Interpreting the *Vajra Rosary:* *Truth and Method* Meets Wisdom and Method

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ABSTRACT

Interpreting the *Vajra Rosary:* *Truth and Method* Meets Wisdom and Method

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This essay, accompanied by the first full English translation of the *Vajramālā* or *Vajra Rosary,* one of the explanatory Tantras of the Buddhist *Guhyasamāja*, or *Secret Community*, Tantric system, and a partial translation of Alaṃkakalaśa's *Commentary*, sets out a novel hermeneutic method by which twenty-first century scholars of religion might approach the interpretation of the Tantra and other texts.

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Abbreviations

Alaṃka or *Commentary*	Alaṃkakalaśa's *Commentary* on the *Vajra Rosary, Śrī-vajramālā-mahāyogatantra-ṭīkāgaṃbhīrārtha-dīpikā-nāma; Rnal 'byor chen po'i rgyud dpal rdo rje phreng ba'i rgya cher 'grel pa zab mo'i don gyi 'grel pa zhes bya ba*
BIL	Tsong kha pa's *Brilliant Illumination of the Lamp of the Five Stages, Rim pa lnga rab tu gsal ba'i sgron me*
CG	Tsong kha pa's *Supplementary Annotations Properly Disclosing the Words and Meaning of [Candrakīrti's] "Brightening of the Lamp," the Extensive Explanation of the King of All Tantras, the Secret Community*, *Rgyud thams cad kyi rgyal po dpal gsang ba 'dus pa'i rgya cher bshad pa sgron ma gsal ba'i tshig don ji bzhin 'byed pa'i mchan gyi yang 'grel*
CMP	Āryadeva's *Integrated Practices, Caryāmelāpakapradīpa; Spyod pa bsdus pa'i sgron ma*
DK	*Sde dge* edition of the *Bka' 'gyur*
DT	*Sde dge* edition of the *Bstan 'gyur*
LK	Lhasa edition of the *Bka' 'gyur*
MA	Candrakīrti's *Introduction to the Middle Way, Madhyamakāvatara*
MMK	Nāgārjuna's *Fundamental Verses on the Middle Way, Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*
PU	Candrakīrti's *Brightening of the Lamp, Pradīpoddyotana*
PK	Nāgārjuna's *Five Stages, Pañcakrama*
SP	Stog Palace edition of the *Bka' 'gyur*
ST	Snar Thang edition of the *Bka' 'gyur*
Toh.	Tōhoku catalogue of the Tibetan Buddhist Canon, Sendai
VR	*Vajra Rosary, Śrī-vajramālā-abhidāna-mahāyogatantra-sarvatantra-hṛdaya-rahasya-vibhaṅga-nāma; Rnal 'byor chen po'i rgyud dpal rdo rje phreng ba mngon par brjod pa rgyud thams cad kyi snying po gsang ba rnam par phye ba zhes bya ba*

Acknowledgements[1]

Twelve years ago, I looked up Bob Thurman and sent him an email, "I'd like to find out what the Tibetans know, and learn Tibetan as a way in." I had discovered Buddhism in 1969 at the age of seventeen, like many of my generation, reading D. T. Suzuki's *Essays in Zen Buddhism*, followed by Alan Watt's *The Way of Zen.* Shortly thereafter, before any of the disturbing cultic activities that occurred later, I started visiting occasionally Chögyam Trungpa's Tail of the Tiger, meditating and wondering with my friend Richard Getler whether the world and various things we experienced were "full emptiness" or "empty fullness." It was the early 70's, and before long I found myself in Gloucestershire with J. G. Bennett, the Alps in a cave with Pir Vilayet Khan, Istanbul with Sheik Muzzafer Ozak of the Helveti-Jerrahi Sufi Order, and, later, in Konya with Suleyman Dede, Sheik of the Mevlevi dervishes, who taught me how to whirl.

Meditation came easily to me, but, on my return to the U.S., I felt that my experience in the world was lacking, and that, in order to deepen my spirituality, I needed to become more worldly, to be more "incarnated," as I put it to myself. So, thinking this was an entre into the "world of men," as Chuang Tzu called it,[2] I became a lawyer. Meanwhile, I fell in love with and married Jan; worked on Wall Street, liked the intellectual aspect of the work, hated the politics; we had Leigh, then Bear; moved to the

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[1] Part of my argument, *see* I, B, 3 below, is that, in order to promote the hermeneutic transparency that fosters dialogue, the interpreter, in this case me, should provide within reason some autobiographical information that would reveal his or her individual and cultural biases and preconceptions, analogous to the social scientific practice of researchers journaling their personal reactions to and experiences during studies, and also related to the concept of "common knowledge" discussed in game theory literature.

[2] Chuang Tzu 1964, 50.

suburbs; left Wall Street; made good friends; saw good friends die; got sick, got cured; lost my parents….. In short, I got more incarnated.

Then, in the late '90's, I woke up, and I said to myself, "O.K., now I'm incarnated, where was I?" Which is when I sent Bob Thurman the email. Shortly after receiving it, Bob replied, "Lozang Jamspal guides out beginners." So I called Jamspal, a Ladakhi lama who had come to Columbia and earned a PhD and was teaching classical Tibetan there. I went to his apartment; we talked; he said come back next week. From that point, except for infrequent times when one of us was out of town, I have studied with him (and enjoyed his fine cooking) every week for twelve years. We started with the Tibetan alphabet. The next week, we started reading and translating Pha dam pa sangs rgya's *Ding ri brgya rsta ma*. Then we moved on to Dharmarakṣita's *Blo sbyong mtshon cha 'khor lo,* the Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras, and other texts. After a few years, we started on Sanskrit, reading Aśvaghoṣa, Prajñākaramati, Jetari and others in Sanskrit and Tibetan, often reading the Tibetan in Genla's "ancient way."[3] I asked Jamspal after the first few weeks, "What is dharma?" He thought for a second, and replied, "Benefitting others." For all of these years together, I have watched him do just that.

After a few years studying with Jamspal, I decided that if I was serious about learning about Tibetan Buddhism, I needed some structure. So I applied to the doctoral program at Columbia. There, I was exposed to a different way of thinking about religious and philosophical issues. Reading the classics in the field, and some of the newer material coming out of the study of religion and consciousness, I started to think

[3] For many years, Jamspal has been a tireless advocate of reading Tibetan religious texts in the "ancient way," *i.e.* pronouncing all of the letters, including those usually silent in modern Tibetan, to promote greater literacy and understanding of the teachings and reduce rampant spelling errors, particularly of the next generation of monastics.

about the vast differences between the study of religion as a discipline and the practice of religion. Wayne Proudfoot's *Religious Experience* got me thinking about how religious experience has been shielded from critical thought by what Wayne calls a "protective strategy," which later came home to me in teaching Contemporary Civilization in the Columbia Core Curriculum, where I saw the profound difficulties students have in thinking critically about the Hebrew Bible, New Testament and Qur'an as contrasted with their virtuousity in handling Plato, Aristotle and Kant. Encountering Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* in Bob's *Central Philosophy of Tibet* and in Joe Loizzo's Theory and Method class made me realize that "Buddhist" philosophical insights need not come only from the East, and that realization was deepened as I explored the writings of Plato, Richard Rorty and many others from the Western philosophical tradition.

All the while though, my training as a lawyer and years of practice in that field made a deep impression on me of the virtues of settled rules of conduct, and the very practical aspects of how, with the aid of the rules of evidence, judges and juries generally make good decisions about complex issues that might otherwise seem intractable. My experience as a litigator, bankruptcy trustee and SEC receiver also made me more than a little skeptical about people but, at the same time, having interviewed and cross-examined thousands of people, it paradoxically has reaffirmed my faith in the generally good behavior of humanity, even under trying circumstances. Especially instrumental in my legal training were Richard Weiner, John Walsh and John Nabors, and my good friend Geoff Brown.

In the Spring of 2004, with Jamspal, I attended the Kālacakra teachings and initiation given in Toronto by H. H. the Dalai Lama, and subsequently attended various

other Tantric teachings and initiations given by the Dalai Lama and H. E. Rizong Rinpoche, H. E. Denma Locho Rinpoche, Lama Zopa Rinpoche and Gelek Rinpoche. Earlier, I had taken bodhisattva vows with H. H. Sakya Trizin. To "acknowledge" the contributions of these eminent teachers to this project is a little like acknowledging the atmosphere for providing the air we breath, for without them and the other holders of Buddhist and Buddhist Tantric lineages, there would be no Tantra to write about. So, without involving them in any of the many mistakes, misstatements and erroneous views that undoubtedly follow and are strictly my own fault, I acknowledge them, as tradition rightly recognizes, along with Professors Thurman and Jamspal, as being more precious to me in this project than Buddha himself.

It is perhaps here that I should note that I don't view my initiations, vows and veneration as impeding in a material way my pursuit of truth as a scholar. I don't know whether this comes from observing what appears to me as the seamless coexistence of Jamspal's faith, honesty, humor, skepticism, scholarship and iconoclastic insight at close range for so many years, or whether this reveals my own inability to fully commit to guru yoga. Perhaps a little like the Dalai Lama says about science, if I had to choose between Buddhism and truth, I would take truth. So far, I have not found so much of a conflict, but where I have, such as, for example, in some instances of the Buddhist tradition's treatment of women, I haven't had a problem in raising it. On the other hand, as a relative newcomer to this worldview, I admit to having some of the enthusiasm and tunnel-vision of the newly converted.

In the Fall of 2004, shortly after I started the doctoral program, I was sitting in Bob's office with Kālacakra scholar Jensine Andersen. Bob said, "What do you want to

do your dissertation on?" I said that I didn't know. Bob said, "You like Tantra; why don't you do one of the *Guhyasamājā* Explanatory Tantras." I said, "O.K." Jensine said, "He could do the *Vajramālā*." And, subject to my looking over the text, that was that.

I started reading the *Vajra Rosary* with Bob in the Buddhist Texts seminar, then with Jamspal. Over the course of the next six years I either read or went over my translations of the entire Tantra with Jamspal. His help was invaluable, to understate the matter, and the *Vajra Rosary* served as a vehicle for my learning not only the text, but much about Tibetan and Indian culture, supplemented with stays the Himalayas and India, where often I would be in the company of Jamspal's extended family.

Contemporaneously, over the course of hundreds of hours, I also read parts of the Tantra, and the majority of Alaṃka's much more lengthy *Commentary* with Bob, learning from and immensely enjoying his observations about things esoteric and mundane. No one could have had a more giving and supportive advisor than Bob. Professors Thurman and Jamspal have each given me unstintingly of their time, wisdom and friendship. Whenever I had a question, indeed, sometimes even when I didn't have a question, I received a direct answer. If there is anything worthwhile here with respect to my translation of and commentary on the *Vajra Rosary*, it is at least inspired by if not directly taught by them.

In May 2005, in light of the Dalai Lama's statements that translating authoritative Tantric texts was permissible, I asked H.E. Rizong Rinpoche whether it was permissible to translate the *Vajra Rosary* into English.[4] At first, Rinpoche said that the *Vajra Rosary*

[4] *See, e.g.,* T. Gyatso 1977, 17. In his *The Economics of Ecstasy,* John Urban wrote that undergoing initiation in an esoteric tradition requiring secrecy would compound the academic author's "epistemological and ethical double bind…a hundredfold." Urban 2001, 15-19. Many of the methodological problems identified by Urban are obviated by the Buddhist tradition's recent modification

had things that were stated indirectly because they were secret, but then that it might be an exception. He then thought about it, and said that since it had been translated into Tibetan, and existed in Tibetan, there was no reason why it couldn't be translated into English. In October 2010, now as Dga' ldan khri pa, spiritual head of the Ge lugs order, at Jamspal's request, Rinpoche gave a *lung*, an oral transmission, on the first five chapters of the *Vajra Rosary*, and ritually consecrated my translation (in a ceremonial way, with no approval of its correctness since he was reading the Tibetan only). Undoubtedly aware of my utter lack of qualifications to undertake the study of this Tantra, he said we would continue in future lifetimes. I'd like to say that we will do so, but have to admit that I don't know whether there are future lifetimes. I hope there are, for there is much to be done. About this, Jamspal says "We have to have faith."

In 2006, H.E. Denma Locho Rinpoche gave the *Guhyasamāja* initiation at a retreat undertaken by Gelek Rinpoche and Jewel Heart, with Geshe Lobsang Negi translating. In 2008, Rinpoche taught *Paths and Grounds of Guhyasamāja According to Ārya Nāgārjuna*, also with the assistance of Geshe Lobsang Negi, and agreed to meet with me to answer whatever questions I wanted to ask. He also prayed for my success in the translation of the *Vajra Rosary*. The next year I visited Rinpoche in Dharamsala, and he again graciously answered my questions about the *Vajra Rosary* and related matters. I thank Rizong Rinpoche and Locho Rinpoche for their care, teachings and inspiration. I wish I had asked better questions!

I am also very grateful Geshe Lobsang Negi of Drepung Loseling and Emory University, whose support and insight were and continue to be invaluable, along with my

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of its attitude towards secrecy although, in the end, the interpretation of requirements of secrecy is a hermeneutical problem that can only be resolved by the interpreter alone.

friends at Drepung Loseling. And I acknowledge a fundamental and deep debt of gratitude to the lineage holders of the Tantric traditions, starting with Buddha himself and extending through Atīśa, Zhi ba ʻod, Alaṃkakalaśa, Tsong kha pa and many, many others, and to the Indian and Tibetan cultures that made these traditions possible. And I also thank my colleagues at the Tibetan Translators Guild of New York, particularly Natalie and Philip Hauptmann, Margot Jarrett, Irene Cannon-Geary and Kyle Fischer a/k/a Thos pa ga, for their friendship and support.

Over the years, so many of my colleagues at Columbia were beacons of insight and support. I thank my friend Paul Hackett, a wellspring of knowledge of Tibetan literature and all things technological. Whenever I needed text or tech, some bucking up or some off-color humor, Paul was there. I also thank with great affection my colleagues Chris Kelley, John Campbell, Roy Tzohar, Annie Bien, Annabella Pitkin, Marty Jiang, Abby Kluchin and Joel Bourdeaux, and from the professorial ranks, Joseph Loizzo, Roosevelt Montas, Tenzin Norbu, Wayne Proudfoot, Rajiv Sethi, Mark Taylor, Gary Tubb and Tom Yarnall. I owe a special debt of gratitude to Defense Committee members Courtney Bender, Bernard Faure, Rachel McDermott and Gray Tuttle, along with Bob Thurman, whose searching comments and vigorous response to the first level of the algorithm made me question my tentative conclusions, reaffirming the power of the algorithmic method to reveal our prior common and uncommon factual assumptions and attitudes. And I thank Noel Bohl-Fabian for her carefully proofing the first chapter and for her insightful comments.

I also acknowledge my enormous debt to the previous and current generation of scholars in our field. Truly I aspire to even reach their shoulders, much less stand upon

them. Three in particular deserve special mention. Alex Wayman, whom I got to know at the end of his career, was a trailblazer in the field of Buddhist Tantra, and his insights were enormously instructive. After I settled on the *Vajra Rosary* as a dissertation topic, Gene Smith, whom I had never met, sat with me for a very long time, setting out what I should look for. Several weeks before Gene left us this year, I presented an outline of my dissertation for Gene and about a dozen scholars at his Tibetan Buddhist Research Center, including my nascent hermeneutic algorithm, which put a big smile on Gene's face. And Ronald Davidson's work, though I disagree with some of his conclusions, has been more than a foil for some of my arguments here. His scholarship and dedication to the task of recovering the historical groundwork of Indian and Tibetan Tantra is also inspirational. For providing copies of electronic texts used in this research, I also wish to thank the Asian Classics Input Project.

Along the way, I had so many fine teachers, both in and out of academia. Mary Williams taught me about faith. Tom Lynch told me after some episode of misbehavior that I had something valuable to give to humanity. Ben Elbirt guided me into the world of Russian, and culture in general. Anthropologist Zekiye Eglar helped me study three languages at once, and told me I needed something more. Richard Wiener told me my problem was "Ready, fire, aim." Still is, I think. Arthur Handler taught me how to negotiate, and Michelle Gershfeld and Judy Siegel kept the wheels of law and commerce turning. And I thank Emma Matsubara and Miho Uchida for their translating several of Yukei Matsunaga's Japanese articles.

My Dad, Bill Kittay, a prince among men, taught me, "What you love you understand," and, though somewhat of a pessimist himself, having lived with, and loved

with extraordinary care and tenderness, *the* great optimist, my mother Rhoda, told me, "The optimists always win." Mom herself was my biggest fan and, until Jan, Leigh and Bear, with my Dad was my most loving support. In a way, she introduced me to Tantra, because, looking through her eyes, I could do no wrong. Mom and Dad, how can I ever repay you? Any intellectual accomplishment and any good character on my part comes not just from your genes, but from your gentleness and inspiration.

I also thank, for bearing with me and for sharing their own joy, accomplishments and struggles, *i.e.* life: Deb and Josh and family; Jan's folks and her brothers Steven and Mark and family; my friends from the old neighborhood, especially Dr. Richard Brunswick, who actually read this manuscript and, in light of my fragile emotional state at the time, refrained from making jokes about it, Mike Roberts, a rock if there ever was one; and my old philosophical friend Buzz Anderson. And I thank my students over the years for their fresh insights.

I am also fortunate to have the most loving, and most interesting and inspiring children anyone could have, Leigh and Bear. We took care of them; now we all take care of each other.

Most of all, I thank from the bottom of my heart my loving wife Jan, my partner, best friend and inspiration, teacher, Renaissance Woman, sculptor, ceramicist, pianist, designer, general contractor, protector of animals, and tireless supporter of me, Leigh, Bear, and all who are fortunate to know her. For so many years, she has put up with me while I pursued this or that idea or project, and then showed me how to make a life, all the while being as true as true can be, just Jan.

Preface

This essay is in large part a thought experiment, exploring how and proposing a method by which we, twenty-first century scholars of religion, might approach the interpretation of a Buddhist Tantric text, in this case, the *Vajramālā* or *Vajra Rosary,* one of the so-called explanatory Tantras of the Buddhist *Guhyasamāja*, or *Secret Community*, Tantric system. The first complete English translation of the *Vajra Rosary*, constituting the longest part of this dissertation, is found in Appendix A; excerpts from Alaṃka's *Commentary* in Appendix B; and a description broken down by subject matters of the Tantra and the entire *Commentary,* with some of my own commentary, constitutes Chapter Three.

A study like this one could start with the text itself, translating it, and then move on to suggest what is distinctive about the text, interpreting it and noting the existence of other interpretations. Translation itself is always a major hermeneutic enterprise. While this ancient text *is* the main engagement here, I am going to begin the discussion with something more familiar: the interpreters themselves, or, I should say, ourselves, starting with a look at how we on the one hand and Indian and Tibetan Buddhists on the other have interpreted Tantric and non-Tantric texts in the past and today. Situating ourselves in this way will, I hope, provide an initial level of hermeneutical self-awareness, a foundational exercise required by both traditional Buddhist Tantric hermeneutics and modern Western theories of interpretation. I am also approaching the task in this way, emphasizing our hermeneutic choices, because I think that, given the erosion in our field

and in twenty-first century culture of the traditional barrier between the interpretation of religious experience and the placing of religious practice in its social context, it is time for a fresh kind of approach to the interpretation of at least religious texts.

The field of Tantric studies is an emerging one in Western academia. With such a vast corpus to explore, it has not been difficult for scholars to uncover new material, either through the study of one text or through selection of one or more themes from texts and non-textual sources, in order to make generalizing conclusions about the whole. In recent times, disciplines such as history, sociology, anthropology, economics and gender studies have been brought to bear on the study of Tantra, and, along with those, the focus of the field of Tantric studies began to shift away from the religious experience that is the ostensible primary subject of the Tantras themselves and towards integration of Tantric studies with other fields in the Western academy. So today a growing emphasis in the field is on the review of various aspects of Tantra, illustrated by excerpts from selected texts and of the lived experience of religion, through the lenses of these other fields.

Sometimes, in the case of Buddhist Tantra, such analyses focus on one or several aspects of the relevant history or economics involved while bracketing or even subordinating Buddhist Tantra's function in the system of Mahāyāna soteriology and Buddhist Tantra's role as a means for individual psycho-physical transformation. This has widened the gulf between the traditional Buddhist and the Western academic interpretations of Tantra, the two often coexisting in a schizoid way, sometimes within a single Western Buddhologist. The seeming inability of contemporary critical hermeneutics with its focus on power relations to engage and give weight to religious experience, and the corresponding inability of traditional religious hermeneutics to weigh

worldly factors reflects that what Wayne Proudfoot calls a "protective strategy" regarding religious experience is still with us. However, I will argue in Chapter One that, given both the inroads and insights that academic critical historical writings have made and contributed, and the embrace of scientific methods by traditional Buddhists as shown by, for example, the present Dalai Lama's *The Universe in a Single Atom* and Emory University's science initiative in Dharamsala, the paradigm is beginning to shift, and the time has come to overtly and consciously *weigh* religious and non-religious considerations, with each other and against each other, in assessing and discussing conflicting interpretations.

In Chapter One, I propose one such methodology, to promote and deepen dialogue and to test the validity of interpretations, drawn from, among others, Emilio Betti, E. D. Hirsch, Jr., Daniel Dennett, Richard Rorty, Umberto Eco and Michel Foucault, as well as Buddhist and Buddhist Tantric hermeneutical principles. The method involves provisionally determining, at the outset of a multi-step formula whose aim is to promote discussion followed by greater insight, a "center of gravity" for texts, conditionally grounding them in an *algorithm*, a scale for weighting both religious *and* non-religious considerations, blending their *prima facie* plain meaning, author's intent and intellectual history, intended audience, commentarial tradition, function and power dynamics. The algorithm also has a reflexive self-critical aspect, to account for the interpreter's bias.

I do not intend this algorithm as a definitive test for some ultimate "meaning" of a text, but rather as a more structured methodology than we presently use to engage in and then broaden the discussion of the validity of different characterizations of texts, a way to

identify their conceptual, factual, and cultural underpinnings. Particularly in today's relativistic culture, I hope that the notion of an algorithm related to meaning is sufficiently striking that it will engage the reader, who should not fear that the results of applying the algorithm are the end of the hermeneutic story, for they are really only the beginning.

For each interpreter, the algorithm will initially determine which interpretations are well grounded and which are "outliers," out of the mainstream. This is not to disparage outliers, for today's outlier is tomorrow's received wisdom. Rather, the main purpose of the algorithm is to bring polarized hermeneutic approaches into dialogue, towards "the fusion of these horizons supposedly existing by themselves,"[5] so dialogue will be increased, arguments more transparent, and research ultimately more productive.

Working through the algorithm to determine the provisional "main meaning" of a text, and in the process expanding and lifting up one's understanding of the original text, is the first step of a method that proceeds like an hermeneutical helix or corkscrew. It is followed by opening one's self to, debating and incorporating the meanings advocated by others, the steps of the algorithm broadening and deepening the discussion, with the hopeful result, among others, of the eliminating or narrowing of factual disputes. Then one reflects on what differences in opinion remain, which should provide insights into one's own personal and cultural biases and preconceptions. Having gone through this process, one is better equipped to enter the hermeneutic circle again, with the same text, another text, or even something not a text at all.

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[5] Gadamer 2004, 305.

In Chapter One, I will also explain that I am using the methodology of a case study, and I will discuss, drawing from other disciplines such as political science, what that entails. Case study methodology, like many other research methods and like the proposed hermeneutical algorithm itself, is a safeguard against the predations of Umberto Eco's "empirical reader" and *ad hoc* selections of excerpts that may be consciously or unconsciously used to advocate a point of view that misrepresents the text as a whole. I will discuss why most case studies are covertly normative, and that the fact/value distinction supposedly safeguarding interpretive case studies from bias is chimerical. For this reason, rather than pretend that a case study is presented from an objective viewpoint, it is more productive to embrace overtly David Thacher's concept of a normative case study.

Because the hermeneutical methodology proposed in Chapter One requires as searching an exploration as is possible of the relevant historical facts regarding the text, in Chapter Two I will situate the emergence of the *Vajra Rosary* historically in light of divergent emic and etic approaches to it, and will give context as to its place in Buddhist Tantric literature. At the outset, there will be a problem: hermeneutic uniformity in our field is so strong that what has become a received view of Buddhist Tantric history occupies the field. This view mirrors, like any other interpretation, our biases and preconceptions, in this case, I will argue, in favor of written Tantric works as opposed to Tantric practices. In order to open up some perspectival space on the issue, I will try to sketch an alternative interpretation. I will also challenge another aspect of the predominant view of scholars today, which view is, in part, based on the writings of Buddhist scholar Yukei Matsunaga concerning what he finds is an effort by Buddhist

Tantric scholars of the end of the first millennium to privilege one practice lineage over another by (what we would call today, fraudulently) adding the last chapter of the *Vajra Rosary* incorporating terminology from the famous *Pañcakrama* or *Five Stages*, which the Buddhist Tantric tradition attributes, to the Madhyamaka philosopher Nāgārjuna, *circa* 200 C.E.

While we know virtually nothing about who first created or taught the *Vajra Rosary* apart from the Buddhist tradition that says it was Buddha Śākyamuni, in Chapter Two I will survey what we know about the life and times of the *Vajra Rosary*'s translators and sponsors, particularly the King or Prince and monk Pho brang Zhi ba 'od of the kingdom of Gu ge in Nga ri, Western Tibet. Zhi ba 'od (1015-1111) was the grand nephew of King Ye shes 'od (947-1024). Ye shes 'od decreed Buddhism as the state religion in Nga ri and sent Rin chen bzang po to India to gather texts, key events in the second propagation of Buddhism in Tibet, which laid the foundation for Tibetan Buddhism as it exists today. Zhi ba 'od's older brother, Byang chub 'od (983-1077) invited the famed Indian scholar-abbot Atīśa to Tibet. The great temple and translation center built by Ye shes 'od and Rin chen bzang po at Tho ling in Guge—where Zhi ba 'od translated the *Vajra Rosary* from Sanskrit into Tibetan—was among the vital centers of the so-called "Tibetan Renaissance."[6] Ye shes 'od, Atīśa and Zhi ba 'od have generally been considered by Tibetan and Western scholars alike to have been "neo-conservatives," interested in promoting a less antinomian version of Indian Buddhism than we see in some of the Tantric literature. We will see if this characterization is accurate.

[6] *See* Davidson 2005.

Because it is the *Vajra Rosary* we are interpreting, a searching exploration of the text itself is crucial: what the lengthy *Vajra Rosary* actually says in its entirety, on its face and as interpreted in the one commentary written exclusively about the *Vajra Rosary* by the Indian twelfth century pandit Alaṃkakalaśa. This will be presented at length, along with my and others' observations on the subject matter and its systematization, in Chapter Three.

Having proposed and defended an hermeneutic methodology in Chapter One, having explored the historical circumstances surrounding the emergence of the text in Chapter Two, and having discussed in detail the text itself in Chapter Three (as supplemented by the translations in the appendices), in Chapter Four I will apply the algorithmic methodology to the *Vajra Rosary* itself, focusing on Ronald Davidson's interpretation of Tantra as primarily involving "the paradigm of dominance, hierarchy, and regal power" as an example of a contemporary interpretive approach to Tantra, and see if that interpretation initially passes muster (for me, as the initial interpreter) as applied to the *Vajra Rosary* under the hermeneutical algorithm or whether the center of gravity of this text lies elsewhere. The scoring of the algorithm in that regard, important as it is in order to focus and broaden the interpretive discussion, is just the initial step in the hermeneutic process I am advocating. It is followed by the equally important second and third steps of identifying alternative interpretations and then reflecting on the shortcomings of one's initial interpretation and what it tells us about one's own personal and cultural biases and preconceptions.

Gadamer's *Truth and Method* is the classic modern text in the tradition of Western hermeneutics. *Wisdom* and *Method* are the two entities combined in the practice

of Buddhist Tantra. This essay will attempt to bring all of them, truth, method, and wisdom, Gadamer and Buddhist Tantra, together. Indeed, the indifferentiability of truth, wisdom and method is one of the definitions of *vajra*,[7] which is what our text, the *Vajra Rosary,* is all about.

[7] T. Gyatso, 1977, 23.

Introduction to the Text

The *Vajramālā* or *Vajra Rosary*[1] is one of the so-called explanatory Tantras of the Buddhist *Guhyasamāja*, or *Secret Community*, Tantric system. It is found in the Tibetan *bka' 'gyur*, the collection of works attributed to Śākyamuni Buddha that were translated into Tibetan mainly in the last part of the first millennium, and compiled by the Tibetan scholar Bu ston in the fourteenth century. Despite the importance of the *Secret Community* system in Indo-Tibetan Buddhism, and the *Vajra Rosary* in particular, except for relatively brief quotes from the *Vajra Rosary* included in translations of other works, until now it has not been translated into English or any other Western language from the extant Tibetan texts.[2] The Tantra describes how, after the prerequisite preparations and realizations of the Bodhisattva path, through further intense, lengthy and subtle practices of meditation and other activities, one can become a completely enlightened Buddha.

In the beginning of the *Vajra Rosary*, Vajrapāṇi poses eighty-two questions to Buddha, principally about perfection stage, also sometimes called completion stage, yoga. The perfection stages is the second of the two main phases of Tantric practice, the stage actually leading to Buddhahood, the first stage being the creation or generation

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[1] The *Vajra Rosary*'s full title is: *Opening the Secret Essence of All Tantras: The Clear Expression of the Great Yoga Tantra, the Glorious Vajra Rosary*; in Sanskrit *Śrī-vajramālā-abhidāna-mahāyoga-tantra-sarvatantrahṛdaya-rahasya-vibhaṃga*; in Tibetan *rnal 'byor chen po'i rgyud dpal rdo rje phreng ba mngon par brjod pa rgyud thams cad kyi snying po gsang ba rnam par phye ba*. Toh. 445, Ca. 208a-277b. The explanatory Tantra *Vajra Rosary* must be distinguished from the *Vajra Rosary of Maṇḍala Rituals* by Abhayākaragupta *(dkyil 'khor gyi cho ga rdo rje phreng ba zhes bya ba; vajrāvalināmamaṇḍalavidhi;* Toh. 3140*)*, which is also commonly called the *rdo rje 'phreng ba*.

