation,¹⁰ then the essence of discriminative awareness is meditative equipoise (which persists) until stability has been obtained in the disposition of the baseless mind-as-such, free from conceptual elaboration despite that emanation & absorption of the syllables. Then, one meditates on the mandala of deities, refining the mind in a display of the four rites and supreme contemplation which are attained by means of the light-rays of the garland of mantras. Subsequently the merit should be dedicated. Signs of accomplishment emerge when this (visualisation) is stable and when thirty-one million one-hundred-thousand recitations (of mantra) have been accumulated.¹¹

As to the attainment of ritual feast-offerings: By means of the cloud-mass of syllables, oneself is transformed into the deity, with the result that the rays of light and the deity's emanation & absorption pacify ailments and malign spirits, they enrich or increase the lifespan and one's experience of rapture, they subjugate, and they perform (wrathful rites of) expulsion, killing, paralysis, bondage, and so forth. These rites will be accomplished within seven days and so forth through the emanation & absorption of diverse contemplations.¹²

Then in a similar manner, oneself is clearly visualised as Vairocana, and one meditates that (extending) from his heart-centre into space there is a stairway and terrain of indestructible

reality. Thereupon, the contemplation of the earth element will be obtained, one will not sink in water, and one will be seated in space in a meditative posture.

Then one visualises that in the heart-centre of oneself in the form of Amitâbha, there is a syllable RAM from which fire emerges, burning all phenomenal existence and pacifying the fires of hell. Thereby the contemplation of the fire element will be accomplished, causing a rain of fire to descend.

Then one meditates that in the heart-centre of oneself in the form of Ratnasambhava there is a syllable KHAM, from which there is a cascade of pristine cognition, filling the world. Thereby the contemplation of the water element will be accomplished, causing outer phenomena to pour down to earth and the fires of evil existences to be quenched.

Then one meditates that in the heart-centre of oneself in the form of Amoghasiddhi there is a syllable YAM from which a blast of air emerges, dispersing the coarse substances of the world.

Then one meditates that in the heart-centre of oneself in the form of Aksobhya, there is a syllable E with which space becomes united. Thereupon, all appearances will be emptied and one will accomplish the rite whereby the sun and moon are eclipsed and collapse.

Similarly, one meditates on the colours of all these apparitions-- white, yellow, red, green and dark blue-- whereby one will accomplish the identity of the five great light rays and their apparitions.

All this is merely illustrative because there are countless other emanational rites on which one meditates in the course of this contemplation of all that the mind desires. All these (apparitions) that emerge in this way are included in the genuine
14
net of contemplation.

ii. The interlinear commentary includes a teaching on the contemplation of the deity according to the creation and perfection stages and an exegesis of phenomenal existence as the seal of Samantabhadra.

The former (comments on Ch. 5, 13):

One's own mind-as-such appears as syllables of inner radiance. From (las) this natural appearance of skillful means (thabs), there emerges the skillful means (thabs-byung) through which syllables come forth from the points of the rays of light. Indeed, through countless emanations the skillful means (thabs) becomes unthinkable (bsam-yas) and immeasurable. This total transformation is not (min) actually differentiated (tha-dad) in an extraneous manner; but one intellectually meditates on oneself as a display of male and female deities, from which the display of mind then becomes differentiated (las tha-dad-pa'i) in the visualisation of the containing celestial palace and buddhafield. During meditation therefore, there is an emanation & absorption of meditation in the countless unthinkable (bsam-yas) mandalas (dkvil-'khor) arrayed by the mind among buddhas and sentient beings. These form the basis of inner (nang) emanation & absorption where oneself appears as the deity and the syllables,

and (dang) the outer (nang-gi phvi-rol-gyi) emanation & absorption of the celestial palace and buddhafield created by the mind. However, this is a display (rol) in which self-manifesting pristine cognition (ye-she) is itself arrayed. This nature of buddhahood is fearsome ('ligs) in all respects, inasmuch as it is mind-as-such pure from the beginning, and secured by the supreme seal of Samantabhadra (kun-bzang phvag-rzva'i mchog), the true abiding nature, who is primordially without (med) deeds and conflicting emotions. Since the creation stage is indeed spontaneously present in the perfection stage, without independent existence, one should become meditatively equipoised in this disposition and abide in the truth without conceptual elaboration.

15

The latter, the exegesis on how phenomenal existence is secured by the seal of Samantabhadra (comments on the same verses as follows:

From the skillful means (thabs-las) of inner radiance or mind-as-such which appears as the syllables, there emerges the skillful means (thabs-byung) through which one's own real nature appears as the object and the (subjective) mind. Indeed, the unthinkable skillful means (thabs bsam-yas) arises, through which phenomenal existence diversely appears. These means however are not differentiated (tha-dad-min) objectively. This appearance which becomes diversely differentiated (las tha-dad-pa'i) arises in unthinkable mandalas (dkvil-'khor bsam-yas), namely, those of inner (nang) mind and (dang) of outer (nang-gi phvi-rol-gyi) phenomena of diverse flesh-coloured appearance. This is a

display of pristine cognition (ye-shes rol), which is said to have been sealed by the supreme seal (phyag-rgya'i mchog) of primordial buddhahood, the fearless Samantabhadra ('jigs-med kun-bzang).

Furthermore, from the wheel of syllables which is skillful means, skillful means is emanated and absorbed, so that there is an unthinkable emanational skillful means associated with these syllables. But these are not differentiated from the mind. It is the intellect which fabricates phenomena, differentiating the source and object of their emanation. These (means) are the unthinkable mandalas wherein all things of one's inner mind and the outer phenomena which appear to the mind are controlled by the emanation & absorption of syllables. Meditating on this display of pristine cognition, one connects with the meditation of the syllables called the supreme seal of fearless Samantabhadra. ¹⁶

iii. Synopsis of This Unique Meditative Equipoise (222.5-224.1):

Thirdly (see p. 603), there is the synopsis (of this unique meditative equipoise, which comments on Ch. 5, 14):

The one who would realise this garland of syllables has a mind (sems) which resembles that of an elephant (gang-gis glang-chen... 'dra-ba'i sems) enebriated (myog) by wine. He moves and suffers in samsāra, enebriated by the wine of reliance on unworthy egotistical views and symbolism. When (nas) this yogin's intellect which apprehends substances and signs has been tamed (btul) by means of meditative equipoise (mnvam-par bzhas-pas) in

the truth of the abiding nature through tranquility and higher insight combined; and if he has then meditated on the extraordinary creation and perfection stages associated with non-dual pristine cognition, and has become very stable (rab-brtan-na) and experienced in its branches, namely, the reality of the mantras (ngags) and (dang) the nature of their seals (phyag-rgya), that one will obtain the amazing great accomplishment (dnagos-grub ya-mtshan chen-por 'gyur), the nature of Samantabhadra.

The five branches of mantra are the realities of self, deity, secret mantra, recitation, and emanation & absorption. Tranquility is the quiescence of mental elaboration, and higher insight is the discriminative awareness which realises that objects are radiant and without independent existence. In this context according to the creation stage, tranquility should be known as the mind not proceeding elsewhere and higher insight as the establishing of its nature without conceptual elaboration.

It is said in the Ornament of the Sūtras of the Greater Vehicle (T. 4020):

Despite analysis, there is no digression.

And:

With respect to any one object of reference,

The mind is established in contemplation.

Therefore, in this context, the contemplation of the syllables is the skillful means which gives rise to tranquility, and from its disposition the uncreated non-conceptual discriminative awareness

and contemplation are both dispositionally accomplished. Hence its profundity. The Lamp (for the Eye) of Contemplation (bsam-stan [mig]-gi sgron-me) says:

Whoever relies on an object of reference
Thoroughly generates the non-referential.
Whoever relies on the non-referential
Attains the realisation called nothing-at-all.
One who experiences that called nothing-at-all
Subsequently abandons that as well.

Conclusion of the Chapter (224.1-224.4)

The third part (see p. 603) is the conclusion of the chapter (which comments on Ch. 5, 15):

So saying (zhes brjod-pas) that the nature of all things abides in the cloud-mass of syllables, the tathāgata (de-bzhin gshegs-pa) Samantabhadra himself (nyid) was delighted by that vision (gzigs-mos mnves-par gyur-to) in which the excellent accomplishments emerged spontaneously from the wheel of syllables. This completes (-'o) and establishes the exegesis of the fifth chapter (le'u ste lnga-pa) from (las) the Secret Nucleus (gsang-ba'i snying-po) or wheel of the cloud-mass of syllables, Definitive With Respect To The Real (de-kho-na-nyid nges-pa), where excellent accomplishments emerge, entitled (gyi) a teaching of the categories of the Contemplation that Attains the Magical Net (sgyu-'phrul dra-ba bsgrub-pa'i ting-nge-'dzin) of the syllables.

The second section (of the general teaching on the nature of the three mandalas of buddha-body, speech and mind, see p. 543) is the revelation of the mandala of contemplation from the (cloud-mass of syllables). It comprises a general teaching on the mandala of the expanse or contemplation (Ch. 6) and a detailed exegesis of its branches, namely, the mandalas of the mantras and seals (Chs. 7-8).

Chapter Six

Emanation of the Mandala

Root-text:

Then all (deities) identified with this nature of all the tathāgatas, neither single nor multiple, throughout the entire ten directions of the six world-systems, willed the mandala of their own greatness to emerge, and then uttered these meaningful expressions. [1]

Pristine cognition is considered

In terms of the four directions and centre.

The unthinkable, spontaneous mandala is Great Perfection,

And the yogin who realises this experiences

The origin of all in that great mandala. [2]

On a four-spoked circle with its rim,

With an interior courtyard adorned by four corners,

And (forming) an entire quadrangle (is the palace)

With its embrasured gates. [3]

There is a diverse display, like a mass of clouds,
And it is adorned with forty-two mandalas. [4]
The great thrones of the lion, the elephant,
The horse, the eagle and the bird,
With (their cushions of) sun, moon, lotus, and gems. [5]

On these seats, in the posture of the perfect (buddhas)
And the posture of the spiritual warriors, [6]
There are the kings and queens of the circle,
Then, starting from the right, there are respectively
The one of sight, the one of hearing,
The one of scent, and the one of savour,
Along with the assembled host of their queens.
And in the corners between these are
The one of the eyes, the one of the ears,
The one of the nose, and the one of the tongue,
Along with the assembled host of their queens.
In the courtyard are revealed the six sages
And to the front and rear the pair who are
The active subject and the passive object.
At the four embrasured gates abide the subjugators
Along with the assembled host of their queens. [7]

With vajra, wheel, gemstone,
Lotus, sword, and blazing bell,
Symbols such as the night lotus, the orange tree, and so on,
And delightful implements, beautifully held. [8]

Their (body-colours) are blue, white, yellow,
Scarlet, green, and various combinations of these. [9]
And they are supple, slender, handsome, upright, youthful,
Radiant, lustrous, resplendent, and charismatic. [10]

This great assembly which emanates light-rays
Is encircled by a blazing ring.
Pervasive without extremes or centre,
It is an unthinkable, spontaneously present mandala. [11]

The supreme great seal of buddha-body
Without straying from the real expanse,
Emerges as the buddha-body of form
Which confers genuine liberation,
And in order to train living beings without exception,
It diversely reveals the appropriate buddha-bodies. [12]

This teacher is a magical display or optical illusion,
A mode which essentially does not stray from the expanse.
But when diversified without straying,
He manifests in dissimilar, diverse (buddha-bodies),
Corresponding to the different (classes of beings).
Although he is uncontrived by the real,
He appears distinctly through the residue of deeds,
As, for example, (images) on a mirror,
And the moon (reflected) in water. [13]

At this time, he is revealed
To all six classes of living beings
In forms which bring them to renounce negativity: [14]

To pious attendants in the form of an arhat, [15]
And to self-centred buddhas in the solitary way of a rhino. [16]

Moreover, according to the sequence of the supreme vehicle,
In the supreme unsurpassed abode of Akanistha,
The buddha-body (is present) as Vairocana,
Who, to retinues of bodhisattvas, does not divulge
The supreme buddha-speech in that previous way,
But discloses through his buddha-body
The doctrines that are encountered. [17]

Just as (when) exposed on a mirror
All actual sallowness (of complexion) can be removed,
When the retinue beholds the buddha-body in this way,
The inestimable depth of their obscurations to enlightenment
Appears on the buddha-body, as on a mirror.
Then the ten levels are sequentially purified,
And unsurpassed enlightenment is genuinely obtained. [18]

The buddha-body of reality is inestimable and inexpressible.
The buddha-body of perfect rapture is an inexhaustible
wish-fulfilling gemstone.

There are inconceivable billions of emanational bodies. [19]

Perfect in all the major and minor marks,
The mandala present throughout the perceptual range
Perfectly displays the two great provisions as well. [20]

As the supreme level of skillful means and discriminative awareness

It is inconceivably supreme in such ways. [21]

The buddha-body of the svâstika, without birth or death,

The one that abides in the field of all conflicting emotions,

The one that becomes an inexhaustible treasure,

The awareness-holding buddha-body of indestructible reality,

The buddha-body of sameness indivisible in all respects,

And the buddha-body of pristine cognition which knows all things--

At this time all five buddha-bodies are indeed perfect. [22]

So saying, the inexpressible mandala in all the infinite limitless ten directions of the six world-systems became radiant in as many fields as there are atoms. [23]

Then this secret description of these very mandalas wherein the tathâgatas and the assembled host of their queens are without duality emerged from the indestructible reality of buddha-body, speech, mind, attributes and activities. [24]

Aho!

Without reference in terms of the object of reference

And the subject of reference, inestimable and inconceivable,

The mandalas of pristine cognition or intrinsic awareness

Are diverse and inexpressible.

Without the pervasive subject-object dichotomy

Throughout sameness and variety,

The expanse is pervaded.

The mandalas, primordially and universally radiant,

Are emanated but not conceptually elaborated.

Ho!

Such were the secret words of indestructible reality which emerged. [25] This completes the sixth chapter from the Secret Nucleus Definitive With Respect To The Real, entitled Emanation of the Mandala. [26]

Commentary (224.4-261.1):

The commenntary (on Ch. 6-- the mandala of contemplation which emerges from the cloud-mass of syllables) includes an overview and an interlinear commentary.

Overview (224.5-229.2)

The overview comprises a general explanation of the verbal definition of the term "mandala" and a detailed teaching on its classifications. As to the former: The Tibetan dkvil-'khor, derived from the Sanskrit term "mandala" means that the central deity (gtso-bo) is encircled by a retinue ('khor).

The latter refers to the three mandalas of the ground, path and result:

1. The mandala of the ground indicates that the containing world and its sentient contents attain buddhahood primordially -- respectively in the nature of the celestial palace and of the deities. These (fundamentally) abide as the mandala. Outer phenomena which appear as the elements primordially abide as the mandala of the female consorts, inner phenomena which appear as the components abide as the mandala of the male consorts, and all accumulated ideas and sensory activity fields abide as the mandala of bodhisattvas or spiritual warriors of enlightenment.

It is said in this Secret Nucleus (Ch. 2, 2):

The aspects of the component of indestructible reality

Are known as the five perfect buddhas.

All the manifold activity fields and sensory bases

Are the nature of the mandala of bodhisattvas.

Earth and water are Buddhalocanā and Māmaki.

Fire and air are Pāṇḍaravāsini and Samayatārā.

Space is Dhātviśvari.

The three realms of existence are primordial buddha(fields).

All things that there are, without exception,

Are not extraneous to the buddhas themselves.

Phenomena extraneous to the buddhas themselves

Have not been found by the buddhas themselves.

And in the Root Tantra of Cakrasamvara (T. 368):

These living beings abide in a naturally present mandala.

Furthermore, appearances primordially abide as the mandala of buddha-body, sounds as the mandala of buddha-speech, and all recollections and awareness as the mandala of buddha-mind. It says in the All-Accomplishing King (T. 828):

O! Concerning the nucleus or mandala of buddha-body,

Arrayed by the All-Accomplishing King, teacher of teachers:

All that appears and abides in accordance with it

Is arrayed in the disposition of reality's uncreated expanse.

Concerning the nucleus or mandala array of his buddha-speech:

All that resounds and abides in accordance with it

Are words arrayed as buddha-speech in the uncreated expanse.

Concerning the nucleus or mandala-array of his awareness:

All the entire recollections, awareness and thoughts

Which are in accordance with it

Are aware of the uncreated All-Accomplishing One himself.

This mandala is itself revealed to be the basis of everything because it is primordially and spontaneously present. The same text says:

O! The centre is the nucleus of unerring truth.

The periphery is endowed with the supreme bliss of samsâra and nirvâna.

This is the basis of all essential mandalas.

All mandalas without exception are realised to be gathered therein.

ii. The second is the mandala of the path which, when classified, has three aspects: There is the mandala of illustrative images; the mandala of genuine buddha-body, speech and mind; and a teaching on the classification of the threefold mandala.

As to the first of these, it is said in the Cakrasamvara (T. 368):

The essence of the two artificial types (of mandala)

Is that their description accords with the goal.

In this context also, (the illustrative mandalas) are entered by those of both dull and mediocre intelligence, and are established through the radiance of contemplation. Four sorts (of illustrative mandala) are indicated, two of which are essential and two subsidiary. These are respectively the mandala drawn on cotton, the mandala of coloured powders, and the incidental mandalas of focal points and flower-clusters. The same text also says:

There is the ritual for drawing (the mandala),

And the sequence in which colours are applied on its lines.

As for the three mandalas of (genuine) buddha-body, speech and mind: The first, the mandala of buddha-body, is that in which the physical body becomes radiant as the deity, and is visually created (simply) as a single heruka (dpa'-bo gcig-pa) and so forth, as far as (elaborate creation of) the deities and celestial palaces of the entire mandala. This text also says (Ch. 9, 33-34):

...manifestly perfect

Throughout the ten directions and four times.

The buddhafield, pure and unthinkable,

In which there is there is the celestial palace

Free from spatial dimensions,

With its ornamental (form) on the wheel,

And the assembly of its display,

Comprises all unthinkable mandalas, without exception.

The mandala of buddha-speech refers to the mantra-syllables of the basic deity, surrounded by the mantras of the retinue, which are pronounced and visualised. As this text says (Ch. 7, 23):

Those (meanings) that are distinctly clarified are themselves

The supreme indestructible buddha-speech.

The mandala of buddha-mind refers to the five poisons which are made into the path as the five pristine cognitions, so that samsâra is inherently pure without being renounced. As (the Secret Nucleus, Ch. 6, 2) says:

Pristine cognition is considered

In terms of the four directions and centre.

The unthinkable spontaneous mandala is Great Perfection,

And the yogin who realises this experiences

The origin of all in that great mandala.

..

As for the teaching on the classification of the threefold mandala, it comprises: the mandala of the supporting celestial palace; the mandala of the supported deities; and the mandala of great non-dual pristine cognition.

The first of these is the excellent location, the mandala in which the axis of the main (palace) is surrounded by a circumference of spatial array. The second is the excellent teacher, the mandala of deities in which the central deity is surrounded by the assembled host of the retinue. The third is the mandala of pristine cognition where naturally present pristine cognition is surrounded by the consciousness of recollection and awareness. As is said in this same text:

5

In the pristine cognition of the Great Identity

Are beheld the five pristine cognitions of the retinue.

And in the All-Accomplishing King (T. 828):

O! I, the All-Accomplishing King, teacher of teachers,

All-pervasively enveloped, without coming or going,

By the uncreated mandala of bodhisattvas,

Penetrate through realisation the uncreated truth.

Now, the naturally present pristine cognition is the nature of Samantabhadra, the pristine cognition which abides in oneself without all the conceptual elaborations of the unstable subject-object dichotomy. The accumulated thoughts such as the five poisons which issue from its disposition are revealed to be the forty-two buddhas including the five tathâgatas, and, as such, are pristine cognition in its state of energy. Thus awareness both in its abiding and emanational states is revealed as the primordial mandala. The yogin who knows this is never separated from the origin of all things, the disposition of the great mandala.

As for the mandala of the result: When the path has been concluded and the rank of Samantabhadra then obtained, this state is described as the buddha-body and pristine cognition without conjunction or disjunction, in which the ground is directly liberated. This (Secret Nucleus, Ch. 6, 22) says:

And the buddha-body of pristine cognition which knows all things-
6
At this time, all five buddha-bodies are indeed perfect.

The result therefore refers to the spontaneous presence of the buddha-body of reality, the buddha-body of perfect rapture, the mandalas of the three buddha-bodies and five pristine cognitions, the five mandalas of buddha-body, speech, mind, attributes, and activities, and so forth.

Interlinear Commentary (229.2-261.1)

The interlinear commentary includes a description of the causal basis for the emanation of the mandala and an exegesis of the actual mandala which is emanated thereby.

The former (229.3-229.5, comments on Ch. 6, 1):

Once the mandala of the cloud-mass of syllables had been arrayed, then (de-nas) all (thams-cad-kvis) deities who appear in the mandala of Samantabhadra-- he who is identified (bdag-nvid) with the nature of all the (thams-cad-kvi rang-bzhin) self-manifesting tathâgatas, neither single nor multiple (gcig-dang du-ma med-pa'i)-- gazing throughout the entire ten directions of the six world-systems ('lig-rten drug-gi phyogs-bcu thams-cad-la) inhabited by those to be trained, willed the mandala of (dkvil-'khor...bzhed) the tathâgatas' own greatness (nvid-kvi che-pa'i) to emerge and then (dbyung...nas) uttered (brjod-do) these meaningful expressions (ched-du brjod-pa 'di).

The latter (229.5-261.1) contains three parts: a general teaching on the natural and spontaneous mandala of the ground; a detailed exegesis of the contemplative or meditative mandala of the path; and a synopsis of the mandala of the resultant great pristine cognition.

General Teaching on the Natural and Spontaneous Mandala of the Ground (229.6-230.4):

The first (comments on Ch. 6, 2):

Pristine cognition (ye-shes) is considered (brtags-te) in terms of the four directions (phyogs-bzhi) because the (four) outer elements of earth, water, fire and air, the (four) inner components of form, feeling, perception, and habitual tendencies, and the four secret poisons of delusion, pride, desire, and envy are spontaneously present as the pristine cognition of reality's expanse, the pristine cognition of sameness, the pristine cognition of discernment, and the pristine cognition of accomplishment. ⁷ And it is considered in terms of the centre (dbus) because hatred, space, and consciousness, these three, abide as the mirror-like pristine cognition. The mandala (dkvil-'khor) wherein the five elements essentially abide as the five female consorts, the five components as the five male consorts, and the five poisons as the five pristine cognitions is unthinkable (bsam-yas). It is the natural Great Perfection (rdzogs-chen) inasmuch as all things of phenomenal existence, samsâra and nirvâna, are spontaneously present (lhun-grub-ni) from the beginning. The yogin who realises this (rtogs-pa'i rnal'byor-pas) should experience (spyod) all (kun) things of phenomenal existence, samsâra and nirvâna, in that great mandala (dkvil-'khor chen-por) of pristine cognition, natural in origin (byung), without renunciation, acceptance, refutation or proof. Actually, whatever appears and whatever arises, all things are revealed as the display of this mandala, without renunciation or acceptance.

Detailed Exegesis of the Contemplative or Meditative Mandala of the Path (230.4-257.2):

The second comprises both the actual mandala of contemplation and an exegesis of the resultant mandala accomplished thereby. The former (230.4-243.2) includes the mandala of the supporting celestial palace and the mandala of the supported deities; and the first of these (230.4-232.6) too has three aspects, namely, the celestial palace, its ornaments and thrones.

1. The first (concerning the celestial palace comments on Ch. 6, 3):

Now, there is a four-spoked circle ('khor-lo rtsibs-bzhi) symbolising that ignorance has been cut through by the four pristine cognitions; along with (bcag) its rim (mu-khyud) which is white and circular, symbolising that ignorance itself is the pristine cognition free from conceptual elaborations. Outside that, there is an interior courtyard (bar-khyams-dang) surrounding it on all sides which symbolises that pristine cognition is not limited or biased; adorned by four corners (gru-bzhis brgyan) to symbolise the four immeasurables. Around that, is the celestial palace forming an entire quadrangle (kun-tu gru-bzhi), indicating the extensive enlightened attributes of greatness. It is endowed with embasured gates (sgo-khyud-can) which symbolise the four kinds of liberation, and tiered pediments with eight units which represent the eight kinds of liberation exemplified in the former (four). In this context, the mandala of the peaceful deities is clearly constructed with

double gateways, as is disclosed in the words:

With an interior courtyard adorned by four corners,

(Forming) an entire quadrangle with embrasured gates.

The shapes of both the outer and inner walls are thus indicated.

Strictly speaking, this (double wall) is visible because the buddha-body of perfect rapture appears within the gates while the emanational body appears in the outer courtyard. It is indeed necessary for these mandalas to be distinct. Otherwise the mandalas of the buddha-body of perfect rapture which manifests in and of itself and that of the emanational body which appears to others would be confused, and the class of the mandala could not be determined. Such flaws would occur.

ii. The second (concerning the ornaments, comments on Ch. 6, 4):
In order to symbolise the thirty-seven aspects of enlightenment, there is a diverse display (rol-mo sna-tshogs) of parasols, victory banners, and so forth which densely congregates like a mass of clouds (sprin-phung-bzhin). And it is adorned with the forty-two mandalas (dkvil-'khor bzhi-bcu gnvis-kvis drgyan) or different seats which beautify it, equal in number to the locations of the deities. There is no occasion for the deities themselves to be included among the ornaments of the celestial palace.

iii. The third (concerning the thrones, comments on Ch. 6, 5):
In order to symbolise the four fearlessnesses and so forth, these seats comprise the great thrones (khri-chen) which are supported respectively by (representations) of the lion, the elephant, the

horse, the eagle and the bird (seng-ge glang-chen rta-dang khvung
10
nam-mkha' lding-gi), along with (la) cushions (representing)
the sun (nyi) of discriminative awareness, the moon (zla) of
skillful means, and the lotus (padma) untainted by flaws. These
too are supported by myriads of gems (rin-po-che) because all
that is desired emerges therefrom.

Now it is explained that (the thrones of) the five enlightened
families have all five layers (of cushions), those of the male &
female consorts Samantabhadra who are their glow have four
layers, those of the spiritual warriors have three layers, while
the six sages each have a lotus seat, and the gatekeepers each
have a single sun-cushion. It is said in the Sequence of Light
(P. 4731):

In the centre of the main palace
Are the eight lions of fearlessness.
In the centre of the eastern (palace)
Is the elephant of great power.
In the southern (palace)
Are the eight horses of miraculous ability.
In the western palace is the peacock,
And in the northern (palace)
Are the eight civamcivaka of enlightened activity.
The basic thrones (of the conquerors) are embellished
With five layers including sun and moon-cushions.
Those of the spiritual warriors
Have three layers of sun, moon and lotus-cushions,
While the wrathful (gatekeepers) have a sun-cushion.

And the sages a single lotus-seat.
The male & female consorts Samantabhadra,
Who are the active subject and the passive object,
Have sun, moon, and lotus-cushions with extensive gems--
As such they are seated in meditative equipoise.

There is no contradiction (between these two descriptions) because the peacock and the eagle are said to have the same function, symbolising that the poisons have been pacified.¹¹

As for the mandala of the supported deities (232.6-243.2), it has six aspects:

1. The first, which concerns their postures (comments on Ch. 6, 6):

On these seats (gdan-la) (the deities) are seated in the posture of indestructible reality, which is that of the twelve perfect (rdzogs) buddhas or male & female consorts, namely, the male & female consorts Samantabhadra and the tathāgatas who, in the manner of kings, are spontaneously accomplished in the two kinds of benefit.¹² They are also seated in the posture of the spiritual warriors (dang sems-dpa'i tshul), i.e. with the right leg extended and the left leg contracted, which is that assumed by the male & female consorts who are spiritual warriors, arrayed in the retinue in the manner of ministers.¹³ Along with these, there is the outward gaze and the posture of vigorous gait assumed by the gatekeepers who, in the manner of field-m Marshals, eradicate obstructing and deviating forces;¹⁴ and the standing posture¹⁵ adopted by the sages who, in the manner of petty kings, appear among their respective classes of living beings in the

form of a central deity.

ii. The second, concerning which deities are present in which locations, (comments on Ch. 6, 7):

At the centre and on the four spokes of the main circle ('khor-lo) there are the kings (rgyal-po) or five male consorts beginning with Vairocana, and (dang) the queens (rgyal-mo) or five female consorts. Then, starting from the right (gyas-nas) or the south-eastern direction of the central deity (Vairocana) and at the extremities of the four spokes, there are respectively Ksitigarbha, the one of sight (mtshong); Vajrapāni, the one of hearing (thos); Akāśagarbha, the one of scent (snom-pa); and (dang) Avalokiteśvara, the one of savour (myong-dang); along with the assembled host (tshogs-su bcas) of their queens (btsun-mo'i), namely, Lāsyā, Mālyā, Gitā, and Nartī.

Similarly, in the (la-ni) four corners between these (gru-chad), starting from the south-east, there are (gnas) respectively Maitreya, the one of the eyes (mtshong-byed-dang); Nivāraṇa-viskambhin, the one of the ears (thos-byed); Samantabhadra, the one of the nose (gnom-byed); and Mañjuśrī, the one of the tongue (myong-byed-rnams), along with (dang-bcas-par) the assembled host (tshogs) of their queens (btsun-mo'i), namely, Dhūpā, Puspā, Alokā, and Gandhā, in a posture of embrace.

In the (la-ni) outer courtyard (bar-khyams) are the six sages (thub-drug) of the gods and so forth, whose respective abodes accord with the following description from the Sequence of Light (T. 4731):

In the south-east are the gods
In the south are the human beings.
In the south-west and north-west
Are the tormented spirits and animals respectively,
And in the north and north-east
Are the antigods and the denizens of hell respectively.

And (dang) to the front and rear (mdun-dang rgyab-tu) of the central deity there are revealed (gnas-par btsan) in the eastern and western directions of the inner courtyard the pair (dag-ni) who are the active male subject (bved-pa) and the passive female object (-dang bya-ba)-- respectively Samantabhadra who activates the glow that arises, and Samantabhadri who is the basis for the glow that arises. This is because all mandalas are shown to arise from these two.

Now, there are some who hold that these two are present to the rear and front of the central deity, some who hold that they lie to the east and west of the courtyard, and some who hold that they are within the heart-centre of the central deity. However these statements do not arrive at the definitive essence, which is as follows: In this context, the male & female consorts Samantabhadra, who are the basis for the glow that arises, are explained to be in the courtyard. The male & female consorts

Samantabhadra who are associated with the central deity of the mandala are not differentiated (in this context) because they are themselves the five enlightened families. Also, when they are explained to be among the forty-two (deities), this refers to the description of the peaceful deities of the buddha-body of perfect rapture in their apparitional mode, and not to the teaching concerning the central deities who are the active subject and passive object. Then, when the male & female consorts Samantabhadra are visualised in the heart-centre of the central deity during contemplative meditation, this refers to the apparitional perfection stage. At that time when the mind apprehends the inner radiance of the nucleus, inner radiance is apprehended by meditation on the buddha-body of reality, the male-female Samantabhadra, a full finger-span in size.

17

As has previously been indicated, the male & female Samantabhadra are present in the field of the buddha-body of reality because they are free from conceptual elaboration. Thence, in the spontaneous Bounteous Array which is the pristine cognition of sameness throughout the four times, the male & female consorts of the buddha-body of perfect rapture are present, forming the five enlightened families. And thence, in the world-systems of those to be trained, the natural expressions of Vajrapāni, Vajrasattva, the six sages and so forth are present. For example, in this buddhafield the transcendent lord known as Śākyamuni was seen as the emanational body by pious attendants, self-centred buddhas, ordinary individuals, and those (bodhisattvas) who were on the paths of provision and connection, but he was seen as the body of

perfect rapture by sublime bodhisattvas and so forth.

At the four embrasured gates (sgo-khyud bzhi-la), starting from the east, the subjugators ('joms-pa-ni) of the four demons, namely, the four wrathful deities Yamântaka, Mahâbala, Hayagrîva, and Amrtakundalin, along with the assembled host (tshogs-dang ldan-par) of their queens (htsun-mo'i), namely, Ankuṣâ, Pâṣâ, Sphotâ, and Ganthâ, abide (gnag) in a display of the nine dramatic airs. These nine dramatic airs are described as follows
19
in the Garland of Narration (klog-gi phreng-ba):

Erotic, heroic, and ugly,

Wild, fierce, and terrifying,

Compassionate, awesome, and peaceful--

These nine dramatic airs are possessed.

At this juncture, there are some agitated by the mirage of wrong view who have degenerated from genuine experience, and who are stranded in the desert sands of error, hard to traverse, saying that the central deity and the retinue are erroneous because Samantabhadra the teacher of this tantra has been ejected to the periphery of the mandala, while Aksobhya has been installed at the centre. In response to this there are some who say that (Samantabhadra) brings out the greatness of the retinue, just as father influences his child; and there are some who say that the (Samantabhadri), the passive object, is arrayed at the centre and (Samantabhadra), the active subject, then abides at the periphery, in the manner of a fortune-teller casting lots. And, there are yet others who say that Aksobhya is depicted in the

centre because in the situation of the ground the central deity is mirror-like, in the situation of the path he becomes the ground-of-all or basis of buddha-body and pristine cognition, and in the situation of the result the mirror-like pristine cognition is revealed as the central deity. However the excellent points made in all these statements have not been properly understood. ²⁰

It is not even certain that (a deity) will emerge at the centre because he is the expositor (of a particular tantra). Otherwise, Śākyamuni would implicitly emerge at the centre (of the mandala) in the Magical Net of Mañjuśrī (T. 360) and in the Purification of All Evil Destinies (T. 483), whereas it is Vairocana and Jñānasattva who do respectively emerge. The central deities and retinues of these (tantras) would in that case be defective. In all mandala of the Kriyātantras too, the sage (Śākyamuni) and Vajrapāṇi would implicitly emerge at the centre because they are the expositors, for which reason those (Kriyātantras) with Vairocana or Aksobhya and their retinues as the central deities would be in error. Such implications could not be avoided.

Rather, it is the case that the male-female Samantabhadra arrayed in the courtyard is revealed as the basis for the glow that arises, but is never depicted as the central deity. Nor is Aksobhya installed at the centre, because it is Vairocana, the deity of buddha-mind who is so depicted. Indeed, this very defect (of an erroneous central deity) does not exist because he himself is the teacher, the male-female Samantabhadra. You (sophists) are extremely deluded with regard to the resultant vehicle of

indestructible reality. Since your intellects do not focus even on the merest description of (Samantabhadra) as the central deity and as the basis for (the glow) that arises, how can you contradict the meaning of these secret mantras? You should instead enter paths which have been revealed by cowherds!

21

iii. The third aspect (of the mandala of the supported deity) concerns the symbolic hand-implements which they hold. (It comments on Ch. 6, 8):

Vairocana, the buddha-mind, to symbolise that emptiness and compassion are without duality, holds the vajra (rdz-rie) in his first or basic right hand. Aksobhya similarly holds the **wheel** ('khor-lo) to symbolise that he has cut through the net of conflicting emotions and turns the doctrinal wheel. Ratnasambhava holds the **gemstone** (rin-po-che) to symbolise that he fulfils the hopes of living beings and is spontaneously accomplished in enlightened attributes. Amitābha holds the lotus (padma) to symbolise that he has purified desire in the expanse and that his intention is directed with discernment towards living beings, and Amoghasiddhi holds the **sword** (ral-gri) to symbolise that he has cut through the conflicting emotions of living beings by means of the four kinds of enlightened activity. All of these (conquerors) hold the **bell** (dril-bu) in their basic or first left hand. In such a way that it embraces the female consort and presses her towards the heart. Their other (two pairs of hands) hold the hand-implements which have previously been indicated.

23

The female consorts correspond to the male consorts in (the implements which they hold in) the right hand, **and** in the left hand also they hold the bell (dril-bu), **blazing** ('bar) forth the light of pristine cognition's gems, and embracing their respective male consorts. There are some who maintain that there are no symbolic implements in the right hand of the female consort, but that is not discerned in the great means for attainment (mahāsādhana).²⁴

The symbolic hand-implements of the central deity (Vairocana) are also described as follows in the Mirror of Indestructible Reality (T. 833):

The vajra, the wheel and the blazing sword.

The bell, the lotus and the gemstone--

That is the sequence of Vajradhara's (implements).

(The hands) in which the others rest

Are known in relation to the vajra.

Which (is held) at the heart in the first (right hand)

While the (first) left hand embraces (the consort).

Accordingly, (Vairocana's) basic pair of hands embrace the female consort with the vajra and bell, his middle pair of hands hold the wheel and the lotus, while his outer pair hold the sword and the gemstone. The implements of the four other (conquerors) such as Aksobhya should be similarly known.²⁵

Now, in general those symbolic hand-implements which have been sequentially described are of four types: those which are held with the right hand extended, those which are held with the left

hand extended, those which are held with both hands equally extended, and those which are held with the surrounding hands extended.²⁶ This description generally accords with the (afore-mentioned) sequence of (implements, beginning with) the basic pair of hands.

Now, the male consorts have three faces and six hands, while their female consorts have one face and two hands. Some say that during ritual service (the male consort) has one face and two hands, but that is an inappropriate observation, clearly not taught in this tantra (of the Secret Nucleus).²⁷

Concerning the symbolic hand-implements of the spiritual warriors, our text (Ch. 6, 8) speaks of:

Symbols (mtshan) such as the night-lotus, the orange tree, and so on (la-sogs-pa).

Thus, Mañjuśrī holds **the night-lotus (utpala)** because he has renounced conflicting emotions. Maitreya holds **the orange tree (klu-shing)** because he has dispelled the fever of conflicting emotions. Ksitigarbha holds a sprouting gemstone because he has brought forth the sprout of pristine cognition. Vajrapāni holds the vajra because he has subjugated suffering. Akāśagarbha holds the sword because he has cut off the continuity of conflicting emotions. Avalokiteśvara holds the lotus because he is untainted by defective flaws. Nivāranaviskambhin holds the wheel of gemstone because he teaches the doctrine to sentient beings, and Samantabhadra holds the corn-ear of gemstones because he fulfils the hopes of sentient beings.

And, as for their female consorts, there are delightful (mnves-
pa'i) implements (yo-byad) beautifully (mdzes-tshul) held ('dzin)
 by them: Vajralâsyâ rests her clenched indestructible fists on
 her hips or holds a mirror, because she reveals all forms to be
 the essence of the real. Mâlyâ holds a garland of gems because
 she indicates that skillful means and discriminative awareness
 are not separated. Gîtâ holds a lute because she plays aloud the
 melody of the doctrine. Nartî holds a vajra and rings a bell in
 her (left) hand which moves up and down because she delights
 those to be trained. Dhûpâ holds a censer because her scent of
 moral discipline satisfies (living beings), Puspâ holds a basket
 of flowers because she indicates the branches of enlightenment.
 Alokâ holds a butter-lamp because she dispels the darkness of
 ignorance; and Gandhâ holds a doctrinal conch of scented water
 because she washes the stains of propensities.

As for the six sages: Satakratu holds a lute because he teaches
 the four affirmations of doctrine ²⁸ to the gods. Vemacitra bears
 armour because he disciplines the antigods through fighting and
 disputation. Sâkyamuni holds a begging bowl and a staff because
 he teaches the ten virtues to human beings. Sthirasimha holds a
 book because he liberates the knot of foolishness and dumbness in
 animals. Jvâlamukha holds a chest of gems because he dispels the
 hunger and thirst of tormented spirits. And the ox-headed Yama
 (a-va glang-mgo) holds fire and water because he discloses the
 misfortunes of the denizens of hell.

The male & female Samantabhadra hold no symbolic hand-implements because they illustrate that the expanse and the buddha-body of reality are free from conceptual elaboration. There are some who claim that they hold the vajra and the lotus, but they have not understood the pure nature of these deities.

As for the four male gatekeepers: Yamântaka holds a skull-topped cudgel because he subjugates the demon who is lord of death. Mahâbala holds a vajra because he subjugates the demon of the components. Hayagrîva holds a skull and snakes because he subjugates the demon of conflicting emotions; and Amrtakundalin holds a crossed-vajra because he subjugates the demon of the divine prince (of egotism). Their four female consorts respectively hold an iron hook, a lasso, an iron chain, and a bell in order to illustrate the four attractive qualities of a bodhi-sattva and the four immeasurables.

iv. The fourth aspect (of the mandala of the supported deities) concerns the body-colours in which they appear. (It comments on Ch. 6, 9):

There are twenty-five (deities) who have body-colours corresponding to those of the enlightened families, and seventeen who have diversified body-colours. As to the former: There are five deities, namely, the male & female consorts Vairocana, the male & female consorts Samantabhadra, and the sage of the antigods, who are blue (nthing-kha) in colour to illustrate the unchanging reality of the enlightened family of buddha-mind. The male &

female consorts Aksobhya, the male & female consorts Ksitigarbha, and the sage of the gods are white (dkar-po) in colour to illustrate that the enlightened family of buddha-body is unmarred by defects. The male & female consorts Ratnasambhava, the male & female consorts Akášagarbha, and the sage of human beings are **yellow** (ser) to illustrate the attributes of greatness belonging to the family of enlightened attributes. The male & female consorts Amitâbha, the male & female consorts Avalokiteśvara, and the sage of the tormented spirits are scarlet (le-brgan) or red in colour to illustrate that the enlightened family of buddha-speech is attracted through spirituality to living beings. The male & female consorts Amoghasiddhi, the male & female consorts Vajrapâni, and the sage of the animals are **green** (liang-khu) in colour because the family of enlightened activity grants instruction through diverse actions.

The latter are (those deities) whose colours are **various** combinations of these (la-sogs sna-tshogs-pa'i) because they train living beings by means of many enlightened activities and attributes: The male & female consorts Maitreya are whitish-yellow. The male & female consorts Nivâranaviskambhin are reddish-yellow. The male & female consorts Samantabhadra are reddish-green. The male & female consorts Mañjuhosa are whitish-green. The male & female consorts Yamântaka are dark brown. The male & female consorts Mahâbala are dark yellow. The male & female consorts Hayagrîva are dark red. The male & female consorts Amrtakundalin are dark green; and the sage of the hells is smoke-coloured.

In this context, there are some who hold that the **sage** of the animals is either dark yellow or red, but they have not analysed the colour of the light within the energy centres (of the body).
30

v. The fifth aspect (of the mandala of the supported deities) concerning their style (comments on Ch. 6, 10):

These deities are **supple** (mnven) in body and physically attractive because they have inherently purified birth. Their bodies are at ease because they have inherently purified sickness, and **slender** (lcug) because they are well-proportioned. Their bodies are **handsome** ('khril) in demeanour, without laxity, and quite **upright** (ldem) or erect because they have inherently purified death. Their bodies are soft ('jal sic!), youthful (gzhon tshul-can), and physically attractive in their disposition because they have inherently purified old age. These five are the essential attributes (of the buddha-body). As for their subsidiary attributes: The buddha-body has a most **radiant** (gsal) hue because it is immaculately adorned with major and minor marks; the buddha-body is bright and has a **lustrous** ('tsher) glow because it has perfected the consummation of the elements; the buddha-body is **resplendent** (lhun-sdug) because it is brilliant and pleasant; and highly **charismatic** (gzi-byin-ldan) because it overwhelms living beings. There are also some who claim that these (two sets of attributes) are respectively the five styles
31
of the male consort, and the four styles of the female consort.

vi. The sixth aspect (of the mandala of the supported deities) concerning their emanation of light-rays (comments on Ch. 6, 11): This great assembly (ishoga chen-po) of light-rays which emanates ³² ('phro-ba'i) countless billion-billions of light-rays ('od-zer) in the ten directions from the six great energy-centres within the bodies of these deities and from all their pores too, is visible without limitation. Now, the six centres are those of the crown, the point between the eyebrows, the throat, the heart, the navel, and the soles of the feet. Therefrom are emanated the light-rays which are of six colours, namely, blue, yellow, red, white, madder, and crystal. Madder is scarlet or light-red, while crystal is bluish-white in colour and translucent. The nature of the buddha-body's inner radiance is such that it emanates these six (colours from) the six respective (centres) into the ten directions, along with a billion-billion concomitant rays of ³³ light.

The male & female gatekeepers are present in an awesome guise in the midst of this throng, which is encircled ('khyil-ba-ste) in the ten directions by a ring (phreng-bas) of fire in the midst of a blazing ('bar-ba'i) expanse, like the conflagration at the end of an aeon. Because it appears in this way, pervasive (khvab-pa-yi) in the expanse of space without extremes or centre (mtha'-dbus med-par), it is a mandala (dkvil-'khor) of contemplation, beyond number and measure, unthinkable (bsam-yas) and spontaneously present (lhun-gyis grub) in nature. Meditating thereon, one becomes extensive in the manner of reality's expanse, and turns to the essence of genuine pristine cognition.

The latter aspect (of the contemplative mandala of the path: 243.2-257.2) is an exegesis of the resultant mandala accomplished thereby. It comprises an overview and an interlinear commentary.

Overview (243.2-248.4):

The overview has three aspects, namely, the structure of the supporting buddha-body, the structure of the supported pristine cognition, and the structure of deeds or enlightened activity.

i. The buddha-body is fivefold, among which the buddha-body of reality is free from all extremes of conceptual elaboration. Concerning it, this text (Ch. 6, 19) says:

The buddha-body of reality is inestimable and inexpressible.

The buddha-body of perfect rapture is a treasure-store in which all enlightened attributes are spontaneously present (Ch.6, 19):³⁴

The buddha-body of perfect rapture is an inexhaustible precious treasure.

The emanational body teaches each in accord with his or her needs (Ch.6. 19):

There are inconceivable billions of emanational bodies.

The body of awakening is the buddhahood in which all things are equally and perfectly united (Ch.6. 22):

The buddha-body of sameness indivisible in all respects.

And the unchanging body of indestructible reality is the nature of buddha-body and pristine cognition, without conjunction or disjunction (Ch.6, 22):

The awareness-holding buddha-body of indestructible reality.

ii. The second (the structure of the supported pristine cognition) is fivefold, including the pristine cognition of reality's expanse. Concerning these (Ch.6, 22) speaks of:

The buddha-body of pristine cognition which knows all things.

iii. The third, the enlightened activities, include both the buddha-body's manifestation and doctrinal teaching on behalf of those to be trained, and its resulting array of maturation and liberation.

As to the former: The teachers who grant their respective instructions to ordinary living beings diversely appear, and teach the doctrine in which virtue is outlined. Then, to pious attendants and self-centred buddhas they appear as an arhat and teach the doctrine which satisfies them. Although self-centred buddhas do not teach the doctrine verbally, they do teach symbolically, as is said in the Ornament of Emergent Realisation (T. 3786, Ch.2, v. 7):

This means that to those respective persons

Who require training,

Whatever they wish to hear,

The respective meanings just appear,

Without even a sound being uttered.

Similarly, there is the instruction granted by the supreme emanational body, as when buddhas such as Śākyamuni perform acts of benefit and teach the doctrines of diverse vehicles.

Then, to bodhisattvas of the tenth level, they appear in Akanistha as the glorious Vairocana who dispels the obscurations of the ten levels. The latter too reveals the doctrine of buddha-body without teaching by means of buddha-speech, as is said in the Sūtra of the Awakening of the Doctrine and its Rapture (chos-dang longs-spyod mngon-par byang-chub-pa'i mdo):

The master of Akanistha, lord of doctrine,
Transcendent lord Vairocana,
Through meditative equipoise
That is unwavering and unspoken...

The buddhas' deeds are inconceivable. For example, in the buddha-field of Gandamādana (spos-kvi yongs-gang brtsegs-pa) when bodhisattvas draw near the great Tree of Perfume, the contemplation of the approach to liberation arises in the mental continuum of these bodhisattvas just through the sensation of that tree's scent. Similarly, it is found in the Pagoda of Precious Gems (T. 45-93):

In certain world-systems the buddhas' deeds are furthered by the eating of food, in some by the wearing of religious robes, in some by the spectacle of the buddha-body, in some by the dreaming of dreams and so forth. This is inconceivable.

Therefore, the buddha-body of perfect rapture manifests and acts on behalf of bodhisattvas of the tenth level. The supreme emanational body does so on behalf of pious attendants, self-centred buddhas, and those on levels experienced through volition (adhimuktibhūmi)³⁷. The ordinary forms and so forth appear and act on behalf of sentient beings of impure deeds.

The latter, i.e. the resultant activities which are an array of maturation and liberation on behalf of those to be trained, have three aspects: those activities arrayed as a support for the path, those arrayed as the path, and those arrayed as the result of the path.

The first are those which guide one from evil destinies, and establish one on the rank of celestial gods and human beings.

The second, activities arrayed as the path, are threefold, namely, those arrayed on the path of pious attendants, on the path of self-centred buddhas, and on the path of the greater vehicle. The greater vehicle also comprises both the causal vehicle of dialectics and the resultant vehicle of secret mantras. In the former case, after the two kinds of mental attitude have been cultivated and the (paths of) provision and connection (have been traversed), the ten levels are refined through the ten perfections on the two paths of insight and meditation. Thus renunciation is depicted as the abandoning of (the path of) insight and the abandoning of (the path of) meditation.³⁸ In the latter case, through maturational empowerment and liberating

meditation according to the creation and perfection stages, one abides on the provisional levels of the three kinds of awareness-
39
holder.

The third, activities arrayed as the result of the path, refers to the enlightened activities or deeds which are arrayed on the six (higher) levels of Universal Light, Lotus Endowed, Great Cyclical Mass of Syllables, Supreme Bliss, Holder of Indestructible Reality, and Undifferentiated Samantabhadra. 40 These are the names applied to aspects of enlightened attributes, including the appearance, emptiness, and pristine cognition of the buddha-level, but they are not traversed in a hierarchical gradation of distinct and different (levels). Universal Light is so called because thereon the emanational body performs acts of benefit through qualitative and quantitative knowledge. Lotus Endowed is so called because the buddha-body of perfect rapture appears. Great Cyclical Mass of Syllables is so called because the cloud-mass of syllables is emanated. Supreme Bliss is so called because one is present in the expanse of supreme bliss. Holder of Indestructible Reality is so called because it is the highest of all conclusive goals; and Undifferentiated Samantabhadra is so called because all these (levels) are indivisible. The expression "beyond the level of Universal Light" is intended simply with reference to the buddha-body of form, over and above the buddha-body of reality, which manifests and performs acts of benefit.

Incidentally, the appendices ('phyong) are explained as follows: It is held that in this sixth chapter (of the Tantra of the Secret Nucleus) there is the appendix of buddha-body in thirteen

pādas beginning with the verse The supreme great seal of buddha-body (Ch. 6, 12). In the seventh chapter there is the appendix of buddha-speech in twenty-one pādas beginning with the verse From the Magical Net, supreme among tantras (Ch. 7, 19). In the eighth chapter there is the appendix of buddha-mind in four pādas beginning with the verse If the supreme provision of the great seal is encountered (Ch. 8, 20). In the eleventh chapter there is the appendix of attainment in twenty-two pādas starting from the verse For genuine accomplishment, the mantrin...onwards (Ch. 11, 24). And in the twentieth chapter there are twenty-four pādas known as the appendix of enlightened activity, beginning from the line The main part of the rite in which the wrathful deities are attained is this which follows (Ch. 20, 16-20).

Then, there are some who hold that the three appendices of buddha-body, speech and mind derive from the sixth, seventh and eighth chapters respectively, that there is an appendix of enlightened attributes in eight pādas derived from the ninth chapter which begins with the verse and manifestly perfect throughout the ten directions and four times (Ch. 9, 33-34), that there is an appendix of enlightened activities in five pādas derived from the thirteenth chapter beginning with the verse In the mandala which is perfect in pristine cognition (Ch. 13, 14), and that there is an appendix of commitments in four pādas derived from the nineteenth chapter which begins with the verse These commitments are most amazing (Ch. 19, 20).

There are also some who hold that, in addition to the five appendices of buddha-body, speech, mind, attributes and activities, there is an appendix of offerings in four pādas derived from the ninth chapter which begins with the verse In the palms of the great seal (Ch. 9, 2-3).

Now, certain persons hold that these appendices are absent in this root tantra (of the Secret Nucleus) but were extracted from other texts in the cycle of the Magical Net and inserted into their respective chapters by rMa Rin-chen-mchog, and that (the versions of the text) were divided by gTsong-rum Rin-chen gZhon-nu into those which have appendices and those which do not.

Again, there are some who hold that the version without the appendices was translated by gNyags Jñānakumāra, and that the version with appended passages had them inserted into the translation by rMa Rin-chen-mchog. There are even some who say that rMa himself concealed them out of envy at La-gsum rGyal-ba Byang-chub. But the truth of the matter is that the appendices are lacking in both the earliest translation made by Buddhaghosha and Vairocana, and in the intermediate translation which was made by Vimalamitra, gNyags Jñānakumāra, and rMa Rin-chen-mchog. Therefore it is clear that the Sanskrit manuscripts themselves had a number of redactions. Should anyone wish to know that this is the case, the Transcendental Perfection of Discriminative Awareness in Eight Thousand Lines (T. 8) itself had a number of manuscripts, extant in the three redactions of the parivrājika gZos-sbyangs, 'Preng-ba-can, and sDe-can; and in certain texts

such as the Sitátápatrá (T. 592) a number of redactions is similarly found. Therefore it is not certain that these (variant passages) were inserted by the Tibetans. One should know that the discrepancies in the translations of this tantra were to be found in the Sanskrit manuscripts. Numerous redactions of Sanskrit manuscripts occur because there is a distinction between those (versions) in which the meaning is clearly expressed and those in which it is not.

Interlinear Commentary (248.4-257.2):

The interlinear commentary (on the resultant mandala-- see p. 657) has four parts: The arising of the resultant buddha-body; the performance of enlightened activity derived therefrom; the liberation of living beings thereby; and the appearance of wondrous omens.

41

1. The first (comments on Ch. 6, 12):

The supreme great seal (phvag-rgya che-mchog-ni) is the nature of the buddha-body (sku-yi) of reality's expanse. This buddha-body of reality is the essence of all buddha-bodies, the buddhahood manifestly attained in the nature of space, free from all extremes of conceptual elaboration. As for its conclusive accomplishment: Without straying from (-las ma-gYos kyang) the real expanse (de-bzhin-dbyings) or reality itself, it is the basis from which the other buddha-bodies arise. From that disposition, it emerges as the buddha-body of form (gzugs-sku) which confers genuine liberation (yang-dag thar-pa'i) from the twofold obscura-

tion and its propensities. This (body of form) includes the buddha-body of perfect rapture adorned by excellent major and minor marks, and (dang) the appropriate (emanational) buddha-bodies (mthun-byas sku-ni) including universal monarchs, whores, pious attendants, self-centred buddhas, and material objects which it diversely reveals (sna-tshogs ston) in order to train (gdul-ba'i phvir) the respective minds of living beings ('gro-ba) [without exception (ma-lus)] through a diffusion of its spirituality and in accordance with their aspirations.

ii. The second comprises both the similes for the appearance of enlightened activity which does not stray from the expanse, and the appearance of enlightened activity for the sake of those to be trained.

The former (comments on Ch. 6, 13):

For the sake of those to be trained, this teacher (ston-nyid) of diverse emanations relatively is a magical display or optical illusion (sgvu-ma mig-yor tshul), which in the manner of a shadow is not concretely recognised from the moment it appears. Ultimately however, he has an uncreated and primordially pure disposition or mode (tshul) which does not stray from the expanse (dbvings-las gYos-pa med) of reality because it is essentially (nyid) without conceptual elaborations. But when (de-tshe), without straying (ma-gYos bzhin-du) the diversified (sna-tshogs-pa'i) forms of the emanational body appear differently in the perception of living beings, he manifests (snang-ba-ni) in diverse (sna-tshogs-la) buddha-bodies of dissimilar (mi-mthun) form, including kings and brahmins, and including peaceful and

wrathful deities, corresponding to ('dra-bar) the different (so-so) classes of beings to be trained. Although he does not stray from (-las ma-gYos kyang) the expanse of the real (de-bzhin-nyid), the buddha-body of reality, he appears distinctly (so-sor snang) through the (dbang-gis) respective fortunes of living beings and their residue of ('phro'i) past deeds (las)-- to terrestrial beings he appears as emanations of natural expression, to some living beings as emanations which train living beings, to some as impure emanations, to some as the diversified emanational body, and so forth. It is as (bzhin), for example (dper-na), when the image of one's complexion appears on the surface of a mirror (me-long) although the complexion itself does not change, and when in a pool of water the moon of the sky appears as the moon reflected in water (chu-zla) although the moon itself does not change. Accordingly, it says in the Great Bounteousness of the Buddhas (T. 44):

Just as the moon, without changing from the expanse,
 Appears in a pool of water,
 Without wavering from the real
 There are inconceivable billions of emanations.
 To some the buddhas are slightly revealed,
 To some they are manifoldly and extensively (revealed),
 And to some the fields are revealed as emptiness.

The latter (the appearance of enlightened activity for the sake of those to be trained) has four parts (which comment on Ch. 6, 14-17):

i. The first part concerns the appearance (of enlightened activity) for the sake of the six ordinary classes of living beings: At this time (de-tshe) when buddhahood is attained in the spontaneous Bounteous Array without conjunction or disjunction in respect of the three buddha-bodies, he is revealed (rnam-par-bstan) to all (thams-cad-la) the ordinary six classes of living beings ('gro-drug) including the gods, as the different sages such as Satakratu, i.e. in forms which bring them to renounce (spong gzugs-su) the negativity (sdig) of their minds; and then he teaches the doctrines which purify the obscurations of gods, humans, and so forth.

ii. (The second) concerns the appearance (of enlightened activity) for the sake of pious attendants: He appears in the guise of a virtuous ascetic and, to (rnam-la) those living beings who are to be trained and who belong to the family of pious attendants (nvan-thos), he is revealed in the form of an arhat (dgra-bcom gzugs), (foremost) among pious attendants, who then establishes them in the realisation of the four truths. ⁴³ It is said in the Sútra Requested By the Emanational King (T. 167):

To those who are to be trained by pious attendants, he becomes present and teaches the doctrine in the form of a pious attendant.

iii. (The third) concerns the appearance (of enlightened activity) for the sake of self-centred buddhas: In order to grant instruction through the form of the self-centred buddhas, to (la) adherents of the vehicle of the self-centred buddhas

(rang-rgyal-rnams), he teaches the doctrine of dependent origination symbolically in the solitary way of a rhino (bse-ru'i tshul).⁴⁴ As the same text says:

To those who are to be trained by the form of a self-centred buddha, he becomes present in the form of a self-centred buddha, and genuinely teaches through symbols the doctrine of dependent origination.

iv. (The fourth) concerns the appearance (of enlightened activity) for the sake of adherents of the greater vehicle: Moreover (gzhan-yang), in addition to these, he appears differently to spiritual warriors of the tenth level whose sequence (rim) of acumen is according to (bzhin) the supreme vehicle (theg-mchog). In the supreme (mchog-tu) unsurpassed abode of Akanistha ('og-min bla-med gnas), the excellent abode of the mighty lord, which is superior among the form-realms, the teacher himself or the buddha-body (sku-ni) is present as Vairocana (rnam-par snang-mdzad tshul), who, to retinues of bodhisattvas (byang-chub sems-dpa'i 'khor-rnams-la) of the tenth level, forming the excellent retinue, teaches the greater vehicle which is the excellence of doctrine during (the time of) unchanging sameness, which is the excellence of time.

Now, the teacher who is himself the buddha-body of perfect rapture does not divulge (mi-smra-te) the doctrines as (supreme) buddha-speech (gsung-mchog) in that previous way (de-bzhin) in which the emanational body appears to different living beings and verbally teaches the doctrine. But he discloses (ston) through (vis) the essence of his apparitional buddha-body (sku) the

doctrines (chos-rnams) of the greater vehicle that are
45
encountered (mjal-bar) in the intellects of the retinue.

The third part (see p. 664) concerns the liberation of living beings through these (activities). This comprises both the refinement of obscurations according to the causal path, and the supreme attainment of the resultant buddha-body and level.

The former (comments on Ch. 6, 18):

This has two sections of which (the first) is illustrative: (The action of this liberation) resembles (that) just as (bzhin-du) when one's face is exposed on a mirror (me-long bstan-pa'i tshul) and stains are seen by regarding one's own countenance on it, so that all sallowness (mdog-ngan thams-cad) of the actual (dnagos-kvi) countenance, tainted by blemishes, can be washed and removed (sel).

(The second) is meaningful: When (na) the retinue ('khor-gvis) of spiritual warriors of the tenth level beholds the buddha-body (sku bltas) of the teacher, i.e. the buddha-body of perfect rapture, in this (de) illustrative way (bzhin), the depth (gting) of their obscurations to enlightenment (byang-chub sgrub-pa) along with their gross, mediocre, and subtle blemishes which are difficult to estimate (dpag), and cannot (med) be measured, appear on the buddha-body (sku-la snang) of perfect rapture, as (bzhin-du) blemishes appear on a mirror (me-long).

Then (de-nas) these spiritual warriors persevere in order to purify the blemishes of their respective levels: On the first level envy is purified. On the second level confusion with

respect to moral discipline is purified. On the third level anger is purified, on the fourth idleness, on the fifth instability, on the sixth confusion with respect to discriminative awareness, on the seventh ignorance of skillful means, on the eighth obscuration with respect to power whereby the benefit of sentient beings is not accomplished, on the ninth the failure to achieve one's aspirations, and on the tenth level ignorance and its subtle seeds are purified. ⁴⁶ Once the ten transcendental perfections and the levels have been completely refined by that purification, the blemishes of the ten levels (sa-bcu) are sequentially purified (rim-gyis 'byang), and unsurpassed enlightenment is genuinely obtained (bla-med byang-chub yang-dag ⁴⁷ 'thob).

At the end of the continuum of the ten levels, the empowerment of ⁴⁸ great light rays is conferred, as is said in the Ornament of the Sūtras of the Greater Vehicle (T. 4020):

Having obtained the end of meditation,

The empowerment of great light rays is conferred.

Accordingly, when such a spiritual warrior makes offerings to all the buddhas, great rays of light emerge from between the eyebrows of the tathāgatas of the ten directions, and then vanish into the crown centre of that spiritual warrior, whereby the vajra-like contemplation is obtained and buddhahood is achieved.

The latter has three aspects, namely, a general teaching on the perfection of buddha-body and pristine cognition in the spontaneous Bounteous Array; a detailed exegesis of the perfection of the levels; and a synopsis of the spontaneous presence of the five buddha-bodies.

1. This has two parts, of which the first concerns the obtaining of the three buddha-bodies without conjunction or disjunction. (It comments on Ch. 6, 19):

The buddha-body of reality (chos-sku), the nature wherein expanse and pristine cognition are without duality is the essential nature, intellectually inestimable (dpag-med) and verbally inexpressible (brjod-du med). From its own disposition [the buddha-body of perfect] rapture (longs-spyod [sku]) is always spontaneously present as an inexhaustible (zad-med) treasure (gter) of precious (rin-chen) [or wish-fulfilling (vid-bzhin)] gemstones. From its disposition there are diffused for the sake of those to be trained an inconceivable (bsam-mi-khyab) billion-billion (bye-ba) emanational bodies (sprul-pa).

The second concerns their presence in great self-manifesting spontaneity. (It comments on Ch. 6, 20):

The buddha-body of perfect rapture which appears in that way is indeed perfect in all the major and minor marks (mtshan-dang dpe-byad thams-cad rdzogs), and it appears as the mandala (mandala) of buddha-body and pristine cognition, present throughout the perceptual range (spyod-yul kun-tu) of self-manifesting pristine cognition, where there is sameness with respect to the four

times. As such, it is spontaneously present in a nature without good or ill, and it displays (rol), perfectly (rdzogs-par) and with great spontaneity in that self-manifesting nature, the two great provisions (tshogs-chen gnvis) as well (kyang)-- namely, the provision of merit whereby all excellent attributes are self-manifest and the provision of pristine cognition whereby there is in no subjective apprehension at all.

The second aspect is (the detailed exegesis) concerning the perfection of the levels (which comments on Ch. 6, 21):

The level of the buddha-body of reality, the Great Cyclical Mass of Syllables (vi-ge 'khor-lo tshogs-chen) is supreme among the levels (sa-yi mchog). In it there are present without duality the Universal Light, i.e. the level of skillful means (thabs) or the emanational body and (dang) Lotus Endowed, i.e. the level of discriminative awareness (shes-rab) or the self-manifesting pure buddha-body of perfect rapture. In such ways (de la-sogs-pa) the enumeration of the levels and their enlightened attributes are immeasurable, inconceivably supreme (bsam-vas mchog) and entirely perfect.

Now, in this context, there are some ignorant of the essence of the levels who hold the level of Universal Light to refer to the buddha-body of reality, the Lotus Endowed to refer to the buddha-body of perfect rapture, and the Great Cyclical Mass of Syllables to refer to the emanational body. But that is a misunderstanding of the profundity, which does not see that these are named merely after a hierarchical series of enlightened attributes. It is explained that Universal Light is so named because emanations are

universally immeasurable; Lotus Endowed is so named because apparitions are immeasurable; and Great Cyclical Mass is so named because pristine cognition is immeasurable. The latter is also called the Great Cyclical Mass of Syllables because, in the uncreated expanse, it abides as the emanational basis, naturally present and unimpeded in the manner of seed-syllables. It is not that there is a cloud-mass of syllables but that the non-dual buddha-body of reality is present. There are others who have confused this term "cycle of syllables" with the cloud-mass of syllables, which is the nature of emanation.

49

In connection with this argument, it is said in the Lasso of Skillful Means (T. 835):

Transcending the level of Universal Light,

When one reaches the Lotus Endowed...

Is this not, one might ask, setting a hierarchical distinction with regard to the meaning of the levels? It has been explained however that they are identical in their true meaning, and simply named according to a hierarchical distinction of enlightened attributes and appearances which arise.

50

The third aspect is a synopsis of the spontaneous presence of the five buddha-bodies (which comments on Ch. 6, 22):

When these levels have been obtained, the five buddha-bodies are also spontaneously obtained. Thus there is first of all the buddha-body of reality free from extremes of conceptual elaboration. It is the unchanging absolute, the spontaneously

present and perpetual buddha-body (sku) of the svāstika (gYung-
⁵¹drung). the reality without birth or death (skve-shi med-pa'i).
From its disposition the blessing arises as the buddha-body of
perfect rapture, and thence the emanational body naturally
emerges. He is the one which abides (gnag) and performs acts of
benefit in the field (zhing-du) of training, on behalf of all
(kun-gyi) sentient beings endowed with conflicting emotions
(nyon-mongs), satisfying each according to his or her needs. The
buddha-body of perfect rapture itself, the basis from which the
emanational body arises, is the one which becomes ('gyur) a
treasure (gter-du) of all raptures of the spontaneous Bounteous
Array, inexhaustible (zad mi-shes-pa'i) in its provisions of
enlightened attributes. The nature in which these three buddha-
bodies are without conjunction or disjunction is the buddha-body
(sku) of unchanging indestructible reality (rdo-rie), holding
('dzin-pa'i) the non-dual indestructible reality and the great
pristine cognition of awareness (rig-pa). Lastly, there is the
buddha-body of awakening which has two aspects. The former refers
to the buddha-body (sku) of (-pa'i) awakening in sameness
(mnvam), indivisible (dbver-med) in respect of all (thams-cad)
things, in primordial Great Perfection, and to the pristine
cognition which qualitatively knows (the view); while the latter
refers to the buddha-body (sku) of awakening and the pristine
cognition (ye-shes) which quantitatively and distinctly knows
⁵²
(mkhven-pa'i) all things (thams-cad).

These are also the buddha-bodies associated with the five
enlightened families and the five pristine cognitions: The body

of the svāstika is the buddha-body associated with the enlightened family of the tathāgata, and the pristine cognition of reality's expanse. The buddha-body of perfect rapture with its inexhaustible reality and the awareness-holding buddha-body of indestructible reality are the buddha-bodies associated with the enlightened family of indestructible reality and the mirror-like pristine cognition. The buddha-body of sameness where all things are indivisible is the buddha-body associated with the enlightened family of precious gems and the pristine cognition of sameness. The body of pristine cognition which knows all things is the buddha-body associated with the enlightened family of the lotus and the pristine cognition of discernment. And the emanational body or the one which abides in the field of all conflicting emotions is the buddha-body associated with the enlightened family of activity and the pristine cognition of accomplishment.⁵³

At this time (de-tshe) when the levels are obtained, all five buddha-bodies are indeed (sku-linga kun-kvang) perfectly (rdzogs) obtained.

This classification of resultant levels, buddha-bodies, and pristine cognitions has no temporal sequence. The levels are so named because they are the support for enlightened attributes; the buddha-bodies are so named because one is transformed into the body of the buddhas; the pristine cognitions are so called because they abide in naturally present awareness; and the enlightened activities are so called because they benefit living beings. Although these are differently named their essence is

identical, just as something is called an object because it is created from causes and conditions, impermanent because it is perishable, and a "vase" because it pours water, while these names have one essential point of reference.

The fourth part (of the interlinear commentary on the resultant mandala) is the appearance of wondrous omens (which comments on Ch. 6, 23):

So saying (zhes bñod-pas) these verses, the inconceivable, inexpressible (bñod-kvis mi-lang-ba) mandala (dkvil-'khor), emanating in all the infinite limitless (mtha'-yas mu-med-pa thams-cad-du) fields in each of the ten directions of the six world-systems ('lig-rten drug-gi phvogs-bcu) inhabited by those to be trained became radiant (gsal-bar gyur-to) and appeared in (du) the fields (zhing-gi) of all the buddhas of the ten directions, which are equal in number to all the atoms (rdul), as many as there are (snved).

Synopsis of the Unique Mandala of Resultant Great Pristine
Cognition (257.2-261.1)

The third part (of the exegesis of the meaning of the words of this chapter --see p. 638) is a synopsis of the unique mandala of resultant great pristine cognition. It comprises both the manner in which it is enunciated and the essence (of the verses) which are enunciated.

The former (comments on Ch. 6, 24):

Once all things had become radiant as the mandala, then (de-nas) this secret description (gsang-ba 'di-nvid) of the very (nvid-kvi) tathāgata, emanating from these mandalas wherein (dkvil-'khor de-dag) the self-manifesting tathāgatas (de-bzhin gshes-pa) and the assembled host of their queens (btsun-mo'i tshogs-dang) are naturally without duality (gnvis-su med-pa'i) emerged (phyung-ngo) as follows from the indestructible reality of buddha-body, speech, mind, attributes, and activities (sku-gsung-thugs von-tan phrin-las rdo-rje-las).

The latter (comments on Ch. 6, 25):

Aho! (A-ho) is exclaimed because the wondrous display of the self-manifesting mandala of contemplation is revealed without straying from the expanse. The object of reference (dmigs-bya) is the naturally pure phenomena, and the subject of reference (dmigs-byed) is the intelligence purified of suddenly arisen imagination. That which is without reference in terms of (mi-dmigs) them is simply non-dual pristine cognition, the essence of these two. It is the ultimate nature, inestimable (dpag-med) by the intellect, the inconceivable (bsam mi-khyab) mandala of the natural ground.

The mandalas of pristine cognition or intrinsic awareness (yeshes rang-rig dkvil-'khor) in which, preceded by the three modes of contemplation, one meditates on the nature of visually created deities in the manner of the moon's reflection in water, are diverse (sna-tshogs) in form and inexpressible (brjod mi-lang). After this meditation, one becomes equipoised in the

expanse (dbvings) or the real, without apprehending it as merely the creation and perfection stages. This is the reality pervaded (khvab-pa'i) by the Great Perfection, the originally pure reality or nature without (med) the pervasive subject-object dichotomy (khvab-khvab). It is present throughout (kun) the sameness (mnvam) where samsāra's nature abides in reality and (dang) the variety (mi-mnvam) of nirvāna's (apparitions) which are quiescent of reference. Such is the mandala of the path in which the creation and perfection stages are attained.

Finally, after this experiential cultivation when the result directly reaches the ground, the mandalas (dkvil-'khor) of the diversified emanational body emerge from the mandala of the unimpeded buddha-body of perfect rapture which primordially (ye-nag) appears and is universally radiant (kun-gsal). They are emanated (rnam-'phro) so that the two kinds of benefit are spontaneously performed for the sake of living beings. But whether these two buddha-bodies are emanated or not, the buddha-body of reality abides in a nature which is not conceptually elaborated (spros-pa med) from the moment of its ostensible appearance. Ho! (ho) is exclaimed because the sky-like reality is wondrously revealed.

Such were (zhes) the secret words of indestructible reality (rdo-rie gsang-ba'i tshig-tu'o) which emerged.

54

This same synopsis also refers to the ground, path and result individually. (With respect to the ground: Mind-as-such, primordially without reference in terms of the dualistic nature

of the object of reference and the subject of reference or intellect is inestimable and inconceivable. In its disposition of inner radiance the mandalas of pristine cognition or intrinsic awareness primordially abide, diverse and inexpressible. Indeed, their natural sameness, pervasive throughout the sameness of reality and the variety of apparitional reality, is an expanse that is greatly pervasive, without the pervasive subject-object dichotomy. The mandalas, primordially and universally radiant, are emanated in great spontaneity for the sake of all living beings. But they are not conceptually elaborated. Ho! is exclaimed on account of this wondrous nature.

Now, this real nature is the all-pervasive essence, as is said in the Buddhasamāvoga Tantra (T. 366-367):

All the infinite objects
Of the spacious expanse
Are the sameness and variety of reality's expanse.
Glorious in the expanse of total space,
Vajrasattva is ever present.

With respect to the path: The essence that is without reference in terms of both the object of reference or contemplation and the subject of reference or one's own intelligence comprises the contemplation of the real nature, the contemplation of universal appearances, which is inestimable in compassion, and the contemplation of the causal basis, from whose compassionate disposition, inconceivable mind-as-such emerges. Therefrom are derived the mandalas of pristine cognition or intrinsic awareness which are diverse and inexpressible. Having meditated in this

way. all things become emptiness because they are the same in mind-as-such, they become appearance or variety which is differently and visually created, and they become the expanse which is pervasive, without the pervasive subject-object dichotomy, throughout its uncreated essence. From that disposition, primordially and universally radiant, many mandalas are emanated through the process of emanation & absorption, but they are actually known in a disposition that is not conceptually elaborated. It is said in the Hidden Seminal Point of the Moon (T. 447):

The actuality of all spiritual warriors
Is Vajrasattva, bliss supreme.
The aspects of this actuality
Are present in all ways and in all things.

Then, when (this synopsis) is explained according to the result: Reality is without reference in terms of the object of reference and the subject of reference, inestimable and inconceivable. From its disposition, the mandalas of self-manifesting pristine cognition or intrinsic awareness are diverse, inexpressible and radiant. Their essence is the expanse without the pervasive subject-object dichotomy, the reality pervasive throughout the sameness and variety of their array. From that buddha-body of perfect rapture, primordially and universally radiant, the mandalas of the emanational body are emanated, but they are not conceptually elaborated from the expanse itself, and they do not change, in the manner of the moon when reflected in water. Thus, the reality in which the three buddha-bodies are without

conjunction or disjunction is wondrously revealed. Here, there is a sameness with respect to the buddhas who appear as such and sentient beings, who are also actually uncreated. It says in the Sûtra of the Arraved Bouquet (Gandavyûha, T. 44):

55

Those who well abide in natural sameness
With respect to self and buddhas,
And are dynamic and non-acquisitive
Become the tathâgatas.

This completes (-'o) the exegesis of the sixth chapter (le'u ste drug-pa) from (las) the secret Nucleus (gsang-ba'i snying-po) of contemplation Definitive with respect to the (nges-pa) self-manifesting Real (de-kho-na-nyid), entitled Emanation of the Mandala (spros-pa'i dkyil-'khor) of natural contemplation.

..

Chapter Seven

Absorption of the Mandala and the Secret Mantras

..

Root-text:

Then these (mantras) emerged from the indestructible body, speech, and mind of all the tathāgatas along with the assembled host of their queens. [1]

BHRUM VISVAVISUDDHE [2]

HŪM VAJRADHRK

OM JINAJIK

SVĀ RATNADHRK

AM ĀROLIK

HĀ PRAJNĀDHRK

MŪM DHĀTVISVĀRI

LĀM DVESARATI

MĀM MOHARATI

PĀM RĀGARATI

TĀM VAJRARATI [3]

KSIM HI RĀJĀYA

TRĀM A GARBHAYAH

HRIH HA HŪM PADMĀBHATAMAH

JIM KURUPĀNA HRIH

HŪM LĀSYE SAMAYAS TVAM

TRĀM MĀLYE SAMAYA HOH

HRIH GITI RĀGO/HAM

ĀH NRTI RĀGAYAMI [4]

MAI DHARANI SVĀHĀ
 THLĪM NISĀRAMBHĀYA SVĀHĀ
 HŪM SARAJĀYA SVĀHĀ
 MŪM ŚRĪ AM RĀGĀYA SVĀHĀ
 JAH DHŪPE PRAVEŚĀ
 HŪM PUSPE AVESĀ
 VAM DĪPASUKHINI
 HOH GANDHE CITTA HOH [5]
 HŪM YAMĀNTAKRT PHAT
 HŪM VIGHNĀNTAKRT PHAT
 HŪM PADMĀNTAKRT PHAT
 HŪM PRAJÑĀNTAKRT PHAT
 OM MAHĀVAJRADHĀRO MAHĀKRODHISVĀRĪ JVALANĪ HŪM PHAT
 OM MAHĀRĀTNADHĀRO MAHĀKRODHISVĀRĪ JVALANĪ HŪM PHAT
 OM MAHĀPADMADHĀRO MAHĀKRODHISVĀRĪ JVALANĪ HŪM PHAT
 OM MAHĀKĀRMADHĀRO MAHĀKRODHISVĀRĪ JVALANĪ HŪM PHAT [6]
 HŪM HŪM HŪM VAJRA CITTA OM
 A A A VAJRĪ BHADRASAMANTĀ AH [7]
 OM MUNE KRIM SVĀHĀ
 OM MUNE HŪM TRUM SVĀHĀ
 OM MUNE SRUM SVĀHĀ
 OM MUNE PRAM SVĀHĀ
 OM MUNE KSAM SVĀHĀ
 OM MUNE YE SVĀHĀ [8]
 OM EHYEHI BHAGAVĀN MAHĀKARUNĪKA DRŚYA HOH SAMAYAS TVAM
 JAH HŪM VAM HOH [9]

OM AH HŪM SVĀHA

VA VA VA VA VA

JRA JRA JRA JRA JRA

SA SA SA SA SA

MA MA MA MA MA

YA YA YA YA YA

OM AH HŪM SVĀHA [10]

. . .

OM King of pristine cognition,

Equiposed now in the most wondrous buddha-body,

Speech, mind, attributes and activities,

May I unite with the Great Seal!

OM VAJRA SAMAYA HŪM OM VAJRA SAMAYAS TVAM

OM VAJRA SAMAYA HOH JAH HŪM VAM HOH [11]

.

With these mantras, the mandalas of buddha-speech resounded pervasively in all the ten directions of the six world-systems. They further resounded and they absolutely resounded. [12]

Then the Transcendent Lord vanished into that mandala where the indestructible active male subject and the indestructible female passive object are non-dual.

Then the Great Identity of the tathāgatas of the ten directions and four times brought forth from the Magical Net, the indestructible reality of buddha-body, speech and mind, these (mantras) which are said to absorb the pristine cognition and charisma of their Great Identity. [13]

OM MAHĀSUNYATAJÑĀNA VAJRASVABHĀVĀTMAKO/HAM
 OM MAHĀDARŚAJÑĀNA VAJRASVABHĀVĀTMAKO/HAM
 OM MAHĀPRATYAVEKSANAJÑĀNA VAJRASVABHĀVĀTMAKO/HAM
 OM MAHĀSAMATAJÑĀNA VAJRASVABHĀVĀTMAKO/HAM
 OM MAHĀKRITYUPASTHĀNAJÑĀNA VAJRASVABHĀVĀTMAKO/HAM [14]
 OM SARVATATHĀGATA MAHĀKĀYA VAJRASVABHĀVĀTMAKO/HAM
 OM SARVATATHĀGATA MAHĀVĀG VAJRASVABHĀVĀTMAKO/HAM
 OM SARVATATHĀGATA MAHĀCITTA VAJRASVABHĀVĀTMAKO/HAM
 OM SARVATATHĀGATA MAHĀNURĀGANA VAJRASVABHĀVĀTMAKO/HAM
 OM SARVATATHĀGATA MAHĀPŪJĀ VAJRASVABHĀVĀTMAKO/HAM [15]

At these mantras, (the blessings) dissolved, radiated, and blazed
 forth. [16]

Emaho! This wondrous, marvelous reality--
 The buddha-speech of all perfect buddhas,
 Transcends all sounds, names and words,
 But clearly emerges as diverse sounds. [17]

The aspects of the mandala of unique buddha-speech
 Are inconceivable and all-pervasive.
 Perceived in distinct sounds, names and words,
 All these are the supreme seal of buddha-speech. [18]

From the Magical Net, supreme among tantras,
 Emerge the meanings of buddha-speech, endowed with bliss,
 And yet all these are lotus-like in their disposition,
 Thus, the path of liberation or release
 And the sounds of samsāra, as many as are expressed,
 Are the supreme buddha-speech.

All higher and lower vehicles, and the languages
Of all erroneous destinies, without exception,
Are subsumed in buddha-speech,
The indestructible reality of enlightenment. [19]

This subsumption is perceived in the ten directions.
Sound itself is enunciated in its unborn disposition,
But when spoken it is the inexpressible;
And this same inexpressible nature
Comprises the diverse sounds,
Perceptible to all but differently appraised.
Real meaning is differently interpreted,
In the case of a single word,
As for example the phrase "removal of numbness" [or "sneeze"].
This is the king, the supreme buddha-speech. [20]

Although there are unthinkable higher and lower vehicles,
They are not spoken in isolation from the real nature.
Although they are heard differently as skillful means
For the sake of those to be trained,
And all pronouncements are expressed accordingly,
They are unspoken, according to the real nature. [21]

The unwritten and the buddha-speech of awareness
Do not emerge on the tip of the buddha-tongue.
Yet, by the blessing of the buddha-speech of spirituality,
Diverse meanings are distinctly clarified
For the sake of living beings. [22]

Those that are clarified are themselves
The supreme indestructible buddha-speech.
The real nature is such that the meanings of buddha-speech
For the sake of living beings
Do not stray from the disposition of the real,
Just as, for example, the sound of an echo. [23]

This completes the seventh chapter from the Secret Nucleus
Definitive With Respect To The Real, entitled The Absorption of
the Mandala and the Secret Mantras. [24]

..

Commentary (261.1-276.5):

The detailed exegesis of the branches of the second section (i.e. the emanation of mandala of contemplation-- see p. 626) concerns the mandala of the mantras of buddha-speech and the mandala of the seals (or hand-emblems) of buddha-body. The former (is the subject-matter of this chapter).

It has three parts: a description of the causal basis for the emergence of the mandala of buddha-speech; a teaching on the actual mandala of secret mantras; and the establishing of its nature.

The first (261.3-261.4, comments on Ch. 7, 1):

Once the mandala of contemplation had been revealed, then (de-nas) in order that its ancillary mandala of mantras might be revealed, these ('di-dag) following secret mantras emerged (phyung-ngo) from the indestructible body, speech and mind of all the tathâgatas along with the assembled host of their queens (de-bzhin gshes-pa btsun-mo'i tshogs-dang bcas-pa thams-cad-kyi sku-dang gsung-dang thugs rdo-rie-las).

The Actual Mandala of the Secret Mantras (261.4-270.5)

The second part includes both the mantras which visually create the mandala and the mantras which confer empowerment.

Mantras which Visually Create the Mandala (261.4-268.1):

These are fourfold, namely, the mantra which visually creates the supporting celestial palace; the mantras which visually create the supported deities; the mantras which completely perfect enlightened activity; and the appearance of their wondrous omens.

1. The first of these (comments on Ch. 7, 2):

Concerning the recitation of BHRUM VISVA VISUDDHE, BHRUM conveys the meanings of Vairocana, a vase, a celestial palace, and a wheel, as well as being the seed-syllable of Usnisacakravartin. Among these, in this context, it visually creates the celestial palace on the circle of pristine cognition, which is the immeasurable ground. It is because the celestial palace is the essence of Vairocana and because a vase is also shaped like a celestial palace that these (other meanings) are associated with the syllable BHRUM. This mantra is indeed indicative of the previous buddha Usnisacakravartin because he was the one who formed an aspiration connected with the celestial palace for the sake of buddhas and sentient beings. It is said in the Short Commentary (P. 4755):

It is the mantra of Usnisacakravartin's own aspiration.

And in the Sequence of Light (P. 4731):

The diverse mandalas are emanated in BHRUM,

As the full-grown palace of pristine cognition.

This syllable is also said to refer outwardly to the palace of the deities, inwardly to the seed-syllables of the deities, and secretly to the womb of the female consorts. As is said in the

Tantra of the Penetrating Magical Net (NGB. Vol. 15):

BHRUM gathers diversity in the expanse or womb.

Pure in its activity and essence

Is this jewelled receptacle of the buddhas.

VISVA means diversity, and VISUDDHE indicates the natural purity of all that appears as the phenomena of samsāra and nirvāna. The expanse of reality free from conceptual elaboration, which is revealed itself to be the residence of the buddhas is in this context illustratively referred to as the celestial palace.

ii. Secondly, there are six categories of the mantras which visually create the deities, among which the first includes the mantras of the male and female consorts of the five enlightened families. (It comments on Ch. 7, 3):

These are in two groups of five beginning with HŪM VAJRADHRK. Now, the initial syllables of the mantras of the male consorts are respectively HŪM, OM, SVA, AM, and HĀ. These are their creative seed-syllables or root-mantras of unerring basis.

These are then naturally expressed as the five buddha-bodies, the five pristine cognitions and so forth. It says in the Gubvasamāja Tantra (T. 442-3):

They are respectively named

The holder of indestructible reality,

The conqueror of conquerors,

The holder of gemstones,

The indicator of great desire,

And the holder of discriminative awareness.

And, for example, in the Sûtra Which Gathers All Intentions (T. 829):

To illustrate the buddha-body

The syllable OM is assigned.

VAJRADHRK and so forth are the essential mantras which illustrate the nature of these (male consorts). The first (VAJRADHRK) is that of Aksobhya, VAJRA indicating the indestructible reality where appearance and emptiness are without duality, and DHRK indicating that he is the holder of that reality. JINAJIK is similar (in its interpretation--i.e. Vairocana and Aksobhya are interchangeable).¹ RATNADHRK is the mantra of Ratnasambhava. RATNA meaning precious gemstone and DHRK meaning that he is the holder of it because he grants all that is desired to living beings. AROLIK is the mantra of Amitâbha, indicating that he is attracted towards those who are to be trained; and PRAJNADHRK is the mantra of Amoghasiddhi, indicating that he holds diverse modes of discriminative awareness for the sake of those to be trained.

The initial syllables of the mantras of their female consorts are respectively MUM, LAM, MAM, PAM, (or PHYAM), and TAM. These are their creative seed-syllables or root-mantras of unerring basis. Their essence is naturally expressed as follows: MUM DHÂTVIŠVARĪ is the mantra of the naturally pure Dhâtvišvari. LAM DVESARATI is the mantra of Buddhalocanâ who is the female councillor of all the buddhas. MAM MOHARATI is the mantra of Mâmakî, indicating

that she is the mistress of sentient beings. PĀM RĀGARATI is the mantra of Pāṇḍaravāsini, indicating that she is uncovered by defective blemishes; and TĀM VAJRARATI is the mantra of Tārā, indicating that she liberates sentient beings from saṃsāra.

The second category includes the mantras of the male and female spiritual warriors of buddha-mind. (It comments on Ch. 7. 4): These also comprise two groups (i.e. male and female): The four (initial syllables) of the male spiritual warriors are respectively KṢIM, TRĀM, HRĪH, and JIM. These are their creative seed-syllables or root-mantras.

HI RĀJAYA (is the mantra of Kṣitigarbha), the king who acts on behalf of sentient beings in the manner of the earth or of eyes.² A GARBHAYAH is (the mantra of Ākāśagarbha), the nucleus from which all desired necessities emerge. HA HŪM PADMĀBHATAMAḤ is (the mantra of Avalokiteśvara) who has a lotus-like face because he is without attachment and captivates the minds of those to be trained; and KURUPĀNA HRĪH is (the mantra of Vajrapāṇi) who acts on behalf of sentient beings in an indestructible manner (i.e. wielding a vajra).

The initial syllables of their four female spiritual warriors are respectively HŪM, TRĀM, HRĪH, and AH. These are their root-mantras and seed-syllables. LĀSYE SAMAYASTVAM is (the mantra of Lāsyā) meaning she who lets the commitments of all buddhas be assumed because she is endowed with a playful or erotic air. MĀLYE SAMAYA HOH is (the mantra of Mālyā), meaning she who must keep the commitments of all the buddhas through retention and

contemplation. GĪTĪ RĀGO/HAM is (the mantra of Gītā), meaning I am the one like a sweet melody who is attracted to sentient beings; and NRTĪ RĀGAYĀMI is (the mantra of Nartī), meaning I must be devoted to sentient beings through enlightened activity which resembles the movements of a dance.

The third category includes the mantras of the male and female spiritual warriors of buddha-speech. (It comments on Ch. 7, 5): These also comprise two groups, among which the root mantras or seed-syllables of the four male spiritual warriors are respectively MAI, THĪM, HŪM, and MŪM. DHARANĪ is (the mantra of Maitreya) who supports sentient beings with loving kindness. SVĀHĀ means "establish the ground". NISĀRAMBHAYA SVĀHĀ is (the mantra of Nivāranaviskambhin) who dispels obscurations which are dense or hard to purify. SARĀJAYA SVĀHĀ is (the mantra of Samantabhadra), the all-positive king whose nature does not abide in the duality of samsāra and nirvāna; and ŚRĪ AM RĀGAYA SVĀHĀ is (the mantra of Mañjuśrī), the glorious one who is devoted to sentient beings without abiding in duality.

The root mantras or seed-syllables of their four female spiritual warriors are respectively JAH, HŪM, VAM, and HOH. DHŪPE PRAVEŚĀ is (the mantra of Dhūpā), the fragrance of moral discipline which penetrates the mental continuum of those to be trained. PUSPE AVESĀ is (the mantra of Puspā), the extensive cascade of the flowers of enlightenment into the mental continuum of those to be trained. DĪPA SUKHINĪ is (the mantra of Ālokā) who dispels the

darkness of ignorance by the lamp of pristine cognition; and **GANDHE CITTA HOH** is (the mantra of Gandhâ) who satisfies the mental continuum of those to be trained by her stream of nectar.

The fourth category includes the mantras of the male and female gatekeepers (commenting on Ch. 7, 6):

These are also in two groups, among which the seed-syllables of the four male gatekeepers are respectively **HOM**, **HUM**, **HUM**, and **HUM**. Through the sound of these syllables there comes about a samharana or gathering whereby venomous beings are overpowered, or the enlightened attributes of greatness are established in the mental continuum of those to be trained. Also, by the sound of their final syllable **PHAT**, there comes about an aspharana or dispersal or diffusion, in which the venomous forces are dispersed. **YAMANTAKRT** (is the mantra of Yamântaka) who assumes the form of Yama, lord of death. **VIGHNĀNTAKRT** (is the mantra of Mahâbala) who puts an end to impediments. **PADMĀNTAKRT** (is the mantra of Hayagrîva) who is uncovered by the mire of samsâra; and **PRAJÑĀNTAKRT** (is the mantra of Amrtakundalin) who subjugates the demon of conflicting emotions.

The female gatekeepers similarly have **OM** as their initial syllable and **PHAT** as their final syllable in the above manner. **MAHĀVAJRADHARO MAHĀKRODHĪSVARĪ JVALANĪ HŪM** (is the mantra of Ankuṣâ), the great retainer of indestructible reality, the great wrathful mistress who blazes forth. Similarly, the same mantra combined with **RATNA** is (that of Pâṣâ), the wrathful mistress who is (a retainer of) gemstones. In combination with **PADMA** it is (the mantra of Sphotâ), the wrathful mistress (who is the

retainer) of the lotus, or padma in the original Sanskrit; and in combination with KARMA, it is the mantra (of Ganthâ), the wrathful mistress of enlightened activity.

The fifth category includes the mantras of the male and female consorts Samantabhadra. (It comments on Ch. 7, 7):

Of these, the mantra of the male consort has three initial syllables HOM, HOM, HOM, indicating the three pristine cognitions or purities in the mental continuum of the three world-systems. VAJRA CITTA OM is (the mantra of Samantabhadra), the buddha-mind of all the buddhas who is endowed with the nature of indestructible reality. The mantra of the female consort has the three initial syllables A, A, A, indicating that the three media of body, speech and mind, the three times, and the three expanses respectively are uncreated. VAJRI BHADRASAMANTA AH is (the mantra of Samantabhadri), indicating that this reality is pure in the nature of Samantabhadri.

The sixth category includes the mantras of the six sages. (It comments on Ch. 7, 8):

OM is the accumulated blessing of mantra, the nature of the five pristine cognitions. MUNE means the sage (i.e. one who has capability), while KRIM indicates those spiritual beings such as ogres who are not peaceful in their demeanour, and in this context, the antigods. SVÂHA means "establish the ground". These syllables are similarly combined in the following manner: TRUM is the nucleus of human beings who are bound by craving. SRUM is that of the animals of dull intelligence. PRAM is that of the

tormented spirits afflicted by hunger and thirst. KSAM is the nucleus of the gods who have patience; and YE is the nucleus of the denizens of hell who fall downwards.

iii. Thirdly, (see p. 689) there are the mantras which completely perfect enlightened activity. The first group of these comprise the mantras of invitation and absorption, (commenting on Ch. 7, 9): OM EHYEHI BHAGAVAN MAHAKARUNIKA DR̥SYA HOH SAMAYASTVAM means "Come here! Transcendent Lord endowed with great spirituality. Look with compassion! Assume the commitments!" JAH HŪM VAM HOH are the mantras which respectively summon with the iron hook (of Ankuṣā), bind with the lasso (of Pāśā), tie with the iron chain (of Sphotā) and overpower with the bell (of Ganthā).

The second group (commenting on Ch. 7, 10) comprises the mantras which scatter the (offering) flowers of one's own awareness: OM, AH, HŪM, and SVAHĀ are the syllables which indicate the five enlightened families and the five pristine cognitions. Then, there are the syllables VA JRA SA MA YA which vibrate separately and have become dispersed. These should be combined with the five syllables which precede them and the five which follow them in this way: OM VAJRA SAMAYA OM indicates that buddha-body is attained through the commitments of buddha-body. AH VAJRA SAMAYA AH indicates that buddha-speech is attained through the commitments of buddha-speech. HŪM VAJRA SAMAYA HŪM indicates that buddha-mind is attained through the commitments of buddha-mind. SVĀ VAJRA SAMAYA SVĀ indicates that enlightened attributes are attained through the commitments of enlightened attributes; and HĀ VAJRA SAMAYA HĀ indicates that enlightened activity is

attained through the commitments of enlightened activity.

The third group includes a prayer for accomplishment (commenting on Ch. 7, 11):

The expression OM King of pristine cognition (OM ye-she rgyal-po) is an appeal to the Transcendent Lord. He is equipped now in (da-nvid-du mnvam-sbyor-bas) the accomplishment of most wondrous (rmad-po-che) buddha-body, speech, mind, attributes and activities (sku-gsung-thugs von-tan 'phrin-las) of all the tathāgatas. Thus, may I unite (bdag sbyor-cig) at the present time with the Great Seal (phyag-rgya chen-po) of the deities' body, speech and mind. OM VAJRA SAMAYA HŪM timely summons the commitments of buddha-body. OM VAJRA SAMAYASTVAM summons the commitments of buddha-speech; and OM VAJRA SAMAYA HOH summons the commitments of buddha-mind. JAH HŪM VAM HOH bring about fusion and stability in the non-dual nature.

iv. Fourthly (see p. 689), there is the appearance of wondrous omens (which comments on Ch. 7, 12):

With these (zhes brjod-pas) words, the mandalas (dkvil-'khor de-dag-gis) of the secret mantras of buddha-speech (gsung-gi) resounded pervasively (khvab-par grags-so) with the great sound of mantra in all the ten directions of the six world-systems ('lig-rten drug-gi phyogs-bcu thams-cad-du). They further resounded (rab-tu grags-so) by conferring maturation on all the minds of sentient beings; and they absolutely resounded (kun-tu grags-so) by conferring liberation on them. One should know that these (three stages) also refer respectively to the sounds of the

secret mantras of buddha-body, speech and mind, to the rays which are emitted from them, and to their grand apparition which is totally diffused.

Mantras Which Confer Empowerment (268.1-270.5):

The mantras which confer empowerment have two sections. The first concerning the manner of their enunciation (comments on Ch. 7. 13):

Once the mantras which visually create (the deities) had been revealed, then (de-nag) the Transcendent Lord (bcom-ldan-'das) vanished into that mandala (dkvil-'khor-la thim-par mdzad-do) of buddha-speech where ..
buddha-speech where Samantabhadra, the indestructible (rdo-rie) active male subject (byed-pa-po) or intelligence and (dang) Samantabhadri, the indestructible (rdo-rie) passive female object (bva-ba-mo) or phenomena are non-dual (gnvis-su med-pa'i). And once he had vanished, then (de-nag) Samantabhadra, the Great Identity of (bdag-nvid chen-pog) all the tathāgatas of the ten directions and four times (phyogs-bcu dus-bzhi'i de-bzhin gshegs-pa thams-cad-kvi) brought forth (phung-ngo) these ('di) following secret mantras which are said to absorb (bsdu-ba zhes-bva-ba) all the excellent pristine cognition (ve-sheg) and (dang) charisma (byin) of their great (chen-po'i) accomplishment, i.e. the identity (bdag-nvid) of the body, speech, mind, attributes and activities of all the buddhas. This emerged, naturally arisen through blessing, from the Magical Net (sgvu-'phrul dra-ba-las), the nature of indestructible reality (rdo-rie) where the buddha-body, speech and mind (sku-dang gsung-dang thugs) of the male & female teachers are non-dual; and where skillful means and dis-

criminative awareness are coalesced.

The latter refers to the actual mantras which confer empowerment.

These are in three parts:

1. The first confers empowerment through the five pristine cognitions, washing away stains. (It comments on Ch. 7, 14):

OM MAHĀSŪNYATĀJÑĀNA VAJRASVABHĀVĀTMAKO/HAM means "I am the identity which is the essential nature of indestructible reality, the great pristine cognition of emptiness". And when (the words of this mantra) are similarly combined (with the other pristine cognitions, ADARSA indicates the mirror-like pristine cognition, PRATYAVEKSANA indicates the pristine cognition of discernment, SAMATĀ indicates the pristine cognition of sameness, and KRTYU-PASTHĀNA indicates the pristine cognition of assiduous accomplishment. JÑĀNA VAJRASVABHĀVĀTMAKO/HAM means "I am the identity which is the essential nature of the indestructible reality or pristine cognition". The significance of this empowerment is that, at this juncture, (the deities) are alternately crowned (by) the lords of their respective enlightened families, a full finger-span in size. The Tantra of the Penetrating Magical Net (NGB. Vol. 15) accordingly says:

The active Aksobya and his female consort

Are depicted with the seal (or gesture)

Of (the enlightened family)

Of the holder of indestructible reality

As are Maitreya and Ksitigarbha.

The others have their own seals.

Yamāntaka is explained to be the permanence (of this family),

And the great sage (Satakratu)
Who is a holder of indestructible reality,
Is most glorious because he is peerless.

In this context, you may ask, should Vairocana not be the central deity by whom (the deities) are crowned? Aksobhya who symbolises the buddha-mind of the tathâgata family is however correct. This is because, in relation to Aksobhya, in this context (of the tathâgata family), Vairocana symbolises the buddha-body. Here all the deities are crowned by the five tathâgatas.

ii. Secondly, there are the mantras through which power is introduced, and blessing conferred by the five enlightened families. (It comments on Ch. 7, 15):

OM SARVATATHÂGATA MAHÂKÂYA VAJRASVABHÂVÂTMAKO/HAM means "I am the great natural expression of indestructible reality, the buddha-body of all the tathâgatas". Similarly, VÂKVAJRA indicates the indestructible reality of buddha-speech, CITTAVAJRA indicates the indestructible reality of buddha-mind, ANURÂGANAVAJRA indicates the indestructible reality of enlightened attributes, and PÔJÂVAJRA indicates the indestructible reality of enlightened activity. Through these (mantras), the five tathâgatas are visually created in the five centres of all the deities. More than twenty-one thousand buddhas abide in this illuminating contemplation because they are visualised within the five centres (of the deities). The number twenty-one thousand refers to the blessings of the buddha-body, speech and mind. It says in the Tantra of the Penetrating Magical Net (NGB. Vol. 15):

The great assembled host, emanating light-rays
From the syllables which fill their three centres,
Absorb the three world-systems in their blessing and lustre.
The three centres of natural indestructible reality
Manifest in and of themselves as two kinds of seed (syllable).⁶

So in addition to these, there are enlightened attributes and activities which emanate from the syllables SVA and HĀ in the navel and secret centres respectively. As the same text says:

In the moon-discs of the two centres--
The navel and the one associated with it--⁷
The two pale green syllables SVA and HA
Emanate and absorb their corresponding light-rays,
Whereby enlightened attributes and perfect charisma are possessed.

Therefore (the deities) are adorned by the five enlightened families of buddha-body, speech, mind, attributes, and activities.

iii. Thirdly, there is the appearance of the blessings which emerge therefrom. (It comments on Ch. 7, 16):

At these (zhes brjod-pas) mantras which confer empowerment and blessing, the blessings granted through the power of those deities dissolved (thim-par gyur) indivisibly in the body, speech and mind of those to be trained, whereby the five poisons of conflicting emotion radiated (gsal-bar gyur) as the essence of the five pristine cognitions, and whereby all the components, sensory bases and activity fields blazed forth ('bar-bar gyur-to) light as the mandala of the deities.

Establishing the Nature of the Secret Mantras (270.5-276.5)

The third part (of this chapter) is the establishing of the nature (of the secret mantras-- see p. 688). It has five sections, namely: the inexpressible essence of buddha-speech; its inconceivable natural expression; its originally pure abiding nature; its supreme apparitional nature; and its mode of being which does not deviate from the expanse.

1. Among these, the first (section on the inexpressible essence of buddha-speech comments on Ch. 7, 17):

Emaho! (a-ma-ho) is an exclamation of wonder at the mystery of the tathâgatas' speech, an inconceivable topic, which is particularly sublime. This reality (chos), wondrous (ngo-mtshar) and marvelous (rmad-kyi) in nature, is the buddha-speech of all (kun-gvi gsung) genuinely perfect buddhas (rdzogs-pa'i sangs-rgyag), a sacred wheel of inexhaustible adornment. This essential nature of buddha-speech is wondrous in that it transcends all (kun-las 'das) expressive sounds (sgra) and (dang) the names and words (ming-tshig) applied to phenomena, but, at the same time, it is wondrous because it clearly emerges (gsal-bar 'byung) as the immeasurable languages or sounds (sgra-rnama), which comprise the diverse (sna-tshogs) excellent intonations of speech, corresponding to the perception of living beings.

ii. The second (the inconceivable natural expression of buddha-speech, comments on Ch. 7, 18):

The unique buddha-speech (gsung-gcig) of the buddhas, adorned with sixty aspects of intonation, is the genuine mandala (dkvil-'khor). Its sixty aspects (van-lag-ni) include six categories, namely, Brahmā-like voice, orchestral sound, song & dance, cuckoo-like trill, thunderous bass, and echo-- each of which has ten features, i.e. they give rise to perception, they are apperceptive, audible, harmonious, most profound, consecutive, imperturbable, euphonous, orderly, and exceedingly clear; making ⁸ sixty aspects in all.

Alternatively, (buddha-speech) has ten features, namely, greatness of melody, pervasiveness, swift appreciation, precision, one-pointed audio-visual attention, momentariness, total accessibility, devotion, sublimation, and the discipline of all ⁹ (beings), each of which has six sections, making sixty in all.

When the (former sixty aspects) are combined with (the latter ten features), there are six hundred aspects of intonation. These multiply to six thousand and then to twenty-four thousand when each is subdivided according to the ten directions and the four times. Then, when subdivided according to the six world-systems, the aspects (of buddha-speech) are inconceivable (bsam-gyis mi-khyab) in number, and they are pervasive (khyab) in all (kun-tu) fields.

These (aspects) are perceived (grags) and understood in accordance with the languages or sounds (sgra-dang) of distinct sentient beings, and their appearance as distinct (so-sor) names and words (ming-tshig). All these (thams-cad) languages are indeed shown to be gathered in the nature of the inexpressible supreme seal of buddha-speech (gsung-gi phvag-rgya'i mchog).

iii. The third (the originally pure abiding nature of buddha-
speech, comments on Ch. 7, 19):
10

From the (las) hundred-thousand chapters of the Magical Net (sgyu-'phrul dra-ba), supreme among (mchog) all tantras (rgyud), the meanings of buddha-speech (gsung-gi don) emerge ('byung-ba) because it is the doctrinal sound or causal basis endowed with (ldan) inestimable (interim) benefit and (ultimate) bliss (bde)
11
for the sake of living beings. And yet ('lang), all these (thams-cad) phenomena (or doctrines) are primordially lotus-like in their disposition (padma'i ngang-gyur), the reality untainted by blemishes from the beginning. Thus (na) the essence of sound or language is indeed shown to be the essence of naturally pure reality or emptiness. For this reason, the language of the vehicles which indicate the path of liberation or release (grol-thar lam) and (dang) the diverse languages or sounds of samsāra ('khor-ba'i sgra) associated with desire and similar states of existence, as many as are expressed (ji-skad briod), all do not transcend reality. They are in fact its uncreated echoes. They are the inexpressible nature of supreme buddha-speech (gsung-mchog-ste), the primordially pure essential nature.

All (thams-cad) languages or sounds associated with the higher and lower vehicles (theg-pa mtho-dman) of the path to release, and (dang) the languages (skad) or sounds of all (thams-cad) sentient beings without exception (ma-lus) including those of the three erroneous (log) evil destinies ('gro) are actually subsumed (bsdus) in (du) the inexpressible buddha-speech (gsung), the indestructible reality (rdo-rie) or abiding nature of primordial enlightenment (byang-chub), the essence of uncreated echo, where the positive and the negative are without duality.

iv. The fourth (the supreme apparitional nature of buddha-speech, comments on Ch. 7, 20):

From the disposition of this subsumption (bsdus-nyid) in the inexpressible essence of buddha-speech, an inestimable number of doctrines is perceived (rnam-par grags) and understood through its many emanations in the ten directions (phyogs-bcur). This perceived sound (sgra) of the doctrine is itself (nyid) enunciated (gsung) in (du) its unborn (ma-chags) primordial disposition (ngang) which accords with the perception of those to be trained; but at the time when (nyid-na) it is spoken (gsungs), it is the inexpressible (brjod-du med) essence of buddha-speech. This same (de-nyid) inexpressible abiding nature is a source which comprises sounds (sgra) of diverse (sna-tshogs) expression. It is perceptible (grags) to all (kun-la) those who require training in identical words, but (shing) its meanings are differently appraised (so-sor mial). The real meaning (de-bzhin) of a single expression or sound (is differently understood), as

for example (dper-na) the phrase "removal of numbness" [or
 "sneeze"] (sbrid-sangs-bzhin)¹² which is understood by some to
 mean the removal of numbness caused by poison, by some to mean
 the removal of numbness caused by defective posture, and by
 others to mean the removal of numbness caused by gnostic mantras.
 In the case of even a single word (gsung-gcig-sgra-vis) of the
 tathâgatas', all doctrines corresponding to the thoughts of
 different sentient beings appear to be differently interpreted
 (so-sor go). This (de-ni) is (vin) the nature of the genuine
 supreme buddha-speech (gsung mchog), the king (rgyal-po) of all
 linguistic phenomena or sounds. Accordingly, it says in the
Pagoda of Precious Gems (T. 45-93):

A single intonation of the conquerors' speech
 Which appears through the merits and deeds of living beings
 Is heard differently, by dint of volition.
 This indeed is the mystery of buddha-speech.

It is the profound coincidence of natural blessing that (buddha-
 speech) appears in this way through the power of spirituality
 although it is unspoken by the buddhas.

Concerning this passage of the text, there are some who claim
 that the tathâgata had sneezed (sbrid-pa sangs) at the entrance
 to his citadel, and that this was differently interpreted by an
 invalid, a nurse, and a doctor. Such persons, however, do not
 differentiate between sound and its meanings!
 13

v. The fifth section (the mode of being which does not deviate from the expanse) has three parts, among which the first teaches that although (buddha-speech) appears as the different vehicles its essence is unspoken. (It comments on Ch. 7, 21):

Although (kyang) there are unthinkable (bsam-yag) higher and lower vehicles (theg-pa mtho-dman) which appear to be spoken, they are not spoken (ma-gsungs te) at all in isolation from (las) reality or the real nature (de-bzhin-nvid). It says appropriately in the Pagoda of Precious Gems (T. 45-93):

From the time when I attained perfect buddhahood until my final nirvâna, I did not teach any doctrine, but it appeared differently from the real nature in accordance with the volition of living beings. This indeed is the inconceivable mystery of the Buddha's speech.

Although words are not actually spoken, they are heard differently (so-sor thos) by sentient beings as (su) the enumeration of doctrines which are learned in the skillful means (thabs) of training for the sake of those to be trained (gdul-bya'i). Although (kyang) all (kun) pronouncements (gsung-rab) of the tathâgata included in the twelve branches are ostensibly expressed (brjod) according (ji-ltar) to the manner in which the lamp of the five aforementioned vehicles is arrayed, if appraised according to (kyis) the abiding mode of reality or the real nature (de-bzhin-nvid), they are the conclusive buddha-body of reality, and therefore unspoken (gsungs-ba-med) even minutely as a doctrinal enumeration. It says in the Cutter of Indestructible Reality (T. 16):

Those who see me as form,
Those who perceive me as sound,
Those persons, who remain on the false path,
Do not perceive me--
For the Buddhas perceive reality,
The Guides are the body of reality,
And reality is not a knowable object.
As such, it cannot be known.

The second part concerns the appearance of the indestructible buddha-speech for the sake of living beings through its disposition of spirituality. (It comments on Ch. 7, 22):

The object that is to be expressed is the unwritten (yi-ge-med) abiding nature and (dang) expressive words (concerning it) which appear to be spoken are the buddha-speech (gsung) of the sugatas' awareness (rig-pa'i). Though they are heard by living beings, from the moment when they are heard they do not emerge (ma-phyung) on the tip of the buddha-tongue (liags-kvi rtse-mor) as sounds and words with individual characteristics. Yet (yang), by the blessing (bvin-rlabs-kvis) of (gi) naturally present pristine cognition, the buddha-speech (gsung) of the conquerors' spirituality (thugs-rie), diverse (sna-tshogs) words and meanings (don) are distinctly clarified (so-sor gsal) and heard for the sake of living beings ('gro) who are trained, corresponding to their volition. This is the indestructible reality of buddha-speech.

The third part exemplifies (the buddha-speech) which appears to be spoken although it is not spoken. (It comments on Ch. 7, 23): Those words and meanings of the doctrine which appear in that manner through the spirituality of the buddhas and the volition of sentient beings, and that are clarified (gsal) in the ears of those to be trained are themselves (nvid) the genuine supreme indestructible buddha-speech (gsung-gi rdo-rié mchog), uncreated from the beginning. The real nature (de-bzhin) of the doctrine which is inexpressible but appears to trainees is such that the meanings (don-rnams) of buddha-speech (gsung-gi) which emerge for the sake of living beings ('gro) are manifest in and of themselves, and indeed do not waver from the disposition of (ngang-las ma-gYos kyang) the expanse or the real (de-bzhin). Just as (bzhin-no), for example (dper-na) the sound of an echo (brag-ca'i sgra) does not exist at all-- either in the person, the rock or in the space between them, but emerges through conditions in an appropriate form of verbal expression, so it is through the condition of the pure deeds of trainees and the cause of the buddhas' spirituality that (buddha-speech) appears in the form of the doctrine. It is also said in the Supreme Continuum of the Greater Vehicle (T. 4024):

Just as the sound of an echo
 Emerges through the perception of others,
 The buddha-speech of the tathāgatas
 Does not abide either externally or internally.

The conclusion (comments on Ch. 7, 24):

This completes (-'o) the exegesis of the seventh chapter (le'u-ste bdun-pa) from (las) the Secret Nucleus (gsang-ba'i snying-po) of buddha-speech, Definitive With Respect To The Real (de-kho-na-nvid nges-pa) nature which apparently emerges from the inexpressible according to volition, entitled (kyi) The Absorption of the Mandala (dkvil-'khor bsdus-pa) and (dang) the revelation of the nature of the Secret Mantras (gsang-sngags) of the different deities.

Chapter Eight

Consecration of All Limbs as the Mandala and the Subsequent Emanation of the Seals

Root-text:

Then all the tathágotas uttered this meaningful expression which is said to consecrate spontaneously all the limbs as the mandala.

[1]

Manifestly perfect through the Magical Net,
All things are (sealed by) the seal of supreme enlightenment.
This seal of the Secret Nucleus Definitive
With Respect to the Real is hard to transcend. [2]

The union (which comes about) through combination
Of two sets of five, namely,
The syllables on the solar disks of Aksobhya
And the syllables on the lunar disks of Ratnasambhava,
Is the causal basis for the emergence of seals or hand-
emblems. [3]

The two syllables OM and MUM unite at their (finger)-tips;
And the (remaining) eight seed-syllables conjoin,
Meeting at their (finger)-tips.
They form the seal granting supreme bliss,
In which all conquerors are equipoised. [4]

Four seed-syllables are concealed and cohere at his heart.
On his raised (finger)-tip with the syllable HŪM
Appears a blazing vajra.
Restrained on their lunar disks are the concealed
Seed-syllables which ring a bell
And, with an embrace, support it on "reality". [5]

Four seed-syllables are concealed and cohere at her heart.
On her raised (finger)-tip with the syllable MŪM
A ringing bell blazes forth.
On solar disks five seed-syllables embrace "activity".
And bowing, she looks on with a smiling demeanour. [6]

Four seed-syllables are concealed and cohere at his heart.
On his raised (finger)-tip with the syllable OM
is a blazing wheel.
Restrained on their lunar disks are the concealed
Seed-syllables which ring a bell,
And with an embrace support it on "reality". [7]

Four seed-syllables are concealed and cohere at her heart.
On her raised (finger)-tip with the syllable LĀM,
A ringing bell blazes forth.
On solar disks five seed-syllables embrace "activity",
And bowing, she looks on with a smiling demeanour. [8]

Four seed-syllables are concealed and cohere at his heart.
On his raised (finger)-tip with the syllable SVA
is a blazing gem.

Restrained on their lunar disks are the concealed
Seed-syllables which ring a bell,
And with an embrace support it on "reality". [9]

Four seed-syllables are concealed and cohere at her heart.
On her raised (finger)-tip with the syllable MAM,
A ringing bell blazes forth.
On solar disks five seed-syllables embrace "activity",
And bowing, she looks on with a smiling demeanour. [10]

Four seed-syllables are concealed and cohere at his heart.
On his raised (finger)-tip with the syllable AM
is a blazing lotus.
Restrained on their lunar disks are the concealed
Seed-syllables which ring a bell,
And with an embrace support it on "reality". [11]

Four seed-syllables are concealed and cohere at her heart.
On her raised (finger)-tip with the syllable PAM,
A ringing bell blazes forth.
On solar disks five seed-syllables embrace "activity",
And bowing, she looks on with a smiling demeanour. [12]

Four seed-syllables are concealed and cohere at his heart.
On his raised (finger)-tip with the syllable HA
is a blazing sword.

Restrained on their lunar disks are the concealed
Seed-syllables which ring a bell,
And with an embrace support it on "reality". [13]

Four seed-syllables are concealed and cohere at her heart.
On her raised (finger)-tip with the syllable TAM,
A ringing bell blazes forth.
On solar disks five seed-syllables embrace "activity",
And bowing, she looks on with a smiling demeanour. [14]

Then there are the symbolic hand-emblems,
Which begin with the night lotus and the orange tree--
Namely, the shoot of gems, the blazing sword,
The white lotus, the blazing vajra,
The doctrinal wheel, and the corn-ear of gems.
And there are the beauteous form, the garland of gems,
The lute and the supreme dancing gesture,
The flower-garland, the supreme incense,
The butter-lamp, the scented oil and so forth.
(The female bodhisattvas) embrace "activity"
And (the male bodhisattvas) support (a bell) on "reality",
Their heads are tilted and bowed.
As in the case of the aforementioned great seal,
They embrace in the disposition of the non-dual expanse. [15]

The seals or hand-emblems of the wrathful deities
At the four gates are respectively
The cudgel surmounted by human skulls which is brandished,

The vajra which subjugates,
The skull with large snakes which subjugates,
The crossed-vajra which subjugates through activity,
The iron hook, the lasso, the iron chain, and the bell.
Abiding at the four gates,
These (deities) bow and embrace in the previous manner. [16]

The six sages have diverse seals.
When subsumed, they number six seals.
Their female consort is the non-referential expanse of reality. [17]

Samantabhadra is meditatively equipoised,
His pristine cogitions diffused.
The one who is his female consort
Is perfect in sameness,
And seated in the lotus posture. [18]

There are, moreover, diverse modes of seal or hand-emblem--
Alternatively, the very (seals should be applied)
Of their (respective) tathâgatas,
Or the gesture of the "indestructible palms". [19]

If the supreme provision of the great seal
Is encountered by one of skillful means
and discriminative awareness,
There is neither stirring nor movement.
All things in their entirety
Abide in the disposition of the great seal. [20]

The limbs (of the central deity)
Are endowed with the forty-two (deities). [21]
These themselves emanate limbs,
And the forty-two then become diffused threefold. [22]

(Illustrated) by the supreme central deity
Who is endowed in this way,
The conquerors and the supreme conqueror
Are similarly endowed,
As are the twelve (surrounding pairs of bodhisattvas),
And the six (sages) who have a diffusion of blazing light. [23]
Including these, (the mandala) is inconceivable. [24]

In the unthinkable ten directions and four times
The purposes of training are differently revealed. [25]

As all the vehicles-- high and low,
As the erroneous and unthinkably (numerous beings),
And as all great assemblies of peaceful & wrathful deities,
They are everywhere perceived, differently
And corresponding (to volition). [26]

As, for example, in the case of a dancer,
This diverse (movement) is revealed
But not depicted in isolation
From the body (of pristine cognition). [27]

In brief, all seals or hand-emblems
Cannot be described as "this" or as "merely one",
But they are emanated twice and thrice,
This movement & emanation are indeed the real nature. [28]

In brief, all movement and stirring in their entirety
Abide in the disposition of the great seal,
But their abiding nature does not abide.
Indeed there is no such abiding at all.

--Such was explained by the pure supreme one himself. [29]

This completes the eighth chapter from the Secret Nucleus
Definitive with respect to The Real, entitled the Consecration of
All Limbs as the Mandala and the Subsequent Emanation of the
Seals or Hand-Emblems. [30]

Commentary (276.6-294.5):

The second branch (of the mandala of contemplation, see p. 688) concerns the mandala-array of the seals or hand-emblems of buddha-body. It has two parts-- an abbreviated teaching on the emanation of this mandala and a detailed exegesis of its nature.

The former (276.6-277.2, comments on Ch. 8. 1):

Once the mandala of the secret mantras had been revealed, then all the tathāgatas (de-nas de-bzhin gshags-pa thams-cad-kvis) uttered this meaningful expression which is said to consecrate (bvin-gvis rlob-pa zhes-bya-pa 'di ched-du brjod-do) naturally and spontaneously (lhun-gvis grub-par) all (thams-cad) the limbs (yan-lag), head, and other organs of the body as the mandala (dkvil-'khor-du) of deities.

Detailed Exegesis of the Nature of the Mandala of Seals

(277.2-294.5)

The latter has three parts, namely: a general teaching on the mandala of seals which forms the spontaneous ground; a detailed exegesis of the mandala of seals through which the path is actually attained; and a synopsis of the mandala of seals according to the resultant supreme pristine cognition.

General Teaching on the Mandala of Seals Forming the Spontaneous Ground (277.3-278.2):

This (comments on Ch. 8, 2):

All things of phenomenal existence, samsāra and nirvāna, subsumed in the components, sensory bases and activity fields abide through (-bas) the essence of the Magical Net (sgyu-'phrul dra), where buddha-body and pristine cognition are without conjunction or disjunction. They are identified as that in which manifestly perfect (mngon-rdzogs-pa) buddhahood is primordially attained, in the manner of fire and the heat which is its natural expression. In this way, all things (thams-cad) are said to be primordially sealed by Samantabhadra, the seal of supreme enlightenment (byang-chub mchog-gi rgya). When their naturally pure abiding nature is sealed by this seal (phvag-rgya) of the nucleus (snying-po'i) of unchanging reality, i.e. the kingly Secret (gsang-ba) Nucleus Definitive With Respect To The Real (de-nvid¹ nges-pa-yi), it is said to be hard to transcend ('da'-dka'-o). This is because it does not transcend the natural Great Perfection of sameness, and because it does not extraneously deviate from that never changing disposition. The Intermediate Mother (T. 9) accordingly says:

Subhūti, just as for example the sky neither increases when praised by anyone, nor decreases when disparaged by anyone, similarly this reality or real nature of all things neither increases nor decreases, whether the tathāgatas come into the world or whether they do not.

Detailed Exegesis of the Mandala of Seals through which the Path is Attained (278.2-288.4): ..

This is threefold: the causal basis for the emergence of the seals or hand-emblems; the general seal which thence emerges; and the seals or hand-emblems of the different deities which emanate from it.

The first (comments on Ch. 8, 3):

In general, the head (of the body) is described as the essence of the tathâgata (Vairocana), the right hand as that of Aksobhya, the left hand as that of Ratnasambhava, the left foot as that of Amitâbha, and the right foot as that of Amoghasiddhi. Then, among the fingers which are the appendages (of those hands), the middle one represents the enlightened family of indestructible reality, the index finger represents the enlightened family of the tathâgata, the thumb represents the enlightened family of gemstones, the fourth finger represents the enlightened family of the lotus, and the little finger represents the enlightened family of activity.

In this context, the hand-gesture known as the "indestructible palms" (rdo-rie thal-mo) is the causal basis of the seals or hand-emblems. It is described as follows: On the tips of the five fingers of the right hand or Aksobhya (mi-bskvod), on the five solar disks (nyi-ma'i dkyil), the size of round grains, are respectively the syllables (yi-ge) HÛM, OM, SVA, AM, and HÂ. These are the five (seed)-syllables of the male consorts of skillful means. And on the five fingers of the left hand or Ratnasambhava (rin-chen), on five lunar disks (zla-ba'i dkyil)

the size of grains or amulets there are respectively arrayed the five syllables (vi-ge) MUM, I.AM, MAM, PAM, and TAM which belong to the female consorts of discriminative awareness. The union (gbyar-bas) in the gesture of "indestructible palms" which comes about through (lag) the respective combination (zung-du sprad-pa) of those two sets of five (lnga-gnyis), namely, the five fingers of the right hand and those of the left hand, is the causal basis for the emergence of ('byung-ba'i rgyu) the seals or hand-emblems (phvag-rgya) belonging to the different deities.

According to the claims of the bLa-ma Rong-zom-pa, this gesture comprises both the commitment seal (samayamudrâ) and the action seal (karmamudrâ). Buddhaguhya asserts that it comprises three kinds of seal, namely, the commitment seal, the doctrinal seal (dharmamudrâ) during meditation on those seed-syllables, and the action seal during the transformation (of the fingers). However, all four seals-- the great seal, the doctrinal seal, the commitment seal and the action seal are actually complete therein. The great seal is included during the apparitional or rainbow-like meditation on one's own (body) as the deity; the doctrinal seal is included during the meditation on seed-syllables upon the fingers of the hands; the commitment seal is included during meditation on the symbolic hand-emblems such as the vajra which emerge therefrom; and the action seal is included during the transformation (of the fingers) and the consequent embrace of the right and left hands. So it is that in this context the (four kinds of seal) are perfectly explained.

The second is the general seal which emerges thence. (It comments on Ch. 8, 4):

The two syllables (gnvis)-- the OM (QM) which is visualised on the index finger of the right hand, and (dang) the MUM (MUM) which is visualised on the middle finger of the left hand-- unite (sbyar-te) directly at their (finger)-tips (rtse); and the remaining eight seed-syllables ('bru-brgyad) of the right and left hands, namely HUM and LAM, SVA and MAM, AM and PAM, and HA and TAM respectively conjoin (bsnol-nas). Meeting at their (finger)-tips (rtse sprad-pa) they form the seal (rgya), granting (sbyin-pa'i) in this very lifetime the supreme bliss (bde-ba chen-po) of accomplishment in which all conquerors (rgyal-ba kun) of the five enlightened families are essentially equipoised (mnyam-sbyor-ba'i). It also says in the Lasso of Skillful Means (T. 835):

The fingers are entwined and press down:

The middle & index fingers, thumbs & little fingers

Are made to meet at their respective tips,

While the fourth fingers are raised into position--

This is the commitment seal.

Now, Buddhaghya holds this to be the general commitment seal of the five enlightened families, i.e. the seal of one-pointed pristine cognition or buddha-mind, in which the vajra is tightly held and the two middle fingers then extended into position. There are also some who hold that, in this gesture of "indestructible palms", the index finger of the right hand and the middle finger of the left hand both meet at their tips, while

3

the remainder are respectively united.

The general form (of this seal) should indeed be read in accordance with the passage from the Lasso of Skillful Means, but it in no way contradicts the latter two (interpretations), according to which the fingers are conjoined in the described manner because they correspond to the actual appearance of the five enlightened families (in particular contexts).

Thirdly, there are the seals or hand-emblems of the different deities which emanate from that (general seal). This has five parts of which the first, concerning the seals of the male & female consorts of the five enlightened families, itself comprises five stanzas. The first of these, concerning the seals of the central deities, i.e. the male & female (Vairocana, comments on Ch. 8, 5):

The great seal (mahāmudrā) is applied by meditation on oneself as the buddha-body of the central deity (Vairocana). The binding commitment seal⁵ is applied when, from that disposition, the four (bzhi) other seed-syllables ('bru) apart from the syllable HŪM are concealed (sbas) on (the respective fingers of) his right hand clenched in the gesture of the "indestructible fist" (rdo-rie khu-tshur):⁶ and (nas), behind the raised middle finger, cohere (bkan) at his heart (thugs-kar).

The doctrinal seal (dharmamudrā) is then applied when HŪM is visualised in the middle of a lunar disk on the tip (rtse-mor) of his raised (bsgreng) middle finger, identified with the syllable HŪM (HŪM).⁷ The visualised commitment seal is applied when this

syllable HŪM melts into light, from which there then appears a five-pronged vajra (rdo-rie) blazing ('bar) forth light.

Meanwhile, his left hand forms the "indestructible fist" and then restrained (brtul) within it are the syllables on their lunar disks (zla). These are the five concealed (sbas) seed-syllables ('bru) representing the female warriors which hold and ring (gsil) a bell (dril) with their indestructible fist, and (zhing) clasp his female consort (Dhâtviśvarī). With an embrace ('khril-ba'i tshul) they place the bell on (la) Amitâbha, i.e. the left thigh of his female consort or "reality" (chos), and they support it (brten) at her side. This is the seal of the male consort through which the male consort (Vairocana) makes offerings to the female consort (Dhâtviśvarī). When applied, it is explained to be the action seal (karmamudrâ). While that hand-emblem (the bell) resounds on his left side, the visualised doctrinal seal (dharmamudrâ) is applied when his (other) symbolic hand-emblem (the vajra) dissolves into the heart-centre of his female consort, and the expressed doctrinal seal (dharmamudrâ) is applied when he utters HŪM VAJRADHRK. In this way there are seven aspects gathered within the nature of the four seals: Both the visualised commitment seal and the binding commitment seal are included in the commitment seal (samayamudrâ). Both the visualised doctrinal seal and the expressed doctrinal seal are included in the doctrinal seal (dharmamudrâ). The other (two seals) should be known as described.

As for the seal of the female consort (Dhātviśvari): The great seal is applied during meditation on oneself as Vajradhātviśvari. The commitment seal is applied from this disposition when, apart from the syllable MUM, the other four seed-syllables ('bru-bzhi) are concealed (sbaḡ) within the lunar disks of her left hand, clenched in the "indestructible fist", and (naḡ) the middle finger coheres at her heart (tḡuḡa-kar pkan). The visualised commitment seal is applied when on the [raised] tip [baḡraḡg]- (rḡse-mor) of the middle finger, itself expressed as MUM, there is visualised a ringing bell (dril-gsil) which blazes forth ('bar) from her syllable MUM (MUM) on its lunar disk. Meanwhile, on the solar disks (nyi-ma) of her right hand the five seed-syllables ('bru-lḡga) representing the male warriors are placed upon the right thigh of the male consort and embrace "activity", (i.e. the right foot or Amoghasiddhi, laḡ-su-'khril). Locked in embrace, with her head slightly bowing (btud-de) towards the male consort, she looks on (blta) the face of her male consort with a smiling demeanour ('dzum-pa'i mdanḡa-kvḡs). The action seal is applied in this way. Then, the expressed doctrinal seal is applied when, ringing (the bell) or hand-emblem on her right side, and reciting MUM DHĀTVIŚVARI, her symbolic hand-emblem (the bell) is visualised to dissolve into the heart-centre of her male consort.