[2] Unlike the *Secret Community Root Tantra*, the *Vajra Rosary* was apparently not translated into Chinese. Tsong kha pa refers to an "Indian book of Paṇḍita Mantrakalaśa" of the *Vajra Rosary*, perhaps indicating that a Sanskrit version was extant at the beginning of the fifteenth century. Tsong kha pa 2010, 62.

stage, where, among other things, the practitioner imagines what he or she will be doing later in the perfection stage. The answers to Vajrapāṇi's questions are given in sixty-eight chapters, which include detailed discussion of yogic meditation and practice involving principally the first stage within the perfection stage, that of vajra repetition or "speech isolation,"[3] but spanning all of the levels of the perfection stage up to the stage of integration, or Buddhahood. One of the Tantra's specialties is describing how to open the heart chakra's "knot" or nerve complex, the key to all of the higher stages; and it also describes how to name and move the subtle neural energy-winds in meditation and how those energy-winds manifest during the cycles of life and death. It covers, among many other things: the initiations of the perfection stage; "great bliss" and the four ecstasies and how they are produced through rarified forms of sexual yoga; the use of mantras; the *Secret Community* body mandala of thirty-two deities; the uniting of the various channels; the six yogas of the perfection stage; the twenty rituals of the creation stage; and the crucial role of emptiness in the overall system.

The leading exponents of the *Secret Community* tradition, Nāgārjuna and, later, Je Tsong kha pa, divide the perfection stage into five divisions: speech isolation; mind isolation; illusory body; clear light; and integration, and there is at least fifteen hundred years of literature on the practices for attaining these states. In so doing, all of these texts follow the *Vajra Rosary*. In his masterwork on the perfection stage, the *Brilliant Illumination of the Lamp of the Five Stages* ("*BIL*"), Tsong kha pa praised the *Vajra Rosary*:

> The savior Nāgārjuna, in condensing the perfection stage into the five stages, follows this Tantra, and also follows this Tantra in the three samadhis, the

[3] So called because at this point, ordinary speech is isolated from its ordinary appearance and the energy-wind that is the source of speech from its ordinary flow. Lodoe 1995, 54.

> four yogas, the thirty-two deities and so forth on the creation stage. Therefore, when His Holiness [Nāgārjuna] in the *Condensed [Sādhana]* becomes an [alchemical] churner, he 'churns the ocean of hidden waters of the *Esoteric Community* with the churning stick of the *Vajra Rosary*.' Thus his statement about finding the art of the practice of the *Community* was not just referring to the creation stage. It explains the many stages of creation and dissolution of the body in terms of the channel-structure, wind-energy-movement, and enlightenment-spirit-substance as a factor in the decisive ascertainment of the internal and external life-energy controls for bringing forth the four voids and the magic body, depending on the life-energy controls of the outer seal of the hidden discipline of desire and of the vajra recitation, and so on. Beyond those two techniques, it further explains the limitless ways for the dawning of realization, and so forth. It also declares many things such as the scheme of consecrations for attaining receptivity for the path condensed into twenty rites, the schemes for condensing the creation stage, and the determinations of the sequence of the two stages. Especially, the sixth chapter explains the keys for the life-energy-control vajra recitation to open up the knot of the heart channels, and the twenty-second chapter section which collects the definitive meaning mantras of the three syllables explains how the unraveling of the heart-channel-knot is the supreme unraveling of a channel-knot of all the wheels [of channels]. It seems that such excellent elucidation is rarely seen. . . .
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> The statement from the translator's colophon of this text that "among explanatory Tantras a better one than this has not previously appeared," still seems to be just how it is.[4]

In the English language literature, the *Vajra Rosary* is known primarily for its explication of the initial "forty syllables" of the *Secret Community Root Tantra*[5] and for being the source of the famous *Lama Chöpa,* or *Guru Puja*, prayer,[6] known by many Tibetans by heart and practiced daily in Dge lugs pa monasteries. Significant as they are, these aspects of the *Vajra Rosary* comprise a small part of its import.[7] The text is a

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[4] Tsong kha pa 2010, 64-65.

[5] *Evam mayā śrutam ekasmin samaye bhagavān sarvatathāgatakāyavākcitta hṛdaya vajrayoṣidbhageṣu vijahāra*, translated by Freemantle as: "Thus have I heard: once the Blessed One was dwelling in the vagina of the Vajra Consort of the Essence of the Body, Speech and Mind of all the Tathāgatas." Freemantle 1971, 27.

[6] T. Gyatso 1988, 11.

veritable encyclopedia of completion stage Tantric practice and Tantric ritual, widely quoted in later commentarial works. [8]

The *Secret Community* or *Guhyasamāja* Tantra is commonly known as the "King of Tantras."[9] "Without relying on its path there is no way to attain supreme enlightenment."[10] Although many Tantras say that they reveal things found in no other

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[7] For example, in his October 2006 lecture at Columbia University, David Gray noted that, for Tsong kha pa, the true "secret" of the *Chakrasaṃvara Tantra* was the union of bliss and emptiness, emphasizing that there was no basis in at least the *Chakrasaṃvara Tantra* for this proposition. This union of bliss and emptiness, however, is explicit in the *Vajra Rosary*:

> The characteristic of illuminating all things is asserted as emptiness. Because of that, great bliss wisdom is the utter purity of clear light, due to which it enters the avadhūtī. It is asserted as perfect emptiness. Expanding the appearance of the conceptuality of all things, it severs all conceptuality. That easing of the conceptual winds is explained as emptiness.

VR 47B. Indeed, the present Dalai Lama's book on the *Lama Chöpa*, which, as mentioned above, is based on the *Vajra Rosary*, is entitled *The Union of Bliss and Emptiness*. T. Gyatso 1988. Because the *Vajra Rosary* is considered by the tradition to be foundational for both "Father" Tantras such as the *Secret Community* and "Mother" or "Yoginī" Tantras such as *Chakrasaṃvara*, the *Vajra Rosary* could well have been the source of Tsong kha pa's statement.

[8] As described by Pan chen bsod nam grags pa in his *Overview of Buddhist Tantra*,

> The special theme of the *Garland of Vajras* [*Vajra Rosary*] is to reveal and clarify the hidden meaning of the 40 introductory syllables of the root Tantra. The remaining chapters all amplify this basic theme as well as teaching 20 rituals for the empowerment and 49 "suchnesses" for the generation stage, together with six yogas, four yogas, and three meditative stabilizations. For the completion stage, the root Tantra is explained by means of five stages, and this is the particular way in which the *Garland of Vajras* teaches the root Tantra. Such a system is not found elsewhere.

Dragpa, 57.

[9] *See, e.g.,* Smṛtijñānakırti, *Commentary on the King of Tantras, the Glorious Guhyasamāja Tantra* (*Śrı-guhyasamāja-tantra-rāja-vṛtti; rgyud kyi rgyal po dpal gsang ba 'dus pa'i 'grel pa*), Toh. 1914; Ānandagarbha, *Extensive Commentary on the Great King of Tantras, the Glorious Guhyasamāja Tantra* (*Śrı guhyasamāja mahātantra raja ṭikā; rgyud kyi rgyal po chen po dpal gsang ba 'dus pa'i rgya cher 'grel pa*), P. 4787; Tsong kha pa, *Extensive Explanation of the King of All Tantras, Guhyasamāja, a Supplementary Commentary of Annotations Revealing the Actual Meaning of the Words of [Candrakīrti's] "Clear Lamp"* (*'byed pa'i mtshan gyi yang 'grel rgyud thams cad kyi rgyal po dpal gsang ba 'dus pa'i rgya cher bshad pa sgron ma gsal ba'i tshig don ji bzhin*). And, as pointed out by Robert Thurman, another reason for the appellation, "King of Tantras" is that the *Secret Community* is the only system to have explanatory Tantras that are themselves revelations of the Buddha. Thurman 1988, 129, 133.

[10] *E.g.* Lodoe 1995, *xvi*, *quoting* Khedrup Je's *Ocean of Attainments of the Generation Stage* (*Bskyed rim dngos grub rgya mtsho*), Lessing 1968, 8.

Tantra, it is generally acknowledged that the *Secret Community* system is explained in more detail than other Tantric systems, which look to the *Secret Community* to explain Tantric theory and practice that is not addressed in other systems.[11] The *Secret Community* system consists of a root Tantra and a number of "explanatory Tantras" (Skt. *vyākhyā* or *ākhyā tantra*; Tib. *bshad rgyud*), of which the *Vajra Rosary* is one. Tibetan scholars consider that there are two main *Secret Community* traditions, the *Jñānapāda* Tradition (*ye shes zhab lugs*), named after *Buddhaśrījñānapāda* (*circa* 900 C.E.) and the *Ārya* or Noble Tradition, so-called after Nāgārjuna, who is often given the epithet, "Noble One."[12] [13] Indeed, the efficacy and importance of the explanatory Tantras as a bridge between the deeply coded *Secret Community Root Tantra* and the personal instructions of the guru is a hallmark of the Noble Tradition.[14]

To my knowledge, the "original" Sanskrit text of the *Vajra Rosary* has been lost, with the exception of the "forty verses" explaining the initial forty syllables, which is quoted in Candrakīrti's *Pradīpoddyotana* or *Brilliant Lamp* ("*PU")*, some brief quotations in Āryadeva's *Caryāmelāpakapradīpa* or *Lamp That Integrates the Practices* ("*CMP*"), and some parts of chapter sixty-eight which are parallel to chapter four of Nāgārjuna's *Pañcakrama* or *Five Stages* ("*PK*").[15] There were several translations into

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[11] Tsong kha pa 2010, 65.

[12] *See, e.g.,* Lodoe 1995, 8; Wedemeyer 2007, 7.

[13] In the Noble Tradition system, the other explanatory Tantras are considered to be the *Tantric Appendix* or *Uttaratantra,* Toh. 443 (ch. 18 of the *Secret Community Root Tantra*, Toh. 442); the *Caturdevīparipṛcchā*, Toh.446*;* the *Saṃdhyāvyākaraṇa*, Toh. 444; and the *Jñānavajrasamucchaya.* Toh. 447. Outside of the Noble Tradition, depending on the commentator, the number of explanatory Tantras varies from four to nine. Nāgārjuna's *Piṇḍikrita Sadhana*, according to the present Dalai Lama, "expounds the main theme of the Guhyasamaja root Tantra based on the interpretation of the explanatory Tantra *Vajra Rosary*." T. Gyatso 1988, 13.

[14] Wedemeyer 2007, 6.

Tibetan, the latest of which appear to date from the eleventh century. As of Tsong kha pa's time, there were several translations of the *Vajra Rosary* into Tibetan;[16] the one I have translated is by Sujana Śrījñana and Zhi ba 'od.[17]

Although the *Vajra Rosary* is widely quoted from and cited, the Noble Tradition commentaries that elucidate one particular text focus on Candrakīrti's *PU*[18] rather than the *Vajra Rosary*. In the *bstan 'gyur* there is just one direct commentary on the *Vajra Rosary*, by Alaṃkakalaśa, whom I will affectionately call Alaṃka in most of this essay.[19] His *Commentary* is incomplete, covering only the first forty-five of the *Vajra Rosary'*s sixty-eight chapters.[20] It is written in the *pañjika* style, and thus comments on all of the words and phrases of the root text, as well as providing more general explanations of the

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[15] My efforts to locate parts or all of the Sanskrit text of the *Vajra Rosary* are ongoing.

[16] In his *BIL*, Tsong kha pa mentions the Zhi ba 'od translation, Tsong kha pa 2010 at 62, the Zhi ba 'od translation edited by Dar ma brtson 'grus, *id*., the translation by Sujana Srijñāna and Zhi ba 'od, *id.*, the "old translations" of the *Vajra Rosary* [and the *CMP*], *id.* at 232, and, referring to a verse concerning the life-energy energy-wind, notes that there are "many different translations" of the verse "in other translations of the *Vajra Rosary* and in [other texts] where it is cited." *Id.,* 258.

[17] Toh. 445. I have translated the Lhasa recension of this Tantra, which is attached as Appendix A to this essay. I have also edited the Tibetan of a good part of the Lhasa *Vajra Rosary* (not attached this essay) to show how the text that Alaṃkakalaśa was commenting on at some points differs significantly from the Zhi ba 'od version. Freemantle noted similar problems in her translation of the Root Tantra. Freemantle 1971, 10, as did the translators of Klong chen rab 'byams's *A Treasure Trove of the Scriptural Transmission.* Rabjam 2001, 453-54. I am in the process of preparing a full critical edition, and ever searching for the full Sanskrit text.

[18] Pan chen bsod nams 'grags pa lists six commentaries on the *PU.* Dragpa 1996, 61.

[19] *Commentary on the Profound Meaning: A Detailed Commentary on the Great Mahāyoga Tantra, the Glorious Vajra Garland* (*Śrī vajramālā mahāyoga tantra ṭika gambhirartha dhivika nāma; Rnal 'byor chen po'i rgyud dpal rdo rje phreng ba'i rgya cher 'brel pa zab mo'i don gyi 'grel pa zhes bya ba*). Toh. 1795.

[20] When editing the Sde dge *bstan 'gyur*, Si tu pan chen chos kyi 'byung gnas (Choky Jungney, 1699 or 1700-1774) noted in his own *karchak* that he was still looking for the rest of Alaṃkakalaśa's *Commentary*; that it goes to 202 *dpe cha'*s, but only gives commentary up to the 47th chapter of the *Vajra Rosary*. He noted that he was still looking for the rest. Personal Communication with Gene Smith, July 5, 2005. As noted below, the *Blue Annals* says that Alaṃkakalaśa died after translating two-thirds of the "*Mahāvibhāśā (Bye-brag bshad-pa chen-po).*" If that text is this *Commentary*, we have an explanation for its being left off in the middle. *See* Roerich 1978, 1053-54.

subject matter.[21] The *Commentary* itself was translated into Tibetan by Alaṃka himself and Steng lo tsā ba a/k/a Tshul khrims byung gnas (1107-90). According to Tsong kha pa, Alaṃkakalaśa's *Commentary* is reliable in that it "does accord with the Noble Father and Sons."[22]

[21] Farrow 1992, *viii-ix*.

[22] Tsong kha pa 2010, 83. Tsong kha pa does, however, criticize Alaṃka's teaching that various types of Tantra are meant for the various castes. Tsong kha pa 1977, 154-55. David Gray notes, however, "Buddhist authors such as Alaṃkakalaśa were surely aware of the orthodox Vedic formulations, and their correlation of the Tantras to the social classes can be seen as an attempt to re-map the social structure in such a way that the brahman's [*sic*] privileged position is undermined… These attempts probably failed to have much effect in India, but that does not make them less subversive." Gray 2001, 354-59.

Chapter One

Interpreting Tantra

How should we understand and interpret Buddhist Tantra? Are its practices to be taken literally or are they symbolic? Are its goals primarily political or polemical, meant to elevate one group of practitioners over another? Is its central motivation economic, candy to attract donors and patronage? Is it largely a reaffirmation of gender roles and the subordination of women? Is its yoga efficacious, or, like some assert about heaven or reincarnation, is it myth, with its primary function to provide valence for an ethical system? Is it all of these things, and, if so, what aspects predominate? In other words, what is Buddhist Tantra, mainly?[23] And what, if anything, should we do about it? And, most importantly, how should we go about answering these and other similar questions?

A. The Problem: Polarized Interpretations of Tantra

Since British and European scholars first encountered Tantric Buddhism in the nineteenth century, scholars have struggled to find ways to reconcile the transgressive practices they found with what they considered to be less problematic, indeed admirable, philosophical and ethical Buddhist doctrines. Initially, their focus was the study of Tantric texts,[24] prompting disgust by some at descriptions of ritual accepted as literal, and

[23] As Gadamer, put it: "Rather, the interpreter seeks no more than to understand this universal, the text—i.e., to understand what it says, what constitutes the text's meaning and significance." Gadamer 1975, 320.

[24] We see this also in the study of Hindu Tantra, in Sir John Woodroffe's translation and publishing of Tantric texts.

apologies by others construing Tantric practice as mainly figurative and metaphoric.[25] Today, although some important work is still being done on the textual and philological side, the analyses of Western[26] academics increasingly focus on the social, economic and historical setting of Tantra,[27] leaving the engagement with the practices described in the texts and descriptions of religious experience to Tibetan lama practitioner exegetes and their Western practitioner students. Perhaps this is not surprising, reflecting the rise of the natural and social sciences and the academy's discomfort with religion.[28]

But such a dichotomy is problematic. How can we make qualitative and quantitative judgments about the meaning or meanings of texts and other cultural phenomena without taking into consideration the force of the subjective religious worldview and practices that are much of the ostensible content of the object of interpretation? To answer the questions posed above requires a *weighing* of radically

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[25] For an excellent summary, *see* Wedemeyer 1999, 27-72.

[26] When I use the term, "Western," I am including "Eastern" commentators expressing views similar to those views that are products of Western philosophy and culture. On this subject, see Wedemeyer 2001; Wedemeyer 1999, 4 n.6.

[27] *See, e.g.,* Bjerken 2005; Davidson 2002, 2005; Faure 1998, 2003, 2009; Lopez 2002; Urban 2001; White 2003, 2007. David Lawrence recently addressed some of these issues in the context of Hindu Tantra. Lawrence 2008, 8-10.

[28] *See, e.g.,* Nagel 2001, generally and at 130; Nagel 2009; Dawkins 2006. Emblematic of this is John Urban's observation that "it became equally apparent that, even if I did have access to a living oral tradition, or even if I were to undergo initiation, this would by no means resolve the epistemological and ethical double bind [that the only way to get accurate information about esoteric traditions is to obtain initiation, which comes with vows of secrecy]. If anything, it would only *compound* it a hundredfold." Urban 2001, 16. Urban's *Economics of Ecstasy: Tantra, Secrecy, and Power in Colonial Bengal* is largely about such secrecy. In the case of Buddhist Tantra, the explosion of printed formerly secret esoteric materials after the Fourteenth Dalai Lama's pronouncement that it was better for these materials to become public in order to counter misinformation about Tantric practice has largely obviated this concern, although there are still the traditional requirements of secrecy following initiation. Given the Fourteenth Dalai Lama's pronouncement, these requirements can be viewed as prudential and common-sense, consistent with the traditional Buddhist notion of *upāya* or skill in method, rather than as categorical in the sense Urban discusses.

different meanings. The making of such value judgments requires *both* a judgment about the usefulness and efficacy of the religious practices *and* their setting in the world of economics, politics and history. We seem to lack the tools to consider these factors together, and this is reflected in a kind of schizophrenic separation of the discourses regarding meaning of Buddhist Tantric texts and practices on the one hand, and their social settings on the other.[29]

Ronald Davidson's *Indian Esoteric Buddhism: A Social History of the Tantric Movement* and his *Tibetan Renaissance: Tantric Buddhism in the Rebirth of Tibetan Culture*, as their titles indeed indicate, are emblematic of the contemporary approach that embodies this kind of discourse-separation. Focusing on the history and social context of the emergence of Buddhist Tantra in medieval India, Davidson has an opinion about the central function of Tantra, here Buddhist Tantra, but in large part does not address the religious function and impact of the practices and worldview he is describing on the actors which are the subjects of his study, ending before it begins any conversation about the weight to be given religious (in this case yogic and soteriological) versus socio-political functionality. Davidson writes:

> [E]soteric Buddhism is a direct Buddhist response to the feudalization of Indian society in the early medieval period, a response that involves the sacralization of much of that period's social world. Specifically, this book argues that the monk, or yogin, in the esoteric system configures his practice through the metaphor of becoming the overlord of a maṇḍala of vassals, and the issues of scripture, language, and community reflect the political and social models employed in the surrounding feudal society.[30]

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[29] John Makransky notes, "Buddhist Studies scholars have been taught how to critically analyze traditional Buddhist understandings of text, lineage, tradition, etc., but only to 'bracket' (and therefore leave unexplored) what underlying truth or value in Buddhism may be left untouched by the critiques, or may even be better revealed through such critique." Makransky 2000, 1-2.

[30] Davidson 2002, 2 (emphasis added). As noted by David Lawrence, "What makes these traditions [Kaula, Krama, Spanda, and Trika; the Vaiṣṇava Pāñcaratra and the Buddhist Vajrayāna] Tantric? Probably the most generic and distinctive feature of these and other traditions that contemporary scholars call Tantra is

And,

> Fortunately we only need read the texts and examine the rituals to determine that Mantrayāna has built into it a sustaining metaphor …. [T]he central and defining metaphor for mature esoteric Buddhism is that of an individual assuming kingship and exercising dominion. Thus the understanding of such terms as tantra in Buddhist India would invoke, first and foremost, the idea of hierarchical power acquired and exercised through a combination of ritual and metaphysical means. Based on this power, the varieties of understanding and of personal relationships become subsumed to the purposes of the person metaphorically becoming the overlord (*rājādhirājā*) for the universal ruler (*cakravartin*).
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> * * * *
>
> As Mahayanists, [monks] also took the vows of the bodhisattva, received bodhisattva ordination, and envisioned themselves as saving all beings through their practices. The esoteric system acts as a third level to the monastic life, in which the others are not discarded, but all are somehow integrated into the regimen.
>
> *In my reading of the material, however, I have been consistently impressed by how these other issues are subordinated to the paradigm of dominance, hierarchy, and regal power*.[31]

The first part of the quote above—making the point that the Tantric yogi's esoteric practice reflects models from the surrounding society—is unremarkable. It is true of course that social practices, be they religious or not, reflect the social matrix in which they arise.[32] Thus, Buddhism has many Indian features because it arose in India.[33]

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the pursuit of *power*." Lawrence 2008, 6. Lawrence, however, criticizes the excesses in this view, of David White in particular, as "exaggerated and prejudicial." *Id.,* 9.

[31] Davidson 2002, 121-23 (emphasis added).

[32] Davidson recognizes this as well, comparing his central metaphor for Tantra to "the appropriation of a democratic structure by the early Samgha, based on similar structures in the political lives of the Śākyas and Licchavis." Davidson 2005, 12.

[33] Gendun Chöpel puts it humorously: "It is known through detailed analysis that the attire of the *saṃbhogakāya* and of the gods is the attire of ancient Indian kings . . . . [I]f the Buddha had been born in China, it would certainly be the case that the *saṃbhogakāya* of Akaniṣṭha would have a long shiny beard and would wear a golden dragon robe. Similarly, if he had been born in Tibet, there is no doubt that in

It is the conclusion at the end of Davidson's second quote – "I have been consistently impressed by how these other issues are subordinated to the paradigm of dominance, hierarchy, and regal power" – that is hermeneutically significant because it is there that Davidson takes an interpretive stand. It is a stand that, to his credit, it refreshingly overt. While there is a great deal of history in *Indian Esoteric Buddhism* and *Tibetan Renaissance*, it is noteworthy that in drawing the conclusions quoted above Davidson in large part steps out of the historical perspective of analyzing what Indian Buddhists thought they were doing and into the role of a contemporary hermeneut reading and interpreting ancient texts: "Fortunately we only need read the texts and examine the rituals to determine that Mantrayāna has built into it a sustaining metaphor."[34] While his conclusion is buttressed with historical examples, these are not examples of historical persons agreeing with his characterizations; rather, he is interpreting history through the lens of his present-day hermeneutics. And Davidson's historical account, perhaps not surprisingly, focuses on examples supporting his hermeneutic stance, although to his credit and as noted below, he does recognize that many of his subjects, such as 'Brog mi, had soteriological motivations along with worldly objectives.

Using a different present-day hermeneutic, one could equally argue that, rather than being primarily a "response to the feudalization of Indian society in the early medieval period," esoteric Buddhism *was* and *is* "a direct Buddhist response" primarily to the problematic aspects of the human condition in general. This hermeneutic would

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Akaniṣṭha there would be fresh butter from wish-granting cows in a golden tea churn five hundred yojanas high, and there would be tea made from the leaves of the wish-granting tree." Lopez 2006, 53.

[34] Davidson 2002, 121, 123.

conclude that esoteric Buddhism succeeded, in this case prevailing not only over non-Buddhist religious forms but also over exoteric Buddhism, because a large number of religious practitioners thought that its response to conditions of instability—*i.e.* the sufferings of old age, sickness and death—was more effective than other approaches. As David Lawrence asks in the context of Hindu Tantra, "While the achievement and enjoyment of practical advantages have long been acknowledged among the possible benefits of the Tantric realization of power (Śakti), why should we assume that soteriology and philosophy are epiphenomena?"[35]

Davidson, aware of a similar line of argument, observes: "Specifically Buddhological writing has occasionally suffered from the supposition that the rise of literary and institutional systems occurs with scant concern for the social world. According to this model, developments in the doctrines or meditative traditions of Buddhism occur principally or exclusively because of internal circumstances."[36] He

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[35] Targeting one of David White's more provocative statements, Lawrence responds with incredulity ("Some of the most brilliant, erudite, and inspired writers in world history, along with centuries of their followers, are assimilated to the commodified banality of contemporary bourgeois bohemian culture"), asserting that White "may be blinded, ironically, to an insidious hegemonic Orientalism or 'ethos-centrism' in our critical reductions of other cultures…." Lawrence 2008, 9-10. Lawrence was addressing White's statement that "Abhinavagupta's 'packaging' of Tantra as a path to ecstatic, exalted god-consciousness was pitched at a leisured Kashmiri populace whose 'bobo' profile was arguably homologous to the demographics of the twentieth- and twenty-first–century New Age seekers who treat 'Tantric sex' as a consumer product. " White 2003, *xiii*.

[36] Davidson 2002, 8. Davidson is addressing the "internalist" hermeneutic while the argument I am describing here, while it has some internalist aspects, arguably primarily emphasizes different social factors than Davidson's: the social factors of old age, sickness and death and so forth versus Davidson's "feudal" instabilities. This raises such issues as the extent to which a strict dichotomy between "internal" and "social" is a false one and whether old age, sickness and death would be as problematic for us if there were no other people involved. At this point, however, we are defining a set of hermeneutic approaches with a heuristic rather than a deconstructive focus.

Of course, there is a balance to be drawn here. Social concerns influence the form of institutions and meditative practices. As Geoffrey Samuel puts it, "The lotus of spiritual enlightenment, as Indian traditions themselves so often remind us, grows out of the mud of everyday life." Samuel, 2008, 11. My point is that there always must be *some* form, and that form will and must always be drawn from the surrounding social and biological facts. But it is not those facts that the institutions or meditations are addressing; it is the more basic human condition underlying those facts: sickness; old age; death; and the first two of the Four

notes that that this kind of hermeneutic was understandable as a corrective to the "diffusionist" view whereby certain scholars found developments in the Buddhist world to be primarily drawn from other religious traditions, but insufficiently reflects the Indian (and then Tibetan) social context.[37] His scholarship is a large step towards redressing that imbalance. But, without a good deal more support and analysis, his hermeneutic stance, like mine and like Lawrence's are all conversation-stoppers to the extent they would subordinate one hermeneutic approach to the other without articulating why.

Another potentially problematic element of Davidson's pronouncement of the subordination of bodhisattva practices to the paradigm of dominance, hierarchy, and regal power is that he doesn't say explicitly to what extent these practices are subordinated. Is it a close call? Or are the bodhisattva practices and ideals mainly window dressing in service of power and domination?[38] In pragmatist terms, what is the "practical cash-value"[39] of those practices and ideals contrasted with the cash-value of power and domination? Even in the rarified world of the academic study of medieval Indian

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Noble Truths, suffering and its origin. As we will see in Chapter Four, Davidson's argument to the contrary has some merit; what I am seeking here is a way for those initially holding whatever view to better converse with one another and understand their own preconceptions and biases.

[37] *Id.,* 8-9.

[38] In the conclusion of *Indian Esoteric Buddhism*, Davidson does not discuss the efficacy or the effect on the actors' behavior of the bodhisattva practices or ideals, or any spiritual efficacy of the practices or literature. He states that Buddhist monks' "imperial paradigm clearly supported an egoistic perspective," while the other aspect of esoteric practice, that of the siddha traditions, "also imported a politics of dominion and control, but for the benefit of the single siddha and not necessarily for the betterment of the surrounding community." Davidson 2002, 337. I am not saying that Davidson is not to some extent correct; but we should *also* look at the bodhisattva ideal as supporting an ego-less perspective and the siddha traditions as importing techniques of achieving subtle meditative states in which reality is grasped in a different way, with concomitant effects on behavior with impacts in the "real" world. These two sides of the question of meaning *are* in dialogue, and we ignore either at our peril if we want to have a more complete understanding of the subject.

[39] James 2000, 28 ("But if you follow the pragmatic method, you cannot look on any such word as closing your quest. You must bring out of each word its practical cash-value, set it at work within the stream of your experience.").

literature and spirituality, "How much?" is a crucial question. For, as in many other spheres of life, based on the answer, we decide whether to buy something or not: be it a pair of shoes; an idea; a spiritual path; a career; a political movement; or a culture.

While, in the conclusory fashion quoted above, Davidson quantifies the importance of domination and so forth, stating that it predominates over the altruistic motivation engendered by bodhisattva vows and practices, what is missing from his analysis—and in this he is typical of not only present day scholarship, but scholarship on religion in general over the past several hundred years—is a determination of the *weight* to be given the soteriological factor. While Davidson acknowledges that there is a soteriological aspect to the behavior at issue, he simply subordinates it to his modernist interpretation focusing on worldly power, largely absent from the traditional Tibetan Buddhist hermeneutic of Tantric practice, without discussing the *weight* of the paradigm of power against that of soteriology.

This is not to say that soteriological and worldly motivations operate in separate spheres. As discussed in depth by Pierre Bourdieu and others, the two are deeply related and interdependent. Soteriological values are formed *within* a social context and not somehow separate from it.[40] And this is also not to say that Buddhist hermeneutics rigidly divides the soteriological and worldly spheres: the Mahāyāna ideal of the bodhisattva is by definition that of an intensely social being, and, as we shall see,

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[40] Gray Tuttle, Personal Communication, 5/10/11. A crucial distinction in any hermeneutic exercise such as this one is that between the closely related concepts of, on the one hand, the meaning of a text, and, on the other, the effect or function or use of a text. While hermeneutics is coextensive with meaning, meaning certainly includes, but is not coextensive with effect, function or use. This is because, as we shall see in constructing an algorithm to yield meaning(s), the meaning of a text encompasses more than its effect in the world; it also is comprised of the intent of the author, the reader, and the semiotic content of the words of the text, among other things.