Now, in order to illustrate the five pristine cognitions, there are genuine symbols such as the vajra and the wheel. In the aforementioned manner (of male & female Vairocana), these emblems extensively apply to the other (conquerors) as well. (First),

there are the seals of the male & female Aksobhya (which comment on Ch. 8, 7-8):

Oneself is visualised as the deity (Aksobhya), and in that disposition the right hand is clenched in the "indestructible fist". On its solar disks there are, apart from the syllable OM, four (bzhi) other seed-syllables ('bru) which are concealed (sbas) within it, and (nas), behind the raised (bsgreng) index finger, cohere at his heart (thugs-kar bkan). On the tip of his (rtse-mor) index finger with the syllable OM (OM), the OM melts and therefrom is visualised a four-spoked wheel ('khor-lo) blazing ('bar) forth light. Meanwhile, the left hand forms the "indestructible fist" within which syllables are restrained (brtul) on their lunar disks (zla). These are the five concealed (sbas) seed-syllables ('bru) representing the female warriors which hold and ring (gsil) a bell (dril) with their "indestructible fist", and (zhing) so clasp the female consort (Buddhalocanâ). With an embrace ('khril-pa'i tshul-gyis) they place (the bell) by her left thigh, and support it on "reality" (chos-la brten).

Again, (in the case of the female consort Buddhalocanâ), there are four seed-syllables ('bru-bzhi) concealed (sbas-nas) within her right hand which cohere (bkan) behind the index finger at the heart (thugs-kar). On the tip of (rtse-mor) of her raised (bsgreng) index finger with the syllable LAM (LAM) the LAM melts and therefrom a ringing bell (dril-gsil) blazes forth ('bar) light, pressing against the heart. Meanwhile, situated on the solar disks (nyi-ma) of her right hand, the five seed-syllables

('bru-lnga) are drawn into (an "indestructible fist") and, placed upon the right thigh of her male consort, they embrace "activity" (las-su 'khril). And she looks on (blta) the male consort with a smiling demeanour ('dzum-pa'i mdangs-kvis), bowing (btud-de) slightly towards his face.

The seals of the male & female Ratnasambhava (comment on Ch. 8, 9-10):

Oneself is visualised as (Ratnasambhava), and then there are four seed-syllables ('bru-bzhi) which are concealed (sbas) within the right hand of the male consort, and (nas) cohere (bkan) behind the thumb at his heart (thugs-kar). On the tip of (rtse-mor) the [raised] thumb with the syllable SVĀ (SVĀ-bsgreng), the SVĀ melts and thence there is visualised a gem (rin-chen) blazing ('bar) forth light and held at the heart. Meanwhile, situated on their lunar disks (zla) of his left hand, are the restrained (brtul) syllables. These are the five concealed (sbas) seed-syllables ('bru) which hold and ring (gsil) a bell (dril) and (zhing) clasp his female consort (Māmaki). With an embrace ('khril-pa'i tshul-gvis) in which the male & female consorts are without duality, they support (brten) the bell at the side on (la) her left thigh, which is Amitābha or "reality" (chos).

Again, as for (the female consort Māmaki), there are four seed-syllables ('bru-bzhi) which are concealed (sbas) within her left hand, and (nas) cohere (bkan) behind the thumb at her heart (thugs-kar). On the tip of (rtse-mor) the raised thumb with the syllable MĀM (MĀM-bsgreng), a ringing bell (dril-gsil) is visual-

ly created, to blaze forth ('bar) light from the MAM, and it is held at her heart-centre. Meanwhile, on the solar disks (nyi-ma) of her right hand the five seed-syllables ('bru-lnga) are drawn into (an "indestructible fist") and, placed on the right thigh of the male consort, they embrace "activity" (las-su 'khril). And, bowing (btud-de) in this guise towards the male consort, she looks on with a smiling demeanour ('dzum-pa'i mdangs-kvis blta). This is the seal or hand-emblem of the female consort (Mâmaki).

The seals of the male & female Amitâbha (comment on Ch. 8, 11-12):

One is visualised as (Amitâbha). In that disposition, four seed-syllables ('bru-bzhi) are concealed (sbas) within the right hand of the male consort, and (nas) cohere (bkan) behind the raised fourth finger, at the heart (thugs-kar). On the tip of (rtse-mor) the raised (bsgreng) fourth finger with the syllable AM (ÂM), the AM melts and thence there is visualised a lotus (padma) blazing ('bar) forth light. Along with this hand-emblem at the heart-centre, the syllables of his left hand are restrained on their lunar disks (zla-brtul). These five seed-syllables ('bru) are concealed (sbas) within the left hand, while they hold and ring (gsil) the bell (dril) with their "indestructible fist", and (zhing) with an embrace ('khril-pa'i tshul-gvis) of his female consort, support (brten) the bell at his side on (la) her left thigh, which is Amitâbha or "reality" (chos).

Again, (as for the female consort Pândaravâsini): there are four seed-syllables ('bru-bzhi) which are concealed (sbas) within her left hand, and (nas) which cohere behind the fourth finger at her heart (thugs-kar). On the tip of (rtse-mor) the raised (bsgreng) fourth finger with the syllable PÂM (PÂM), there is visualised from the PÂM a ringing bell (dril-gsil) which blazes forth ('bar) and is held at the heart-centre. Meanwhile, on the solar disks (nyi-ma) of her right hand the five seed-syllables ('bru-lnga) are drawn into (an "indestructible fist") and the fingers are placed on his right thigh where they embrace "activity" (las-su 'khril). And bowing (btud-de) towards her male consort, she looks on with a smiling demeanour ('dzum-pa'i mdangs-kvis blta).

The seals of the male & female Amoghasiddhi (comment on Ch. 8, 13-14):

One is visualised as (Amoghasiddhi). There are four seed-syllables ('bru-bzhi) concealed (sbas-nas) within his right hand, which cohere (bkan) behind the little finger at his heart (thugs-kar). On the tip of his (rtse-mor) raised (bsgreng) little finger with the syllable HÂ (HÂ-bsgreng) there is visualised a sword (ral-gri) blazing ('bar) from the HÂ, and held at the heart-centre. Meanwhile, the syllables of his left hand are restrained on their lunar disks (zla-brtul). These five seed-syllables ('bru) are concealed (sbas) within it while they ring the bell (dril-gsil) and (zhing) with an embrace ('khril-pa'i tshul-gvis) of his female consort (Samayatârâ), place the bell at her left thigh and thus support it on "reality" (chos-la brten).

Again, (as for the female consort Samayatârâ), four seed-syllables ('bru-bzhi) are concealed (sbas) within her left hand and (nas) cohere (bkan) behind the little finger at her heart (thugs-kar). On the tip of her (rtse-mor) raised (bsgreng) little finger with the syllable TÂM (TÂM), a ringing bell blazes forth (dril-gsil 'bar) from the TÂM, and is held at the heart-centre. Meanwhile, on the solar disks (nyi-ma) of her right hand the five seed-syllables ('bru-lnga) are drawn into (an "indestructible fist") and then, placed on the right thigh of her male consort, they embrace "activity" (las-su 'khril). And bowing (btud-de) towards the male consort, she looks on with a smiling demeanour ('dzum-pa'i mdangs-kvis blta).

Secondly, there are the seals or hand-emblems of the male & female bodhisattvas. (This comments on Ch. 8, 15):

These are similar to the aforementioned (seals of the conquerors). In particular, the male consorts hold the symbolic hand-emblems which emerge from their respective seed-syllables at the heart-centre in their right hands, and the female consorts hold theirs at the heart-centre in their left hands. The left hands of the male consorts in addition support (a bell) on the left thigh of the female consort, which represents reality; and the right hand of the female consort should embrace the right thigh of the male consort (representing activity).

Then there are the symbolic hand-emblems of the male consorts, i.e. the symbolic hand-emblems (mtshan) which begin with (la-sogs) the night lotus (utpala) that emerges from the syllable MŪM

(of Mañjuśrī) and the orange tree (klu-shing) that emerges from the syllable MAI (of Maitreya). These are namely, the shoot of gems (rin-chen mvu-gu) which emerges from the syllable KSIM (of Ksitigarbha), the blazing sword (ral-gri 'bar) of light which emerges from the syllable TRĀM (of Akāśagarbha), the white lotus (padma dkar-po) which emerges from the syllable HRIH (of Avalokiteśvara), the blazing vajra (rdo-rie 'bar) which emerges from the syllable JIM (of Vajrapāni), the doctrinal wheel (chos-kyi 'khor-lo) which emerges from the syllable THLIM (of Nivāranaviskambhin), and the corn-ear of gems (rin-chen snve-ma) which emerges from the syllable HŪM (of Samantabhadra).

Then, there are the symbolic hand-emblems of the female consorts, namely, the mirror illustrative of beautiful form (gzugs-mdzes) which emerges from the syllable HŪM (of Lāsya), the garland of gems (rin-chen 'phreng-ba) which emerges from the syllable TRĀM (of Mālyā), the lute (pi-vang) which emerges from the syllable HRIH (of Gītā), and the supreme dancing gesture (gar-mkhan mchog-nyid-de) which emerges from the syllable AH (of Nartī). This is indicated by the three-pronged vajra which she carries above her head in a dancing movement. Also included among these are the flower garland (me-tog 'phreng) which emerges from the syllable HŪM (of Puspā), the censer of supreme incense (dang spos-mchod-ma) which emerges from the syllable JAH (of Dhūpā), the butter-lamp (mar-me) which emerges from the syllable VAM (of Ālokā), and the doctrinal conch with its scented oil and so forth (byug-pa) which emerges from the syllable HOH (of Gandhā).

In the case of the female consorts, the right hand of the female consort embraces ('khril) the right thigh of the male consort which represents "activity" (las-la), and (zhing) in the case of the male consorts, the left hand supports (a bell) on (la-brten) or clasps the left thigh of the female consort, representing "reality" (chos). The heads (dbu-rnams) of the male consorts are slightly tilted ('byo) towards their female consorts, and (zhing) the female consorts are bowed ('dud-pa'i tshul) in the presence of their male consorts. As in the case of the aforementioned great seal (gong-gi phvag-rgya chen-po bzhin), the male & female consorts embrace in the disposition of (-kvi ngang-du 'khril) the expanse (dbvings) of reality, the nature of supreme bliss without conceptual elaboration, which is non-dual (gnvis-med) in terms of skillful means and discriminative awareness.

Thirdly, there are the seals or hand-emblems of the male & female gatekeepers. (This comments on Ch. 8, 16):

Among the eight male & female wrathful deities (khro-bo) at the four gates (sgo-bzhi'i) of the mandala, the seals or hand-emblems of (-i phvag-rgya-ni) the four male consorts are as follows: The cudgel surmounted by human skulls which is brandished (nri-mgo gdengs), the five-pronged vajra (rdo-rie) which subjugates (gnon), the skull with large snakes (thod-sbrul chen-po) which subjugates (gnon-pa-dang) by ensnarement, and the crossed vajra which subjugates through activity (rdo-rie rgya-gram las-kvi gnon) emerge from the respective syllables HŪM (of Yamāntaka, Mahābala, Hayagrīva, and Amṛtakundalin). While the four (gatekeepers) raise these emblems with their right hands, and clasp

their respective female consorts with their left hands, their index fingers are poised in the gesture of menace. ¹⁰

The seals of the female consorts, emerging from the four syllables PHAT (of Ankuśâ, Pâśâ, Sphotâ, and Ganthâ), are respectively the iron hook (lcags-kvu), the lasso (zhags-pa), the iron chain (lcags-sgrogs/ sphota), and the bell (ho/ dril-bu). These are grasped with their left hands, while their right hands, clenched in an "indestructible fist", clasp their male consorts.

These (de-dag) male & female gatekeepers, abiding at the four gates (sgo-bzhir gnas-pa) are such that the female consorts bow ('dud-tshul) to their male consorts, and the male consorts are slightly tilting towards their female consorts. So the male & female consorts embrace ('khril-ba) in a disposition of non-dual reality, in the manner (bzhin) previously (gong-ma) revealed.

Fourthly, there are the seals or hand-emblems of the six sages (which comment on Ch. 8, 17):

By the power of those to be trained, the six sages (thub-drug) have diverse (sna-tshogs-te) seals (phyag-rgya). Although they are without specific definition, number and extent, when subsumed (mdor-bsdus) according to their respective classes (of living beings), they number six seals (phyag-rgya drug yin-no). What, one might ask, are these? According to the Indestructible Reality ¹¹ (NGB. Vol. 15) they are as follows:

They should be known as the seals or hand-emblems
Of the lute, the armour, the begging bowl,
The casket, the book and the fire & water.

Emerging from their respective seed-syllables (OM), these seals or hand-emblems are maintained at the heart-centres (of the respective sages). One might think, by the way, that because the sages have no female consorts they conform to the path in which skillful means and discriminative awareness are not coalesced. In that case, it is true that they lack a female consort who appears as a referential object, but they are revealed to have the non-referential expanse as their female consort. Therefore, their female consort (yum-ni) is the expanse of reality (chos-kyi dbvings), non-referential (dmigs-med) in all respects and free from extremes of conceptual elaboration. There are some who hold that on the left side of the six sages there are six Samantabhadris, but that would contradict the precise number of deities (i.e. forty-two). There are also those who say their (consorts) are combined in Samantabhadri, but that is incorrect because during meditation one would confuse the visualised deities and their correct number. Again, there are some who hold that the six sages have no female consort, saying:

In order to benefit eternalistic extremists
The buddhas' queen is most secret.

The latter observation, however, refers to the circumstances of the Yogatantras, and in this context (of Unsurpassed Yogatantra) it is not relevant. Although the sage of the human beings

(Śākyamuni) did renounce the attributes of desire, he did not say that other (buddhas) should renounce them because emanational buddha-bodies appear to each in accord with his or her needs. Therefore, the actual absence of a female consort depends on (the type of) emanation and the number of deities (in the mandala).¹²

Fifthly, there are the seals or hand-emblems of the male & female consorts Samantabhadra (which comment on Ch. 8, 18):

The two hands of Samantabhadra (kun-bzang) are meditatively equipped (mnyam-bzhag). From his palms he displays the basis that arises as the glow (of the mandala) so that his five pristine cognitions (ye-shes) become diffused ('phro) throughout the ten directions as light-rays of five distinctly radiant colours. Meanwhile, his feet assume the posture of indestructible reality (rdo-rje'i skvil-krung). The seal or gesture of the one who is his female consort (yum-'gyur), Samantabhadri, is perfect in sameness (mnyam-rdzogs) like that of the male consort; and her two feet are seated in the lotus posture (padma'i dkvil).

Now, all of these (different seals or hand-emblems) are shown to be reduced in number as follows. (This comments on Ch. 8, 19): Apart from these different seals which have been revealed, there are moreover (gzhan-yang) diverse modes of seal or hand-emblem (phyag-rgya sna-tshogs-te). When each enlightened family is attained individually, these deities may be depicted with an identical hand-emblem which is symbolic of that particular enlightened family, such as the vajra. Alternatively (yang-na), either the very (nyid) seals of their five (respective)

tathāgatas (de-bzhin gshes-pa) should be applied, as indicated
13
above, or (dam yang-na) else the simple folding gesture of
(nvid) the "indestructible palms" (rdo-rie thal-mo). There are
some who teach that these three steps indicate that the male &
female consorts Samantabhadra have diverse seals. 14 This is the
point in the following passage from the Indestructible Reality
(NGB. Vol. 15):

The male & female Samantabhadra, sky-like in colour,
Have diverse and indefinite seals.

In addition to their meditative equipoise
And diffusion of pristine cognition,

They are depicted with the vajra and bell.

This passage however concerns the context in which the central
deity is arrayed with the body-colour and symbolic hand-emblems
of Samantabhadra; and it is said that the seals of the male &
female Samantabhadra through whom the glow arises (gdangs-'char-
ba'i kun-bzang yab-yum) are exclusively those of meditative
equipoise, because they do not lapse into partiality.

Synopsis of the Mandala of Seals according to the Resultant
Supreme Pristine Cognition (288.4-294.5):

The third part (of the detailed exegesis of the nature of the
mandala of seals-- see p. 718) is a synopsis of the seals
according to the resultant pristine cognition. It is threefold,
comprising a general teaching on the natural seal of the abiding
nature, a detailed exegesis on the seals which provisionally
appear, and action on behalf of living beings through the seal

which is the conclusive result.

15

i. The first (comments on Ch. 8, 20):

The essence of originally pure mind-as-such is the disposition of the great seal (phvag-rgva chen-po'i), a genuine presence whereby all accumulated ideas that arise primordially abide as the supreme provision (tshogs-mchog-ni) of pristine cognition. If (na), realised through the kindness of the guru, this (great seal) is encountered ('byor) by the mind of one who simultaneously has (ldan) the objective attributes of apparitional skillful means (thabs-dang) and the naturally liberated awareness where discriminative awareness (shes-rab) arises without grasping, there is neither stirring (ma-bskyod) of the body nor movement (ma-bsgul) of the limbs. Indeed, all (kun) six classes of living beings and paths of conduct in their entirety (thams-cad) abide (gnas) and are gathered in the disposition of the great seal (phvag-rgva chen-po'i ngang-du), so that no artificial seals are applied.

ii. The second (the detailed exegesis of the seals which provisionally appear) has four sections, the first of which concerns the emanation of the mandala of the forty-two buddhas. (It comments on Ch. 8, 21):

The energy of this (mandala) is increasingly acquired by experiencing the contemplation in which the hand-emblems are emanated in the above manner. In this way, the limbs (van-lag) of the body (of the central deity) are endowed (ldan) with the forty-two (bzhi-bcu rtsa-gnyis) deities and the benefit of

realisation then emerges.

Now, when oneself is visualised as the male & female Vairocana, the five male consorts-- Aksobhya, Amitâbha, Vairocana, Ratnasambhava, and Amoghasiddhi, are located respectively in the crown, throat, heart, navel and secret centres of the male consort. The four spiritual warriors of buddha-mind-- Ksitigarbha, Vajrapâni, Akâṣagarbha, and Avalokiteśvara, are respectively the right eye, ear, nostril and side of the tongue; and similarly the four corresponding organs on the left side are the four spiritual warriors of buddha-speech-- Maitreya, Nivâranaviskambhin, Samantabhadra, and Mañjuśrî. His right hand is (Yamântaka) the liberator of Yama; and his left hand is (Mahâbala) the liberator of discriminative awareness. His left foot is (Hayagrîva) the liberator of the lotus, and his right foot is (Amrtakundalin) the liberator of impediments. These are the four male gatekeepers. The six sages are respectively the crown, throat, heart, navel, secret centres and the soles of the feet. Thus, there are twenty-three deities (within the body of Vairocana).

Meanwhile, the five female consorts-- Buddhalocanâ, Pândaravâsini, Dhâtviśvarî, Mâmakî, and Samayatârâ-- are located respectively in the crown, throat, heart, navel and secret centre of the female consort (Dhâtviśvarî). The four female deities of the sense-objects-- Lâsyâ, Mâlyâ, Gitâ, and Nartî-- are respectively her left eye, ear, nostril, and side of the tongue; and similarly the four corresponding organs of the right side are the four female deities of time, namely Dhûpâ, Puspâ, Âlokâ, and Gandhâ. Her left hand is Ankuṣâ, and her right hand is Pâśâ;

while her right foot is Sphotâ and her left Ganthâ. These are the four female gatekeepers. Thus, there are seventeen deities within the female consort (Dhâtviśvarī).

Combined together, these forty are the so-called deities of skillful means because they coarsely and outwardly abide. With the addition of the two basic deities, the male & female (Vairocana), there are altogether forty-two deities refined (on this path). The number of male and female consorts is unequal because the sages have no female consorts; and the male & female Samantabhadra are (in this context) subsumed within the nature of the basic deities.

Once this excellent visualisation has become radiant, there follows the second section concerning the emanation of the mandala of the thousand buddhas (which comments on Ch. 8, 22):

In the heart-centres of these (de-nyid) forty (deities), there abide corresponding beings of pristine cognition (jñānasattva) similar to (the deities) in appearance. The latter are called the deities of discriminative awareness, forty in number, because they abide subtly and internally as limbs (yan-lag) which (the deities) themselves (bdag-ste) emanate (spros).

Although the forty-two (bzhi-bcu rtsa-gnyis) deities of skillful means are mentioned (at this point in the text), they number forty with the exclusion of the two basic deities, the male & female (Vairocana).

These (forty) then become ('gyur) one hundred and twenty when diffused ('phro) in a threefold (gsum) manner, as the deities who are blessed respectively by buddha-body, speech and mind. Each of these also has the five deities as their crown ornament, making six hundred. There are also another three hundred and sixty because those deities who are blessed by buddha-body, speech and mind are themselves threefold. With the addition of the forty deities of discriminative awareness, there is therefore a mandala of one thousand buddhas refined (on this path). ..

Now, in the opinion of some, there are forty deities of skillful means, forty deities of discriminative awareness, forty deities of buddha-body, forty deities of buddha-speech, and forty deities of buddha-mind, i.e. two hundred, each of which has the five crown ornaments, so that there is said to be a mandala of a thousand (buddhas). The point is identical. 18 ..

When these (deities) have been excellently visualised, there is the third section concerning the radiance of the mandala of the 21,000 buddhas. (It comments on Ch. 8, 23): ..

Illustrated by (gis) the supreme central deity (gtso-mchog), the male & female Vairocana, who is endowed in this way (de-ltar ldan-pa'i) with the thousand buddhas, the four (other) enlightened families of conquerors (rgyal-ba) and Samantabhadra the supreme conqueror (rgyal-mchog) are also estimated to be similarly endowed (de-bzhin-du), so that each has a thousand (buddhas), making six thousand. Also endowed in the same way as these are the twelve (bcu-gnyis) (surrounding pairs), namely, the

eight pairs of male & female spiritual warriors, and the four pairs of male & female gatekeepers-- twelve thousand in number. The six (drug) who have a diffusion of blazing light (-gi 'od 'phro-'bar) are the six sages, who have no female consorts. The mandala to be refined (on this path) altogether has an enumeration of twenty-one-thousand three-hundred-and-twelve (deities). Those who hold it to comprise twenty-four thousand (deities) conceitedly attribute female consorts to the six sages.

Once this (mandala) has been experienced, there is the fourth section concerning the refinement of the mandala of inconceivable buddhas (which comments on Ch. 8, 24):

When each buddha, including these (de-la sogs-te) forms, is in turn visualised as twenty-one thousand buddhas, the mandala (of deities) which is to be refined is inconceivable (bsam-mi-khyab).

Now, the bla-ma Rong-zom-pa comments (on this same passage) as follows: A single buddha-body of the deity (such as Vairocana), is endowed with forty-two limbs, and each of these also is endowed with three deities blessed respectively by buddha-body, speech and mind. So it is that these themselves are the emanated limbs (van-lag spros-pa dag-ste). The forty-two (deities) become diffused in a threefold manner. Also, he explains that the twelve (surrounding pairs) and the six (sages) have a diffusion of blazing light because the deities who are the limbs are also estimated to have the same (number of internal deities) as the central deity himself, so that in each one-hundred-and-twenty (deities) emerge.

These apparitional deities are established as the result through the previous experience of yoga, and they are also established as the path because they are the causal basis for attaining power over the lifespan during the performance of feast-offering ceremonies.
21

iii. The third concerns actions on behalf of living beings through the conclusive seals. It has five parts, the first of which reveals their diversity for the sake of those to be trained. (It comments on Ch. 8, 25):

When conclusive buddhahood has been attained through meditation in that manner during the circumstances of the path, in the unthinkable (bsam-vas-su) buddhafi elds subsumed within the ten directions and four times (phyogs-bcu dus-bzhi) the purposes of (-'i don-rnams) the seals which bring about the training ('dul-ba) of inestimable trainees are differently revealed (so-sor ston) by the buddha-body, acting on behalf of living beings in the form of buddha, universal monarch, and so forth, corresponding to the perception of the different sentient beings.

The second concerns the appearances which accord with this teaching. (It comments on Ch. 8, 26):

As all (thams-cad) the vehicles (theg-pa)-- including the high (mtho) ones, from mantra to transcendental perfection, and the low (dman) ones of the pious attendants and self-centred buddhas, and (dang) as the eternalistic extremists with their erroneous (phyin-ci-log-rnams) view and conduct and the unthinkably

(bsam-yas) numerous ordinary beings; and (dang) as all the great assemblies (tshogs-chen thams-cad-la) including those of deities who are peaceful (zhi) for the sake of trainees and wrathful deities (khro'i) such as Mâra and Yama, they appear differently (so-sor), training each according to his or her needs, and they are everywhere perceived (kun-tu snang), corresponding (mtshun-byas) to volition.

The third illustrates that although they diversely appear they do not deviate from a unitary state. (It comments on Ch. 8, 27):

As in the case ('dra-ba) for example (dper-na) of a single theatrical dancer (gar-mkhan-nvid) whose right leg is extended and left leg is drawn in, and who appears as the manifold peaceful and wrathful deities, this diverse (sna-tshogs) movement of the peaceful and wrathful deities and so forth is indeed revealed (ston) spontaneously and through spirituality which corresponds to the perception of living beings; but it is not (ma) purposefully depicted (bkod) or specifically referred to in isolation from (las) the unique nature of the primordially pure body (lus) of pristine cognition.

The fourth teaches that on account of those to be trained, the seals are indefinite in number. (It comments on Ch. 8, 28):

In brief (mdor-na), all seals or hand-emblems (phvag-rgva thams-cad-ni) including those of supreme enlightenment and those which discipline Mâra, cannot be described (brjod-du med) exclusively as "this" ('di-zhes) finite category or as "merely one", (gcig-ces), but they are multiplied twice (gnvis) through the power of skillful means and discriminative awareness, and thrice (dang-

gsum-du) through the buddha-body, speech and mind. They are moreover emanated (rnam-par 'phro) as the four rites of enlightened activity and so forth because this movement (bskyod) of the body and (dang) all emanation (spro-ba) of its limbs as seals or hand-emblems are indeed ('ang) present as the real nature (de-bzhin-nvid) of the deities' seals.

The fifth is the gathering of all (movements) in the great seal of the abiding nature (which comments on Ch. 8, 29):

In brief (mdor-na), all (thams-cad) movement (bskyod) of the limbs and stirring (bsgul) of the body in their entirety (kun) abide in the disposition of the great seal (phvag-rgya chen-po'i ngang-du gnas); but the abiding nature (gnas-nvid) of all is the reality of primordial buddhahood which does not (mi) itself abide (gnas) even minutely as impure (gestures of) sealing or phenomena. Indeed there is no such abiding at all (gnas-pa'ang min). Rather, one's body abides as the seal or mandala of the deity, one's speech as that of mantra, and one's mind as that of reality.

Such (de-skad) verses as these were explained (bshad) by Samantabhadra himself (nvid-kvis), the supreme one (mchog) in whom the two obscurations are without exception pure (dag), the buddha endowed with the excellence of fine learning. This indeed is a ground for conviction, as is said in the Sūtra Requested by Jñānottara (T. 82):

This is because one whose defects have ceased

Has no reason to tell lies.

The conclusion (comments on Ch. 8, 30):

This completes (-'o) the exegesis of the eighth chapter (le'u ste brgvad-pa) from the (las) most Secret Nucleus (gsang-ba'i snying-po) that is the seal of pristine cognition, Definitive With Respect To The Real (de-kho-na-nvid nges-pa) abiding nature of reality, entitled (-'i) the Consecration (byin-gwis brlabs) of All (thams-cad) Limbs (yan-lag) of the body and thought as (du) the primordially pure Mandala (dkyil-'khor) and the Subsequent (nas) Emanation (spros-pa) of the natural Seals or Hand-emblems (phvag-rgya).

Chapter Nine

Secret Commitment of the Indestructible Array

Root-text:

Then the tathágata, the Great Joyous One, became equipoised in the array of the secret commitments of indestructible reality, and then uttered this meaningful expression. [1]

In the palms of the great seal,

The most subtle and supreme commitment [2]

Is the genuine mandala of buddha-mind.

It should be four inches (sor-mo) in its dimension. [3]

Endowed with five seeds, five scents, five gems,

Five essences, five medicines, and five nectars,

It is exceedingly level,

And its lines should be pitched with awareness. [4]

It should have a four-spoked circle and perimeter

Endowed with a central axis and radial lines,

And a courtyard with four corners,

A quadrangle, and embrasured gates. [5]

On disks of sun and moon, the size of a round fingernail,

On a lotus seat, the size of a chick-pea,

There is the syllable, the size of a mustard seed,

And derived therefrom the (symbolic) seal is drawn,

The size of a sesame seed. [6]

Surrounded by diverse kinds of manufactured cotton,
And by ornaments, garlands, potables, and savouries,
Offerings are excellently made with provisions--
A cloud-mass of songs, verses, dancing,
Gesticulations, and musical trappings.
The female consorts, the female gatekeepers,
And the female spiritual warriors
Make worthy offerings, just as they are desired. [7]

The fire which has become a mouth,
Endowed with characteristics of shape and colour,
Is summoned forth into (the hearth)
And offerings of the four rites are excellently presented
With provisions of food, drink, and savouries. [8]

This is similar for the mandala of wrathful deities.
One who has refined the subtlest (contemplation)
Should indeed act in the same manner
In the case of the unthinkable (mandalas),
Insofar as they have been estimated by awareness. [9]

The great seal through which offerings are made
Comprises the buddhafiels of all ten directions
With their provisions, which form a wish-fulfilling
Cloud-mass of the mind--
There is the ground composed of diverse gemstones
Which is pliant, soft and pleasant to touch.
Beautifully designed and bedecked,

It blazes forth as a mass of precious things
Which are the origin of all.
There are shapely pools, most delicious to taste and cool,
Diverse mansions of gemstones,
Ornaments, groves of wish-granting trees,
Melodious songs, the sound of poetic verses,
Canopies, victory-banners, robes, parasols,
Long pendants, shoulder-ornaments, half-pendants,
Diverse [/ supreme] kinds of food and drink,
And there are male and female deities,
Themselves ornamented beautifully and
Numerous as atomic particles,
Who fill the space of the ten directions
With their unthinkable dancing, gesticulations and so on,
And then make offerings extensively to all mandalas. [10]

..

According to distinctions in the clarity of fortunate ones,
One is either gradually or immediately
Equiposed in the expanse of reality. [11]
And one should meditate on the great seal
Through which these offerings are made. [12]

When she (the karmamudrâ) has radiance or is consecrated,
In the manner of the trichiliochosm absorbed in a mustard seed,
Offerings are made after inviting the mandalas

..

from the expanse,
And the supreme commitment of accomplishment
(Is obtained) once they have been pleased. [13]

Through offerings of the Great Identity
All mandalas of the buddhas without exception are pleased.
..
All living beings within the three realms of existence
Are filled with supreme delight. [14]

Through stability in the Magical Net
All mandalas of the buddhas without exception,
..
Which emerge in the ten directions and four times,
And (the beings of pristine cognition) become manifest
To living beings of the three world-systems. [15]

Body, speech, mind, and all phenomena
Do not abide in any respect, and are non-referential.
Like an optical illusion, through this union,
Meditate on the space within space. [16]

Having performed all these, the mighty lord
Should enter with awareness.
Then the student should be ushered in. [17]

Then this supreme son of the enlightened family
Offers the kingdom and his own body,
His children, wife, and riches,
Which are most dear and pleasant to his mind. [18]

If offerings of the five raptures are made to the mighty lord,
Offerings are made to all mandalas.
..
It goes without saying that (offerings are made)
To the mandala which is at hand!
..
All defects are purified. [19]

If the ascetic discipline of faith and perseverance
is well understood,

The empowerments of beneficence are given,
And the empowerments of ability
Should be given sequentially,
And received with compassion,
Such that they are not unproductive. [20]

Alternatively, with palms joined together,
And in the lap of the great seal,
One who is learned should confer (empowerment) in the mandala
Which is a full finger-span in dimension,
In accordance with the ritual. [21]

Alternatively, on a most level site
The mandala should be a full cubit in dimension,
Or a full body-length in dimension,
Or three body lengths in dimension.
With kīlas, threads, colour powders,
And a pleasant assistant,
Beautified with robes and ornaments,
The excellent ritual in which the lines are pitched
Should be performed by the great learned one,
Twisting (the threads) together. [22]

Alternatively, it should be sixteen, and twenty
Or twenty-five cubits in dimension.

One meditates on the five mandalas of enlightened families,
..
And the forms endowed with buddha-body, speech and mind
are also arrayed. [23]

Alternatively, it is one reach of hearing, one yojana.
Or an unthinkable expanse of space in its dimension.
Therein one meditates on the diverse mandalas of the buddhas,
..
And, in order that they might be revealed
To deluded unseeing beings,
They should be drawn with coloured powders
Of twenty-five hues or of five hues.
These are to be painted according to the ritual
In which instruction is given. [24]

The supreme infinite display of contemplation
Is endowed with syllables, symbols, heart-mantras,
Seals, or the buddha-body, speech and mind.
Consecrated in that (mandala),
..
There are amazing and wondrous accomplishments
Which are the commitment of all the buddhas.
If the sequence of liberation will be obtained
Even when seals have been made from clay and so forth,
It goes without saying that (mind) will be purified
By pure pristine cognition. This itself is (buddhahood)! [25]

The Great Identity of the mandalas
Of the directions and times
Invites all mandalas from the mandala
Of non-referential buddha-mind. [26]

Through meditative union, characteristic of entry
Into the self-manifesting indivisible mandala.
The mandala of ritual service is well perfected,
Emerging from all directions and times.
This is the supreme commitment of the closest ones. [27]

The wish-granting tree,
The wish-fulfilling gemstone,
And all things that emerge
Are not substantial,
But are the steadfast merit
Of one's own mind. [28]

This wondrous, marvellous, amazing reality
Does not extraneously exist and come forth,
But it emerges in those dispositions
Which have the nature of discriminative awareness,
Steadfast in skillful means.
The real nature of the expanse of discriminative awareness
Becomes the seals of skillful means.
Thus pristine cognition is displayed in pristine cognition
And the display of pristine cognition is itself gathered. [29]

The conquerors actually emerge and grant protection.
They confer blessing and also become visible
In the same (aforementioned) manner.
With charisma which can perform actions,
This indestructible reality of magical display
Is supreme among kings. [30]

Having perfected the five kinds of ritual,
If one perfectly endowed with the five requisites
And perfect in the five aspects of mantra
Perseveres to undertake (practice) without degeneration [31]
The genuine accomplishment of empowered awareness
Will be achieved in six or twelve months,
Or in fourteen, or in sixteen.
Within sixteen lifespans (one will obtain)
The spontaneously perfect five buddha-bodies. [32]

In that nature, the seminal point of pristine cognition,
The appearance of the seminal point
Of pristine cognition itself is inconceivable,
Infinitely supreme, and manifestly perfect
Throughout the ten directions and four times. [33]

The buddhafiield, pure and unthinkable,
In which there is the celestial palace
Free from spatial dimensions,
With its ornamental (form) on the wheel,
And the assembly of its display,
Comprises all unthinkable mandalas, without exception.

..

When it is seen, mastery is attained
And the benefit which emerges
From its vast buddha-speech
Is the harmonious pristine cognition,
Manifest in and of itself. [34]

The real nature which is free from
The single and the multiple,
And is without extremes or middle,
Is not seen even by the buddhas.
The naturally present pristine cognition
Appears without abiding. [35]

Purified of applied misconceptions,
That pristine cognition is not extraneous to the expanse.
As such, it makes connection through great spirituality,
Whereby it appears to the six classes of living beings
In all times and places without exception. [36]

If the faithful ones enter in the mandala of supreme bliss,
Where the two spouses (are present),^{..} or when
The five (coloured mandala) has been formed,
They will be equal to their desired and agreeable (accomplishment).^{..}
The pristine cognition equal to one's fortune
Will draw near if it is cultivated,
And its most amazing (accomplishment)
Is certain to emerge.
But if those lacking faith spoil it,
They will be lost.--

--Such was his meaningful expression. [37]

This completes the ninth chapter of the Secret Nucleus Definitive
with respect to the Real entitled the Secret Commitment of the
Indestructible Array. [38]

Commentary (294.5-370.5):

The third part (of the general teaching on the nature of the three mandalas of buddha-body, speech and mind, see p. 543) concerns the mandala of images which clarifies (the aforementioned mandala of contemplation). It includes an overview and an inter-linear commentary.

Overview (294.6-332.2)

The overview has three aspects, namely, a teaching on the drawing of the mandala and its beneficial attributes; the visual creation of the deities and the making of offerings to them; and a teaching on empowerment and its result.

Drawing the Mandala and its Beneficial Attributes (295.1-304.2):

The first of these has four subdivisions-- the ritual associated with the site; the ritual associated with the coloured lines; the drawing (of the mandala) and the arrangement of its ornaments; and a teaching on the preparation of the offerings and their beneficial attributes.

1. The first of these (the ritual associated with the site) has seven topics, among which the first is the inspection of a site or ground suitable for a level and pleasant mandala. It says in the Sequence of Indestructible Activity (P. 4720, 70.5.3):

The site should have many peaks,
Octagonal in shape and so forth,
And water which does not flow out

In the manner of a river.

It should also be level

And endowed with pleasant springs

Which pour from the mouths (of animal-shaped rocks).

Its characteristic atmosphere should be one

In which sunshine is known mostly to prevail.

The land to the west and north should be high and steeply
inclined,

While that to the east and south should fall away and slope gently.

Inspect the site for high solitary peaks,

(Tear-shaped) rocks, exposed valleys

And rivers which do not converge.

These are hostile perimeters for the mandala

And its empowerment (dal-dbang).

The site should be a forested mountain elevation,

Extremely level and verdant.

With rivers flowing from west to east.

Inspect its gentle breeze,

Its flower groves, and chirping birds.

One which has a known history is indeed said to be best.

Introspective and delightful,

It should be remote from the enemies of concentration,

Just like one's own home and so forth,

Because it has a persistent ability and strength.

Excavating a hole one full cubit wide by four cubits deep in such
a location, one should remove the following impurities (op. cit.,
70.5.6):

Bog, cinders, and charcoal,

Gravel, bones, and so forth.

The hole should be filled with water, and this water should then be inspected at the distance of one hundred paces (op. cit., 71.2.6-61.3.1):

Filled with water, it should be examined at one hundred paces.

The indications are best if the water has not decreased, mediocre if it has half decreased, and worst if it has entirely evaporated.

The second topic is the request for the site: The site should be requested for the mandala from its human and non-human (owners),
..²
in accordance with the following words:

One whose mind has abandoned avarice

Should make this request to its visible and invisible owners,

With payments and sincere persuasion

In order to pacify disputations.

Then, after earth-treasures of corn and gems have been concealed,³ the ground should be levelled, sprinkled with drops of perfume, and the ritual of the goddess of the earth should be performed: The yogin must indeed conquer negativity in the manner of the Buddha who previously requested the site at Vajrāsana and conquered Māra at the time of attaining buddhahood.⁴ The golden goddess (of the earth) is visually created, holding a vase and riding on a pig. Once she has been invited, offerings and

eulogies are made to her, along with the words:

"Permit me, such and such a person of indestructible reality, to build a mandala in the vicinity of this site!".

..

The third topic is the domination of the site: One must pacify impediments, visualising oneself as the red Kilaya Heruka, and meditating that the site is filled with his rays of light.

The fourth topic is the purification (of the site): At the outset, (the site) should be probed around (the abdomen of) the Lord of the Soil, the Serpent-Bellied Spirit (urâga/ lto-'phye). It should be probed in accordance with the following verses from the Commentary on the Eight Volumes of Nectar (bam-brgyad-kvi 'grel-
pa):

The characteristic way in which

The Serpent-Bellied Spirit abides is as follows:

(Moving clockwise) with the motion of the sun,

During the three autumn months

The spirit lies on his left side

With head facing east and his face to the south.

During the three winter months

His face is to the west and his head to the south.

During the three spring months

His face is to the north and his head to the west;

And during the three summer months

His face is to the east and his head to the north.

The Serpent-Bellied Spirit, lord of the soil, abides as such.

O Great One! Dig at the abdomen of the serpent (lto-'phye).

One should indeed dig at the abdomen. Otherwise, if the head (of the spirit) is struck, the master will die; and if the tail is struck the student will die.

Then one should examine the supporting base (of the site). The land around it should slope downwards to the north and east; it should be level in the other two directions, and slightly higher in the middle. That (middle area) should also be annointed with five dairy products, five kinds of grain and so forth. The Flash of Splendour (T. 830) says:

Blending a solution of mineral deposits,
8
Which are of five colours,
Apply it thoroughly in all directions
In the middle of the square,
And plaster (the site) two cubits across.

Then the site is also purified by fire:

If the indications are entirely negative,
One should proceed to another site
Or purify it well by fire which pacifies.

9
Then visualising oneself as the wrathful deity (Amrtakundalin), rays of light emerge from the palms of his hands, turning the area of the site into the nature of a five-pronged vajra. Impurity is refined, and one should then focus on emptiness.

The fifth topic is the consecration of the site: The master visually creates himself as the central deity, and conceives of manifold buddhas and bodhisattvas in that site, which is

radiantly visualised as a celestial palace of deities. Then he exclaims:

Do not transgress any of the commands given by me, the Great Identity!

He proclaims the SUMBHANI oath (which removes impediments) and encircles the site with the motion of his vajra.¹⁰

The sixth topic is the guarding of the site: He meditates that from his own heart ten wrathful deities emerge to guard the site, blazing forth like a conflagration (at the end) of an aeon.¹¹

The seventh topic is the seizing of the site: In order to pitch the lines (of the mandala) or project its schematic points, (the master) visually creates the deity, makes some offerings and eulogies, and then visualises that the deity dissolves to become the ground of the celestial palace of deities.¹² Through all these topics, the ritual associated with the site is completed.

11. The second subdivision (see p. 756) concerns the consecration of the coloured lines: Yarn of five or twenty-five colours is spun by a sixteen year old girl. As is said in the Sequence of Indestructible Activity (P. 4720, 72.2.1):

Coloured yarn prepared from lotus fibres

Should be excellently spun by a mudrā of sixteen years.

Each single yarn with its five strands

Should establish the nature of the pristine cognitions.

Nine yarns of three colours

Manufactured from cotton wool

Represent the buddha-body, speech and mind.

These are excellently arrayed on a pure receptacle or site.

These strands of yarn and their coloured dyes are consecrated as the nature of the five pristine cognitions. At the outset, the spatial line of indestructible reality (rdo-rje gnam-thig) is grasped by a female assistant who is significantly able to duplicate the mandala. ¹³ She pitches it in accordance with the following words from the Flash of Splendour (T. 830):

The female assistant who draws the lines
Is consecrated as one endowed with the signs
Of a spiritual warrior of activity.
With her hand-seal and gesticulation
She pitches the spatial line of the natural mandala.
Then the terrestrial line is also pitched:
Distinguished by the acumen of those to be trained,
The dimensions of the mandala are indefinite.
Beginning with a dimension of four inches,
It may reach as far as yoianas.

In this way, the dimensions (of the mandala) are said to be between four inches and infinity. ¹⁴ ..

A consecration should also be performed: The coloured lines are visualised as the deities, after which offerings and eulogies are made to them. In this way (the lines) are transformed into pristine cognition. The Sequence of Indestructible Activity (P. 4720, 72.3.4) says:

When the receptacle or site has been purified
In a distinct sequence,
Meditate that each single seed-syllable such as HŪM
Is represented by five (lines) with corresponding colours,
And that on transfiguration,
These become the deities with their twenty-five (colours),
Endowed with skillful means and discriminative awareness.
The five pristine cognitions indicative of
Buddha-body, speech, mind, attributes and activities
Of the ten directions and four times
Are absorbed therein.

Consequently these five transfigured material (lines)
Should be considered as a mandala
Materialised from the causal basis of pristine cognition--
The buddha-body, speech, attributes, activities, and mind.

Moreover, when the seed-syllables are traced on coloured soil,
they should be heaped up and then vanish into it (72.4.3):

The mantras and seals,
Which purify the coloured powders,
Are heaped up and act as if impregnating them.

Concerning the significance of the different colours discerned
among the coloured powders, there is a passage from the Tantra of
the Extensive Magical Net (T. 834) which says:

All sentient beings without exception
Are totally pervaded by the five pristine cognitions,
But they have been obscured by their own thoughts.

In order to reveal the character of pristine cognition
To all such deluded beings,
Who do not see the meaning of the five pristine cognitions,
The colours white, red, yellow and green
15
Are revealed, including black.

As for the material substance of these coloured dyes, the best
are prepared from gemstones, as is said in the following passage
from the Sequence of Indestructible Activity (P. 4720, 72.3.3):

There are coloured dyes made from five kinds of gems:
These are prepared from sapphire, moonstone,
Topaz (pusparâga), fine coral, and emerald (marakata).
Other (shades) are synthesised by combining them:
To represent the bodhisattvas and wrathful deities
In each intermediate direction and so forth,
There are said to be twenty-five colours.

The mediocre and inferior kinds of material substance are those
compounded from all sorts of coloured pigments.

iii. The third subdivision (see p. 756) concerns the drawing (of
the mandala) and the arrangement of its ornaments. This has two
parts of which the former concerns the drawing of the lines:

After the spatial line of pristine cognition (ye-shes-kvi gnam-
thig) has been raised up, it is brought down (to earth) and then
pitched. The ritual for drawing (the lines) is then described in
the following words (from the above text, 72.4.4):

When mighty ones endowed with appropriate implements
Pitch the lines (of the mandala),
First the site is circumambulated from the north-east
And then those of powerful presence should draw it,
Engaged in contemplation and the hand-seals
Of "indetsructibvle palms" or "fist",
And endowed with their respective seed-syllables.

So it is in accordance with a lineage-holder who discerns the
Brahmā lines (tshangs-thig), the diagonal lines (zur-thig), and
so forth, that (the lines) are pitched to represent the double
gates and walls.

There are also esoteric instructions which, to some extent,
analyse (the drawing of these lines):

(The lines of the mandala) form sixteen large bands.
Among them are three interior bands
Which should be bisected, making six.
Among (these six), the first is divided in two,
And its outer half is further divided.
The second should be divided into four,
The third and fourth are left unmarked.
The fifth is marked by two outer lines,
But not in its middle section.
The sixth is divided in two,
And its outer half is further divided.
This all represents the inner gates.
The fourth large band represents the outer courtyard.

The fifth is marked by two outer lines,
But not in its middle section.
The sixth is divided in two,
And its outer half is further divided.
The seventh should be divided into four,
And the eighth is marked by two outer lines,
But not in its middle section.

The hole, marked by the Awesome Kfla ('gying-phur), is filled
with coloured powders representing the five pristine cognitions,
and then the colours are gradually applied. It says accordingly
in the Magical Net of Vairocana (NGB. Vol. 19, T. 466):

The coloured dyes should be applied from the inside.
The coloured dyes should not be applied from the outside.
Starting first from the north-east
The master himself should initially apply the paint,
And then, as indicated, the student should do so.

And in the Awakening of Vairocana (T. 494):

The coloured dyes should be applied from the inside.
They should not be applied from the outside.
White should initially be applied,
And subsequently red,
Then yellow should be applied,
And subsequently green is applied.
Inside all of these there is black.
The ritual associated with the coloured dyes
Is explained in that manner.

Now, in the case of a large (mandala), at the central point in the middle of the area demarcated by the double gates and walls there is a four-spoked circle. In the middle of that and (on the four spokes), i.e. in five locations, there are four-spoked circles with their own perimeters. These (are painted) in order, corresponding to the colours of the deities. Then the areas covered by the four inner and outer rightangled corners are painted.

Thereafter, the five walls are successively coloured from the inside-- blue, green, red, yellow, and white. In general, (mandalas have) a wall with two layers, representing the layers of pristine cognition and buddha-body. In this (Secret Nucleus), however, the inner wall (of the mandala) is the layer of pristine cognition and the outer wall is the layer of buddha-body. The latter is (coloured) from the inside in the order of blue, white, yellow, red and green.

The courtyard is green, and the tiered pediments are ornately coloured, while appropriately ornate colours should also be applied to the other areas. There are some who hold that these (other areas) refer to the four spoked-circles at the base of the tiered pediments, but the majority hold them to indicate the four half-vajras (rdo-rje ra-ba) because (colours) are applied to them in harmony with those others. Whichever view is held, there is indeed no contradiction.

(The mandala) of intermediate dimension is similar to the one which immediately follows. The condensed (mandala) is claimed to have four right-angled corners and embasured gates without an inner courtyard.

Symbols are then arrayed in these locations of (the mandala): In the case of a constructed (mandala), they form an appropriate array of the images of buddha-body, seed-syllables, and symbolic hand-emblems; and if unconstructed, one should just employ symbolism, indicating the body-colours (of the deities) with heaps of coloured powders. The Flash of Splendour (T. 830) says:

The central deity is perfectly drawn in form,
The retinues should be indicated by their hand-emblems,
And the ordinary (deities) by their seed-syllables.

iv. The fourth subdivision (see p. 756) concerns the preparation of the offerings and a teaching on their beneficial attributes. This has three parts: The first is the preparation of the offerings, including outer and inner offerings, ornaments and clothing, cymbals and other such musical instruments. These should be adorned with an abundance of edibles.

The second is the consecration (rab-gnas): The mandala is visually created in an immediate manner and the being of pristine cognition (inānasattva) penetrates it, whereupon one meditates on it as an image stabilised by the essential tokens or the three seed-syllables. The Flash of Splendour (T. 830) accordingly says:

Whatever object has been constructed, including mandalas,
If it lacks consecration and pristine cognition,
Its provisions and drawings will be impotent.

The third concerns the beneficial attributes: The merits of drawing such a mandala of coloured powders are inestimable. It says in the Extensive Pristine Cognition (ve-shes rgyas-pa):

Those who draw the supreme mandala of the conquerors
With lines and coloured dyes
Have an immeasurable mass of meritorious deeds,
Granting the seven precious things²¹
To all the buddhafields of the ten directions.
Their deeds will be accomplished,
And, intended by the conquerors,
They will obtain unthinkable mandalas.

Also, in the White Lotus of the Genuine Doctrine (T. 113, Cf. Kern, p. 50):

Whoever construct a stûpa from stone,
Whoever construct a stûpa of aloeswood, and sandalwood,
Or whoever construct one of medicinal wood,
And those who make one of wood or other materials,
And who build a joyous field of conquerors' stûpas
With clay, bricks and so forth,
And who similarly construct them from mounds of dust
In deserted wildernesses,
And those who construct stûpas dedicated to the conquerors
In a mound made of sand

During random childhood play,
And others, too, who commission representative images
Will all obtain enlightenment.
Those who have made images of the sugatas
From the seven precious things
And those who have similarly made them
From copper and bell-metal,
All will obtain enlightenment.
Those who have made images of the sugatas
From lead, iron or clay
Or have made them of mud, beautiful to behold,
Will all obtain enlightenment.
Those who have made line drawings of images
On the surfaces of walls
And the buddha-bodies complete with extensive merits
and attributes,
Whether they have themselves drawn or commissioned them,
All will obtain enlightenment.
Those, old or young,
Who, during their studies
Or in play and in private
Have drawn images with fingernail or a piece of wood
All will obtain enlightenment.

Visual Creation of the Deities and the Making of Offerings to them (304.2-313.1):

The second section of the overview (see p. 756) includes both the creation and visualisation of the deities, and the making of offerings to them.

1. As to the former: When the boundaries of this location and the commitments associated with it have been established, one should sit there in a comfortable posture. Initially, one should cultivate an enlightened attitude with the verses which begin (Ch. 2, 6):

Emaho! This wondrous marvellous reality
Is the secret of all perfect buddhas.
All is created through the uncreated.
At creation itself there is no creation.

One should then meditate on the three kinds of contemplation from within this disposition that is without conceptual elaboration in all respects. ²² Uttering the words (Ch. 9, 16):

Body, speech, mind and all phenomena
Do not abide in any respect, and are non-referential.
As an optical illusion, through this union,
Meditate on the space within space.

one should meditate from the disposition or contemplation of the real, which is non-referential in all respects, upon that contemplation in which great compassion universally appears for the sake of all sentient beings. Then, from that disposition, one meditates on the contemplation of the causal basis which is expressed in the following words (Ch. 5, 2):

Mind-as-such without basis

Is the basis of all things.

Mind-as-such is the nature of the syllables.

The syllables are a cloud-mass of wish-fulfilling gems.

One recites the syllable A, and thereupon, from a disposition in which the nature of mind radiates as the white syllable A, one utters the following words (Ch. 4, 2):

AH The steadfast white syllable A

Emanates tiny syllables A

Which radiate and fill the ten directions,

It (re-)absorbs them, and yet remains constant,

Without increase or decrease.

In this way, there naturally emanate from the syllable A in the middle of a lunar disk, which itself derives from the syllable A, the vocalic seed-syllables representing the major marks (of the buddha-body) and the consonantal seed-syllables representing the minor marks. Surrounding it in two rows, these essential syllables from A to KSA melt into light and are thence transformed into a vajra marked with the syllable HŪM. That too is transfigured and one meditates that from it there emerges the body of dark-blue Samantabhadra, the natural ground, seated in the posture of indestructible reality and blazing forth a mass of light-rays which pervade the expanse of space.

Now, (the contemplations) concerning the real nature and (great compassion) which universally appears refer to the identity of the pristine cognition of emptiness and the enlightened family of

the tathâgata. The solar and lunar disks refer to the mirror-like pristine cognition and the enlightened family of indestructible reality. The mass of light refers to the pristine cognition of sameness and the enlightened family of gemstones. The vajra marked with the syllable HUM refers to the pristine cognition of discernment and the enlightened family of the lotus. The buddha-body (of Samantabhadra) refers to the pristine cognition of accomplishment and to the enlightened family of activity. This is indeed a complete meditation on all realities of the buddha-level.

Then, with the words (Ch. 7, 2):

BHRUM VISVAVISUDDHE

there emerges the great celestial palace which is located on the immeasurable ground, the circle of pristine cognition. It is endowed with four gates, four sides, and four tiered-pediments. Upon its five walls there are cornices of gemstones, pendant with necklaces and half-necklaces of precious gems. Adorned with battlements and corbelled brackets (pu-shu), its bulbous and symmetrical vase-shape fills the expanse of space. Outside and inside it is pure, radiating the light of pristine cognition. It has both outer and inner gateways, and (above them) a dense cloud-mass of parasols, victory-banners and musical instruments; while a cloud-mass of offerings is gathered by inestimable goddesses endowed with desired attributes. Thus the celestial palace is most radiantly created with the following verses (Ch. 6, 2-5) from:

Pristine cognition is considered

In terms of the four directions and centre.

down to:

With (their cushions of) sun, moon, lotus and gems.

Then, on one's left, one visually creates the dark-blue female consort Samantabhadri, similar to her male consort (Samantabhadra), with the following words (Ch. 4, 16 & 23):

The syllable A is the uncreated real nature.

KSA is the spirituality of pristine cognition, the buddha-
mind.

Then one utters the verses (Ch. 4, 27):

This wheel is a joyous cloud of

Skillful means and discriminative awareness.

It is the causal basis of the provision of enlightened mind.

Its result is the maturation and accomplishment of the
conquerors.

These wondrous forty-two consonantal syllables,

Not compounded by nature,

Are the compounded indestructible reality

Which discloses the mandalas.

Their commitment to do so is not transgressed--

Dependent are they on the great force

Of their accumulated causes and conditions. Aho!

Thereupon, the male and female consorts (Samantabhadra) embrace indivisibly, and from their heart-centre a cloud of syllables emanates. It is visualised that these turn into the mandala of

deities, accomplishing the deeds of the buddhas, and are then reabsorbed in the mandala.

Then one utters the verses (Ch. 4, 17-24) from:

THA is the indestructible reality of magical emanation.

down to:

AU is the destructor of all.

Thereupon, the male & female Vairocana dissolve into the male & female Samantabhadrsa, and the other deities are visualised to be present within their respective (peripheral) abodes. Then, the Samantabhadra of awareness comes forth alone from the heart of the central deity, standing upright with his ankles touching and palms folded together, and with the ornaments of a spiritual warrior.²³ Circumambulating the deities of the mandala three times, he scatters flowers from the western gate and utters the²⁴ verses:

OM The great past commitment of buddha-mind

Unites all world-systems without exception

In the fields of the conquerors.

Thereby, may I unite with the great seal!

The deities grant their consent and emanate light-rays of skillful means and discriminative awareness towards oneself. The thoughts of one's mind and the body and speech derived therefrom are purified and transformed into a single mass of light which is naturally free from the subject-object dichotomy. The light rays of the body, speech and mind of those deities are emanated in the form of the syllables OM, AH, HUM, which penetrate and vanish

into that mass of light. Consequently it becomes the syllable HŪM, a nature in which buddha-body, speech and mind are indivisible. It is then visualised to vanish into the heart of the central deity so that the body of the central deity becomes brilliant. Then it becomes the "seminal enlightened mind" (bodhicitta) of the male & female central deities without duality, and abides in the secret centre of the female consort. All the deities dissolve into this "seminal enlightened mind", along with the sounds of their respective secret mantras. Then, in the middle of the mandala on a lion (throne) with sun and moon (cushions) one visualises the nature of the "seminal enlightened mind" in which all these are unified as a mere orb of light. It yet again turns into the syllables HŪM and MŪM, and through the emanation & absorption of light-rays these turn into a vajra and bell. It is through the transfiguration (of these hand-emblems) that the bodies of the male & female Vairocana are (finally) visualised.

Then beginning with the verses (Ch. 7, 14):

OM MAHĀSŪNYATAJĀNĀNAVAJRASVABHĀVĀTMAKO/HAM

the empowerments of the five pristine cognitions and the conferral of blessing through the fivefold buddha-body, speech, mind, attributes and activities are performed. Then, when the secret centres of the male and female consorts have been consecrated respectively as a vajra and a lotus, their union is symbolically indicated by the words (Ch. 7, 11):

SAMAYA HOH

and they become meditatively equipoised without duality. The

"seminal enlightened mind" of the male consort is diffused into the secret centre of the female consort, thereby consecrating that secret centre as the celestial palace. Within it, the heart-mantras of the deities, i.e. their different seed-syllables such as HŪM and OM, are radiantly visualised, and these are transformed into the bodies of the different deities simply by reciting the secret mantras of the different deities. Then, just by reciting the syllable JAH, they immediately come forth from the secret centre of the female consort into the space before one, and are visualised to be present in their respective locations (of the mandala), their body, speech and mind blessed by the syllables OM, AH, and HŪM and accomplishing the deeds of the buddhas through the emanation & absorption of their rays of light. The mantras of the different deities which have previously been revealed are then recited and visually created: The male & female consorts Samantabhadra are visualised in the heart-centre of the central deity, and the six sages should be seated in the outer courtyard. The others are (to be visualised) in the aforementioned manner. Such is the visual creation of the mandala.

Then (the being of pristine cognition) is invited with the following verses (Ch. 9, 26-27):

The great identity of the mandalas
Of the directions and times
Invites all mandalas from the mandala
Of non-referential buddha-mind.
Through meditative union, characteristic of entry
Into the self-manifesting indivisible mandala,

The mandala of ritual service is well-perfected,

Emerging from all directions and times.

This is the supreme commitment of the closest ones.

And (Ch. 7, 9):

OM EHYEHI BHAGAVAN MAHAKARUNIKA DRŚYA HOH SAMAYASTVAM JAH
HOM VAM HOH.

In this way, the great mandala arrives from Akanistha in the space before one, just as it has been visually created. Offerings are then made mentally to it. The (offering) flowers of one's awareness are scattered with the following words (Ch. 7, 10):

OM VAJRA SAMAYA OM
AH VAJRA SAMAYA AH
HOM VAJRA SAMAYA HOM
SVĀ VAJRA SAMAYA SVĀ
HĀ VAJRA SAMAYA HĀ.

Consequently, the buddha-body, speech, mind, attributes and activities of the natural mandala and the buddha-body, speech, mind, attributes and activities of contemplation should be realised to be indivisible in nature. This is because all that emanates from mind is primordially pure. This is known indeed as the scattering of the (offering) flowers of one's awareness. It is also called the "seal indicative of undifferentiated awareness", and the "entrance into the self-manifesting mandala".

Then, in order that the bodies of the deities might be indivisibly dissolved therein, one utters the verses (Ch. 7, 11):

OM King of pristine cognition!
Equiposed now in the most wondrous buddha-body,
Speech, mind, attributes and activities,
May I unite with the great seal!

In this way, the deities approach to confer their accomplishments, and with the words (Ch. 7, 11):

OM VAJRA SAMAYA HŪM
the being of pristine cognition (inānasattva) dissolves indivisibly into the being of commitment (samavasattva), just as water is poured into water.

Then with the words (Ch. 7, 11):

OM VAJRA SAMAYASTVAM
oneself is visualised to be established in the mandala of deities until buddhahood has been obtained.

With the words (Ch. 7, 11):

OM VAJRA SAMAYA HOH
this visualisation becomes powerful and joyful; and with the words:

JAH HŪM VAM HOH
it becomes firm, radiant, and then extremely radiant. Then, the deities are radiantly visualised with the following verses (Ch. 6, 6-11):

On these seats, in the posture of the perfect (buddhas)
And the posture of the spiritual warriors.

down to:

(Pervasive without extremes or centre)

Is this unthinkable, spontaneously present mandala.

..

ii. The latter part (see p. 771) concerns the making of offerings to (the mandala). It has three sections among which the first concerns the common offerings: According to the traditions of the outer mantras oneself is present in the mandala of deities as a spiritual warrior of activity, emerging from the heart-centre of the central deity. The acts which one should then perform include prostrations, offerings, eulogies, confession, the receiving of accomplishments, and prayers of aspiration. One should know that these are also the indivisible essence because they are simply a display of mind.

27

The second concerns the uncommon offerings: In the manner of the gods of Nirmānarata who enjoy rapture of their own emanation, goddesses endowed with desired attributes issue forth from the heart-centres of the deities and are visualised making offerings to them. All the ten directions are visualised as pure buddhafi elds and the inconceivable offering-cloud of Samantabhadra is emanated-- a great uninterrupted and spontaneous offering of all excellent desires including clouds of songs, verses, and music which are displayed with ornaments of great rapture. The offerings should be made in the manner of deities at play with deities.

28

The third concerns the unsurpassed offerings, including in this context: the presentation of the non-dual offerings associated with the paths of sexual union and "liberation", the offering of

nectar which is a sacrament of the commitments, the offering in song of the seals of pristine cognition, and the offerings in praise of the Great Joyous One (Samantabhadra), which are mentioned above and below.

29

In particular, after the nectar (has been offered), a mandala is visually created, the size of a mustard seed, in a lotus-courtyard symbolic of sexual union with the female consort, actual or imaginary, who possesses the (appropriate) marks. Then the mandala equal to the confines of space is invited from Akanistha and it dissolves therein. An offering should then be made through the bliss of the display (of "seminal enlightened mind"). This is the sacrament of offering which is offered with supreme bliss to its object, i.e. the supreme bliss of the buddhas. In this way, the resultant pristine cognition or supreme bliss which is the intention of the buddhas is actualised from the present moment, making this therefore supreme among all the provisions of merit and pristine cognition.

31

Then, there is the sequence of recitation: Light, emanating from the syllables in the heart-centres of the deities, makes contact with the infinite sentient beings of celestial expanse, in such a way that it is visualised to purify all their obscurations and so forth through the succession of the four rites. The sentient beings should recite the mantras of these different deities, transforming themselves into the syllables and vanishing into the heart-centres (of the deities) until they have received an injunction from the central deity.

Alternatively, the garland of mantras thoroughly permeates the bodily form of the different deities and from their secret centres it emits supremely blissful enveloping rays of light, which make contact with sentient beings in such a way that obscurations are purified. (Sentient beings) should persevere in one-pointed recitation of the mantra of the basic deity and the seed-syllables alone of the retinue, transforming themselves into the nature of the deities and reabsorbing themselves in the heart-centre.

No precise number (of recitations) has been specified in this context, but it is held that recitation should continue until one becomes accomplished. In general it is claimed that ritual service should be performed with a number (of recitations) which amounts to ten million for the central deity and ten thousand for each of the retinue. Therefore one should also follow that custom in (the practice of) this (Secret Nucleus).³²

Now in order not to transgress the mandala of deities, one should visualise it at all times during and after sessions of meditation. During this disposition, one should be meditatively equipped, recollecting the meaning of the four seals and the abiding nature of the natural Great Perfection. Then, after dedicating the merit for the sake of sentient beings one should arise (from that session) and freely perform activities on the path of conduct, with the volition that all phenomenal existence becomes the deities, celestial palace and buddhafield.³³

Empowerment and Its Result (313.1-332.2):

The third aspect (of the overview-- see p. 756) is a teaching on empowerment and its result. It has three sections, namely: a teaching on the burnt offerings which form the common preliminary practice; the entry and empowerment of the student (in the mandala); and a teaching on the result achieved through .. meditation on the creation and perfection stages.

1. Concerning the first of these (the burnt offerings), it says in the Sequence of Indestructible Activity (P. 4720, 74.2.4):

There are said to be four kinds of burnt offering--³⁴

Each of them concerns the site,

The two participants in the consecration,

And the actual time for the conferral of bliss.

Thus, during the rites associated with the site there is pacification of negative signs, enrichment or increase in the lifespan of the one who consecrates the mandala, subjugation or power over the lifespan of the one who is empowered; and during the preparation of the student there is wrathful subjugation of bad dreams which arise.³⁵

For the rite of pacification, the hearth (thab-khung) is white and round. If it is constructed with walls, it should have a one cubit deep railing in three tiers which are marked respectively (with the motifs) of wheel, half-vajra, and a white lasso with four darts. If it is drawn, it has the form of an eight-spoked wheel, the extremities of which are marked with the syllables OM.

the motif of a lion-headed capital (geng-mgo spel-ma), and a
white lasso with four darts.³⁶

For the rite of enrichment, the hearth is square and yellow. If it is constructed with walls, they form a one cubit deep square in three tiers, the innermost one of which has (the motif of) a chest of gems, the middle one a vajra, and the outermost one is encircled by a yellow lasso. If it is drawn, it has the form of an octagonal gemstone, the tip of which is marked with gemstones.³⁷

For the rite of subjugation, the hearth is semi-circular and red. If it is drawn, it has the form of an eight-petalled lotus. If it is constructed with walls, they are square and red, with (the motif of) four darts.³⁸

For the rite of wrath, the hearth is triangular and black. If it is drawn, it has the form of the gaping jaws of a wrathful deity. If it is constructed with walls, it has (the motif of) four darts surrounded by a black lasso.³⁹

The firewood is piled up corresponding in colour and shape to the different (kinds of hearth). For the rite of pacification the burnt sacraments are the three white things (i.e. curd, milk, and butter), sesame oil and edibles which are white in colour. For the rite of enrichment the sacraments are the three sweet things (i.e. molasses, honey and sugar), curds and various kinds of yellow grain. For the rite of subjugation the sacraments are sour things, flowers and various kinds of food and drink which are red

in colour. For the rite of wrath the sacraments are pungent things, poisons, blood, and various effigies (linga) which are black in colour.⁴⁰

Then, once the hearth and the sacraments of the burnt offering have been purified with incense-smoke, one visually creates in the midst of the fire-light of pristine cognition, endowed with the colour of the rite, the syllables OM, TRAM, HRIH, and AH.⁴¹ Therefrom emerges Agni, the fire-god of the rite which is being performed, upon a goat (ra-skves) and holding rosary-beads, a chest, a lasso, and a trident, while his left hand carries a ladle (kunda). He is endowed with the colours of the respective (rites).⁴² Then he is invited with the following words:

HUM By virtue of my faith and commitment
I beseech you, great elemental,
To come here. Come here!
May the god of fire, supreme sage and brahman,
Come to this very place!
OM AGNAYE EHYEHI SAMAYA JAH JAH.

Then with the words:

JAH HUM VAM HOH

(the fire-god) vanishes into the (hearth). A welcoming meal (byon-zan) is presented to him with seven ladles of molten butter, and then offerings and eulogies are made. Once the burnt sacraments have been offered and praises made seven times with the mantras of the fire-god, then, during both the rites of pacification and enrichment, the peaceful deities are invited into the stomach of the fire-god; while during the rites of

subjugation and wrath the wrathful deities are invited. This invitation may be visually created or not. When these deities are present (in the hearth), they are each given seven ladles-full of the welcoming meal, after which offerings and eulogies are made. Then, once the burnt sacraments including the firewood have been offered in conjunction with the root mantras of the different (deities), (diagrams) of the mantras for the respective (rites)-- SĀNTIM, PUSTIM, VAŚAM KURUYE SVĀHA, and MĀRAYA PHAT-- are attached (to the fire) and offered (through recitation) one hundred, or one thousand times and so forth. ⁴³ Then, praying for one's desired purpose, one implores (the deities) to come forth. The other deities common to this enlightened family are radiantly visualised, along with country divinities, the lords of the locality, and the fire-god himself, and all that one possesses is offered to them. Having assigned them their enlightened activities, one should pray for forbearance and (complete the rite) from the departure (of Agni) down to the benediction. Thereby, the rites are accomplished and obstacles ⁴⁴ are pacified.

ii. The second section (see p. 783) concerns the entry and empowerment of the student (in the mandala). It has three parts, namely: the preparatory ritual for the student's entry; the sequence of the actual foundation of empowerment; and the beneficial attributes which have been proclaimed along with the rites which conclude the feast (offerings).

Concerning the first of these, it says in the Sequence of Indestructible Activity (P. 4720, 74.2.6):

The entrance of the mighty lord into the mandala,
His prayer for forbearance,
The ablution, covering, and scent,
The offering of the body, and expulsion of impediments,
The consecration (of the master) as the deity,
The granting of commitments, their appraisal,
And the bestowal of the water (of commitment),
The proclamation (concerning commitments),
The casting of one's offering gems,
The descent of the deity, the earnest entreaty,
The opening of the eyes,
The excellent revelation of the mandala,
And the provisions which are offered and presented--
These are the eighteen aspects (of the entrance).

Thus, there is one factor associated with the entrance of the master, and seventeen associated with the entrance of the student. As to the former: The master of indestructible reality (vairâcârva), clad in his red robe, stands at the eastern gate of the mandala. He holds a flower and recites the mantras (Ch. 7, 10):

OM VAJRA SAMAYA OM

Thereby, he visualises that the deities of the mandala are indivisible from the buddha-body, speech, mind, attributes and activities. Then, after reciting the verses (Ch. 7, 11) which begin:

OM King of pristine cognition...

he summons forth accomplishment with mantras such as:

OM VAJRA SAMAYASTVAM

and visualises that he and the mandala are present without differentiation. That is a somewhat brief explanation. When this entrance is elaborately made, (the master) enters in the manner of a student and receives the empowerment.

Then, when the students outside the mandala have washed with scented water, their faces are covered with a red blindfold (migdar) made of cotton and so forth, and flowers are placed within their palms, folded together. Inside (the mandala), the master folds his hands together and utters the following words (Sequence of Indestructible Activity, 74.3.3):

I intentionally pray that my students
May be permitted to enter this mandala--
The palace or nucleus of all the tathāgatas
Through which the pristine cognition
Of indestructible reality is obtained.

In this way, all the tathāgatas rejoice, and it is visualised that the students obtain permission to enter.

Then the master of ceremonies (karmācārya) leads the disciples, their eyes covered with a blindfold, into the presence of the guru, through a door which is not adjacent to the mandala, and where they make the following request to the guru (Māvāīlābhi-sekavaśyaka, P. 4721, 78.4.6):

I bow before you, the central deity, Vajrasattva.

I desire the great path to liberation.

I seek refuge in this empowerment, its commitments,

Its nātha protectors, and its vīras or warriors.

As I enter into the mansion of the greater vehicle,

Bestow the pristine cognition of excellent knowledge on me!

The guru then asks:

Disciple, in what do you say you delight?

To which the students reply:

I delight in my good fortune.

The guru then speaks (the following words from the Māvājalābhi-
sekavaśyaka, P. 4721, 78.4.7):

My child! Come hither!

Attend to the ritual conduct which is pleasant,

And grasp the indestructible buddha-body, speech and mind.

In order to abide non-referentially

In the supreme bliss of perfect pristine cognition,

Practice liberality with a confident mind

Which has abandoned avarice,

And firmly grasp the mind itself.

I grant the perfect empowerment of the Magical Net!

Then the master of ceremonies presses half of a vajra into their hands. The students grasp it and are led into the presence of the mandala where they make obeisance, and offer their bodies with

.. 45
the mantra:

OM SARVABUDDHA PUJOPASTHĀNĀYA ATMĀNAM NIRYĀTAYAMI.

The guru then expels impediments with the crossed-vajra and so forth, while he visualises the five fingers of his (right and left) hands as the male and female consorts of the five enlightened families respectively, and makes a solemn declaration of truth. From the points of contact made by pressing the fingers together light-rays of "seminal enlightened mind" are emanated, which sever the obscurations of the disciples, causing them to melt into light, and then to abide in the manner of mercury. Through the three kinds of (contemplative) ritual the students are equipped and protected for the visualisation of Vairocana.

46

Then, again, they make the following requests:

In the manner of the offerings made to the buddhas

By the indestructible enlightened mind...

And the words which begin:

Glorious holder of the body of indestructible reality...

Afterwards the guru, with the words KĀYA SIDDHI OM and so forth, inserts the three seed-syllables in their three centres, and these then are emanated and absorbed. Uttering the words:

SARVATATHĀGATA KĀYA SIDDHI OM

and so forth, he confers the commitments of buddha-body, speech and mind.

He also presses a vajra to the hearts of the disciples and appraises them of the commitments with the following words (Sequence of Indestructible Activity, P. 4720, 74.4.1):

This secret of all the buddhas

Should never be divulged

To those tainted by violation of commitments.
Do not scorn or despise me,
The one who reveals the greater vehicle.
Abide constantly in buddha-body, speech and mind,
And act on behalf of sentient beings without exception.

Then, he pours out the water of commitment with the words
(op. cit., 74.4.5):

This is water of hell for you.

If you transgress the commitments

47

It will burn.

Turning into a great wrathful deity of indestructible
reality,

Drink this water of indestructible reality!

OM VAJRA YAKSA HUM.

Then again, he should bestow the offering-water with the words
(op. cit., 74.4.4):

So it is, my son,

That you should guard the commitments.

If you guard the commitments, accomplishment will come.

Drink therefore this water

Which is nectar of indestructible reality!

OM VAJRA UDAKATHAH HUM.

Then he proclaims his understanding of the commitments that are
obtained with the words (op. cit., 74.4.5):

Through mind-as-such endowed

With skillful means and discriminative awareness

One should never harbour doubts,

48

But experience the five desired attributes.

Then the students cast their diadems or flowers (of offering), and these adhere to the particular deities (of the mandala) with whom they are connected through (past) deeds. At that time, they speak as follows:

49
May the garland of gems, flower, and so forth
Fall upon that deity whose pristine cognition
I performed ritual service for in past lives,
And whose intention is to receive me with spirituality.
OM PRATICCHA VAJRA HOH.

Then, picking up their flowers, they place them on the crown of the head and respectively invite on to the crowns of their heads the particular deities on whom their flowers have landed, saying:

EHYEHI.

The deities dissolve therein through the mantras JAH HUM VAM HOH, and a declaration of truth is made. Subsequently the students call their particular deities by name, making them sit in front of their hearts. Saying:

May I therefore achieve excellent accomplishment!

It is then visualised that the breast of each student is opened by the mantra PRAVEŚA, and that the deity and student become indivisible through the mantra AVEŚA.

Then, corresponding to the enlightened family of the deity on whom one's flower has landed, one is given a secret name, such as

Vajrâja (King of Indestructible Reality), and one should apply oneself to the meditation and recitation (of mantras) connected with that deity.

50

The covering over the face is then removed with the words:

Today, by dint of faith,

Behold the genuine mandala.

Take birth in the enlightened family of buddha-speech,

And resort to supreme accomplishment.

VAJRA CAKSUH PRAVEṢA PHAT.

On opening the eyes the darkness of ignorance is removed, and one should have the volition to see the mandala of pristine cognition. Then the symbolic meanings of the mandala are revealed in the words (op. cit., 74.5.2) which begin:

The light rays which dissolve all things

In the non-dual expanse are radiant.

Devoid of unity and all conceptual elaborations,

They form a circular mandala, without conceptual elaboration.

And the real natures of the respective deities are revealed with the words (74.5.5):

Because everything is naturally pure,

The forty-two deities of the Magical Net

Constantly comprise all things in their divine nature.

Everything without exception forms the supreme mandala.

One should know well this characteristic nature.

Then all offerings that one possesses are actually presented, or if one has none, they are promised and mentally offered. The offerings are pledged with the following words:

HOH I pray intentionally
To the identity of great pristine cognition
And its secret mandala which do not abide.
In the presence of such and such,
Who is a holder of indestructible reality,
And my guru or great mighty lord of yoga,
I have purified the buddha-mind in reality,
Subtlest of all the atoms of aeons and fields.
Thus I am present at this time as a master
Of the great secret mandala. HOH!
When an empowerment such as this profound Magical Net,
Most uncommon of all transmitted precepts, is requested,
May I be the one to give it
With an intention directed to sentient beings
Who possess the natural mandala,
Even if they are unworthy recipients. HOH!
These offerings are merely an indication
That payment for kindness is not forgotten.

This completes the ritual connected with the entrance of the student (into the mandala).

The second aspect (of the entry and empowerment of the student-- is the procedure for the actual empowerment. It has two parts, of which the former comprises the ten empowerments of beneficence. These are described as follows (Ch. 10, 9-10):

When the empowerments have been conferred
Of crown-ornament, diadem, rosary,
Armour, victory-banner, seals,
Parasol, vase, food & drink,
And of the five essences,
Henceforth one will become a son of the Conqueror,
Will be without all evil existences,
Will have the excellent happiness of longevity,
And become a master of celestial realms and liberation!

The student is radiantly visualised as a deity, and then a crown-ornament of gemstones is fastened (to the head), whereby he is empowered as a doctrinal king of the three world-systems, and crowned by the five enlightened families to indicate that this is irreversible. The advantage of this (empowerment) is that the aggregates of consciousness become radiant as the five pristine cognitions.

The diadem is then attached (to the head), the advantage (of this empowerment) being that skillful means and discriminative awareness are coalesced. By (the empowerment of) the rosary one obtains the advantages of the branches of enlightenment, and of retention (of mantras) and contemplation. Similarly, by (the empowerment of) armour, one is unharmed by the weapons of conflicting emotions, and one purifies the network of 13 million

53

energy channels. By (the empowerment of) the victory banner, one conquers disharmonious aspects and is triumphant in battle over samsāra. By (the empowerment of) the seals, the forty-two (syllabic) aggregates of thought attain the level of the Cyclical

54

Mass of Syllables. By (the empowerment of) the parasol, one is protected from the torments of conflicting emotion, and a rain of spirituality descends, purifying the thirty-two petalled lotus-

55

centre in the skull (dung-khang). By (the empowerment of) the vase, the stains of conflicting emotion are purified, and the mind is mollified by an unceasing stream of water. The (empowerment of) food & drink causes the desired attributes to arise as ornaments, thereby removing degeneration and bringing satisfaction through the bliss of concentration. And (the empowerment of) the five essences purifies the five conflicting emotions and five components into the five pristine cognitions and five enlightened families respectively. At the time when these ten empowerments are conferred through their respective sacraments of empowerment, one should visualise that one is endowed with the ability of the excellent body, speech, mind, attributes and activities of all the buddhas.

The essence of these (empowerments of beneficence) is described as follows in the Tantra of the Penetrating Magical Net (NGB. Vol. 15):

The ten elements, the two "pathways of bliss",

56

The contents of the central channel,

57

The energy channels which form a network of knots,

And the sense-organs, components and so forth

Become blissful centres of pristine cognition,
 And this blissful pristine cognition (is symbolised by) HŪM.
 The eight aggregates (of consciousness)
 Become the five natural pristine cognitions.
 The sacraments of mantras which are intentionally adopted
 Arise on all sides, and through their protection
 Liberation from suffering is correctly ascertained.

The latter part comprises the five empowerments of ability, among which the first is the empowerment of the listener (nyan-pa'i
 58
dbang): The guru, i.e. the male & female consorts in union, becomes radiant as the male & female central deities, and from their point of union, a reddish yellow syllable BHRUM emanates, and is visualised to make contact within the student's ear. With the ritual vajra (the guru) places a drop of nectar thereon, melting the syllable BHRUM so that it confers on the (student's) two ears (the shape of a celestial palace) with its four-spoked circle, four rightangled corners and four gates. Therein, are five pairs or ten single syllables TRĀM, along with the syllables JAH, HŪM, VAM, HOH, which melt into light, and are thence radiantly visualised as eighteen (deities). These comprise the ten deities of the palace, i.e. the male & female Ratnasambhava surrounded in their four directions by Vajraratna, Vajresūrya, Vajradhvaja, and Vajrapāśa with their female consorts Mālyā, Puspā, Pāśā, and Vajrasukhī; along with the male & female gate-
 59
 keepers. Then, the four female deities of the seals issue forth from the heart-centre of the guru, and the beings of pristine

cognition (inānasattva) similar to them are invited from
60
Akanistha. Dissolving (into their respective beings of commit-
ment) they purify all obscurations in general, and those obscura-
tions connected with listening to the doctrine in particular. The
student and the deity melt into light, and are visually created
as Ratnasambhava. Entrusting the volume of the Secret Nucleus (T.
832) to him, (the guru) makes the following proclamation (Ch.
10, 3):

TRĀM! One should listen to all secrets--
Which are secret, most secret, and supremely secret.
One should examine the secret meaning itself,
And thence it should not be divulged to others.

The subsequent (four empowerments of ability) are arranged in a
similar manner. The second is the empowerment of the meditator
(sgom-pa'i dbang), according to which the mandala of the deity on
whom one's flower has landed is visually created from the seed-
syllables of its five enlightened families. Melting into light,
it is recreated as that very deity, who entrusts (the student)
with the rosary, which is a sacrament of empowerment, and utters
the following verses (Ch. 10, 4):

OM Great son of the conquerors of the three times,
Grasp the indestructible reality
Of buddha-body, speech and mind!
Make offerings which please all the conquerors,
And be evenly united with all the conquerors.

Buddhaguhya adds that the sacrament of empowerment is (not a rosary) but actually a vajra because (in his view) it is visualised that within the heart is the syllable HŪM, which transforms into a vajra, and then becomes Aksobhya. 61

The third is the empowerment of the expositor ('chad-pa'i dbang): The syllable BHRUM emerges on the tongue, and is transformed into a celestial palace, within which are the syllables HRĪH and JAH HŪM VAM HOH. From these one visualises that there emerge, in the previous manner, the male & female Amitābha, (surrounded by) the deities Vajradharma, Vajratikṣṇa, Vajracakra, and Vajravāk, along with their female consorts Gītā, Ālokā, Sphotā, and Dyuticitrā (62 gsal-bkra-ma). Entrusting into the hand (of the student) a sharp-edged wheel which is the sacrament of empowerment, he utters the following verses (Ch. 10, 6):

OM The unsurpassed nectars of the doctrine
Are poured to satisfy faithful individuals.
Corresponding to those of superior, mediocre,
And inferior intelligence,
The secrets should be proclaimed, but not otherwise.

The fourth is the empowerment of enlightened activity (phrin-las-kvi dbang): The celestial palace which was previously (visualised) emerges on the two hands (of the student), and within it are the syllables HĀM and so forth. Through transformation, these are visualised to emerge, in the previous manner, as the male & female Amoghasiddhi (surrounded by) the deities Vajrakarma, Vajraraksita, Vajrayaksa and Vajramusti (rdo-rie

khu-tshur) and their respective female consorts Nartī, Gandhā
(byug-pa), Kinkinf (dri-'khrol) and Praveśā ('bebs-ma).⁶³

Entrusting the crossed-vajra which is a sacrament of empowerment into the hand (of the student), he utters the following verses (Ch. 10, 5):

OM You should engage in activity of indestructible reality.
Perform all activities without exception.
All the emanations and absorptions
Of the multitude of intermediaries
Perform your requirements!

The fifth is the empowerment of the king of indestructible reality (rdo-rie rgyal-po'i dhang): One meditates that on the head and limbs there are five mandalas, outside of which is a ring of wrathful deities. Now, on the shoulder to the right side of the head there are the male & female Aksobhya, surrounded in the four directions by Sattvavajra, Ratnavajra, Dharmavajra, Karmavajra, and their respective female consorts Sthiravajrā (ldan-ma/ brtan-ma rdo-rie), Jvalavajrā, Valivajrā (sdud-ma rdo-rie), and Ksobhyavajrā. On the head are the male & female Vairocana with their retinue of Vajrasattva, Vajrarāja, Vajrarāga (rdo-rie chags-pa), and Vajrasādhu, and their respective female consorts Vajralāsyā, Dhūpā, Ankuśā, and Tārā.⁶⁴ On the left shoulder is the mandala of Ratnasambhava, as previously described. On the right and left legs respectively are the mandalas of Amoghasiddhi and Amitābha, as before. In the ten cardinal directions outside (the body), including zenith and nadir, one meditates on the mandala of the ten wrathful

deities.

The beings of pristine cognition become absorbed therein, and, joyfully united, they melt into light. Thereby, the student is visualised as Samantabhadra. The vajra and bell which are sacraments of empowerment are entrusted into his hands, and a permissory initiation is granted with the following verses (Ch. 10, 7):

OM Great indestructible reality
 Of the body, speech and mind
 Of all the ten directions and four times,
 Creator of all mandalas!
 Enact the gift of all mandalas!

Then, a mandala is offered and prayers are made in connection with the profound empowerments (zab-dbang): The guru, i.e. the male & female consorts, is visualised as the male and female central deities, and their secret centres are consecrated. The "seminal enlightened mind" (byang-chub-kyi sems) produced by their sexual union emerges from the vajra (=penis) of the male consort as a stream of syllables HŪM, and focuses on the tip of the lotus (=vagina) of the female consort, where it becomes radiant as the body of Vajrasattva and is placed directly on the tongue of the student. In this way, the secret empowerment of skillful means (thabs-kyi gsang-dbang) is conferred.

If it is impossible to receive this (empowerment), the disciple should extract the "seminal enlightened mind" from the tip of the lotus of the female consort. This is the secret empowerment of discriminative awareness (shes-rab-kyi gsang-dbang).

And if that too is impossible, (the "seminal enlightened mind") is extracted from the secret centres of the male & female consorts by the tongue of the male consort, and then directly transposed on the tongue of the student. In this way, the secret empowerment in which skillful means and discriminative awareness are without duality (thabs shes-rab gnvis-su med-pa'i gsang-
66
dbang) is conferred. Placed directly on the tongue in this way, the stream of nectar descends to the heart. The deeds of the six classes of living beings and the propensities for sleep are purified, and the mind should abide in a disposition of bliss,
67
radiance, and non-conceptualisation.

Then the mother, herself representing discriminative awareness (prajñāpāramitā), and the disciple are consecrated, as in the secret empowerment: The "seminal enlightened mind", the product of their meditative equipoise, descends on the tip of the lotus, and is thence potently reversed by the guru who becomes radiant in that disposition of bliss. This is the empowerment of dis-
68
criminating pristine cognition (shes-rab ye-shes-kvi dbang).

Then, one is introduced to this disposition of bliss as a nature without inherent existence, and as the essence of the Great Perfection free from all extremes of conceptual elaboration. This is the conclusive path, the empowerment of supreme bliss (bde-ba
69
chen-po'i dbang).

According to this (tradition), the guru cannot confer the secret empowerment on others unless he has received the empowerment of discriminating pristine cognition; and the student also does not

traverse the path unless he has completed the empowerments. The empowerments are therefore conferred and received in this manner.

The preceding account refers to those students of powerful intelligence who are free from attachment. During the path of liberation which is followed by those of little intellectual ability, on the other hand, (the empowerments) are achieved simply through contemplation and through pills compounded of the nectar of enlightenment.⁷⁰

There are also some who claim that this (tradition of the Secret Nucleus) refers only to the secret empowerment, but they do not discern the actual and implicit meanings (of this text).⁷¹

Concerning the sequence of those (empowerments of ability) the Indestructible Reality (NGB. Vol. 15) says:

The seed is planted by the first.

Ability is generated by the second.

Experience is cultivated by the third.

The real nature is secured by the fourth.

And one who experientially cultivates the fifth
with steadfastness

Will achieve the supreme accomplishment in this lifetime.

Now, there are some masters of the past who hold that these (empowerments) number eighteen, namely, the ten empowerments of beneficence, the five empowerments of ability, and the three empowerments of profundity. Some also hold that there are sixteen when the three empowerments of profundity are subsumed together. In this tradition however, the empowerments are subsumed into two

categories, namely, empowerments of beneficence and empowerments of ability, making fifteen. Here, the empowerments of profundity are subsumed within the empowerments of ability.

72

iii. The third aspect (of the entry and empowerment of the student) concerns the beneficial attributes which have been proclaimed along with the rites which conclude the empowerment feast.

It has five parts, among which the first concerns the beneficial attributes of empowerment. This also has four subdivisions, namely, instatement among the conquerors' children, non-regression into the lower vehicles, temporal proximity (of one's goal), and the obtaining of prophetic declarations.

Concerning instatement among the conquerors' children: Starting from the time when one obtains empowerment, one is regarded as a child of the buddhas. In this lifetime one's desire will be accomplished, and in the next, the celestial realms and liberation will be attained. The continuity of all evil existences will be interrupted. It says accordingly (Ch. 10, 10):

Henceforth you will become a son of the Conqueror,
Will be without all evil existences,
Will have the excellent happiness of longevity,
And become a master of celestial realms and liberation.

Concerning (the benefit of) non-regression into the lower vehicles, it says in the Indestructible Peak (T. 480):

As long as one has not obtained the eighth level,
One will fear the lower vehicles.
Whoever enters into and abides in

This most secret vehicle

73

Is on the level of the conquerors' sons.

Concerning temporal proximity (of the goal), the same text says:

That which others attain in sixteen lifetimes

74

Will be obtained in this very lifetime.

Though you would obtain this level of the conquerors' sons,

How will you do so

Without resorting to the secret mandala?

Similarly, those with conviction in the vehicle

Endowed with indestructible reality

Who actually persevere

In this birth and in all births,

Will, at the conclusion of sixteen births,

Obtain the buddhahood of quiescence.

Though you may obtain this level of the conquerors' sons,

Without entering the secret vehicle,

You will experience two "countless aeons",

And not become transformed within sixteen lives.

And also in the Secret Treasury of Tantra (rgyud gsang-mdzod):

When genuine empowerment is granted and possessed,

The empowerment will take effect from lifetime to lifetime.

Within seven births even one who is not accomplished

75

Will obtain accomplishment.

Concerning the obtaining of prophetic declarations, the Tantra of Buddhasamāvoga (T. 366-367) says:

Once the student has indeed entered the mandala,
And once the supreme offerings have been accepted,
The empowerment of the indestructible name is conferred.
This declares prophetically that the student
Will become a tathâgata.
Until the nucleus of enlightenment (is obtained)
Through unity with these seals,
That one is well known by his indestructible name,
And then will indeed attain buddhahood.

76

Now, although the enlightened attributes of those who have obtained the levels (of realisation) and those who have obtained empowerment are dissimilar in their miraculous abilities and so forth, this empowerment is a profound path because it draws one near to the attainment of buddhahood.

77

The second part (see p. 804) concerns the defects of one who has not obtained empowerment: This text (Ch. 10, 8) accordingly says:

Those who begin to study and so forth,
Without pleasing the master
And without obtaining empowerment
Will have no result, and will be lost.

78

And in the Kriyâtantras, it says:

If one recites the secret mantra of mine
Without cultivating the enlightened mind
And entering into the mandala,
That one will be ruined.

The third part concerns the pleasing of the guru, on which subject the Sūtra Which Gathers All Intentions (T. 829) says:

In all ways one should particularly please him,
Introducing polite speech at the beginning
With the words "genuine guru and spiritual benefactor".

Regarding the way in which he is to be pleased, the same text also says:

There are eight requirements for pleasing
Which are perfectly offered to the genuine one:
Faith without sorrow and fatigue,
Flexibility without obstinacy and pride,
Material concern (zang-zing) without avarice,
Respect without doubt,
Honesty and directness without basis in deceit,
Independence of mind without loquacity,
Discriminative awareness without delusion,
And superior mind without stains--
These eight are perfectly offered to the genuine one.

Now one should not disregard the injunctions of the guru, and one should do whatever is asked. The same text also says:

The burnt offerings associated with the mandala and so forth,
The accepting of students, and the teaching of doctrine
Are not begun without authorisation.
These are inappropriate activities
Except for one who is a genuine object (of refuge).
To act on behalf of others,

One should not enjoy possessions,
But offer them all to the genuine one.
It is inappropriate in the presence of a genuine one
To study under even a genuine one's student.

If one were freely to enjoy the possessions of the guru, that
would be a defect. As the same text says:

The wretch who possesses
The requisites of a genuine one
But distributes them to another,
Will indeed make the latter destitute.
Without genuine sustenance,
And deprived of great rapture,
That one will fall into the desolation of famine.

Now after one has been taken into the following of the guru, one
should be respectful:

After accepting someone as a genuine (guru),
Whether or not he is certainly genuine,
How can one who has disregarded injunctions be authorised.
If one is ensnared in this way,
One will proceed to the Indestructible Hell,
And endure great unbearable suffering.

79

And in the Flash of Splendour (T. 830):

Even when lacking in enlightened attributes,
If a guru is abandoned after being accepted,
One has contempt for the masters of everyone.
One depreciates the buddhas of the three times,

And has indescribable defects.

Briefly, the defects (of such misconduct) would be immeasurable.

The Sequence of Indestructible Activity (P. 4720) also says:

80

The mighty lord who has become a field of accomplishment

Has the characteristics of all buddhas.

One who does not please him with endeavour

Is obscured for aeons and separated from bliss

By darkness and the like.

The paths including those

Of skillful means and discriminative awareness

Become exceedingly remote.

The transmissions of the sugatas

Endowed with ability, power and grace,

Are similar to gemstones, oceans and space,

And should be accepted with degrees of reverence

Even by great bodhisattvas of the tenth level

Because their ability and power are not deceptive.

The fourth part (see p. 804) concerns the commitments which are to be guarded: It is said in the Sūtra of All-Gathering Awareness (T. 831):

One who has thoroughly perfected the empowerments

Should guard against violations

Of all basic and ancillary commitments.

81

Supreme accomplishment will thereby be obtained.

The fifth part concerns the activities of the feast-offering:
This (Secret Nucleus, Ch. 9, 18) says:

Then this supreme son of the enlightened family
Offers the kingdom and his own body,
His children, wife, and riches,
Which are most dear and pleasant to his mind.

The third section (of the third aspect of the overview-- see p. 783) is a teaching on the result of meditation through the creation and perfection stages. It has two parts, among which the former (concerns the provisional results).

Provisionally, those who have obtained empowerment maintain the commitments. By meditation on the stages of creation and perfection, they obtain the status of an awareness-holder of maturation (rnam-smin rig-'dzin), and thence the status of an awareness-holder with power over the lifespan (tshe-dbang rig-
82
'dzin). The Secret Nucleus (Ch. 9, 32) accordingly says:

The genuine accomplishment of empowered awareness
Will be achieved in six or twelve months,
Or in fourteen or in sixteen.

And on that basis one will also accomplish the status of an
83
awareness-holder of the great seal (phyag-chen rig-'dzin).

Then concerning the conclusive result, one will obtain the status
of an awareness-holder of spontaneous presence (lhun-grub rig-
84
'dzin). The Secret Nucleus (Ch. 9, 32) continues:

Within sixteen lifetimes one will (obtain)
The spontaneously perfect five buddha-bodies.

While it is also reported that supreme accomplishment will be attained in about sixteen lifespans of one hundred years, the number of years contained in these sixteen lifespans, in which individual awareness-holders actually become accomplished, is calculated in terms of the lifespan of their own human contemporaries. ⁸⁵ The Indestructible Peak (T. 480) indeed says:

At the conclusion of sixteen births

The buddhahood of quiescence will be obtained.

This concludes the exegesis of the overview.

Interlinear Commentary on the Mandala of Images

(332.2-370.5)

The interlinear commentary on Chapter Nine includes a brief teaching on the enunciation of this mandala, and a detailed exegesis of its nature.

The former (comments on Ch. 9, 1):

Once the mandala of contemplation had been revealed then the **tathāgata** (de-nas de-bzhin gshegs-pa), the **Great Joyous One** (dgves-pa chen-pos) Samantabhadra himself, for the sake of living beings, became **equipoised** (snvoms-par zhugs) through his inconceivable pristine cognition in (1a) the sequence of empowerments. These accord with the mandala array (bkod-pa) of the secret commitments of indestructible reality (rdo-rie gsang-ba'i dam-tshig). Then (nas) in conjunction with his female consort, he uttered (brjod-do) this ('di) following meaningful expression (ched-du brjod-pa).

Detailed Exegesis of the Nature of the Mandala of Images

(332.4-370.5)

The latter has three parts, namely the empowerment into the supreme mandala for those of highest acumen, the empowerment into the mandala of coloured powders for those of low acumen, and a synopsis concerning the beings to whom empowerment is given.

Empowerment into the Supreme Mandala (332.5-349.5):

The first part has two subdivisions, namely, the empowerment into the mandala of the female consort and the empowerment into the mandala of the male consort.

Empowerment into the Mandala of the Female Consort (332.5-348.6):

The former has three aspects, namely: the projection of the mandala and the rites of burnt offerings; the making of offerings which are apparent but not inherently existing; and the actual entrance and empowerment.

1. The first of these aspects includes both the projection of the mandala and the rites of burnt offerings; and the former (332.6-337.3) comprises both the revelation of the mandala and the preparation of the offerings.

The revelation of the mandala (of the female consort) has five sections, among which the first concerns the location in which the mandala is projected. (It comments on Ch. 9, 2):

The supremely secret great bliss is a most subtle (shin-tu phra-
ba'i) topic because it is hard to know and appreciate; and it is
the supreme commitment (dam-tshig mchog), inappropriate for those
who would not attain supreme (accomplishment) in this very life-
time. Therefore, the mandala which confers empowerment abides in
(du) the pure secret (or sexual) centre of the female consort,
(seated) upon the palms (phyag-mthil) of (-'i) the body sealed
with great (chen-po) bliss, i.e. in union with a seal (phyag-
rgya) or mudrâ possessing the appropriate signs, who is created
86
from and retains (that bliss).

The second concerns the dimensions of the mandala. (It comments
on Ch. 9, 3):

This is the genuine mandala of (-kvi dkvil-'khor dam-pa-ste) the
buddha-mind (thugs) of all buddhas, where pristine cognition and
great bliss are indivisible. As for its measurement in inches
(sor-ni), it should be (bya) four (inches) in its dimension
(bzhi-vi tshad), indicative of the (four) delights, namely,
delight, supreme delight, the delight which is free from delight,
87
and the coemergent delight. Accordingly it says in the Tantra
of Radiant Expanse (klong-gsal, NGB. Vol. 7):

The secret centre of the female consort
Is the secret and profound mandala
Of all the buddhas.
It indivisibly confers empowerment
Into the nature of the four pristine cognitions.

The third concerns the pitching of the lines. (It comments on Ch. 9, 4):

This refers to the purification of the mind of that location (i.e. the mudrâ or female consort). It is endowed with five seeds ('bru-lnga), namely, the seeds of birth or the five poisons which (inherently) abide as the pristine cognitions; the five scents (spos-lnga), namely, the five pristine cognitions which are their inherently pure nature; the five gems (rin-chen lnga), namely, the five components; the five essences (snying-po lnga), namely, the five buddha-bodies; the five medicines (dang sman lnga), namely, the five enlightened families; and (dang) the five nectars (bdud-rtsi lnga), namely, the nature (nyid) of mind where the fivefold buddha-body, speech, mind, attributes and activities are indivisible, and which is pure inner radiance.

88

The mandala is also said to be exceedingly level (rab-bsnvams-la) in that it reveals all things as sameness in buddhahood. This is because they are such and are known as such. It is with this awareness (rig-pag) that its supreme and pure Brahmâ lines (thig-ni) should be pitched (gdab-par-bya) or visualised, representing the mind of the female consort as it radiates great pristine cognition.

89

If the mudrâ is one whose mind has not previously been purified in accordance with the secret mantras, the master should pitch the lines which gradually make her mental continuum pure and radiant according to the lay vows and so forth. Once her mind has been purified, the ritual activities included in the creation and

perfection stages, and in the training of the energy channels are also expressed in these lines.

At this juncture, there are some who draw the four-inch mandala on (a base of) ivory and so forth. Then the lines are (physical-ly) pitched: The five seeds are barley, wheat, peas, sesame, and rice, which derive from the nature of the five components purified as the five buddha-bodies. The five scents are camphor, saffron, white and red sandalwood, and aloeswood, which derive from the nature of the five sense-organs purified as the five enlightened activities. The five precious things are gold, silver, coral, pearl, and gemstones which derive from the nature of the five sense-objects purified as the five enlightened attributes. The five essences are salt, honey, molasses, butter and fruits which are derived from the nature of the five aggregates of consciousness purified as the five pristine cognitions. The five medicines are white Acorus Calamus (shu-dag dkar-po), Cedrus Deodara (dbang-po lag-pa), Tinospora Cordifolia (sle-tres), Solanum Xanthocarpum (kantakâri), and mango fruit (amra'i 'bras-bu), which derive from the nature of the five
90
desired attributes purified as the five modes of buddha-speech.

And the five nectars are the pure-essences of sun, moon, water, earth and human flesh which derive from the nature of the five
91
elemental properties purified as the five enlightened families.

It is held that the lines are pitched after the yarn has been soaked in a solution of these ingredients in equal proportion. Then the mandala of painted colours is placed on the palms of the master, and it is claimed that the empowerment is conferred,

beginning from the point when (the mandala) is surrounded with offerings in its cardinal directions and continuing as far as the attainment of the mandala.

92

However that procedure is not intended in this text (the Secret Nucleus). It is indeed impossible to draw such a mandala, and even if one could, the empowerment into it would lack the superior enlightened attributes. And if, being small, it had (these attributes) it would be implicit that even the smallest of physical forms and the like would have the greatest of merits. This artificial (mandala) is, rather, designed for those of feeble acumen. The Cakrasamvara Tantra (T. 362) concurs with the following words:

There is the ritual for drawing (the mandala),
The procedure for colouring the lines,
And the mandala naturally formed
By these living beings.
The former two artificial sorts of mandala
Are essentially objects to be attained,
But the learned do not regard them
As the actual object of their attainment.

Thus, the empowerment is conferred in the natural mandala of the body.

The fourth concerns the drawing (of this mandala. It comments on Ch. 9, 5):

The nature of the secret centre of the female consort is visualised in the form of the celestial palace. In the middle, it is endowed with a central axis and radial lines (lte-ba rtsibs-dang ldan-pa-vi), the essential nature of which is the four-petalled centre within the vagina. This has a four-spoked circle and perimeter (rtsibs-bzhi 'khor-lo mu-khyud-bcas), outside of which is a lotus in the form of a courtyard (bar-khyams) shaped with four rightangled corners (gru-chad bzhi-dang) and a quadrangle (gru-bzhi-vi); and it should (bya) be visualised to have embrasured gates (sgo-khyud ldan-par).

The fifth concerns the array of its symbols. (It comments on Ch. 9, 6):

In that location (or secret centre) of the deity, illustrating the essential nature of flesh-coloured impurities, on a seat composed of the disks of sun and moon, the size of a round fingernail (sen-zlum-tsam-gvi nvi-zla-la), and on a lotus seat, the size of a chick-pea (tsa-na'i 'bru-tsam padma'i gdan) or a split pea, there is the exceedingly clear essence, the size of a mustard seed (yungs-'bru tsam-gvi), which radiates in the form of the syllable (vi-ga) HUM. And derived therefrom (las), the vajra which is the symbolic seal (phyag-rgya) of the non-dual nature, the size of a sesame seed (til-'bru tsam-du) is radiantly visualised to be drawn (bri).

Secondly, the preparation of offerings (associated with the mandala of the female consort-- see p. 812, comments on Ch. 9, 7):
On the left side of the mudrâ, (the mandala) should be adorned with provisions and offerings, with or without visual support. 94

Surrounded by (bskor) diverse kinds of (sna-tshogs) manufactured (bcos-bu'i) and cotton (ras) fabrics which have been dyed and (dang) by (bas) diverse ornaments (brgyan) including diadems and necklaces, by diverse garlands ('phreng) including pendants and half-pendants, by diverse potables (btung) including tea and ale, and savouries (dang bro-bas) such as meat, cheese-cake (thud) and cheese (da-phrum), one sings the sweetest of songs (glu) and beautiful verses (tshig) of praise, and executes dancing (bro) steps and gesticulations (gar) of the hands. Thus, the offerings are excellently made (rab-tu mchod) with provisions (tshogs-kvis) forming an inconceivable cloud-mass (sprin-phung) of (vi) musical trappings (rol-mo) such as conch-shells, cymbals, lutes, flutes, parasols, and victory-banners.

Moreover, the female consorts (yum-dang) on whom these offerings are conditional, the female gatekeepers (sgo-ma) who grant what is wished, and the female spiritual warriors (sems-ma vis) who bring about rejuvenation should adorn (the mandala) and thus make worthy offerings (las-bzhin mchod) of three kinds, just as they are desired (ji-ltar 'dod-pa'i). These (three kinds of offering) respectively generate delight in this (blissful) display itself, in the object of contact and the eye (or subject of contact). It is claimed that the foremost objects of offering made in this context are these outer, inner and secret female

consorts who confer bliss.

The latter (337.3-338.2), which concerns the rites of burnt offering, has two sections. The first is an abbreviated teaching on the burnt offerings of the four rites. (It comments on Ch. 9, 8):

According to the sequence of the four rites, the hearth is endowed with (ldan-par) complete characteristics of (mtshan) different shapes (dbvibs)-- round and so forth, and (dang) also colours (kha-dog) such as white. The supramundane deity of fire (me) is summoned forth (hos-la) and invited into the cavity where the nature of the fire god has become a mouth (zhal-du gyur-ba'i) to consume the offerings. Offerings are then made with provisions of food, drink and savouries (bza'-btung bro-ba'i tshogs-rnams-kvis) including curd porridge (zho-zan) and melted butter; and offerings of the four rites (las-bzhi mchod-pa) such as sesame oil for pacification and gemstones for enrichment, are to be excellently presented (rab-tu sbyin) in conjunction with their
96
respective mantras and contemplations.

The second section is a particular exegesis of the burnt offerings made to wrathful deities. (It comments on Ch. 9, 9):
In the manner of the burnt offerings made to peaceful deities, this characteristic ritual of the hearth, deity and so forth is to be similar (de-bzhin-te) for the mandala of wrathful deities (khro-bo'i dkyil-'khor). The yogin^{..} or one who has (vis) excellently refined (sbyangs-pa) the subtlest (shin-tu phra-la) and most profound essentials of contemplation and so forth should indeed act in the same manner ('ang de-bzhin bya) of ritual

sequence in the case of (1a) the unthinkable (bsam-vas-dag) mandalas of deities, pleasing them with burnt offerings. The ways in which burnt offerings are made to the mandala of any deity through any rite should be applied insofar as (tsam-du) they have been well estimated (dpag-pa) by one's own awareness (rig-pas) which connects with their provisional situations.

ii. The second aspect (of the empowerment into the mandala of the female consort --see p. 812) concerns the making of offerings which are apparitional but not inherent existing (338.2-345.3). There are two parts, namely, mental offerings of contemplation and secret offerings of supreme bliss.

The former comprises both offerings of relative appearance which are illusory, and offerings of pristine cognition which is the ultimate reality of the perfection stage. The first of these also has two aspects, of which the former is the array of the cloud-mass of the offerings of contemplation. (It comments on Ch. 9, 10):

The great seal through which offerings are made (mchod-pa'i phyag-rgya chen-po) to the mandalas by mental emanation comprises (ni) the buddhafields of all (thams-cad sangs-rgyas zhing) world-systems of the ten directions (phyogs-bcu) with their provisions (tsbogs-kvis) which form a thick cloud-mass (sprin) of wish-fulfilling (vid-bzhin) gems, the projection of one's own mind (sems-kyi). These are of the nature of diverse and pure gemstones, radiantly visualised through the syllable BHRUM, in the manner of the field of the Bounteous Array.

There is the ground (gzhi), an entirely level surface composed of gemstones (rin-po-che'i) diverse (ana-tahogs) in substance, which is ornately bedecked with inconceivable and agreeable details of ornament and array, and is pliant, soft, and pleasant to touch (mnven-'jam reg-na bde-ba-vi). Beautifully designed (mdzes-par brig) with diverse gems in the manner of a chequer-board, and (shing) bedecked (spras-pa dang) throughout the ten directions with the diverse gems of deities, adorned in clusters, it has a bounteous mountain which blazes forth ('bar) from the syllable TRAM as a network of light-rays or as a mass of (phung-por) the seven precious things which are the origin of all (kun-'byung rin-cen) that is desired.

There are, derived from the syllable KHAM, beautifully coloured and shapely (dbyibs-legs) lotus pools (rdzing-bu) including lakes and ponds, filled to the brim with water possessed of eight good qualities--- most delicious to taste (bro-mchog), cool (ball) and so forth. These are covered with flowers and resound with the pleasant chirping of birds.

Concerning these eight qualities (of water), it says in the Transmissions of the Vinaya (Vinayāgama, T. 1-7):

Light, delicious, and soft,
 Clear, cool, and unsullied,
 Not harmful to the stomach when drunk,
 And not harmful either to the throat --
 These are the eight attributes
 With which water is endowed.

There are, derived from the syllable BHRUM, a multitude of mansions of gemstones (rin-cen khang-pa), adorned with diverse (sna-tshogs-dang) details of shape, colour, and array; and derived from the syllable OM there are, in parklands, garlands in the form of ornaments (rgyan-dang) of precious gems, and groves of (tshal) divine wish-granting trees (dpag-bsam lion-pa'i), pendant with a network of diverse drapes and gems.

There are, derived from the syllable HRĪH, all languages, pleasant melodious songs (glu-dbyangs), the sound of poetic verses (tshigs-su bcad-pa'i sgra) including praises and benedictions, which are naturally arisen. Derived from the syllable OM there are drapes and offering utensils, canopies (bla-bre), victory-banners (rgyal-mtshan), parasols (gdugs), and diverse robes (na-bza') including both upper and lower garments. Derived from the syllable TRAM there are the inconceivable details of ornamentation such as crowns, necklaces, long pendants, shoulder ornaments, and half-pendants (do-shal dpung-rgyan se-mo-dq). Derived from the syllable OM there are diverse kinds of food (bza') endowed with a hundred supreme savours, diverse [or supreme] (sna-tshogs/ mchog-rnams-dang) kinds of delicious nectarine drinks (dang btung-ba'i), and diverse garment-fabrics, a full measure in size (gos-zungs), bedecked with diverse gems. And, derived from the syllable HŪM there are the bodies of all sentient beings and the natural expressions of the male and female deities (lha-dang lha-mo), ornamented (brgyan-pa-yi) beautifully (mdzes-par) with raiment, ornaments and so forth, which are appropriate to themselves (rang-la), equal in number

to and as numerous as atomic particles (rdul-snyed). All of them are pleasing with their unthinkable (bsam-yas-kvis) dancing (bro) movements of the feet, gesticulations (gar) of the hands, the melodious songs of their music, and so on (la-sogs). It is they who completely fill (bkang) the entire space of the ten directions (phyogs-bcu nam-mkha'i khams) with this cloud of offerings, and then (nas) make offerings (dbul) individually and extensively (rgyas-bar) to all mandalas (dkvil-'khor kun-la) of ground, path and result, subsumed in the expanse of samsâra and nirvâna.

The latter aspect (of the offerings of relative appearance which are illusory) concerns the way in which these are presented. (It comments on Ch. 9, 11):

According to distinctions (khvad-par-gvis) of non-clarity and in the clarity (gsal-ba'i) of the contemplation of yogins or fortunate ones (skal-ldan), one is either gradually or immediately (rim-gvis yang-na cig-car-du) equipoised (mnyam-sbyor) in the expanse of reality (chos-kvi dbyings-dang) which is vast in radiance, and (zhing) then the offerings are presented.

Secondly there are the offerings of pristine cognition, which is the ultimate reality of this perfection stage. (It comments on Ch. 9, 12):

And, in order to renounce actual attachment to these offerings of contemplation, one should meditate on the great seal through which these offerings are made (mchod-pa'i phyag-rgya chen-por bsgom). This accords with (the view) or tradition that these

offering clouds do not exist anywhere apart from one's own mind, that the mind too is of a sky-like nature, without abiding anywhere, and that the threefold interaction of the object of offering, the subject of offering, and the act of offering is essenceless in that disposition, free from all extremes of conceptual elaboration. One of highest intelligence meditates in this way from the very moment when the offerings are made, and is without grasping or attachment, and one of lower intelligence is established subsequently in that non-referential disposition. 97

It says in the Sūtra of the Lamp of Precious Gems (T. 145):

Know the object to which offerings are made to be sky-like.
And the subject who makes them to be non-referential,
Without apprehension in any respect.
This is the most genuine of all offerings.
Which will excellently obtain the inestimable,
Unthinkable pristine cognition.

The second part (see p. 820) concerns the secret offerings of supreme bliss. These include both offerings of the supreme bliss of skillful means, and offerings of discriminative awareness which does not abide in the two extremes.

The former comprises both the actual offerings and a teaching on their beneficial attributes, and the first of these (comments on Ch. 9, 13):

When she (ma), the action seal (karmamudrā), has radiance (gsal-ldan) of contemplation, or ('am), if lacking that, is ritually consecrated (bvin-brlabs-la) by a yogin who visualises himself as the deity, consecrates her secret centre and so forth, the white

and red pure-essences on the tip of her lotus, the size of mustard seeds, are visualised as the mandala. This resembles the miraculous ability of sublime beings which can consecrate all world systems of the trichiliocosm (stong-gsum) to be absorbed (gzhug) or enclosed in a mustard seed (yungs-'brur), with the result that the trichiliocosm is not diminished and the mustard seed does not increase. In that manner (tshul-du), offerings are (mchod) to be made after inviting the (spyan-drangs) inestimable mandalas (dkyil-'khor) of the conquerors and absorbing them into her "lotus-courtyard" from the expanse (dbyings-nas) of reality, without the supporting mandala of her "lotus-courtyard" increasing or the being of pristine cognition (inānasattva) decreasing. Aroused by the signs of this union, offerings should be made of the bliss that is displayed. Once the deities of the mandala have been pleased (mnyes-nas) thereby, one is thought to have obtained the rank of the supreme commitment (dam-tshig mchog) of ('i) inconceivable great accomplishment (grub-pa). This (offering) is clearly described in the sequence of ritual service and attainment associated with the aforementioned four-inch mandala array, prior to the entrance of the being of pristine cognition and the conferral of empowerment.

The second, the beneficial attributes of that offering, are both provisional and conclusive. The former are of two sorts, the first of which are those pleasing to all the buddhas. (It comments on Ch. 9, 14):

Through offerings (mchod-pa-yis) of the blissful Great Identity (bdag-nyid chen-po) which is made in the mandala of the secret centre of the female consort, all mandalas of the buddhas (sangs-rgyas dkyil-'khor) of the ten directions and four times without exception (ma-lus) are pleased (mnyes). Also, through the offerings of her bliss that is displayed to the Great Identity or pristine cognition of intrinsic awareness, the deities of the forty-two mandalas and so forth in which sensory bases and activity fields are primordial buddhahood are pleased. Furthermore, through the offering-sacraments of the Great Identity, which the male consort confers on the female consort and the female consort confers on the male consort, the deities of skillful means and discriminative awareness are pleased. So one should know (this offering) to be threefold: outer, inner, and
 100
 secret.

All living beings, too, are satisfied in the following manner: All living beings ('gro-ba thams-cad-la) possessed of feeling and accumulated thoughts are subsumed within the three realms of existence (srid-gsum), namely, the existence of the desire realm which physically appears through the display of that bliss, the existence of the form realm which is pure and semi-manifest, and the existence of the formless realm which is mental and invisib-
 101
 le. They are filled (khyab-par-'gyur) with the supreme (chen-pog) inner radiance free from conceptual elaboration and the four realities which are indivisible from the four delights (dga'-ba) of great pristine cognition.

The four realities are namely: The reality of non-dual body, liberated from the entire subject-object dichotomy because there is no apprehension of the male & female consorts; the reality of non-dual speech, liberated from all conceptual elaboration and attachment because it is inexpressible; the reality of non-dual mind, liberated from accumulated thoughts in supreme bliss, which thus perceives the essence of the natural buddha-body of reality; and the reality of non-dual pristine cognition, which is an uninterrupted cycle of inner radiance, abiding in the great disposition where there is no subjective apprehension with respect to bliss.

102

The four kinds of inner radiance are namely: The inner radiance of bliss through which at that time the three media (of body, speech, and mind) are filled with delight, causing phenomenal existence to arise as delightful bliss; the inner radiance of radiance through which the naturally radiant essence of mind unimpededly appears from that disposition of bliss as skillful means and discriminative awareness; the inner radiance of non-conceptualisation through which sensations of attachment to subtle and coarse phenomena subside, so that one abides in a non-conceptual state without digression in any respect; and the inner radiance of the inconceivable through which the apparition of ten signs arises from the disposition of reality.

The ten signs are the indications of the single savour of the expanse and pristine cognition, which emerge through the entry of vital energy and mind into the central channel, namely those

which resemble smoke, mirage, clouds, fireflies, sun, moon, blazing gemstones, eclipse, stars, and the appearance of light rays. A slightly dissimilar enumeration of the ten signs is also explained in other classes of tantra.

103

The latter refers to the conclusive result, or the attainment of buddhahood. (It comments on Ch. 9, 15):

Through (vis) (attributes) which emerge from excellent stability in (brtan-pa) the experience of reality, indicated by the ten contemplative signs of skillful means and discriminative awareness associated with the Magical Net (sgyu-'phrul dra-ba), the result is that the nature of all mandalas of the buddhas without exception (sangs-rgyas dkyil-'khor ma-lus-dang), which emerge in the ten directions and four times (phyogs-bcu dus-bzhir gshegs-pa-yi) and (dang) the beings of pristine cognition who perceive with spirituality become manifest (mngon-du-'gyur) to the living beings of the three world-systems (khams-gsum 'gro-rnams). Alternatively, it is said that the mandalas of all the buddhas conclusively cause the components, sensory bases and activity fields to radiate as the deities, and the three media to become manifest as wheels (of adornment), the essence of buddha-body, speech, and mind.

Secondly there are the offerings of discriminative awareness which does not abide in the two extremes. (This comments on Ch. 9, 16):

The conflicting apprehension, attachment and ordinary thoughts of these male & female consorts who are equipoised in non-duality should be purified right where they are. Therefore, the body, speech, and mind (lus-ngag-sems) of oneself and the female consort, and (dang) the nature of all (thams-cad) outer and inner phenomena (chos) indicated by bliss do not abide in any (gang-la'ang mi-gnas) objective respect, and are non-referential (mi-dmigs-te) also in terms of a subjective mind. In that disposition, like an optical illusion (mig-yor tshul-du) which is non-existent but apparitional, and through this union (sbyor-ba-vis) of the male & female consorts in non-duality, one should meditate on the space (nam-mkha' bsgom) of the unimpeded pristine cognition or mind-as-such within the space (nam-mkha'-la ni) of the uncreated expanse where skillful means and discriminative awareness are without duality. One should become equipoised and playful in the essence of their indivisible reality. ¹⁰⁴

iii. The third aspect (of the empowerment into the mandala of the female consort --see p. 812) concerns the actual entrance and the empowerment (345.3-348.6). Its two subdivisions are therefore the entrance and the empowerment.

The former (comments on Ch. 9, 17):

It has two sections. First there is the entrance of the master himself. Having performed all these (kun byas-nas) requisites which precede the ritual, beginning with the meditation on the contemplation of the real, ¹⁰⁵ the mighty lord (dbang-phyug) of the assembled feast-offerings and of yoga, a master of

indestructible reality in person, should enter ('jug) first into the mandala with awareness (rig-pas) of contemplation.

..

Then there is the entrance of the student: Once the master has entered, then the student (de-nas slob-ma) should be ushered in (gzhug-par-bya) to the mandala in accordance with the seventeen procedures for entering.

106.

The latter is the empowerment, which includes both the presentation of offerings (for empowerment) and the actual empowerments connected with the degrees of (the students') intelligence.

The first has two sections, and the first of these concerns the actual offerings which are presented. (It comments on Ch. 9, 18): After the procedures for entering have been concluded, then (de-nas) this (des) son of the enlightened family (rigs-kvi bu), endowed with supreme (mchog) fortune, should make offerings to the guru with all his possessions. He offers (dbul) the kingdom (rgyal-srid) with its provinces, and (dang-ni) his own body (rang-gi lus), his children, wife, and riches (bu-dang chung-ma nor-gvi dbvig), which are diverse precious things including gold and silver. If he has two of each of these, he offers those which are most dear (rab-tu gces) and (dang), in brief, the things which are agreeable and pleasant ('thad) to his own mind (vid).

The second section concerns the beneficial attributes (of this presentation, commenting on Ch. 9, 19):

If offerings are made (mchod-na) of the five (lngas) kinds of desired raptures (longs-spyod) to the master of indestructible

reality who is a mighty lord (dbang-phyug) of yoga, offerings are made to all mandalas (dkvil-'khor thams-cad mchod-pa vin) of the buddhas of the ten directions and four times. If so, it goes without saying that (sos-ci dgos) offerings are made to the meditational deities in the mandala which is at hand (nye-pa'i dkvil-'khor)! The Tantra of the Array of Commitments (dam-tshig rnam-par bkod-pa'i rgyud) says:

If offerings are made to the guru or holder of indestructible reality,

Offerings are made to all mandalas.

It goes without saying that (offerings are made)

to the mandala at hand!

When defects have ceased, supreme accomplishment will be obtained.

So it is that all defects (nyes-pa thams-cad) of the commitments and vows are exclusively purified (dag-par 'gyur).

Secondly, there are the actual empowerments connected with the degree of (the student's) intelligence. (This comments on Ch. 9, 20):

If (na) (the student) is known to have the good fortune whereby the ascetic discipline of faith and perseverance (dad-pa-dang brtson-pa'i brtul-zhugs) is well understood (rab-rtogs), the ten empowerments of beneficence (phan-pa'i dbang) and (dang) the five empowerments of ability (nus-pa'i dbang) [should be given sequentially / rim-pa bzhin-du sbvin-par-bya] by the master; and these are received (gzung) and conferred on the student's mind

with superior compassion (snying-ries), such that they are not unproductive (chud ma-zos-par).

If one is without good fortune, (the empowerments) are not given, or else only the empowerments of beneficence are conferred. The empowerments of ability are not given because there would be a great defect. This is also said in the following passage from the Tantra of the Supreme Commitment: the Great Array of Pristine Cognition (ye-she bkod-pa chen-po dam-tshig mchog-gi rgyud):

If empowerment has been given to a student

Who is an unworthy recipient,

Both (master and student) will be lost.

In this circumstance one would be obscured by the unending darkness of wrong view which is a vast dense forest of error, one would be disturbed by the brigandry of conflicting emotion, and the light rays of the sun which is the buddhas' spirituality would have no chance to enter into enlightened activity.

There are also some (among you) who say, "Other tantras mention the four empowerments and their fourteen subdivisions, but this tantra of yours (i.e. the Secret Nucleus) is not authentic because it has a disparate enumeration of fifteen derived from both the empowerments of beneficence and ability". Alas! those of unfortunate disposition such as yourselves have not comprehended the classifications (of empowerment) and its meaningful sequence. Such intellects have not even been directed towards the intention of the different classes of tantra. For, the Yogatantras speak of three empowerments, namely, those of the vase, ascetic

discipline, and the master of indestructible reality; the Purification of All Evil Destinies (T. 483) speaks of eleven empowerments, or nineteen when they are subdivided; the Summation of the Real (T. 479) and the Tantra of the Hidden Point of the Moon (T. 477) mention three empowerments, i.e. vase, secret, and discriminating pristine cognition. Even the Buddhasamāvoga (T. 366-7) would be an inauthentic tantra because it subsumes these in the two empowerments of the master and the student. Considering, however, that all these (tantras) are not flawed because their meanings are similar, how is there a defect in this (Tantra of the Secret Nucleus)? It too is similar in meaning. It is the root of all tantras, and all the methods of empowerment according to the other tantras are gathered within
107
it.

The empowerment of the vase, which is explicitly mentioned, is the water empowerment of Aksobhya. Those of the crown, diadem, and flower are the empowerments of Ratnasambhava. Those of the seals, i.e. of vajra and bell, are the empowerments of Amitâbha and Amoghasiddhi respectively. And, during the empowerments of ability, there is the empowerment of Vairocana which begins with
108
the verses (Ch. 10, 3):

You should engage in activity of indestructible reality.

All attributes such as ascetic discipline, prophetic declaration, and inspiration are revealed through the empowerments of ability, which include the empowerment of the king of indestructible
109
reality (rdo-rie rgyal-po).

The secret empowerment is explicitly revealed (here), while the empowerment of discriminating pristine cognition and the precious empowerment of word (and meaning) are implicitly indicated as its subdivisions.¹¹⁰

Inasmuch as this (tantra) conforms in its meaning to the classes of tantra, where is the defect in it? The tongues of those who scorn such a tradition would visibly (i.e. in this very life) protrude below the larynx, and at the time of their death a great apparition of fire would blaze forth. Who but you would experience such extraordinary indications of the descent into hell? You would deserve compassion for many aeons.¹¹¹

Empowerment in the Mandala of the Male Consort

(348.6-349.5)

The second part (of the empowerment into the supreme mandala for those of highest acumen --see p. 812) is the empowerment in the mandala of the male consort. (It comments on Ch. 9, 21):

There is another tradition derived from the (aforementioned) secret empowerment and the empowerment of discriminating pristine cognition in the mandala of the female consort, in which it is revealed that the empowerment is received from the tip of the vaira (penis) of the male consort: Alternatively (yang-na), one who is learned (mkhas-pas) in the skillful means of bliss should visualise himself as the male consort, with palms (thal-mo) in meditative equipoise, joined together (rab-bsnol-nas) (with the female consort) as the great seal (phyag-rgya chen-po) or body of the deity. Then indeed (yang), in the lap of (phang-

du-ni) (that deity), he should confer (bva) empowerment on the disciple by means of the pure-essence (=semen) in (du) the mandala (dkyil-'khor) of his penis (guhvavaira) which is a full finger-span in dimension (mdzub-gang tshad).¹¹² This is done in accordance with the ritual (cho-ga ji-bzhin) of empowerment. Then, the empowerments are completely granted.

There are some who, in this context, first confer the empowerments of ability, and subsequently those of beneficence as a permissory blessing.¹¹³ Or indeed they confer all these through the secret empowerment alone. However this refers only to those (students) of keenest acumen. They have not correctly perceived the statement found in the Sequence of Indestructible Activity Reality (P. 4720) that there is another (order) for those of feeble intelligence. This text itself says (Ch. 9, 20):

The empowerments of beneficence
And the empowerments of ability
[Should be given sequentially]
And received with compassion,
Such that they are not unproductive.

This passage mentions the empowerments of beneficence first. The order is such that the vase empowerment is found at the beginning, and is then followed by the secret one, the discriminating pristine cognition, and the fourth (empowerment).¹¹⁴

Empowerment in the Mandala of Coloured Powders

(349.5-369.4)

The second part (of the detailed exegesis of the mandala of images --see p. 812) is the empowerment into the mandala of coloured powders for those of low acumen. This has three subdivisions, namely: the drawing of the mandala; its means of attainment; and the result of this attainment.

Drawing of the Mandala (349.6-353.6):

The first of these also has three sections, namely, the rituals for the drawing of the small, intermediate, and large mandalas.

1. The drawing of the small mandala (comments on Ch. 9, 22):

First there is the ritual connected with the site. Apart from those empowerments in the supreme mandala, there is alternatively (yang-na) another method in which (the mandala) is drawn on a most level (rab-mnyam-la) surface, in accordance with the ritual of the site (sa-gzhi). A site which has not formerly been purified does not subsequently become pure. But one, who knows that (Ch. 2, 2):

Earth and water are respectively Buddhalocanā and Māmaki and so forth, subsequently purifies the site by clearly visualising that it has been pure from the beginning.

Secondly there is the actual drawing (of the small mandala). The smallest form of the small mandala (dkvil-'khor) of images should be a full cubit in dimension (khru-gang tshad-du)

bya). Or (yang-na) the intermediate form of the small (mandala) should be a full body-length in dimension (lus-gang tshad-du ste), i.e. four cubits ('dom-gang). Or (yang-na) the large form of the small (mandala) should be about three body-lengths in dimension (lus-ni gsum-gvi tshad). It is endowed with kilas (phur-bu) of human bone and so forth, which include the Awesome Kila ('gying-phur) of four inches in the middle of the mandala and those of eighteen inches for guarding (the mandala) from impediments; with threads (grad-bu) of cotton, wool, lotus fibre, hair from a charnel ground and so forth, double the size of the mandala, which are used to distinguish its sectors; with coloured powders (tshon-phye) of five kinds and so forth, which form distinct colours to symbolise the different enlightened families; and (dang) with a sixteen year-old action seal (karmamudrā) or pleasant (vid-'ong) female assistant (gros) who is beautified (mdzes-pa'i) with robes and fine ornaments (rgyan) in order that the rite might be attained.

Then the assistant holds the ends of the threads, while the excellent ritual in which (-'i cho-ga phun-sum tshogs) both the line (thig) of pristine cognition and the line (thig) of action are pitched (gdab) should be performed (bya) by the master of indestructible reality, the great one (chen-pog) who is learned (mkhas-ldan) in the rites of the mandala, twisting (bsgrims-te) (the threads) well together, without wavering in body or mind.

ii. The second section concerning the intermediate (mandala comments on Ch. 9, 23):

This (mandala) also has three forms: Alternatively (yang-na), the small form of the intermediate (mandala) should be (bya) sixteen cubits (khru-ni bcu-drug), and (dang) the intermediate form of the intermediate (mandala) twenty (nyi-shu), or ('am) the large form of the intermediate (mandala) twenty-five cubits in dimension (nyi-shu rtsa-lngar). In this (mandala), the lines should be pitched in the previous manner. One meditates on (bagom) the coloured lines as the five mandalas of the enlightened families (rigs-kvi dkyil-'khor lnga-rnams), and visualises the coloured lines of the five pristine cognitions which arise from their fusion. And, once the lines have been pitched and the colours have been applied, the appropriate forms (gzugs) indicative of buddha-body, speech, and mind are also (kyang) to be arrayed (dgod) in the respective locations of the deities. These include the pictures (tse-ka-li), relief images, or mould engravings symbolic of buddha-body (sku) which mark the different locations of the deities; the seed-syllables or heart-mantras symbolic of buddha-speech (gsung); and the vajra and wheel with which they are endowed (ldan) and which indicate the nature of the deities by their hand-implements, symbolic of buddha-mind (thugs).

iii. The third section concerns the large (mandala, and comments on Ch. 9, 24):

This also has three forms: Alternatively (yang-na), the small form of the large (mandala) is one reach of hearing (ngyang-

grasa). This is the point expressed in the following passage from the Treasury of the Abhidharma (T. 4089):

There are twenty-four inches (anguli) in one cubit (hasta),
Four cubits in one bow-span (dhanuh),
Five hundred bow-spans in one earshot (krosa),
Which is held to be a long measurement.
Eight of these are called one vojana.