Davidson is correct in asserting that Tantra "sacralizes" the social world.[41] Yet this does not mean that we are unable to distinguish between the two spheres, interrelated as they are. Indeed, we cannot even discuss the relatedness of the soteriological and worldly, the soteriological and social, the soteriological and economic, or the soteriological and political and so forth, without distinguishing the one sphere from the other and carefully noting and weighing their differences.[42] This is also not to say that the only way to slice the pie as it were is between the soteriological and the worldly. While this particular dichotomy, somewhat reductionist as any such dichotomy must be, is one way to approach something as multifaceted as Tantra, there are many other ways as well.

In *Tibetan Renaissance*, Davidson extends his basic interpretation of the main function of esoteric Buddhism to the events in Tibet during and after the second propagation of Buddhism there. His conclusion there is perhaps slightly more accepting of the soteriological factor, noting that "the doctrine of awakening in its various guises became the social, intellectual, and spiritual catalyst for the renaissance of Tibetan culture."[43] However, despite his generally accurate summary of Tantric literature and ritual,[44] he argues that the primary function of the translators of the esoteric scriptures

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[41] In a similar vein, we might say that thinkers such as Marx and Bourdieu "materialize" the social world.

[42] This is also a different question from the historical one of whether Indians of the first or Tibetans of the second millennium distinguished the soteriological from the social. As discussed below, I believe that they did, as shown by the basic definition of what constitutes dharma and what does not (fame, gain, pain and blame etc.). But in
assessing how *we*, today, do and should interpret texts such as the *Vajra Rosary*, the distinction between the two related spheres is a real and important one, much a part of *our* thinking and culture. *We* are (unavoidably) the ones doing the interpreting now.

[43] Davidson 2005, 376.

[44] Davidson 2005, 36-44. There are some issues here though. For example, Davidson's description of the secret initiation assimilates that ritual to ordinary sexuality with his assertion that the teacher "copulated with the woman and the resulting ejaculate was consumed by the disciple." *Id.,* 37. As we shall see, in the *Vajra Rosary,* ejaculation is considered to be a "fault." *See VR* 91A-91B, ch. 62, vv. 25-26.

was a social one: in some cases to achieve "the de facto aristocratic status that some could not obtain by birth;"[45] and, more generally, that "the translators' efforts were driven mainly by the overwhelming social value placed on the new forms of knowledge to which Tibetans were exposed."[46] In concluding that social factors predominate, Davidson ascribes little or indeterminate value to the yogic or soteriological value of the practices embodied in the scriptures or to the personal transformation contemplated by them.[47] In so doing, Davidson brackets and therefore depreciates both the explicit language of the scriptures and the soteriological and ethical role of Tantra.

Let us take another example. In his *Esoteric Indian Buddhism*, Davidson contrasts Munidatta's commentary on Virūpa's *Drinking Song*, which appears in the *Caryāgītikośa* with the text of the *Drinking Song* itself, concluding, "Many of Munidatta's readings of the *Caryātikośa* poems appear forced and implausible…." and noting that "the forced interpretations of Munidatta are somewhat transparent…."[48]

Per Kvaerne's translation of the text of the *Drinking Song* with Munidatta's Commentary is as follows (the text of the song is in italics; Munidatta's Commentary is in brackets, prefaced by "M"):

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[45] Davidson 2005, 2.

[46] Davidson 2005, 155.

[47] This is not to say that Davidson is not an admirer of the dynamism and creativity of the Tibetan Tantric system. For example, in discussing the role of esoteric Buddhism in the Mongol court, he criticizes prior scholarship for its "solely functional assessment" of the role of 'Phags pa and the relationship between the Sa skya pas and the Mongols, stating "while any discussion of the nature of religious conversion movements must take into account their sociopolitical functions, the nature and dynamic of the system that Phags pa offered surely must have affected the manner of its reception…In reality, the Mongol patronage of Tibetan and Indian Buddhist masters was an important moment in the spread of arguably the most successful form of Buddhism to have matured in India." Davidson 2005, 9.

[48] Davidson 2002, 259-62.

> *One is the liquor-girl* [M: avadhūtī], *(yet) she enters* [M: joins, i.e. causes to enter the central channel] *two houses* [M: Sun and Moon, whereby the svādhiṣṭāna is made firm]; *(she has) neither yeast nor (powdered) bark, (yet) she produces* [M: binds, by means of the Clear Light] *liquor* [M: bodhicitta, i.e. seed, in the aperture of the peak of the Vajra-Jewel].
>
> *Making (it) naturally* [M: Simultaneously-arisen Bliss] *firm* [M: by means of the Bliss of Cessation], *produce* [M: bind] *liquor* [M: the relative bodhicitta by means of the Bliss of Immobility in the svādhiṣṭānacakra], *so that having become free from old age and death, the body (becomes) incorruptible.*
>
> *Having seen the sign* [M: of the Joy of Great Passion] *at the Tenth Door* [M: the Door of Vairocana], *the buyer* [M: gandharvasattva] *has come, (yet) he himself has brought…* [M: having entered by that door, he delights in the drinking of the juice of the Lotus of Great Joy].
>
> *In the sixty-four pots* [M: in the nirmāṇa-cakra with 64 petals] *the display* [M: the seat…] *is arranged; the buyer* [M: gandharavasattva] *has entered, (but there is) no egress.*[49]

Consonant with his view that the new Tantric scriptures consisted of "rather pedestrian ritual exercises" only, turned "into highly challenging intellectual exercises" by subsequent interpreters like Munidatta,[50] Davidson assumes from the outset, without much discussion, that the *Drinking Song* is "a humorous acknowledgment that the famous saint preferred to spend time in a bar rather than in religious environments."[51] He therefore concludes that Munidatta is engaged in "interpretive ballet"[52] "to explain away the great saint's unfortunate preference in dining establishments."[53] Kvaerne himself is more circumspect, noting that "whether the ambiguity with which the words are thereby

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[49] Kvaerne 1977, 81.

[50] *Id.*, 262.

[51] *Id.,* 258.

[52] *Id.*

[53] *Id.,* 261. Davidson makes a similar observation about a different poem in the *Caryāgīti*: "[T]he verse is a relatively transparent allegory, in which the Śabara stands for the esoteric yogin, engaging in promiscuous intimacy with emptiness. Yet the commentator Munidatta cannot leave it there, for his tortuous explanation runs the spectrum from excessive to obsessive, interpreting each item as if it must denote some aspect of the yogic process." Davidson 2002, 228.

invested [by Munidatta] was originally intended by the authors of [the *Caryāgītikośa*], cannot be definitely ascertained, although one may perhaps suspect that this in fact was the case."[54] It is important to emphasize that Davidson doesn't maintain that the *Caryāgīti* verses have no connection to Tantric yoga, for he recognizes their provenance within the Tantric Buddhist tradition.[55] Rather, it is a question of emphasis, of the *weighing* of the importance of different factors; whether Munidatta is "overdoing" it.

It is easy to imagine the arguments supporting Munidatta's and opposing Davidson's reading of the *Drinking Song*: that Virūpa isn't any old drunk; and that according to the *Caturaśītisiddhapravṛtti* (although reliance on that text is not without significant problems[56]), he is the *mahāsiddha* Virūpa, a monk-yogi famed for his practice of the Vajrayoginī contemplations, who devoted himself to that practice for twenty-four years and only started drinking after being commanded by Vajrayoginī to let go of ordinary conceptual thoughts and attaining the state of the Great Seal.[57] Even

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[54] Kvaerne 1977, 17. Kvaerne states that while it was not necessary in his study "to determine… whether the songs originally contained an esoteric message or not, … the *probability* of the songs' having an esoteric aspect will be pointed out in the course of this study." *Id.,* xi (emphasis added).

[55] For example, he notes the frequent use of the esoteric term *sahaja* in these kinds of texts. Davidson 2002b, 47.

[56] The *Caturaśītisiddhapravṛtti* has been translated by Dowman as *The Hagiographies of the Eighty-four Siddhas*. Dowman 1985. The *Caturaśītisiddhapravṛtti* is far from the last word on the subject, if a last word there is. Davidson notes: "Indeed, one of the problems of this era's historical presentation has been the scholars' willingness to rely on certain Buddhist compendia of the saints' lives, especially the *Caturaśītisiddhapravṛtti*...This work must be handled carefully, however, and the present work emphasizes instead the far greater number of individual hagiographies that have circulated in India, China, and Tibet." Davidson 2002, 3. Davidson in fact contends that the *Caturaśītisiddhapravṛtti* "represents the personalities of esoteric saints in an extreme and fictive manner." Davidson 2002b, 46.

[57] Dowman 1985, 43-52. Davidson notes variations of this story from individual hagiographies. Davidson 2005, 52. In his *Tibetan Renaissance*, Davidson reviews the hagiographic evidence about Virūpa at some length, but then concludes that "Virūpa would have been a failed monk, probably not excessively learned, and given to hanging around with the wandering bards for whom composition in Apabhraṁśa was the norm." Davidson 2005, 54. The problem is that, unlike his research on the hagiographic material, Davidson gives no citation or other explanation for his conclusion. *Id.* He does note, however, that "the surviving works attributed to Virūpa reveal a siddha concerned with many of the same issues as were the

disregarding problematic hagiographical descriptions of Virūpa and looking at the text itself, one cannot help but notice what a strange bar this is: the barmaid enters "two houses" and produces liquor though she doesn't have any ingredients; the liquor makes one free from old age and death; the sign is at the tenth door and the liquor is arranged in sixty-four pots, coincidentally the number of channels in the navel chakra that is the key chakra for generation of *tummo*, the key to the higher levels of Vajrayoginī practice. From the perspective of the completion stage yoga described in the *Vajra Rosary*, the chance that this is just about the drinking of an otherwise saintly yogi, hermeneutically retrofitted to fit Tantric practice, seems as slim to me as Munidatta's gloss seems to Davidson.

Clearly, these dramatically differing views are the products of differing hermeneutic approaches. Davidson's is based upon, among other things, "the humanist historical methods generated during the Florentine Renaissance,"[58] while Munidatta's is based upon the Buddhist Tantric hermeneutics of the thirteenth century.[59] In his approach, Davidson explicitly bifurcates "engag[ing] this material with the critical faculties at our disposal…from that required by traditional Buddhism by understanding that reflexive historical awareness is different from direct spiritual experience."[60] In dividing a critical from a religious approach, separating historical "facts" from religious "values," Davidson is employing a time-honored "protective strategy" segregating

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other siddha singers of Apabhraṁśa songs: the evil of non-Buddhist practices, the importance of the guru, the fact that realization is beyond learning, and so forth." *Id.* at 53.

[58] Davidson 2002, 7.

[59] Wedemeyer 2007, 14; Kvaerne 1977, 2.

[60] Davidson 2002, 14.

religious experience from other experience.[61] As Hilary Putnam notes, "The worst thing about the fact-value dichotomy is that in practice it functions as a discussion-stopper, and not just a discussion-stopper, but a thought-stopper."[62] The problem with Davidson's approach is not so much his unremarkable assertion that Western historical awareness is different from Buddhist spiritual experience but his not attending to their connection, which spawns his de-emphasizing the importance *in history* of such spiritual experience.

Yet Davidson acknowledges the limitations of an overly reductionist approach – even one using his "historical epistemology":[63]

> [S]pirituality and its institutionalization seemingly cannot be reduced to naked politics, economics, or power…For its part, esoteric Buddhism and its hagiographical representations were not hatched on the back stairs of a Buddhist monastery a little after midnight, with the purpose of political dominion, economic gain, or the subordination of subalterns at all costs.[64]

So the difference in interpretation in this case does not stem from a simplistic and easily marked failure to grasp that there is another side to the argument, but from a difference in the weight given to, simply put, the political versus the spiritual. And this difference is not at all explained, but, to the contrary, is obscured by Davidson's assertion of the integration of the two: "Buddhist monasteries were not hermetically sealed and isolated from the outside world—indeed, if anything they frequently appear intensified microcosms of that very world in which they dwelt."[65]

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[61] *See* Proudfoot 1985, *xvi,* and discussion *infra.*

[62] Putnam 2002, 44.

[63] Consisting of five basic sources of evidence: documents; epigraphs; archeology; coins; and, peculiar to India, sealings from monasteries, kings and merchants. To this Davidson adds familiarity with the descendants of those under investigation. Davidson 2002, 21-22.

[64] Davidson 2002, 23.

[65] Davidson 2002, 24.

How can these diametrically opposing views-–of Tantra in general, the intention of the Tibetan translators or this particular *Virūpa's Drinking Song*—engage each other, and how we can decide whether a particular interpretation is well founded or not? If we take a traditional Tibetan Buddhist view, how can we relate to Davidson's interpretation, and if we take a modernist or post-modern academic (etic) view, how can we relate to traditional commentary? How can a semiotic proposition be so clear to Davidson, when its opposite is so clear to Munidatta and me, another so clear to White, while the opposite is so clear to Lawrence? Are these differing views reconcilable? If not, how do we go about determining for ourselves, other than by "gut feeling," which views are *right*? How can proponents of these radically differing views better discuss them with each other? Is there a hermeneutical method that would promote these goals?

B. Hermeneutic Systems in Conflict

Let us take a closer look at the development of the two hermeneutical systems most relevant to understanding the *Vajra Rosary,* and, by extension, any Buddhist Tantric text: Indian and Tibetan Buddhist traditional exegesis (which I will call, for now, "theirs") and post-Enlightenment modern or post-modern hermeneutics ("ours").

1. "Theirs": Buddhist and Tantric Hermeneutics in the Indo-Tibetan Tradition

Perhaps largely because of Buddha's lengthy teaching career in which he encountered a plethora of students and teaching situations, the long period prior to the creation of written scripture during which Buddha's teachings were transmitted orally,

subject to the vagaries of memory, and the explosion of canonical scriptures ascribed to Buddha himself emerging with the Mahāyāna movement, hermeneutics is central to Buddhism. Which of the many views found in Buddhist scripture is correct? Final? Is there a "self," as taught in many sutras, or a "non-self" as taught in the *Perfection of Wisdom* Sutras? Should sense pleasures be avoided, as stressed in the *Vinaya*, or embraced, as stressed in Tantra? These issues arose at the outset in Buddhism, in the earliest writings, "raising a very unique case within the history of religions, wherein the founder of a religion is himself aware of exegetical and hermeneutical difficulties regarding his own doctrines."[66] The distinction between interpretable texts and definitive texts is found very early in the Mahāyāna sutras. Lamotte notes that the *Mahāpadeśasūtra*, in which textual authenticity is discussed, "appears in the earliest collections of the sutras and vinayas."[67] The *Bodhisattvabhūmi* discusses why the bodhisattva should rely on definitive sutras,[68] and the hermeneutic discussion explodes with texts like the *Saṃdhinirmocana Sūtra.* At the apex of Buddhist philosophy in Tibet, Tsong kha pa's major work, the *Essence of Eloquence*, *Drang nges legs bshad snying po,* deals almost exclusively with hermeneutics.[69] And, as we shall see, the *Vajra Rosary* itself is self-aware when it comes to hermeneutics.

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[66] Katz 1984, 192, citing Thurman 1978, 22. For this proposition, Katz cites the *Brahmajāla Sūtta*, addressing the question of how to interpret the claims of other Indian religions, and Buddha's discussion with Ānanda in the *Saṃyutta Nikāya* which he explains to Ānanda why he has taught Vacchogotta that there is indeed a self.

[67] Lamotte 1988, 11.

[68] *See* Katz 1984, 194.

[69] *See* Thurman 1984.

Complicating the picture is the primacy in Buddhism of *upāya kauśalya*, *mkhas thabs,* "skill in method." If teachings are geared to the nature of the student, since students differ so dramatically in circumstances and needs, by definition there will be different teachings for different students. This is "the first principle of Buddhist hermeneutics: a teaching is directed in all cases to listeners at a particular stage of spiritual development."[70] Indeed, one could make the argument that *upāya*, method, is the ultimate principle in Buddhism, trumping all others.[71]

A *Buddhist* hermeneutics must be sensitive to the central notion of tolerance of differing teachings, and differing interpretations of the same teachings. Indeed, the notion of *upāya* in a sense contradicts the notion of hermeneutics itself.[72] In a way this is a very modern problem, for as society has become more complex and traditional national and cultural barriers have dissolved, we are faced with a similar problem: the prospect of

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[70] Tatz 1994, 5. The sole exception to this notion is where the intended audience would benefit from a categorical, non-provisional presentation of doctrine, philosophy or institutions, which of course is not an exception at all.

[71] *See generally* Kittay 2005 for a full presentation of this argument. While I understand the serious controversy involving the views of Alexis Sanderson, who asserts that, generally, Buddhist Tantra is a borrowing from Śaiva sources, Sanderson 2009, nothing would be more *upāyic* than doing so. Indeed, Alaṃka notes that the *Vajra Rosary*'s count of the chakras refers to "the nature of counting the chakras known from the systems of others because it is explained in most cases as due to sentient beings living with faith in that." 24A (*gzhan gyi grub pa'i mtha' las grags pa'i 'khor lo rnams kyi grangs kyi ngo bo de la mos pa'i sems can rnams*). While that controversy is beyond the scope of this thesis, I note that one of Sanderson's arguments is that "the requirement that candidates enter a state of possession (*āveśaḥ*) at the time of their initiation…is the hallmark of initiation in the Śaiva Kaula systems, setting them apart from all others. [fn. omitted]." *Id.,* 133. However, that such states spontaneously arise during initiation as the result of good meditation, Personal Communication with H. E. Rizong Rinpoche, 5-29-05, seems to support Ruegg's argument that many of these elements are pan-Indian rather than strictly arising within one tradition or the other. *See* Ruegg 2008. As I argue below, the phenomenological realm cannot be ignored in assessing the meaning of Tantric practices.

[72] This hermeneutic problem is not unique to Buddhism. It is found in the hermeneutics of Ibn Sīnā and Ibn Rushd, among others. As noted by P. Heath, "This statement typifies the hermeneutic approach of the great medieval Muslim philosophers. It contends that religion's truth is expressed hierarchically, since men themselves have various levels of intellectual capability." Heath 1989, 191. Heath observes, however, that this approach remained a minority opinion among Muslims, and even those great philosophers had to remain circumspect in the expression of their hermeneutic opinions. *Id.,*194.

an overriding, nihilistic relativism that defeats any hermeneutic prioritizing. As Nietzsche put it, "it is precisely facts that do not exist, only *interpretations*...;"[73] "There are many kinds of eyes…and consequently there are many kinds of 'truths,' and consequently there is no truth."[74]

In fact, Buddhists were keenly aware of the difficulties posed by views similar to Nietzsche at least one and perhaps two millennia before Nietzsche. This is because Buddhist understandings of karma, epistemology and ontology deal directly with the problem of subjectivity, illustrated in the classic example of a glass of liquid that functions as nectar for the gods, water for people and pus for hungry ghosts.[75] Given the emphasis on function in many Buddhist philosophical systems, the liquid actually functions as the different substances for the different beings. Because of the relatedness of subject and object, one's subjective worldview *literally* determines what is objectively "out there." The same considerations, though perhaps not so dramatic, would apply to the interpretation of texts. Although mainly humans are involved in that task,[76] due to their karmic differences, different people have differing capacities and therefore interpret texts in different ways. The purpose of Buddhist practice and the Buddhist path is to increase human capacity; deployment of *upāya* ensures that the teachings are effective right up to the point of Buddhahood.

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[73] *Notes* (1888), Nietzsche 1968, 458. Elliot Wolfson comments: "Even the proposition that there is only interpretation cannot be taken for granted as a principle of truth…." Wolfson 2005, 114.

[74] Nietzsche 1888, Sec. 540, 80.

[75] *See, e.g.,* Newland 1999, 78-79.

[76] According to tradition, gods and nāgas etc. are sometimes involved, although one of the signature features of being human is that we have the leisure, capacity, and opportunity to engage in this kind of activity.

Buddhist hermeneutics evolved and accommodated this tension between the heuristic and the absolute at its very heart.[77] Thus, Donald Lopez' statement that "it is the experience of the Buddha's enlightenment that provides final validity in interpretation" reflects the need for a Buddhist hermeneutics, for "those who are not yet enlightened must interpret."[78] And Robert Thurman, noting the diverse, contradictory teachings of Buddha, abandonment of any of which would constitute a grave sin, writes:

> And yet a practitioner must settle on one method, technique, or discipline. One can hardly set out to win liberation and enlightenment, or even to live properly in an ethical sense, until one has decided which of these teachings is right, and what ways lead to their realization. Thus it is clear that the hermeneutical enterprise in this tradition is an essential part of practice on whatever level, an essential vehicle on the way of enlightenment[79]

Thus, because the underlying objects of Buddhist practice, liberation, skill in method, the understanding of reality in terms of relativity and the two truths doctrine, among others, while not entirely alien to Western thought,[80] differ significantly from it, Buddhist hermeneutics employs principles both familiar and unfamiliar to those of Western hermeneutics. While a fulsome treatment of Buddhist hermeneutics is beyond the scope of this discussion,[81] I will give a brief summary of the basic principles of

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[77] As noted by Donald Lopez, "Seeking to determine this final view became an overriding concern in Buddhist hermeneutics, and it is not surprising that the doctrine of upāya, of the buddha's skillful methods in teaching the doctrine, which caused such problems in the interpretation of scripture should itself become a principle by which that interpretation was undertaken." Lopez 1988, 5.

[78] Lopez 1988, 7.

[79] Thurman 1984, 113.

[80] *See, e.g.,* McEvilley 2002.

[81] *See generally* Lopez 1988, for a good overview, and Thurman 1984 for Tsong kha pa's masterly treatment of the subject.

Buddhist and Buddhist Tantric hermeneutical principles so that we can appreciate how those traditions approach the interpretation of texts.

As is the case with Western hermeneutics, we can speak of "Buddhist hermeneutics" in a narrower sense, as primarily concerned with the interpretation of texts, or in a broader, philosophical sense, as concerned with the interpretation of experience generally. Nathan Katz notes in this regard:

> It could be and has been argued that, in Buddhism, the problems of hermeneutics are the problems of life itself …. Such a view has much to offer, but to accept it would lead to holding all of Buddhism as precisely a hermeneutic of awareness by virtue of which subjectivist domination of experience is overcome, turning hermeneutics into everything, and thereby reducing discrete fields of inquiry such as psychology or epistemology into hermeneutics. In keeping with the field parameters given by the Buddhist tradition itself, I prefer to use the term 'hermeneutics' specifically in the context of textual interpretation and of reflection upon the nature of this interpretation.[82]

When Katz speaks about the "parameters" of the Buddhist tradition, he is, of course, simplifying the matter.[83] Historically, there are a myriad of "Buddhist" approaches to hermeneutics, and today, Buddhism itself is evolving in many ways, as it always has.

Nevertheless, perhaps the most basic overall Buddhist hermeneutical scheme is found in the *Catuḥpratisaraṇasūtra* and many other Mahāyāna texts:

> Rely on the teaching, not the teacher;
> Rely on the meaning, not the letter;
> Rely on the definitive meaning, not the interpretable one;
> Rely on wisdom, not on consciousness.[84]

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[82] Katz 1984, 189.

[83] His article focuses on Tsong kha pa's treatment of the *yāna* problem in Buddhism.

[84] Lopez 1988, 3; Thurman 1984, 115.

Equally well known is Buddha's admonition, found in the *Gaṇḍavyūha* and other Sūtras that one should rely on his own experience in testing the teachings, as a goldsmith assays gold, by cutting, burning and rubbing it.[85]

These hermeneutic guidelines on their face apply to both the narrow and broad conceptions of hermeneutics. The reference to the "letter" makes it clear that written texts are included, while the balance could apply to both writings and experience generally. The peak of this hermeneutic scheme is "wisdom," which is generally regarded as the wisdom of emptiness, the lack of inherent existence of persons and things demonstrated through reason,[86] or, in the Tantric context, non-dual knowledge of relative things through the five Buddha wisdoms.

Buddhist Tantric hermeneutics has been treated as a special case by both Indian and Tibetan exegetes and by Western commentators. Unlike in exoteric hermeneutics, where the principal issue is whether a textual reading is definitive (*nītārtha, nges don*) or interpretable (*neyārtha, drang don*),[87] esoteric hermeneutics encompasses a more complex approach. Within the Indo-Tibetan tradition, there are different hermeneutic schemes set out in various Tantras and commentaries for each of the four types of Tantras: action; conduct; yoga; and unexcelled yoga.[88] For unexcelled yoga Tantras such

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[85] The *Vajra Rosary* has its own version of this hermeneutic instruction, interestingly in the context of the guru's testing the disciple: "Just as one tests/ A jewel by rubbing/ And gold by burning,/ Similarly, he tests the disciple/ For twelve years." Ch. 2, v. 11. Alaṃka explains that this testing is mutual; the disciple also tests the guru in this manner. Alaṃka 36B.

[86] Thurman, following Tsong kha pa, argues that "'critical reason' is the major authority in Buddhist hermeneutics, in virtually all its systems or schools." Thurman 1988, 119.

[87] Thurman 1984, 253. Tsong kha pa aligns these in the *Madhyamaka* tradition with ultimate and conventional realities, respectively. *Id.* 257-58.

[88] Kongtrul 2005 has a good summary of these at 279-300.

as the *Secret Community* and its explanatory Tantras, including the *Vajra Rosary*, the leading commentary on hermeneutics is Candrakīrti's *PU*, which expands on the "seven-ornament" system introduced in the *Secret Community* Explanatory Tantra *Vajra Wisdom Compendium*.[89] It should be noted that this hermeneutic system is inherently polysemous, setting forth a hierarchy of meanings for persons of different levels of understanding.

The seven ornaments as set forth in the *PU* are:[90]

1. The Five Preliminaries **(***upodghāta***)**: the Tantra's (1) name; (2) audience; (3) author; (4) size; and (5) purpose;

2. The Four Methods *(nyāya)* for becoming a Buddha in accord with Śākyamuni's biography, respectively expressed for the dispassionate and the passionate disciple: (1) lineage, being born as a human, or, for the passionate, generating one's self in the lineage of the five Buddha families; (2) basis, *i.e.* becoming a renunciant, or recognizing that the Buddhas in union are all of one family, (3) definitive word, *i.e.* following the *vinaya* precepts, or accepting the Tantric vows, including pure conduct in the union of vajra and lotus; and (4) means, *i.e.* meditation, or using great bliss in the path of desire;

3. The Six Parameters (*koṭi*): (1) interpretable meaning, generally relating to the creation stage; (2) definitive meaning, generally relating to the completion stage; (3) ulterior statement, for the sharpest disciples, *e.g.* "slay living creatures" as meaning "block karmic energy-winds;" (4) standard statement, for disciples of lower faculties, to teach them the creation stage; (5) literal speech, concerning the three lower Tantras; and (6) symbolic speech, the use of words coined specially for Tantric practice, as found in chapter sixty-three of the *Vajra Rosary*;

4. The Four Procedures (*naya*) of Interpretation (*vyākhyā*): (1) literal meaning, for ordinary people; (2) general meaning, for exoteric Buddhists, lower Tantra practitioners and creation stage yogis;[91] (3) concealed meaning, involving practices of the

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[89] *Jñānavajrasamucchaya.* Toh. 447.

[90] This summary draws on the Tibetan text of *CG*, and Thurman 1988, Kongtrul 2007, 279-91, and Campbell 2009.

[91] Jamgón Kongtrul notes that the modes of general meaning counteract regret or reluctance on the part of practitioners of *sutra*, the lower Tantras of the creation stage of unexcelled yoga Tantra. With respect to the latter, Kongtrul says that instructions to meditate on the tip of the face nose are for those disciples not qualified yet to hear the concealed teachings on sexual desire. Kongtrul 2007, 289.

yogi and yoginī involving sexual desire, and involving vajra repetition and speech isolation, the three luminances of mind isolation, and the illusory body, *i.e.* the first, second and third of the *PK*'s five stages; and (4) ultimate meaning, relating to the fourth and fifth stages of clear light and integration.[92]

5. The Two Forms, of public **(***satravyākhyāna***)** and individual (*śiṣyākhyāna***)** teachings;

6. The Five Persons (*pañcapudgala*), from the superior jewel-like disciple to the more challenged sandalwood; and

7. Performance (*sādhana*) of the two truths, in the context of the illusory body and integration.

At the beginning of his *Commentary*, addressing the first words of the *Vajra Rosary*, *evam mayā śrutam*, etc., Alaṃka sets forth an interpretive hermeneutic similar in some respects to that of the *PU*: an introductory framework, corresponding to the *PU*'s first ornament; a Four Mode system that seems similar to that of the *PU* in nomenclature but different in application; a reference to the Six Parameters (*mtha' drug*); and additional categories for "internal" and "external" meanings:

> [F]irst Vajrapāṇi and Mañjūśrī, the compilers of the *Vajra Rosary Tantra*, having in mind all of the meanings of Tantra, having another framework for the ***introduction***, spoke the first words, "**These words**"[93] and so forth. For this *there are three meanings: the necessary words of introduction; the condensed meaning of the introduction; and its subsidiary meaning*. As for that [***introduction***], first, the teaching to the distinguished audience [has] the nature of putting the person who is the listener at ease, cultivating the command of the Lord, and attaining trustworthy personal teachings. The so-called ***condensed meaning*** has the five perfections. As for that, by "these words," etc. that to be taught is perfect. "**I heard**" and so forth [means] a brief explanation of the perfect retinue. "**At one time**" and so forth [means] the perfect time. "**The Lord**" and so forth, the perfect teacher. "**Was dwelling in the vaginas of the Vajra Queens, the essence of the**

[92] The distinction between literal, exoteric and polysemous esoteric meaning is also found in Ibn 'Arabi's *Bezels of Wisdom*: "It is know that when the Scriptures speak of the Reality they speak in a way that yields to the generality of men the immediately apparent meaning. The elite, on the other hand, understand all the meanings inherent in that utterance, in whatever terms it is expressed." Ibn 'Arabi 1980, 73.

[93] The Tibetans translated *evam,* usually rendered "thus," in English, as in the famous "Thus I have heard," as *'di skad*, "this word" or "these words."

body, speech and mind of all Transcendents" and so forth is said to be the perfect place.

As for that, ***there are two types of subsidiary meanings: the first is the Four Modes of Interpretations*; *the second is*** the division of explanations by nature of being ***internal or external***. As for [the four types of explanations], on the occasion of explaining the **[1]** ***literal meaning***, it is explained by the five types of perfections. By the divisions of suchness [truth body], moon [beatific body], seed [syllable] and body [mandala], the Lord dwelled in the measureless mansion said to be "perfect." Following the explanations of the Six Parameters, you will know and understand.

* * *

By the nature of the seed [syllable], whatever is emanated is the supreme chakra of the gods [protection chakra]. The time of supreme ecstasy is explained as "**at one time**." The Lord of the eight masteries dwells in the place of great bliss. His five aggregates are victors; they are all Transcendents! The essence of his body, speech and mind vajras is great bliss! The well-purified queen is the great seal! The well-purified lotus is the *bhaga*! Vajradhara dwells there, "abiding in the form of a drop" etc. So saying, he taught the meaning by the explanation of the **[2]** ***general meaning***. As for the **[3]** ***secret meaning***, following the fifty-ninth chapter, I will explain the "holy wisdom of *E*" etc. later. As for the **[4]** ***ultimate meaning***, following the *Explanation of the Intent Tantra* [*Saṃdivyākaraṇa-nama-tantra*], [in] Tantra, "**I heard these words**" is explained as "it was a time of a certain clarity" etc.

Here also, because this Tantra is usually to be explained in common with [other] Tantras, following the *Mahāyoga* and *Yoginī* Tantras, I will comment on the introduction. As for that, by "**these words**" [tending] towards **[5]** ***external explanation***, by the conjunctive phrase that teaches the whole meaning of Tantra, he spoke the condensed meaning of Tantra according to the wishes of the Compiler. Thus, "***EVAM***" is just like that in how it compresses, having "a meaning that is not reification or repudiation." "**I**" means by the audience of which I am the main one, including the Transcendents, the Consorts, the Sense Goddesses, the Bodhisattvas and the forms of the Fierce Ones. ….

* * *

When the Lord sits upon a sun and moon seat, which is above a measureless mansion which is generated from the transformation of Vairocana, who is above a mandala of wind, fire, water and earth, which is from the transformation of Amogasiddhi, the Lord of Speech [Amitābha], the Lord of Mind [Akṣobhya] and Ratnasambhava, together with [their] consorts,

> who are generated from the transformation of the seed [syllables] *YAM*, *RAM, BAM and LAM*, [which are] above the seal of the Reality Source generated from the transformation of Great Vajradhara after meditating on voidness, that is the meaning of "**at that time I heard**." "**Dwelling**" means residing by means of the four magical dwellings. As for that, the four magical dwellings means, if someone asks, "the place of teaching and the place of the behavior and the place of meditative equipoise and the place of perfect focus within." As for that, all from the speech of the Lord means the Teacher Presence. All the enlightened activities of body means the Behavioral Presence. All types of mental actions are naturally equipoised in the entrancement in contemplation and concentration are the Entrancement Presence. All actions of mind in entering equipoise in whatever contemplation or concentration by nature are placing in equipoise is the Place of the Equipoise of Those. Naturally purified mental activities regarding the approaching etc. of deities etc. is Inner Focus Presence. That is the **[6] *external explanation***.[94]

Alaṃka also engages in an interpretive/definitive hermeneutic analysis of most of the thirty-two deities in the Noble Tradition *Secret Community* mandala that closely corresponds to that of the *PU*, with the definitive meaning referencing the higher of the five stages, particularly that of clear light and the ecstasies, and the interpretive meaning more geared to the creation stage and more dualistic conceptuality.[95] In interpreting the *Vajra Rosary* as having layers of hermeneutic significance, Alaṃka was not making any sort of bold move; the *Vajra Rosary* itself plays constantly with different levels of

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[94] Alaṃka 4A-6B. The non-italicized bold words are those from the *Vajra Rosary* that Alaṃka is commenting on; the italicized words indicate the hermeneutic structure as stated by Alaṃka. It is not clear here whether Alaṃka means this interpretive scheme to only apply to the introductory words, the *nidāna*, of the Tantra. Even though the nomenclature of the Four Modes as used by Alaṃka is identical to that of the *PU,* there appear to be disparities between the content of those four categories, as discussed below.

[95] For example, in discussing the names of various of the Terrifics, Alaṃka explains, "**Yamantakṛt**" [meaning] the Terminator of Yama. ["]Yama["] is a hell being. He is called that because he is the terminator of concentration through great anger. [This is] the interpretive meaning. ["]Yama["] is ignorance. He is called that because he perfects through the actuality of clear light. [This is] the definitive meaning. "**Prajñāntakṛt**" [means] Knowledge Terminator. ["]Prajñā["] is called that because by eliminating knowledge he terminates addiction. [This is] the interpretive meaning. Because of its nature of completely transforming the active consciousnesses, it is ["]knowledge,["] [and] because it ["]perfects["]by entering clear light, it is the Knowledge Terminator. [This is] the definitive meaning. "**Padmāntakṛt**" is the Lotus Terminator. By being untainted by the addictions like a lotus is untainted by [muddy] water, because of terminating them, he is called that. [This is] the interpretive meaning. ["]*Padma*["] is the place of birth. ["]*Anta*["] is the middle. Because of making [*kṛt*] bliss for him, *Padmāntakṛt*. Alaṃka 160B.

hermeneutic awareness. At the very outset of the Tantra, after watching Buddha's magical displays and emanation of the *Secret Community* mandala, the very first observation of the gathered bodhisattvas is "Oh my! Great Vajra Family! You teach the *meaning* of the Vajra Rosary!"[96] Vajrapaṇi's first question to Buddha Vajradhara is: "I would wish to ask/ A little about the secret/ Of all Buddhas,/ The *concentrated meaning*/ Of all Tantras/…. Please teach me/ The *hidden meaning*/ Of Tantric yoga!"[97] Buddha's response is unequivocally hermeneutical: "The answers to [your] questions,/ The supreme secret,/ Not spoken of anywhere/ In the Action,/ Performance/ Or Yoga Tantras,/ *I will explain clearly and definitively*."[98] The very notion of an "explanatory Tantra" in the Noble Tradition system is hermeneutic, as shown throughout the *Vajra Rosary*: "The *Vajra Rosary's clear meaning*/ *Is totally hidden* in the Tantras…."[99] Throughout the Tantra, Buddha Vajradhara makes statements like this: "The very explicit reality of mantra,/ The supreme secret reality,/ I haven't taught to anyone./ Because of the thought that / No one deserved it, I hid [it] in all the Tantras. // But now I'll teach, / So listen up!"

A good illustration of the playful self-awareness of the *Vajra Rosary* of the hermeneutic polysemy involved in its explanations are the thirteen levels of interpretation of the "union of vajra and lotus," explicitly laid out in chapter fourteen of the Tantra:

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[96] *VR* ch. 1, v. 34 (emphasis added).

[97] *VR* ch. 1, vv. 41, 44 (emphasis added).

[98] *VR* ch. 2, v. 2 (emphasis added).

[99] *VR*, ch. 3, v. 1 (emphasis added).

TABLE 1. Summary of *VR* Ch. 14's "Union of Vajra and Lotus"

Vajra	Lotus
1. Energy-wind discerning *A*	8-petaled heart chakra
2. Energy-wind overcoming the 8 consciousnesses	The 8 conventional consciousnesses[100]
3. Compassion	Emptiness
4. Light rays of the vajra "sun" (penis)	Lotus that opens to them (vagina)
5. Enlightenment spirit (semen)	Crown chakra
6. Speech of the teacher	Listening of the student
7. Serenity (*śamata*, *zhi gnas*)	Insight (*vipassana, lhag thong*)
8. Great bliss in the mouth of the yoginī	The mouth of the student
9. *Lingam*	Yoginī's vagina
10. The 72,000 channels	The channel through which the enlightenment spirit descends
11. Vajra seat above the moon maṇḍala	Yourself as Vajradhara
12. The supreme empowerment[101]	The disciple
13. The syllable *E*	The syllable *VAM*[102]

Various scholars have made observations on particular aspects of comparison of Buddhist and Western hermeneutics, but none has made an in-depth study. Michael Broido notes that, "[I]t seems wholly plausible that we shall be able to make sense of the Buddhist hermeneutic enterprise by seeing it as founded upon intention-ascription."[103] Robert Thurman observes that because awareness of the teachings is a "direct personal process," the Tantric Buddhist hermeneutical circle takes into account both the

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[100] *VR* 26B, ch. 14, vv. 2-3. The eight conventional consciousnesses (the six sense plus the addicted and foundational) engaging in cyclic existence are overcome and united by the energy-wind vajra. *Id.*

[101] The Tibetan here, *dbang bskur*, literally "bestowing power," obviously supports the term "empowerment;" however, this is a translation of the Sanskrit *abhiṣeka*, from the root *sic*, to sprinkle in the sense of anointment. *See, e.g.* Onians 2001 at 164. I use both "initiation" and "empowerment" to describe particular initiatory rituals depending on the context, but, particularly given our sensitivity to power relationships in this context, we should be aware that "empowerment" is very much a loaded term. With that awareness, we can proceed.

[102] *VR* ch. 14, vv. 2-18.

[103] Broido 1988, 87.

relationships between the original author and the original audience and the current teacher and current audience.[104] Thurman notes a number of significant differences between Tantric Buddhist hermeneutics under the Seven-Ornament system and modern Western hermeneutics:

> There is no "romantic" attempt to reconstitute the subjectivity or intention of the teacher via elaborate historical interpolation. Nor is there any idea of the nihilistically relativistic use of the text to constitute an entirely new personal meaning locked away in the subjectivity of the hearer.[105]

In reviewing the above brief summary of Buddhist and Buddhist Tantric hermeneutics, it should be clear at least that the traditional Indo-Tibetan esoteric hermeneutic scheme is not something familiar to the typical Western scholar of religion, much less to a typical intelligent Westerner. One thing is conspicuously absent: there is no hermeneutic principle directed at uncovering meanings associated with "dominance, hierarchy or regal power," or the socio-political, economic, or gender issues of the time.

But we should not be misled by a lack of terminology. Traditional Indian and Tibetan commentators were unaware of the misuse of the Tantras in pursuit of worldly ends. Indeed, this has been the case from nearly the beginning of the migration of Buddhist Tantra to Tibet from India, as we shall see in Chapter Two illustrated, for example, by Ye shes 'od's tenth century *Proclamation* and Atīśa's *Lamp,* for it seems that for almost as long as there has been Tantra, there have been "sinister yogis."[106] Indeed, the traditional Indo-Tibetan hermeneutic system set forth in such texts as the *PU*

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[104] Thurman 1988, 135-136.

[105] Thurman 1988, 135.

[106] *See* White 2009.

and Alaṃka's *Commentary* are intended, in part, to *avoid* such misuse of the teachings by these sinister yogis:

> Having not discovered this great way of sealed import, O Lord of Secrets (Vajrapāṇi), but grasping the literal meaning, they find they will always enter evil paths in their pride of intellect. They rejoice saying, "We are the yogis." … Such persons do not understand the *Guhyasamāja*, the great Communion, they do not preserve the secret as is required to maintain their vows, and they show off to all beings. They despise their guru, who is clearly like the buddhas, and they do not honor him. They become furious in an instant and also lustful in an instant. They have intercourse with unsuitable persons such as mother, sister, and daughter. They kill father and mother and also kill other animals… They will achieve those mantras and mudras to make a living wherever they can get some profit. They will teach the dharma for personal profit. In order to protect them, the esoteric teaching is declared with ulterior intentions.[107]

However, in arguing that the *main* meaning of Tantra is a worldly one, modern commentators like Davidson turn the traditional view completely on its head, arguing in effect that the primary function of Tantra is precisely the "showing off" that the tradition says the Tantric practitioner should not do. It is hard to imagine a less deferential attitude towards an indigenous tradition,[108] and a greater gap between the modern academic approach and that of the tradition. Yet, on the other hand, recognizing that the tradition itself was aware of the potential for Tantra to be cynically employed for worldly benefit opens a window for dialogue between the two views.

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[107] Thurman 1988, 127, quoting from Tsong kha pa's *PU Commentary.*

[108] Even Christopher Hitchens, perhaps the most extreme critic of religion writing today, who writes eloquently about the misdeeds of religion in the worldly sphere, recognizes: "Religious faith is, precisely *because* we are still-evolving creatures, ineradicable. It will never die out, or at least not until we get over our fear of death, and of the dark, and of the unknown, and of each other. For this reason, I would not prohibit it even if I thought I could." Hitchens 2007, 12.

While some Buddhologists explore the hermeneutic of revealing the social, economic and political settings of Buddhism and Buddhist Tantra, "unmasking" it,[109] others have sought to emphasize the validity of the traditional Buddhist and Tantric Buddhist tradition.[110] For example, Robert Thurman writes:

> When I completed my degree several years later and began to teach, I was appalled to discover in the Western literature and in my colleagues' minds a massive and systematic distortion of Eastern civilizations in general, and Buddhist civilization in particular. This misinformation came from the European "authorities" Weber, Freud, Marx, and Durkheim and was perpetuated by contemporary writers, even by translators.[111]

Thurman in fact applies a Tantric sort of hermeneutic to historical and social matters, reversing the cause and effect relationship that Davidson finds so compelling, and painting a radically different picture of the role of monastic institutions. He writes:

> The educational institution Shakyamuni Buddha founded is the Jewel Community…It is an alternative social world founded on enlightenment, detachment, and love (the ordinary social world is founded on delusion, greed, and anger)….
>
> Monasticism is the core of the Jewel Community. It is an original invention of the Buddha. It spurs society to acknowledge that its highest collective interest is none other than the self-fulfillment of its individuals….
>
> The Jewel Community operates on three levels in every culture in which it exerts its influence: revolutionary, evolutionary, and fruitional or millennial….
>
> The millennial phase is *pervasively* nondualistic. During it, the society is able to enjoy the universe of enlightenment, and Jewel Community institutions openly take responsibility for the society's direction….
>
> Tibetan society is the only one in planetary history in which this third phase has been partially reached.[112]

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[109] *See, e.g.*, Lopez 2002; Faure 2009; Davidson 2002 and 2005.

[110] *See* Wedemeyer 2007, 389-90; Broido 1988; Gray 2007; and Thurman 1988.

[111] Thurman 1998, 15.

[112] Thurman 1998, 291-96.

While Thurman does concede here that the millennial phase was achieved in Tibetan society only "partially," his interpretation about what goes on in Tibetan monasteries is the polar opposite of Davidson's. Is there a way to bridge the vast gulf between these two views?

2. Conflicting and Evolving Western Interpretations of Buddhist Tantra

Before turning to the trajectory of Western and contemporary hermeneutics, inasmuch as *we* have begun and continue to interpret *their* hermeneutic, I'll very briefly summarize how Buddhist Tantra has been thus far been interpreted by Western scholars.[113] In so doing I will add some of my own thoughts on some of the more recent issues that have emerged, particularly the contention made by some of my colleagues that Buddhist Tantra is "obscure." Obscurity would indeed pose a problem, perhaps insurmountable, in understanding Buddhist Tantra.

In the early 19th Century, the researches of B.H. Hodgson, which were relied on by Eugene Burnouf, served as the foundation for what Christian Wedemeyer describes as "the first firm distinction between Buddhism as such ('real Buddhism') and forms of Buddhism which are said to be characterized by later Śaivite admixture (Tantric Buddhism)."[114] Writing about the *PK*, Burnouf states: "It is difficult to describe the kind of discouragement that one suffers in the reading of such a composition. There is something saddening in seeing serious men advance the most bizarre words and syllables

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[113] Others have written extensively on this subject. *See, e.g.,* Wedemeyer 1999, 27-72; Lopez 1995; Almond 1988.

[114] Wedemeyer 1999, 29.

as the vehicle of salvation…."[115] In 1879, with the publication of Edwin Arnold's immensely popular *Light of Asia*, lionizing the Buddha as a Lutheresque reformer of ritualized and corrupt Hindu practices, Victorian England was swept with interest in Buddhism, but a Buddhism totally cleansed of the rituals and procedures of Indian or Tibetan Tantric Buddhism.[116] Thus, the outset of the modern Western encounter with Buddhism was characterized by a polarization of views.[117] Christian Wedemeyer notes that nothing much has changed in this regard:

> Buddhist Tantric traditions would seem to offer a distinctive case in which problems of interpretation stand to the fore in a way almost unheard-of in other areas. Though they have been the object of modern academic study for almost 200 years, one continues to confront much confusion and misinformation concerning even the most basic questions of scriptural understanding and religious praxis. Specialist scholars themselves are still divided on the most fundamental issues,…[118]

Wedemeyer draws the distinction between the "literalists" – the early Orientalists like Burnouf, but also including modern scholars like David Snellgrove and Ronald Davidson, who, for different reasons "have argued quite stridently against those who take such terms to mean anything other than what they literally denote" – and the "figurativists," like A. K. Warder, who interpret the more transgressive aspect of the

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[115] Wedemeyer 1999, 40, *quoting* Burnouf, *Introduction*, 557-58.

[116] Almond 1988, 1-4.

[117] The pre-modern Western encounter with Buddhism appears to have been quite different. *See, e.g.* McEvilley 2002. Indeed, one versed in Buddhist thought cannot read Plato's *Republic*, particularly the last chapter discussing the story of Er, and the Stoics without experiencing an overwhelming sense of recognition. But that is beyond the scope of the present study.

[118] Wedemeyer 2007b, 384.

Tantras as metaphor.[119] We can see the distinction clearly in Davidson's rejection of Munidatta's interpretation of Virūpa's *Drinking Song*.

Reviewing this bi-polar approach, Wedemeyer suggests that a better approach would be to consider that the Tantras, or at least the "five meats" ritual in many Tantras discussed in his *Beef, Dog, and Other Mythologies,*[120] might be better considered as connotative rather than denotative language, *i.e.* a second-order system of signification where complex ideas are indicated obliquely. Thus, the reference to the five meats as part of Tantric ritual is "[f]undamentally…a discourse about purity and pollution…not the special, intrinsic qualities of particular meats and bodily fluids."[121] This is because what is occurring in the Mahāyoga Tantric rituals is not at the level of denotative discourse, but in the "more visceral, more instantaneous mode" of "the poetical discourse of connotative semiotics," where the *fact* of the practitioner's higher consciousness is declared: "the enlightened state of communion? It's just a fact: look as I savor this soup of beef, dog, semen, and faeces!"[122] Thus, Wedemeyer concludes that question that has plagued the literalists, "the question which has troubled modern scholarship—is it 'shit' or not?—is beside the point."[123]

Here, in attempting to steer a middle course, arguing that the Mahāyoga Tantras employ connotative semiotics as opposed to literalism or figuratism, I think Wedemeyer

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[119] *Id.* 386-89.

[120] Wedemeyer 2007b.

[121] *Id.*, 403.

[122] *Id.,* 406-07.

[123] *Id.,* 407. Ronald Davidson points out that the ingestion of impure substances—such as feces—was an actual practice of great antiquity in India. Personal Communication 2-16-11.

has overstated the matter a bit. While his argument that the Tantras do in fact draw upon connotative meanings is persuasive, I think he is wrong if he is arguing that such meaning is *the* meaning. As put, is hard for me to see Wedemeyer's connotative semiotic argument as anything other than a form of figuratism, a different form of apology than metaphor, but an apology nevertheless.[124] Perhaps Wedemeyer simply overstated his conclusion in contending that the argument over literal versus figurative meaning is "beside the point"; earlier in the article he states that connotative meaning is "*one* of the primary modes of signification used in the Mahāyoga Tantra system."[125] Here I believe that Wedemeyer was most accurate in recognizing that "the complex, polysemous modes of Tantric interpretation found in the commentarial and hermeneutical literature…sets forth a system of interpretation which allows for multiple, simultaneous readings of individual passages—including, but not limited to, the literal meaning."[126]

Another issue at the core of Western scholarly interpretation of Tantric texts is the concept of obscurity. While scholarly understanding has gone beyond the orientalist notion that in general Eastern thought is "non-rational," this issue still is a live one when it comes to Tantric hermeneutics, and its exploration is key to determining how we should interpret Tantric texts like the *Vajra Rosary*. For example, Robert Thurman, a

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[124] Wedemeyer's explanation, *a la* Barthes, that the second-order meaning of eating the five meats is "It's just a fact: look as I savor this soup of beef, dog, semen, and faeces!" *id.* at 406, assimilates this to any and all other creation stage practices, where the meditator imagines himself as deity or deities performing these and many other practices. While this may be *one* of the intended meanings, particularly as related to the creation stage practitioner, perfection stage yogis, beyond the imagination and ritual phase, would presumably relate to such practices in different ways.

[125] *Id.,* 393 (emphasis added).

[126] *Id.,* 390. Wedemeyer adds that he "does not, however, necessarily mean that these substances were not actually consumed," stressing that for the connotative meaning to obtain "the *possibility* of such consumption must be available." *Id.,* 408 n.40.

defender of the Buddhist tradition's respect for critical reason, writes: "[Buddha's] *root Tantra* texts are hard to understand, encoded purposely to be obscure. His *explanatory Tantra* texts clarify the mystery, but in an enigmatic manner."[127] Similarly, he writes: "To put it very bluntly, if you can say that the aim in the exoteric Centrist and Idealist schools is *clarity*, then the aim in the esoteric Tantric traditions is, 'clearly,' *obscurity*."[128]

David Gray follows Thurman, arguing that Tantric texts "use evocative language, which opens up not one or two but often numerous possible interpretations. This often 'radical use of language' appears to have been a deliberate strategy; Thurman has shown that the Tantras do not even take 'clarity' as their goal, but rather tend toward an obscurity."[129] Gray finds this strategy to be anti-essentialist, the ambiguity itself employed as a liberative technique:

> Tantric language is radical in attempting to subvert the essentialist understanding of language. When it comes to interpretation, the Tantric author, like the poet, would insist that no interpretation is final, due to the multiplicity of meanings inherent in language that is intrinsically unstable. Tantric discourse is not unique in this regard, but only radical: it actively seeks to dispel the illusion of permanence adheres to 'normal' hegemonic discourse. Its purpose here, as Thurman has pointed out, is compassionate; for the Tantric adept all things are theoretically at least conducive to liberation, so it is natural that they would use language as a liberative technique, by emphasizing the poetic, symbolic, de-reifying aspects of language.[130]

Gray's statement that "the Tantric author, like the poet, would insist that no interpretation is final, due to the multiplicity of meanings inherent in language that is intrinsically unstable" strikes me as not well taken. In fact, much of Indo-Tibetan

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[127] Thurman 1988, 129.

[128] Thurman 1988, 121.

[129] Gray 2001, 122.

[130] *Id.,* 123.

hermeneutics is precisely about what interpretation is "final" or "definitive." Gray's statement that such an author would hold that language is "intrinsically unstable" also seems at variance with traditional commentarial works, which view language as "mere designation," conventionally real, and, as Śāntarakṣita would say, "beautiful without examination."[131] There's a limit to finding post-modern arguments in ancient Indo-Tibetan texts. The *difference* between traditional Indo-Tibetan hermeneutics and modern Western hermeneutics is instructive, and conflating them clouds the issue.

Although Gray mentions this radical use of language in the context of the Tantric critique of the hegemonic ideology of caste, it seems to me that his approach is itself somewhat hegemonic: It assumes that because *we* don't understand a single clear meaning, it must be ambiguous or obscure. Multivalent speech or writing is, of course, very different from obscure or ambiguous speech or writing. It is easy to understand how multivalence or polysemy is grounded in the doctrine of *upāya*, as expressed in numerous Buddhist sources: Buddha is speaking to each student in her own language. Obscurity is a different matter.

In his *Great Exposition of Secret Mantra*, Tsong kha pa stresses that even non-conceptual yoga is to be achieved through analysis and reasoning, noting that "the wisdom of individual analysis…is not fit to be forsaken even on the occasion of meditating on suchness."[132] Thomas Yarnall notes in his study of that text that "Tsong Khapa and his sources are clear that while there certainly are some unique Tantric techniques...., such special techniques augment rather than replace analysis, and that

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[131] Skt. *avicāramya,* Tib. *ma brtags nyams dga' ba.*

[132] Yarnall 2003, 251.

indeed the kind of nonconceptual emptiness meditation integrally involved in Tantric practice does also necessarily entail the critical, analytical examination of reality."[133] Of course, Tsong kha pa was writing several hundred years after the later propagation of Buddhism during the time of Zhi ba 'od and Atīśa, and the problem he sought to counter was nihilism and relativism; hence his emphasis on the "appearance side" (*snang phyogs*) as contrasted with the "emptiness side" (*stong phyogs*) of reality.

The *Vajra Rosary* has many references to terminating conceptuality through various yogic techniques,[134] but that is very different than the Tantra itself being obscure. While there is much that is difficult to understand in the *Vajra Rosary*, the difficulty does not arise so much from any obscurity or ambiguity in text as from our own unfamiliarity with the specific states described. These meditative states are only experienced, according to the texts, at very deep levels of concentration and the continuous practice of mantra.[135] Generally speaking, perfection stage yoga (the subject of the *Vajra Rosary*) follows mastery of the subtle creation stage, where one can hold one's attention fixed on a single object visualized at one of one's nose tips, often described as a complete mandala

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[133] *Id.,* 249.

[134] *E.g. VR* 13A, ch. 4, v. 7 ("By terminating all conceptuality…Great bliss is produced"); 14A, ch. 5, v. 14 ("Logicians misled/ By conceptuality,/ Deluded by ignorance,/ Do not know the ultimate/ And hold conventional words/ As a treasure"); 23A, ch. 12, v. 9 (in vajra repetition, "you reverse the energy-winds [and] abandon conceptuality"); I count twenty six references to non-conceptuality in the tantra. Chapter thirty-six of the Tantra is entitled "The Characteristics of Non-conceptuality" and says that "When the non-conceptual/ Energy-wind arises,/ He who knows/ Will attain/ The good state/ Of Vajrasattva." *VR* 57B, ch. 36, v. 1.

[135] *E.g. VR* ch. 3, vv. 14-15, contrasting the ignorance of the logicians with the yogi who practices yoga and contemplation "with supreme subtlety;" *VR* ch. 6, v.3, stating that for those lacking meditative concentration, "the Buddhas are difficult to obtain;" *VR* ch. 6, v. 50 and ch. 14, v. 6, stating that constant repetition of mantra for six months is a prerequisite to opening the heart lotus; which is done as described in *VR* ch. 12, v. 11 in the first month alone by counting 21,600 breaths in the day and night for twenty-seven consecutive days, followed by even more subtle meditative concentrations described in the balance of chapter twelve; and the subtle measure of internal time described in chapter sixteen.

the size of a mustard seed, uninterruptedly for four hours. That is clearly not an easy task, and not something that many people in any culture, let alone ours, have mastered.

I am not arguing that ambiguity or obscurity could not be used as *upāya* in order to release overly literal-minded students from such addictions, like a Zen *koan* used to free a disciple from conceptual thought, but it seems to me that, at the very least, such an *upāya* would be specialized and not of general application. And it should be noted that the use of obscurity is only one method for loosening the hold of conceptuality. The *Vajra Rosary* has a number of such methods.[136] Thus, given the ubiquity of *upāya* and the creativity of those employing it, while I would certainly recognize "the uses of *obscurity* in the art of liberating beings,"[137] before reaching the conclusion that such an *upāya* were behind what appears to us to be obscure language in the Tantras, I would want to explore the possibility that this language simply reflects the multivalence of an "enlightened" or at least a very subtle mind, a mental paradigm differing from ours, something not ambiguous or obscure in the least.

Gray cites Thurman's *Vajra Hermeneutics*, in which Thurman concludes that "this hermeneutic of compassion, this vajra hermeneutic, encompasses the uses of *obscurity* in the art of liberating beings."[138] But nothing in Thurman's article supports the notion that the Tantras are in any way *objectively* obscure, only that they are meant to be *subjectively* obscure for disciples not ready for exposure to all of their multivalent meanings. It is one thing to say that a disciple needs to have her reified sense of "clarity" shattered by an

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[136] *See, e.g., VR* 65A, ch. 46, v. 8.

[137] Thurman 1988, 144.

[138] Thurman 1988, 144.

obscuring teaching; another to say that that teaching is itself obscure.[139] Indeed, the assumption is that this disciple's sense of clarity was not really clarity, which is why it needed to be undermined. "Hidden" is not obscure;[140] "ulterior" is not obscure;[141] "mysterious" is not obscure.[142] That a disciple might need a dose of obscurity because he needs "to break free from his dependency on the guru's authority"[143] makes logical and common sense; but it is not obscure in the least. As Barthes put it, almost as if he were writing about Tantra, the term itself often described in the literature as deriving from Sanskrit *tan,* "weave," "The plural of the Text depends, that is, not on the ambiguity of its contents but on what might be called the stereographic plurality of its weave of signifiers (etymologically, the text is a tissue, *a woven fabric*)."[144] Tsong kha pa's comment that Buddha teaches "mysteriously" to all in order to require reliance on a guru[145] does not mean that the teachings are obscure. It just means one needs a key to open the lock.

Western scholars are just beginning to become familiar enough with the subject matter of the Buddhist Tantras to start to apply "our" hermeneutical outlook to the

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[139] Thurman 1988, 126. To the extent that Thurman *is* saying that the Tantras are objectively obscure, which he may be, Personal Communication 1-25-11, I think he is wrong. No one stresses more than Thurman the importance of reasoning in the Buddhist tradition, and while Tantra can be confusing, it is subject to logical rules and practices and is only effective in the context of understanding the philosophy of emptiness, again, which Thurman emphasizes is the product of reason and, among other things, the law of the excluded middle. Thurman 1984, 140.

[140] Thurman 1988, 125.

[141] Thurman 1988, 127.

[142] Thurman 1988, 138.

[143] Thurman 1988, 138.

[144] Barthes 1977, 159.

[145] Thurman 1988, 138.

Tantras themselves.[146] At the same time, while Tibetan Buddhist teachers have now been in the West for many years, and, with the current Dalai Lama in the forefront, have begun to think deeply about how a scientific approach impacts Buddhist principles and teachings, I am unaware that any have begun to think about how Western hermeneutic principles might apply to Buddhist Tantra. It is time to start thinking about that.