Then, there is the intermediate form of the large (mandala) at one vojana (dpag-tshad), or (dam) the large form of the large (mandala) at an unthinkable expanse of space in its dimension (nam-mkha'i dbyings-ni bsam-yas). Therein (par), the mandala of the awareness-holders is actually emanated, or else one meditates on the diverse (sna-tshogs bagom) enlightened families of the mandalas of the buddhas (sangs-rgyas dkyil-'khor), while the empowerments are conferred.

This implies that empowerment is conferred on the student while the mandala which pervades the entire expanse of space is actually emanated. It is exemplified in the past by the master Buddhaguhya who, (seated) by the shore of Lake Manasarovar, pitched the lines on the lake and then actually revealed and granted the empowerment of the mandala of the indestructible expanse (Vajradhātumandala) to Mañjuśrīkīrti; and also by the great master Padmasambhava who revealed the mandala of Vajrakumāra, equal to the dimensions of space, in the Lion Cave of sTag-tshang, and then conferred empowerment on Ye-she mTsho-rgyal.

Although the five buddha-bodies and five pristine cognitions abides primordially in the mental continuum of sentient beings, they have been obscured by ignorance. In order that they might be revealed to deluded unseeing beings (ma-mthong rmongsa-la bstan-phyir), they should be drawn with (gyis bri-bar-bya) coloured powders (tshon) of twenty-five (nyi-shu rtsa-lnga) hues (kha-dog), which are compounded by dividing (a basic colour) such as white into its five respective shades -- yellowish white, reddish white, greenish white, bluish white, and white itself, while the other four (basic colours) are similarly divided. These symbolise the twenty-five facets of pristine cognition, the bodhisattvas in the intermediate directions (of the mandala) and so forth. Or ('am) if all these (twenty-five) are lacking, it should be drawn with coloured powders of five hues (lnga'i tshon), namely, white, yellow, red, green, and blue. Accordingly, it says in the Tantra of the Extensive Magical Net (T. 834):

All sentient beings without exception
 Are totally pervaded by the five pristine cognitions,
 But they have been obscured by their own thoughts.
 Then, in order to reveal the character of pristine cognition
 To all such deluded beings
 Who do not see the meaning of the five pristine cognitions,
 The colours white, red, yellow, green, and so forth
 Are revealed, including black.

As to the drawing of (this mandala), there are detailed, intermediate, and condensed structures and so forth which are to be painted (dgye) by a perceptive lineage-holder with pure practical

application and according to (bzhin-du) the tradition of the ritual in which instruction is given ('dul-ba'i cho-ga) in this context. The Flash of Splendour (T. 830) accordingly says:

The images are indeed drawn

Corresponding to the mandala of one's contemplation.

There are some who claim that these (mandalas of coloured powders) apply to the traditions of the Kriyâtantras and Caryâtantras, and there are some who utilise them as a means of instructing those to be trained. Such persons however seem to misunderstand that the extensive, intermediate, and condensed mandalas of images are indeed distinguished according to the intelligence and resources of individuals. For universal monarchs and so on there is (the large mandala) of one yojana and so forth; for ordinary persons who are supremely endowed there is the intermediate (mandala); and for those of meagre resources there is said to be (the mandala) of small dimension. The large form of the large mandala is distinguished according to the acumen of a supreme student who is empowered by a sublime guru.

The texts also explain these three kinds (of mandala) without confusion: During (the preparation of) the small (mandala) they speak of the sequence of the lines. During (the preparation of) the intermediate mandala they speak of the consecration and drawing of the coloured lines, and the means of arraying the symbols; and during (the preparation of) the extensive mandala they speak of the perfect method of drawing according to the sequence in which the symbols are painted.

Attainment of the Mandala (353.6-356.4):

The second part (see p. 836) concerns the attainment of the mandala. It has three sections, namely: the creation of the mandala; its invitation; and its absorption in a non-dual manner.

1. The first (comments on Ch. 9, 25):

Through the generation of an enlightened attitude and the supreme infinite display of contemplation (ting-'dzin rol-mo mtha'-vas mchog) of the real nature and so forth, the mandala is visually created, reaching the limits of the expanse of space. Within it, the locations of the different deities are visualised, endowed with (ldan-par) their respective syllables (yi-ge) such as THA, or ('am) drops of colour heaped up as symbols (brda'-am) to indicate the deities corresponding to their body-colours, heart-mantras (snying-po) such as HOM and MUM, or ('am) seals (phvag-rgya) including the vajra and the wheel, or the ('am) complete buddha-body, speech, and mind (sku-gsung-thugs) of the different deities, whichever are appropriate. Thus, the mandala of coloured powders is said to be consecrated in that (bvin-rlabs) mandala of contemplation or pristine cognition. As to the goals achieved thereby, there are ('gyur) the common four rites which are amazing (ya-mtshan) and provisional, and the wondrous (rmad-po-che) conclusive accomplishments ('grub) of the mandala of deities. These are the great commitment (dam) of all the buddhas (sangs-rgyas kun-gyi). If, even when the forms of the seals (phvag-rgya) of buddha-body, speech, and mind have been made (bvas) from (las) crude external materials including clay (sa), wood, stone and so forth (la-sogs), the sequence of liberation

(rnam-grol rim-pa) corresponding to the fortune of respective trainees will be obtained (thob-par-'gyur) in the three different degrees of enlightenment, ¹²¹ it goes without saying that (smos-ci dgos-te) the objects of the mind will be purified (sbyangs-pas) by (-gyis) the contemplation of pure pristine cognition (dag-pa'i ye-sbes). They will become primordial inner radiance and buddhahood will be accomplished. Accomplishment will take effect merely by visualising that this ('di) mind itself (nvid) is (vin) primordial buddhahood. It says in the Sûtra of Pristine Cognition At the Moment of Decease (T. 122):

If the mind is realised, there is buddhahood. Therefore, one should meditate well on the perception that buddhahood is not elsewhere attained.

And in the All-Accomplishing King (T. 828):

Mind-as-such is perfect buddhahood.

The second section (of the attainment of the mandala) is the invitation (which comments on Ch. 9. 26):

The Great Identity of (bdag-nvid chen) all the mandalas of the (dkvil-'khor) ten directions (phyogs) and four times (dus) invites all (thams-cad spyan-drang-ngo) mandalas (dkvil-'khor) of the beings of pristine cognition which are desired from (las) the disposition of the buddha-body of reality or mandala of buddha-mind (thugs-kvi dkvil-'khor) which is the fundamental abiding nature, non-referential (mi-dmigs) in any respect, and free from conceptual elaboration.

Now, these (beings) are said to be invited simply when the intellect wills them to come, and they are also consecrated by all-knowing spirituality because the central deity experiences them as a mere emanation of his own mind. This is consistent because the mind is itself buddhahood, and the mandala is attained by its experience and radiance.

The third section (of the attainment of the mandala) is the absorption in non-duality (which comments on Ch. 9, 27):

The visualised mandala of contemplation and the natural spontaneous mandala of the ground both abide in an indivisible (dbver-med) manner in the self-manifesting (rang-snang) essence. This absorption occurs through (-bas) the meditative union (mnvam-sbvor) of these two mandalas, in the manner of water being poured into water; and it is characteristic of (mtshan-nvid) the entry ('jug-pa) and absorption of the invited mandala of the being of pristine cognition into the mandala (dkvil-'khor-la) of natural commitment, which has been visualised. Therefore one performs ritual service (bsnyen-pa), aspiring that the tathâgatas might become present before those who visualise them in person-- as has happened to some in accordance with the former acts of all the buddhas, emerging from all the (kun-nas rshogs-pa-vi) ten directions (phyogs) and four times (dus) for the sake of living beings. In consequence of (-'i) this (ritual service) being accomplished, the mandala (dkvil-'khor) of enlightened activity which performs acts of benefit in accordance with the real nature arrives through spirituality and enters in a well perfected (rab-tu rdzogs) manner into the mandala of the being of commitment.

This invitation and absorption is the supreme commitment (dam-tshig mchog) because its intention is directed towards those sons who are the closest ones (nve-bar gvur-pa'i).

Result of the Attainment of the Mandala (356.4-369.4):

..

Thirdly, there is the result which is attained through the mandala. It has three sections, namely: the appropriate array of accomplishments which emerges from the mind; a teaching on the skillful means through which it is attained; and a description of the result accomplished by that skillful means.

1. This also has three parts, among which the first is an illustration (of this array. It comments on Ch. 9, 28):

The wish-granting tree (dpag-bsam shing-dang) of the gods, the wish-fulfilling gemstone (vid-bzhin-gvi rin-po-che) and (dang) moreover all (kun) the desired things that emerge ('byung-ba) with the appearance of external objects seem to be different wonders and attributes. However, they (de-dag) are not (yod ma-yin-te) substantial (rdzas) objects existing independently and externally. The youthful Jyotiska exchanged his mansion of gemstones for the house of Ajâtaśatru, and yet it followed after him. Udâgata stretched out his own hands, and brought forth food, clothing and so forth from his well, but others did not. When the gemstone and the wish-granting tree were taken by the gods and the inhabitants of Uttarakuru they experienced all that they desired, but others did not. But, if you ask from what primary cause these appearances come about, they ripen in this way as

the steadfast (briān-pa) and mature result of the merit (bsod-nams) of one's own mind (rang-sems), the seed or propensity of one's past liberality which abides in the ground-of-all (kun-gzhi). Through its encounter with those conditions, the desired necessities are (yin) seen to emerge. In the same way, the material forms of the different things which emerge in the world manifoldly appear through the propensity for objective appearance in the beginningless ground-of-all. The individual components emerge through the propensity for physical appearance, and the outer and inner phenomena or sensory bases of sentient beings along with the aggregates of individual consciousness emerge through the propensity for conceptual appearance. However, these do not exist as discrete objects, and are similar to dreams.

123

ii. The second concerns the genuine meaning (of the appropriate array of accomplishments which emerges from the mind. It comments on Ch. 9, 29):

So this (ultimate) mandala of buddha-body, speech, mind, attributes and activities, which is the wondrous marvelous (ngo-mtshar cho-'phrul) astonishing and amazing reality (rmad-kyi chos), and provisional accomplishments such as the four rites are obtained in the abiding nature of genuine mind-as-such. However one does not arrive at (this result) by transcending (one's present level). It does not extraneously exist (gzhan-na yod) in space, and it does not come forth ('ongs ma-yin-te) having been summoned into one's presence. But rather, it naturally emerges (byung) and appears as a spontaneous mandala of

buddha-body and pristine cognition in (-du) the dispositions (ngang) of those (de-lta-bu-yi) who master the creation and perfection stages. Such beings have become thoroughly steadfast in (la-brtan-pa'i) the mental cultivation of great compassion in the creation stage of skillful means (thabs), beginning with the visualisation of the outer containing world as the celestial palace, its inner contents as the male & female deities, and oneself as the body of the conqueror; and they have thence become purified in the nature (nyid) of non-dual coalescence through the cultivation of the perfection stage of discriminative awareness (shes-rab), free from all extremes of conceptual elaboration.

The real nature of the expanse of (dbyings-kvi de-bzhin-nyid) reality or discriminative awareness (shes-rab), a nature free from conceptual elaboration, is the disposition of the buddha-body of reality. It becomes (gyur-pa'i) transformed into the seals of skillful means (thabs-kvi phvag-rgya), a display of spontaneous pristine cognition which is arrayed as the self-manifesting mandala of the body of form within the spontaneous Bounteous Array. Thus (phvir), the pristine cognition (ye-shes) of the buddha-body of form is displayed (rol) in (la-ni) the pristine cognition (ye-shes) of the buddha-body of reality; and it is from this disposition that the display of the pristine cognition (ye-shes rol-pa) of the emanational body is itself (nyid-kvang) said to be gathered (gsog), in the manner of the moon's reflection in water, without straying from its (source) and corresponding to the perception of those to be trained in the world. It says accordingly in the Intermediate Mother (T. 9):

The all-knowing one is like a dream, an illusory display, the moon's reflection in water, and an optical illusion.

The pristine cognition of the all-knowing one too is like a dream, an illusory display, the moon's reflection in water, and an optical illusion.

Some interpret this verse to mean that the buddha and his pristine cognition are both "gathered", i.e., gradually acquired, but their view is unconnected with the real nature of the buddha-
124
body of perfect rapture.

iii. The third section (of the appropriate array of accomplishments which emerges from the mind) concerns the benefit for the sake of others which thereby emerges. (It comments on Ch. 9, 30):

If one were to think that when the display of pristine cognition is gathered, it would be improper to perform acts of benefit
125
through it on behalf of others, it is said that:

Through the appearance of this gathering
Acts of benefit are indeed performed.

Now, the conquerors (rgyal-ba) actually (mngon) emerge (byung) as the six sages and so forth corresponding to the volition of sentient beings, and they perform acts of benefit through their twelve deeds and so forth which grant protection (skvob-pa-dang) from the suffering of living beings. They confer blessing (bvin-rlabs) whereby they appear from the disposition of the buddha-body of reality as the buddha-body of perfect rapture in the spontaneous Bounteous Array; and thence they also become visible

(ston-pa'ang) to bodhisattvas of the tenth level as the emanational body of natural expression, or the buddha-body of perfect rapture of the five enlightened families. Indeed, they appear in the same manner (de-bzhin-te) as the (aforementioned) illustrative gemstone and the wish-granting tree, (which appear) through the spirituality of the Teacher corresponding to the merits experienced by the individual minds of living beings. The Introduction to the Madhyamaka (T. 3861) accordingly says:

126

The fields and bodies are radiant like the wishing tree.

They are non-conceptualising like the wish-fulfilling gem.

Ever remaining to guide the world until beings are liberated,

They appear to those who are free from elaboration.

Therefore, the emanational body without independent existence arises of its own accord as a display of enlightened activity, endowed with the charisma (gzi-byin-gvis) of spontaneous spirituality, which can perform actions (bva-byed nus-pa'i) of benefit for the sake of living beings. It is similar to the illumination of the four continents by the brilliant light of sun and moon, and to the reflection of an open lotus flower in a pool. One who possesses the nature of this indestructible reality of (rdo-rie) buddha-body, speech, and mind, a magical display (sgyu-ma) of pristine cognition, is supreme among (mchog) the genuine great kings (btsan-po) because that one is master over all things. It says in the Indestructible Reality (NGB. Vol. 15):

The self-manifesting magical display of pristine cognition

Is the supreme commitment, or indestructible king,

The great accomplishment of buddha-body, speech and mind

Which illuminates all living beings.

The second section (of the result attained through the mandala teaches the skillful means through which it is attained. (It comments on Ch. 9, 31):

One who has been accepted by a spiritual benefactor or guru who reveals the unerring path, who has obtained the empowerments from him, who has kept the commitments and vows, and who is learned in the esoteric instructions of attainment can attain (the result) by excelling in perseverance. Having (byas-shing) mentally perfected (rdzogs) the five kinds of ritual (cho-ga lnga-ni) through which accomplishments are attained, one who is perfectly endowed (rdzogs-par-ldan) with the five requisites (yo-byad lnga-ni) appropriate for attaining accomplishment, and who is perfect in (rdzogs-pas) the five aspects of (-kvi yan-lag lnga) attainment according to the secret mantra (sngags) will swiftly become accomplished.

Now, the five requisites are namely: to be without obstacles and to be in sympathy with the object of attainment; to have a female assistant with complete and auspicious characteristics; not to fall into the two extremes regarding the necessities of one's livelihood and to be without wrong livelihood; to maintain without degeneration the complete sacraments of accomplishment; and to accumulate and have as a support the sacraments of commitment. The five aspects of attainment according to the secret mantras are those which concern the real nature respectively of oneself, the deity, the secret mantra, the recitation, and the emanation & absorption (of light).

This accomplishment will occur if (na) one perseveres (rab-brtson) to undertake ('jug-la) and maintain one's practice, without degeneration (ma-nvams) in the general view and commitments, and without degeneration in the particular provisions which are appropriate conditions for attainment, and provided that one has, by day and night, renounced lethargy and fatigue with respect to attainment. It is said that if one does not persevere there will be no accomplishment.

In some versions of the text, the words "by persevering" (brtson-pag) are found (instead of "if one perseveres"; brtson-na), in which case the general tenor (of this means for attainment) is explained, but (the opposite condition under which) there will be no accomplishment is not implied.

128

There are also some who hold the five kinds of ritual to be namely: the real nature, its universal appearance, its seed-syllables of buddha-speech, its hand-implements symbolic of buddha-mind, and the perfect buddha-body; the five requisites to be the possessions of food & drink, dance steps & gesticulations, song & verse, robes & ornaments, and "vowels & consonants"; and the five aspects of mantra to be namely: the visual creation of the limbs as a mandala of fifty deities, the knowledge that their corresponding conceptual aspects are the forty-two deities, the subdivision of each of these deities into forty-two, the consecration of their buddha-body, speech and mind, and their empowerment which is conferred by the five enlightened families. However that opinion is unsuitable because it is exclusively

biased in the direction of the creation stage. The real nature of the perfection stage, with the requisites of its locations and sacraments are incomplete.

129

The third section (of the result attained through the mandala-- is a description of the results accomplished by these skillful means. It comprises both provisional and conclusive results.

The former (comments on Ch. 9, 32):

The genuine accomplishment (dam-pa) of (-kvi) the awareness (rigs)-holder who is empowered (dbang-bagvur) with control over the lifespan will be achieved ('grub) by those of highest acumen and perseverance within six months, or literally six times thirty days (zhag-ni sum-cu phrag-drug), or (gam) by those of mediocre acumen in twelve months (bcu-gnyis), or by those of inferior acumen in fourteen (bcu-bzhi), or even by the basest in sixteen (bcu-drug-gis).

130

Now, the term "genuine", in this context, does not describe those (accomplishments) possessed by the higher (awareness-holders) of the (great) seal and spontaneous presence. Why therefore is this (power over the lifespan) described as genuine? It is so-called because it surpasses (the accomplishment of the awareness-holder) of maturation and because it refers to the attainment of buddhahood in this very body, just as the term "supreme phenomenon" (mchog-chog) is employed to describe the supreme phenomenon on the path of connection. Accordingly, the Sequence of the Path (P. 4736) also says:

131

Through accomplishments attained by the performance
Of feast-offerings, which conclude one's entry
into the vision of truth,
Corruption of body, sensory bases and womb comes to an end.
One is transformed into the body of indestructible reality
And passes into nirvāna in the reality
Where awareness of the lifespan is discerned.
This is the level of the conquerors
Whereon the body is not relinquished.

On the basis of this attainment of power over the lifespan, one
will obtain buddhahood in the number of years or time occupied by
sixteen (bcu-drug) prolonged lifespans (de-tshe). Within (tshun-
chad-kvis) sixteen such "births", one will obtain the spont-
aneously perfect (lhun-gvis rdzogs-pa-ni) buddhahood of the five
buddha-bodies (sku-lnga).

It is held in certain mantra-texts that the (level of the) sky-
farers will be traversed and buddhahood attained by means of a
single body within a single lifespan, and that even if one
loiters buddhahood will be obtained within seven births or in
sixteen. Although this is indeed the case, here in the (tradition
of the Secret Nucleus) one who has obtained power over the life-
span is capable of a single lifespan (which lasts) for one
thousand six hundred years, and then obtains the status of an
awareness-holder of spontaneous presence. When the habitual
impulses of the (normal) lifespan come to an end, the lifespan is
prolonged through skillful means. Shortening the course of each

century sixteen times in that way, one abides in a single
132
body. It says in the Extensive Magical Net (T. 834):

One abides for sixteen lifespans,
Shortening the course of each century,
And attains buddhahood
Without relinquishing the body.

And in the Indestructible Peak (T. 480):

At the conclusion of sixteen births
The buddhahood of quiescence will be obtained.

There are some who say that although there is a single lifespan, the reduction in the age of the body sixteen times is effected in the manner of resurrection from the dead, but they are refuted because buddhahood is said to be attained without relinquishing the body.

In connection with the two (kinds of awareness-holder which are revealed) here, namely those of power over the lifespan and spontaneous presence, the (other) awareness-holders of maturation
133
and the great seal are also implicitly indicated.

The latter concerns the conclusive result or the awareness-holder of spontaneous presence. It has three parts, namely: the accomplishment of self-manifesting buddha-body and pristine cognition in the spontaneous Bounteous Array; the presence of the inwardly radiant field of the body of reality which is the expanse of the real free from conceptual elaborations; and the reemergence of the emanational body in the world-systems of those to be trained.

The first of these has two subdivisions, among which the former concerns the manifest awakening. (It comments on Ch. 9, 33):

In that nature (de-nvid-la) or reality of the unique seminal point (thig-le) of pristine cognition (ye-shes) free from all extremes of conceptual elaboration, which is the expanse, the naturally pure mind-as-such, and primordial buddhahood, without form or radiance, there is found the unceasing and uncreated pristine cognition in which suddenly arisen and imaginary stains are pure right where they are. The appearance (snang-ba) of the seminal point (thig-le) itself (nvid), where pristine cognition (ye-shes) is mingled indivisibly in that expanse in a single savour, like water poured into water, is inconceivable (bsam-gyis mi-khyab) and infinitely supreme (mtha'-vas mchog). For, it is spontaneously present as the five buddha-bodies, i.e., those of awakening, indestructible reality and quiescent reality, the radiant body of perfect rapture, and the emanational body of pristine cognition. The supreme accomplishment is said to be obtained because there is a manifestly perfect (mngon-rdzogs-pa'i) awakening, indivisible from the nature of the indestructible body, speech and mind of all the tathâgatas throughout the
134
ten directions and four times (phvogs-bcu dus-bzhi).

The latter concerns the appearance of the buddhfields. (It
135
comments on Ch. 9, 34):

At that time (of manifest awakening), the buddhfield (zhing-khams) of the spontaneous Bounteous Array becomes present, naturally pure (rnam-dag) and entirely immaculate in its unthinkable (bsam-vas) disposition because it pervades the

expanse of reality and the infinity of space. In it is situated the celestial palace (gzhal-vas-khang) without spatial dimensions (rgya) in the ten directions and free from (-dang bral-ba'i) being considered as merely one specific object. With its ornamental (rgyan) form, based on the wheel ('khor-lo'i) of pristine cognition, or the immeasurable ground, which is also symbolised by a wheel of gems; and (dang) the great assembly of its display (rol-mo'i tshogs) where excellent desired attributes are arranged throughout the ten directions, it comprises the nature of all unthinkable (bsam-vas kun) mandalas (dkvil-'khor) of the five enlightened families, without exception (ma-lus). For these are spontaneous appearances of inner radiance, pervading the confines of space.

When it is seen (mthong-nas) as an object of the pure vision of pristine cognition, mastery is (nve-bar brnyes-pa) actually attained over the ground of great rapture; and (dang) the benefit (don) of living beings which spontaneously emerges ('byung-ba'ang) from its (las) amassed syllables of buddha-speech (gsung), vast (rgya-chen) because they are inexpressible and impartial, is itself said to be the pristine cognition (ve-shes). This is naturally harmonious (mthun-pa'i) with primordial buddha-hood in the mandala of the spontaneous ground, with radiant visualisation through the profound contemplative mandala of the path, and with the indivisible three degrees of enlightenment in the original abiding nature of the result. Through its presence and the knowledge that it is present, that presence is directed

136

reached.

This buddhafield moreover is not materially seen by any beings confined within any spatial direction. Rather, it is the pristine cognition of buddhahood, manifest in and of itself (rang-snang-ba'o).

The second part (of the conclusive result, concerning the buddha-body of reality, comments on Ch. 9, 35):

This apparitional buddhafield is also absorbed into the field of the buddha-body of reality, an expanse which resembles the moon of the darkest night. It is therefore without outward appearance, but its cognition as inner radiance is unimpeded. This is the real nature (de-bzhin-nvid) of the buddha-body of reality which is (yi) naturally free from the single and the multiple (gcig-dang du-mar bral-ba), and without extremes or middle (mtha'-dang dbus-med). In that expanse where all conceptual elaborations are quiescent, the real aspect of the body of perfect rapture, present when external perception has vanished, is not seen (mi-zzigs-te) as a relative appearance even by the buddhas (sangs-rnyas-kvis kyang). This is because the naturally present (rang-byung) and most subtle pristine cognition (ye-she) itself appears (snang) or abides in the expanse of quiescence, without abiding (gnas-med) in any (relative) respect. ¹³⁷ The Tantra of the Marvelous King (NGB. Vol. 2) accordingly says:

In the palace of reality's expanse all buddhas of the three times are present without seeing one another.

There are some who hold that this (reality) is not seen by the six classes of living beings but is seen by the buddhas. However, that is not the intention of this present passage, which is connected with the conclusion of the four visionary appearances:

138

Now, the visionary appearance of actual reality occurs at the time when an (awareness-holder) with power over the lifespan first perceives the pristine cognition of inner radiance as smoke and so forth. The visionary appearance of ever increasing experience occurs when that diffusion intensifies so that outer and inner signs are perceived. Then, the visionary appearance which reaches the limit of awareness occurs when the field of the buddha-body of perfect rapture is perceived. And the visionary appearance of the cessation of reality occurs when that too becomes inward quiescence, so that there is no apprehension. Then, when the appearance of the field of the buddha-body of perfect rapture vanishes in the original disposition, the ground is directly reached, and it is present without being seen, in an enclosure of spontaneous gemstones.

139

The third part (of the conclusive result) which concerns the re-emergence of the emanational body in the world-system of those to be trained (comments on Ch. 9, 36):

Then, in the world-systems of those to be trained, with spontaneous enlightened activity for each in accord with his or her needs, the emanational body endowed with the pristine cognition of awareness actually appears. This pristine cognition of spirituality or awareness is purified of (rnam-dag) the entire

twofold obscuration of the essence along with its propensities, without exception, which are applied (brtags) in an imaginary manner by erroneous misconceptions (log-par rtags). Indeed, the pristine cognition which qualitatively and quantitatively knows all things without exception is vast throughout the ten directions. That same pristine cognition (ye-shes) is not extraneous to (-las mi-gzhan) the treasure of enlightened attributes which form the expanse (dbyings) or naturally pure buddha-body of reality, but is identical in essence. As such (phvir) it emerges spontaneously and in a non-conceptual manner for the sake of living beings. Through great spirituality (ihugs-rje chen-pog) in which both the object or world-systems to be trained and the subject or omniscient pristine cognition are primordially and spontaneously present, a connection is made ('brel) between object and subject, whereby (-bas-na) the eye of pristine cognition sees the world-systems of the impure six classes of living beings ('gro-drug) in all times (dus) --past, future and present, and cognises those for whom instruction is timely. And so, in all places (gnas) without exception (ma-lus), including the celestial abodes, which are filled with sentient beings, an immeasurable number of emanations including the six sages appears (gnang) and performs acts of benefit corresponding to the perception of different (beings). The Sūtra of the Ten Wheels ('khor-lo bcu-pa'i mdo) accordingly says:

The spirituality of the sugatas

Over a long period of time

Cognises living beings as an object of training.

And then acts on their behalf.

Without passing beyond time.

It immediately appears to different beings.

Obeisance to you, perceiving with pristine cognition!

Now, these (emanations) emerge without straying from the buddha-body of reality, (as it is said in the Supreme Continuum of the Greater Vehicle, T. 4024):
140

Without straying from the body of reality,

Through diverse natures of emanation...

According to the tradition of the transcendental perfections, this buddhahood may also be accomplished upon the completion of three "countless" aeons.
141 This is stated in the following passage from the Ornament of the Sûtras of the Greater Vehicle (T. 4020):

One who has completed three "countless" aeons

Reaches the conclusion of meditation.

The beginning of this (gradual path) is also apprehended as a specific aspiration on the path of provisions.
142 The same text continues:

One who is good and has the power of aspiration...

According to the outer traditions of the secret mantras, one who has been authorised through transformations in fortune, volition and contemplation, and who maintains the symbols of ritual service will see the visage of the buddhas in this lifetime. Then

it is reported that within one, two, or three lifetimes, and so
143
forth buddhahood will be obtained.

According to the tradition of Mahâyoga, it is said that through
volition, perseverance and the power of the spiritual benefactor,
the level (of an awareness-holder) with power over the lifespan
144
will be obtained in this body and then one will be liberated.

Here (in the tradition of the Secret Nucleus), it is revealed
that one who has obtained empowerment and keeps the commitments
will attain power over the lifespan within six months and so
forth, and then on that basis will accomplish enlightenment in a
145
single lifetime and in a single body.

All these (views) are indeed true according to whichever
tradition one enters. One should not recognise simply this or
that one to be true, because they do differ in their antidotes,
paths, effort, and the potency of their conditions. Although
detergents ('dag-chal) of different power proceed quickly or
slowly to purify stains on a single object, and their speed
indeed appears to accord with their respective strengths and
powers, for the object itself there is no distinction between
close and remote (purification). Therefore, until one has
obtained power over the mind, one should adhere to (the sequence
of) conditions and deeds, but thereafter time itself freely
appears. A long time may become short, and a short time may be
emanated over a long period, and so forth, because time is indeed
146
nothing but an appearance of the mind. Accordingly it is said
in the Sûtra Revealed by Vimalakîrti (T. 176):

For those who desire time to be short. I consecrate them to pass many aeons in seven days.

and so forth. Therefore, until the rank of the sublime (bodhisattvas) has been obtained, the profundity of the path may appear close or remote, but thereafter, one who has obtained power over mind has the individual power to attain liberation by whatever means. It says accordingly in the Intermediate Mother (T. 9):

Subhûti, when the immaculate eye of the doctrine has been obtained with respect to phenomena, one will, if desired, attain buddhahood in unsurpassed enlightenment within seven days. Or one will, if desired, attain buddhahood in unsurpassed enlightenment over a multitude of 10¹⁸ aeons. This indeed is the first distinction of learning in skillful means made by bodhisattvas who are great spiritual warriors.

Synopsis concerning the Beings to whom Empowerment is Given (369.4-370.5)

Thirdly (see p. 812), there is the synopsis concerning the beings for whom empowerment is given. (It comments on Ch. 9, 37):

In the mandala of supreme bliss (bde-ba chen-po'i dkyil-'khor-na), where supreme empowerment is conferred in the aforementioned manner and where the two spouses (stangs-dbyal gnvis-sam), i.e., the male & female consorts, (are present), or when (yang-na) the five (lnga) coloured mandala of coloured powders has been formed (byas-te), if (na) the students who are faithful enter (dad-ldan rab-zhugs) therein, they will be equal to (mnvam-par-'gyur)

their desired ('dod-pa) agreeable (vid-'ong) accomplishment, which was obtained by others in the past. The great pristine cognition (ye-sheg), equal to one's fortune (skal-ba mnyam-pa'i), will draw near (nye-bar 'byung-ba) as the great accomplishment in this very lifetime, if it is cultivated (gnver-na); and its (-vi) natural expression -- the most amazing (ya-mtshan chen-po) supreme accomplishment, buddhahood itself, is certain (nges) to emerge ('byung-ba) and be obtained on the basis of the four rites and power over the lifespan which were (previously) obtained. It accordingly says in the Mirror of Indestructible Reality (T. 833):

Any merits displayed by one who enters,
 Manifestly to see the mandala
 Of Vajrasattva and the other deities,
 Will later have their corresponding effects.

But otherwise, if (na) those lacking faith (dad-ldan) in the doctrine and the guru, and who degenerate (nyams) in the basic and ancillary commitments, engage in these practices, diverse undesirable conditions such as illness and harm will emerge in this life, and in the next life they will be born in evil existences. In this way, they will be lost (phung-par 'gyur). It says accordingly in the Yogatantras:

One who has not cultivated enlightened mind,
 But harbours hesitation and doubt
 Does not speak according to the transmitted precepts,
 And is faithless,
 Will not become accomplished.

That one will subsequently turn to suffering itself.

Such (zhes) was the meaningful expression (ched-du bñiod-do) uttered by the tathâgatas and the assembled host of their queens.

(The conclusion comments on Ch. 9, 38):

This completes ('o) the exegesis of the ninth chapter (le'u-ste dgu-pa) of the Secret Nucleus (gsang-ba'i snying-po), the abiding nature of the primordial and spontaneous mandala. Definitive with respect to the Real (de-kho-na-nyid nges-pa-las) genuine pristine cognition. It is entitled (-gi) the most Secret (gsang-ba) Commitment (dam-tshig) of all the buddhas of the Array (bkod-pa'i) in the mandala of images-- which symbolises the Indestructible (rdo-rie) essence of the primordially present mandala.

..

Chapter Ten

Conferral of Empowerment

Root-text:

Then the transcendent lord, the Great Joyous One, became equipped in the contemplation called "the conferral of the king", and then uttered this meaningful expression. [1]

Derived from the seal of skillful means
In discriminative awareness,
The stream which radiates as a mass of blissful seeds
From the pathway of the vajra,
Becomes centred in the lotus,
Is absorbed from the tip (of the tongue),
And transforms the mandala. [2]

..

Clearly visualised in the wheel-shaped
Celestial palaces of the ears,
The essential nature of the seminal point
Forms the supreme assembly of the seals
Of the syllables TRĀM.

Therefrom the mandala of Ratnasambhava
..
Is radiantly emanated, and absorbed.

TRĀM ! One should listen indeed to all secrets --
Which are secret, most secret, and supremely secret.
One should examine the secret meaning itself.
And thence not divulge it to others. [3]

Clearly visualised in the celestial palace
(of the heart) which is a radiant wheel,
The essential nature of the seminal point
Forms the supreme assembly of the garland of syllables.
Therefrom the mandala of the enlightened family
Is radiantly emanated and absorbed.
OM! Great son of the conquerors of the three times,
Grasp the indestructible reality
Of buddha-body, speech and mind!
Make offerings which please all the conquerors,
And be evenly united with all the conquerors. [4]

Clearly visualised in the celestial palaces
Of the wheel-shaped hands,
The essential nature of the seminal points
Form the supreme assembly of the seals of HĀM.
From these, the mandala of enlightened activity
Is radiantly emanated and absorbed.
OM! You should engage in activity of indestructible reality.
Perform all activities without exception,
All the emanations and absorptions
Of the multitude of intermediaries
Perform your requirements. [5]

Clearly visualised in the celestial palace
Of the wheel-shaped tongue,
The essential nature of the seminal point
Forms the supreme assembly of the seals of HRĪH.

Therefrom, the mandala of the doctrine

Is radiantly emanated and absorbed.

OM! The unsurpassed nectars of the doctrine

Are poured to satisfy faithful individuals.

Corresponding to those of superior, mediocre,

And inferior intelligence.

The secrets should be proclaimed,

But not otherwise. [6]

Clearly visualised in the celestial palaces,

Which are wheels of great movement,

The essential natures of their seminal points

Are the syllables HŪM, OM, SVA, AM, and HĀ.

Therefrom is derived the meditation

On the five mandalas and the row of wrathful deities.

OM! Great indestructible reality

Of the body, speech and mind

Of all the ten directions and four times,

Creator of all mandalas!

Enact the gift of all mandalas. [7]

Those who begin to study and so forth,

Without pleasing the master

And without obtaining empowerment,

Will have no result, and will be lost. [8]

When the empowerments have been conferred
Of crown-ornament, diadem, rosary,
Armour, victory-banner, seals,
Parasol, vase, food & drink,
And of the five essences [9]
Henceforth you will become a son of the Conqueror,
Will be without all evil existences,
Will have the excellent happiness of longevity,
And become a master of celestial realms and liberation!

-- Such was his expression. [10]

This completes the tenth chapter from the Secret Nucleus
Definitive with respect to the Real, entitled the Conferral of
Empowerment. [11]

Commentary (370.5-379.1):

The latter section (of the creation of the mandala of the ground and the granting of empowerment-- see p. 543) is a particular exegesis of the skillful means through which empowerment is granted. It comprises both a brief teaching on the entrance into empowerment and an extensive exegesis of its nature.

The former (comments on Ch. 10, 1):

Once the mandala had been revealed, then the transcendent lord (de-nas bcom-ldan-'dag), the male & female consort Samantabhadra, the Great Joyous One (dgves-pa chen-po) of uncorrupted bliss, became equipoised in the contemplation called (zhes-bya-ba'i ting-nge-'dzin-la snyoms-par zhugs) the conferral (sbvin-pa) on the student's mind of empowerment as a doctrinal king (ngyal-po) of the three world-systems, and then (nag) uttered this (di brijod-do) meaningful expression (ched-du brijod-pa) which follows concerning empowerment.

Now, the (Sanskrit) term abhiseka means "empowerment". It also means "to be enabled": Just as when, in the world, (a king) has been invested with the kingdom and empowered by the vase of Vedic ritual he is then enabled to hold sway over the country, so, in this context, one is enabled to act in accord with natural expression, and this is called "the conferral of the king".¹

Moreover, the (Sanskrit) term abhisīṅga also indicates empowerment in the sense that one is clad in pristine cognition and the stains of the three media are cleansed.²

The latter has three parts, namely, the empowerments of ability, the empowerments of beneficence, and their beneficial attributes.

Empowerments of Ability (371.4-376.4):

This has three sections:

1. The first is a general teaching on the empowerments of profundity. (It comments on Ch. 10, 2):

These occur, as previously explained, once the mandala of the deity has been visualised, the master and the students have entered, the empowerments of beneficence and ability have been given, and the female consort (gzung-ma) has been consecrated. The male consort who is the seal of skillful means (thabs-kvi phvag-rgya) becomes equipoised in union with the female consort who is the seal of discriminative awareness (shes-rab), and derived from (las) that union, the "enlightened mind" (semen) of the male consort comes forth from the pathway of the ('i lam-nas) secret vajra (penis) in a stream which radiates (gsal-ba'i rgyun) as a mass of seeds ('bru-tshogs), or syllables HŪM, blissful (bde-ba'i) in nature. It becomes centred in the lotus (padmar 'khvil) (=vagina) of the female consort, whence it is then absorbed (bstim) internally by the student from the tip (rtse-nag) of the tongue; and (zhing) in this way it transforms (bsgyur) the emanation, absorption, consecration and subsumption of the mandala (dkvil-'khor) of the central deity into the heart of the student, whereupon the secret mantras are recited.

Concerning this passage, there are some who claim that all the five empowerments of ability are conferred by means of this ritual, that their different visualisations and permissory intitiations are given, and that the secret stream (of "enlightened mind"), transformed into the seed-syllables beginning with TRĀM, is then absorbed into the student so that it emanates and absorbs the five mandalas of the different deities. This view is defective because the order (in which empowerments are conferred) is mistaken.³

ii. The second section is an exegesis of the particular empowerments of ability. It has five parts of which the first concerns the contemplation associated with the empowerment of the listener (nyan-da'i dbang -- It comments on Ch. 10, 3):

The student is clearly visualised as Ratnasambhava. Within the two ears (nyan-byed) of that deity there are clearly visualised (gsal-ba'i) his celestial palaces (gzhal-vas-su), derived from the seed-syllable TRĀM, on wheel-shaped ('khor-lo) bases with four spokes which derive from the syllable BHRUM. Therein, the sense-organ of the ear is present as the essential nature (ngq-bo-nyid) of the translucent seminal point (thig-le) which sustains its ability to hear sound. This nature consists of (-gi) five pairs or ten single syllables TRĀM along with four syllables HŪM and the syllables JAH, HŪM, VAM, HOH. These syllables form the supreme assembly of the (-i tshogs-mchog) doctrinal seals (phvag-rgya). They melt into light and therefrom (las) the mandala of Ratnasambhava is radiantly (rin-cen dkyil-'khor gsal) visualised.⁴ The guru is emanated (gpro) as the real being of

pristine cognition, and is absorbed (thim) into the ears of the student, whereupon the obscurations of hearing are purified and melt into light along with the deity. He is then considered to be Ratnasambhava, the commitments are proclaimed, and the following promissory initiation is given:

It begins with the syllable TRĀM! (TRĀM). One should indeed listen to all secrets (gsang-ba kun-la'ang mnyan-par-bva) of the inner vehicles, namely, Mahāyoga, Anuyoga, and the Great Perfection of Atityoga, which are (gang) respectively secret, most secret and supremely secret (gsang-ba gsang-chen gsang-mchog), and also of the outer tantras of capability,⁵ namely Kriyā, Ubhaya and Yoga. Until one has received the empowerment of the master, one should inquire into and examine (brtag-pa) this secret meaning itself (gsang-ba'i don-nvid) in one's own mind; and thence (las) not proclaim it, because one should not divulge it (smra-bar bva-ba min) to other individuals, in other places or times.

The second is the contemplation associated with the empowerment of the meditator (sgom-pa'i dbang -- It comments on Ch. 10, 4): The heart which is a radiant wheel (gsal-ba'i 'khor-lo) is visualised as the celestial palace (gzhal-yag), and within (-su)⁶ it, the ground of recollection is clearly visualised (gsal). The essential nature (ngo-bo-nvid) of (-i) the seminal point (thig-le) or supporting pure-essence of (-ba'i) that ground, the size of a mustard seed, forms the supreme assembly of the garland ('phreng-ba'i tshogs-mchog) of syllables (yi-ge) HŪM, the seed-syllable of the central deity. These (syllables) melt into light,

and therefrom (las) the mandala of the enlightened family (rigs-
kvi dkvil-'khor) of buddha-mind is radiantly (gsal) visualised.⁷
 The being of pristine cognition is emanated (spro), and absorbed
 (thim) so that the obscurations of the mind are purified, melt
 into light and are transformed into the deity. Consequently, the
 following promissory initiation is given as an exhortation to the
 student:

OM! (OM) great son of the conquerors of the three times (dus-
gsun-gvi rgyal-ba'i sras-po chen-po), grasp (gzung) the medita-
 tion on the profound truth or indestructible reality of (kvi rdo-
rie) the buddha-body, speech, and mind (sku-gsung-thugs) of all
 the buddhas, in which body becomes deity, speech becomes mantra
 and mind becomes reality. Then from that disposition, make
 offerings which please all the conquerors (rgyal-ba thams-cad
mnves mchod) and, with supreme bliss, present the outer, inner
 and secret offerings. And (la) consequently, one should obtain
 the rank of one who is evenly united with all the conquerors
 (rgyal-ba kun-dang mnvam-par sbyor).

The third is the contemplation associated with the empowerment of
 enlightened activity ('phrin-las-kvi dbang; It comments on
 Ch. 10, 5):

8

The consciousness of contact is clearly visualised (gsal-ba'i)
 in the celestial palaces of the hands which are wheel-shaped
 (lag-pa'i 'khor-lo'i gzhal-yas-su). The essential nature of the
 (-i ngo-bo-nyid) translucent seminal points (thig-le) which
 sustain that consciousness forms the supreme assembly of the
 seals of the syllable HĀM (HĀM-gi phvag-rgya'i tshogs-mchog),⁹

and from (las) the natural transformation of these syllables the mandala of enlightened activity (las-kvi dktivil-'khor) is radiantly (gsal) visualised. The being of pristine cognition is emanated (sdros) and absorbed (thim). Melting, this is transformed into the male & female consorts Amoghasiddhi, and the following promissory initiation is granted:

OM! (OM), son of the enlightened family, from today as Amoghasiddhi, you (khvod-ni) should engage in (vin-gvis) the enlightened activity of indestructible reality (rdo-rie las). Perform all activities without exception (las-rnams ma-lus kun gvis-shig) which respectively benefit sentient beings and make offerings to the buddhas. Thereby, all (kun) the assemblies of the multitude of intermediaries (pho-nyā mang-po'i), or emanations of buddhas and bodhisattvas naturally confer accomplishment through their incoming absorptions ('du) and attain enlightened activity through their outgoing emanations ('phro). They perform (byed-ba-vin) actions so as to attain all your requirements (khvod-kvi dros-pa). Alternatively, the accomplishments will be attained through meditation by means of an intermediary.

The fourth is the contemplation associated with the empowerment of the expositor ('chad-pa'i dbang -- which comments on verses Ch. 10, 6):

The sense-organ of the tongue which apprehends taste is translucent and clearly visualised (gsal-ba'i) in the celestial palace of the wheel-shaped tongue (smra-byed 'khor-lo'i gzhal-yas-su). The essential nature of the seminal point (thig-le'i

ngo-no-nvid) [which sustains it] forms the supreme assembly of the seals (phvag-rgva'i tshogs-mchog), consisting of five pairs, which are naturally expressions of (vi) the syllable HRĪH (HRĪH). These melt into light, and therefrom (las), the mandala ('khor-lo) of (kvi) Amitābha, the enlightened family of the doctrine (chos) or buddha-speech is radiantly (gsal) visualised. The being of pristine cognition is emanated and absorbed (spros-thim), and on melting, Amitābha is actually visualised. Then the following promissory initiation is given:

OM! (OM), the unsurpassed nectars of the doctrine (chos-kvi bdud-rtsi bla-med-kvis) -- outer, inner and secret, are poured to satisfy (ngoms-par byos) with the teaching of the doctrine those individuals (skyes-bu) who are faithful (dad-ldan) to any of the different vehicles. Corresponding to (mtshun-par) the degrees of acumen, the secrets (gsang) of the doctrine should be differently proclaimed (bsgrag), i.e., the most secret and marvelous vehicle should be given to those of superior (rab) acumen, the causal aspect of the greater vehicle to those of mediocre (acumen), and the vehicles of pious attendants, self-centred buddhas, gods, and humans to those of inferior intelligence (tha-ma'i blo-can-la). But it should not (min) otherwise (gzhan-du) be proclaimed in such a way that the doctrines of the greater (vehicle) are entrusted to lesser individuals, those of the lesser (vehicle) to greater individuals, and so forth. This is because beings would not turn towards reality, and instead they would accumulate deeds which renounce the doctrine. Accordingly, it also says in the Introduction to the Conduct of a Bodhisattva (T. 3871):

Supreme doctrines are not explained to lesser beings.

And in the Sūtra of the Bounteous Array (T. 110):

One should make connections extensively
With one who is a worthy recipient of the doctrine,
But not with one who is an unworthy recipient.

The fifth is the contemplation associated with the empowerment of the myriad precepts of the king of indestructible reality (rdorje rgyal-po bka' rab-'byams-kvi dbang -- which comments on Ch. 10, 7):

The sense-organ of the body ¹³ is translucent and clearly visualised (gsal-ba'i) in the celestial palaces of ('i gzhal-yas-su) the five limbs (of the body) which include the head. These are wheels of great movement (skvod-chen 'khor-lo) because they perceive and activate the six classes of living beings, the gestures of sealing and their sense-objects. The essential natures of their (-i ngo-bo-nvid) respective seminal points (thig-le) are indivisible from them: On the shoulder to the right side of the head is the syllable HŪM (HŪM), on the head is the syllable OM (OM), on the left (shoulder) is SVĀ (SVĀ), on the left foot is the syllable ĀM (ĀM), and on the right foot is the syllable HĀ (HĀ). These melt into light, and therefrom is derived (las) the meditation on (bsgom) the five mandalas (dkvil-'khor lnga) of the different five enlightened families, and (dang) the row of ('phreng) the ten wrathful deities (khro) who form a protective circle outside them. ¹⁴ Then, the following promissory initiation is granted:

OM! (OM), Great indestructible reality of the body, speech, and mind of all (thams-cad-kvi sku-ssung-thugs-kvi rdo-rie che) buddhas of the ten directions and four times (phyogs-bcu dus-bzhi), you, glorious Samantabhadra, are the creator of all mandalas (dkvil-'khor kun-gyi byed-pa-po) of marvelous nature which primordially pervade all samsâra and nirvâna. Therefore, enact (spyod) or confer the genuine gift (sbyin-ba) of all (kun-gyi) accomplishments of the supreme mandalas (dkvil-'khor) on this son of the enlightened family!

The third section (of the empowerments of ability) concerns the defects of not possessing empowerment. (It comments on Ch. 10, 8):

Those who begin to (rtsom-pa-rnams) study (nyan-pa) the secret mantras, or to attain them, or explain them to others, and so forth (la-sogs), without pleasing the master (slob-dpon mnyes-par ma-byas) of the secret mantras by means of body, speech, mind, and material necessities, and (shing) without obtaining (thob-par ma-byas-par) in their minds the outer, inner, and secret empowerments (dbang-rnams) will have no (med) result ('bras-bu), attainment or accomplishment in this lifetime, and (cing), experiencing suffering in evil existences during subsequent lives, they will be lost (brlag-par 'gyur). This is because they squander the empowerment into the profound doctrine. It says in the Tantra of the Ocean of Activity (las-kvi rgya-mtsho'i rgyud):

Without obtaining the empowerments,

It is wrong to practice the secret mantras.

Empowerments of Beneficence (376.4-377.5):

Secondly (see p. 870), there are the empowerments of beneficence (which comment on Ch. 10, 9):

The student is radiantly visualised as the real nature of the deity, and then the crown-ornament (dbu-rgyan) is attached, whereby mastery and empowerment are conferred on the student as a doctrinal king of the three world-systems, illustrating that the eight aggregates of consciousness are radiant and irreversibly present as the five pristine cognitions. The diadem (cod-pan) with its silken ribbons illustrates that the two kinds of obscuration are purified and that skillful means and discriminative awareness are coalesced. The rosary ('phreng-ba) of flowers illustrates that deeds and propensities are purified, and that the excellent branches of enlightenment are obtained. These three comprise the empowerments of the crown ornament through which one becomes the regent of the buddhas.

The armour (go-cha) illustrates that one is unharmed by the weapons of conflicting emotions and disciplines the magical apparitions of Māra. The victory-banner (rgyal-mtshan) illustrates that one rises above and purifies all causal bases of samsāra, and that disharmonious aspects are conquered. The seals (phyag-rgya) of the five enlightened families including the vajra illustrate that the five conflicting emotions are inherently pure and comprehended as the five pristine cognitions. The parasol (gdugg) illustrates that one is protected from the afflictions of conflicting emotions and that living beings are

protected by spirituality. These four comprise the empowerments of excellence for the sake of others.

The vase (bum-pa) illustrates that there is an unceasing stream of water, which cleanses the stains of conflicting emotions and establishes the ability of the five enlightened families. The food & drink (bza'-btung) illustrate that the display of concentration is extensive and free from the disadvantages of samsâra and nirvâna.¹⁵ These two comprise the empowerments of excellence for the sake of oneself.

And (dang) then, when the empowerments of the five essences are conferred (gnying-po lnga-vis dbang-bakur), namely, those pure-essences of solar and lunar fluids (sperm & ovum), water (urine), earth (excrement), and human flesh, this illustrates that the five components are indivisibly purified as the five male consorts, the five elements as the five female consorts, and the five conflicting emotions as the five pristine cognitions. This latter empowerment is the one which reveals that samsâra and nirvâna are indivisible.

Beneficial Attributes of Empowerment (377.5-379.1):

The third topic concerns the beneficial attributes of one who has obtained empowerment. (It comments on Ch. 10, 10):

Henceforth (dug-'di phyin-chad), after perfectly obtaining the empowerments of ability and beneficence, you, son of the enlightened family, will become a son of the Conqueror (rgyal-ba'i gras), Samantabhadra. It says in the Secret Tantra (gsang-

ba'i rgyud):

Immediately after obtaining the secret empowerment,

One becomes an actual son of Samantabhadra.

Now, even adherents of the Transcendental Perfections say that one becomes a son of the conquerors immediately after cultivating an enlightened attitude. Correspondingly, it says in the Introduction to the Conduct of a Bodhisattva (T.3871):

Immediately after cultivating enlightened mind,

Those who are tormented and bound in the prison of samsāra

Should be called sons of the tathāgatas,

And become an object of obeisance

For gods and human beings of the world.

After obtaining empowerment, one's connections with the deeds and propensities which cause one to fall in the next life into evil existences will actually diminish and cease, so that one will be without all (thams-cad med-pa-dang) the three evil existences
16
(ngan-song) and their sufferings. Also, by acquiring the appropriate causal basis of the empowerment of longevity, in this life one will entirely have the excellent happiness (bde-ba phun-sum-tshogs) of longevity (tshe-ring), wealth, possessions, and genuine mastery; and one will be without suffering. And in the next life, too, one will provisionally be born among the gods and humans of celestial realms (mtho-ris), one will constantly practice the virtuous doctrine, and become ('gyur) a master of (bdag-por) conclusive liberation (thar-pa), in order to achieve the excellent twofold benefit for living beings through the

excellent buddha-bodies of reality and form!--- Such was his expression (zhes bried-do).

Accordingly, the Samputatantra (T. 382) also says:

Those who have obtained empowerment,
Endowed with excellent happiness,
Will indeed accomplish all that is good in this life,
And be without all evil existences.
In the next life, too, they will spontaneously
Accomplish the twofold benefit.

(The conclusion comments on Ch. 10, 11):

This completes ('o) the exegesis of the tenth chapter (le'u-ste bcu-pa) from (las) the supremely Secret Nucleus (gsang-ba'i snying-po) or pristine cognition of buddha-mind, Definitive with Respect to the Real (de-kho-na-nvid nges-pa), excellent and profound nature, entitled the Conferral of (sbyin-pa'i) pristine cognition or Empowerment (dbang) as a regent of the buddhas.

Chapter Eleven

Mandala of the Feast-Offerings

..

Root-text:

Then the tathâgata, the Great Joyous One, became equipoised in the contemplation called "the king or transformation of the Magical Net", and then uttered this meaningful expression. [1]

The single basis and the manner of seed-syllables,
The blessing and the direct perception:
Through (these) four kinds of excellent realisation,
All things are the great king, manifestly perfect. [2]

The limbs, sense-organs, and consciousness,
All are to be known on maturation as the syllable OM.
One meditates on them as the nature
Of the perfect mandala.
Alternatively, one meditates on these
As the mandala of wrathful deities. [3]

..

Forms, sounds, scents, savours, contacts and so forth
Are to be known on maturation as the syllable MUM.
One meditates on them as the mandala of female consorts.
Alternatively, one meditates on them
As the mandala of female wrathful deities. [4]

..

The raiment, ornaments, food & drink, songs,
Verses, dance steps & gesticulations,
And the cloud-mass of feast-offerings
Are known as the syllable HŪM.
So when these have been well enjoyed,
It is pleasing to the mandala of wondrous source. [5]

Discriminating between devis, nāginis,
And female (mudrās) of inferior species,
Or else without discrimination, [6]
There are ritual service, further ritual service,
Rites of attainment, and rites of great attainment. [7]

In the mandala of the lotus of the female consort,
The mandala of blissful buddha-mind is emanated.
And through the offerings of supreme joy and equanimity,
Made to all mandalas of buddhas, without exception,
(The deities) dissolve. [8]

Those essences of attainment, sun and moon-fluids,
Are drawn by the tongue-like vajra into the mandala. [9]

One will become a skyfarer, radiant and blazing forth,
With longevity, et cetera,
And a master of the Wish-fulfilling Clouds. [10]

Those who have become fields (of compassion),
Belonging to supreme and less supreme (realms), [11]
Are placed by the learned (yogin)
Upon solar and lunar disks.
With pride, he meditates on that hand-made (effigy):
Transformed into the syllable HUM, and so purified,
This dissolves into the expanse,
And then blazing forth as the symbolic seal,
It becomes the buddha-body,
Brilliant through the proliferation
Of its rays of light.
Then he meditates that (the evil one) has become triumphant
On the crown of the head. [12]

This is the wondrous skillful means,
Which releases beings from evil existences. [13]

The primordial uncreated real nature
Appears as a magical apparition,
In the manner of an optical illusion.
Although all rites of sexual union and "liberation"
have been performed,
They have not been performed, even to the extent
of an atomic particle. [14]

The world, its contents, and the mind-stream
Are realised to be pure.
Through the two samenesses
And the two superior samenesses
The mandala is the field of Samantabhadra. [15]

..
Conduct is transformed through the two great provisions,
And then the yogin who has not degenerated
In the branches (of mantra),
Who possesses the requisites,
And completely knows the rituals,
Will, by means of the mandala of feast offerings,
..
Certainly accomplish his excellent purpose. [16]

One should meditate on the form
Of the deities of the five clusters,
Arrayed five in union with five,
And on the ten wrathful male deities,
And the ten wrathful female deities,
In the manner of a circle. [17]

One should meditate on the deities of the three clusters,
Of buddha-body, speech and mind,
Namely those of the enlightened family of the tathâgata,
Of the enlightened family of indestructible reality,
And of the enlightened family of the lotus;
Which have a host of wrathful deities. [18]

One should meditate on the deities of a single cluster,
Namely the enlightened family among enlightened families,
Where the central deity of the enlightened families
Is the mind of buddha-mind, the supreme buddha-mind;
And which has a host of wrathful deities. [19]

Through the assembled hosts which include
The great assembly of male wrathful deities
And female wrathful deities,
With those of their intermediaries,
Retainers, attendants, and other servants,
The rites and accomplishment are perfected. [20]

The yogin or mantrin, [21] in terms of accomplishment,
Abides in a disposition of spontaneous sameness and perfection;
And through conduct, unimpeded in all respects,
All things are primordial and indivisible.
All mandalas are within the enlightened family
Of indestructible reality.

The yogin should excellently meditate
That they emanate light and blaze forth,
And this should be dissolved without attachment.
Transformed, without duality,
That one obtains the great seal. [22]

Alternatively, the yogin (should attain) the nature
Of buddha-body, speech and mind--
All (buddhas) without exception
Are buddha-body, speech and mind.

In contemplation, they emanate rays of light
Which radiate and blaze forth,
And which are dissolved in the disposition
Of the non-dual expanse.
Then the supreme accomplishment of
The awareness-holder will be obtained,
All mandalas without exception will blaze forth,
The suffering of conflicting emotions will be dispelled,
And (beings) will be born into the enlightened family
Of indestructible reality. [23]

For genuine accomplishment, the mantrin
Should meditate without attachment
On skillful means and discriminative awareness,
And by all means upon the five mandalas
And the row of wrathful deities.
These should be dissolved without dichotomy,
And the nucleus of supreme accomplishment will be achieved. [24]

The yogin, by means of skillful means
And discriminative awareness,
Should meditate on the tathâgatas
And their female consorts;
And he should meditate on the nature of
The male and female spiritual warriors.
These emanate a multitude of light-rays. [25]

Their respective mantras, seals
And contemplations radiate
Genuinely and differently. [26]

One who is well endowed
With the locations and enjoyments,
Whichever are pleasing,
And an intellect without degeneration,
Should firstly act as if taking a vow,
And when propitiation has been performed,
Without laziness and langour,
And without hesitation,
That (yogin) will accomplish all mandalas,
And obtain the supreme, genuine,
Secret of indestructible reality. [27]

The days and dates for attainment
Are explained according to
Their description in the tantras. [28]

--Such were his words of indestructible reality. With these words, the tathāgata held meaningful discourse with the tathāgata himself. This completes the eleventh chapter from the Secret Nucleus Definitive with respect to the Real, entitled the Mandala of the Feast Offerings. [29]

Commentary (379.1-419.6):

The second aspect (of the spontaneously present mandala of peaceful deities -- see p. 543) is a teaching on the creation and perfection stages of the path (Chs. 11-13). It has two parts, namely, the stage of creation which reverses common attachments (Chs. 11-12), and the stage of perfection which penetrates the essential meaning (Ch. 13). The first of these comprises both the mandala of feast offerings according to the creation stage of skillful means (Ch. 11), and an exegesis of its particular branches (Ch. 12).

The former (is the subject-matter of this chapter). It has three subdivisions, namely; the background motivation; an exegesis of the meaning of its words; and a summary of the chapter.

The first (comments on Ch. 11, 1):

Once empowerment in the mandala of the ground had been conferred, then (de-nag), in order to take into the path the apparitional objects of skillful means according to the creation stage, the tathâgata (de-bzhin gshags-pa) Samantabhadra himself, who is known as the Great Joyous One (dryes-pa chen-po) because he delights in skillful means, and who comprises both the male and female consorts, became equipoised (gnvoms-par zhugs) in the (la) genuine contemplation (ting-nge-'dzin). This is a great coalescence in primordial reality, without dichotomy between acceptance and rejection or refutation and proof. Therein, the **Magical** (sgyu-'phrul) apparitions of skillful means, which manifest as

the conflicting or defiled phenomena of samsâra including the five desired attributes, have the nature of a Net (dra-ba) because they inherently abide as discriminative awareness or emptiness. This is called the (zhes-bya-ba) abiding nature or king (rgyal-po) of all things because it is primordial buddhahood, or else it is called (zhes-bya-ba'i) the powerful transformation (bsgyur) into great pristine cognition of the desired attributes and conflicting emotions, which are to be known without being renounced, and from the very moment at which they manifest. And then (nas), Samantabhadra uttered (brjod-do) this ('di) following meaningful expression (ched-du brjod-pa), which reveals all things as the path to liberation.

Exegesis of the Meaning of its Words (380.1-419.1)

The second subdivision (of this chapter) comprises both the mandala of the spontaneous ground which is to be known, and the mandalas of skillful means and discriminative awareness according to the path which are to be experientially cultivated.

Mandala of the Spontaneous Ground which is to be Known (380.1-384.1):

This (comments on Ch. 11, 2):

The single basis (rgyu gcig-pa) means that all things subsumed within apparitional existence, samsâra and nirvâna, emerge from the disposition of primordial emptiness. It says in the Sûtra of the King of Contemplation (T. 127):

Just as when swirls of cloud instantly appear
From a sky which has no trace of clouds,
And, having emerged, disintegrate,
So that there are no swirls of cloud,
One should examine whence they originate,
One should know all things in their entirety to be likewise.

All things have not only emerged at the outset from that disposition of emptiness. Indeed, the naturally uncreated essence abides from this very moment at which they appear, without a duality of appearance and emptiness, in the manner of the seed-syllables (dang yig-'bru'i tshul). The Sūtra Requested By Devaputra (Devaputrapariṣecchāsūtra, T. 161) says:

All things abide in the manner of the naturally pure syllable A.

Now, appearances abide in the nature of the syllable OM, emptiness abides in the nature of the syllable AH, and their non-duality abides in the nature of the syllable HUM. Therefore, things are empty while they appear, and appear while they are empty. There is no dichotomy between appearance and emptiness. It says in the Root Stanzas of Madhyamaka entitled Discriminative Awareness (T. 3824):

Creation, abiding, and similarly destruction,
Are said to resemble dreams,
Magical displays, and castles in the sky.

And:

For this reason, there is nothing but emptiness.

Just as the nature of fire is blessed with heat, all things naturally have the blessing (byin-gyis briabs-dang) of buddhahood in the nature of the primordial mandala; and they abide in a completely pure manner, without impurity. It says in the Secret Tantra (gsang-rnyud):

All things are pure.

Blessed in the primordial mandala.

..

Now, the natures of the empty buddha-body of reality, the apparitional buddha-body of perfect rapture, and the emanational body which is diversified in its appearance are such that all forms abide as the mandala of buddha-body, all sounds abide as the mandala of buddha-speech, and all reality abides as the mandala of buddha-mind.

..

Furthermore, the natures which abide in that manner are not covert and they do not exist in an extraneous temporal dimension. Indeed, from this very moment of their appearance they are visible in direct perception (mngon-sum-par) as the essence through which external phenomena abide in the nature of the female consort, internal components in the nature of the male consort, and the aggregate of thought in the nature of the deity. From the very moment of their appearance, they reveal an intention which does not stray from the disposition of sameness. It says accordingly in the All Accomplishing King (T. 828):

Derived from enlightened mind, the basis of all,

The five great elements which are the substance of mind

Emerge as the five teachers or enlightened mind.
 Their body is the buddha-body of perfect rapture,
 As for doctrines, they expound those
 In accordance with their own essence,
 As for teaching, their own nature is revealed.
 These teachers, the buddha-body of perfect rapture,
 Have an intention which does not conceive of itself,
 And nor does it conceive of other phenomena either--
 These five teachers of enlightened mind
 Accordingly reveal all things to be reality.

In this way, the presence of the pristine cognitions is revealed
 by the five poisons, the five buddha-bodies are revealed by the
 mind, and the five female consorts are revealed by the five
 elements. Clearer even than one's own face or its reflection, the
 individual characteristics of all things actually are revealed as
 the reality of buddhahood; while their apparent reality is
 visible but is not (dualistically) recognised.