3. "Ours": Western Legal Hermeneutics and the Methodology of Emilio Betti

Hermeneutics has a long history in the West, starting with Aristotle's *Peri Hermeneias*, or even Plato's *Ion.*[147] Paul Ricoeur noted that, prior to what he calls the "deregionalization" of hermeneutics, which he ascribes to Schleiermacher, there were two specific domains of hermeneutics, the philology of classical, mostly Greco-Roman, texts, and the exegesis of the Bible.[148] Interestingly, in antiquity most interpretations of religious texts were figurative rather than literal,[149] but biblical interpretation gave rise to an almost unlimited variation of methods and theories, which extend right up to the present time. Furthermore, because of its long history in our culture, and the impact of science and the scientific method on biblical hermeneutics giving rise to such issues as

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[146] Many Western Buddhist scholars mention, mainly in their introductory remarks, Western hermeneutics, with a nod to Gadamer and Derrida, but I am not aware of anyone who has written in depth on the subject. *Buddhist Hermeneutics,* edited by Donald Lopez, (Lopez 1988) is a step in that direction, but, as its title indicates, its subject is mainly *Buddhist* hermeneutics. Davidson's invoking of Petarch in Davidson 2002 is also a step in that direction, and, as argued in this essay, he is certainly making arguments based on some Western hermeneutical principles, but those principles are not spelled out, and they are not considered in the context of what might be a unified hermeneutical approach to the meaning of Buddhist Tantra.

[147] *See* Russon 1995.

[148] Ricoeur 1981, 45.

[149] Yarchin 2006, *xii*.

the nature of the historical Jesus and its relation to faith, that history has much to teach scholars of Buddhism.[150]

Until fairly recently, the principal domain of non-biblical hermeneutics had been legal hermeneutics, which existed, as long as there have been law and facts, by virtue of the nature of the application of law to fact. For example, the very notion of equity requires interpretation. As Aristotle wrote in *Nichomachean Ethics*: "When the law speaks universally, then, and a case arises on it which is not covered by the universal statement, then it is right, where the legislator fails us and has erred by over-simplicity, to correct the omission—to say what the legislator himself would have said had he been present, and would have put into his law if he had known."[151] In his hermeneutic studies, Gadamer recognized, and in fact titled his discussion of the subject, "THE EXEMPLARY SIGNIFICANCE OF LEGAL HERMENEUTICS." He observes:

> Legal hermeneutics is, then, in reality no special case but is, on the contrary, fitted to restore the full scope of the hermeneutical problem and so to retrieve the former unity of hermeneutics, in which jurist and theologian meet the student of the humanities.[152]

Where legal hermeneutics differs from theological or general hermeneutics is that, in many cases, there is an immediate cash value associated with the interpretation that is considered correct. The judgment or verdict is for the prosecution or the plaintiff, on the one hand, or for the defendant on the other: the defendant goes to jail or suffers some

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[150] Most of which is, unfortunately, beyond the scope of this dissertation, but it remains a very fertile area for exploration. *See, e.g.,* Makransky 2000, 20.

[151] Aristotle 1998 at 133. Not surprisingly, the relationship between law and equity in Roman law was expressed by the term, "interpretation." Bruncken 1917, 149.

[152] Gadamer 1975, 325. Because, for Gadamer, application is an element of understanding itself, because they both apply the law, "mediating between history and the present in the act of understanding itself," he puts "the legal historian and the practicing lawyer on the same level." *Id., xxix*.

other punishment or has to pay money or take an unwanted action. Because the stakes are high, rules of interpretation must be viewed as fair and consistent, so we have evidentiary rules such a hearsay and the best evidence rule, and jury instructions. I think that we in academia can learn something from this.[153]

From biblical and legal themes, over the past two hundred years Western hermeneutics has leapt, like John Wilkes Booth, from the balcony to center stage. On the one hand, Heidegger's "ontological turn" brought hermeneutics into every act of human understanding, while, on the other, Foucault's theory that "power is everywhere"[154] brings that hermeneutic, well, everywhere. Meanwhile, Ricoeur's "hermeneutic of suspicion" has become second nature to any Western academic. Stepping back from an historical vantage point and looking at the substantive content of Western hermeneutics as a collection of approaches to interpretation, one can see a tension between two major views: on the one hand, the mostly modern approach of seeing the process of understanding as an open-ended or "philosophical" process (most associated with Heidegger and his student Gadamer), which, misunderstood, verges on a nihilistic relativism; and, on the other hand, a rule- or principle-based approach, that, if it ignores the open-ended nature of any text, devolves into wooden formulas that lack general applicability.[155] In our era, this tension between the "philosophical" and methodological approaches was best exemplified in the dialogue between Gadamer and the legal historian Emilio Betti. Because I submit that our primary problem today falls in the area of

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[153] As discussed below in the context of Eric Hirsch's writings, any hermeneutical method or rule would be counterproductive were it to eliminate creativity in solving problems. The law takes account of this by the operation of equity on the civil side and jury nullification and the pardoning power on the criminal side.

[154] Foucault 1978, 93.

[155] *See generally* Hirsch 1967, 198-207.

relativism rather than dogmatism, I believe that we have much to learn from Betti's approach, tempered of course by Gadamer's openness and creativity.

Betti, the practical jurist, was quite aware of the virtues of the modern approach, even while seeking useful hermeneutic rules:

> The fact that the hermeneutical task can never be completed entails that the meaning contained within texts, monuments, and fragments is constantly reborn through life and is forever transformed in a chain of rebirths; but this does not exclude the fact that the objectivated meaning-content still remains an objectivation of the creative force of an Other, to which the interpreter should seek access, not in an arbitrary way, but *with the help of controllable guidelines*.[156]

While Betti and Gadamer sparred over the correct approach,[157] Gadamer in general praised Betti's efforts:

> Betti seeks the mean between the objective and the subjective element in all understanding. He formulates a complete canon of hermeneutical principles, at the head of which stands the text's autonomy of meaning, according to which the meaning—i.e., what the author intended to say—can be gained from the text itself. But he also emphasizes with equal clarity the principle of the currency of understanding—i.e., its adequacy to the object. This implies that he views the interpreter's being inevitably tied to a particular perspective as an integrating element in hermeneutical truth.[158]

For his part, Betti criticized Gadamer's *Truth and Method* because it failed to provide for any kind of methodology and jeopardized the objectivity of the interpretation reached.[159]

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[156] Betti 1990, 173 (emphasis added); Bleicher 1980, 68-69.

[157] Gadamer wrote that Betti wrongly "follows the 'psychological interpretation' founded by Schleiermacher, to the extent that his hermeneutical position is constantly in danger of becoming vague….That he can conceive the problem of hermeneutics *only* as a problem of method shows that he is profoundly involved in the subjectivism which we are endeavoring to overcome." Gadamer 1975, 512, 513 (emphasis added).

[158] Gadamer 1975, 511.

[159] Palmer 1969, 54.

According to Betti's hermeneutical method,[160] there are two "objective" and two "subjective" canons, relating respectively to the object of interpretation or to the subject who interprets:

Object-related: 1. Hermeneutical autonomy of the object;
2. Totality and coherence of hermeneutical evaluation.

Subject-related: 1. Actuality of understanding;
2. Harmonization of understanding.[161]

The first of the two object-related canons, the hermeneutical autonomy of the object, is "objective" for Betti in the sense that it must "be understood with reference to that other mind that has been objectivated" in the "meaning-full forms," *i.e.* the text, which are thus "autonomous." The meaning-full forms of the text

> should be judged in relation to the standards immanent in the original intention: the intention, that is, which the created forms should correspond to from the point of view of the author and his formative impulse in the course of the creative process; it follow that they must not be judged in terms of their suitability for any other external purpose that may seem relevant to the interpreter.[162]

In short, then, Betti's first canon is respect for the authorial intent as objectified in the text.

His second canon, "totality and coherence of hermeneutical evaluation," concerns "the relationship of elements between themselves and to their common whole," *i.e.* "the meaning of the whole has to be derived from its individual elements, and an individual

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[160] My principle source here is Josef Bleicher's "condensed summary" in Bleicher 1980 of Betti's voluminous *Allgemeine Auslegungslehre als Methodik der Geisteswissenschaften*, published in 1967, which, unfortunately for me, has not been translated into English.

[161] Bleicher 1980, 37.

[162] Bleicher 1980, 58.

element has to be understood by reference to the comprehensive, penetrating whole of which it is a part."[163] Betti's rationale for this canon, however, is "the pre-supposition that the totality of speech, just as that of any manifestation of thought, issues from a unitary mind and gravitates towards a unitary mind and meaning."[164] To the extent that a text is the product of accretion, or is otherwise issued from several minds rather than a "unitary" mind, one might think that this canon would have to be modified in order to be applicable. However, Betti notes that the "totality" of the "unitary mind" can be construed in broader terms:

> A comprehensive totality can, in an objective reference, be conceived of as a cultural system which the work to be interpreted belongs to, inasmuch as it forms a link in the chain of existing continuities of meaning between works with a related meaning-content and expressive impulse.[165]

Indeed, "interpretations have to be excluded which would conflict with the consistency of a system that has been established," *e.g.*, in legal hermeneutics, "when the application of particular norms derivable from other legal systems— in accordance with the directives of international private law—has to be excluded in so far as it would conflict with the spirit of one's own legal order."[166] Thus, insofar as the text to be interpreted is, as is the *Vajra Rosary*, part of a commentarial tradition (although the Tantra is, in the tradition, the word of the Buddha rather than a śāstra or commentary, by its terms it is commenting on the *Root Tantra*, and is, in turn, commented upon by Alaṃka and Candrakīrti in the *PU*), the commentarial tradition would be, for Betti, the "cultural system," the "totality"

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[163] Bleicher 1980, 59.

[164] *Id.*

[165] Bleicher 1980, 60.

[166] *Id.*

with which the various parts of the work must be consistent. To the extent that *Virūpa's Drinking Song* was also part of such a tradition, the same logic would apply.

Betti's last two canons turn to the subject, the interpreter. The third canon, that of "the actuality of understanding," following Rudolph Bultman's *Geschichte und Eschatologie* (and, of course, echoing Schleiermacher),

> states that an interpreter's task is to retrace the creative process, to reconstruct it within himself, to retranslate the extraneous thought of an Other, a part of the past, a remembered event, into the actuality of one's own life; that is, to adapt and integrate it into one's intellectual horizon within the framework of one's own experiences….[167]

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[167] Bleicher 1980, 62. This is the point where Betti, according to Gadamer, follows the 'psychological interpretation' founded by Schleiermacher," and "imagines that he is ensuring the 'objectivity' of understanding by this strict psychologism with its romantic flavor, an objectivity that he regards as threatened by all those who, following Heidegger, regard binding meaning to subjectivity as mistaken," running the risk of his hermeneutics becoming "vague." Gadamer 1975, 511-512. Betti's response to this is that "the obvious difficulty with the hermeneutical method proposed by Gadamer seems to lie, for me, in that it enables a substantive agreement between text and reader – i.e. between the apparently easily accessible meaning of a text and the subjective conception of the reader – to be formed without, however, guaranteeing the correctness of understanding." Bleicher 1980, 79. To this, Gadamer replies, quoting from a letter he sent to Betti that Betti reprinted in his treatise, "Fundamentally, I am *not proposing a method*; I am describing *what is the case.* That it is as I describe it cannot, I think, be seriously questioned…..Even a master of the historical method is not able to keep himself entirely free from the prejudices of his time…I regard it as a necessary philosophical task to consider why this failure always occurs wherever anything is achieved. In other words, I consider the only scientific thing is to *recognize what is*, instead of starting from what ought to be or could be. Hence I am trying to go beyond the concept of method held by modern science (which retains its limited justification)…" Gadamer 1975, 512-13. Betti, as noted above, was completely aware of the fallacy of an "objective" reading of a text. The main difference between the two seems to be in fact just that difference in purpose described by Gadamer: Betti, like Plato in *The Republic*, is describing what *should be*, in the form of a method; Gadamer, like Aristotle in *Nichomachean Ethics*, is describing what *is*. Harmonizing the two, one might conclude that methods can be useful, and that no method is perfect. (*See* Silverman 1985, 83-84 for a discussion of Gadamer's position on epistemological-methodological hermeneutics.) Another, equally valid, way of looking at it is that Gadamer's primary target, like Nāgārjuna's, is reification, eternalism and dogmatism, so he is more interested in deconstruction than construction, while Betti's, like Tsong kha pa's, is relativism, nihilism and existentialism, so he focuses on construction, *i.e.* method. Both are useful. Given contemporary academia's embrace of relativism, I would argue that we could benefit from a dose of Betti, who was explicit about his mission:

> It is here that the questionable character of the subjectivist position comes to full light; it is obviously influenced by contemporary existentialist philosophy and tends towards the confounding of interpretation and meaning-inference and the removing of the canon of the autonomy of the object, with the consequence of putting into doubt the objectivity of the results of interpretative procedures in all the human sciences (*Geisteswissenschaften*). It is my opinion that it is our duty as guardians and practitioners of the study of history to protect this kind of objectivity and to provide evidence of the epistemological condition of its possibility.

In propounding this canon, Betti tries to steer a middle course between the "objective" approach," "the attempt of some historians to rid themselves of their subjectivity," regarded by Betti as "completely nonsensical,"[168] and the overly subjective approach, where:

> The danger of confusion increases with the possibility of deriving only what is meaningful and reasonable to oneself and of missing what is different and specific in the Other or, as the case may be, bracketing it as a presumed myth. The objection to this is obvious: the texts…are not to be used to confirm already held opinions; we have to suppose, instead, that they have something to say that we could not know by ourselves and which exists independently of our meaning-inference.[169]

Thus, Betti's third canon, while focused on the subjectivity of the reader, directs us to try to enter into "what is different and specific" in the text, and to fuse it with the reader's own experience. This is not so different than the Buddha's advice to examine teachings based on one's own experience: "Just as a goldsmith would test his gold, by burning, cutting, and rubbing it, so you must examine my words and accept them, but not merely out of reverence for me."[170] Betti's emphasis on "what is different" in the text from one's own experience and his caution against "deriving only what is meaningful and reasonable to oneself" serves as an effective defense against unbridled subjectivism.

Betti's fourth and last canon – that of the "harmonization of understanding," also from the point of view of the subject, is similar to the third canon in its respect for the

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Bleicher 1980, 73.

[168] *Id.*

[169] *Id.,* 73. As mentioned above, Gadamer notes that "Betti seeks the mean between the objective and the subjective element in all understanding." Gadamer 1975, 511.

[170] T. Gyatso 2000, 35.

mind(s) that created the text. Betti explains it by stating that "only a mind of equal stature and congenial disposition can gain access to, and understand, another mind in a meaningfully adequate way."[171] This requires technical expertise in the subject matter, which Betti calls "technical-morphological interpretation," and both humility and open-mindedness. It

> involves a stance that is both ethically and theoretically reflective and which can be identified as unselfishness and humble self-effacement, as it is apparent in the honest and determined overcoming of one's own prejudices and certain attitudes that stand in the way of unbiased understanding; seen more positively, this stance could be characterized as a broad viewpoint and wide horizon, an ability that creates a congenial and closely related outlook in relation to the object of interpretation.[172]

This humility of Betti's approach is rooted in his belief that,

> Any given human being may well try to reap the yield of the past, but he will have come to realize that the treasures of thought accumulated through the gigantic effort of past generations contain meaning-contents which, although they are of human origin, are also of overwhelming meaning and significance[173]

and his view that,

> We, in addition, may remind ourselves of the eternal truth expressed by Goethe when he stated that it is only the whole of mankind that is in a position to completely understand a human product.[174]

I would assert that this attitude of respect for the text and its author(s) is a necessary bulwark against an overly subjective characterization of a text or of an

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[171] Bleicher 1980, 84-85.

[172] Bleicher 1980, 85. Gadamer's "fusion of horizons" evinces a similar open-mindedness: "The process leading to fusion of horizons is more like a posture, or a way of conducting yourself, a willingness to open yourself to the standpoint of another so that you can let their standpoint speak to you, and let it influence you. Koch 1996, 177.

[173] Bleicher 1980, 92.

[174] *Id.,* 91.

interpretation of a text, whether the interpretation be traditional, as, for example, Alaṃka's *Commentary* on the *Vajra Rosary* or Munidatta's concerning *Virūpa's Drinking Song*, or modern, as found in the works of Davidson, White and Urban. This open-minded focus on the Other is also key to the promotion of dialogue, revealing what the economists and game theorists call "common prior assumptions" and "posterior opinions," whether the subject be ancient religious texts or contemporary political issues like abortion or the proper role of government in health care.

Betti's methodological approach has become the minority view in philosophy given the overwhelming influence of Gadamer's *Truth and Method*, the philosophical hermeneutics of which were a negative "reflection about what is going on in using 'methods'" in the sciences.[175] Nevertheless, methodological hermeneutics has found a home in the social sciences, which require some measure of objectivity, as a research procedure. As noted by one commentator,

> Heidegger's and Gadamer's critique of objectivity was particularly challenging for social theorists because empirical social science and normative social theory depend ultimately on the characterization of events and situations. At a minimum, the practical need to assess truth-claims and interpretations had to be reconciled with the critique of objectivity.[176]

In research studies based on an hermeneutical approach, whether guided by Betti, Heidegger, Gadamer, or Habermas, there should be a sensitivity to the issue of whose voice is being heard, that of the researcher of that of the subject, as contrasted with a

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[175] Koch 1996, 176, quoting Boyne 1988 at 33.

[176] Mallery 1986, 11. Apel and Habermas proposed such a reconciliation, finding that an objective hermeneutics was possible, but only with keen attention to social class interests and language. *See* Mallery 1986, 11.

phenomenological approach, [177] where the emphasis would be primarily on the essence of the subject's experience as taken in by the reader, with the researcher's preconceptions "bracketed out."[178] This necessary focus on the researcher/subject relationship raises a number of practical as well as theoretical issues.

Because the research report necessarily represents a "fusion of horizons" of the researcher and the subject, in order for the reader to interpret the report, it is essential that she not only learn what the subject said, but also she must learn of the preconceptions and biases of the researcher who is reporting what the subject said:

> Getting into the hermeneutic circle "properly" relies on maintaining a reflexive journal. Thus the daily journal is essential in recording the way in which my horizon is working. I support the notion that credibility is enhanced when researchers describe and interpret their experience as researchers….
>
> Clearly describing procedures, e.g. theoretical notes, methodological decisions, plans for analysis and interpretive frameworks, is an essential part of this research process. For the purpose of this inquiry, trustworthiness may be established if the reader is able to audit the events, influences and actions of the researcher….These decisions are recorded in a journal and made available to the reader in the detailed writing of the study. The study's claim to legitimacy is the appeal to an audit process.[179]

Not surprisingly, this relates directly to the role of "common knowledge" as promoting public agreement that we see in game theory literature, and also to the importance of case studies and the avoidance of selection bias, both of which will be discussed in the next section of this essay.[180] We do see this kind of reflexive approach to some extent, in a

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[177] *E.g.* following Husserl. *See* Koch 1996, 175-76.

[178] Koch 1996, 176.

[179] Koch 1996, 178. This study is of the experiences of older patients admitted to an acute care hospital in England.

[180] *See* discussion at Chapter I, C, *infra.*

vague and unstructured way, in Western scholarship on Buddhism in the form of autobiographical information that is sometimes included even in the most scholarly articles.[181] In my experience, this sort of information is helpful in evaluating the author's point of view. Does the scholar have some economic interest in the position espoused? Has the scholar had some negative or positive personal experience with Buddhism that colors her interpretation? How did the scholar select her sources? Is she a god, human, or hungry ghost?

C. Who Is Right? How to Approach the Irreconcilable

We can now see the problem more clearly. Not only do we have conflicting interpretations as to the meaning of Tantra, but we have entire systems of interpretation that seem to be at cross-purposes. Davidson sees domination; Munidatta the navel chakra's sixty-four petals. Candrakīrti, "in the night-lily garden of the treatises of Nagarjuna…all illumined by garlands of white light,"[182] is seeking the "ultimate meaning," relating to the fourth and fifth stages of clear light and integration; Foucault is

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[181] Repeated regurgitation of autobiographical information in every publication would not be necessary, and might give the wrong impression. In a relatively narrow field, this kind of information can be published once or twice. For example, Donald Lopez's "Foreigner at the Lama's Feet," in Lopez 1995, apart from being illuminating reportage, gives insight into some of his high hopes, initial illusions, formative struggles, realizations and disappointments in the field of Buddhist Studies, and is helpful in understanding his subsequent work. Robert Thurman's life-changing experience when, on an errand for his Buddhist teacher, "I experienced a disorienting sensation that I can only describe as the feeling of a push-pressure on my tailbone suddenly dislodging itself…a weight was lifted from my body, a veil removed from my heart. I had begun to break free from my inherited life of bondage to enter a new life unbound, an infinite life," Thurman 2004, xvii-xviii, fulfills the same function. And Janet Gyatso reveals that what drew her to the subject matter of Jigme Lingpa's spiritual autobiographies was that she was "immersed in a perpetual identity crisis…obsessed over questions regarding the self, memory, destiny, independence, and subjectivity…." J. Gyatso 1998, *xvi*.

[182] Thurman 1984, 183, *quoting* Tsong kha pa describing Candrakīrti.

with the prison guards, "being taught the art of power relations."[183] How do we choose? Can we choose?

1. Are Differing Interpretations Compatible?

We don't have to choose between varying interpretations if they are reconcilable or compatible. As noted by Eric Hirsch,

> [E]very interpretation is partial. No single interpretation can possibly exhaust the meanings of a text. Therefore, to the extent that different interpretations bring into relief different aspects of textual meaning, the diversity of interpretations should be welcomed; they all contribute to understanding. The more interpretations one knows, the fuller will be one's understanding.[184]

Many differing interpretations are compatible. My strongest impression of President Obama is that he is principled and intelligent. Yours may be that he is a skilled orator and politician. Someone else's is that he is black. There is nothing necessarily incompatible about these interpretations. Other differing interpretations *are* incompatible. Hirsch writes:

> [N]ot all plausible interpretations are compatible. An interpretation of *Hamlet* which views the hero as a dilatory intellectual is not compatible with one that views him as a forceful man of action thwarted by circumstances. Both interpretations are plausible, and perhaps both are incorrect, but they are not compatible. Nor would their incompatibility be removed by concluding that both traits are present in Hamlet's character. That compromise would represent a third interpretation distinct from and incompatible with each of the other two.[185]

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[183] Foucault 1978, 295.

[184] Hirsch 1967, 128.

[185] *Id.*

Here, Davidson's interpretation of *Virūpa's Drinking Song* as a simple drinking song is incompatible with Munidatta's interpretation of the song as a reference to Tantric perfection stage practice; his interpretation of the soteriological and spiritual concerns of Buddhist Tantra as subordinate to those of regal power, domination and so forth is incompatible not only with traditional Buddhist hermeneutics but with the Buddhist expressed worldview in general inasmuch as matters concerned with pain, fame, gain and blame are not even considered to be *dharma*. This leads us to the next question.

2. Are Incompatible Views Reconcilable? Information and Bias

a. ***Why do we disagree?***

In economics,[186] where it is difficult to dispute the "cash-value" of the exercise, "it has become an article of faith…that differences in beliefs among rational individuals must be explained by different information."[187] If Davidson and Munidatta had the same information, *i.e.* what the economists and game theorists call "common prior assumptions" or "priors," would they necessarily agree on interpretation, *i.e.* have the same "posteriors"?

Robert Aumann's 1976 statement of the theoretical answer to this question has become classic in the field:

> If two people have the same priors, and their posteriors for a given event *A* are common knowledge, then these posteriors must be equal. This is so even

[186] In his book on an hermeneutical approach to economics, Don Lavoie notes that the "two intellectual traditions … are at this time almost complete strangers: economics and hermeneutical philosophy. Indeed, it is probably fair to say that very few hermeneutical writers have more than a passing familiarity with economics, and the most economists have never even heard of hermeneutics." Lavoie 1990, 1.

[187] Morris 1995, 227.

> though they may base their posteriors on quite different information. In brief, people with the same priors *cannot agree to disagree*.[188]

Thus, if you and I are in possession of the same facts, then eventually we will agree.

Aumann notes that a prior well-known study

> argued eloquently that differences in subjective probabilities should be traced exclusively to differences in information—that there is not rational basis for people who have always been fed precisely the same information to maintain different subjective probabilities.[189]

In Aumann's formulation, the requisite "common knowledge" of posterior beliefs of the parties[190] is as crucial as knowledge of prior assumptions. He explains:

> The key notion is that of "common knowledge." Call the two people 1 and 2. When we say that an event is "common knowledge," we mean more than just that both 1 and 2 know it; we require also that 1 knows that 2 knows it, 2 knows that 1 knows it, 1 knows that 2 knows that 1 knows it, and so on. For example, if 1 and 2 are both present when the event happens and see each other there, then the event becomes common knowledge. In our case, if 1 and 2 tell each other their posteriors *and trust each other*, then the posteriors are common knowledge. The result is not true if we merely assume that the persons know each other's posteriors.[191]

Aumann's theory is not merely that identical prior assumptions are the only way for people to agree; even if they have different priors, if they are engaged in the public

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[188] Aumann 1976, 1238.

[189] Aumann 1976, 1237-38, referring to Harsanyi 1967-68. To the extent that game theory is being employed in the construction of an hermeneutic method, the objectives of each should be considered. Game theory is concerned with rational choices as is hermeneutics; both are deeply linked to common knowledge; but game theory is primarily concerned with action, while, arguably, hermeneutics is concerned with meaning.

[190] "An event is common knowledge among a group of agents if each one knows it, if each one knows that the others know it, if each one knows that each one knows that the others know it, and so on." Geanakplos 1992, 54. Geanakplos notes the utility of common knowledge in illuminating many problems in economics, but concludes that "if everyone can think interactively and deeply all the way to common knowledge, then sometimes puzzling consequences may result." *Id.*

[191] Aumann 1976, 1236.

dialogue and trust each other they will eventually reach public agreement. But whatever the route, exchange of information is key.

> While Aumann's theory seemed initially
>
> to have little empirical relevance…further research has found that similar results hold when many of Aumann's assumptions are relaxed to be more empirically relevant. His results are robust because they are based on the simple idea that when seeking to estimate the truth, you should realize you might be wrong; others may well know things that you do not…
>
> One of Aumann's assumptions, however, does make a big difference. This is the assumption of common priors, i.e., that agents with the same information must have the same beliefs.[192]

Aumann nevertheless noted that despite his theoretical finding that exchange of information would always produce agreement, there was still plenty of public disagreement around, so that information exchange could not be the whole story: "People may also be biased because of psychological factors, that may make them disregard information that is unpleasant or does not conform to previously formed notions."[193] More recent studies have confirmed both the difficulties in ascertaining private information, leading to the breakdown of communications,[194] and to the intractability of bias:

> Our analysis suggests some specific and striking conclusions. It suggests that people are not truthseekers, that they are self-deceived about this fact, and that they are self-deceived in overestimating their relative meta-rationality. Furthermore people seem to want to be this way. We refer not only to people in general, but also to most academics, and to ourselves.[195]

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[192] Cowen and Hanson, "Are Disagreements Honest?," Unpublished Paper, August 18, 2004 (First version April 16, 2001), 3-4; Sethi and Yildiz, 2009.

[193] *Id.,* 1238. This is consistent with Pierre Bourdieu's writings in which he posits that social agents do not act according to rational choice, but according to *habitus*, their "feel for the game." Bourdieu 1990, 66.

[194] *See, e.g.,* Sethi and Yildiz 2009.

[195] T. Cowen and H. Hanson 2001, 3.

The notion that agreement can be reached by parties with significantly different levels of prior assumptions on a given subject is supported both by economic and game theory, as well as common experience. Putting aside the question of bias for the moment, the key factor, seems to be the *observability* of the prior assumptions of each party. As noted by Sethi and Yildiz, "the expected value of public disagreement is greater when priors are unobservable than when they are observable."[196] We see a similar analysis in Clifford Geertz's points about the desirability of Gilbert Ryle's "thick description" in doing ethnography.[197] So, mutual education of those with conflicting views on a given subject about the common prior assumptions of each other clearly remains an important element in reaching agreement, whether it be on the meaning of texts or on political issues. It seems unproblematic to conclude that any solution to the problem of

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[196] Sethi and Yildiz 2009, 1, 4, 13. The subject of Sethi and Yildiz's study is largely group-oriented, focusing on the disparate reactions of the black and white communities to the verdict in the O.J. Simpson case. Professor Sethi himself stressed to me the limitations of his conclusions; that they were applicable only when the prior assumptions were not tied to belief in a strong way, particularly religious beliefs. Personal Communication 10-28-10. Nevertheless, the application of game theory and economics principles seems quite useful in approaching the problem of scholarly disagreement, or, for that matter, any form of disagreement where the actors are posited primarily as Bayesian rational actors. Sethi and Yildiz agree with Aumann on the importance of "systematic biases in computing probabilities, i.e., to differences of priors on the broader state space in which individuals update their beliefs," as well as differences in prior assumptions in the narrower, factual sense. Sethi and Yildiz 2009 at 3.

[197] Geertz 1973, 5-10. As for the application to hermeneutics, Geertz notes that, "Doing ethnography is like trying to read…a manuscript." *Id.*, 10. John Stuart Mill made a similar point:

> When we consider either the history of opinion, or the ordinary conduct of human life, to what is it to be ascribed that the one and the other are no worse than they are? Not certainly to the inherent force of the human understanding….Why is it, then, that there is on the whole a preponderance among mankind of rational opinions and rational conduct? If there really is this preponderance…it is owing to a quality of the human mind, the source of everything respectable in man either as an intellectual or as a moral being, namely, that his errors are corrigible. He is capable of rectifying his mistakes, by discussion and experience. Not by experience alone. *There must be discussion, to show how experience is to be interpreted.*

Mill 1991, 24 (emphasis added).

disagreement must take cognizance of both the prior assumptions, including facts and opinions, of each interpreter, and their respective biases, and should make such assumptions and biases as observable as possible so as to promote a deeper and multifaceted dialogue.

b. *Addressing Bias: Research Methods and the Case Study*

If one interpreter has studied a text or subject in detail while another has not, there will be a significant difference in common priors and thus it may be difficult for them to agree on interpretation unless one party defers to the other in terms of her greater expertise with the text or other object of interpretation. Similarly, if we are talking about a collection of texts, where one party has studied many and the other just a few, we have the same imbalance in prior assumptions. Putting to the side, for the moment, the issue of bias, what steps can be taken to maximize the prospect of agreement on the meaning of a particular text? It seems almost trivial to note that the more each party knows about the text, the more likely it will be that they share assumptions about the text, the common prior assumptions that make common posterior assumptions or conclusions more likely. Here, the social scientific concept of a "case study" is helpful.