The abiding nature of the genuine ground, which abides in that
 way, is consecrated by one's own merits and the spirituality of a
 genuine guru. Consequently, through these four kinds of excellent
 realisation (rab-tu rtoqs-pa rnam-bzhi-vis) all things (thams-
cad) are incontrovertibly realised to be the great king (rgyal-
po-che) of primordial, manifestly perfect (mngon-rdzogs)
 enlightenment. At that time, the abiding nature of most secret
 meaning is found because the things of phenomenal existence,
 samsāra and nirvāna, arise as the display of pristine cognition.

in a common equilibrium (phyam-gcig). That is the explanation (of
these verses) in terms of the real nature of the expanse.⁵

(When this passage is explained) according to the creation stage:
all things are known through these four kinds of excellent
realisation-- The single basis refers to the three kinds of
contemplation, the manner of seed syllables to the visual
creation of the nucleus of the different deities, the blessing to
the visual creation of the mandala of the deities, and direct
perception to spontaneously perfect meditation in that
disposition.

Then, when combined with the perfection stage: the single basis
refers to the unity of samsâra and nirvâna in the mind, the
manner of the seed-syllables refers to realisation in the un-
created disposition, the blessing to the transformation of such
meditative absorptions indivisibly into the essence of
indestructible buddha-mind, and direct perception to realisation
derived from meditating by means of the pristine cognition of
one's own particular awareness. It says accordingly in the
Sequence of the Path (P. 4736):

The view dependent on study and thought is concluded

By one who is assuredly confident,

Because, like a reflection on a clear ocean,

He does not engage the mind in verbalisation,

He is without objective referent

In the direct perception of his own awareness,

And is naturally radiant, and unswerving,

Without the threefold interaction.⁶

Then, (when the same verses are explained) according to the
coalescence (of the two stages):⁷ the single basis refers to the
unity of creation and perfection, and of the two truths; their
essence abides in the cloud-mass of syllables beyond eternalism
and nihilism; from the naturally pure disposition of the expanse
these (syllables) are blessed or consecrated to manifest in and
of themselves as the creation and perfection (stages); and having
realised this reality through awareness in a decisive and non-
contradictory manner, one perseveres (to maintain it) by day and
night. It says accordingly in the Flash of Splendour (T. 830):

According to the inner yoga,

Realisation also is claimed to be of four kinds:

Through the single basis, the manner of seed-syllables,

The blessing and direct perception,

The meaning of the Great Perfection is introduced.

The basis refers to the two truths

Which, in an immediate manner,

Are characterised as a single (essence)

Because they are of a single (emptiness).⁸

In the mandala of buddha-body, speech and mind

All things are naturally realised.

From the blessing of the uncreated expanse,

All things are known to appear.

When such a nature is determined,

Without extraneous dependence or wavering,

Through the awareness of direct perception,

One has arrived at the level of yoga.

According to passages such as these, it is improper even to suggest that a single (interpretation) is alone valid, because the verses of indestructible reality (vairapâdas) are profound and may be applied in any context whatsoever.

Mandalas of Skillful Means and Discriminative Awareness of the Path which are to be Experientially Cultivated (384.1-419.1):

The latter (see p. 890) concerns the mandalas of skillful means and discriminative awareness according to the path, which is experientially cultivated. It has three parts, namely: the mandala in which all that appears is pristine cognition; the mandala of the displayed feast offerings; and the branches of its means for attainment.

Mandala in which All that Appears is Pristine Cognition (384.2-402.1):

The first comprises both a general teaching on the mandala in which appearances and mind are indivisible, and a particular exegesis on the mandala in which the paths of sexual union and "liberation" are indivisible.

The former (384.3-386.1) has three aspects, namely the mandala of the male consort who is the apprehending subject, the mandala of the female consort who is the apprehended object, and the mandala of their indivisible display.

1. The first of these (comments on Ch. 11, 3):

There are two parts, of which (the first) concerns that which is to be known as the mandala of peaceful deities. The five limbs (van-lag) of the body, the sense-organs (dbang-po) including the eyes, and the aggregates of consciousness (rnam-sheg) associated with them, are all (kun) ordinary forms which, on maturation (rnam-smin) of their individual characteristics, are to be known as (sheg-par-bya) the syllable OM (OM), the nature of the five pristine cognitions. To illustrate this, one meditates on them (bsgom) as the nature of the mandala (dkvil-'khor nvid-du) of perfect (rdzogs) rapture, i.e., that of the five enlightened families who appear without inherent existence in the manner of the reflection on a mirror, and who are naturally expressed as the five male consorts, the eight male spiritual warriors, the four male gatekeepers, and the six sages.

Then, concerning that which is to be known as the mandala of wrathful deities: Alternatively (yang-na), in accordance with the acumen of those to be trained or by one's own volition, one should meditate (bsgom) on all these components, sense-organs, and consciousnesses as the essence of the five pristine cognitions in the mandala of ('i dkvil-'khor) the extremely wrathful deities (khro-bo).

ii. The second aspect (of the general teaching in which the mandala of appearances and mind are indivisible) concerns the mandala of the female consort. (It comments on Ch. 11, 4):

Here there are also two parts, of which the former concerns that which is to be known as the female consorts of the peaceful deities. All the forms (gzugs) subsumed by the living beings of phenomenal existence, and internal phenomena including sounds, scents, savours, contacts and so forth (ggra-dri-ro-reg la-gogs), and all appearances of the five elements are to be known (gheg-par-bya) on maturation (rnam-smin) as (du) the syllable MUM (MUM), the essential nature of non-dual pristine cognition. To illustrate this, one should meditate on them (bagom) as the nature of the mandala of female consorts (yum-gvi dkvil-'khor nyid-du), who appear but are not (dualistically) recognised, i.e., the forms of the four female gatekeepers, the eight female spiritual warriors, and the five female consorts.

The latter concerns the visualisation of the female consorts of the wrathful deities. Alternatively (yang-na), one meditates on them as the mandala of female wrathful deities (khro-mo'i dkvil-'khor bagom) depending on the status of those to be trained or on one's own volition.

iii. The third aspect (of the general teaching on the mandala in which appearances and mind are indivisible) is the mandala of their indivisible display. (It comments on Ch. 11, 5):

The raiment (gog) which covers the body, the ornaments (rgyan) which are fastened to it, the food & drink (bza'-btung), the vocal songs (glu), the expressive verses (tshigs), the configurations of the body -- dance steps (bro) of the feet and gesticulations (gar) of the hands -- and the great cloud-mass of (-kvi

sprin-phung-la) all the feast offerings (tshegs) of enjoyable requisites, whichever are employed, are not ordinary appearances, but they are known as (-du shes) the syllable HOM (HOM), the nature of appearance and emptiness, or male and female consort without duality, which is the reality of non-dual supreme bliss. So (-bas) when (-na), without attachment, these requisites of the feast offerings have been well enjoyed (rab-spyad) as the nature of the six (offering) goddesses, ¹⁰ in a dream-like disposition without inherent existence, the result is pleasing (mnves) to all buddhas present as components, sensory bases and activity fields in the mandala (dkvil-'khor) which is (ba'i) the natural source ('byung-ba'i) of wondrous (ngo-mtshar) supreme and common accomplishments. Consequently, the most bounteous of beneficial attributes,-- the swift accomplishment of enlightenment is obtained.

Mandala in which the Paths of Sexual Union and "Liberation" are Without Duality (386.2-402.1):

The mandala in which the paths of sexual union and "liberation" are without duality has three aspects, namely: the mandala of great bliss or supreme enlightenment in which sexual union is inherently pure; the mandala of the secret skillful means in which "liberation" is inherently pure; and the mandala of magical pristine cognition for one who is untainted with respect to sexual union and "liberation".

The first includes an overview and an interlinear commentary.

Overview of the Rites of Sexual Union (386.3-394.6)

This has two sections: the classification of the supporting seal or female partner (mudrâ), and the nature of the supported pristine cognition. The former comprises both a general teaching and a particular exegesis.

In general, there are three kinds (of mudrâ): The twelve year-old girl whose secret centre is an eight-petalled lotus is a devi because she fills both male and female consorts with bliss. As the Tantra of Mañjuśrî (T. 543) says:

She possesses twelve aspects of genuine meaning.

The sixteen year-old girl who has a four petalled lotus is a nâgini because she confers bliss on the male consort:

She is the awareness with sixteen aspects.

And the twenty year-old girl who has a two-petalled lotus is of an inferior genus because she confers bliss on the female consort. As (the same text) says:

She is enlightened in twenty ways.

Thus, (the mudrâs) aged between twelve and fifteen are devis, those aged between sixteen and nineteen are nâginis and those over twenty are subsumed by (beings of) inferior species. In addition, all of them should be beautiful in form, and most desirous. They should not befriend another, and they should be able to maintain secrecy. They should be learned in the skillful means of sexual union, and great in discriminative awareness. They should have respect and great affection for their respective

accomplished masters; they should have faith, perseverance, and compassion, and they should possess the extraordinary energy channel of bliss.¹² In association with these three kinds of female consort who are the female consorts respectively of buddha-mind, buddha-speech, and buddha-body, accomplishment will swiftly be obtained.

In this context, there are some who hold that girls belonging to the race of the devīs or of nāgās are actually summoned. There are some who hold that these are divided into the three categories of the beautiful, the ugly, and the mediocre; and there are those who hold them to be divided according to the three categories of action seal, seal of pristine cognition, and great seal. However, this does not seem to be the intention of the present text. Those (opinions) are respectively untenable because (mudrās of these races) do not become objects that are adhered to and possessed by all yogins, because the bliss derived from an ugly partner would be inappropriate, and because the sequence of sexual union is said to depend on the actual¹³ (physical) support of the ritual action seal (karmamudrā).

The latter is the particular exegesis, according to which there are six kinds (of female partners), namely, the "lotus" girl, the "conch" girl, the "marked" girl, the "doe" girl, the "elephant" girl, and the "diverse" girl.¹⁴

Among them the first is of three kinds: The best kind of "lotus" girl has a body which is not too tall or short, her figure is neither angular nor flat, her complexion is neither greenish nor

yellowish, but beautiful, pink, and attractive; she has seventy-
two more energy channels than the male; ¹⁵ her hair is fair and
curling; on her body there is the scent of sandalwood, and from
her mouth wafts the fragrance of the night-lotus; her body is
full and yet her waist is slim; her hands and feet are bird-like,
red and slender; her rounded lips are somewhat large, and her
lips have lotus markings; her teeth are excellent, (visible)
through the lips and close-fitting; her navel is deep and marked
with lotuses, while (her feet) make lotus impressions on the
ground; below her navel are three markings in the shape of the
syllable E; on the spot between her eyebrows there are three
upright marks; on her hairline and temples there are markings
like a silken headress; on her tongue there is a sword-like mark;
on her shoulders or shoulder-blades there are markings like a
twisting svâstika; her breasts are small and prominent; her
vagina is tight, hairless, fleshy, and high like the back of a
tortoise; her behaviour is pleasant and hard to feign; her very
sight generates bliss; by listening to her voice or by her touch,
thoughts are transformed into non-conceptual pristine cognition,
and the contemplation of bliss increases dispositionally. It is
auspicious merely to be in the vicinity of one who is so endowed
and the bliss of the yogin becomes extensive. If one has a
relationship with her, the supreme rank (of accomplishment) will
certainly be obtained.

The mediocre kind of "lotus" girl is white-skinned and of highly
domesticated background. Her limbs are coarse, her behaviour is
unrefined, and she is slow in temperament. Learned in worldly

activities, she gives birth to sons; she cannot be deceived by others, and is affectionate. If one has a relationship with her, the result will be obtained within a matter of years.

The inferior kind of "lotus" girl is fair-complexioned and of good figure, but spiteful; she is superficial, and she strives to sweep (the house) clean; she is open-mouthed and unable to keep secrets; her eyes are narrow and the hairs proliferate on her face. Do not adhere to her, for she is called "deceitful white eyes" (dkar-mo mig sgyu-ma).

The "lotus" girl is the female consort of Samantabhadra, the
16
supreme pristine cognition.

Secondly, there are three kinds of "conch" girl: The best is of shining complexion, the tips of her hair curling; her flesh is yellowish and her veins red; her behaviour is skillful, and she has an excellent sedentary posture; slow in speech, she looks obliquely; she has great discriminative awareness and understands through a mere intimation; she suffers acutely and has coarse thoughts; the flesh of her body is plump, pliant, and soft; her voice is clear and loud like a blown conch shell; and on her navel there is the mark of a conch curling to the right. If one has a relationship with her, the supreme rank (of accomplishment) will be obtained in this very lifetime.

The mediocre kind of "conch" girl seems to be hunched when regarded from behind, and she seems to stoop when regarded from the front; her body is beautiful with few masculine features (rngom); her bosom is hunched but her chin is fine; her figure is

small in height but broad; she performs all kinds of trifling activity in the house; and after cohabiting with her, she is greatly afflicted by attachment of the heart and loving kindness. If one has a relationship with her, accomplishments will be achieved within years and months.

The inferior kind of "conch" girl has yellowish flesh and large eyes; she has keen intelligence and clear recollection; she is restless and likes to travel; her hands are agitated and she is hyperactive; she is ill-mannered and not strict in her resolutions (i.e. she gossips); she keeps her eyes on men, and she is exceedingly jealous. One should not adhere to her because she is inauspicious.

The "conch" girl is the female consort of the enlightened family of the tathâgata.

The third is the "marked" girl who is of three kinds: The best is greenish (in hue), with elongated figure and long limbs; her rounded lips are large, and the flesh of her body is plump; from her chin to her vagina (lotus) there are few wrinkles; her eyes are long and fine; her teeth are neither long nor short, but even-sized; on her figure and body there are little moles, and her voice is sweet; she is passive, very slow, and gentle in her behaviour; her form is noble and she is skilled in politeness; her shape is symmetrical (phyed), and on her brow there are three upright markings; she has experience in and familiarity with divine laws and human laws; and at her hairline she has one or three marks which resemble a sealed skull. If one has a relationship with her, one will possess rapture and swiftly obtain accom-

plishment.

The mediocre "marked" girl has, in addition to these signs, great faith and discriminative awareness; she can keep secrets and has attachment of the heart. The inferior type is dark-skinned and fair-browed; her eyes are small and deep-set; she is loose-mouthed and talkative; she is great in defilements and cannot keep secrets. Do not adhere to her.

The "marked" girl is the female consort of the enlightened family of precious gems.

The fourth is the "doe" girl: Her body resembles that of a doe; she is corpulent and has large breasts; the flesh of the lower part of her body is plump and her vagina is tight; her breath and womb have the fragrance of musk; her waist is slim, and her gait slow; she regards people without closing her eyes, and her voice is sweet. If one has a relationship with her accomplishment will swiftly be obtained. The mediocre kind is beautiful in form, and sweet-voiced; she is respectful and can keep secrets. The inferior type is the reverse of these and one should not adhere to her.

The "doe" girl is the female consort of the enlightened family of indestructible reality.

The fifth is the "elephant" girl: The best sort has long eyes, and the space between her eyebrows is wide; her body is not tall and she is slow in temperament; she does not heed the words of

others, and she is small-minded; she has large ears and little shame; she knows what is proper and improper in conduct, and she is fond of relaxation; she is most domineering in speech and very industrious; she has a delicious smell and short limbs. One who frequents her will swiftly obtain accomplishment.

The mediocre sort is greenish in complexion and lofty in height; her body is domesticated and of great strength; she is not distracted from her purpose and cannot be deceived; she is great in self-assurance (mdo) and very liberal (spro ring-ba). One should adhere to her because she is endowed with glorious signs.

The inferior type is fickle and talkative; great in deception and prone to anger; she is facile both in her likes and dislikes; she has great attachment and does not appreciate liberality. One should not adhere to her because she is said to be "worth a useless horse" (bre-mo rta ri-ma).

The "elephant" girl is the female consort of the enlightened family of the lotus.

The sixth is the "diverse" girl: The best kind is beautiful in form, and with slender waist; she has a sweet voice and can keep secrets; her flesh is clear, radiant, and deeply lustrous; she is somewhat small, and has curling hair; her gait is rapid, and her talk energetic; she is skilled in assigning chores and very strong; on her brow there is a wrinkle which resembles a crossed-vajra. If one has a relationship with her, accomplishments are at hand.

The mediocre kind in addition to these (qualities) knows faith and modesty, and it is clear that she is small in stature. The inferior kind is the reverse of these; she strides impulsively; her flesh is rough and her limbs coarse; she is great in deception and prone to anger; she is talkative and laughs extensively; she is ugly to behold and of frightful appearance; she has little shame and enjoys fighting; she has disagreements with everyone and is unpleasant. One should not adhere to her because she is inauspicious.

The girl of "diverse" type is the female consort of the enlightened family of activity.

These signs are clear (in girls) under the age of twenty, and thereafter they become somewhat unclear. The worthy female partner or mudrâ is particularly sublime in ways such as these. It says in the Mahâmâya Tantra (T. 425):

Among all magical apparitions,
The magical apparition of womanhood
Is particularly sublime.

One should search for a mudrâ who is endowed with such signs. Then her mind should be trained and purified, beginning with the lay-vows and continuing as far as the secret empowerment; and she then becomes a suitable assistant for one's desired means for attainment (gâdhana). The Hevajra Tantra (T. 417-8) concurs with
17
the words:

First you should grant the posada vow;
Followed by the ten topics of training.

11. The second section (in the overview of the mandala of great bliss or supreme enlightenment in which sexual union is inherently pure) concerns the sequence of the supported pristine cognition.¹⁸ It has three aspects, namely, the preliminary ritual service which is to be performed; the application of the rites of attainment and great attainment; and the classification of pristine cognition according to the actual foundation (dnngos-¹⁹gzhi).

According to the first of these (the preliminaries), one whose own vital energy and mind are appropriate should relax for some days, eat substances containing the essential minerals, perform massage (bskum-nye), and extend the energy channels of the body with bliss by means of conversation, glancing, laughing and so forth, which incite desire.

Then, according to the second, on a comfortable seat one radiantly visualises (oneself and the mudrâ) as the male and female consorts in their mandala of deities, and consecrates the respective secret centres as a vajra and a lotus. On the tip of the latter, the mandala of the buddhas is visually created and invited. Then, the rite of attainment activates the seminal fluid or "enlightened mind" by embracing, kissing, scratching with the fingernails, rubbing the breasts, and so forth. Then, entering into union, the rite of great attainment is effected. This refers to the non-dual display of the male and female consorts.

According to the third (the classification of pristine cognition in the actual foundation): At that time, when the pure-essence

(of seminal fluid) moves from the crown-centre to the throat centre. there is the pristine cognition of delight; then, there is the pristine cognition of supreme delight when it descends from the throat centre to the heart-centre; there is the pristine cognition absent of delight when it descends from the heart centre to the navel centre; there is the pristine cognition of coemergent delight when it descends from the navel centre to the secret centre; and there is the inconceivable pristine cognition, in which all conceptual elaborations of the subject-object dichotomy are quiescent. This is the great bliss, granting the supreme offering of joy and equanimity. For it is said: ²⁰

The supreme offering, great desire,

Delights all sentient beings.

Then the white and red seminal fluids are drawn in through the pathway of the vajra (penis), whence they fill the four centres and their petals from the navel as far as the crown. In this way they are visualised to be extended with unceasing bliss and pervaded with pristine cognition free from all conceptual elaborations. As is said (Ch. 11, 9):

Those essences of attainment, sun and moon-fluids,

Are drawn by the tongue-like vajra into the mandala.

..

Then in the energy channels, these (pure-essences) are arranged by means of the three essentials, namely, yogic exercises ('khrul-'khor), visualisation and non-visualisation; and they are determined in a natural disposition free from conceptual elaboration. This is the genuine pristine cognition of reality, the intention of Samantabhadra. ²¹

Now, the first (of those) pristine cognitions is the mirror-like pristine cognition in which thoughts of hatred become blissfully radiant without independent existence because they are inherently pure. The second is the pristine cognition of sameness because the proud mind is purified and the male and female consorts are without duality. The third is the pristine cognition of discernment in which the nature of bliss is known to be emptiness because subjective thoughts of coarse desire have disappeared. The fourth is the pristine cognition of accomplishment because envy is purified and the activities of bliss and emptiness are concluded. Then, at the conclusion of the four delights of the supported (pristine cognitions) in their upward momentum, there is the pristine cognition of reality's expanse, non-conceptual in all respects. All (aspects of) sexual union are purified as pristine cognition, and the four pristine cognitions are purified in the expanse of reality. This is applied in five natural steps, namely, the deity dissolves into the seed-syllable, the seed-syllable dissolves into its vibration, the vibration dissolves into its superscript point, and that dissolves into the expanse of reality. ^{21b} In this way the intention of the male and female consort Samantabhadra, where expanse and pristine cognition are without duality, is concluded. In Chapter Thirteen (of the Secret Nucleus, 13, 9) this point is also made:

Through the display of the pristine cognition of bliss
When the essential seminal points are united,
Offerings are made to joyous pristine cognition.

Interlinear Commentary on the Rites of Sexual Union

(394.6-396.6)

The interlinear commentary on the mandala of great bliss or supreme enlightenment, in which sexual union is inherently pure, has five sections.

i. The first concerns the object (or female partner) with whom one enters into sexual union. (It comments on Ch. 11, 6):

Discriminating between (dbye) the good and bad qualities and the different particular qualities of **devīs (lha-mo)**, who are the twelve-year old secret consorts of buddha-mind, **nâginis (klu-mo)** who are the sixteen year old secret consorts of buddha-speech, **and female (mudrās) of inferior species (rigs-ngan-mo)** who are the twenty-year old secret consorts of buddha-body, one should reject those who are bad and adhere to those who are good; **or else (ma yang-na)** without **discrimination (mi-dbye-par)**, one should resort to whichever object (or female partner) is appropriate.²²

ii. The second, concerning the manner in which one sexually unites (with her, comments on Ch. 11, 7):

There are four branches of ritual service and rites of attainment through which one adheres to or serves a single deity. Accordingly, in this context also **there is ritual service (bsnyen-pa-dang)** through which the mind of the mudrā is trained and her enlightened mind extended; **there is further ritual service (ni-nye-bsnyen-dang)** which includes glancing at and touching (the mudrā) with purity of perception; **there are rites**

of attainment (sgrub-pa-dang) which include the radiant visualisation of her as the deity and the consequent embrace; and there are rites of great attainment (ni- sdrug chen-po) wherein, through their display in non-duality, (the seminal fluids) descend from the four centres to the secret centre. Through these four steps, one unites with pristine cognition.

23

iii. The third, concerning the essence of sexual union, (comments on Ch. 11, 8):

Then, the receptacle of non-dual "enlightened mind" (the seminal fluid), the size of a mustard seed, is visualised in the mandala of the lotus of the female consort (yum-gyi padma'i dkvil-'khor-du); and the mandala of (-kvi dkvil-'khor) natural supremely blissful (bde-ba) buddha-mind (thugs) adorned with clusters of buddhas is emanated (spro) and visually created. The beings of pristine cognition are invited from the expanse and dissolve therein, whereupon the offering of this displayed (fluid) is made to all mandalas [/cloud-masses] of the buddhas without exception (sangs-rgyas-kvi dkvil-'khor [/ sprin-tshogs] ma-lus-pa) who are present. Consequently, through the (-pas) great offerings of supreme joy and equanimity (dgves-mnyam mchog-gi shyin), the deities who have been invited and all the deities of the naturally present mandala located in the centres of one's own body respectively dissolve (bsatim). By virtue of making these offerings in a satisfactory manner, the accomplishment of non-dual supreme bliss is visualised to be obtained, and the "enlightened mind" (seminal fluid) is concentrated in the lotus.

iv. The fourth, concerning the way in which the accomplishment is received (comments on Ch. 11, 9):

Those essences (anving-po-de) which are the sun and moon-fluids (nyi-zla) of the secret centres, (i.e., ovum and sperm) are activated by these four branches of (-i) ritual service and attainment (sgrub-pa). They are drawn (blang) by the tongue-like (lce-yis) secret vajra (rdo-rie), (i.e., the penis), into the mandala (dkyil-'khor) of the four centres within the energy channels. Filled by this movement from below, all centres of the body are permeated and this is determined to be pristine cognition.²⁴

In this context, there are some who hold that once one has become radiant as the deity, (the seminal fluids) are extracted by the tongue, visualised as a vajra, and are then consumed internally. However that is not the case. They do not understand the meaning of the rite of sexual union.²⁵

v. The fifth, concerning the result of that attainment, (comments on Ch. 11, 10):

Through miraculous abilities one will become a sky-farer (mkha'-²⁶gro); through supernormal cognitive power one will directly experience the radiant (gsal) realisation of all things; and through the blazing forth ('bar) of the light-rays of contemplation and pristine cognition one will upwardly traverse the distinctive levels and paths.²⁷ With longevity (tshe) equal to that of sun and moon, the benefit of oneself and others will be attained, and the body of indestructible reality (vajrakāya)

acquired; et cetera (la-sogs). Included among these, there are revealed to be obtained the eight common accomplishments of the enchanted sword, eye-salve, pills, alchemical transmutation (of iron) into gold, swift-footedness and so forth. ²⁸ And one will also become a master of the Wish-fulfilling Clouds (vid-bzhin sprin-gvi bdag-por 'gyur) or supreme level of ²⁹ Samantabhadra. Inasmuch as buddha-body and pristine cognition are without conjunction or disjunction, the twofold benefit of living beings will be spontaneously present.

Rites of "Liberation" (396.6-400.2):

The second aspect (of the particular exegesis of the mandala in which rites of sexual union and "liberation" are indivisible, see p. 899) is the mandala of secret skillful means in which the rites of "liberation" are inherently pure. It has three sections.

1. The first, concerning the object which is "liberated", (comments on Ch. 11, 11):

They are those who have become fields (zhing-gyur) of compassion, on whom it says in the Tantra of Vairakīla (NGB. Vol. 19):

The commitment which "liberates" by compassion
 Is not one of murder and suppression--
 Having filled the components with indestructible reality,
 One meditates on consciousness as indestructible reality.

Accordingly, one (who enacts this rite) should have no inherent characteristics of hatred, and should be guided by compassion. ³⁰

Now, those sentient beings who cannot be trained by the rites of pacification and enrichment, and who are to be trained by means of sorcery comprise gods and human beings belonging to supreme (mchog) exalted realms, and (dang) living beings of less supreme (mchog-phran) evil existences. When classified, there are beings of ten such fields (of compassion) who endure the causes and results of suffering. Consequently, it is in order that they might be freed from their respective sufferings that these beings are "liberated". It also says in the Clarification of Commitments (P. 4744):

Both those hostile to the Precious Jewels,
And to the body of the master,
Those who have deviated from their commitments,
And those who are contentious,
Those who (inappropriately) come to the (mandala) assembly,
And those who are harmful to all (beings),
Those with a hostile or evil disposition
With respect to the commitments,
And those who are beings of the three evil existences--
These ten kinds of being
Are earnestly received by all yogins.

Indeed, when one resorts to activity on behalf of others, understands the nature of change, and has great compassion, there are occasions when the first seven non-virtues are permitted, even in
31
the causal phase of the greater vehicle:

For a great spiritual warrior,

Seven non-virtues are permitted.

Similarly, there was (the incident when Śākyamuni "liberated") an
evil armed assailant (who had murdered five hundred merchants).³²

11. The second section, concerning the skillful means through which these beings are "liberated", (comments on Ch. 11, 12):

The best yogin "liberates" (these beings) through contemplation, the mediocre yogin "liberates" them through contemplation, mantra and gestures of sealing; and the inferior one, in addition to those methods, gathers together the actual sacraments including a hearth and an effigy, and then "liberates" them utilising a
³³
representative image.

The basic equipment is the blazing hearth located in the south-west of the mandala which is triangular in the shape of the (Sanskrit) syllable E, and filled with charcoal (rdo-sol). Within it and upon (steng-du) a solar disk (nyi) derived from the syllable MA, and a lunar disk (zla) derived from the syllable A, an effigy (of such beings) and tokens indicative of their names and clans are placed (gzhas) by (-pas) the yogin who is learned (mkhas) in the rite of "liberation", while (the beings them-
³⁴
selves) are summoned and induced by means of contemplation.

Now, there are five ways in which (the yogin) is learned: He is learned in the view which liberates by nature, he is learned in meditation which liberates by contemplation, he is learned in conduct which liberates through sense-organs, objects and time,

he is learned in the oral instructions which liberate by the secret and supreme skillful means, and he is learned in the deeds and conduct which "liberate" by profound sorcery (i.e., ejection of samsāra).
35

Then endowed with pride (nga-rgyal), he visualises himself as a great warrior, the essence of the male and female consorts, and thinking that the malignant beings should be "liberated", he visualises on the ten fingers of his hands the five seed-syllables of the spiritual warriors or the ten syllables HŪM, which are the seeds of the ten "liberating" spirits (sgrol-ging) and whence emerge the ten male "liberating" spirits (ging-pho
36 bcu). Meanwhile, he turns his copper dagger or kila and thrusts it into the heart of that hand-made (lag-gi 'du-byed) effigy, so that it is cut into pieces of flesh and blood. He then meditates (bsgom) that the ten "liberating" spirits deliver these to the central deity and offer them to the mandala. The obscurations of the three media (of the beings' body, speech and mind) are also refined: The consciousness is transformed into (-du-gyur) the single white syllable HŪM (HŪM), and so purified (-pas rnam-par dag) of all deeds and propensities. This same syllable HŪM gradually dissolves into the expanse (dbyings-su thim) of its crescent-shaped breve-accent (zla-tshe), and then (nag) the crescent is wholly transformed into the mirror-like pristine cognition, which itself becomes a single vajra, the symbolic seal (phyag-rgyar) of buddha-mind, blazing forth ('bar) rays of light.

The yogin then meditates (bagom) that it becomes the buddha-body (skur-gyur) of Vajrasattva, brilliant through the proliferation of its rays of light ('od-zer 'phro-bas brjid); and that on the crown of the head (gtsug-tu) it has a finger-size Samantabhadra image, indicating that (the evil one) has become triumphant (rnam-par rgyal-bar) over samsāra. Seated upon a lunar throne on a mandala of vital energy, this (image) is ejected by the sound of PHAT to Akanistha where it is visualised as Vajrasattva in the secret centre of the female consort, seated in the presence of the tathāgata. Consequently, (the evil one) is visualised to become a tathāgatas' son, acting on behalf of sentient beings. ³⁷

iii. The third, concerning the beneficial attributes of having performed this rite of "liberation", (comments on Ch. 11, 13): This skillful means, by the "liberation" of sorcery, releases into exalted realms those sinful beings who are otherwise certain to be subsequently born in limitless evil existences. This is the skillful means (thabs), particularly sublime, the great secret of the vehicle of indestructible reality, more wondrous (ngo-mtshar) than the other vehicles, which releases (thar-pa'i) sinful beings from evil existences (ngan-'gro) and obtains their "liberation".

There are some who might doubt that such acts of killing belong to the genuine path because the rite is based on hatred, but there is no defect. For those living beings are released by means of "liberation" with an altruistic mind, devoid of hatred. ³⁸ It says in the Supreme Reasoning (rig-byed bla-ma):

No defect is visible
In one who acts malignly
For the benefit of the malign.

And in the Purification of All Evil Existences (T. 483), which is
39
a Yogatantra, it also says:

Sarvavid has said that
If one should eradicate
Those who make improper attempts
To curse the guru, and so forth,
One will become accomplished.

And :

Moreover, those who attempt to curse the guru,
Those who harm the Three Precious Jewels,
And those who destroy the buddhas' teaching
Should be "liberated" by the mantras of a mantrin.

Mandala of Magical Pristine Cognition Untainted by Defects with
..
respect to Rites of Sexual Union and "Liberation" (400.2-402.1):

The third aspect (of the particular exegesis of the mandala in
which the rites of sexual union and "liberation" are indivisible
--see p. 899) concerns the mandala of magical pristine cognition
untainted by defects with respect to rites of sexual union and
"liberation". (It comments on Ch. 11, 14):

Ultimately, the abiding nature of all things is the primordial
(ye-nag) original uncreated real nature (skve-med de-bzhin-nvid),
on which the Sūtra of the Lamp of Precious Jewels (T. 145) says:

All things are uncreated,
And eternally resemble space.

And the Sûtra of the Non-Emergence of All Things (T. 180):

Whosoever sees that there is no buddha,
No doctrine of the buddha,
And never sentient beings,
And whosoever knows the reality
Which resembles space,
Will swiftly become a superior being.

From the very moment of its relative appearance, in the manner of an optical illusion (mig-yor tshul) which is not (objectively) recognised, (this reality) diversely appears (snang-ba) through conditions and without independent existence as a magical apparition (sgyu-mar), just as the forms of a horse, ox, man or woman arise in place of a twig or a small stone. It says in the Sûtra of the Ornament of Pristine Cognition's Appearance (T. 100):

Just as forms which have materialised
As a magical apparition
Are not created and do not come into being,
The diversity of phenomena similarly
Is not created and does not come into being.

So it is that because all things are primordially pure and of the nature of a magical apparition, the rites of sexual union and "liberation" too are primordially pure. Although all the rites

of sexual union and "liberation" have been performed (abvor-agrol
bva-ba kun-byas kyang) by the yogin who understands this nature
of magical apparition, from the very moment of their performance,
(rites of) sexual union and "liberation" generated by defects
which accumulate (world-forming) deeds, and possessing inherent
characteristics, have not (med) actually been performed (bvas-
pa), even to the extent of an (isham-yang) indivisible atomic
particle (rdul-cha). This is because there is no subjective
attachment. It also says in the Extensive Pristine Cognition
(ve-sheś rgyas-pa):

One who is learned in skillful means
Should perform (the rites)
In the manner of magicians
Whose emanational magical apparitions
Are untainted by any defect
Compounded of virtue and non-virtue.

And in the Verse Summation of the Transcendental Perfection of
Discriminative Awareness (T. 13):

Although in (the view of) ordinary beings,
One may cut off many millions of heads,
One who knows well that all beings are emanations,
Is indeed without fear.

And in the Yogatantras:

Even if one slays all sentient beings,
One is untainted by sins.

When sin emerges with inherent characteristics there must also be inherent characteristics of attachment to its true existence, but here there is established to be no degeneration owing to the absence of substantial existence and the transformation of perception, just as in the case of a madman who is without subjective apprehension. This is known from the following passages of the Root Sūtra of the Vinaya (T. 4117):

Dreams are non-existent in a similar manner.

Their fruit is itself uncompounded.

And:

There is no degeneration

For those who are mad and mentally disturbed.

And:

When the perception of the central consciousness

Is itself transformed...

In this context too, the rites of sexual union and "liberation" are realised to be dream-like and without substantial existence, the perception is transformed into that of a deity, and there is no defect because, as in the case of a madman, there is no attachment to true existence.

40

The Mandala of the Displayed Feast Offerings

..

(402.1-416.2)

The second part (of the exegesis of this chapter --see p. 896) concerns the mandala of the displayed feast-offerings. It includes an overview and an interlinear commentary.

Overview of the Mandala of Feast-Offerings (402.1-408.1):

..

There are three parts: characteristic nature, classification, and the skillful means through which the mandala of feast-offerings is to be performed.

i. As to the first: The (Tibetan) term tshogs-kvi 'khor-lo or "mandala of feast-offerings" is derived from (the Sanskrit) ganacakra. Its characteristic nature is that there is a feast or assembly (tshogs) of the extraordinary supports, persons, and implements associated with the deliberate practice of the secret mantras. It is said in the Tantra which Comprises the Supreme Path of the Means Which Clearly Reveal All-Positive Pristine Cognition (NGB. Vol. 3):

The feast-offerings of supports, persons and implements
Are said to be assembled through great, secret skillful means.

ii. As for its classification, there are three sections: The actual classification; the sequence of ritual activity; and the purpose for which feast-offerings are to be performed.

On the first of these, it is stated in the Sequence of Indestructible Activity (P. 4720):

An assembly comprised entirely of intimate persons
Is called the feast-offering
Of a congregation of yogins;
The complete enjoyment of their possessions
Is explained to be the feast-offering
Of blissful enjoyment;
The gathering of all deities and oath-bound ones

Is explained to be the feast-offering
Of a great congregation;
The continual perfection of the two kinds of provision
Is certainly considered to be
The great feast-offering

So it is that the feast offerings are of four kinds, namely: the feast-offering which is a gathering of fortunate beings; the feast-offering of the implements which they possess; the feast-offering of the deities of accomplishment; and the feast-offering
41
of merit and pristine cognition.

The first refers to the assembly in pairs of the male and female yogins who possess the commitments; and it illustrates the nature of skillful means and discriminative awareness. Now, when this occurs in a small gathering, there are either only the male and female consorts who represent the central deities, the three pairs who represent the nature of buddha-body, speech and mind, or the five pairs who indicate the five enlightened families, i.e. two, six, or ten (individuals) altogether. In the intermediate gathering the yogins equal in number the hundred deities of the mandala, and in the large gathering there is a great
..
multitude over and above these. Accordingly it says in the Secret Tantra (gsang-rgyud):

In the small gathering they number two, six, or ten.

In the intermediate one they equal the deities

Of the mandala in their number,

..
And in the large one they form a great multitude.

Now, there are also appropriate feast-offerings in which manifold male and female yogins are not coupled together. These are called either the feast of the male spiritual warriors or the banquet of the female spiritual warriors.⁴²

The second (kind of feast-offering) refers to all the implements, outer, inner and secret. In particular, meat and ale are the sacraments of skillful means and discriminative awareness, which it is improper to be without.⁴³ The same text says:

Ale and meat with nectar
Are the sacraments of accomplishment,
Which it is improper to be without.
To eat and drink there are
Grains, mineral elixirs, fruits,
And all desired things.

These are also adorned by many cloud-masses of song, dance and music.

The third (kind of feast-offering) refers to all the mandalas of supporting (buddha-body) and supported (pristine cognition), and to the oceanic throngs of the oath-bound (protectors), in which the central deity is surrounded by a retinue, i.e., those of the actual buddha-bodies, the flower clusters which are visually created as the deities, and all those who are invited through contemplation to the field of merit.

The fourth (kind of feast-offering) refers to the two continuous provisions. During the performance of the mandala of feast offerings in particular, the provision of merit includes all the deliberate practices and appearances associated with the creation stage of skillful means, and the provision of pristine cognition includes the realisation and meditations of the profound uncreated (disposition) subsumed in the perfection stage of discriminative awareness.

44

The second section (of this classification) concerns the sequence of ritual activity. It comprises both the sequences for the peaceful deities and for the wrathful deities.

As to the former: During the feast offering of the peaceful deities, the yogins, assuming the guise and hand-implements of the peaceful deities and possessing the symbols of the deities on whom their flowers have landed, enter into the assembly hall. Thereat, the four male gatekeepers including Yamântaka are seated by the gate of the assembly hall. (The yogins) raise a single finger to symbolise their entreaty: "May we enter!" ; at which (the gatekeepers) raise two fingers in reply, which is to say, "Come in!" Having gone within, the master of ceremonies (las-kvi rdo-rje) raises his hands in the gesture of the three-pronged vajra to symbolise the question, "What is your enlightened family?", at which in response they reveal the gesture or seal of the central deity belonging to the enlightened family on which their flowers have landed.

45

Then they make obeisance to the master of indestructible reality, and, in accordance with the sequence of empowerment, are given the vase-empowerment with the lay-vows, the secret empowerment with the novitiate, the empowerment of discriminating pristine cognition with the vows of a monk, and the (empowerment of) the Great Perfection with the status of a sthavira.⁴⁶

The yogins then take their seats in an orderly manner, either forming a single row for each of the four enlightened families in the four directions of the central deity, or having placed symbolic hand-emblems such as the wheel and vajra at the head of the row to indicate the rows of the mandala of the five enlightened families which are situated to the right, left and their mid-points. The ritual is then completed.

Secondly there is (the sequence) for the wrathful deities which, one should know to be similar.

In a mandala of feast offering which includes both the peaceful and wrathful deities together, the male and female yogins who represent the peaceful deities are seated on the right of the master of indestructible reality, and those representing the wrathful deities are on the left. It is also best if the numbers of male and female yogins are equal.

The third section (of this classification) concerns the purpose for which (the feast-offering) is to be performed. This is to be known in accordance with the details of the four rites: When the yogins are those who would repair their commitments and purify obscurations, the feast offering is fulfilled for the purpose of

pacification. When their purpose is to increase the lifespan or possessions, it is enrichment. For overpowering and summoning it is subjugation; and for the eradication of impediments and malignant beings and so forth it is wrath. (The feast offerings) are thus endowed in order that the desired purpose of these different rites might be attained.

iii. The third aspect (of the overview of the mandala of displayed feast-offerings) is the skillful means through which the feast offerings are to be performed. It has five aspects.

The first concerns the preparation of the supports and implements: In that location, during the night and so forth, beside the mandala of the deities which is either drawn on cloth or arrayed with heaps of coloured powders, the assistants (of the feast) should prepare the outer, inner and secret offerings, all the implements which have been obtained for the feast-offering, and the pills of nectar which form the inner offering.

The second is the entreaty that transformation may occur in the

47

course of the yoga: All the male and female yogins are seated in rows and then the master of ceremonies (las-kyi rdo-ri) makes obeisance, scatters flowers, and bows, joining the sleeves of his ceremonial robe together at the knees. He should make

48

obeisance, slowly reciting the following words:

Ho! By the natural, immeasurable spirituality of glorious Samantabhadra, may such and such a guru and holder of indestructible reality who is present for the sake of living beings, acting as the central deity, direct his

intention towards these great mighty lords of yoga. Although all things are primordially awakened in the nature of the Great Perfection, may he direct his intention towards the world-systems of living beings who pervade all the ten directions of the six worlds through the power of ignorance. Through his display of great spirituality, we beseech him to abide in yoga through profound contemplation in the mandala of natural spontaneous presence.

The third concerns the creation of the mandala of deities: Then the offering-cake (gtor-ma) is offered to the impediments, which are expelled to the frontiers of the oceanic (mandala). A boundary is delineated, comprising perimeters of fire, mountains, blazing weapons, and the ten wrathful deities. Then, the mandala of deities is radiantly visualised in the previously manner, and it should be pleased with offerings until actually pleased. The offerings of the feast should then be purified by incense, multiplied and transformed in the appropriate manner. An offering compounded from the five meats and five nectars is then consecrated and offered in a broad and vast skull-container.

The fourth concerns the enjoyment (of those offerings): It is visualised that there are five seeds representing the male spiritual warriors and five seeds representing the female spiritual warriors on the solar and lunar disks (= fingers) in the palms of the two hands, and that, derived therefrom, there are ten male & female deities of the feast offering (tshogs-kvi lha yab-yum bcu) who spread forth their offering clouds of the

five desired attributes. It is visualised that they make contact with the food and drink, and consequently are pleased. Then, offerings should be made to the deities of the components, sensory bases and activity fields (i.e. the assembled yogins themselves). The master of ceremonies again makes obeisance, and distributes the sacraments of skillful means and discriminative awareness with the lotus seal or gesture, saying:

HŪM! Direct your intention, great spiritual heroes.

These are excellent things!

Do not have doubts regarding the things that are gathered.

Think of brahmans, dogs and outcastes as identical

In nature, and enjoy them.

In response, the recipients also form the lotus gesture or seal, and accept and enjoy the offerings, saying:

OM! I make obeisance to the real nature,

The body of reality of the sugatas,

Where the subject-object dichotomy is abandoned,

And desire and other such stains are absent.

ALALAHO!

In the rows of the assembled feast-offering, one should not cling to the true existence of disputation, clamour, common appearances and so forth. Indeed one should perceive satisfaction, delight, and an absence of subjective clinging, so that body, speech and mind respectively become deity, mantra and reality.

The fifth concerns the concluding rites: Afterwards, the residual tormas is dispatched, and there should be performed songs of indestructible reality, glorious dancing, dedication (of merit) and the benediction.

56

Concerning the beneficial attributes of those (feast offerings) too, it says in the Indestructible Reality of the Magical Net (NGB. Vol. 15):

Among merits, the mandala of feast-offerings is supreme.

All aspirations will be accomplished in this life.

Impediments and obstacles will be pacified.

And in the next life, one will obtain

(The level of) Samantabhadra,

The field of the awareness-holding conquerors.

Now, these offerings surpass those which are made according to the lower vehicles in three ways: Their object is the buddhas because it is they who radiate as the deities; their accomplishment is not ordinary because they are transformed into nectar; and their aspiration is without subjective attachment because reality is displayed. Therefore, this nature of skillful means is sublime through the extraordinary discriminative awareness of the vehicle of indestructible reality (vairavâna).

Interlinear Commentary (408.2-416.2):

The interlinear commentary (on the mandala of displayed feast-offerings) comprises a brief teaching on the feast-offerings of Samantabhadra, and a detailed exegesis of their nature according to the different mandalas.

1. The first has two (gsun sic!) sections, the former concerning the nature (of the feast-offering) which is to be known. (It comments on Ch. 11, 15):

These (offerings) illustrate that through the three purities and the four modes of sameness all things are primordial buddhahood in the field of Samantabhadra. Now, the essences of the five elements which form the system of the external world (gnod) are pure in the nature of the five female consorts. The sentient beings who form its inner contents (bcud) subsumed in the five components are purified in the five male consorts; and the sense-organs and consciousness of the mind-stream (rgyud-rnams) of the respective (beings) along with their sense-objects are pure respectively in the male spiritual warriors, the female spiritual warriors, and the male and female gatekeepers. Moreover, those who abide in the great mandala where the world is the nature of the celestial palace, its contents are the male and female deities, and the individual mind-stream is the five pristine cognitions, are realised to be pure (rnam-dag rtogs-shing) in the nature of primordial buddhahood.

57

Moreover, there are the two samenesses (mnvam-gnyis) in accordance with which all things of phenomenal existence, samsâra and nirvâna, are ultimately the same in their uncreated disposition, and relatively the same in the manner of a magical apparition; and the two superior samenesses (lhag-pa'i mnvam-gnyis) in accordance with which the five components are buddhas and the eight aggregates of consciousness are pristine cognition.

58

Through (-kvis) these (axioms), the mandala (dkvil-'khor) in which all things are without good and bad, or acceptance and rejection, is the field of (-'i zhing) the natural Samantabhadra (kun-tu bzang-po), the abiding nature of genuine reality as it arises and appears, pervading all samsâra and nirvâna without partiality or bias. It says in the All-Accomplishing King (T. 828):

The centre is the unerring genuine nucleus.

The periphery envelops and entirely pervades

Samsâra and nirvâna.

The latter concerns those who should know (the nature of the feast-offerings. It comments on Ch. 11, 16):

When, by realising this nature of the Great Perfection, empowerment has been obtained in the mandala of genuine reality, all conduct (byed-spyod) of body, speech and mind that one has performed is perfectly transformed (gyur) through the innate force of the two great provisions (tshogs-chen gnvis) of merit and pristine cognition, and then (nag) whatever appears arises as pristine cognition. It says in Vairasattva: the Great Space (NGB. Vols. 1-2):

When all things are realised to be uncreated,

Spontaneously perfect and primordially liberated,

One's deliberate practice spontaneously accomplishes

The creation and perfection stages,

And the unfabricated nature perfectly appears.

The yogin (rnal-'byor) who has not degenerated in the (ma-nyams) five branches (yan-lag) of mantra which have been previously been described, who possesses the (ldan) five requisites (vo-byad), and who completely knows the (rdzogs-par shes-pa-yi) five rituals (cho-ga) should please (the deities) by means of the mandala of feast offerings (tshogs-pa'i dkyil-'khor-gyis), endowed with supportive individuals and the implements of a feast-offering, at special times and in locations such as charnel grounds. Once this has been attained, he will certainly (nges-par) accomplish ('grub) the result, i.e. the provisional status of the three kinds of awareness-holder and four rites, and the conclusive enlightenment, which is his excellent purpose (legs-pa'i dgos-
59
pa).

The second part (of the interlinear commentary concerning the mandala of the displayed feast-offerings) is the detailed exegesis of the nature of the (feast-offerings) according to different kinds of mandala. It has two sections, namely, the nature of the supporting mandala and the sequence of attainment which accords with it.

1. The former comprises both the mandala of the peaceful deities and the mandala of wrathful deities. The first is threefold, namely, the mandalas of five clusters, three clusters and a single cluster (of deities).

Among them, the first (comments on Ch. 11, 17):

One should meditate on the form (rnam-par-bsgom) of the deities of the five clusters (tshom-bu lnga-vi lha), which are derived from the [conquerors of the] five (lnga-dang) enlightened families in indivisible union (sbvor-ba-via) with the five (lnga-vi) female consorts or objective fields of the five enlightened families. These are arrayed (bkod) fifty in number, i.e., the ten male and female consorts forming five basic (or central pairs) of male & female consorts, and the ten in each of the other four (peripheral) enlightened families. And also (one should meditate) on (1a) the ten wrathful male deities (khro-bo bcu) such as Hūmkara and the ten wrathful female deities (dang khro-mo bcu) such as Vajranāditā (rdo-rie sgra 'bvin-ma), who are situated outside those (deities) on the ten radial points of a protective circle, hollow inside, i.e., in the eight cardinal directions along with the zenith and nadir. They are in the manner of a circle ('khor-lo'i tshul-du) which protects (the mandala) from obstacles.

Now, in the middle there are the male and female central deities (Vairocana) who are natural expressions of Samantabhadra, and around them are Sattvavajra, Ratnavajra, Dharmavajra, and Karma-vajra with their four respective female consorts Sthiravajrā, Jvalavajrā, Valivajrā, and Ksobhyavajrā; making ten male and female consorts altogether.

In the east are the male and female consorts Aksobhya, and around them are Vajrasattva, Vajrarāja, Vajrarāga, and Vajrasādhu with their four respective female consorts Lāsya, Dhūpā, Ankuṣā, and Vajratārā.

In the south are the male and female consorts Rathasambhava, and around them are the four (male consorts) Vajraratna, Vajrasūrya, Vajradhvaja, and Vajrapāśa, with their respective female consorts Mālyā, Puspā, Pāśā, and Vajrasukhī.

In the west are the male and female consorts Amitābha, and around them are the four (male consorts) Vajradharma, Vajratikṣna, Vajracakra, and Vajravāk with their respective female consorts Gītā, Alokā, Sphotā, and Vajradyuticitrā (rdo-rie gsal-bkra-ma).

In the north are the male and female consorts Amoghasiddhi, and around them are the four (male consorts) Vajrakarma, Vajrarakṣita, Vajrayakṣa, and Vajramuṣṭi, with their respective female consorts Nartī, Gāndhā, Kinkinī, and Vajrapraveśā.

Outside these fifty (deities) there are the ten wrathful male deities with their consorts, so that the five clusters altogether
61
comprise seventy deities.

In general it is held that the clusters represent the central deities and retinues when the form of the celestial palace with its gates, tiered pediments and so forth is absent, whereas the mandala proper does include the celestial palace. However in this (tradition), it indicates that these deities are present as an encircling cluster.

Secondly there is the mandala of the three clusters (which comments on Ch. 11, 18):

One should meditate on the deities of the three clusters (tshom-bu gsum-gvi lha-rnams bsgom), which is the mandala comprising the thirty deities of buddha-body, speech and mind (sku-gsung-thugs), namely (-te), those of the enlightened family of the tathâgata, of the enlightened family of indestructible reality (de-bzhin rigs-dang rdo-rie rigs) and of the enlightened family of the lotus (padma'i rigs), each of which is naturally expressed as ten male and female consorts. On their periphery too they have a host of wrathful deities (khro-bo'i tshogs-dang ldan-pa-vi), namely, the eight male and female gatekeepers.

The third is the mandala of a single cluster (which comments on Ch. 11, 19):

One should meditate on the (bsgom) eighteen deities of a single cluster (tshom-bu gcig-pa'i lha-rnams), namely (-te), the enlightened family (rigs) of Samantabhadra, the real nature among (kvi) all enlightened families (rigs), where the central deity of (-kvi gtsö) the mandala of the five enlightened families (rigs) is in the form of Vairocana. His nature, when the mandala of the tathâgata is divided into its five enlightened families, is that of the mind of buddha-mind (thugs-kvi thugs-te). Indeed, it is the supreme buddha-mind (thugs-kvi mchog) which is adorned with dark-blue Vairocana as the central deity. The periphery of this mandala, which comprises the ten (basic) deities, has a host of wrathful deities (khro-bo'i tshogs-dang ldan-pa-vi), namely, the eight male and female gatekeepers.

The latter is the mandala of the wrathful deities (which comments on Ch. 11, 20):

The feast-offerings are attained in the blazing mandala through the (-kyis) great assembled hosts (tshogs-rnams) of the fifty-eight Blood-Drinkers, which include (la-sogs) the ten male and female consorts forming the great assembly of (-'i tshogs chen-po) five male wrathful deities (khro-bo) and five Krodheśvaris or female wrathful deities (khro-mo), with those of the intermediaries (pho-nya) through whom their rites are attained, namely, the eight Mâtaris of the sense-objects, their retainers (phvag-brnyan) who are the eight Piśâcis of the sensory locations, their attendants (bka'-nyan) who are the four female gatekeepers of pristine cognition, and the [other] (sogs) servants (ci-bgyi), i.e., the twenty-eight mighty mistresses or Išvaris who perform the rites. Thereupon, the rites (las-rnams) of wrath which eradicate malign beings and so forth are provisionally [perfected] (rdzogs-par-byed) and the accomplishment (dnegos-grub) of the supreme excellent intention will conclusively and certainly be achieved.

The second section (of this detailed exegesis) concerns the sequences through which (the feast-offerings) are attained: They are attained in accordance with the mandala of either a single cluster (of deities), of three clusters, of five clusters, or of the expanse of indestructible reality (vairadhâtumandala).

1. The first of these has two parts, of which the former concerns the individuals by whom (the single cluster) is attained. (It comments on Ch. 11, 21):

The type of individual who attains this (single cluster) is the yogin (rnal-'byor), i.e. one who "unites" ('byor) the intellect in reality for the sake of the "fundamental" (rnal) mind-as-such. When (yogins) are classified, there are three types, namely, yogins of the natural ground, yogins of the creation and perfection stages according to the path, and yogins of the spontaneously present result. Among them, this passage refers to the yogins of the path. The Two Stages (T. 4771) also speaks of:

The yogin who has created and perfected

The modes of the ground and the natural result...

64

And in the Madhyamaka:

It refers to some who would attain enlightenment,

Endowed with the nucleus of emptiness and compassion.

Or alternatively, (the individual concerned) should be a mantrin (angags-'chang), i.e. one who "upholds" ('chang) the words and meanings of the "mantras" (angags) which are the profound marvelous secret of the tathāgata. The (Tibetan) term angags is derived from (the Sanskrit) mantra. Three kinds of mantra are upheld, namely, secret mantras (guhya mantra), gnostic mantras (vidyā mantra), and incantations (dhāraṇī). The first of these affords protection from the suffering of samsāra because it refers to the secret and marvelous view, meditation, conduct and result of the outer and inner (vehicles). The second affords

protection from suffering through the mighty awareness of anchorites (rsig) and so forth, who have obtained power over contemplation. The third comprises truthful expressions (bden-tshig) and protective expressions (bgos-pa'i tshig) which bring about their appropriate results, beneficial or harmful.

65

The latter concerns the accomplishment which these individuals are to attain. (It comments on Ch. 11, 22):

In terms of accomplishment (dnngos-grub-ni), the yogin acquires excellent enlightened attributes which are supreme and common. He abides in a disposition (ngang-gnas) where all things are spontaneous (lhun-grub) and indivisible in their nature of primordial sameness (mnvam) and their disposition of great perfection (rdzogs), without partiality or subjective attachment. Through conduct (spyod-pas) without acceptance and rejection, the yogin attains the realisation that all things (thams-cad) are primordially (ye-nas) of a single essence and indivisible (dbver-med-pa'o), unimpeded (thogs-med-pa'i) and without attachment or clinging in all respects (ci-la'ang). The mandalas (dkvil) of all (thams-cad) enlightened families are gathered within the enlightened family of indestructible reality (rdo-rje'i rigs-su) or buddha-mind, which is the mandala attained in this context. Consequently, the yogin should excellently meditate that (rab-tu-bgom) all the deities and their celestial palaces emanate ('phro) light ('od) rays of pristine cognition and blaze forth ('bar-bar) their brilliance. These should then be (bva) delighted with the divine offerings which are made to deities, without attachment (chags-med tshul-gvis) for, or clinging to, all the

desired attributes, and then be dissolved (batim-par). The result is that, transformed into (gyur-nag) the buddha-body of reality where mind-as-such is without duality (gnvis-med), that one obtains the rank of the spontaneous great seal (phyag-rgya che).
66

ii. The second, concerning the mandala of three clusters, (comments on Ch. 11, 23):

Apart from that previous (mandala-cluster) the yogin should alternatively (yang-na) attain the nature (nyid-de) of the mandalas of buddha-body, speech and mind (sku-gsung-thugs) which are respectively those of Aksobhya, Amitābha, and Vairocana. This is because the mandalas of all (thams-cad) buddhas without exception (ma-lug), when condensed, are gathered in the mandalas of buddha-body, speech and mind (sku-gsung-thugs). Also in contemplation (ting-'dzin) of the creation and perfection stages which brings about the attainment, the yogin meditates that they emanate rays of light ('od-zer 'phro) which radiate (gsal) in the form of the deities and blaze forth ('bar) their major and minor marks. Thereby, acts of benefit are performed for the sake of sentient beings. All the desired attributes, which are considered to be their female consorts, are enjoyed by the male consorts, so that these are all thought to become dissolved in the disposition (ngang-du thim) of the (-kvi) natural non-dual (gnvis-med) expanse (dbyinga) of reality, free from conceptual elaboration.

Then, the result is that the supreme accomplishment of the awareness-holder (rigs-'dzin dngos-grub mchog) of spontaneous presence will be obtained (thob-'gyur), and thereafter, all mandalas (dkvil-'khor) of the deities without exception (ma-lus) will blaze forth ('bar-ba 'grub) the glory of their enlightened attributes for the sake of those to be trained, the suffering of conflicting emotions (nyon-mongs adug-bsngal) experienced by sentient beings without exception will be dispelled (sal-bar-mdzad), and then the enlightened activity will be achieved, establishing that these sentient beings will be born into the enlightened family of indestructible reality (rdo-rie'i rigs-su skye-ba'i gnas).

iii. The third, concerning the mandala of five clusters, (comments on Ch. 11, 24):

This section also has two parts, namely the type of individual who attains this mandala and the manner of the attainment: For genuine accomplishment (dngos-grub yang-dag-pa-ni) to be obtained in the mind, the yogin who is a mantrin (sngags-'chang) radiantly visualises the male and female consorts as skillful means and discriminative awareness (thabs-dang shes-rab) and should meditate on (bsgom) the five mandalas (dkvil-'khor lnga) of clusters and (dang) the row of wrathful deities (khro-phreng) outside them, by all means (thams-cad-kvis) of ritual, including the three kinds of contemplation. Without attachment (chags-pa med-pa'i tshul-gvis-ni) to the desired attributes, these should be dissolved (bstim-par-bya) without (med-par) clinging to the offering in terms of the subject-object dichotomy (gnvis), and in

accordance with the dissolution of deity into deity. The result is that the nucleus of supreme accomplishment (dnge-s-grub mchog-gi snying-po), the awareness-holder of spontaneous presence, will be achieved ('grub).

There are some who hold that there are different accomplishments, i.e. that the awareness-holder of the seal is attained by means of the single cluster, the awareness-holder with power over the lifespan by means of the three clusters, and the awareness-holder of spontaneous presence by means of the five clusters. There is no such implication here because, through each of these clusters, one provisionally becomes accomplished as the three (lower) kinds of awareness-holder, and conclusively accomplished as the awareness-holder of spontaneous presence.⁶⁷

iv. The fourth, concerning the attainment of the mandala of the indestructible expanse (vairadhâtumandala-- comments on Ch. 11, 25):

This also has two parts, namely, the type of individual by whom it is attained and the manner of attainment. The yogin (rnal-'byor), by means of (-kvis) skillful means (thabs) which is naturally represented by the male consort and (dang) discriminative awareness (shes-rab) which is naturally represented by the female consort, should meditate on the (-du-bgom) five tathâgatas (de-bzhin gshes-pa) and (dang) their five respective female consorts (yum); and he should meditate on (-du-bgom) the sense-organs and aggregates of thought as the nature of the male and female spiritual warriors (sems-dpa' sems-ma-

nyid), along with the male and female gatekeepers. These deities also emanate ('phro) a profusion or multitude (rnam-pa mang-po) of light rays ('od-zer) throughout the ten directions.

In the sPar-khab Commentary (P. 4718) this is said to be the condensed Magical Net, comprising a mandala of eighteen deities. Although there is no contradiction, according to the root-text itself it is the mandala of the forty-two conquerors which is radiantly visualised.
68

The Branches of Means for Attainment connected with the Feast-Offerings (416.2-419.1):

The third part (of the mandalas of skillful means and discriminative awareness of the path which are to be experientially cultivated, see p. 896) concerns the branches of means for attainment (connected with the feast-offerings). There are three parts.

1. The first, the branch of contemplation which is attained, (comments on Ch. 11, 26):

When all things are attained in the mandala, the outer and inner objects which are experienced as the body, its rapture and so forth, as well as the self which experiences them are displayed through the mandala. Consequently, one should know that the respective mantras, seals and (so-so'i sngags-dang phyag-rgya-dang) contemplations (ting-'dzin) which are provisionally assumed radiate differently (so-sor-gsal), incontrovertibly, genuinely (yang-dag), and distinctly.

ii. The second, concerning the way in which this branch is appropriately attained, (comments on Ch. 11, 27):

The yogin should find the locations (gnas-dang) suitable for this attainment, endowed with complete characteristics and without obstacles, and obtain the necessary enjoyments (longs-spyod-dang), whichever are pleasing (ci bde-dang) without falling into

69

the two extremes. Exemplified thereby, one who is well endowed with (rab-ldan-pas) the implements, supports, sacraments of commitment and other suitable requisites which assist this attainment, complete and without degeneration (ma-nyams), and without contradictions, and whose intellect (blo-ni) in the course of this attainment is not captivated by extraneous conditions, but established in and resigned to a single goal, should firstly (dang-por) at the beginning of the means for attainment act (bya) firmly, as if taking (nos bzhin-du) a vow (dam) with the following thought at its inception, "Until I have success, I must not roam from this seat, from this posture or location."

Then the yogin cultivates perseverance during the course of the attainment, without (med-pa-yi) a trace of effort with respect to extraneous activities, or of bad signs and omens, or of fatigue because nothing is happening, of idleness (le-lo) due to the self-indulgent thought that he would not succeed, and of langour (sgvid-snyoms) through which attainment emerges slowly and unpunctually, and through which physical and verbal distractions are indulged. Then, without (med-par) hesitation (the-tshom) and doubts, such as wondering whether something is or is not mantra,

contemplation' and so forth, or whether the result will or will not emerge, when the propitiation has been performed (bsgrub-bvas-na) with an attitude profoundly established in a single assured goal, that yogin will accomplish all mandalas (dkvil-'khor thams-cad 'grub-par-'gyur) which are propitiated, and will obtain ('thob) the supreme (mchog) secret of indestructible reality (rdo-rie gsang), the genuine (dam-pa) body of reality where buddha-body and pristine cognition are without conjunction or disjunction.

iii. The third, the branch concerning the time within which attainment will occur (comments on Ch. 11, 28):

The days (zhag) suitable for attainment (bsgrub-pa'i) are stated in the verses which begin (Ch. 9, 32):

The genuine accomplishment of empowered awareness

Will be achieved in six or twelve months...

These, and the dates (dang tshe-grangs-ni) for beginning the rite of attainment, together with the (auspicious) planets and stars, are to be explained (bshad) according to their description (amos-pa bzhin-du) in the (-las) Extensive Tantra (NGB. Vol. 14) as follows:

As to time, beginning on the eight day
Of the bright half (of the month),
And above all in the constellation of Pusyâ.
One intensively practices the conduct
Associated with enlightenment.
In order that the accomplishment

Of the supreme secret should thereby be obtained,
It should indeed be received under
An auspicious planet and star.

Is it not, one might ask, incorrect to recognise (these times) because (the yogin) should be without acceptance and rejection? Although in essence that is the case, one should begin at an auspicious time owing to the co-incidence whereby the relative causes and results are not mistaken, and one should not begin at an inauspicious time. One should know this to resemble the planting of seeds which occurs during a season of heat and moisture, but not in another season. It says in the Flash of Splendour (T. 830):

Derived from the branches of science,
The times which should be known
Are the auspicious days for the deities,
The excellent conjunctions and hours.
Although these are of course symbolically conceived,
The tokens and signs of accomplishment do emerge.

There are those (among you) of diminished perception and consciousness, who, having surrounded their lofty citadel of error and its walls of hesitation with a perimeter which is hard to cross, say, "This Secret Nucleus of yours is not a tantra because it indicates (other) tantras (as an authority)". However, the Supreme Tantra of Clear Expression (T. 369), the Hevaira Tantra (T. 417-8) and so forth which you independently uphold would, also by implication, not be tantras because they too

indicate other tantras (as authorities). The latter indeed says
70
for example:

But why say more?

One should perform this in accordance with

The mandala-ritual from the Summation of the Real.

..

The Tantra of Mañjuñrī (T. 543) also indicates (other authorities) when it says:

According to the great Tantra of the Magical Net...

Therefore, the Teacher (Śākyamuni) rejected hierarchical statements concerning the nature of the tantras which he equally taught.