A case study is "an in-depth study of a single unit…where the scholar's aim is to elucidate features of a larger class of similar phenomena."[198] Today, in political science and other social sciences, "the case study occupies a vexed position…apt to be described as a 'mere' case study."[199] In the field of Buddhist studies, case studies of particular texts

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[198] Gerring 2004, 1. *See also* Kaarbo and Beasley 1999, 372-376.

[199] Gerring 2004, 1. Compared with other scientific or social scientific research methods, there are significant drawbacks to the case study method. For example, "Case studies lack the usual precautions for

are singularly out of fashion. For example, Ronald Davidson, while praising the work of those who "feel safe in simply continuing the arduous procedure of understanding internal Buddhist systems," notes that the direction of "textual analysis…concerned with the relationships of Buddhas in maṇḍalas, the identity of mantras, and the stratification of texts…has often yielded textual descriptions with a curiously disembodied sense of authorship, and we are left asking questions of audience, language, teaching environments, or patronage."[200]

There are various kinds of case studies, depending on the unit chosen for primary emphasis, recalling that by its definition above a case study involves more than one unit where the primary unit is the basis for generalizations about the subsidiary units.[201] One good example of a recent short case study in our field is Kurtis Schaeffer's "A Letter to the Editors of the Buddhist Canon in Fourteenth-Century Tibet: The *Yig mkhan rnams la gdams pa* of Bu ston rin chen grup."[202] There, Schaeffer translates a short letter of Bu ston's about his method for directing the editing and copying of manuscripts, and then makes some generalizing conclusions about Bu ston's method and motivation and what it says about the Buddhist book production and literature.

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minimizing intentional or unintentional error in the sampling and interpretation of evidence (precautions such as double-blind coding). In the typical situation, the solo investigator—who has a political or theoretical ax to grind—searches through the masses of historical evidence and decides which facts to highlight and which ones to downplay." Tetlock 1994, 520. However, the more rigorous procedures are not available in the context of the interpretation of texts. No research method is without its drawbacks, however. *See, e.g.,* Gable 1994 (comparing case study and survey methods in information systems research).

[200] Davidson 2002, 10.

[201] Gerring 2004, 344.

[202] Schaeffer 2004.

The present study is primarily a case study of the *Vajra Rosary*, generalizing to Buddhist Tantra and, from there, to a more general exercise in the principles of hermeneutics and some observations and comparative analysis regarding perfection stage Tantra. Here, among other things, the in-depth study of the entire text, something that naturally follows a comprehensive translation, will enable me to draw conclusions about the text as an entirety that question the received wisdom of modern scholarship as to the cohesiveness and composition of the *Vajra Rosary* and the relationship between it and Nāgārjuna's *Five Stages*.[203] It will also enable me, for better or worse, to examine and judge the validity of differing interpretations of Buddhist Tantra, particularly insofar as they involve perfection stage texts, by comparing them not only to various elements of the *Vajra Rosary*, but to the text as a whole.

Obviously, the larger the "case," the greater the potential for selection bias as regards the focus of the research. Davidson's *Indian Esoteric Buddhism* and *Tibetan Renaissance* largely consist of historical overview combined with a number of short case studies that are implicitly or explicitly presented as representative of the whole, from which overall conclusions are drawn. Any methodology of choosing representative examples is open to the danger of selection bias,[204] which can undermine the basis for Aumann's "common knowledge." The instant study, to the extent it takes the *Vajra Rosary* as representative of a genre of Tantra or Tantra in general, is no more immune to selection bias than Davidson's works. As we shall see, modern Western hermeneutics

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[203] *See* especially Chapter II, C, 2, *infra*.

[204] Davidson's buttressing of theory with vignettes and selections of various Tantras and other works clearly raises the question of selection bias. Even in a case study, "because [it] refers to a set of units broader than the one immediately under study, a writer must have some knowledge of these additional units (a) to choose a unit for special treatment and (b) identify plausible causal hypotheses. Case studies are not immaculately conceived; additional units always loom in the background." Gerring 2004, 344.

has become extremely suspicious of selection bias and social science of the confirmation bias of experts.[205] This is not to say that the case study is the only method that is likely to reduce the potential for selection bias. There are a number of recognized research methods with the same objective, such as survey methodologies, peer-review, grounded theory and narrative history.[206] Whatever the approach, any hermeneutical method should take cognizance of the interpreter's selection and confirmation biases, and attempt to counter them.

c. *The Normative Case Study*

Although I have not seen it explicitly applied in the context of hermeneutics, much less in the context of Buddhist or Tantric studies, I think that David Thacher's concept of the "normative case study" is relevant here. While Thacher's call for normative standards to be incorporated into case study methodology may be making a virtue of necessity in the sense that normative biases always have the potential to, and in fact do infect the "objectivity" of any study, it also may be indicative that the paradigm shift towards a fulsome analysis of both critical historical and religious factors that I will discuss in the field of Buddhist studies may be of broader application.[207]

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[205] *See, e.g.*, Tetlock 2006, 2000 and 1994; Derrida 2004, 70; Eco 1994, 8.

[206] *See generally* MacCoun 1998.

[207] Thacher also identifies reasoning parallel to that involved in the normative case study in recent discussions of ethical philosophy and the philosophy of science. Thacher 2006, 1634.

Normative case studies help determine the ends, not just the means, of the subject of the study.[208] Describing its benefits, Thacher states:

> Briefly, normative case studies aim to contribute to our understanding of important public values—to ideas, for example, about what a good city neighborhood should provide…, what responsibilities organizational leaders should attend to…, or when military intervention is justified… They make these contributions by bringing into view situations we had not previously envisioned, since normative reflection about such cases can lead us to rethink the ideals to which we are committed if the ideals advise counterintuitive judgments about the case. Because normative case studies combine empirical observation with normative assessment, they are particularly useful for analyzing so-called "thick ethical concepts"—concepts like "courage" that have both descriptive and evaluative dimensions that cannot be disentangled.[209]

While most case studies are descriptive and contribute to explanatory theory, *e.g.* how residents of a village in Nepal conceive of and apply Buddhism in daily life,[210] some case studies can and should contribute to normative theory, *e.g. should* we accept the traditional Indo-Tibetan conceptions of Tantra as expressed in the *Vajra Rosary* and practice them in twenty-first century America? This is closely related to the hermeneutic enterprise: how *should* we interpret Tantra? Just as "social science can investigate values as well as facts,"[211] the hermeneutical algorithm I am proposing here requires us to place *value* judgments on conflicting interpretations.

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[208] *Id.,*1633. This is not to say that normative studies are any less rigorous than interpretive studies: "For normative theory as well as explanatory theory, close analysis of the empirical record is essential." *Id.,* 1644.

[209] Thacher 2006, 1632.

[210] *I.e.* an interpretive case study. Geoff Childs's *Tibetan Diary, From Birth to Death and Beyond in a Himalayan Valley of Nepal* could be interpreted as a case study, yet even there he expresses caution about generalizing his experience in a particular village: "[I]t is nonsense to generalize about 'Tibetan culture' based on information gathered from a single setting…Tibetans are a diverse group whose social practices and cultural beliefs vary from region to region, from valley to valley, and in some cases from village to village." Childs 2004, 5.

[211] *Id.,*1634.

Christian Wedemeyer's description of Columbia's Alex Wayman's works illustrates, in an incipient way, what I am talking about here. Wedemeyer writes:

> Wayman's approach to the study of Tantra is certainly unique, if not downright quixotic. He makes the rather puzzling claim that the goal of scholars of Buddhist Tantra should be that of "recreating the Tantra as a viable entity to be liked or disliked," claiming that "the trouble with so much of the present writing on the Tantra is that the reader is, or should be, left with a feeling of distancy or bewilderment; he is neither genuinely for or against it." It is not clear why such advocacy (or antagonism) should be the role of academic scholars of religion….[212]

While Wedemeyer's quotation of the material leaves something to be desired,[213] I think that it is fair to say that Wayman was making the point, more subtly perhaps than Wedemeyer indicates, that sympathy or antagonism towards Tantra was inevitable for scholarly writers and a desideratum for readers. In so doing, Wayman makes the commonsense presumption that anyone taking the time to research and write, or read about Tantra, particularly given the unusual and antinomian elements of Tantric practice, should come away with a feeling about it, one way or the other. Wayman is saying: give the reader sufficient information, so that she can make the choice: is she for it or against it? Indeed, reading Davidson, Thurman, Wedemeyer, Lopez, and Wayman himself, to give a few examples, one gets a definite impression of whether those scholars are "for or against it," even if, in some cases, the answer should be prefaced by "It's

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[212] Wedemeyer 1999, 65, quoting Wayman 1991, 52.

[213] What Wayman wrote was, "The trouble with so much of the present writing on the Tantra is that the reader is, or should be, left with a feeling of distancy or bewilderment; he is neither genuinely for or against it, *because he does not understand it.*" Wayman 1991, 52. Wayman was primarily criticizing the lack of explanation contained in modern scholars' introductions to Tantric works. Wedemeyer's first quotation of Wayman is also out of context. The complete quote is, "To answer the question posed above ['What is an introduction of the ideas and practices of the Buddhist Tantras?'], an introduction should show what the Tantra is all about, the underlying suppositions, the leading instructions, to the extent of recreating the Tantra as a viable entity to be liked or disliked." Wayman 1991, 51, 52. Wayman does note that "[S. B.] Dasgupta was himself attracted to certain features of the manuscripts which he consulted," and that "Benoytosh Bhattacharyya …was well prepared to explain elements of the system, which he did in various publications with sympathy." *Id.,* 51.

complicated."[214] The problem, and this I believe was Wayman's main point, is that these stances tend to be veiled and covert, and, ultimately, are confusing for the reader.

Moreover, the epistemological foundations identified by Thacher that buttress the normative case study are similar to those identified by Aumann and that underlie the primarily discursive justification for the algorithmic methodology proposed here: "Knowledge is the product of reflection as well as observation (for example, we may revise our views without new empirical observations by considering the implications of one conviction for others to which it has not previously been connected), and observation itself may have implications that ripple through our network of convictions to reshape beliefs that are not themselves directly empirical."[215] Put another way, reflecting on the prior assumptions of others has the power to reshape not only our own posterior beliefs, but even our biases and preconceptions, which is why exposure to the maximum range of possible interpretations in as transparent a way as possible will result in better knowledge, and consequently better interpretations and value judgments.

I would go one step further than Thacher. He distinguishes the interpretive from the normative case study by noting that the interpretive "typically strikes the detached pose; insofar as it focuses on values, it aims to *describe* the values currently held by the subjects of research", while the normative case study "strikes the committed pose; it typically tries to convince its readers that theory should *change* the way they think about their values."[216] I would argue that ostensibly interpretive studies such as, for example,

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[214] This is another reason why autobiographical information provided in their works by some of these scholars is helpful in understanding their writings.

[215] Thacher 2006, 1634.

[216] *Id.,* 1637.

Davidson's or the present study,[217] cannot help covertly having a strong normative content, and the hermeneutical method I am proposing is designed to make the covert overt, so the subject matter can be thoroughly discussed, and a more open normative judgment can be made: in this case, how we *should* interpret the *Vajra Rosary* and Buddhist Tantra.

d. Lost in Translation?

In such a project as this, where the text to be interpreted is being interpreted contemporaneously with the interpreter's translating the text from another language, the hermeneutic issues are greatly magnified. Indeed, as David Ruegg (among many others) notes, "to translate is to betray (*traduttore traditore*)."[218] To assess the validity of such an interpretation, one should ideally be in a position to re-translate the text, identifying the various hermeneutic choices made by the translator/interpreter and assessing their validity. This is where the preparation of critical editions and peer review by competent scholars is key.

Here, the translation/interpretive issues are doubled, as the Tibetan *Vajra Rosary* that I have translated into English is itself a translation from the Sanskrit. Indeed, the many etymological exegeses of the Tantra make no sense unless one back-translates the

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[217] Here I am giving Davidson's studies the benefit of the doubt and considering them to be case studies of the social history of Tantra. Thacher's paradigmatic example of the normative case study is Jane Jacobs's *The Death and Life of the Great American Cities* in which her normative "descriptions of city life helped to clarify the things that are intrinsically good or bad for humans." Thacher 1641. Davidson in fact does this in an eloquent way: **"**Throughout all their activities, the Buddhist religion provided the correct materials for reconstructing Tibetan society, and the doctrine of awakening in its various guises became the social, intellectual, and spiritual catalyst for the renaissance of Tibetan culture." Davidson 2005, 376.

[218] Doboom Tulku 1995, 75.

Tibetan into Sanskrit.[219] The Tibetan *lotsawa*s faced many of the same issues we English-speaking translators face today, regarding literalness, uniformity and the like, in addition to their own hermeneutic reflections. With the over-used term "Indo-Tibetan," we tend to gloss over those issues, assuming a uniformity of hermeneutic approach among Indians and their Tibetan students and successors. Yet, Tibetans brought a host of their own cultural preconceptions and biases to the project, even if their objective was to incorporate an Indian hermeneutic into their own. And those cultural preconceptions and biases were obviously quite different from our own.[220]

There are a host of issues regarding interpretation *via* translation, that could certainly take up a large portion of this essay. However, given the space limitations here, I have attempted to deal with some of these translation hermeneutic issues in the notes to the translations.[221] Generally speaking, Alaṃka's *Commentary* is very useful here because we often see translations into Tibetan of verses from the *Vajra Rosary* that are quoted in the *Commentary* (presumably by Stengs pa lo tsa ba, who worked in tandem with Alaṃka on the *Commentary*) that differ from the translations of Zhi ba 'od and Sujana Śrī Jñāna of the Tantra itself.[222] David Ruegg recommends that contemporary translators of Tibetan into English follow the same procedure as was followed in Zhi ba 'od's and Alaṃka's times: "It seems clear that in many branches of Tibetan studies real

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[219] Chapter three of the Tantra provides many good examples of this phenomenon. *See, e.g.,* Alaṃka 45A. Alaṃka's explanations there and in many other chapters underline the hermeneutic issues involved.

[220] For example, as mentioned above, Tsong kha pa criticizes Alaṃka's categorizing the classes of Tantra according to caste, while David Gray finds such an approach "subversive," which, these days, is something positive. *Compare* Tsong kha pa 1977, 154-55, *with* Gray 2001, 354-59.

[221] *See also, e.g.,* fn. 374, *infra.*

[222] I have prepared, and hope to publish someday, a comparison of Alaṃka's and the Tantra's Tibetan verses from the *Vajra Rosary*.

progress can be made only in close collaboration with Tibetan scholars, following the model, as it were, of the Pandita-Lotsawa teams that produced most of the translations from Indian languages into Tibetan."[223] I have attempted to follow this model here by working closely with Professor Jamspal, yet I must acknowledge that this does not necessarily eliminate any hermeneutic issues; indeed one could argue that it compounds them.

Despite the many levels of hermeneutic difficulty, *we* still are left with the text, how to decide what it means, and how to choose among conflicting interpretations.

4. How Do We Determine Which Views Are Right?

Having identified some parameters from the social sciences concerning what features of interpretation make discourse and eventual agreement more likely, we now turn to the issue of how we determine which view or views are right. By "right," I don't mean in any ultimate or philosophical sense, but "valid," as E.D. Hirsch uses that term,[224] in a practical, culturally bounded way. If one argues that no interpretation is "right," and that we cannot distinguish between them, then there is nothing further to discuss.

Clearly, the issue of whether there is a "right" or "valid" interpretation can be a philosophically sophisticated one, implicating Western philosophical concerns about cultural and other forms of relativism.[225] However, even if one adopts Richard Rorty's

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[223] Doboom Tulku 1995, 79.

[224] Hirsch 1967, 207.

[225] *See, e.g.*, Searle 1995.

view that "reality" is in fact "mirrors all the way down,"[226] one can still advocate that an interpretation is "right" in the sense Rorty calls "irony," in which one recognizes that reality, including one's "most central beliefs and desires,"[227] is purely contingent, yet (or, precisely because of that recognition) fully engage in the transformation of oneself and society based on that reality, on those same contingent beliefs and desires.

Which interpretation is "right" is a hermeneutical question. But whose hermeneutics? Since the question posed is "How do *we* determine…," the answer must be *our* hermeneutics. But what do we mean by "we"? Although that question cannot be ignored today as it might have been in Western writing prior to Kant and Hegel, very few academic writers go there, and none that I am aware of in the field of Buddhist studies. As Donald Lopez wrote in his introduction to *Buddhist Hermeneutics*,

> Among the questions left unexplored in this volume is that of the hermeneutical enterprise not of the ancient Buddhist exegete but of the modern western Buddhologist…. *An attempt to become aware of the prejudices and preunderstandings that the modern Buddhologist, alienated from his subject by both time and culture, brings to the study of Buddhist texts remains a desideratum*.[228]

The answer to the question of who "we" are is significantly different than it was even twenty years ago, and undoubtedly will be different twenty years from now. How can we ignore the impact of global mass media and the Internet on our ways of understanding

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[226] Rorty 1991, 100.

[227] Rorty 1989, *xv*.

[228] Lopez 1988, 9-10 (emphasis added).

and pre-understanding? Moreover, particularly in today's multicultural world, even the "we" applied to scholars in a specialized field is problematic.[229]

As if all this were not daunting enough, the object of this study is the meaning of a text that is a thousand years old, which, along with other texts from that time and place and genre, has been continuously interpreted at least since it was reduced to writing. In studying *their* tradition, should *our* hermeneutics take cognizance of *their* hermeneutics? Are the two unbridgeably different? Is it still *their* tradition? And, if so, who are *they*? The present seventeenth Karmapa, H.H. Ogyen Trinley Dorje, born in 1983, plays video games on Playstation and listens to hip-hop.[230] In the balance of this chapter, we will examine whether there is an approach that can give us some traction in interpreting these texts and perhaps in grappling with some broader issues as well.

5. Are "Religious" and Social Experience Commensurable?

Why is it difficult to find a discussion, much less a determination, of how religious and non-religious considerations are actually weighted in determining the meaning of a text? Is it something about the disciplines themselves – religion and theology on the one hand, and politics, economics and gender studies for example on the other – that they claim sole dominance in their respective spheres? And why does the commensurability and weighing of religious and non-religious perspectives seem an

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[229] As Johann Herder wrote, "Not a man, not a country, not a people, not a natural history, not a state, are like one another. Hence the Truth, the Good, the Beautiful in them are not similar either." Herder, collected works, IV, 472 (*On Thomas Abt's Writings*). *See* Sundaram 1998.

[230] *The Times of India*, Sept. 20, 2009 ("So, for me sometimes it can be a relief, a kind of decompression to just play some video games. If I'm having some negative thoughts or negative feelings, video games are one way in which I can release that energy in the context of the illusion of the game. I feel better afterwards.").

important question now, when, in the past, it was, generally speaking, acceptable to leave each in its own sphere?

As Wayne Proudfoot points out, the terms "religious" and "experience" both have their provenance in the modern West, stemming largely from the work of Schleiermacher.[231] Describing the dichotomous relationship between religious experience and other fields of human knowledge that Schleiermacher's thought embodied, Proudfoot states,

> With this idea of religion as an experiential moment irreducible to either science or morality, belief or conduct, Schleiermacher sought to free religious belief and practice from the requirement that they be justified by reference to nonreligious thought or action and to preclude the possibility of conflict between religious doctrine and any new knowledge that might emerge in the course of secular inquiry.
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> ….[In this view,] [a]ny attempt to assimilate religion to nonreligious phenomena is an attempt to reduce it to something other than it is….[A]ny attempt to explain the experience in terms other than those adopted by the subject, is regarded as reductive, and reductionism in any form is to be opposed.[232]

If the *Vajra Rosary* or Tantra in general primarily describes religious experience, then, under the Schleiermacher model, the interpretations of Davidson and others stressing the social, economic and political setting of Tantra would not be relevant, at least insofar as the focus is on the religious experience. This would be the result, as Proudfoot puts it, of a "powerful protective strategy."[233] While that protective strategy is grounded in a genuine insight—that the interpretation of experience as "religious" by the subject is a primary cause of that experience being religious for the subject—Proudfoot

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[231] Proudfoot 1985, *xii*.

[232] *Id., xiii, xiv*.

[233] *Id., xvi.*

asserts that the argument that the subject's interpretation is innocent of explanatory commitments is not well founded, and that this error, that "religious experience, belief, and practice have their own integrity and can be understood only from the inside,"[234] has characterized the last three centuries of religious thought in the West. Proudfoot concludes: "The authority of religious doctrine or of the religious form of life cannot be disconnected from other concepts and beliefs."[235] Thus Proudfoot offers a strong argument for the relevance of hermeneutically contextualizing a text in the social, economic and political fabric of its times, while allowing for the importance of the subjective religious experience of the practitioner, author or reader.

Proudfoot's fellow Pragmatist, Richard Rorty, finds the notion of commensurability deeply problematic, considering it to be an artifact of the essentialist, representationalist view of Western epistemology he criticizes in his *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*. He writes:

> The notion that there is a permanent neutral framework whose "structure" philosophy can display is the notion that the objects to be confronted by the mind, or the rules which constrain inquiry, are common to all discourse, or at least to every discourse on a given topic. Thus epistemology proceeds on the assumption that all contributions to a given discourse are commensurable. Hermeneutics is largely a struggle against this assumption.[236]

Although one might ascribe his conclusion to his idiosyncratic use of the terms "epistemology" and "hermeneutics," I think Rorty is subtly conflating a number of issues

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[234] *Id.,* 235.

[235] *Id.*, 236.

[236] Rorty 1979, 315-16. I find Rorty's critique of epistemology masterful and useful. As discussed below, his medicine, and that of "the holistic, antifoundationalist, pragmatist treatments of knowledge and meaning which we find in Dewey, Wittgenstein, Quine, Sellars, and Davidson" has been effective, but, as he himself would have recognized, the conversation has moved on.

here, and this leads to a negative view of hermeneutical method that need not be the case, even if one subscribes fundamentally to Rorty's approach. I agree with what Rorty says about a *permanent* framework, which is an easy target for him. But, for Rorty, the alternative is a relativistic ongoing conversation, which, I think, misses something very fundamental about the hermeneutic exercise: that for us humans, its purpose is, at least provisionally, to *choose*, and then, again provisionally, to *act* on that choice. Without taking a stand, we lose the focus that energizes the dialogue.

Moreover, there is something curious and, I believe, circular, about Rorty's position that commensurability is purely a function of an erroneous, essentialist, epistemological view. Following Thomas Kuhn, Rorty argues that what one might say are the "scientific" view and the "edifying" (which for our purposes we could also call "spiritual")[237] view *are in fact* incommensurable in normal discourse, and, for that reason, there is little we can do to choose between them:

> There is no "normal" philosophical discourse which provides common commensurating ground for those who see science and edification as, respectively, "rational" and "irrational," and those who see the quest for objectivity as one possibility among others to be taken account of….If there is no such common ground, all we can do is to show how the other side looks from our own point of view. That is, all we can do is be hermeneutic about the opposition—trying to show how the odd or paradoxical or offensive things they say hang together with the rest of what they want to say, and how what they say looks when put in our own alternative idiom.[238]

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[237] Rorty's distinguishes between "systematic" revolutionary philosophers such as Husserl, Russell, Descartes and Kant and "edifying" revolutionary philosophers like the later Wittgenstein and the later Heidegger, Kierkegaard and Nietzsche. His category of edifying is reminiscent of Pierre Hadot's remark that "for Epicurus just as much as for the Stoics, philosophy is a therapeutics…." Hadot 1995, 87. Indeed, Rorty himself writes: "It would be more precise, but perhaps needlessly long-winded, to call my own little sect 'therapeutic Wittgensteinians.'" Brandom 2000, 79 n.1.

[238] Rorty 1979, 364-65.

For Rorty the only way we could choose between the scientific and the spiritual—without such choice being be a function of "abnormal" discourse—is if there were a Kuhnian paradigm shift that resulted in a reordering of discourse such that the Kantian and Schleiermachian gulf between them disappeared, to be replaced be a new form of "normal" discourse in which these views were commensurable. In the new normal discourse, there would be "theory, methods and standards together, usually in an inextricable mixture…."[239] Thus, Rorty is assuming that the paradigm Proudfoot identifies as Schleiermacher's "protective strategy" is still fully in effect, and thus normal discourse *cannot* measure the scientific against the spiritual and vice-versa.

I think there are two answers to Rorty on this score. First, I think that in our little field of Buddhist and Buddhist Tantric studies, there is ample evidence that the wall has been breached and the paradigm is shifting. That the dominant writings in the field are by scholars, such as Davidson and others, whose views encompass social scientific, historical and other modern academic disciplines, and who in many (but not all) respects trample any protective strategy, shows this. So does the present Dalai Lama's emphasis on science, shown by his avid participation in scientific discussions such as the *Mind and Life Institute*, his publication of books like *The Universe in a Single Atom*, and his many statements that science and religion are both valid spheres of inquiry. Indeed, the invasion of a formerly sacrosanct religious sphere has caused the need for a new paradigm, precisely because any intelligent "religious" person considering the matter can no longer ignore the secular point of view. As Kuhn and Rorty note, when there is a new

[239] Rorty 1979, 326, *quoting* Kuhn 1970, 108-09.

paradigm, there is a need for a new method which recognizes as normal the commensurability of religious and non-religious, indeed anti-religious, discourse.[240]

Beyond our little field, this need can be seen in the wider world. In the United States, this issue has emerged in the course of the creationist position, which plays itself out before school boards and courts. Boards and judges must make decisions weighing secular and religious considerations. The abortion debate involves the same conflicts. Both involve the breakdown of communication, because, while the paradigm is shifting, we do not yet have a methodology to even help us discuss, let alone weigh, religious and secular or scientific concerns surrounding these issues. Worldwide, a resurgent, fundamentalist, and politically-energized Islam challenges our fundamental notions about the role of religion, but we do not have a way to talk about it, let alone determine which religious considerations should be legitimate in which spheres, and how to weigh those considerations along with and, yes, even against secular and scientific ones. Secular-minded people can no longer ignore the impact of the religious point of view. Religious-minded people are hard-put, particularly in the age of mass media, the Internet and social networks, to ignore the ubiquitous challenges to their faith. Nowadays, most people must decide, on a daily basis, how much weight to give religion versus other points of view: there is no way around it.

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[240] In 1999, in his well-known *Orientalism and Religion,* Richard King argued for a confluence if not commensurability of religious and non-religious categories, furthering the paradigm shift in our field:

> I wish to argue for an awareness of the mutual imbrication of religion, culture and power as categories. This is not to say that religion and culture can be reduced to a set of power relations but rather that religion and culture are the field in which power relations operate. Materialist and cultural analyses are not mutually exclusive, 'either/or' explanations.

King 1999, 1.

The second answer to Rorty's critique of method is drawn from Buddhist *Madhyamaka* philosophy and Rorty's own writings, and, indeed, the response is fairly obvious from that point of view. Rorty's approach to ontology is quite *Madhyamaka*-esque:

> Just as, for the usual Sartrean reasons, there is no perduring, intrinsic character of a human self – no 'real me,' no me *en soi*, for myself to grasp – so there is, for the usual Wittgensteinian-Sellarsian psychological nominalist reasons, no intrinsic character of *any* object to grasp. . . .[241]

And the *Madhyamaka* notion of pure conventionality is very similar to Rorty's "web of belief":

> For once one sees inquiry as reweaving beliefs rather than discovering the natures of objects, there are no candidates for self-subsistent, independent entities save individual beliefs -- individual sentential attitudes. But these are very bad candidates indeed. For a belief is what it is only by virtue of its position in a web.[242]

Rorty's objections to method evaporate if the method envisioned is considered as part of a conversation, a "reweaving of beliefs," and that is just how I intend the proposed hermeneutical algorithm to function. This, however, does not detract from the seriousness of the proposal, which embodies, in Rorty's words, "a belief [that] can still

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[241] Rorty 1998, 105. Rorty's reference to the "usual" reasons is a compression of a great deal of philosophical history, and his "usual reasons" are, of course, different from those of, for example, Tsong kha pa. One could argue that a full analysis of Sartre's rejection of Husserl's transcendental ego may reveal that, if the basis of Rorty's subjective selflessness is Sartre, Rorty has less in common with Madhyamaka than meets the eye. *See generally* Medidhammaporn 1995. For an argument that Sartre's *en soi* refers to the conventional subjective self and thus is consistent with Mahāyāna, see D. Heyman 1997. The counter-argument, on the other hand, which I think has greater force, is that the reasons underlying and leading to one's apprehension of selflessness may be varied without undermining one's realization. Does it matter whether one realizes selflessness by means of the "diamond smithereens," the "royal reason of relativity," or the "sevenfold analysis"? *See* Thurman 1984, 137 n.199.

[242] Rorty 1991, 98.

regulate action, can still be thought worth dying for, among people who are quite aware that this belief is caused by nothing deeper than contingent historical circumstance."[243]

Moreover, academic and philosophical arguments aside, I submit that nowadays we *do measure* social, political, economic and scientific concerns against spiritual and religious concerns. We do it most every day in our ordinary lives. Will I eat fish on Friday? Will I call the exterminator to get rid of the mice? Will I have an abortion? Will I drive on Saturday? Will I go to church, mosque or temple today? Will I marry within my faith? Will I say a prayer? What box do I check next to "religion"? Will I meditate or watch TV? How much will I give to charity? Will I relate to this person as a threat or a deity? But we do all of this instinctively, without a vocabulary for discussing it with others or ourselves. What I propose is a step towards bringing those decisions out into the open, where transparency of what the economists call "common prior assumptions" will increase the likelihood of Gadamer's "fusion of horizons."

D. Towards A Solution: Algorithm; Alternatives; Dialogue; Reflection

1. Groundwork

Perhaps because in some respects I am a practically-oriented jurist myself, I find much in Betti's approach that is commendable. The existential relativism that his method addresses is a large part of our culture today, which, paradoxically, is why so many find fundamentalism an attractive alternative. That is exactly why today we need some guidelines to make spoken what is unspoken, but guidelines that are neither

[243] Rorty 1989, 189. Indeed, following Nāgārjuna in his *Commentary on the Middle Way*, the relationality of all things, including beliefs, requires that there *be* method. *See* Garfield 1995, 293-321.

fundamentalist nor essentialist. So, in this section, I will propose some guidelines of my own, composed to reflect both, as Gadamer would say, "*what is*," and what Gadamer said Betti said, "*what should be*."[244] There is definitely some normative content in this approach. *What is* will reflect the preconceptions and biases of the interpreter; there will be subjectivity in any application of any guideline. *What should be* will be brought closer by the process of applying the guidelines, discussing the guidelines, and reflecting on the discussion in order that interpreters gain greater awareness of their own subjectivities, whereupon they can apply the guidelines again with a different and better result. In this way, the dialogical hermeneutic circle can rise, like a double helix, towards a deeper understanding of the internal interpretive processes of ourselves and of others.

There is nothing magic or eternal about the guidelines that I am proposing here. They are provisional, for this time and place, and are intended in large part to stimulate discussion and bring us closer to *what should be*. They are meant to be useful rather than in some way dispositive. As noted by Jay Garfield,

> We need a more general hermeneutic approach for global scholarship, not a context-free Archimedean principle of universal interpretation—that is chimerical—but a practical guide to talking across borders with the purpose of achieving some mutual understanding. We need nothing transcendent, just a useful guide to productive interchange between persons of good will.[245]

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[244] *See* n.163, *supra.* Given the crucial role of the interpreter whether the object of interpretation is located in the present or the past, the "historical" question of *what was* is closely related the "hermeneutic" question of *what is.* In the case of Davidson, given his emphasis that "we only need read the texts and examine the rituals to determine that Mantrayāna has built into it a sustaining metaphor," Davidson 2002, 121, an emphasis that is consistent with depreciating the significance of the commentarial tradition for the determination of the meaning of a text, *what was* seems somewhat open to the predations of Eco's "empirical reader," discussed below, who sees everything through the prism of his own world. Davidson compensates for this through his thick historical description of the relevant time periods, but of course those descriptions too are seen through the same prism.

[245] Garfield 2002, 233.

Consonant with my belief that there is a "cash value" to hermeneutics in that one's interpretation of a text, *what is,* a culture or an issue determines how one will act: whether one will buy into it, oppose it or ignore it, these guidelines are proposed in the form of what can loosely be called an algorithm. Particular hermeneutic categories are given percentage values or points totaling one hundred. Analysis of each category by the interpreter will yield various point totals for what the interpreter considers to be the primary meaning of the text or other artifact from that hermeneutic point of view. The totals from the various hermeneutic categories can then be added up to yield a primary meaning or center of gravity of the meaning of the text or artifact in question. This is similar to the process that a judge or jury undertakes in order to determine guilt or innocence, a finding for the plaintiff or for the defendant. The evidence—whatever it is, state of mind of the actor, what actually happened, the effect upon the persons acted upon—will be weighed and a decision made.

This primary meaning, as in, for example, "What is the *Vajra Rosary* about, mainly?" is meant to answer that question for us, now, at this time, in this culture. It reflects this culture's conventional beliefs about how we should go about determining meaning, so as the culture changes, so will the algorithm. The algorithm is also designed in this way to identify interpretations that are outliers, but not in a negative sense, for today's outliers are tomorrow's paradigm shifts, and the orthodoxies of next year.

The algorithm is intended to be a stepping-stone towards meaningful dialogue. At the end of the day we may find a multiplicity of meanings, meanings that are multivalent. But unless we initially focus on actually weighing different proposed meanings, a

meaningful dialogue that identifies commonalities and differences in factual contentions and issues of values will be hard to begin.

The benefits of promoting public dialogue and agreement are themselves, of course, merely relative. Agreement is "good," for instance, when there is too much disagreement, and where dialogue has broken down. I have made the argument that such is the need today. It is not difficult, however, to imagine an alternative situation, where *too much* agreement can easily lead to sterility and groupthink. Imposition of a uniform set of hermeneutic standards in that context would diminish the dialectic of human creativity. Indeed, the celebration of differing views not only has a long tradition in Western thought in the tradition of J.S. Mill, but is also the Tantric way, as espoused in the *Vajra Rosary*.

For this reason also, the guidelines proposed here should be seen as purely conventional, indeed *upāyic*, responding to the needs of particular students with particular needs at a particular time and place. The application of the algorithm should be and is complimented by another guideline, one promoting creativity and the virtue of being *wrong*, an hermeneutical canon in the tradition of ontological, philosophical hermeneutics. It may be no coincidence that this tradition, of Heidegger, Gadamer and Derrida, evolves parallel to the rise of totalitarian states,[246] much as Nāgārjuna's

[246] Heidegger's and Gadamer's relationships to the Nazi regime are complex and controversial. On the one hand, their focus on the prejudices of the interpreter, for example, the early Heidegger's writing about the influence of the "they," tying "understanding to emotionally-charged everyday affairs like minding a business, chatting with a neighbor, answering a threat, or simply feeling bored," Shalin 2010 at 9, is mindful of the powerful context of groupthink. On the other hand, statements like Gadamer's that "What is fixed in writing has detached itself from the contingency of its origin and its author and made itself free for new relationship" illustrate a formalism that "suits well interpreters distancing themselves from their own feelings…. Shalin 2010, 20. As Dmitri Shalin writes, "Why shouldn't the interpreter raise the question about the author's intent and the audience for which the text was originally written? This is not just a romantic fancy, as Gadamer would have it; it is a sound imperative that goads us not to squint when

ontological hermeneutic method emphasizing emptiness was a reaction against the *abhidharmika* method, the groupthink of his time. Perhaps this is a different, less spoken of, rationale for the critique of methodology.

Before presenting the components of my dialogical hermeneutical algorithm, I will further address two theoretical concerns and one practical one: 1) Should there be method at all, let alone an "algorithm"? 2) If so, must one have a unified hermeneutical theory that justifies one's hermeneutical method and one's selection of techniques from the methodological toolkit? 3) Am I seriously proposing an *algorithm*?

Answering the practical question first, I am mostly serious, but in a playful way. As Nietzsche wrote, "The lovely human beast seems to lose its good mood when it thinks well; it becomes 'serious'!"[247] A sense of playfulness is an antidote to being perhaps a little too serious; and in that way, the algorithm is entirely serious: an attempt to restore some balance to an inner and outer dialogue.

Should There Be Method At All?

While there are some powerful arguments against method, particularly in the modern and post-modern period, I think that, mainly, they apply principally to the essentialist, dogmatic use of method, and not the purely conventional, provisional methodology proposed here, a methodology that incorporates the self-reflexive and open-ended attitude expressed by Gadamer, Rorty and Hirsch, among others, and, moreover, is fully consistent with Buddhist hermeneutics and Madhyamaka philosophy.

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confronted with the messy socio-historical and affective-somatic realities surrounding the production of a textual product." *Id.*

[247] Nietzsche 2001, 182.

In his Afterward to *Truth and Method*, as well as in his dialogue with Emilio Betti described above, Gadamer reflected that his critique of method was meant as a corrective, not a condemnation:

> In my work, heightening the tension between truth and method had a polemical intent. Ultimately, as Descartes himself realized, it belongs to the special structure of straightening something crooked that it needs to be bent in the opposite direction. But what was crooked in this case was not so much the methodology of the sciences as their reflexive self-consciousness.[248]

Gadamer emphasizes that his description of "the tension between truth and method" is not meant to repudiate method:

> No productive scientist can really doubt that methodical purity is indispensable in science; but what constitutes the essence of research is much less merely applying the usual methods that discovering new ones—and underlying that, the creative imagination of the scientist. This is not true only in the so-called Geisteswissenschaften….
>
> …Here we are in the middle of a hermeneutic problematic—*but this scarcely implies that there are no scientific methods whereby to distinguish the true from the false, to avoid error, or to reach truth*. In the "moral" sciences this is not a whit different from the "real" sciences.[249]

So, we can comfortably conclude that Gadamer was not against method *per se* and, in fact, recognized its utility and necessity. Arguments to the contrary are based upon a misunderstanding of his position.

A withering critique of the notion of general, universally applicable hermeneutical canons is found in E.D. Hirsch's *Validity in Interpretation*. Hirsch writes:

> What then is the status of the many traditional canons and maxims of interpretation, and what is their purpose? Clearly, they are provisional guides, or rules of thumb…[S]ince any interpretative canon can be overturned by

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[248] Gadamer 1975, 559. *See also* Pan 2009, which makes an argument, on somewhat different grounds than mine, for the redeployment of hermeneutic method.

[249] *Id.* at 555, 557 (emphasis added).

> subsuming the text under a still narrower class in which the canon fails to hold or holds by such a small majority that it becomes doubtful, it follows that interpretative canons are often relatively useless baggage. When they are general, they cannot compel decisions, and even when they are narrowly practical, they can be overturned….
>
> The notion that a reliable methodology of interpretation can be built upon a set of canons is thus a mirage.[250]

But while Hirsch emphatically states that "there is not and cannot be any method or model of correct interpretation," he equally stresses that "there can be a ruthlessly critical process of validation to which many skills and many hands may contribute."[251] He is able to say this because of his analysis of the hermeneutic process as consisting of two phases. In the first, that of understanding, which is, "at first a genial (or a mistaken) guess": "There are no methods for making guesses, no rules for generating insights. The methodical activity of interpretation commences when we begin to test and criticize our guesses."[252] The testing, according to Hirsch, is of the "validity" of the interpretation under scrutiny:

> [T]he requirements of validity are everywhere the same even though the requirements of interpretation vary greatly with different intrinsic genres. Validity requires a norm—a meaning that is stable and determinate no matter how broad its range of implication and application.[253]

The algorithm that I am proposing, because it intended to test, criticize and validate interpretations rather than to formulate them, leaves the creative process of the reader unhindered. Its utility is also found in providing a methodical rather than an *ad*

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[250] Hirsch 1967, 203.

[251] *Id.,* 206.

[252] *Id.,* 203.

[253] *Id.*, 126.

hoc structure, one of articulated reasons rather than unexplained conclusions, to aid in ensuring that no stone is left unturned in applying critical analysis to interpretations that are being advanced, and to promote full dialogue between interpretations.

The algorithm is not meant to dictate at which point of the hermeneutic circle we should enter. If reading the *Vajra Rosary*, one starts with the proposition that this text (or Tantra in general) is so unusual that it must have been deposited on this planet by aliens and hence must primarily be a tool for our future colonization by them, bravo! On the other hand, if one approaches the text, or Tantra, with the idea that it emanates from a feudal society and hence *must* be primarily a function of class oppression, fine. Or, that the main meaning here is transforming ordinary people into superhuman "Buddhas," o.k. The purpose of the algorithm is not to inhibit those theories but to test them in such a way that the alien theorist, the Marxist, and the Buddhist can have a detailed, reasoned conversation in which each of them listens to the others and learns. The method presupposes an openness to radical possibilities of meaning, and the fact that it is comprised of conflicting approaches is designed to trigger recognition of the previously unrecognized.

Do we each need to have the same algorithm? Of course not, and, part of the didactic function of the algorithm is to generate discussion over its terms, followed by reflection and re-application of the algorithm. But I submit that it would be beneficial and useful to have some algorithmic structure to tease out presuppositions and evidence for propositions about meaning that, particularly regarding religious phenomena and their relationship to non-religious things, has been insulated from reasonable discussion and investigation under the old "protective" paradigm. The broader the algorithm, the more it

takes into account varying points of view, and the more viewpoints it encompasses, the better the discussion will be.

Must Method Be Justified By Theory?

Ronald Farmer answers that question in the affirmative in his *Beyond the Impasse: The Promise of a Process Hermeneutic*, finding in Alfred North Whitehead's process philosophy[254] an underlying methodology that, he asserts, grounds exegetical methods. He describes his discomfort with using exegetical tools borrowed from differing hermeneutical schemes:

> Each hermeneutical approach offered something worth pondering if not adopting, but I did not find any one method that I could embrace completely; consequently, I found myself engaged in "tool box raiding." Although my eclecticism was frowned upon by methodological purists, I found it inescapable. Nevertheless, I was uncomfortable with it myself because my use of these divergent tools was entirely ad hoc. The various hermeneutical approaches from which I borrowed were based on diverse, even conflicting perspectives and presuppositions; I had no undergirding methodological rationalization for my eclecticism. I was at an impasse.[255]

Farmer stresses that his process hermeneutics does not need to excise problematic elements:

> Contrary to many hermeneutical models, a process hermeneutic encourages special attention to those dimensions of a text opposed to its own worldview. There are two reasons for this. First, the entertainment of lures foreign to the interpreter's sensibilities can result in the emergence of a novel pattern large enough to include both the foreign and the familiar in a harmonious contrast. When this occurs, the interpreter's perspective is creatively transformed. [256]

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[254] Process philosophy is based on considering events rather than matter as being ultimately real. *See* Whitehead 1978.

[255] Farmer 1997, 46.

[256] Farmer 1997, 124.

Ann Taves makes a similar move in her *Religious Experience Reconsidered*. There, she argues for the creation of a larger novel pattern, but I don't think her pattern is large enough. In her effort to create a framework broad enough to include subjective religious experience and objective measures of the same experience such as are now possible in neuroscience, so "scholars can situate what people characterize a religious, spiritual, mystical, magical, superstitious, and so forth in relation to larger processes of meaning making and valuation, in which people deem some things special...,"[257] I think she is glossing over the live issue of the commensurability of religious and non-religious phenomena. While her revised nomenclature may obviate some of the conceptual problems occluding the comparative study of phenomena from different religious traditions, she does not address the commensurability issue. The problematic issue—and the solution— is *weighing* the special versus the non-special, and that Taves does not address.

While there is something comforting in an overarching theory, I think that requiring a theory that harmonizes tools from differing hermeneutic viewpoints actually undermines the ability to weigh and measure *incompatible* interpretations. One of Gadamer's main points, and one with which I agree, is that there *is* an aspect of understanding that is beyond method; as he put it, "the act of understanding, including the experience of the work of art, surpasses all historicism in the sphere of aesthetic experience."[258] Moreover, the greater is the emphasis on theory as justifying practice, in this case justifying the components of the hermeneutical algorithm, the greater the risk of

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[257] Taves 2009, 12.

[258] Gadamer 1975, *xxvii*.

confirmation bias. Philip E. Tetlock's research on expert opinion confirms this. Summarizing this research, he writes:

> If we want realistic odds on what will happen next, coupled with a willingness to admit mistakes, we are better off turning to experts who embody the intellectual traits of Isaiah Berlin's prototypical fox—those who "know many little things," draw [*sic*] from an eclectic array of traditions, and accept ambiguity and contradiction as inevitable features of life—than we are turning to Berlin's hedgehogs—those who "know one big thing," toil devotedly within one tradition, and reach for formulaic solutions to ill-defined problems.[259]

Similarly, a method "drawn from an eclectic array of traditions" will avoid the dogmatism of any one tradition.

This accounts for the eclecticism of the method I will propose, but not for the particular weighting of the algorithm, which I will discuss below.[260] *Any* weighting of one factor over another, indeed any weighting at all, presupposes a value judgment about what is correct, or, more modestly, what is conventional. While there is certainly a virtue in being able to hold in one's mind a large number of incompatible interpretations, and that is certainly necessary in order to compare them, at some point one must *choose*. As mentioned earlier, Derrida says, "[H]e who through 'methodological prudence,' 'norms of objectivity,' or 'safeguards of knowledge' refrained from committing anything of himself would not read at all."[261]

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[259] Tetlock 2005, 2, *quoting* Berlin 1997, 436-98.

[260] Sextus Empiricus said in a similar context that he composed his guidelines "without asserting anything about their meaning or their number, because they may be unsound, or there may be more than I shall enumerate." I'll try to surpass that standard. Patrick 1899, 10.

[261] Derrida 2004, 70. Derrida's hermeneutic approach merits a good deal more discussion, which I hope to do in more fulsome treatment of these subjects. I am focusing here on the groundwork for the proposed hermeneutical algorithm rather than a history of hermeneutics *per se.*

I would submit that the terms of such a choice, whether it be which interpretation to emphasize or conclude is dominant, or how to weight different, conflicting interpretations, or what sources to choose as representative, involves a normative judgment. In choosing a methodology that combines different conventional approaches to reach a conventional result, leaving open the possibility that one could be *wrong* about one's interpretation, I am privileging a sense of radical openness to the possibility that the text, artifact or the world could be utterly different than what one thinks. This normative choice is similar to Thacher's paradigmatic example of the normative case study, Jane Jacobs's privileging of vibrant urban neighborhoods in her *The Death and Life of the Great American Cities*.[262] This, then, is a normative case study.

Because I agree with Daniel Dennett that there is no one privileged worldview, the weighting, rather than serving some formula designed to reach some privileged "truth," should, more modestly, identify interpretations that are more or less consonant with hermeneutics as it has been applied across different traditions, as well as serving the overall goal of promoting dialogue and creative transformation. So, I have chosen what I think is a fairly representative sample of possible hermeneutic approaches from different traditions, balancing the Indo-Tibetan (and Schleiermachian) views that stress, among other things, the text, the author and the original reader, with modern hermeneutical concepts like Dennett's functionality and Foucault's appreciation of power dynamics, the latter for me particularly including gender issues.

There is a deliberate arbitrariness in my weighting of these differing approaches, and there certainly can be reasonable debate about this, and, indeed, whether the correct

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[262] *See* Thacher, 1641.

approaches have been chosen or others omitted. That is good, for it will promote dialogue and testing of various detailed formulae, which is just what I have in mind. I also think that an eclectic approach that is purposefully *not* the product of any over-arching hermeneutic philosophy might avoid being easily reduced and discarded before it is tried. There is a better way to "test" the algorithm, and that is by seeing the result obtained. If it seems to work, then we can investigate why. The theorists will always disagree.

2. The Algorithm

Plain Meaning

All hermeneutic systems take as their object, if not the sole object, the text or artifact being interpreted. So the words of the text or description of the artifact surely have a place in any method. This is a familiar starting point in legal hermeneutics. A typical statement of the rule is:

> It is elementary that the meaning of a statute must, in the first instance, be sought in the language in which the act is framed, and if that is plain, and if the law is within the constitutional authority of the lawmaking body which passed it, the sole function of the courts is to enforce it according to its terms.[263]

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[263] *Caminetti v. U.S.*, 242 U.S. 470, 485 (1917). While Hirsch is quite skeptical of these kinds of rules, finding that they all have an explicit or implied "unless," *i.e.* "we ought not to deviate from the common use of the language, *unless* we have very strong reasons for it," Hirsch 1967 at 202, and holding that "Every practical rule of interpretation has an implicit 'unless' after it, which means, of course, that it is not really a rule," *id.* 202-03, I think Hirsch is being a little too extreme here. Hirsch recognizes that these types of "rules of thumb" are useful "because they hold true more often than not;" *id.* at 203., he just doesn't think they are *that* useful and reminds us of their provisionality. But this is just the provisional spirit in which I offer it as a part of the algorithm.

Closely related to this rule of "plain meaning" is the familiar evidentiary rule excluding in many circumstances the use of parol, *i.e.* oral, evidence to contradict the terms of a writing:

> A court will refuse to use evidence of the parties' prior negotiations in order to interpret a written contract unless the writing is (1) incomplete, (2) ambiguous, or (3) the product of fraud, mistake, or a similar bargaining defect.[264]

The "plain meaning" concept from legal hermeneutics is substantially identical to the "literal meaning" as described in Buddhist Tantric hermeneutics as the first branch of the *PU*'s second ornament. Although meant primarily for non-Buddhists, Bu ston notes that this kind of interpretation is crucial, for unless it is attended to, they will lose interest and thus not further pay attention to the text, losing interest in dharma.[265] [266]

Intellectual History / Authorial Intent

Few argue that the intention of the author, despite the modern critiques stressing the incompleteness of any text and the interpretation by the reader, is irrelevant to the interpretation of a text.[267] Authorial intention is at the heart of Schleiermacher's hermeneutic and is Betti's first canon, the hermeneutical autonomy of the object. Hirsch,

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[264] Posner 1988, 534.

[265] Campbell 2010, 154.

[266] Many texts may be less than clear in whole or in part, opening the door to attempts to resolve ambiguities. Where the ambiguities relate to linguistic terms or are not central to the particular interpretation for which validation is sought, the familiar canon of compositional integrity, that the parts and the whole be consistent, can be invoked without too much controversy. Recalling Betti's rationale for his second canon, "totality and coherence of hermeneutical evaluation," is "the pre-supposition that the totality of speech, just as that of any manifestation of thought, issues from a unitary mind and gravitates towards a unitary mind and meaning," Bleicher 1980, 59, we can see that this principle can be applied not only internally within a text, but also in the context of the author's work as a whole, or a culture's presuppositions to the extent that they are uniform.

[267] Daniel Dennett and Roland Barthes essentially argue this, but their views are well represented in "function" category of this algorithm.

following Betti, notes: “All valid interpretation of every sort is founded on the re-cognition of what an author meant.”[268]

I believe, however, that we can focus this canon and make it more consonant with advances in hermeneutic understanding by emulating Richard Rorty’s notion of the “intellectual history” of the author in formulating intent.[269] Rorty would have us reconstruct a thickly described, “nitty-gritty” “intellectual history” that describes “what the intellectuals were up to at a given time and … their interaction with the rest of society—descriptions that, for the most part, bracket the question of what activities which intellectuals were conducting,” “producing "a sense of what it was like to be an intellectual in that [spatiotemporal] region – what sort of books one read, what sorts of things one had to worry about, what choices one has of vocabularies, hopes, friends, enemies, and careers.”[270]

Construction of a Rortian intellectual history of people who lived a millennium ago in Western Tibet or Bengal, or, in the case of Śākyamuni Buddha, more than two millennia ago, is a challenging task, and in the end will be imperfect. Construing the

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[268] Hirsch 1967, 126.

[269] Rorty critiques naïve objectivity in divining authorial intent, noting that "successful historical reconstructions can be performed only by people who have some idea of what they themselves think about the issues under discussion . . . ." Rorty 1998, 251 n.5. He says that rational and historical reconstruction "should be seen as moments in a continuing movement around the hermeneutic circle, as circle one has to have gone round a good many times before one can begin to do *either* sort of reconstruction." Rorty 1998, 267-68. The "hermeneutic circle" involved in the modern (not limited to Western) study of the development of Buddhist Tantra is still in its relative infancy. If using very broad strokes, one considers the writings of B. H. Hodgson and H. H. Wilson and their successors in what may be characterized as the colonialist/degeneracy trope as the beginning of the first cycle, followed by Arthur Avalon and his successors who were more open to the emic/traditional viewpoint, then we might consider David White and Ronald Davidson, reacting to what they consider to be the excesses of scholars accepting the emic/traditional viewpoint without sufficient objective scrutiny, as the beginning of the second cycle. Of course, one might find smaller cycles within these, but given the very limited access to texts, complicated now by the political situation in China, and to archeological data, it is clear that we are still near the beginning.

[270] Rorty 1998, 267-68.

intent of the anonymous author of *Virūpa's Drinking Song* is even more challenging. Despite these problems, a modest approach to construing authorial intent as part of any hermeneutic method seems inarguable.

The Model Reader

Another clue to the meaning of a text or other communicative artifact is the audience for whom it is intended. Umberto Eco[271] has explored this aspect of the hermeneutic process in his description of the "model" as contrasted with the "empirical" reader. For Eco, the "model reader" is "a sort of ideal type whom the text not only foresees as a collaborator but also tries to create."[272] Eco explains: "If a text begins with 'Once upon a time,' it sends out a signal that immediately enables it to select its own model reader, who must be a child, or at least somebody willing to accept something that goes beyond the commonsensical and reasonable."[273] On the other hand, Eco's empirical reader is

> You, me, anyone, when we read a text. Empirical readers can read in many ways, and there is no law that tells them how to read, because they often use the text as a container for their own passions, which may come from the outside of the text or which the text may arouse by chance.[274]

Grounding interpretation of the text in its intended audience is quite familiar in the Buddhist context of skill in method, *upāya*, and is also an important component of the *PU* and other Tantric hermeneutical approaches. Some texts, of course, such as

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[271] Thanks to Dr. Paul Hackett for calling my attention to Eco's work.

[272] Eco 1995, 9.

[273] *Id.*

[274] *Id.*, 8.

constitutions and scripture, are intended not only for the present, but also for future audiences, who may be envisioned by the text as being different from the present audience. The same would be true of a letter whose envelope specifies that it is not to be opened until the occurrence of a certain event, such as the writer's death. So all of this should be kept in mind in the application of this guideline.

As Interpreted by Commentary/Discourse

Both Tibetan and Western hermeneutical authorities agree on the importance of traditional commentaries in guiding interpretation. Tsong kha pa writes;

> [M]any different interpretations of interpretable and definitive have been declared in the scriptures themselves…The Champions of Philosophy, foretold to discern the interpretable and the definitive in the teachings, elucidated their inner meaning. Hence, *we must seek that meaning by following their determinations (established) by reasonings*….[275]

Gadamer agrees:

> [O]ne of the conditions of understanding in the human sciences is belonging to tradition…This condition is clearly not so much a limiting condition as one that makes understanding possible.[276]

And,

> I shall not deny, however, that—among all the elements of understanding—I have emphasized the assimilation of what is past and of tradition.[277]

In the context of the interpretation of Buddhist texts, Jay Garfield notes, "A text makes sense only as a response to its predecessors, only in light of its consequences for future texts, and in the end only as seen through subsequent commentary…[A]t the same

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[275] Thurman 1984, 189.

[276] Gadamer 1975, 325.

[277] *Id.*, *xxxiv*.

time the very traditions that determine the significance of these texts themselves comprise precisely the texts they make possible."[278] While this is true to a large degree, to overly stress the role of commentary in ascribing meaning would fail to account for creativity and the fact that no commentarial tradition is static. So there is an important place for it in the algorithm, but not a determinative one.

Function

Having described the more traditional hermeneutic categories, we now move to the more modern hermeneutic lenses, where what we see may conceal a deeper reality, the legacy in our culture of Marx, Freud and many others. Yet this too is not without an analogue in the Buddhist tradition. There in the *Yogacāra* system of tenets, what we see is similarly unreal, a product of the mind only. It is also worth noting Buddha's central hermeneutic command that in evaluating anything we should rely on our own experience, and that we should prefer the meaning over the letter of a text, so perhaps this guideline is not so modern after all.

Asserting that interpretation based on taking the author's opinion of meaning as authoritative is based on the "Intentional Fallacy" that "there always *is* a 'deeper fact' about what the text *really means*,"[279] Daniel Dennett looks to the functionality of texts, (and people, artifacts and organisms) as the best indication of their meaning. Dennett prefaces his article, "The Interpretation of Texts, People and Other Artifacts," with a quote from Wimsatt and Beardsley's "The Intentional Fallacy:

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[278] Garfield 2002, 233.

[279] Dennett 1990, 180.

> Judging a poem is like judging a pudding or a machine. One demands that it work. It is only because an artifact works that we infer the intention of the artificer.[280]

Dennett writes: "[W]e can get *better* grounds for making reliable functional attributions (…that are likely to continue to be valuable interpretation-aids in the future) when we ignore…'what the author says' in the case of texts…."[281]

Dennett treats the reader no better than the author: "There is no 'privileged access' to be had in any quarter."[282] He explains:

> People buy old-fashioned sad-irons not to iron their clothes with, but to use as bookends or doorstops; a handsome jam pot can become a pencil holder, and lobster traps get recycled as outdoor planters. The fact is that sad-irons are much better as bookends than they are at ironing clothes—at least compared to the competition today. And a Dec-10 mainframe computer today makes a nifty heavy-duty anchor for a large boat mooring. No artifact is immune from such appropriation, and however clearly its *original* purpose may be read from its current form, its new purpose may be related to that original purpose by mere historic accident --- the fellow who owned the obsolete mainframe needed an anchor badly, and opportunistically pressed it into service.[283]

Thus, because "utility can change swiftly," "the user is no more privileged than the author."[284] [285]

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[280] *Id.*, 177, *quoting* Wimsatt and Beardsley 1954, 4.

[281] *Id.,* 194.

[282] *Id.*

[283] *Id.,* 184.

[284] *Id.*, 193.

[285] While Dennett makes a strong case that the function of a text, including the answers to the questions, "Does it work?" and "For what?", is a crucial perspective for interpreting the meaning of the text, he stresses, with Rorty, that,

> We cannot begin to make sense of functional attributions until we abandon the idea that there has to be one, determinate, *right* answer to the question: What is it for? And if there is no deeper fact that could settle that question, there can be no deeper fact to settle its twin: What does it mean?

Considering *function* as an important component of the hermeneutical algorithm takes into account the insights of such modern thinkers as Marx, Foucault, Habermas and Bourdieu, whose insights as to the importance of the sub-text and con-text, be it economics, various subconscious drives, power, social relations and so forth, are very much a part of contemporary hermeneutics. In the context of Tantra studies, *function* would encompass and legitimate the observations of various scholars about the relative importance of socio-economic, political and gender in construing the function of Tantric texts.[286] Some of these theories are totalizing in the sense that they displace other considerations, interpreting human conduct of whatever kind through primarily one lens, and I would anticipate arguments prompted by the dialogical algorithm that the analysis of one or the other thinker should be determinative.

These modern hermeneutic thinkers, however, even in advancing more or less totalizing theories, exhibit a deeply felt sense of nuance. Marx, for example, was perhaps at his most eloquent on the subject of religion, holding that "the criticism of religion is the premise of all criticism."[287] While emphasizing that "*man makes religion*, religion does not make man;" and that "[m]an is *the human world,* the state, society,"[288] and that it is the task of history to abolish the "illusory" happiness of men by abolishing religion,

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Dennett 1990, 194. What I propose to do is to employ Dennett's insight about the importance of the function of a text, and use it to help determine, as discussed above, not the "determinate, *right* answer to the question: What is it for?" but to determine the *provisionally* determinate, *conventionally normative* right answer to that question.