Here too, the ancillary tantras and commentaries which derive from this root tantra (of the Secret Nucleus) are indicated and mentioned (as authorities) in connection with the rites of attainment.

Summary of the Chapter (419.1-419.6)

The summary of the chapter (comments on Ch. 11, 29):

Because all things are primordially pure in the display of Samantabhadra, (the feast-offering) is to be performed, without acceptance and rejection--- Such were his words (tshig-tu'o) in this tantra, the essence of secret indestructible reality (rdor-rie gsang-ba'i). At the time when he spoke with these words (zhes), all the self-manifesting appearances of the spontaneous Bounteous Array were not extraneous to the buddhas' display, and so the tathāgata (de-bzhin gshegs-pa nyid) is said to have held

meaningful discourse (ched-du gleng-ngo) with the tathāgata himself (de-bzhin gshegs-pa-nvid-la), indicating that there is no duality of object and subject. In this way, all things are revealed to be self-manifesting; and that which is self-manifesting is revealed to be the non-dual intrinsic mind-as-such, substantially uncreated, in the manner of a dream.

This completes ('o) the exegesis of the eleventh chapter (le'u-
ste bcu-gcig-pa) from (las) the Secret Nucleus (gsang-ba'i
snying-po) of reality, Definitive with respect to the Real (de-
kho-na-nvid nges-pa) display of pristine cognition, in which it manifests. It is entitled the meaning of the Mandala of Feast Offerings (tshogs-kvi dkvil-'khor) in which all things that appear are made into the path of skillful means and discriminative awareness by the gathering of all yogins who have appropriate view and conduct, by the free enjoyment of the implements possessed by these (yogins), by the timely gathering of the meditational deities, dākinis and oath-bound protectors, and by the perfection of the two provisions in the mind, without clinging or apprehension.

Chapter Twelve

Attainment of the Feast-Offerings

Root-text:

Then the Tathāgata, the Great Joyous One, emanated a cloud of his display, became equipoised in the contemplation of "the array of ornaments", and then uttered this meaningful expression. [1]

With firm contemplation in the manifestly perfect
Mandala of the Magical Net: [2]

..

By the seal which absorbs and emanates
The dance steps and gesticulations,
One sinks down or traverses the sky. [3]

By the seals of song, verses, and intonations,
One will obtain the accomplishment of the doctrine. [4]

By the seal which assumes ornaments and raiment,
One will accomplish (the status of) the king
Who blazes forth, and which cannot be matched. [5]

By the seal of food & drink,
One will become accomplished in
The wish-fulfilling buddha-body and nectar. [6]

By the seal of "vowels" and "consonants,"
Each and every (activity) will be achieved. [7]

Retention endowed with characteristics
Of awareness and entrance,
Is the basis and condition
Which brings the result to maturity.
Those who transform it into a potent force [8]
Are known as awareness-holders,
In the field of the conqueror. [9]

Although they assume the pure birth
Of humans, gods and Brahmá gods, [10]
They are transformed into the extraordinary levels,
And the transcendental perfections are totally completed. [11]

The extraordinary levels, namely the ten and the three
Which respectively have skillful means,
Supreme skillful means & discriminative awareness,
And that which is supreme for its supreme discriminative
awareness
Are spontaneously perfect through their distinctions
Of cause and result. [12]

One should meditate that on cushions of sun and moon,
In the expanse of the clear mandala of the sky,
There is the king of pristine cognition,
In union with his consort;
Thus one comes to meditate without exception
On all mandalas of the conquerors, in their entirety. [13]

From any of the four times and ten directions,
The perfect buddha will not be found.
Mind-as-such is the perfect buddha.
Do not search elsewhere for the buddha. [14]

One should be well united in the mandala, Samantabhadra,
So that all mandalas will be accomplished. [15]

Whether the rituals are abundant or incomplete,
Flaws are themselves pure, and there is no defect. [16]

--Through this meaningful expression, (the tathāgatas) were
pleased by the cloud of that display. This completes the twelfth
chapter from the Secret Nucleus Definitive with respect to the
Real entitled the Attainment of the Feast-Offerings. [17]

Commentary (419.6-439.3):

The second section (of the teaching on the creation stage which reverses common attachments-- see p. 889) is an exegesis of the particular branches of that (mandala of feast-offerings). It has three parts, namely: the background motivation; an exegesis of the meaning of its words; and a summary of the chapter.

The first (comments on Ch. 12, 1):

Once the mandala of the feast-offerings had been explained, then the Tathāgata (de-nas de-bzhin gshags-pa), the Great Joyous One (dgves-pa chen-pos) Samantabhadra, in whom all things are displayed without duality, emanated (rnam-par spros-te) all things of phenomenal existence throughout the infinity of space as a cloud of (-'i sprin) his display (rol-mo) of pristine cognition, wherein all that is desired emerges spontaneously and perfectly by nature. He became equipoised (snvoms-par zhugs) in the contemplation (ting-nge-'dzin-la) of the "array (bkod-pa'i) of ornaments" (rgyan) which are greatly enjoyed throughout the perceptual range of the buddhafi elds and the six classes of living beings, corresponding to their respective perceptions. And then (nas) he uttered (brjod-do) these ('di) naturally arisen meaningful expressions (ched-du brjod-pa), without being encouraged or requested to do so, to the assembled array which is a pure self-manifestation of the Teacher himself.

Exegesis of the Meaning of Its Words (420.4-439.1)

This has three parts: a general teaching on the contemplation of the feast-offerings along with their beneficial attributes; a particular exegesis of the result attained through the feast-offerings; and a synopsis of the great all-gathering mandala which supports the feast-offerings.

General Teaching on the Contemplation of the Feast-Offerings and their Beneficial Attributes (420.5-424.2):

The first of these includes both a brief teaching and an extensive explanation.

i. The former (comments on Ch. 12, 2):

All things abide in the manifestly perfect (mngon-rdzogs-pa'i) mandala (dkyil-'khor) of male and female deities, in a great coalescence of subject and object, or of male & female consort, as the essence of the Magical Net (sgyu-'phrul dra-ba'i), which is a display of pristine cognition. With the emanation and absorption of firm contemplation (brtan-pa'i ting-nge-'dzin) on that very object, radiantly visualised and experienced by the intellect, the supreme and common accomplishments will be achieved.

ii. The latter (the extensive explanation) has five sections, among which (the first) comprises the contemplation of dance-steps and gesticulations along with its beneficial attributes.

(It comments on Ch. 12, 3):

This contemplation visually creates the five limbs of the body including the head as the mandala of the five enlightened families. The location is venerated as the nature of the indestructible ground, and the house as a pure buddhafield, adorned with the celestial palace of the deity. In that disposition which absorbs and emanates ('du-'phro'i) the diverse seals including the dance-steps (bro) of the feet and gesticulations (gar) of the hands, and in which the form of the deity, indivisible from the Magical Net, is known to be without true inherent existence, all movements and postures (of the body) and configurations of the hands do not transgress the nature of the deity. Therefore, all activities connected with dance-steps and gesticulations whatsoever are expressed in the term "seal" (phyag-rgya); and this seal is held to include the stretching and contracting of the fingers.¹

As for its beneficial attributes: By (vis) such activity, one sinks down ('dzul) within the earth and overpowers those mudrās who are nāginis below the earth by passing unimpededly through mountains and rocks, or one unimpededly traverses ('gro-bar 'gyur) the sky (lam nam-mkhar) above in the manner of a bird, and so comes to overpower the gods, antigods and so forth.

The second, concerning the seal of songs, (comments on Ch. 12, 4):

It also has two aspects. As to contemplation, this contemplation arrays the syllable HRIH within the throat, and makes offerings to the deities of the mandala by the seals (phyag-rgya-vis) of

sweet melody and song (glu), of its verses (tshig), and of other intonations (sgra-vi) of praise, benediction and so forth.

As to its beneficial attributes: One will obtain the accomplishment (dnngos-grub thob-par-'gyur) of the conch-shell of the doctrine (chos-kvi), which can understand things through a single inexhaustible wheel of adornment, the buddha-speech. Accordingly, it says in the Sûtra which Reveals the Diffusion of Light-Rays Everywhere (T. 55):

I also have rays of light,
Which are called the conch-shell of doctrine.
These entirely fill the world
By understanding everything as a single melody.
The meritorious basis of those rays of light
Arises from their inestimable nature.

Now, the buddha-speech is heard by whichever beings there are who require training, corresponding to their volition, and without reference to those who are near and those who are far. There is no difference whether one is present within the (teaching) courtyard or far beyond all the sands of the River Ganges. Just so, when Maudgalyâyana went to the world-system of Maricikâ in the west, he heard the doctrine of Sâkyamuni as before, whereas, according to the Sûtra of the Cornucopia of Avalokiteśvara's Attributes (T. 116), unfortunate beings did not hear him even when seated within the assembly. Indeed at Jetâvana, Sâkyamuni was heard by bodhisattvas and yet not by any of his pious attendants.
2

The third, concerning the seal of ornaments and raiment, (comments on Ch. 12, 5):

As for contemplation, this contemplation radiantly visualises that, derived from the syllable TRĀM, the crown and other such ornaments become gemstones; and, derived from the syllable A, the garments are consecrated as the garments of the deities and the garb of the peaceful and wrathful deities. This is implemented by the seal (phyas-rgya-vis) which assumes the ornaments (rgyan) including gemstones and bones, and (dang) the raiment (bro-ba'i) of upper and lower garments and so forth.

As for its beneficial attributes: Provisionally one will be clad in solid armour, which is luminous, brilliant, and cannot be destroyed even by Nārāyana;³ and conclusively one will become a universal monarch, and a bodhisattva who blazes forth ('bar-ba'i) with major and minor marks, and then one will accomplish ('grub) (the status of) the buddha-body, the king (rgyal-po) who holds sway over them with his ten powers which cannot be matched (thub-med)⁴ by Māra or by any disputant.

The energy comprised by these ten powers accords with the description found in the Pagoda of Precious Gems (T. 45-93) which says that one athlete is much stronger than seven human beings of Jambudvīpa, and similarly, one Śākya youth is stronger than seven athletes. The antigods are superior to seven of these, and the gods, yakṣas, Nārāyana, pious attendants, self-centred buddhas, and bodhisattvas are (successively) superior to seven of their immediate predecessors in power and skills. Meanwhile, the buddhas surpass in power all those beings who fill the expanse of space.

The fourth, concerning the seal of food & drink, (comments on Ch. 12, 6):

As for contemplation, this contemplation consecrates the food & drink derived from the syllable KHAM as nectar. By the seal (phyag-rgya-vis) of food (bza') including fish and meat, & drink (dang btung-ba'i) including tea and ale, offerings are made to the outer and inner deities.

As for its beneficial attributes: One's own body will become accomplished ('grub) in the buddha-body (sku), like the wish-fulfilling (vid-bzhin) gem which brings about all that is desired, and (dang) one will become accomplished in the supreme savours of buddha-speech, the nectar (bdud-rtsir), endowed with a hundred savours, which anyone may enjoy.

The fifth, concerning the contemplation of the seal of the rites of sexual union and "liberation", (comments on Ch. 12, 7):

This contemplation is one in which the male and female consorts are radiantly visualised as deities and the mandala is invited into their secret centres. There, the mandala should be pleased by the seal (phyag-rgya-vis) of the "vowels" (â-li), which make offerings of the supreme bliss, and of the "consonants" (kâ-li) which perform rites of "liberation", making offerings of human and non-human flesh and blood which are turned into nectar.⁵

The beneficial attributes (of this contemplation) are that each (thams-cad) supreme and common accomplishment, including that of the uncorrupted contemplation, will be achieved ('grub-par-'gyur) through the rite of sexual union, as will every (thams-

cad) enlightened activity which eradicates malign beings, pacifies naturally occurring evil forces, and releases (beings) into the next life, and so forth by the rites of "liberation".

Particular Exegesis of the Result Attained through the Feast-Offerings (424.2-435.4):

Secondly (see p. 954), the particular exegesis of the results attained through the feast-offerings includes an overview and an interlinear commentary.

Overview (424.2-430.6):

This comprises both verbal definition and classification: According to the (Sanskrit) term vidyâdhara, vidyâ means awareness, which is the seed of discriminative awareness, pristine cognition, and buddhahood. Dhara means holding or maintaining, i.e., the study or possession of (awareness) as an object.

The classification comprises both a general teaching which is illustrative (of the resultant awareness-holders), and a particular exegesis of their natural expression. Concerning the former, it says in the Fulfillment and Confession of the Denizens of Hell (na-ra-ka skong-bshags):

They have maturation, power over the lifespan,

The (great) seal, and spontaneous presence.

Thus, there is the awareness-holder of maturation; the awareness-holder with power over the lifespan, the awareness-holder of the great seal, and the awareness-holder of spontaneous presence.

The first of them is endowed with three characteristics, namely, maturation in the yoga of the meditational deity, stability in the form of the maturational body, and, on association with the seal of the body (lus-rgya= karmamudrā), the buddha-body of the great seal is obtained. It says in the Flash of Splendour (T. 830):

Having grasped the form of the meditational deity,
And untied the knots by means of the seal of the body,
The buddha-body of the (great) seal will itself become radiant.
That is said to be maturation.

The second (the awareness-holder with power over the lifespan) transforms that maturational body into the body of indestructible reality, and without abandoning it, unites with the buddha-level so that there is no corruption of the components and the intelligence of pristine cognition is cultivated. (As the same text says:

One endowed with body and components
Attains the awareness with power to keep them,
And, through the emergence of higher realisation,
Passes away without relinquishing the body.
This is the great awareness,
Wherein all corruption has ceased.
Whatever is practised, there is no reversal.
One who has obtained independence
Obtains inspiration, and so at this juncture
Perceives the middling degree of truth.

According to the third (the awareness-holder of the great seal), one's own body is transformed into the guise of (the deity) on whom one has meditated. It says in the Answers to the Questions of Vajrasattva (P. 5082):

The deity actualised by meditation
On one's own body as the great seal
Of the conquerors,
Endowed with major & minor marks,
And supernormal cognitive powers,
Is known as the awareness-holder
Of the great seal.

If one were to think that buddhahood has then been actualised, it is still to be attained because that (awareness-holder) is not free from all obscurations. One should know this to resemble the assertion of the Ornament of Emergent Realisation (T. 3786), concerning the "attainment of buddhahood", that although buddhahood is obtained on the first level, there are still stains to be purified on the remaining levels. The Indestructible Reality (NGB. Vol. 15) also says:

Although the buddha-body with the guise
Of the seal of enlightenment
Manifests that guise,
Endowed with major and minor marks and so forth,
The real nature of quiescence is not perceived.

The fourth (the awareness-holder of spontaneous presence) is the buddhahood in which renunciation and realisation are concluded. ¹⁰

It says in the Indestructible Reality:

Through the perfection of the power
Derived from the previous awareness,
Stains are purified, as has been explained,
And one becomes an awareness-holder of spontaneous presence
Endowed with the three kinds of discriminative awareness
¹¹
Of the buddha-level.

The latter, the particular exegesis of their natural expression has four parts, namely, their emanational births, their subsumption of the uncorrupted levels, their completion of the transcendental perfections, and their conclusive attainments.

i. Concerning the first: These awareness-holders perform acts of benefit for each according to his or her needs, having emanated for the sake of living beings as a universal monarch who is chief among human beings, as Brahmâ, Satakratu and so forth who are chief among the gods, and as the beings of the Mahâbrahmâ ¹² realms. There are some who claim without contradiction that the awareness-holder of maturation is displayed among human beings, the awareness-holder of power over the lifespan among gods, the awareness-holder of the great seal among Brahmâ realms, and the ¹³ awareness-holder of spontaneous presence among all.

ii. As for their subsumption on the uncorrupted levels: the awareness-holder of maturation is subsumed in the level which concludes (the paths of) provision and connection. The awareness-

holder of power over the lifespan is subsumed in the levels of learning as far as the path of insight. The awareness-holder of the great seal is subsumed in the levels of extraordinary realisation on (the paths) of insight and meditation, which concern the sublime pristine cognition; and the awareness-holder of spontaneous presence is subsumed in the buddha-level.¹⁴

However all of these are subsumed together on the Extraordinary (khvad-par-can) or thirteenth level. Therein they have all certainly been actualised. The distinction here resembles, for example, that between a fish which has been caught by an iron hook but is still in the water, and one which has been brought forth to dry land.¹⁵

Moreover, through the function of having sublime pristine cognition, one is called an awareness-holder of the great seal; and through the function of being devoid of birth and death, one is called an awareness-holder with power over the lifespan.

Again, there is explained to be a threefold division, according to which (the awareness-holders) are respectively introduced onto the buddha-level, abide on the buddha-level, and are matured on the buddha-level. There are also some who hold that the awareness-holder with power over the lifespan refers to the first level, that of the great seal to the eighth, and that of spontaneous presence to the tenth, but that is not intended according to the intention of the Magical Net, which says (Ch. 9, 32):

Within sixteen lifespans (one will obtain)

The spontaneously perfect five buddha-bodies.

And:

Without renouncing the body, on the buddha-level...

These passages indeed contradict the explanation that (the awareness-holder) of spontaneous presence has buddhahood, and they do not differentiate between the characteristics of the (awareness-holders) with power over the lifespan and of the great seal.¹⁶

iii. As for the third (their completion of the transcendental perfections): It is revealed that the ten transcendental perfections are gradually refined by adherents of the gradual path and that the ten levels correspondingly arise; whereas adherents of the immediate path swiftly complete these.¹⁷ Because things are not at all grasped, the transcendental perfection of liberality and its result are revealed to be spontaneously perfected without being sought. Similarly, moral discipline is uncovered, without acceptance or rejection, through an awareness of the sameness (of all things); patience is the absence of disturbance and the total apprehension of the character of pristine cognition; perseverance is the lack of degeneration in that and the accumulation of appropriate actions and behaviour; concentration is the abiding in the nature of all things without deviating from sameness, although the sense-organs are object-oriented; discriminative awareness transcends the apprehension of substances and signs because that nature is incontrovertibly realised; skillful means is that which directs one to action for the sake of others;

aspiration is that which utterly purifies fields and perceptual ranges; power is that which is never oppressed by disharmonious aspects; and pristine cognition is the qualitative realisation of the truth. Through the spontaneous perfection of these ten transcendental perfections, (their corresponding results) are swiftly perfected, without having to be refined over a long period of time.

18

The verbal definition and the attributes of the levels are also mentioned in the following passage from the Ornament of the Sûtras of the Greater Vehicle (T. 4020):

The Joyful Level is so called because

It gives rise to joy

At the increasing proximity of enlightenment,

And at the preception that the benefit

Of sentient beings is accomplished.

The Immaculate Level is so called

Because it is free from the stains

Of striving after indisciplined behaviour.

The Illuminator Level is so called because

It activates the great appearance of doctrine.

The Flaming Level is so called because

It burns both aspects (of obscurations)

Which are out of harmony with enlightenment.

The Hard to Conquer Level is so called because

It completely matures sentient beings,

And also protects one's own mind,

And is hard for intelligent beings to conquer.

The Manifest Level is so called because

Dependent on the perfection of discriminative awareness

Both samsāra and nirvāna are thereon manifested.

The Far-Reaching Level is so called

Because it connects one with the unique path of progression. 19

The Immovable Level is upheld

Because it is unmoved by the two kinds of perception. 20

The Level of Excellent Intelligence

Is that of the noble intelligence of

Particularising genuine awareness.

The Cloud of Doctrine is so called because

It fills the firmament with the two cloud-like (provisions). 21

As for their respective enlightened attributes, on the first level twelve hundred are instantly actualised, without temporal sequence, including the audience with a hundred buddhas. It says in the Great Bounteousness of the Buddhas (T. 44):

One hundred contemplations and a hundred buddhas are seen.

One hundred fields are roused and manifestly traversed.

One hundred sentient beings are refined,

And established within the door of the doctrine.

Emanating for one hundred aeons,

One hundred bodies are revealed,

And sons of the conquerors, one hundred in number,

Are also revealed.

Higher than that there are immeasurable (attributes)

Endowed with the power of supreme aspiration.

Similarly, on the second level there are twelve thousand attributes, on the third there are twelve hundred-thousand, on the fourth there are twelve billion, on the fifth there are one hundred and twenty billion, on the sixth there are twelve billion billion, on the seventh there are twelve hundred-thousand billion billion, on the eighth there are (attributes) equal to the number of atoms in one hundred-thousand chiliocosms, on the ninth there are (attributes) equal to the number of atoms in one million chiliocosms, and on the tenth there are (attributes) equal in number to (the atoms of) indescribable (chiliocosms). These include audiences with the buddhas, in which their doctrines are heard, their buddhafi elds are roused, their light is effulgent, their fi elds are traversed, sentient beings are matured, the gateways to the doctrines are opened, contemplations are entered with equipoise, instantaneous time-moments are revealed for many aeons, many aeons are revealed in an instantaneous time-moment, the vision of all limits of all past and future lives is penetrated, one's own body emanates as many buddha-bodies, and each of these is revealed to be surrounded by many retinues. All these emerge instantaneously without temporal sequence.

22

iv. The fourth concerns their attainment of the conclusive levels: Once these ten levels have been completed, the following levels are spontaneously perfected: the eleventh level, Universal Light, whereon many rays of light are diffused and one acts on behalf of sentient beings; the twelfth level, Unattached Lotus-Endowed, on which there is no attachment owing to the appearance of pristine cognition and great spirituality; and the

thirteenth level which is called Holder of Indestructible Reality, or the Great Mass of Rotating Syllables, or the Great Extraordinary level, or the Awareness-holder because the conclusive power over all things is spontaneously perfected. Now this thirteenth level, from the standpoint of the buddha-body of reality free from conceptual elaboration is called the Great Extraordinary level. Derived from that disposition, it is called the Great Mass of Rotating Syllables because it is the basis for the arising of the buddha-body of perfect rapture; it is called the Holder of Indestructible Reality because it itself is the guru of all; it is called the Awareness-holder because it is the essence of conclusive pristine cognition. Thus it is known (differently) according to the standpoints of its enlightened attributes.

These levels are without a hierarchical order as in the case of the rungs of a ladder, and are indeed the essence of the single buddha-nature, expressed (differently) from the standpoints of the three buddha-bodies. When these too are distinguished through their enlightened attributes, there are said to be many more (synonyms).

Then, there is the fourteenth level, which is known as Supreme Bliss because it has immeasurable bliss; the fifteenth level known as Contemplation, and the sixteenth level known as Guru of Pristine Cognition. In the genuine essence, these are explained to refer to a single level because there is nothing to be accomplished or clarified. They are one in the Great Perfection, the

23

indivisible Samantabhadra. It is said in the All-Accomplishing King (T. 828):

Together they are the all-accomplishing enlightened mind,
which...

This completes the exegesis of the overview.

Interlinear Commentary (430.6-435.4):

This has three parts, namely: the causal basis through which the status of an awareness-holder is accomplished; the provisional results accomplished thereby; and the conclusive result of one who has reached the goal.

1. The first has two sections, among which the former concerning the actual causal basis (comments on Ch. 12, 8):

The retention (gzungs) in the mind which is endowed with ('byor-ba'i) the abiding nature of excellent view concerning the characteristics of awareness (shes-pa'i mtshan-nyid) of the primordial buddhahood of all things by means of the four kinds of realisation, is the basis which brings the result to maturity ('bras-bu smin-bved rgyu) in the four kinds of awareness-
24
holder. And the retention which is endowed with the coalescence of the creation and perfection stages, characteristic of the entrance ('jug) into attainment once that has become known, is the condition (dang-rkven) which brings the result to maturity in the four kinds of awareness-holder; i.e. once the characteristics have been known, the result of the doctrine is acquired through attainment. Those who have experienced and become familiar with that basis and condition, and who transform them into a (-du gang gyur-pa) particularly potent force (nus-mthu-can) will

emerge as awareness-holders, from the status of maturation to that of spontaneous presence, just as a wholesome seed of causal basis when moistened by the water of condition, produces its results, which range from the shoots (of spring) to the fruits of autumn.

The latter, concerning their subsequent modes of attainment, (comments on Ch. 12, 9):

Such beings are known as (-du-grags) awareness-holders (rig-'dzin) either in the fields which give birth to the conqueror (rgyal-ba), or in the fields of (-'i zhing) the buddhas of the ten directions, and they obtain prophetic declarations to the effect that:

Thus, in such and such a world-system,
Such and such an awareness-holder will abide,
And at a specified time,
Will perform the deeds of the buddhas.

ii. The second part concerns the provisional results accomplished thereby. There are two sections, of which the former concerns the beings who accomplish (those provisional results. It comments on Ch. 12, 10):

Among those awareness-holders, there are some in the respective abodes of (-vi) the humans (mi-dang) of the four continents, of the gods (lha-dang) of the desire realm, and the Brahmā gods (tshangs-pa) and so forth. Although they assume ('dzin mod-kyang) the pure birth (skye-ba rnam-dag) in those respective forms, faultless and excellent in enlightened attributes, there is no

similarity of attributes or equality in fortune with the beings of those abodes and races, just as, for example, buddhas and bodhisattvas may both assume the bodies of different abodes and classes of living beings, although there is no similarity in their fortune or enlightened attributes.

26

Concerning the four ways in which birth is assumed, it says in the Ornament of the Sūtras of the Greater Vehicle (T. 4020):

Birth is held to be determined
Through the deeds of intelligent beings,
Through their aspiration and power for the sake of others,
And through contemplation and mastery.

Among these (four), one is born on the ordinary levels, either into higher or evil existences by dint of good and evil deeds. One is held to be born on the levels from the first to seventh through aspiration and emanation which is learned in skillful means, and one appears to be born on the three pure levels (eighth to tenth) in order to train each according to his or her needs by contemplation and mastery. Then, on the buddha-levels, one manifests a display of great mastery over the twelve deeds and so forth by means of spontaneously present emanations.

27

The sublime beings are without the characteristics of birth because they have traversed the rivers of birth, old age, sickness, and death. However, they do emanate through their spirituality, as is said in the Supreme Continuum of the Greater Vehicle (T. 4024):

The sublime one has uprooted and abandoned
The sufferings of death, sickness and old age.
He is without them because he is without birth,
Which is determined by deeds and conflicting emotions.
Because he perceives genuine reality as it is,
He has transcended birth and so forth.
However, as an embodiment of his compassion,
He displays birth, death, old age, and sickness.

And in the Verse Summation of the Transcendental Perfection of Discriminative Awareness (T. 13):

Though he is without old age, sickness and death,
He displays the transference of consciousness at death.

Now, the awareness-holder of maturation has put an end to birth determined by deeds. This is because, immediately after abandoning his body, he obtains the sublime levels and, in this way, identifies with the conclusive path of connection. From the feeling of warmth experienced on the path of connection there are no evil existences,²⁸ as is said in the following verse from the section on the feeling of warmth in the Ornament of Emergent Realisation (T. 3786):²⁹

Hesitation and the absence of (the eight) freedoms are ended.

So it is that one is born through aspiration in the pure fields for the sake of living beings.

The awareness-holders of power over the lifespan and the (great) seal perform acts of benefit through their births which are determined by contemplation. However, these births are without inherent characteristics because the body itself is transformed into the buddha-body of indestructible reality, so that there is no connection with decay.

The awareness-holder of spontaneous presence manifests the birth determined by mastery, in order to train each according to his or her needs, so that there is a diffusion of emanations.

The latter concerning the levels in which they are subsumed, (comments on Ch. 12, 11):

The first three kinds of awareness-holder are subsumed in the causal levels, and the last kind is subsumed in the resultant levels. Because all of these are irreversible, they are subsumed in extraordinary levels. Therefore the text says:

They are transformed (gnas-'gyur vin) into the extraordinary levels (khyad-par sa-la),

And the transcendental perfections (pha-rol phyin-pa) are totally completed (kun-tu rdzogs).

When these verses are explained according to their subsumption in the causal levels: those awareness-holders of the first three kinds, although they assume the births of humans, gods, and Brahmā gods, are transformed into the ten extraordinary levels. This is said because they have obtained in their minds the essence of the ten levels, i.e., the ten transcendental perfec-

tions are totally completed.

Then, when these verses are explained according to their subsumption in the resultant levels: those (awareness-holders) of spontaneous presence are transformed into the Holder of Indestructible Reality, which is the extraordinary thirteenth level. This is said because the ten transcendental perfections which are the causal basis for the attainment of the conclusive result are totally completed.

And when these verses are explained according to their subsumption in the extraordinary irreversible levels, it is said that all those four kinds of awareness-holder are transformed into extraordinary levels because it is certain that they abide as resultant awareness-holders; and that their sequence of attainment is such that the essences of their accomplishment in those levels, i.e., the causal and resultant transcendental perfections, are totally completed, as for example a fish that has been caught by an iron hook and brought forth to dry land.

iii. The third part (of the particular exegesis of the result attained through the feast-offerings), concerning the conclusive result (of one who has reached the goal, comments on Ch. 12, 12): The eleventh level, Universal Light, is the level on which living beings are trained through emanations and enlightened activities, manifested by conclusive skillful means (thabs). It says in a

30

sūtra:

It is called the level of Universal Light because there is a diffusion of light-rays which make those to be trained into worthy recipients.

The conclusive twelfth level, Unattached Lotus-Endowed, on which supreme discriminative awareness and skillful means (-dang shes-rab thabs-kyi mchog) are effortlessly coalesced manifests in and of itself as the Buddhafield of the Spontaneous Bounteous Array. It says in the Tantra Comprising the Supreme Path of the Means which Clearly Reveal All-Positive Pristine Cognition (NGB. Vol. 8):

On the Lotus-Endowed level,

The spontaneous pristine cognition

Of perfect rapture manifests in and of itself.

Then, there is (the thirteenth level), the field of the buddha-body of reality free from all conceptual elaborations, the original Samantabhadra, which is an enclosure of spontaneously present gemstones, supreme (mchog-gyur-pa'i) for its supreme discriminative awareness (shes-rab mchog-gi) because it is the basis which absorbs the two (form bodies) of perfect rapture and emanation in the expanse of nirvāna, the ground of the buddha-body of reality. It says (Secret Nucleus, Ch. 9, 35):

The real nature which is free from

The single and the multiple,

And is without extremes or middle,

Is not seen even by the buddhas.

The naturally present pristine cognition

Appears without abiding.

So it is that provisional and conclusive extraordinary levels (sa-yi khvad-par), namely, the ten (bcu) beginning with the Joyful, and the three (-dang gaum) beginning with Universal Light which respectively have (-pa'i) those (aforementioned) attributes are classified through their distinctions of cause and result (rgyu-'bras khvad-par); but they are naturally and spontaneously perfect (lhun-gvis rdzogs) without being sought. That is the conclusive (result) which is to be obtained.

Synopsis of the Great All-Gathering Mandala which Supports the Feast-Offerings (435.4-439.1):

The third subdivision (of the exegesis of this chapter -- see p. 954) is a synopsis of the great all-gathering mandala which supports the feast-offerings. It has three parts, namely: a teaching on the creation and perfection of Samantabhadra; the accomplishment of all mandalas thereby; and (its result) which is uncovered by the slightest defect.

1. The first of these also has two aspects, the former concerning the actual meditation. (It comments on Ch. 12, 13):

32
Preceded by the three modes of contemplation, one should meditate that (bsgom) on a lotus seat with cushions of sun and moon (nyi-zla) in the expanse (dbvings) of the (-i) exceedingly clear (dang-ba) mandala of the sky (mkha'-dkvil), there is the luminous celestial palace of pristine cognition, and within it the buddha-body of Samantabhadra, the king of pristine cognition

(ve-sheṣ ṛgval-po) who is in union with his consort (stangs-dpyal) and is thus equipoised in the posture of indestructible reality, and from whom many rays of light emanate.

Now, according to the particular teaching of the common vehicles, buddhas are held to have different causal bases, different times, and different mannerisms. According to the uncommon vehicles, although the emanational bodies which appear as such do so in the perception of those to be trained, when investigated, they are all subsumed in the uncreated buddha-body of reality and the unimpeded buddha-body of perfect rapture which resides in Akanistha. Therefore all (buddha-attributes) are accomplished through meditation on whichever natural buddha-body one wishes. In particular, by meditation on the single pair of the male & female consorts Samantabhadra, who represent the nature or action of all the buddhas, one comes to meditate without exception on all the mandalas of the conquerors in their entirety (rgval-ba'i dkwil-'khor thams-cad [kun] ma-lus-par-ni bsgom-par-'gyur). This is because all the mandalas of deities are gathered together in the buddha-body, speech and mind, and in the naturally pure expanse.

The latter aspect concerns the correct projection (of that meditation. It comments on Ch. 12, 14):

In order to abandon hesitation caused by wondering how the deities who are the object of such meditation could be accomplished because they are (the nature of) one's own mind, or by wondering whether the nature of the deity arrives extraneously and then grants accomplishment: from any of (gang-nas kyang) the

four times (dus-bzhi) such as the past and ten directions (phyogs-bcu) such as east, the perfect buddha (rdzogs-pa'i sangs-rgyas) will not be found (nyed mi-'gyur) as an independent characteristic apart from the mind, whether as one yet to be attained or as one which is emergent. The nature of mind (sems) as such (nyid), just as it abides, is the perfect buddha (rdzogs-pa'i sangs-rgyas-te). Indeed the buddha will not be found by the extraneous analyses of objects and time, whether one asks if such buddhas (emerge) from other directions of space or thinks that one who has refined the seed or cause of buddhahood, namely the present mind itself, will at some future time become a buddha, but is not now a buddha. ³³ Therefore, as it is taught, do not search (ma-'tshol-zhig) elsewhere (gzhan-du) for the buddha (sangs-rgyas) apart from the mind. The Transcendental Perfection of Discriminative Awareness in Eight Thousand Lines (T. 8) accordingly says:

A buddha-image made a prophetic declaration in the presence of the bodhisattva Sadaprarudita, and then vanished. At that time, there occurred to Sadaprarudita this following thought. "Whence", he thought, "did this tathāgata come, and where does he reside?". Then, Dharmodgata said, "Son of the enlightened family, this tathāgata did not come from anywhere and he does not reside anywhere. If you ask how this is the case, it is as follows: when, for example, the tathāgata appears during the dreams of certain persons and then vanishes, does he come from or reside anywhere?" Sadaprarudita replied, "He does not exist. There is nothing

but sleep." Dharmodgata said, "In the same way, (that buddha-image) is not separate from the mind. So it is that all things are naturally pure."

And also:

If the mind is realised, it is the buddha. Therefore one should well cultivate the perception that does not seek elsewhere for the buddha.

ii. The second part (of the synopsis of the great all-gathering mandala which supports the feast-offerings) concerns the accomplishment of all mandalas thereby. (It comments on Ch. 12, 15): One should be well united in (rab-sbyor) and meditate on the creation and perfection stages of the unique mandala (dkvil-'khor) that is Samantabhadra (kun-tu), so that (-bas) all (thams-cad) mandalas (dkvil-'khor) which emanate therefrom, without exception, will be accomplished ('grub-par 'gyur), just as when the sun and moon materialised all their light-rays without exception were formed.

iii. The third part concerns that (result) which is uncovered by the slightest defect. (It comments on Ch. 12, 16):

Having thus understood the point that there should be no acceptance or rejection with respect to all things because they are known to be the nature of mind, one acquires mastery over the perfection stage. Whether (na-'ang) the intricate rituals (cho-ga) of the creation stage are abundant or incomplete (lhag-gam ma-tshang), the flaws (skyon) of having degenerated in the aspects of the ritual are themselves pure and (nyid-dag-ste)

there is no defect (nyes-ba-med) in one's accomplishment. That
will not be obscured. ³⁴ It says in the Indestructible Reality
(NGB. Vol. 15):

The yogin who unites with pure reality
Is thoroughly pure in the ritual activities
Of the creation stage:
Whether (these rituals are) abundant or incomplete,
There is no defect.
The amazing great accomplishment will be achieved.

Although this is generally known in both the symbolic creation
stage and the non-symbolic perfection stage, ³⁵ the meditations
which occur when the mind of the yogin apprehends objects and
symbols do not transcend the symbolic; whereas any meditations
which occur when the mind is without apprehension of symbols are
non-symbolic. It says in the Flash of Splendour (T. 830):

Therefore the yogin,
Abiding in a non-symbolic disposition,
Should meditate on the yoga of symbols,
And should know there is no difference
Between the non-symbolic and the symbolic.
A yogin of such awareness
Indeed obtains my level,
And is also called a buddha.

And also:

As long as one apprehends the symbolic
One is a mundane being, endowed with symbols,
But when one is without objects and symbols,

One excellently transcends the mundane,
And one's perceptual range is the field of Samantabhadra.
There is no duality between
Conflicting emotions and pristine cognition.

Summary of the Chapter (439.1-439.3)

The summary of the chapter (comments on Ch. 12, 17):

Through (-pas) this (ces) meaningful expression (ched-du bñiod) uttered in the presence of the retinue, which is pure and self-manifest, all the tathāgatas were pleased (mnves-bar gyur-to) by (-gyis) the offerings arrayed as the cloud (sprin) of that display (rol-mo'i) of contemplation, an excellent self-manifesting ornament which radiates without obscuration throughout the ten directions.

This completes (-'o) the exegesis of the twelfth chapter (le'u-ste bcu-sñvis-pa) from the (las) supremely Secret Nucleus (gsang-ba'i sñying-po) or display of skillful means, Definitive with respect to the Real (de-kho-na-nvid nges-pa) apparitional feast-offerings, entitled the Attainment of the Feast-Offerings (tshogs-bgrub-pa'i), i.e., the provisions of merit and pristine cognition according to the path.

Chapter Thirteen

Nucleus of Most Secret Esoteric Instructions

Root-text:

Then when all mandalas of indestructible buddha-body, speech and mind of the tathâgatas throughout the ten directions and four times had been subsumed together, the Great Joyous One became equipoised in the contemplation which is a cloud-like array of the nucleus of the most secret commitment, i.e. that all things are spontaneously present in the primordial Great Perfection; and then he uttered this meaningful expression. [1]

There are those of no understanding,
And those of wrong understanding,
Those with partial understanding,
And those who have not (quite) understood genuine reality,
Those of discipline, intention, secrecy,
And the naturally secret truth. [2]

These are well illustrated by verses which depend
On syllables, conventional sounds and nominal compounds. [3]

The concealed and hidden points
Extracted from within these
Abide in the mind of the teacher,
Who is the indestructible reality. [4]

Through the mandala endowed with the mandala,
One should meditate on the mandala as a mandala. [5]

The mandala which emerges from the mandala
Is the mandala of buddha-mind,
Supreme among mandalas. [6]

The secret seminal point is the expanse
In which the mandalas (emerge). [7]

The elements (abide as) the female consorts
Of the enlightened families,
Who are discriminative awareness;
The great (components) are the real nature
Of the enlightened families;
The enlightened mind is the assembly
Of indestructible reality;
The sense-organs, objects, times, and awarenesses
(Abide as) the mandala of All-positive (Samantabhadra).
One should have regard for that superior Great Identity
By means of the five pristine cognitions of buddha-mind. [8]

Through the display of the pristine cognition of bliss
When the essential seminal points are united,
Offerings are made to joyous pristine cognition. [9]

Through that merit, free from corruption,
Manifesting in and of itself
As a magical display of pristine cognition,
There is derived the infinite mandala of the display
And the supreme (field). [10]

The secret seminal points are the expanse of real nature.
They are the actuality of all the buddhas. [11]

Manifestly perfect in the ten directions and four times,
The faces which identify body, speech, attributes,
Activities, and mind, without exception, are perceived.
This mastery is the genuine supreme nature.

For one who abides in the mandala, the mandala itself
Becomes spontaneously present as the mandala of perfection,
And, as its ornaments, one encounters all mandalas without
exception. [12]

Through the union of the perfect mandala
The mandalas of spirituality entirely emerge.
(One becomes) the lord who trains the mandalas
of space and time,
And by (deeds) which liberate the mandalas of magical
display,
One enacts the mandala without object or subject. [13]

In the mandala which is perfect in pristine cognition,
Through union with study, thought, and meditation,
The self-originated (pristine cognition),
Confronting all, is spontaneously present.
This is the supreme commitment
Not to be transgressed by all the buddhas. [14]

One who has aspired towards this
Is deemed by all the mandalas of buddhas
To be a closest son,
Who would perform the ritual service
Of all mandalas without exception
Throughout space and time, in all their aspects. [15]

This is the most secret result (gained)
By those who well abide in excellent refinement
Over aeons equal to the number of atoms in the fields,
And by those who perform the ritual service
Of all mandalas without exception. [16]

In the ten directions of the six world-systems,
All mandalas without exception of the conquerors
Of the past, present, and future
Have mastered this (path), and then
Spontaneously perfected the five buddha-bodies. [17]

All (yogins) who have emerged,
And those in the future, in their entirety,
Accomplish spontaneous presence through this (path). [18]

The result, definitive and most secret,
Has been transformed into the path. [19]

For the mandalas of the conquerors, without exception,
Apart from this, there is no secret definitive meaning.
Though sought, none is found by the conquerors. [20]

Among the great seals of all (buddhas),
This supreme one should be retained by those endowed
With the eyes of discriminative awareness,
Who have well refined it in study, thought, and meditation.
And it should be given to those worthy recipients,
Who are of noble disposition and steadfast,
Who donate their bodies and enjoyments. [21]

It should never be given to others.
If it has been given to those who are deluded
Because they are agitated,
One's life will come to an untimely end,
And then one will be roasted, parched,
And one will remain so for a long time. [22]

-- Such was the meaningful expression which the tathâgata himself
uttered to the tathâgata himself. This completes the thirteenth
chapter from the Secret Nucleus Definitive with respect to the
Real, entitled [the Nucleus of] Most Secret Esoteric
Instructions. [23]

Commentary (439.3-483.4):

The second part (of the teaching on the creation and perfection stages of the path-- see p. 889) concerns the perfection stage which penetrates the essential meaning. It has three sections, namely: the background motivation; an exegesis of the meaning of its words; and a summary of the chapter.

The first (comments on Ch. 13, 1):

Once the creation stage of the path had been revealed, then (de-nag) in order to reveal the perfection stage, when all mandalas of indestructible buddha-body, speech and mind of (sku-dang gsung-dang thugs rdo-rie'i dkvil-'khor thams-cad) all the tathâgatas throughout the ten directions and four times (phvogs-bcu dug-bzhi'i de-bzhin gshegs-pa) had been subsumed together (gcig-tu 'dus-nag), they were displayed by the Great Joyous One (dgves-pa chen-pos) of unsurpassed pristine cognition, Samantabhadra the teacher in whom they abide. He became equipoised in the contemplation which, for the sake of supremely fortunate beings, is a (-i ting-nge-'dzin-la snyoms-par-zhugs) cloud-like (sprin) array (bkod-pa) of the nucleus (snying-po'i) or real nature, and which is the commitment (dam-tshig) most secret (shin-tu gsang-ba'i) to unworthy recipients, i.e., the commitment that all things (chos thams-cad) of phenomenal existence, samsâra and nirvâna, are spontaneously present in the primordial Great Perfection (ve-nag rdzogs-pa chen-por lhun-gyis grub-pa'i). And then he uttered this meaningful expression (nas ched-du briod-pa 'di briod-do) concerning the genuine esoteric instructions.

Exegesis of the Meaning of the Words (440.1-483.1)

The second part includes both a general teaching on how the secret truth abides in the mind of the master of indestructible reality (vajracarya), and a detailed exegesis of the meaning of the natural Great Perfection.

General Teaching on how the Secret Truth Abides in the Mind of the Master of Indestructible Reality (440.1-448.3)

This has three subdivisions, of which (the first) concerns the recognition of that truth. (It comments on Ch. 13, 2):

In general one should depend on the individual masters who reveal the conclusive goals of the different vehicles; and in particular one should meet a guru, pleasing him with one's desire for the oral instructions because the hidden and concealed points contained within the text or verses of the tantras & literary transmissions belonging to the conclusive truth of the natural Great Perfection abide in the mind of the guru.¹

Now, the inconceivable, indescribable buddhafi elds and the domains of sentient beings are not definite because they cannot be enumerated. However, in this Auspicious Aeon and in this world-system of Patient Endurance, the lamp of the buddhas has been arrayed.² When the modes of their vehicles -- lesser, supreme, and erroneous -- and their textual traditions are provisionally subsumed, they fall into eight categories. There are firstly those of no understanding (ma-rtogs-pa) of the genuine truth: These are ordinary beings who do not entertain the

philosophical systems, i.e. those who follow the basic vehicles of gods and humans through which progress towards happiness is attained because they strive after a (goal) of simple excellence. Their purpose is to be propelled into (birth) among the gods and humans of the desire realm through the practice of the ten virtues, and to attain the higher realms of formless concentration. There is a passage in the Madhyamaka teachings, which begins:³

The correct view for a mundane being...

There are some who hold (those of no understanding) to include both the apathetic and the materialists but that would be an improper temporal sequence of (progression), which does not apply in the classification of the vehicles. Indeed, in the previous section on the five vehicles, those of no understanding have been described as belonging to the vehicle of gods and humans. This is called the basic vehicle because it subsumes all those who hanker for the vehicles. The apathetic and the materialists are unconnected with it however because they are categories of the philosophical extremists who have erroneous understanding.⁴

Then, there are those of wrong understanding (-dang log-par rtogs), divorced from the genuine truth, who contrive the extremist philosophies. Although these have inconceivable categories, calculated according to the enumeration of their wrong views, when subsumed they are known as the five schools of philosophical extremists (tirthikas). These comprise four schools which adopt an eternalist view and one which adopts a nihilist view.

The four eternalist schools are the Nyayâyika (rig-da-can) which holds Iṣvara to be eternal, the Vaisnava which holds Viṣnu to be eternal, the Sâmkhya which holds the soul (purusa) to be eternal, and the Vaiṣesika which holds atomic particles to be eternal. These are the followers of the sage Kaplia, Kanâda, Akṣapâda, and Ulûka. Those who hold a nihilist view are the hedonists, or else they are called Digambaras, or Bârhaspatyas. All of them uphold
5
egotism.

The eternalistic views uphold the independent existence of the self or soul (purusa) alone, asserting that its nature empowers and pervades the elements, while abiding in the hearts of all sentient beings. They also hold that there are eternal deities -- Iṣvara, Viṣnu, and so forth-- who cast one into exalted realms or into evil existences. The nihilists however hold that the self comes into being having emerged suddenly within the mother's womb, and that at the time of death, the continuity of the self is interrupted. Thus they are nihilistic with respect both to the past and the future. Because they hold that there are no past or future lives, and that there is neither liberation nor omniscience, they are called nihilistic extremists or materialists. When these are subsumed together they are gathered into the two categories of the eternalists and the nihilists.

Then, there are those with partial understanding (phyogs-rtogs) of the genuine reality, who comprise both the pious attendants and the self-centred buddhas. This is because they respectively understand one part and one and a half parts of what is implied
6
by selflessness, and because they are liberated from samsâra.

The pious attendants, when classified, comprise four basic sects (of the Vinaya), which are then subdivided into eighteen.⁷ Among them, the Mûlasarvâstivâda sect had seven subdivisions, namely, the Kâśyapîya, Mahîśâsaka, Dharmagupta, Bahurûtiya, Tâmrasiya, Vibhâjyavâdin, and the basic subdivision or Sarvâstivâdin. These are the lineages derived from the students of Râhulabhadra, who was the son of the Transcendent Lord (Śâkyamuni), and who belonged to the class of Ksatriyas. They spoke in Sanskrit, and their robes had between twenty-five and twenty-nine fringes, with the edge-symbol of the the night-lotus (utpala), the day-lotus (padma), and the gemstone (ratna).⁸

The Mahâsamghika sect had five subdivisions, namely, the Pûrvaśâila, Haimavata, Prajñâptivâdin, Lokottaravâdin, and the basic subdivision (Uttaraśâila). These were the lineages derived from the students of the elder Mahâkâśyapa who belonged to the class of Brahmins. They spoke in the Prakrit language and their robes had between twenty-three and twenty-nine fringes with the edge-symbols of the svâstika and the glorious heart-orb (hrivatsa).⁹

The Sthavira sect had three subdivisions, namely, the Jetavanîya, Abhayagirivâdin, and Mahâvihâravâdin. These are the lineages derived from the students of the sublime renunciate Mahâkatyâyana, who belonged to the bamboo-craftsman caste (of Vaiśyas). They spoke in the Apabhramśa language, and their robes had between twenty-one and twenty-nine fringes with the edge-symbol of the conch shell.¹⁰

The Sammitiya sect had three subdivisions, namely, the Kaurukullika, Avantaka, and Vatsiputriya. These were the lineages derived from the students of the sublime renunciate Upâli, who belonged to the barber-caste (of Sûdras). They spoke in the Paisâcika language and their robes had the same number of fringes as those of the Sthaviras.

11

All these (pious attendants) actualise their result by realising that the selfhood of the individual comprises an ego and components which are apprehend as an ego, and that, apart from them, it does not exist.

12

The self-centred buddhas, when classified, are of three types, namely, those who are great in provisions and conduct, those who are small (in provisions and conduct), and those who resemble a rhinoceros (in their solitary approach). Their view encompasses one and a half (parts of what is implied by selflessness) because they understand the selflessness of the individual and they realise that external objects are without independent existence. To accomplish enlightenment for themselves in their final birth, without actually referring to a guru, they realise that the reality of dependent origination arises of its own accord, and then they are liberated. They teach a symbolic doctrine, which is not divulged through speech.

13

14

Furthermore, there are those who have not quite understood (ma-rtogs) the genuine reality (yang-dag-nyid) or truth of the abiding nature absolutely or without a residue (of misunderstanding). These are the adherents of the causal vehicles of

dialectics, who hold that sentient beings, by acquiring the two provisions, which are the causal basis, accomplish their desired result of buddhahood over many countless aeons. When classified, they comprise both the adherents of the Madhyamaka and of the Mind Only schools.¹⁵

Among the latter there are some who hold that the phenomena of the external containing world are the mind. This mind then may have both veridical and false status because it is held to be either veridical or false in relation to the ultimate pristine cognition or intrinsic awareness, where there is no subject-object dichotomy.¹⁶ It says in the Ascetic Discipline of Avalokiteśvara according to the Madhyamaka (dbu-ma spyan-ras-gzigs-kvi brtul-zhugs):

Having admitted that the objects which diversely appear are one's own mind, one should refute the natural dichotomy through which that mind also propounds as true or false the pristine cognition of particularising intrinsic awareness, where there is ultimately no duality of subject and object.

There are also two schools of Madhyamaka, among which the Svântantrikas (who apply independent reasoning) hold that these diverse appearances are relative, in the manner of a magical display, and that ultimately they are of a sky-like non-existing nature. The adherents of Prâsangika Madhyamaka hold that at all times these (appearances) are without independent existence. They may appear corresponding to the eight similes of apparition, but they are non-existent in any respect and beyond the stains of the four extremes because they are free from all extremes of

conceptual elaboration. Having determined all things according to the view or reality which is empty of the two kinds of selfhood, the result is held to be achieved after one has forsaken the non-virtuous path and attained the virtuous one.

When (these schools) are appraised from the perspective of the higher vehicles, although they hold that all phenomena are realised to be without self and to be the same in nature, they do not perceive that all things are identical in primordial buddhahood. Nor do they realise that this nature requires neither renunciation nor acceptance because conflicting deeds themselves arise as pristine cognition. Furthermore, (the adherents of the causal vehicles) are meagre in their skillful means, and they accomplish their result with difficulty and toil over a long period of time. For all these reasons, they are said not to understand the genuine reality.

There are some who confuse these opinions, saying that there is no distinction of discriminative awareness, but that (the resultant vehicles) are superior in skillful means. However, the discriminative awareness established through skillful means by one who has adopted the superior skillful means (of the resultant vehicles) and is consequently more sublime is also superior to (the discriminative awareness of the causal vehicles). In addition, where in the vehicle of the transcendental perfection of discriminative awareness is it held that all things abide in the mandala, or that this very mind of the present moment attains buddhahood without changing so much as a hair? Therefore, (the resultant vehicles) are superior in both skillful means and

discriminative awareness. It says in the Lamp of the Three Modes
20
(T. 3707):

Though they are identical in purpose,
The vehicle of the mantras is superior;
For it is unobscured and endowed with many means,
It is without difficulty
And is referred to by those of highest acumen.

So it is explained that in the way of transcendental perfection
there is an aspect of deluded obscuration.

Moreover, it also says in the Definitive Order of the Three
21
Vehicles (T. 3812):

The vehicle pure in its visualisation,
Its power of assistance, and level of conduct,
To those who are endowed with intelligence
Is well known to be the greatest.

And in the Lasso of Skillful Means (T. 835):

The most marvellous and great way of secret mantras
Is the shortest among the paths.
It is the most unerring and genuine of skillful means,
And in terms of discriminative awareness,
It is the extraordinary discriminative awareness.

In addition, there are those who perform acts of discipline
('dul-ba) with regard to the misconduct of body, speech and
mind, and who emphasise cleanliness and austerities, namely, the
adherents of the Kriyâtantras and the Caryâtantras.

When (these tantras) are classified, there are three categories, i.e., those in which the deity is attained dependent simply upon the cultivation of enlightened mind, those in which the deity is attained dependent simply on austerities and purificatory fasting, and those in which the deity is attained dependent simply on the permissory blessing which confers awareness.²²

These rites of attainment are also commenced and concluded with reference to the auspicious planets, stars and temporal conjunctions.²³

There are also those of intention (dgongs-pa) who adhere to the Yogatantras. The Tibetan term dgongs-pa, derived from the Sanskrit abhiprāya, means the "intention of mind". The deity is attained chiefly through the contemplation of the one-pointed mind.²⁴ There is, by the way, no tradition in which the deity may be attained without having received empowerment.

There are those which clearly reveal the **secrecy** (gsang-ba-dang) of the buddha-body, speech, and mind, namely the Mahāyogatantras. These are secret because they should not be revealed in the lower vehicles where beings have an intelligence which actually clings to objects. When classified, they comprise the Father Tantras which chiefly reveal the creation stage, the Mother Tantras which chiefly reveal the perfection stage, and the Non-dual Tantras²⁵ which chiefly reveal the coalescence (of the two stages).

And then there is the marvelous naturally secret truth (rang-bzhin gsang-ba'i don) which is primordial and spontaneously present. This is the great Magical Net, where mind and pristine cognition are revealed to be self-manifest in accordance with the Great Perfection. It is secret because it is superior in its essence, natural expression, and skillful means, which are not within the perceptual range of all beings. When classified, it consists of the Great Perfection of the coalescence of creation and perfection stages, which reveals mind and pristine cognition to be without duality; the Great Perfection of the primordial liberation according to the Mental and Spatial (Classes) which chiefly reveal the mind; and the Great Perfection of the reality of inner radiance, which chiefly reveals pristine cognition. So it is that the different vehicles comprise the truth which is to be understood.

The second subdivision (of the general teaching-- see p. 988) reveals the expanse in which this truth is present. (It comments on Ch. 13, 3):

The meanings assumed by these vehicles are preserved in the texts which form their verbal expression, and the texts are also comprised of minute syllables (yi-ge). The latter take shape as nouns which comprise conventional (btags) vocalic and consonantal sounds (ggra), such as the noun a-ma (=mother) which combines the vowel a and the consonant ma. Then slokas are well composed, the corpus of the different treatises or tantras is given form, and the respective meanings which are to be expressed through the different texts are well illustrated (rab-tu mtshon-te) by verses

which depend on (-la-brten-pa'i tshig-gis) sentences formed of all the many nominal (ming) compounds (tshogs).

iii. The third subdivision (of the general teaching) concerns the one who reveals this truth without error. (It comments on Ch. 13, 4):

Distinctive modes of truth abide within these (khong) different texts and their verses. In particular, there are concealed (gab) truths contained within the different verses of this natural Tantra of the Secret Nucleus which are naturally hard to understand, including the view that all things are primordial buddhahood; and there are those which are hidden (gbas) by means of symbolic language and so forth because the profound secrets, which it is improper to proclaim within range of ordinary beings, are not to be comprehended by those who lack good fortune. These are naturally exemplified by the following verse, (Ch. 12, 7):²⁷

By the seal of the "vowels" and "consonants"...

Such points (don), manifestly extracted from ('byin-pa) the texts, abide in the mind of (-'i thugs-la gnag) the teacher (ston-pa) who is the master of indestructible reality (rdo-rie), and in whom the meaning of the tantra is incontrovertible. Thus, the teacher resembles an only child.

There are some who say that these (profundities) are extracted in Akanistha by the Teacher Samantabhadra, and extracted in ordinary realms by the masters of indestructible reality. Although this seems in order, there is in fact no connection. The one who

extracts the meaning from within this tantra is shown to be different from the teacher of the tantra, so how could Samantabhadra be the expositor and audience, and (at the same time) extract the meaning? That is indeed a misunderstanding.

28

Detailed Exegesis of the Meaning of the Natural Great Perfection

(448.3-483.1)

The latter section of the (exegesis-- see p. 988) is a detailed exegesis of the meaning of the natural Great Perfection. It has three subdivisions, namely: a teaching on the actual profound meaning of the nucleus; its superiority over other (teachings); and a teaching on the worthy recipients to whom it should be given.

The Actual Profound Meaning of the Nucleus (448.3-477.6)

This also has three parts, namely, a brief teaching, an extensive exegesis, and a synopsis. The first (448.4-449.6) is also three-fold, and its first section concerns the creation stage of skillful means. (It comments on Ch. 13, 5):

All things of samsâra and nirvâna subsumed in the components, sensory bases and activity fields attain buddhahood primordially in the mandalas of buddha-body, speech, and mind; and they are naturally pure. Apart from that, they do not subsequently attain buddhahood through the path, having previously not attained buddhahood. Abiding primordially in that way, all living beings partake of the nature which is effortlessly endowed with (ldan-pa'i) the mandala (dkvil-'khor) of the spontaneous ground. When

..

one has realised it as such, through the mandala (dkvil-'khor-gyis) of contemplation, one should visualise and meditate (bsgom) on the (la-ni) primordially present mandala (dkvil-'khor), as a mandala (dkvil-'khor) which is known to be present.

Therefore, although the nature of all things is such, there is no advantage in it merely being so. For it is the ground in which they are present as such, and this is yet to be attained through the path, just as gold and silver are present in gold and silver ore, but invisible if they are not smelted and refined; and just as a white conch-shell may be present, but appear yellow to one with phlegmatic eye-disease until (the disease) has been treated, so that it is essential to treat the phlegmatic disease.

The second, concerning the perfection stage of discriminative awareness, (comments on Ch. 13, 6):

The mandala (dkvil-'khor) of bliss, radiance, and non-conceptualisation is that which emerges from the mandala (dkvil-'khor-las byung-ba) where the appearance of accumulated ideas and conflicting emotions is retained by skillful means. Because it is naturally pure right where it is, without being renounced, it is called the mandala of buddha-mind (thugs-kvi dktivl-'khor), supreme among (mchog) all mandalas (dkvil-'khor).

iii. The third, concerning the stage of inner radiance where these are without duality, (comments on Ch. 13, 7):

Within the doctrinal wheel of the heart-centre and so forth, there is the amazing secret seminal point (gsang-ba'i thig-le) which abides as the primordial and spontaneous nature of buddha-

body and pristine cognition. When it is experientially cultivated through the conditions or esoteric instructions of the guru, it is the expanse in which (dbyings) all the mandalas (dkvil-'khor) of the inexhaustible wheels of adornment, the buddha-body, speech, and mind, emerge.

This aspect appears to have been misunderstood by the ordinary scholars of the Magical Net of the past because in this tantra it is extremely hidden and concealed.

31

Secondly, there is the extensive exegesis (449.6-477.3), which is also threefold: the outer creation stage, the inner perfection stage, and the secret stage of inner radiance.

Outer Creation Stage (450.1-453.1):

This (comments on Ch. 13, 8):

Concerning the determination (of the creation stage) by the view: The images which appear as the five external elements ('byung-ba) abide as the female consorts (yum) or display of (-kvi) reality -- the original enlightened families (rigs) without inherent existence. These are the reality, apparent but not existent, the naturally pure abiding nature, Prajñāpāramitā or the Mother-Perfection of Discriminative Awareness (shes-rab), who gives visible form to emptiness. This means that the appearances of reality abide indivisibly in the emptiness of reality. It says accordingly in the Supreme Tantra of Clear Expression (T. 369): Through the nature of diverse phenomena,

32

Emptiness is expressed as form.

And in the Heart Sūtra of Discriminative Awareness (T. 21):

Emptiness is form.

The five components, indicated by the term **great** (chen-po) elements, are the real nature (de-bzhin-nyid) of the five male consorts of the enlightened families (rigs-kvi), who are natural expressions of the emptiness of form, similar to a reflected image on a mirror. Moreover, the actual elements are said to be naturally subsumed within the inner components as solidity, liquidity, warmth, lightness & mobility, and space, while the corresponding external components comprise their so-called transformations or elemental forms. The inner aspects outwardly appear in the manner of an image and a reflection on a mirror. Thus, the apparent reality of the five components is empty of inherent existence, and is therefore a reality which appears without having independent existence. As (the same text) continues:

Form is emptiness.

34

And as is said in the Madhyamaka:

Whatever the nature of form may be,

It is a description of emptiness.

The awareness or enlightened mind (byang-chub sems-ni) is a nature without ground or basis, and it primordially does not conceive of conceptual objects, i.e., it is the assembly (tshogs) of the male & female consorts Samantabhadra, who are the nature of indestructible reality (rdo-rie'i). This indescribable expanse of awareness where radiance and emptiness are without duality is

called the assembly of the male & female consorts Samantabhadra because it is the source of all the innumerable pristine cognitions.

The sense-organs (dbang-po) such as the eyes, the sense-objects (yul) such as form, the times (dus) including the past, and the awarenesses (rig-pa-rnams) including the consciousness of the eyes are pure respectively as the male spiritual warriors, the female spiritual warriors, and the gatekeepers; and they primordially abide as the mandala (dkvil-'khor) of reality, which is that of (-'i) (Samantabhadra), without proof or clarification. This means that their nature is indeed positive (bzang-po) because they appear but are in all (kun-tu) respects without inherent existence, and that the essence of their diverse phenomena is of a single savour in emptiness. To understand phenomena in this manner is the (genuine) view. As is said in the Madhyamaka:

A single thing has the essential nature of all things.
Whoever sees the real nature of one single thing
Perceives the real nature of all things.

And in the Intermediate Mother (T. 9):

If one thing is known, one is said to be knowledgeable with respect to all forms; for these are forms of quiescent reality.

Secondly, concerning the experiential cultivation (of this view) through meditation:

Once it is known that all things of phenomenal existence are from this very moment present in the mandala of Samantabhadra, without inherent existence, one should meditate on that (-la) disposition. Beginners of little intellectual ability should enter into a non-referential meditative equipoise through the sequence of meditation in which the creation stage is clear. On the other hand, those who have either experienced the space (of reality) or possess supreme intelligence should regard the nature of any appearances and thoughts that arise as primordial emptiness and without basis; or else they should become equipoised in the disposition of that creation stage, (in which appearances) are without independent existence but like a reflected image. At that time, the essential nature is present, free from intellectual and conceptual elaborations, without the subjective apprehension of objects or signs. This is the superior (lhag-pa-yi) profound intention of the male & female consorts Samantabhadra, the Great Identity (bdag-nvid chen-po). One should have regard for (lta-zhing) and completely assume the disposition of that reality by means of the five pristine cognitions of buddha-mind (ye-sheg lngas), beginning with the mirror-like one.

Now, the mirror-like pristine cognition refers to the unimpeded appearance of the forms of external objects. The pristine cognition of reality's expanse refers to the emptiness which is their essence. The pristine cognition of sameness refers to the

absence of grasping in that respect. The pristine cognition of discernment refers to the particular appearances of form, sound and so forth; and the pristine cognition of accomplishment refers to liberation from the conflicting emotions of refutation, proof, and so forth. These five pristine cognitions thus refer to the five poisons, which through mere recognition at the time of their arising, are inherently pure without being renounced.

37

Moreover, when the mind enters into meditative equipoise in a one-pointed manner, the pristine cognition of reality's expanse refers to the essence or emptiness. The mirror-like pristine cognition is the unimpeded radiance and clarity of awareness. The pristine cognition of sameness is the absence of dualistic apprehension. The pristine cognition of discernment is the unimpeded appearance of objects; and the pristine cognition of accomplishment is liberation from the subject-object dichotomy.

At this juncture, it is revealed that one should enter into meditative equipoise in the disposition of that reality which accords with the creation stage, but it is not the creation stage itself which is being described. There are therefore some who have been mistaken and have not seen so much as a part of these attributes which are present within the mandala of the deities according to this creation stage.

38

..

Inner Perfection Stage (453.1-463.4):

The second is the inner perfection stage, which includes an overview and an interlinear commentary. The former (453.2-462.5) comprises both the path of skillful means (thabs-lam) and the path of liberation (grol-lam). As to the former, it says in the Oceanic Magical Net (NGB. Vol. 15):

There are the upper and lower doors (of the body)
Which, transformed through particular vital energies,
Bring forth pristine cognition.
These are the very skillful means
Which both eject and draw in (vital energy):
The "cow of space" is milked
By the motion of the vital energy of fire
In the three "life-giving trees" with their three centres,
And this is known as the aspect (of skillful means)
Associated with the upper (door).
By developing the fivefold sequence of "enlightened mind"
Which, in three steps, is drawn in,
The nature in which the sixteen levels are obtained
Becomes co-emergent, so that the path of release
Is effected through control (of the seminal fluid).

Accordingly, (the path of skillful means) has three parts-- the training in the vital energy associated with the upper door (of the body), the training in the seminal point or fluid associated with the lower door, and the skillful means of meditation on the Candâli, which assists these.

The first also has two sections, of which the former concerns the nature (of the vital energy associated with the upper door) which is to be known: Within the body of indestructible reality there are three main energy channels, namely the white Rasanâ on the right, the red Lalanâ on the left, and the dark-blue Avadhûti in the centre. The three media (of body, speech, and mind) and the three poisons are supported by those three "life-giving trees"; and the three buddha-bodies are supported by them through the purification of skillful means and discriminative awareness in coalescence. The three centres from which those (channels) diverge are the centre of supreme bliss (mahâsukhacakra) in the crown, the centre of perfect rapture (sambhogacakra) in the throat, and the centre of the doctrine (dharmacakra) in the heart. This refers to the meditation on the seed of pristine cognition and the meditation of vital energy. When, in addition to that, one meditates on the Candâli (the channels) diverge at four (centres) including the centre of emanation (nirmânacakra) in the navel. The petals (of those four centres) respectively number thirty-two, sixteen, eight, and sixty-four. On further analysis, these diverge into seventy-two thousand channels of pristine cognition, as is said in the Hevaira Tantra (T. 417-⁴¹8):

The energy channels are correctly explained

To number seventy-two thousand.

Within these energy channels, for twenty-four hours, day and night, the vital energies of pristine cognition move covertly, corresponding to them in number; but because that motion is

unclear, its extraordinary enlightened attributes are not manifested. When, however, vital energy is controlled, the vital energy of conflicting emotions turns into and moves as the vital energy of pristine cognition so that enlightened attributes arise within the yogin.

In general, there are twenty-one thousand six hundred coarse vital energies which move by day and night. These, inasmuch as they move coarsely, are the vital energies of deeds or conflicting emotions. But when they are controlled, the radiant, non-conceptual pristine cognition is generated, and so they become the vital energies of pristine cognition. ⁴²

Now (vital energy) is of three types-- the upward moving vital energy of speech (upadâna), the downward moving vital energy of excretion (apadâna), and the balanced vital energy of digestion (samastha), which are so called because they respectively move upwards, downwards, and in between, within the body, and because they respectively move outwards, penetrate inwards, and balance those two. Moreover, those vital energies are called the male vital energy when they move through the right nostril, the female vital energy when they move through the left nostril, and the ⁴³ neuter vital energy when they move (through both) equally.

As for the five colours of the vital energies: The vital energy of earth is yellow, the vital energy of water is white, the vital energy of fire is red, the vital energy of air is green, and the vital energy of space, which is great pristine cognition, is blue.

At the time when these vital energies (of the elements) are supported in the four directions and centre of the heart-centre, and penetrate into the central channel, they are transformed into the vital energy of pristine cognition, in such a way that the glow of the five energies arises as smoke, mirage and the diverse apparitional forms of emptiness.⁴⁴

The latter section concerns the experiential cultivation (of this vital energy associated with the upper door) once it has been known. It has three aspects of which the first concerns the practical steps: Having induced the two ends of the Rasanâ and the Lalanâ from the space between the eyebrows into the right and left nostrils respectively, the vital energy is then slowly expelled, so that obscurations are cleansed, and all appearances are visualised as the mandala of pristine cognition. Through inhalation, the vital energy of pristine cognition is absorbed therefrom, and proceeds downwards, entering the central channel from the (secret centre) covered with pubic hair (sbu-na-gu'i mtshams), where the (lower) ends of those two (channels) meet. Thereby one meditates and momentarily apprehends that the four centres and their petals are filled with pristine cognition.

When one has become somewhat stable in this practice, there follows (the second aspect of experiential cultivation) namely, the meditation according to the actual esoteric instructions, which is to be gradually refined and experienced, and then applied in an immediate manner. It has four parts, namely: the esoteric instructions of Samantabhadra which entail meditation on the heart-centre; the esoteric instructions of Samantabhadra

which entail meditation on the navel-centre; the esoteric instructions of their pure union which entail meditation on the throat-centre; and the esoteric instructions of their great enveloping pervasion which entail meditation on the crown centre.

As to the first of these: The mind is refined into the causal basis of the five male consorts, an essence of five seminal points, the size of mustard seeds, which gather together the five pure-essences within the precious casket of the doctrinal centre (dharmacakra) in the heart. Then, the mind is consequently refined into five globes of light, and, consequent on that, into the buddha-bodies of the five enlightened families. One should know that the procedure is similar for (the meditations on) the navel, throat, and crown centres.

45

Through this meditation, (there follows the third aspect of the experiential cultivation, the result): One will provisionally accomplish supernormal cognitive powers, contemplation, and miraculous abilities et cetera; and one will obtain the conclusive supreme buddha-level.

The second part (of the path of skillful means) is the training of the seminal fluid or point associated with the lower door (of the female partner's body). It has two sections of which the former concerns the nature (of this practice) which is to be known: It says in the Tantra of the Hidden Point of the Moon (T. 477):

46

When there is no desire, there is no enlightenment.

And in the Extensive Magical Net (T. 834):

When there is unerring understanding of the characteristics
Of specific and general teachings on conflicting emotion,
One converts them into the path of purification.
The accomplishments of buddha-body, speech and mind
Are nothing but this conversion.
Grasping the energy of magical display,
One proceeds to skillful means,
And is united in discriminative awareness
Where signs do not abide.

And in the Clarifying Lamp (T. 1785):

For the sake of those persons who have desire,
Vajrasattva activated this (path).

With respect to this (training in the seminal point associated
with the lower door) there is both classification and the
perfection of the levels and paths through it.

The former refers to (the classification of) the four delights--
delight, supreme delight, coemergent delight, and absence of
delight-- and to their enumeration of sixteen which is made when
each of these is combined with the other three, beginning with
the delight of delight.
47

These delights also are of three types, among which (the first)
concerns the four delights in relation to renunciation: Here,
delight occurs when the conceptions of the male consort have been
approximately renounced through the coemergent pristine cognition
of meditative absorption; supreme delight occurs when they have

all been renounced; absence of delight occurs when those of the female consort have been approximately renounced; and coemergent delight occurs when these have all been renounced. The second concerns the four delights in relation to presence: Here delight occurs when bliss is partially generated in the body of the male consort; supreme delight occurs when that is pervasively generated; absence of delight occurs when (bliss) is partially generated in the female consort; and coemergent delight occurs when that is pervasively generated. The third concerns the four delights in relation to their order (in the body): Here, delight occurs in the crown centre; supreme delight in the throat centre, absence of delight in the heart-centre, and co-emergent delight in the secret centre.

The latter aspect concerns the perfection of the levels and paths through these (delights). It says in the Sequence of Indestructible Activity (P. 4720):

48

The sixteen moments of pristine cognition
Which are present (within the body)
Are similarly classified according to the four centres,
From the paths of provision, connection, the first level and so on,
To the conclusive buddha-level itself.
Among these, the intermediate (aspect) of the second (delight)
Corresponds to the Joyful level, and so forth.
These (delights) are explained to be perfect
Because they are identical to the perfections
And the characteristics of the levels.

Therefore, when the momentum of the four delights is supported from above, i.e. from the crown-centre to the vajra (penis), they are classified into sixteen, which represent the perfection of the causal levels. Among them, the four delights of delight indicate the path of provisions, the delight of supreme delight indicates the path of connection, the supreme delight (of supreme delight) indicates the first level, the absence of delight (of supreme delight) indicates the second level, and the coemergent delight (of supreme delight) indicates the Illuminator. The delight of the absence of delight indicates the fourth level, the supreme delight of that indicates the fifth level, the absence of delight of that indicates the sixth level, and the coemergent delight of that indicates the seventh level. Then, the delight of the coemergent delight indicates the eighth level, the supreme delight of that indicates the ninth level, the absence of delight of that indicates the tenth level, and the coemergent delight of that indicates the level of Universal Light.⁴⁹ At that time, the two impurities are relinquished within, and the two pure-essences (sperm) emerge, in the manner of dew, on the tip of the vajra (penis).

Similarly, by the perfection of the sixteen delights in the female consort, the two impurities are relinquished and the two pure-essences come forth on to the tip of the lotus (vagina), whereupon the four white and red seminal points of the male and female consorts (sperm & ovum) intermingle. At that time, the male consort savours radiant bliss, and the female consort savours non-conceptual emptiness; and by the fusion of these two,

there arises the intention where bliss and emptiness are coalesced and which radiates, unobscured by the two extremes. In this way, the level of Universal Light is the essence of the empowerment of discriminating pristine cognition.

50

At this time, the ten transcendental perfections are also perfected: Liberality is the emission of "enlightened mind" (seminal fluid) throughout the network of energy channels; moral discipline is present because the seminal fluid is controlled without being secreted; patience is present because one is not frightened by the skillful means of the rites of sexual union; perseverance is present because one strives for the skillful means of bliss; concentration is present because the mind is one-pointed in the disposition of that (bliss); discriminative awareness is present because the aggregates of thought arise as the mandala of bliss; skillful means is present because, even after such practices, one is uncovered by conflicting emotions; power is present because conceptualising thoughts are amassed together at once; aspiration is present because one refers to the result; and the transcendental perfection of pristine cognition is present because one tastes the coemergent pristine cognition.

51

It is also said in the Extensive Magical Net (T. 834):

The causes and results of the transcendental perfections are perfected.

As for the genuine empowerment of supreme bliss: the seminal point in which those solar and lunar (fluids) are intermingled, and through which bliss and emptiness are savoured in that manner is induced upwards (through the body) by vital energy, and one

becomes absorbed in the disposition of reality.

Moreover, the four delights are also classified when this momentum (of the seminal fluids) is supported from below: Here they number sixteen, beginning with the coemergent delight, and they respectively indicate the levels and paths associated with the way of secret mantras. The four delights of coemergent delight indicate the path of provisions. The coemergent delight of the absence of delight indicates the path of connection; the absence of delight of that indicates the path of insight and the first level; the supreme delight of that indicates the second level; the delight of that indicates the third level. The coemergent delight of supreme delight indicates the fourth level; the absence of delight of that indicates the fifth level; the supreme delight of that indicates the sixth level; and the delight of that indicates the seventh level. The coemergent delight of delight indicates the eighth level; the absence of delight of that indicates the ninth level; the supreme delight of that indicates the tenth level; and the delight of that indicates the buddha-level.

Now, the movement of the seminal point from the tip of the vajra (penis) to the navel indicates the level of Universal Light; its movement from the heart to the throat indicates the level of Unattached Lotus Endowed; its movement from the crown-centre to pervade the entire body indicates the level of the Holder of Indestructible Reality, or Great Rotating Mass (of Syllables).

Although there is also a tradition which holds that the causal levels are perfected when the seminal point is ejected from the base of the penis to its tip, and the resultant levels when it is drawn inwards from the tip, in this context, the (causal & resultant levels of realisation) are respectively connected with the sequences in which the momentum (of the seminal point) is supported from above and supported from below, in accordance with the esoteric instructions of the guru.

Similarly, the six supernormal cognitive powers, and the major and minor marks are also perfected by this practice: Introduced by skillful means, the supernormal cognitive power of recollecting past abodes is present when the seminal point arrives in its natural abode; the supernormal cognitive power of miraculous ability is present when the seminal point goes and comes; clairaudience is present when bliss and emptiness are without description; clairvision is present when the three buddha-levels are perceived; the scent of freedom from corruption is present because therein there is no clinging to bliss; and the supernormal cognitive power which knows the minds of others is present because the male and female consorts know the savour that is relished by one another.

55

The thirty-two major marks are present during the coalescence of solar and lunar (fluids) which corresponds to the sixteen delights of the male and female consorts; and the eighty minor marks are present because the sixteen delights experienced through the lunar fluid or seminal point of the male consort each are endowed with the five pristine cognitions. These are

absent in the female consort because she is the emptiness or reality itself. This is the point conveyed in the following passage from the Oceanic Magical Net (NGB. Vol. 15):⁵⁶

By transformation (of the seminal point)
Through skillful means,
Previous abodes are known;
Through miraculous ability associated
With the motion (of the seminal point)
The vital energies become radiant;
There is clairaudience, as described,
And clairvision of the three buddha-levels;
There is non-corruption of the components,
Sensory bases and activity fields;
One knows that the twofold bliss of vowels and consonants
Intermingles and becomes one;
The sixteen (delights) by their dual movement
possess the major marks.
And one series of them, endowed with five pristine cognitions,
Becomes the eighty minor marks.
Superior to the feeling of receptiveness
And other causal (teachings)
Are these seminal points,
The nature of non-dual supreme bliss.

This surpasses the tradition which holds that through the causal vehicles the supernormal cognitive powers and the major and minor marks will be obtained by virtuous actions which multiply receptiveness and so forth in an external manner.⁵⁷

The latter section concerns the means of experiential cultivation once that (practice of the lower door) has been known: One who has the appropriate vital energy and mind should arouse a seal of action (karmamudrâ) through his display of bliss. The male & female consorts are then visualised as the deities, their secret centres are consecrated as a vajra and a lotus, the seminal point descends and is retained in the vase of the vajra (penis), it is then drawn upwards, like a threaded web of syllables HUM, it is diffused throughout the entire body; and everything becomes equi-poised in the disposition of the Great Perfection, the abiding nature, without duality. The result of this (experiential cultivation) is that the supreme and common accomplishments are swiftly obtained. As this text says (Ch. 12, 7):

By the seal of "vowels" and "consonants",
Each and every (activity) will be achieved.

The third part concerns the meditation on the Candâlf which assists these (practices). It says in the Oceanic Magical Net (NGB. Vol. 15):

It is explained that the fire
Of uncorrupted bliss blazes forth,
And that (the seminal point) is burnt,
And milked from above.

At the junction where the three energy channels meet directly four finger-spans below the navel, the mind apprehends the short-syllable A, of the nature of fire, the size of a mustard seed and

extremely hot to touch. Dependent on that, a flame blazes forth, the size of a thumb, which fills the interior of the three energy channels and centres within the body, so that deeds and obscurations are burned. One meditates that a stream of nectar consisting of the white and red pure-essences or seeds descends from the syllable HAM in the crown centre, and so pervades the entire interior of the body with bliss and emptiness. This meditation is the genuine skillful means which generates warmth, and gives rise to the pristine cognition of bliss and emptiness.
58

The latter section (of the overview) concerns the path of liberation (grol-lam).⁵⁹ This has two parts, namely, the meditation which entails contemplation on an apparitional deity, and the meditation which entails contemplation on the emptiness or real nature.

As to the former: In the disposition where one meditates on the apparitional body of the deity, any conceptual events or feelings which arise are retained by the creation stage; and through the force of that, all the enlightened attributes of contemplation and so forth are accomplished. This is because the nature of one-pointed mind is the essence and causal basis of contemplation.

As to the latter: One settles into equilibrium, without wavering towards all that appears and without fabricating a duality between the objects which appear during meditative equipoise and the intellect which apprehends them. Thereby one abides in the disposition of the non-dual truth. During the aftermath (of that

meditative equipoise), one should refine the expressive power, according to the Great Perfection, through which appearances are apparitional, and awareness is naturally liberated reality. When this has been refined, there arises in a coalescent manner the tranquility in which the mind abides and the higher insight in which the truth of the absence of inherent existence is realised. ⁶⁰ When one has meditated in this way on higher insight retained by tranquility, the head of conflicting emotions is crushed down and their base is uprooted. It says in the Extensive Pristine Cognition (ve-sheṣ rgyas-pa):

Through tranquility the head of conflicting emotions
is crushed down,

And through genuine higher insight their base is uprooted.

In the Introduction to the Conduct of a Bodhisattva (T. 3871) ⁶¹
these points are expressed in the following words:

One should know that through higher insight,
Excellently endowed with tranquility,
Conflicting emotions are subdued.
Tranquility should indeed be sought at the outset,
And it is achieved with manifest joy
In freedom from mundane desire.

⁶²

And also:

One who has disciplined through meditative equipoise
The mind which resembles a rutting elephant...

The result (of this contemplation on the path of liberation) is that the excellent enlightened attributes, provisional and conclusive, will be accomplished.

Now, for those individuals who have fewer conceptions and coarser conflicting emotions, the path of skillful means is revealed in accordance with both the upper and lower doors (of the body); and for those who have a larger share of conceptions the sequence of meditation on the deity and the non-conceptual (reality) is revealed.
63

Interlinear Commentary on the Inner Perfection Stage (462.5-463.4):

This has two parts, of which (the first), concerning meditation on bliss and emptiness, (comments on Ch. 13, 9):

Through the (-vis) supremely secret display of (rol-mo) the pristine cognition (ye-shes) of bliss (bde-ba'i) and emptiness which is obtained when the essential seminal points (snying-po thig-le) of the white and red pure-essences of the male and female consorts intermingle and are united (mnvam-sbyor-bas) at the tip of the vajra and of the lotus, offerings are made to the deities who have been invited into the mandala of the secret centre. Then, when these are inducted upwards by the vital energy, offerings (mchod-pa) of non-dual bliss and emptiness are made ('bul) in the energy channels of the four centres and throughout the body to (la) the naturally abiding mandala of the buddhas and to one's own mind-as-such which have become exceedingly joyous (dzves) in that most blissful pristine cognition (ye-shes).

The second part, concerning the result of that (meditation, comments on Ch. 13, 10):

Through the merit (bsod-nams-kvlg) of these offerings which have been made, free from corruption (zag-pa med-pa), the three provisional kinds of awareness-holder and the eight (common) accomplishments are obtained, and there is derived the conclusive field of the awareness-holder of spontaneous presence, manifesting (snang-ba) buddhahood in and of itself (rang) as a magical display of pristine cognition (ye-she^s sgvu-ma). This is the infinite (mtsha'-yas)⁶⁴ mandala of (-'i dkvil-'khor) of the five enlightened families of the display (rol-mo) of the spontaneous Bounteous Array, immeasurable in its array. And then, the conclusive result is obtained in the supreme (mchog) field of the buddha-body of reality, the ground of Samantabhadra.⁶⁵

The Secret Stage of Inner Radiance (463.4-477.3):

The third part (of the extensive exegesis --see p. 1001) concerns the secret stage of inner radiance. It includes an overview and an interlinear commentary.

The former (463.4-474.6) has two aspects, namely, the nature of the inner radiance which is to be known, and the sequence of experiential cultivation once it has been known.

As to the first of these, it says in the Oceanic Magical Net (NGB. Vol. 15):

Since the primordially manifest and perfect
Doctrine of the buddhas abides in all corporeal beings,
The spontaneous mandala of the conquerors

Abides in the body of all corporeal beings,
And it maintains inestimable peaceful and wrathful forms,
Which become radiant through the power of experience,
In this lifetime, or in the intermediate state.

Thus, the mandala of the ground or indestructible expanse which abides in Akanistha is said to be present within the energy-centres (of the body) in the form of clusters (of deities), which depend on the pure-essences or seminal points of relative appearance, in the nature of five subtle and glowing lights. As such, the mandala of the forty-two conquerors is within the heart-centre of all sentient beings, and the mandala of the fifty-eight Blood-Drinkers is within their crown-centres. One who has experienced the creation and perfection stages will radiantly perceive the natural expression of these mandalas. However, they remain invisible until one is liberated from the snare of (the path of) maturation because one is still obscured by the coarse body with its flesh and blood. Even though one is exceedingly steadfast in these creation and perfection stages, and one's mind has become exceedingly radiant as the body of the deity in a rainbow-like manner, one is not liberated from the snare of the body; but as soon as one is liberated therefrom, one perceives the meaning of the great seal and becomes an awareness-holder of maturation, who attains liberation in the body of the deity during the intermediate state and then acts on behalf of sentient beings.

Then, dependent on the creation and perfection stages, when this very body transcends birth and death, and obscurations have to some extent been purified, one becomes an awareness-holder with power over the lifespan and an awareness-holder of the great seal, who attain buddhahood without relinquishing their bodies. Then, as an awareness-holder of spontaneous presence, or buddhahood itself, one is manifestly transformed into that mandala.

It is because this Akanistha is present primordially within oneself that buddhahood is attained through the visualisations of the creation and perfection stages. Indeed, the pure fields of buddha-body and pristine cognition are not sought or accomplished in other world-systems of the ten directions, as our text says (Ch. 12, 14):

From any of the ten directions and four times
The perfect buddha will not be found.
Mind-as-such is the perfect buddha.
Do not search elsewhere for the buddha.

The latter (is the experiential cultivation of inner radiance):
In a pleasant darkened house, one should assume the seven postures of Vairocana, without moving. It says in the Sequence of the Path of the Magical Net (P. 4736):

Therefore, with blissful joy
Which is superabundant and uniform,
One assumes the guise of venerable Vairocana,
Endowed with seven postures,
And sits with an attitude

Free from grasping and striving.

This passage therefore teaches three ways in which one should be unmoved.

The seven postures are crossed legs, equipoised hands, the waist straight as a rod of dong-rtse coins, ⁶⁹ the neck gently bent, the eyes focussed on the tip of the nose, the tongue meeting the palate, and the lips and teeth set in their natural positions. In particular, from the space between the eyebrows one should fix one's gaze on space to a distance of twelve inches, one should not speak, and one should settle into the disposition of space without the mind thinking upon anything. One who has done this for one day, or for three or seven days, will perceive signs of smoke and so forth. Similarly one who has done this for fourteen days, or for twenty-one or one month, will firstly perceive smoke-like (apparitions) and then appearances which resemble clouds, mirage, fire-flies, butter lamps, and sunlight. ⁷⁰ It says in the Sequence of the Path (P. 4736):

One encounters (apparitions)
Which resemble mirage, smoke, clouds, fireflies,
Butter-lamps, and sunlight.

When these occur, one should remain (seated), rejecting all outer, inner and secret activities of the body, speech and mind. The same text says:

One should abandon all breaks and intervals
Based on cause and result,
And the conceptual elaboration

Of the nine kinds of doctrinal conduct.

One should not even undertake

That which is present in the mind

Because one would be distracted by the symbolic.

Having experienced the yoga of darkness in this way, during the daytime one settles into a disposition without recollection or thought, maintaining the previous posture and folded hands.

The same text says:

Through a sequence which is non-referential,

Extremely non-referential, and subsequently non-referential,

Without abiding, without thought and without covetousness,

And beyond conceptual objects of speech and thought,

The expanse of the real, pristine cognition becomes present.

Naturally radiant and unwavering,

It coalesces tranquility and higher insight.

This is indeed exceedingly non-referential and so forth because the external objects of attraction, the internal mind which apprehends them, and one's own body and speech which are in between are not grasped.

At that time, there is a coalescence of tranquility, which is non-conceptual in all respects, and higher insight which is radiant. When one has persevered in this course for six months, one year, and one year two months or four months, the coarse movements of the upper vital energy cease. One obtains power over the vital energy of pristine cognition, and then obtains successively the status of the awareness-holders of maturation, power over the

lifespan, and the great seal. Then, after one thousand six hundred years (i.e. sixteen lifespans) one achieves the deeds of the buddhas. ⁷² This text (Secret Nucleus, Ch. 9, 32) says:

The genuine accomplishment of empowered awareness
Will be achieved in six or twelve months,
Or in fourteen, or in sixteen.
Within sixteen lifespans, (one will obtain)
The spontaneously perfect five buddha-bodies.

This applies at the time when the uncorrupted state is accomplished by means of inner radiance.

As for the signs (of this realisation), there are four kinds which respectively resemble the diverse appearances of the five lights, the seminal points, the blazing of gemstones, and the (solar and lunar) disks (eclipsed) by Râhu. It says in the Tantra of Mañjuñari (T. 543):

There is a glorious orb,
Blazing forth fine light,
And blazing light appears in the hands.

And also:

Pristine cognition has a dazzling appearance:
There are butter-lamps
(Which dispel the darkness) of living creatures,
Lamps of pristine cognition,
And brilliant garlands, pleasant to behold.

And in the Great Bounteousness of the Buddhas (T. 44):

Through the association of "gemstone" and "ocean",

There are resplendent disks of light

Some of which radiate in the mandala of the sky.

..

Now, the glorious orb and the "gemstone" refer to the heart. The "ocean" refers to the eyes; and arising through their association are the forms of emptiness which appear in the sky. Such apparitions are known as the visionary appearance of actual reality (chos-nyid mngon-sum-gyi snang-ba).
73

When, during these (apparitions), one's lifespan comes to an end, in the next life one will be born in a pure buddhfield, and having obtained power over the lifespan, one will attain buddhahood. The enlightened attributes of this (first visionary appearance) are referred to as "secret seminal points" (gsang-ba'i thig-le) and so forth.

Then, through experience, the movements of the vital energy of the five elements subside in pristine cognition. This pervasion by the natural appearance of the five pristine cognitions is known as the visionary appearance of ever increasing contemplative experience (nyams-gong 'phel-gyi snang-ba).
74

Then, derived from that experience, the five enlightened families of the buddhfields are perceived; and this is known as the visionary appearance which reaches the limit of awareness (rig-pa tshad-phebs-kvi snang-ba). It is said that one encounters all mandalas without exception as ornaments.
75

..

Then, once the induction of the vital energy of the five elements into the five pristine cognitions has ceased to expand, all appearances become like a cloudless sky; and this is known as the visionary appearance of the cessation of reality (chos-nvid zad-pa'i snang-ba). At this point the spontaneous presence (of all-surpassing realisation) approaches.

76

Now, the first two visionary appearances are perceived as the support for the awareness-holder of maturation; the (visionary appearance) which reaches the limit (of awareness) is a support for the awareness-holder with power over the lifespan; the visionary appearance of cessation (of reality) is the support for the awareness-holder of the great seal; and once these have been perfected, the buddha-level and the status of an awareness-holder of spontaneous presence will be obtained.

There are some who, confusing this tradition, say that this occurs after the emanational body and the buddha-body of perfect rapture have entered into the (thirteenth level), Great Rotating Mass (of Syllables). They, however, do not discriminate between the bodies of rapture and emanation which appear on the path and those two bodies of rapture and emanation which are conclusive.

77

During these visionary appearances, the pristine cognition which appears, without being grasped, arises as an inner experience. It says in the Sequence of the Path (P. 4736):

Not designated as extremes or middle,
Intrinsic awareness itself,
Free from subject-object dichotomy,
Appears there in a non-referential manner.

During the first of these visionary appearances, the three media (of body, speech and mind) abide in a relaxing manner, whereby one obtains the three kinds of warmth, namely bliss of body, radiance of speech and non-conceptualisation of mind, and one obtains power over the coarse exhalation and inhalation of the breath. This same text says:

When this is prolonged without activity,
Warmth emerges in body, speech and mind.
A subtle receptiveness is obtained,
And one obtains power over the moving breath.
One arrives at the genuine fundamental reality,
And definitively experiences the three kinds of warmth.

Now, as external signs (of these visionary appearances), light and apparitions of the seminal points are perceived because the elements, on their consummation, become an activity field of syllables. As internal signs, one obtains receptiveness in body and speech; and the five conflicting emotions decrease; contemplation becomes firm and the vision itself is diffused. The same text says:

Now (the signs of) the former are both outer and inner:
Outwardly, the elements are perceived
As an actual activity field,

And lotus-lights and so forth are perceived.
Inwardly, receptiveness is particularly obtained,
And the course of the five rivers (=conflicting emotions)
Is gradually interrupted.

Virtuous dreams are also perceived. As the text says:

Even the dreams of one who abides in yoga
Nakedly emerge and are immaculate.

During the second visionary appearance, all things are realised
in apparition-like forms and so forth, and the vision is greatly
diffused. It says in the Sequence of the Path (P. 4736):

The nature of awareness free from subject-object dichotomy
Is uncovered, as a magical display of pristine cognition.
It is described as the essence in which water
And the moon's reflection in water are equally radiant.
Whatever conceptions or signs arise,
They naturally appear as a magical display
Of pristine cognition.
Thus desire, hatred, hope and doubt do not emerge:
These are nothing but the magical display of pristine cognition.

At that time, there emerges the compassion which is powerless but
(to act) on behalf of living beings. It says in the Indestruct-
ible Reality (NGB. Vol. 15):

Through the experience of one
Who has obtained such magical display,
The phenomena of samsâra are captured
By immeasurable enlightened mind.

Amazement is generated at both unbewildered
And bewildered (phenomena):
For they are present without objective basis.
All things within the range of this life
Are perceived as a dream or as a magical display.

At this time there are immeasurable enlightened attributes which
arise. The same text says:

There are enlightened attributes equal to the limits of space,
And the perceptual range is identical to buddhahood.
Endowed with the great provision of merit
Which is acquired through causal bases,
This great unattached pristine cognition
Is the yoga not to be sought in a future life.

78

Power over the lifespan is thus obtained, and even in dreams one
perceives the magical display, whereby there is neither clinging
nor attraction to all things. At that time the body becomes as
light as cotton wool, the exhalation and inhalation of breath is
not felt, and there are no bacteria or lice present inside or
outside the body. Such signs are possessed.

The third visionary appearance is that in which all appearances
manifest in and of themselves as the mandala of deities. It says
in the Sequence of the Path (P. 4736):

The mandala of the components and so forth
Appears as the deities:

When, in the manner of a reflection on a clear ocean,
The intrinsic awareness of all things radiates as the deity.
Without singularity or multiplicity,
And that radiance is without object and unwavering,
This is said by the Conqueror to be the essence of yoga.
This nature is emanated, and yoga is emanated,
Also, the peaceful and wrathful deities
Who discipline venomous (beings) are emanated,
The circles are emanated, and the seals are emanated,
The clusters are emanated, and the mandala is emanated.
Because of this universal emanation, .. the result is emanated.
The radiant experience of this emanation is called yoga.

These appearances become manifest through meditation on the
79
mandala of the Thousand Buddhas and so forth, and they become
..
actually manifest through inner radiance. At that time, there are
also signs through which the truth of this particularly sublime
level is perceived. In particular, it says in the same text:

The six supernormal cognitive powers,
And the five basic realities are perfected.
In superior and mediocre instances,
These become radiant and perform acts of discipline
Throughout the countries and continents.

The five basic realities whereby pristine cognition is obtained
are the buddha-body, speech, mind, attributes and activities,
80
each of which has five subdivisions. Their radiance is
perceived by clairvoyance even during intervals (of sleep), and
thence, there are no dreams.

During the fourth visionary appearance, one is liberated from the snare of the body and its appearance. It says in the Indestructible Reality (NGB. Vol. 15):

In the guise of the buddha-body of pristine cognition,
One is released from the elements in the indestructible body.

This is an effortless and spontaneous accomplishment derived from the previous experience. The same text continues:

Through one's own unwavering perception and experience,
And by striving in a purposeful sequence,
The power over the perfection of all paths is reached,
And there is spontaneous accomplishment,
Unconnected with yoga and innately purified of defilements.

The enlightened attributes of this (visionary appearance) are also cited in the Sequence of the Path (P. 4736):

Without wavering from meditative equipoise,
In worlds which equal the number of atoms
In ten hundred thousand chiliocosms,
And in fields which equal the number of atoms
In ten hundred thousand "countless" buddhafiels,
Acts of discipline are performed
By the emanational forms of hunter, courtesan, and so forth.

Once these four visionary appearances have been concluded, the resultant three supreme buddha-levels become spontaneously present; and at that time, there are also twenty-five enlightened
81
attributes (or realities). Among them, the first (group of

five) is that of the five buddha-bodies, namely, the buddha-body of reality which is free from conceptual elaboration, the buddha-body of perfect rapture which is great inner radiance, the emanational buddha-body which is indefinite and diversified, the buddha-body of awakening in which renunciation and realisation are concluded, and the buddha-body of indestructible reality which is great and unchanging. It says in the Sequence of the Path (P. 4736):

There are the natural buddha-bodies of reality,
Perfect rapture, diverse emanation,
Awakening, and indestructible reality.

The five kinds of buddha-speech are as follows: There is the great indescribable speech of the body of reality, on which the same text says:

Through the uncreated genuine and supreme buddha-speech,
The unspeakable and indescribable is understood.

There is the unimpeded, naturally radiant and mirror-like speech of the body of perfect rapture, on which the same text says:

By perceiving the body of the mighty lord,
Symbolised by its eight mirror-like attributes,
The meaning of indestructible reality is manifested
In the minds of those bodhisattvas
Who are great spiritual warriors.

The speech of the emanational body has sixty aspects, as the same text says:

There are six categories of basic and ancillary attributes,
Which are heard as Brahmá speech
By the fleshy ears of corporeal beings.

The speech of the body of awakening is the naturally radiant
pristine cognition, on which the same text also says:

The pristine cognition of awareness, in its five names,
Is indeed radiantly manifested like the sun
Through the blessing of the garland of syllables,
In all the naturally secret tantras.

The speech of the body of indestructible reality is the
indivisibility of sound and emptiness, as the same text says:

Resounding in the manner of sound, and indivisible,
Vision and hearing occur through its power.

Now, in this context, the self-manifesting body of perfect
rapture is subsumed within the buddha-body of reality, because it
is exclusively within the perceptual range of buddhahood.⁸⁴

Among the five kinds of buddha-mind, the first is the pristine
cognition of emptiness, which is radiant and without substantial
existence.⁸⁵ It says in the Indestructible Reality (NGB. Vol. 15):

It is said to be primordially radiant and empty
In the manner of space.

The mirror-like pristine cognition is radiant and without
conceptualising thought:

It radiates in a mirror-like manner, without object.

The pristine cognition of sameness is radiant and without the duality of good and evil:

It is sameness, without alteration, and
Without acceptance or rejection.

The pristine cognition of discernment is radiant and does not confuse the general and particular characteristics of things:

Because it is none other than the expanse of the real,
It radiates without dividing consciousness
From its particular and general (characteristics).

The pristine cognition of earnest accomplishment effortlessly achieves activity for the sake of oneself and others:

The two kinds of benefit are accomplished
Through its spontaneous and perfect activity.

These comprise the buddha-mind associated with the five buddha-bodies.

As for the five kinds of enlightened attributes, (the first) refers to the nature of the pure buddhafield of awareness without spatial dimensions, which pervasively appears throughout the expanse of reality:

Without independent existence, the awareness manifests
As the buddhafields of the ten directions without exception,
Which are the accumulated wish-fulfilling clouds of mind.

There is the appearance of awareness as the celestial palace:

The spontaneously perfect awareness,
Which manifests in and of itself,

Is the celestial palace, in nature
Free from the subject-object dichotomy.
Neither supportive nor supported,
It is the abode of everything.

There is the awareness which appears as light-rays:

Because its nature radiates without obscuration,
Its diverse light-rays radiate in the ten directions.

There is the awareness which itself appears as the seats and
thrones:

Because all the resultant (attributes) such as power
are perfected,

86

The details of the five seats become manifest.

And there is the awareness which itself appears as the ornaments:

Because they are spontaneously perfect and not to be
abandoned,

The ornaments of the diverse great mandalas are present.

..

These (enlightened attributes) refer to the field of the
spontaneous Bounteous Array.

The five kinds of enlightened activity are the five types of
deeds, namely, the deeds which mollify and pacify the minds of
those to be trained, the deeds which satisfy and enrich sentient
beings with the doctrine and materials, the deeds which subjugate
living beings, those which uproot venomous beings by wrathful
sorcery, and the enlightened activity spontaneously accomplished
by the lords of all the enlightened families in all directions

and spheres without distinction between those which are close and those which are remote:

The different activities of discipline
Comprise the four methods which are displayed
By peaceful & wrathful deities and Mâtaris
For pacifying violations (of the commitments).
These perform acts of discipline in an appropriate manner,
In association with the (first) four enlightened families,
While (the activity) of spontaneous accomplishment
Is associated with the enlightened family of activity.

This (resultant reality) is the most secret, hidden and concealed meaning belonging to the Tantra (of the Secret Nucleus). It has been portrayed (here) in accordance with (the exegesis) found in the Lamp of Precious Inner Radiance ('od-gsal rin-po-che'i sgron-
87
ma), which was composed by the great master Padmâkara.

When this (instruction) is combined with the Oral Instructions of the Moment of Death ('da'-ka-ma'i gdams-ngag), which is the work of the great master Vimalamitra, those of low acumen should be liberated during the intermediate state of maturation. Therefore, at the time of death one should not waver from the disposition of the creation stage in which the mandala of deities is present, and of the perfection stage which is without conceptual elaboration. In this way, during the intermediate state, one will
88
attain buddhahood in the body of the deity.

For those of basest acumen who do not obtain maturation, it is explained that they should focus the mind within the inner

radiance of the heart-centre, and then, transforming the vital energies of sun and moon within it, eject that globe of light with equilibrium into a pure land. Thereby, in the next life, one will obtain the status of an awareness-holder either of maturation or with power over the lifespan, and attain buddhahood
89
in a pure land.

There are also some who say that one will be (completely) liberated by recognising the mandalas of the peaceful and wrathful deities which arise during the intermediate state, but it is certain that one obtains liberation therein only after obtaining the status of an awareness-holder of the great seal or
90
of spontaneous presence.

This is the actual foundation of the points expressed in this chapter, and it is most profound and extensive because it introduces the meaning of inner radiance. Through these topics, the exegesis of the overview has been completed.

The interlinear commentary (on the secret inner radiance, 474.6-477.3) has three aspects. Among them the first concerns the recognition of the nature of the ground or inner radiance. (It comments on Ch. 13, 11):

The mandalas of buddha-body and pristine cognition, which are the secret seminal points (gsang-ba'i thig-le) of inner radiance, abiding in the four energy centres and especially in the heart-centre, are the expanse of (-kvi-dbvings) reality or the real nature (nyid) which is spontaneously present. Naturally abiding in the forms of Akanistha, the Bounteous Array, they are (de-ni)

spontaneously present as the actuality of all the (kun-gvi dngos) primordial buddhas (sangs-rgyas). In this way, the three buddha-bodies are said to abide within oneself; and among them, the bodies of rapture and emanation are the basis of manifest appearance.

The second concerns the recognition of the appearance of pristine cognition in accordance with the path. (It comments on Ch. 13, 12):

By meditating on this mandala, the ten signs including light and seminal points are naturally perceived as the apparitional objects of contemplation. Among them, the faces (zhal) are perceived (mthong-ba) which identify (bdag-nvid) without exception (ma-lus) all the mandalas of the body, speech, attributes, activities, and mind (sku gsung von-tan phrin-las thugs) of all the buddhas who have attained manifestly perfect (mngon-rdzogs-pa) buddhahood in the ten directions and four times (phyogs-bcu dus-bzhir). It says in the Extensive Magical Net (T. 834):

When the truth of signlessness is perceived,

The mandalas of all the buddhas are perceived.

This text explains that by seeing one thing all things are seen, that this is the conclusive buddha-body of reality, and that one who has experienced the uncreated truth will perceive the faces of the buddhas.

This mastery (dbang-sgyur) through contemplation of the naturally pure buddha or mind-as-such is therefore the genuine supreme nature (mchog-nvid dam-pa yin) of all things, because it is the meditation on the conclusive truth of abiding nature. It says in the Sūtra Requested by Jñānottara (T. 82):

The supreme contemplation
Which is dispositionally unwavering,
Concerns the nucleus of all things.

When one has meditated in this way, for one who abides in the mandala (dkvil-'khor-la gnas) of natural expression and the ..
mandala created by contemplation, there ensues meditation on the ..
mandala (dkvil-'khor) of self-manifesting inner radiance. This ..
itself (nvid) then becomes spontaneously present as the mandala ..
(dkvil-'khor lhun-gvis grub) of (-'i) the perfection (rdzogs-pa)
stage of discriminative awareness, the great pristine cognition, so that increasingly higher enlightened attributes of the path are perfectly actualised. In particular, when one's own perception is transformed into the field of the five enlightened families, in all outer (phenomena) and the inner centres of the energy channels, one encounters (thogs) all mandalas (dkvil-'khor) of the different deities without exception (ma-lus) as its ..
ornaments (rgyan-du) of natural awareness or pristine cognition. These, too, are adorned with thousands of enlightened attributes. When all apprehension of them has ceased, one arrives at the cessation of reality, which is the primordially pure nature of
92
the levels and paths.

The result (of this meditation comments on Ch. 13, 13):

The result is that, through the (las) non-dual union (mnyam-sbyor) of the mandala (dkvil-'khor) of perfect (rdzogs-pa'i) rapture in the mandala of the buddha-body of reality, the emanational mandalas (dkvil-'khor) of spirituality (thugs-rie'i) entirely emerge (yongs-kvis 'byung) without exception in a great spontaneous presence. By the force of that (experience), one becomes the lord who trains ('dul-ba'i mgon-po) the mandalas of (dkvil-'khor) the six world-systems within the ten directions of space (phvogs) and the four times (dus), without exception. One appears in the nature of the six sages and so forth, and by (vis) the deeds of excellent enlightened activity which liberate (sgrol-ba'i) all the mandalas of (-i dkvil-'khor) sentient beings without exception, who form a magical display (sgyu-ma), one appears to train each according to his or her needs. However, from the very moment of that appearance, one enacts (spvod) and attains the mandala (dkvil-'khor) where the training that occurs and the beings to be trained resemble a reflection or phantom. That is without (med-pa'i) true inherent existence, either in the sentient beings with individual characteristics who are the object (bva) of liberation, or in one's own emanational bodies which are the subject (byed) of liberation. Accordingly, it also says in the Magical Net (NGB. Vols. 14-16):

Sentient beings are forms of magical display.

Enlightenment too is like a magical display.

For example, when certain magicians

Cast spells at potsherds and so forth,

If their practical experience is intensified,
Those charmed forms appear to minds which apprehend them
In forms with four-legs and so forth.
Similarly, the mind which has benefited through the
Provisions derived from merit and pristine cognition,
Manifests the unsurpassed enlightenment
Before the minds of sentient beings.

Synopsis (477.3-477.6)

Thirdly, the synopsis (of the actual profound meaning of the
nucleus --see p. 999, comments on Ch. 13, 14):
92b

All things abide in the mandala which is perfect in (rdzogs-pa'i
dkvil-'khor-la) primordial^{..} buddha-body and pristine cognition
(ye-shes). Study (thos) makes one aware of it, thought (bsam)
analyses its meaning by means of the mind, and the natural
creation stage of skillful means and perfection stage of
discriminative awareness are meditation (sgom-pa) directly on it.
The result that is genuinely achieved through (-gyis) union
(mnyam-sbyor) with (-'i) these, is the self-originated (rang-
byung) pristine cognition. It is obtained in a spontaneously
present (lhun-gyis grub) manner, along with the enlightened
activity which acts, confronting all (kun-ngam), through great
spirituality for the sake of those to be trained.

This ('di) excellent (meditation on inner radiance) is revealed
as the supreme commitment not to be transgressed ('da'-bar mi-
mdzad dam-tshig mchog), the resultant nature in which buddhahood
is attained through meditation on the creation and perfection

stages of the path without duality. It was assumed as an unfailing doctrine by all the buddhas (sangs-rgyas thams-cad-kyas).

Superiority of the Natural Great Perfection to Other Teachings

(477.6-481.2)

The second subdivision (of the detailed exegesis of the meaning of the natural Great Perfection --see p. 999) concerns its superiority to other (teachings). It has three sections, of which (the first) concerns the greatness of the individuals who accomplish it. (This comments on Ch. 13, 15):

The yogin or one who (gang-zhig) has (gyur-pa) merely aspired towards this ('di-la mos) vehicle is deemed (dgongs-par 'gyur) by all the mandalas of (dkvil-'khor thams-cad) all the buddhas (sangs-rgyas) to be a closest son (nve-ba'i sras-su) in respect of the marvellous secret nature. He is one who would perform the ritual service of (bsnyen-pa-vi) and swiftly obtain in his mind all mandalas (dkvil-'khor) of most secret meaning without exception (ma-lus) throughout (kun-nas) space and time (phyogs-dus), without exception, wherever they reside, and in all their aspects (thams-cad-du). For example, just as a universal monarch may have a thousand sons but hold as his genuine son that one who has the appropriate marks, so those bodhisattvas who maintain (the vehicles of) pious attendants, self-centred buddhas, and causal teachings are not closest sons because it is not within their perceptual range to hear the Secret Nucleus and so forth, which is the natural intention of the buddhas.

The second section concerning the greatness of its path or means for attainment has four parts. First among them, it is great because it is the result of all paths. (This comments on Ch. 13, 16):

This ('di) vehicle of Atiyoga is (vin-te) the most secret result ('bras-bu gsang-chen) which is to be gained by all those who have practised and striven to abide well (rab-gnas-shing) in excellent refinement (shin-tu sbvangs-la) through the diverse causal vehicles over aeons (bskal-pa) of time which are equal to the number of atoms in the (-gi rdul-snyed-du) buddha-fields (zhing); and by those who perform the ritual service (bsnyen-pa-yi) and attainment of all mandalas (dkvil-'khor), outer and inner, without exception (ma-lus), in accordance with the vehicle of the secret mantras. This is because all of them depend upon this path
94
for buddhahood.

The second reveals that it is the track along which all conquerors have passed. (It comments on Ch. 13, 17):

Formerly, in the ten directions of the six world-systems ('rig-
rten drug-gi phyogs-bcu-na), including those which are lateral, upward-facing and downward-facing, all mandalas without exception (dkvil-'khor ma-lus) of the conquerors (rgyal-ba'i) of the past, present and future ('das-dang da-ltar byung-ba-yi) who act on behalf of living beings have mastered this (brnyes) path, and then (nas) spontaneously perfected the five buddha-bodies (sku-lnga lhun-gyis-rdzogs). This is because all the buddhas of the three times follow none other than this unique path of progression. Even those who proceed through the causal vehicles

must enter into the resultant vehicle because the buddhas emerge
from the resultant vehicle. ⁹⁵ This is proven by the following
passage (Secret Nucleus, Ch. 3, 15):

Disillusioned with the four vehicles,
One abides in the result of the single vehicle.

The third teaches that it is the path of all yogins. (It comments
on Ch. 13, 18):

All (kun) yogins who have emerged (byung) in the past and in the
present, and (dang) all (thams-cad) yogins or awareness-holders
who will emerge in the future (ma-'ongs) in their entirety (kun)
accomplish ('grub-par 'gyur) the buddha-level or the status of an
awareness-holder of spontaneous presence (lhun-gvis) through this
('di-yig) path. This is because there is no difference in the
paths of all the buddhas of the three times. It also says in the
⁹⁶
Yogatantras:

Great is the indestructible reality
Of buddha-body, speech and mind!
The buddhas who reside in the three times
Through the power of the secret mantras
Of indestructible reality
Possess the peerless and genuine pristine cognition.

The fourth concerns its superiority over the causal vehicles.
(This comments on Ch. 13, 19):

This ('di-ni) system of Atiyoga or Great Perfection has made into
the path (lam-du) the mandala of primordial buddhahood, the
essence of the result ('bras-bu), in this very lifetime, in

accordance with the definitive (nges-pa-yi) esoteric instructions which actualise the most secret (gsang-chen) result that is merely proclaimed in the lower vehicles. Therefore one has actually been transformed (gyur-ba-yin) by this short-cut of the buddhas, which is effortlessly present without having to be extraneously attained. It says in the Indestructible Peak (T. 480):

Ordinary beings accomplish buddhahood,

But do not do so not extraneously.

The third section (of its superiority over other teachings) teaches that there are no other paths superior to this one. (It comments on Ch. 13, 20):

For (1a) all the mandalas of (-'i dkvil-'khor) the conquerors (rgyal-ba) of the ten directions and four times, who have passed away in ancient and recent times, and who are currently present, along with their sons, without exception (ma-lus), there is apart from this ('di-las) vehicle of Atiyoga where primordial liberation is spontaneously perfect, no (med) other shortcut of secret definitive meaning (gsang-ba'i nges-don) at all; for there are no other doctrines better than this one. If there were, it is correct that they would be found by the buddhas who seek them. But though sought (btsal-kyang) elsewhere, none (mi) better than this doctrine is ever found (brnyes-so) by the conquerors (rgyal-bas). This means that no such (superior doctrine) is to be found; and it also means that the result of the secret mantras is here made into the path. It is so-called because when the minds,

sense-organs and so forth of living beings obtain the conclusive result of primordial buddhahood, the goal is directly reached. There is no (final result) other than that. It says in the Oceanic Magical Net (NGB. Vol. 15):

Like the wish-granting tree and gemstones,
All things abide in the essential causal basis.
In the actual appearance of the container world,
And its mobile (creatures) there is
No inherent existence.
This itself is the great buddha-body of reality,
Which abides as such through its natural disposition.
Other than it, there is nothing to be obtained.
Once all things have indeed been matured,
There is no progress (anywhere).
This is the essence of the path.

However, one might ask, if (the path) is the result, why should one practice it from the beginning according to the creation and perfection stages and so forth? The result is established to abide as such from the standpoint of the conclusive (path) which is to be traversed, but its essence is obscured by ignorance. Nonetheless, when the erroneous perception which resembles the (mistaken) apprehension of a conch shell as yellow, has been refined, the ground of one's own original essence is directly reached, and those bewildering suddenly arisen appearances are reversed. Apart from that, there is no extraneous result which newly emerges and was not present before. It says in the Sûtra of All-Gathering Awareness (T. 831):

Having been sought, it is not obtained.

The supreme result is present

At the time of the cause itself.

The Worthy Recipients to Whom It Should Be Given

(481.2-483.1)

The third subdivision (of the detailed exegesis of the meaning of the natural Great Perfection --see p. 999) indicates the worthy recipients to whom this instruction should be given. It has two sections, of which the first, concerning the fortunate recipient to whom it is given, (comments on Ch. 13, 21):

The secret great seals (phvag-rgya chen-po) of all (kun-gvi) the buddhas are the three inner classes of secret mantras. Among them this natural Tantra of the Secret Nucleus is the superior or wondrously supreme one (mchog). Therefore it should be retained by those (-kvis zung) individuals endowed with the eyes of discriminative awareness (shes-rab mig-ldan-rnams) who have become skilled in the sequence of its words through abundant study (thos), skilled in its genuine abiding nature through discriminative awareness born of thought (bsam) which scrutineses the meaning of those (words), and who have (-ba'i) well (rab) refined it (sbyangs) in (la) repeated meditation (bsgom) on that genuine truth. Among those (adepts) too, this doctrine should be entrusted to those worthy recipients (snod-ldan) of the natural Secret Nucleus who are not frightened of its extensive profound meaning, who have renounced evil through the virtuous and noble

(bzang) disposition (ngang-tshul) of their aspirations, and who are unchanged by conditions and (la) steadfast (brtan) in faith. It should be given (sbyin) completely to those who (la) can donate (gtong) their own bodies (lus) and (dang) all their enjoyments (longs-spyod) to the guru and the doctrine. It says in the Verse Summation of the Transcendental Perfection of Discriminative Awareness (T. 13):

One who does not fear to donate even life itself
For the sake of the doctrine,
And who is without doubt regarding one's own level.
Always resembles Mount Sumeru.

Therefore, the words and meaning (of tantras such as the Secret Nucleus) are given perfectly to one who is noble in spiritual wealth, and similar to (the bodhisattva) Sadaprarudita.⁹⁸

The second reveals the unfortunate ones to whom it should not be given. (It comments on Ch. 13, 22):

Apart from those worthy recipients to whom it should be given, it should never be given (nam-yang sbyin mi-bya) to others (gzhandu) who would not understand it even after it had been revealed, and who, even if they did understand, would act erroneously, vacillate in respect of the vows and commitments, have fear and be lethargic or hesitant with respect to the rites of ritual service and attainment, or to the two provisions. This is because (these beings) are afflicted by great defects. If it has been given (gal-te byin) to (la) those who are deluded (rmongs), who do not know the genuine meaning, and are unfortunate, and to those who commit sin and divulge secrets because (-bas) their

body, speech and mind are agitated ('phyar), uncontrolled, and unpacified, one's life will come to an untimely end (dus-min-par-ni srog-zad) owing to the punishment of the dâkinis and oath-bound protectors, and then (nas) the duration of one's lifespan will be interrupted (byed!), and in the next life, among the throngs (afflicted) by the unbearable darkness of the hot hells, one will be roasted (bsregs) by the fires of hell, and (dang) parched (sbrebs-par) by the snows and blizzards of the cold hells, and so forth. Then, just holding on to life, one's body will indeed remain so for a long time (yun-ring gnas), tormented by the suffering of affliction, and for twenty thousand aeons and so forth one will have no opportunity for release. Accordingly it says in the Magical Net of Vairocana (T. 466, NGB. Vol. 19):

Having been slain by weapons, fire, and poison,
 And similarly by demons and disease,
 And by snakes and cannibal spirits,
 One will be born in the great hells.

99

And in a sūtra:

One who has accumulated deeds which are adverse to the doctrine is a sentient being who will proceed from the great hells to the great hells.

Summary of the Chapter (483.1-483.4)

The summary of the chapter (comments on Ch. 13, 23):

Such was (zhes) the meaningful expression which (ched-du brjod-do) the tathâgata (de-bzhin gshes-pa) or lord of the mandala,

..

Samantabhadra himself uttered (nvid-kvis) to the tathāgata himself (de-bzhin gshegs-pa-nvid-la), including the five enlightened families of self-manifesting array.

This completes (-'o) the exegesis of the thirteenth chapter (le'u-ste bcu-gsum-pa) from (las) the supremely **Secret Nucleus** (gsang-ba'i snying-po) **Definitive with respect to the Real** (de-kho-na-nvid nges-pa) oral instructions of the Great Perfection, which effects liberation in this very lifetime. It is entitled the Nucleus of (-gi snying-po) the Esoteric Instructions (man-ngag-gi) through which buddhahood is obtained in a single lifetime, and which are Most Secret (shin-tu gsang-ba) in comparison to the lower vehicles.

Chapter Fourteen

The Eulogy Which Pleases

Root-text:

Then this song of the Great Joyous One was sung to the mandala of
all the tathâgatas themselves. [1]

OM! Perfect in the ten directions and four times,
The mandala of pristine cognition
..
Is the great seminal point.
The mandala of merits is an assembly of buddha-body.
..
Its appearance and emptiness is the seminal point,
Entirely perfect. HOH! [2]

OM! The indestructible great seminal point of merit is:
The indestructible reality endowed with the mandala
..
of pristine cognition;
The indestructible reality, infinite in its great sound;
And the indestructible reality, king or great
seminal point. HOH! [3]

OM! The great perfection of body, speech, and mind is:
Entirely perfect in enlightened attributes and activities;
The primordially and spontaneously perfect Samantabhadra;
And the great assembly that is gathered--
A great seminal point. HOH! [4]

OM! Without reference, the expanse
Of sameness or magical emanation
Entirely emanates as an infinite diversity.
The infinite (pristine cognition) is spontaneously
Absorbed from all directions.
And diverse (attributes emerge)--
The great buddha-body, speech and mind. HOH! [5]

OM! Comprising all the atoms of the worlds within the ten
directions,
The purposes of the conquerors, equal to the number of atomic
particles,
Through unthinkable emanations, equal to the number of atomic
particles,
(Have) spontaneously presence in an instantaneous moment of
time. HOH! [6]

OM! All (mandalas) without exception are buddha-body, speech
and mind:
The Great Identity of buddha-body, speech and mind;
The buddha-body, speech and mind which pervade all (objects);
And the great seminal point of buddha-body, speech and mind.
HOH! [7]

--Thus did he proclaim. This completes the fourteenth chapter
from the Secret Nucleus Definitive with respect to the Real,
entitled the Eulogy which Pleases. [8]

Commentary (483.4-488.2):

The third aspect (of the spontaneously present mandala of peaceful deities -- see p. 543) is a eulogy to the resultant nature of buddha-body and pristine cognition. It has three parts, namely, the background motivation, an exegesis of the meaning of its words, and a summary of the chapter.

The first (comments on Ch. 14, 1):

Once the mandalas of the creation and perfection stages of the path had been revealed, then (de-nag), in order to praise the spontaneously present mandala of the result, this song of the **Great Joyous One** (dgves-pa chen-po'i glu-'di) Samantabhadra, who is the lord of all the tathāgatas themselves (de-bzhin gshes-pa thams-cad nyid-kvi) and the essence of all the buddhas of the ten directions and four times, was sung (blangs-so) to the (la) self-manifesting mandala (dkvil-'khor) of buddha-body and pristine cognition.

The second part (the exegesis of the meaning of its words) has two subdivisions, namely, a general eulogy to the five buddha-bodies along with the five pristine cognitions, and a particular eulogy to the male & female consorts who are the mighty lord and lady of the mandala.

i. The former has five sections, among which the first is (the eulogy) to the mandala of buddha-body or the enlightened family of indestructible reality and the (pristine cognition of) reality's expanse. (It comments on Ch. 14, 2):

The syllable OM! (OM) begins the song because the five buddha-bodies are perfected. It indicates that this mandala of buddha-body is also to illustrate the nature of the five buddha-bodies and the five pristine cognitions.

Now, there are five aspects to these songs-- the singer, the melody, the lyrics, the embellishment, and the blessing of the song. Among these, the melody of the song requires a choirmaster who introduces the following melody-- the Pañcama tone, followed by the Sadja tone, which in turn is followed by the Madhyama tone, that by the Gandharva tone, and that by the melody of the Dhaivata and the Nisâda tones.

The buddha-body is indeed the natural expression of manifestly perfect (rdzogs-pa-vi) buddhahood, indivisible in nature from the indestructible body of all the buddhas in the ten directions and four times (phyogs-bcu dus-bzhi).

The buddha-mind of this buddha-body refers to its mandala of (dkvil-'khor) self-manifesting pure pristine cognition (ye-sheg), mirror-like and so forth in nature and without conceptual elaboration, which is the great (che) pure and indivisible seminal point (thig-le).

The buddha-body of this buddha-body refers to its self-manifestation as the mandala of (dkvil-'khor) excellent merits (bsod-nams), which appears but is without inherent existence. It is an inconceivable assembly of buddha-body (sku-vi tshogs) because the nature of the five enlightened families is pervasive without extremes or centre.

The buddha-speech of this buddha-body refers to its essence or nature in which appearance and emptiness (snang-stong) are without duality. It is the genuine indescribable and great seminal point (thig-le), entirely perfect (kun-tu rdzogs) in excellent attributes. HOH! (HOH) is exclaimed because joy emerges therefrom.

The second (eulogy) is on behalf of the primordially pure pristine cognition of discernment in the mandala of buddha-speech or the enlightened family of the lotus. (It comments on Ch. 14, 3):

The syllable OM! (OM) is expressed because the five modes of buddha-speech are perfect and spontaneously present. The mandala of Amitâbha, representing indestructible (rdo-rie) buddha-speech, is indeed a great (che) natural and spontaneous seminal point (thig-le che) of merit (bsod-nams) and pristine cognition.

The buddha-mind of this buddha-speech refers to its indestructible reality (rdo-rie), which is endowed with the mandala of (dkvil-'khor-ldan) the pristine cognition (ye-shes) of discernment and so forth because appearances and emptiness are indivisible.

The buddha-speech of this buddha-speech refers to the non-dual indestructible reality (rdo-rje), infinite in its great (chen mtha'-vas-pa) natural sound (sgra) of pristine cognition.

And the buddha-body of this buddha-speech refers to the genuine self-manifesting indestructible reality (rdo-rje), i.e. the king (rgyal-po) or great seminal point (thig-le che) in whom appearance and emptiness are indivisible. **HQH!** (HQH) indicates great amazement.

The third is a eulogy on behalf of the mirror-like pristine cognition in the mandala of buddha-mind or the enlightened family of the buddha (=tathâgata. It comments on Ch. 14, 4):⁷

OM! (QM) is expressed because the five kinds of buddha-mind are perfect. Vairocana is the great perfection of the body, speech and mind (sku-gsung-thugs-kvi rdzogs-pa-che) of all the buddhas.

The buddha-mind of this buddha-mind refers to his nature which is entirely perfect in (kun-tu rdzogs) enlightened attributes and activities (yon-tan phrin-las) without exception.

The buddha-speech of this buddha-mind refers to the natural disposition of Samantabhadra (kun-tu bzang) in whom excellent enlightened attributes abide **primordially and spontaneously perfect** (ye-nag lhun-rdzogs), without being sought.

And the buddha-body of this buddha-mind refers to the great assembly (tshogs-chen) of the mandala of pristine cognition that is gathered ('dus-pa'i) at this time in a self-manifesting manner. It is a great seminal point (thig-le-che) because it is

naturally pure. HOH! (HOH) is exclaimed because (the buddha-mind) is spontaneously present.

The fourth is a eulogy on behalf of the pristine cognition of sameness in the mandala of enlightened attributes or the enlightened family of precious gems. (It comments on Ch. 14, 5):

OM! (OM) is expressed because the five kinds of excellent enlightened attributes are spontaneously present.

The buddha-body of these enlightened attributes refers to the excellent buddhafield or expanse of reality without reference (mi-dmigs) in all symbolic terms, to the celestial palace in the expanse of (-i dbyings) self-manifesting sameness (mnvam-pa), which is the spontaneous Bounteous Array or magical emanation (sgyu-'phrul) of skillful means and discriminative awareness, and also to the infinite (mtha'-yas) mandala of deities entirely (kun-nas) bedecked with ornamental details, which emanates ('phro) as a diversity (sna-tshogs) of light-rays in the ten directions.

The buddha-speech of these enlightened attributes refers to their symbolic or natural expression, the infinite (mtha'-yas) pristine cognition which is spontaneously (lhun-gyis) absorbed (thim) from all directions (kun-nas) in the disposition of indivisible sameness.

And the buddha-mind of these enlightened attributes refers to the possession of the great buddha-body, speech and mind (sku-gsung thugs chen-po), where all the desired diverse (sna-tshogs) treasures of contemplation, miraculous ability, supernatural

cognitive power and so forth emerge in the manner of the wish-fulfilling gem. **HOH!** (**HQH**) is exclaimed to indicate great astonishment.

The fifth is a eulogy on behalf of the pristine cognition of accomplishment in the mandala of enlightened activity or the enlightened family of activity. (It comments on Ch. 14, 6):

The syllable **OM!** (**QM**) is expressed because the five kinds of enlightened activity are spontaneously present. The excellent field of those to be trained is one comprising (**du**) all the atoms of (**rdul-snyen**) container-worlds (**'jig-rten**) or fields and their sentient contents within the ten directions (**phyogs-bcu'i**) of the six world-systems.

The buddha-body of this enlightened activity refers to the purposes of the conquerors (**rgyal-ba'i don-rnams**) which demonstrate four kinds of enlightened activity, equal to the number of atomic particles (**rdul-phran snyed**) in those worlds. Such deeds are in fact their own essence.

The buddha-speech of this enlightened activity refers to the diffusion of emanations by whom (these actions) are demonstrated, i.e. instruction through unthinkable (**bsam-yas-kyis**) emanations (**sprul-pa**) who instruct each according to his or her needs, and who are also equal to the number of atomic particles (**rdul-snyen**).

The buddha-mind of this enlightened activity refers to the effortless spontaneous presence (**lhun-gyis grub**) for the sake of living creatures through which these emanations grant

instruction, pervading their fields in an instantaneous moment of time (skad-cig yud-la). This is accomplished without wavering from the buddha-body of reality. HOH! (HOH) is exclaimed because this (enlightened activity) is amazing.

The second subdivision (see p. 1056) is a particular eulogy to the male & female consorts who are the mighty lord and lady of the mandala. (It comments on Ch. 14, 7):

The syllable OM! (OM) is expressed because buddha-body and pristine cognition are spontaneously perfect. All (thams-cad) mandalas of the five enlightened families, without exception (ma-lug), which manifest in and of themselves throughout the ten directions and four times, are naturally the buddha-body, speech and mind (sku-gsung-thugs), the inexhaustible wheels of adornment.

Samantabhadra is the Great Identity (bdag-nvid chen-po) or active male subject of buddha-body, speech and mind (sku-gsung-thugs-kyi), Samantabhadri is the female passive object of buddha-body, speech and mind (sku-gsung-thugs-kvis) which pervade all (kun-tu khvab) objects; and those two male & female consorts without duality are naturally the reality in which all samsāra and nirvāna attain buddhahood primordially as the essence of buddha-¹⁰ body, speech, and mind (sku-gsung-thugs).

These male & female consorts-- Samantabhadra of the ground, path and result-- are naturally unchanging throughout the three times because they are enlightened in that expanse of the great seminal point (thig-le-che). HOH! (HOH) is exclaimed in the Great Joyous

One's song because he is spontaneously present as the original lord of all buddhas and sentient beings.

The summary of the chapter (comments on Ch. 14, 8):

Thus (-zhes) did he purposefully proclaim (bsgrags-so), unprompted, to the retinue of the pure and self-manifesting field of the spontaneous Bounteous Array.

This completes (-'o) the exegesis of the fourteenth chapter (le'u ste bcu-bzhi-pa) from (las) the Secret Nucleus (gsang-ba'i snying-po) of the result Definitive with respect to the Real (de-kho-na-nvid nges-pa) buddha-body and pristine cognition, entitled The Eulogy (batod-pa) according with the abiding nature Which naturally and spontaneously Pleases (mnyes-pa'i) the mandala and the great mighty lord of the mandala.