[286] In the dominant Indo-Tibetan epistemological tradition, Dharmakīrti ascribes reality to phenomena in accordance with their ability to function. Dreyfus 1997, 67-68.

[287] Marx 1978, 53 (emphases in original).

[288] *Id.*

Marx nevertheless recognized that religion plays a crucial active role in constituting human behavior:

> *Religious* suffering is at the same time an *expression* of real suffering and a *protest* against real suffering. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the sentiment of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the *opium* of the people.[289]

Further evidence of the paradigm shift and convergence I have been discussing is the fact that the Marxist critique of religion is, to a significant degree, not inconsistent with a Buddhist approach, as the current Dalai Lama has stated. Viewing a picture in Communist Mongolia depicting a monk with a huge mouth into which nomads were walking with their cattle, he said, "There was no need to hide anything from me. There was a certain amount of truth in what the picture was saying."[290]

In evaluating function, everything must be on the table: in John Urban's words, we "should critically interrogate…those phenomena claiming to be eternal or

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[289] *Id.,* 54 (emphases in original).

[290] T. Gyatso 1990, 228. While having a problem with Marxism's materialism, *id.,* 90, the Dalai Lama notes that "my religious beliefs dispose me far more towards Socialism and Internationalism [than capitalism], which are more in line with Buddhist principles. The other attractive thing about Marxism for me is its assertion that man is ultimately responsible for his own destiny. This reflects Buddhist thought exactly." *Id.,* 268.

There is one passage in Marx's *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844* that strikes me as Tantric in approach. Marx writes that when man is alienated he becomes "lost in his object." Marx 1978, 88. Only when man becomes a "social being," *i.e.* connected and relational, does the sense object become a "*social*" or "humanized" object. *Id.* 88, 89. Only when man becomes truly human will the senses be liberated:

> Only through the objectively unfolded richness of man's essential being is the richness of subjective *human* sensibility (a musical ear, an eye for beauty of form—in short, *senses* capable of human gratifications, senses confirming themselves as essential powers of *man*) either cultivated or brought into being. For not only the five senses but also the so-called mental senses—the practical senses (will, love, etc.)—in a word, *human* sense—the humanness of the senses—comes to be by virtue of its object, by virtue of *humanized* nature. The *forming* of the five senses is a labour of the entire history of the world down to the present.

Id., 89.

transcendent, in the light of their most concrete social and political contexts."[291] Our task will be to weigh these theories, compare them, and apply them in the context of Tantric Buddhism. This is a daunting task, and a complete treatment would be well beyond the scope of this study. In a real sense, it is a collective task, and the methodology proposed here is a small step in that direction. The conclusions drawn, as the methodology presupposes, will be provisional.

But *function* when? If we look at function purely in terms of the present, then we would look at Dennett's sad-iron as just a bookend, his mainframe solely as a potential anchor. This does not seem right, for it would limit interpretation of a text to a context unrelated to that of its creation, and, in the case of ancient texts like the Tantras, unrelated to their interpretation over the course of hundreds or thousands of years. Gadamer observed that, "Historical knowledge can be gained only by seeing the past in its continuity with the present…."[292] Looking at this issue from the other end, with respect to the terminology of *sahaja* and its related compounds, Davidson criticizes scholarship that has "indulged in a favorite form of hermeneutics: reading the terms' application in later texts into the lines of earlier works, and modern scholars have generally privileged the latest and most recently written materials."[293] For these reasons,

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[291] Urban 2003, 13. Geoffrey Samuel writes, "[E]ven textual scholarship cannot be divorced from a reconstruction of the intellectual, emotional, social and political context of the people who produced those texts, however difficult that might be to achieve. I would go further and state that it is the intellectual, emotional, social and political context which is the real object of study of scholars of Indian religion. Ultimately, it is people and their specific life-worlds that we are attempting to understand." Samuel 2008, 21.

[292] Gadamer 1975, 375.

[293] Davidson 2002b, 52.

we will consider function as a continuum, ranging from the creation of the text, through its uses over the course of its functionality, to its uses today.

The devaluation of authorial intent and emphasis on the relationship between the text and the reader is a hallmark of postmodern hermeneutic theory. Whether one agrees with this or not, this perspective has become a part of the normative contemporary approach to interpreting texts. Hence I am giving it substantial weight among the varying traditional and non-traditional approaches comprising the dialogical algorithm.

Power Relations

Certainly modernity did not invent power; after all, as Kögler suggests, "The question of the exercise of power within understanding and interpretation has played a central role in the human sciences since their very inception."[294] Long before that, Machiavelli interpreted Italian history through the hermeneutic lens of power. Anticipating Dennett (and Davidson), Machiavelli concerns himself with what is *really* happening: "I thought it sensible to go straight to a discussion of how things are in real life and not waste time with a discussion of an imaginary world."[295] More recently, Foucault writes:

> Power's condition of possibility…must not be sought in the primary existence of a central point… it is the moving substrate of force relations which, by virtue of their inequality, constantly engender states of power, but the latter are always local and unstable…*Power is everywhere; not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere.*[296]

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[294] Kögler 1999, 215.

[295] Machiavelli 1995, 48.

[296] Foucault 1978, 93.

In our field, Ronald Davidson and John Urban have written extensively on the issues of political and economic power, and this perspective on interpretation is a crucial one for us to consider.

Another equally important domain of power relations is gender and sexuality, which, we will see, play an important role in the *Vajra Rosary*. In *The History of Sexuality,* Foucault writes:

> Sexuality is not the most intractable element in power relations, but rather one of those endowed with the greatest instrumentality: useful for the greatest number of maneuvers and capable of serving as a point of support, as a linchpin, for the most varied strategies.[297]

In a similar vein, Bernard Faure notes, "In most cases, what is at stake is neither purely consensual sex or individual awakening, but rather collective strategies aimed at the preservation of the lineage."[298] Indeed, he notes, "A consistent feminist critique could well shatter Buddhism in its foundations."[299] We should take a close look at the *Vajra Rosary* and the circumstances of its creation, translation, interpretation and practice in order to see if we agree with Foucault and Faure in this instance.

The same timing issue arises here as with functionality: should we be considering power relations at the time of the creation or translation of a text, or in a subsequent historical period, or today? I think the answer is the same as it is in the context of functionality; we should be looking at a continuum covering all of those time periods.

This last category is different from the preceding ones in that it is grounded in a definite assumption: a significant component of the meaning of any text or artifact will be

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[297] *Id.*, 103.

[298] Faure 1998, 63.

[299] *Id.*, 281.

grounded in power relations. If a text is reviewed, and, contrary to expectation, there is nothing or very little of the sort in the language or its surrounding circumstances, then this category can be omitted or diminished, and the meaning of the text determined by tallying up the other categories or giving less weight to this one. But I believe that will be a rare occurrence.

Critical Reader Bias

Having concluded a brief description of the categories of interpretive analysis (the arithmetical components will be described below), there is final algorithmic component designed to correct the ever-present bias of the interpreters themselves, who are often, as Eco would say, "empirical readers." As Bernard Faure writes in the context of sexuality: "We must also insist on the obvious impossibility of treating a topic like 'Buddhist' sexuality—even if it seems culturally external and sufficiently objectivized—without implicating oneself with one's desires and biases."[300] The problem of the bias of empirical readers is magnified when the reader/interpreter is an "expert."[301] In Philip Tetlock's studies, the lowest scorers tested for accuracy of predictions were the "hedgehogs"—"who 'know one big thing,' toil devotedly within one tradition, and reach for formulaic solutions."[302]

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[300] Faure 1998, 283, 284.

[301] Tetlock 2006, 2000, 1994.

[302] Tetlock 2006, *quoting* I. Berlin 1997, 436-98. In his study, Tetlock tested 284 experts in economics, history, journalism and political science, and rated for accuracy 82,361 subjective probability estimates derived from approximately 27,450 forecasting questions. Tetlock 2006, 246. Ronald Dworkin makes a contrary argument in Dworkin 2011.

No modern hermeneut surpasses the Buddhists in their appreciation of the importance of the subjective factor, as discussed above in the context of the liquid in a glass appearing to be, and actually being, nectar, water or pus for the god, human or hungry ghost, respectively. A text can serve the same function as a glass of water in this respect. This view would devolve into nihilistic relativism were it not for the fact that, based on the relational status of the liquid or the text, we can conventionally agree that, at least in the human context, on the meaning of the liquid as water, or on the meaning of a text.

I propose to handle the subjective element by a kind of reflexive subtraction: if the interpreter is a Marxist, we will subtract a given percentage from any Marxist interpretation. This preserves the general conventional agreement that we can have about the meaning of a text, while leaving some play for our individual differences—assuming for the present that none of us are hungry ghosts! Because of the efficacy of the case study method, if the interpreter has engaged in a close case study of the object(s) of her interpretation or followed a parallel methodology designed to curb bias, the deduction should be less because the bias is presumably more controlled. While this does give some credence to the expertise of the interpreter, the particular expertise recognized is not that of a particular discipline, the subject of Tetlock's study, but that of intimate familiarity with the text.

* * * *

The point values or percentages of these seven categories or, as Candrakīrti might have called them, ornaments (*alaṃkāra*), are proposed here in the spirit of moving the overall project forward; they, like the categories themselves, are not set in stone. Indeed,

as mentioned several times (deliberately, given our tendency to reify and reduce) because the primary purpose of the algorithm is to broaden discussion in order to reveal our covert and unspoken judgments about meaning, discussion about the parameters of the algorithm serves that purpose, albeit on a more theoretical plane, as much as application of the algorithm. Yet, mindful of Derrida's reminder about the importance of committing oneself,[303] I have quantified the algorithm as follows.

I think it important that the text-rooted categories of *plain meaning*, *author's intent/intellectual history*, *model reader* and *commentary/discourse* be significant but not determinative, particularly in cases where the function(s) of the text or artifact are different than what was originally intended. So I have given those former categories collectively forty percent (40%) of the total. This leaves sixty percent (60%) for *function* and *power relations*. In ascribing thirty-five percent (35%) of the provisional meaning to *function*, I am giving significant weight to science, practice and Buddha's admonition to rely on our own experience. Perhaps applying some reflexive subtraction already, I am also, to a significant degree, moving away from the romantic hermeneutics of Schleiermacher and Betti, even though those formulations have great appeal to me.

Obviously there is some overlap here; function might well encompass power relations. Given our social and philosophical position today, if a text's or artifact's function *and* its connection with the distribution of power in a setting are consonant with an interpretation we seek to validate through the algorithm, then that interpretation should be *prima facie* valid, notwithstanding the words of the text, intention of the author, the text's model reader or any commentarial tradition. The past is longer than the present,

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[303] Derrida 2004, 70.

yet the present, though an instant, is always with us: so I have given twenty-five percent (25%) to the *past function* and fifteen percent (15%) to the *present function* of the text or artifact.

Power relations are significant to us. Although Marxism is gone from all but the academic scene, multifarious other power relationships have come to the fore in our culture, involving race, gender, globalization, and climate change, to name a few. Given the potential overlap between function and power, if the function of a text or artifact is predominately the distribution or preservation of power and so forth, an interpretation consonant with that should presumptively carry the day. In reserving twenty percent (20%) to *power relations*, I am making a judgment, with Foucault, that power is always at work in a significant way.

As for the reflexive subtraction for *critical reader bias*, particularly relevant in the academy where most interpreters are experts in some field, relying on Gadamer's insights about subjectivism and Tetlock's research concerning expert opinion, I am positing a fairly significant corrective: ten percent (10%) if the person applying the algorithm has done a case study with in-depth review of the subject matter or something with the same (imperfect) safeguards as a case study such as a closely worked peer-reviewed narrative history; and twenty percent (20%) if not.

Thus, we have…

The Algorithm: (TABLE 2)

1. Plain Meaning (Parol evidence) (+10%)
2. Intellectual history/Authorial Intent (Rorty) (+10%)
3. Model Reader (Eco) (+10%)
4. As Interpreted by Commentary/Discourse (+10%)
5. Past function (Dennett) (+25%)
6. Present function (Dennett) (+15%)
7. Power Relations (Foucault) (+20%)

100%

(Critical Reader's bias)

Without Case Study or equivalent (-20%)
With Case Study or equivalent (-10%)

= Provisional "Main Meaning"

3. Application of the Algorithm - First Level: Finding the "Main Meaning"

So, assume we are comparing interpretation "A" with interpretation "B." Say the plain meaning, after careful thought and review is determined by the interpreter to be 80% in accord with "A" and 20% with "B," and so on. It would work like this:

TABLE 3 – Sample Illustration

	A	B
Plain Meaning (Parol evidence) (+10%)	8	2
Intellectual history/Authorial Intent (Rorty) (+10%)	7	3
Model Reader (Eco) (+10%)	6	4
As Interpreted by Commentary/Discourse (+10%)	8	2
Past function (Dennett) (+25%)	20	5
Present function (Dennett) (+15%)	0	15
Power Relations (Foucault) (+20%)	0	20
100%	49	51

Then assume that the person applying the algorithm himself was an advocate of interpretation "B," but had performed a case study of the text or object to which the interpretations are being applied.

(Critical Reader's bias)		
Without Case Study (-20%)		
With Case Study (-10%)		(10)
= Provisional "Main" Meaning	49	41

In the above example, the bias of the person applying the algorithm causes Interpretation "B," which would have had a score of 51, to be reduced to 41, and "lose" to Interpretation "A"'s score of 49. Alternatively, we could take one rather than two interpretations, and run it through the algorithm. In the example above, neither of the two interpretations seems particularly dominant, either on an absolute scale or in relation to each other. A preliminary issue is whether all points in a given category should be awarded the "winner" or whether categories can be split. I would say that we can go

either way with this, or both ways. It is important to keep in mind that the algorithm is only a tool, what Hirsch would (disparagingly) call a "rule of thumb,"[304] and that dialogue and further exploration are its primary goals. Discussion about whether the rule should be "winner take all" or not in the context of a given text would likely be productive in illuminating hidden prior assumptions of the evaluators. My judgment would be to split the categories, awarding each interpretation whatever percentage the interpreter finds warranted in a given category.

4. Application of the Algorithm - Second Level: Identifying Multiple Meanings

In the example above, Interpretation "A," with 49 points is, for purposes of this particular application of the algorithm, the main provisional meaning of the text, which for these purposes we are calling (conventionally) valid, while Interpretation "B" is subordinate and conventionally invalid. We are making that judgment. Yet, they are both interpretations. Interpretation "B" resonates as valid, at least at the time of the interpretation, with "B's" interpreter. While post-application discussion and reflection may change the interpretation of either of the interpreters, at any given time multiple meanings will exist. The algorithm takes account of this by acknowledging these meanings and placing them in a hierarchy or scale. A: 49, B: 41, as in an (American) football game. A wins, but B has scored. It was a close game; it could have gone either

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[304] Hirsch 1967, 203. Hirsch makes the argument that hermeneutical canons, which Hirsch correctly says are "provisional guides, or rules of thumb," "are often relatively useless baggage" because a general interpretive rule "is more reliable the narrower its intended range of application" and "any interpretive canon can be overturned by subsuming the text under a still narrower class in which the canon fails to hold or holds by such a small majority that it becomes doubtful." *Id.* Passing that Hirsch's logic here seems to me to be not well taken, analogous to the doctrine of the infinite divisibility of extension which Hume said "shocked common sense" more than any "priestly *dogmas*, invented on purpose to tame and subdue he rebellious reason of mankind," Hume 1993, 107, I think that Hirsch's criticism does not apply to the instant algorithm, which is less about interpretive "canons" than about the subject matters that should be considered in determining meaning or validating interpretations, the latter perfectly proper per Hirsch.

way. After discussion and reflection, the next game could go the other way. This is not a problem: the purpose of the algorithm is to get us to commit, and, most importantly, to weigh all of the relevant factors.

In order that the algorithm maximally draws out the full range of possibilities of interpretation, it is imperative that we not discard these alternative, if subordinate, meanings. In exploring the differing perspectives of interpretation, the algorithm is fulfilling two functions: one is the determination of the main meaning, albeit provisional, in a given community so as to be in a position to make judgments that themselves stimulate further energetic discussion (much in the way that Davidson's definitive position on the subordination of soteriological concerns had a large role in stimulating this essay); the other is to identify a broad a range of possibilities in order to open a perspectival window enabling us to engage in the critical self-reflection that is part of the third level of the application of the algorithm.

But there is another factor operative in religious texts, particularly Buddhist texts, and that is polysemy, *i.e.* the author *intends* to deliver multiple meanings to listeners or readers of varying capacities. This is the hallmark of Buddhist Tantric hermeneutics; there is a presumption that there are many meanings in play for a given text. We see this spelled out in the *PU* and many other texts, and Alaṃka applies this hermeneutic of multiple meaning to the *Vajra Rosary* itself; indeed, chapter fourteen of the *Vajra Rosary* *is* such a device. But Buddhist Tantra is not the only place we see this. In Buddhism generally multiple meanings of a teaching are intended for *upāyic* reasons; in literature, this may be done as a plot device; in politics, a politician may want to play to different constituencies.

There is a danger in polysemous communication: the danger of misinterpretation. For example, Candrakīrti's fourth ornament, the "four procedures" are clearly directed towards different readers, "ordinary people" on up, and his sixth, the "five persons" differentiates among the five kinds of disciples. A teaching meant for a jewel-like disciple could be misinterpreted by the more challenged sandalwood disciple, not to mention the kinds of activities condemned by a long line of Tibetan authorities from Ye shes 'od to the present Dalai Lama. So long as these teachings were secret and individually based, the danger of misinterpretation was minimized, but with the change in culture, the explosion of media and the lifting of secrecy, there is potential, sometimes realized, for misuse and harm, as will be discussed in Chapter Four.

The imperative of choosing an interpretation and the possibility of misinterpretation notwithstanding, the polysemous nature of a religious or other text will be something to keep in mind as we proceed up the hermeneutic double helix. This toleration of cognitive dissonance from Tantric hermeneutics is a valuable tool enabling us to determine meanings while keeping open minds.

5. Application of the Algorithm – Third Level: Reflection and ` Further Discussion

While, through the application of the algorithm, we may determine the provisional, conventional meaning of a text, and, through identifying multiple meanings, make those meanings common knowledge, we may still be left with differences in interpretation, *i.e.* the subjective factor remains. Our subjective viewpoint, culturally or karmically determined and always operative, may have been slightly changed, hopefully by the better, through the discussion and reflection that accompanies the application of

the algorithm, but it remains nevertheless. If two interpreters, though the algorithmic dialogical process, have revealed most of their prior and posterior assumptions, factual disputes can be mostly resolved, or at least identified and bracketed. If they still disagree on interpretations, the main reason is likely to be their preconceptions or biases, both cognitive and affective. Where factual disputes cannot be resolved because of lack of evidence, it should be apparent that the facts that are the subject of the dispute cannot drive the respective interpretations because they are unknown. That is often the case in determining the context for the interpretation of ancient texts.

So, the next stage in the algorithmic hermeneutic process is reflection on how differing interpretations give insight into the preconceptions and biases of oneself and other interpreters. It is precisely the *difference* in interpretations that is likely to identify the preconceptions and biases. If we agree on most of the important facts, yet still have different interpretations, the source becomes plain: ourselves. If we look closely at *why* we react the way we do to the texts, we may start to see something of ourselves, which, according to Hobbes, is the foundation of knowledge, "[f]or men measure not only other men, but all other things, by themselves."[305]

The most difficult bias to identify is one's own. It is often the case that this bias is culturally dictated, Pierre Bourdieu's "habitus." For this reason, cross-cultural studies are crucial in giving us perspectival space from which to view and critically analyze whatever received wisdom we are endorsing. Where differences in interpretation arise among interpreters with similar cultural backgrounds, other factors come to the fore, relating more to our individual experience, be it social, psychological, genetic or karmic.

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[305] Hobbes 2008, 11.

This is another reason why appropriate self-revelation is a good thing; others can help us gain insights. So armed, we can better interpret the next text, or re-interpret the same text.

* * * *

Before applying the algorithm to the *Vajra Rosary*, in the spirit of the case study, the groundwork needs to be secure. First, we should examine existing scholarly preconceptions about Tantra and its origins as well as the historical context of the *Vajra Rosary*, so we will be in a position as best we can given the state of the evidence to evaluate the setting in which it emerged, was taught and was practiced. This will be done in the Chapter Two. Then, we should pay very close attention to what the *Vajra Rosary* says, in its entirety, which will be done in Chapter Three and in the translations set forth in the Appendices. Only following this will we be in a position to see what the proposed algorithm says about the validity of the various interpretations of Buddhist Tantra tested against the reality of the *Vajra Rosary*, as a whole, in context. And thus having completed the first part of our case study, we will be in a position to generalize about the validity of contemporary hermeneutic approaches to Tantra. Following that, we will be in a position to reflect on what the differing interpretations say about ourselves, preparing us to enter the hermeneutic circle yet again.[306]

[306] It remains to be seen whether this algorithm or a similar one would have wider applicability. While it is not hard to envisage it being applied to *Virūpa's Drinking Song,* could it be applied to religious texts in a broader context, or texts in general, or, with some modification, issues, artifacts or persons? The benefits of the algorithmic method proposed need not be limited to ancient texts. One could argue that the need for more structured and deeper dialogue is greater regarding the meaning of the more contentious issues of the day, government, abortion and terrorism, to name a few. That project awaits.

Chapter Two:

The Background and Origin of the *Vajra Rosary*

A. Who Taught Tantra? Tradition, Received Wisdom, and the State of the Historical Record

The *Vajra Rosary* itself and Alaṃka's *Commentary* subscribe to the traditional Buddhist view that Buddha himself taught Tantra in general and the *Vajra Rosary* in particular.[307] Alaṃka explains, in accordance with the more or less standard Tantric account of Buddha's enlightenment,[308] that Prince Sarvārthasiddha, the pre-enlightenment name for Buddha Śākyamuni,[309] was entranced in "an erroneous 'space pervading' concentration"[310] on the bank of a river:

> Thinking to himself, "This is enlightenment," he remained in that state. Then, from the so-called Buddha fields of Abhirati, Akaniṣṭha, Ratnasambhava, Sukhāvatī, and Kusumavatī,[311] [the Buddhas of the ten directions] came and exhorted Prince Sarvārthasiddha, saying "this concentration is impure" and so forth. Then he rejected that mistaken concentration. Then he saw the sky teeming with all the Lords.

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[307] *VR* 1B-8B, ch. 1; Alaṃka 1B-4A.

[308] *See, e.g.,* Lessing and Wayman 1968, 37 ("'You cannot become a Manifest Complete Buddha by this *samādhi* alone.' 'Then, how shall I do it?' he implored them. Thereupon all the Buddhas of the ten directions summoned the daughter of the gods Tilottamā and bestowed concretely the third initiation, the Insight-Knowledge Initiation.").

[309] *See, e.g.,* Lessing and Wayman 1968, 27.

[310] This probably refers to the first of the four formless absorptions, infinite space, with respect to which Lati Rinpoche notes: "The object of observation is the mental aggregates of the meditator, 'limitless space' means that for the meditator's mind, space pervades everywhere." Lati Rinpoche 1997, 114. There is nothing "wrong" with this concentration, which, along with the other three formless absorptions, is not exclusively Buddhist. *See* Wynne 2009. Here, though, as described below, Buddha mistook it for enlightenment.

[311] The pure lands of Akṣobhya, Vairocana, Ratnasambhava, Amitābha and Amoghasiddhi, respectively, although Akaniṣṭha can also refer to the highest of the sixteen form realms."

> He prostrated, saying, *Om sarva tathāgata kāya vāk citta pranamena vajra bandhanam karomi,*[312] and, circumambulating as a preliminary practice, supplicated those Lords to teach the concentration of the actuality of unerroneous reality. Then those Lords, having preliminarily emanated the Great Seal mandala and performed the preparatory ritual for disciples, mentally resolved on the enlightenment spirit and, having conferred initiation through the four initiations together with the preliminary practices divided into the four initiations, the pledges and the vow of giving, having given individual instruction of the stages wherein are taught the three concentrations, the hundred families classification and the five stages, those Lords departed to their own Buddha fields.
>
> Then, the Lord Lion of the Śākyas, because of his sharp faculties of esoteric knowledge as taught to him by previous Lords, completely awakened at midnight, overcame Mara before dawn, [and] left for Tushita Heaven….[313]

Then, as Alaṃka tells it, Buddha emanated the *Secret Community* thirty-two deities from his body,[314] and taught the twenty-five thousand-verse version, now lost, of the *Secret Community Tantra*. He also taught a briefer version, also lost, of eighteen hundred lines in eighteen chapters,[315] and subsequently taught a number of other Tantras, culminating in his teaching of the *Vajra Rosary Tantra* (which is referred to as the *Small Vajra Rosary Tantra*) and the other explanatory Tantras that we have today:

> After that, for the benefit of the living beings of the Vaishya [merchant] class, who have great attachment and hatred and small obscuration,[316] teaching principally the four empowerments to the Tushita gods, he taught the *Gathering in Two Stages* and the *Secret Community Tantra*. After that, in the Western Mountains of Oḍḍiyana, the Lord, from the

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[312] "I perform vajra praise by bowing down to the body, speech and mind of all Buddhas."

[313] Alaṃka 1B-2B. Tsong kha pa says this is contradicted by the *PK* and the *CMP,* which say that only the clear light and communion personal instructions were given. Tsong kha pa 2010, 482.

[314] Alaṃka 2B.

[315] That the surviving Tantra is a much shorter version of the original lost tantra is a common trope in the Buddhist literature.

[316] Tsong kha pa says that Alaṃka's relation of different Tantras for different castes is wrong. Tsong kha pa 1977, 155-56. In defense of Alaṃka, however, I think that he is merely accounting for the original motivation for Buddha's teaching the various Tantras rather than saying, as Tsong kha pa assumes, that the various Tantras are suited for practice by the various castes.

perspective of the ten Terrifics in the form of glorious Vajrasattva, principally in order to control the ten Directional Protectors, taught the two Tantras: the *Vajra Rosary* in twelve thousand lines and the *Shorter Vajra Rosary*. After that, the Lord who had prayed to the Transcendent, in the form of glorious Vajrasattva, on the snow covered mountain, taught the *Scriptural Indication of the Intention Tantra*[317] among human beings.

After that, the Lord, who was supplicated by the four goddesses, on the peak of the Vindhya Mountains, taught the *Requests by the Four Goddesses Tantra*.[318] After that, on the banks of the Ganges, he taught by dividing the major and minor *Vajra-Wisdom Compendium Tantra*.[319] After that, having relied on living beings connected with the *candala* [outcast] caste of the greatest of the great in desire and hatred and the smallest of the small in delusion, the Lord, in a saintly state, by dividing the major and minor glorious *Chakrasaṃvara* [*Tantra*], principally taught [to those in] the pure abodes the two stages, principally the four empowerments, together with the four explanatory Tantras which mainly emphasize wisdom, and did not teach, because it was not required here, the classification of the place of the four Tantras.

After that, for the purpose of training the four devils in Magadha in this very India,[320] he taught the teaching of the glorious *Joyful Vajra Tantra* together with the major and minor explanatory Tantras. Likewise, here he did not teach the differentiation of the various places and so forth because it was not necessary. Because of this, having great compassion, here, on top of the peak of Western Uddiyana, the Lord taught from among the five classes of Tantra the *Small Vajra Rosary Tantra*, and taught that which has as its essence the 68 chapters and the 82 questions and answers.[321]

Interestingly, Alaṃka gives two versions of the timing of the teaching of the oral personal instructions, and the root, branch[322] and explanatory Tantras: one that they were

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[317] *Saṃdhivyākaraṅa-nāma-tantra; dgongs pa lung bstan pa zhes bya ba'i rgyud*, Toh. 444.

[318] C*aturdevı-paripṛcchā; lha mo bzhis yongs su zhus pa*, Toh. 446.

[319] *Vajrajñāna-samuccaya-nāma-tantra; ye shes rdo rje kun las btus pa zhes bya ba'i rgyud*, Toh. 447. The colophon to the text preserved in Tibetan attests to its actually being only the second chapter of a text by that name. The chapter preserved in Tibetan translation is the "Great Bliss" chapter (*bde ba chen po'i le'u*). So, "major and minor" may refer to different, fuller texts. Thanks to Paul Hackett for this reference.

[320] This may be a reference to Alaṃka's locale at the time he wrote or dictated the *Commentary*.

[321] Alaṃka 3B-4A.

[322] According to Longchenpa, "branch" Tantra is one that focuses on one of the ten "essentials" of Tantra: outlook, meditation, behavior, initiation, mandala, charismatic activity, commitments, capacities, worship

respectively taught in the four ages or *yugas*; and another that they were all taught by Buddha during this age immediately after the teaching of the brief version of the *Secret Community Tantra*.[323] Alaṃka says of the latter, "This view is also agreeable.[324] Alaṃka's ambidexterity in this regard is consistent with Christian Wedemeyer's argument that Tibetan historians, in particular those writing about the Noble Tradition, were well aware of the historiographical difficulties they confronted and that the traditional accounts were a solution to the more pressing problem of the legitimacy of revelation.[325] Alaṃka's easy acceptance of the alternative accounts seems to coincide with Wedemeyer's conclusion that "to them, the problem was not a *problem*."[326]

Today, in the view of most modern (not limited to Western) commentators, all of the *written* Indian Buddhist Tantric texts were composed between the sixth and ninth centuries C.E., and almost no one argues for an earlier date for Tantra in general.[327]

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and mantras, while a root Tantra encompasses all of them; an explanatory tantra expands upon and clarifies them. Longchenpa 2000, 2.

[323] Alaṃka 3A (Sde dge) (*de yang sdud pa po phyag na rdo rje'am dpal gyis brgyud nas mi'i 'jig rten du 'ongs so/ de la rdzogs ldan dang gsum ldan dang gnyis ldan dang rtsod pa can gyi dus su zhal gyi gdams ngag dang rtsa ba'i rgyud dang yan lag gi rgyud dang bshad pa'i rgyud la sogs pa la 'jug pa zhes bya ba ni kha cig smra'o/ gzhan dag ni rtsod pa'i dus 'di nyid du sems can thams cad rjes su gzung ba'i phyir nyung ngu'i rtsa ba'i rgyud bstan pa'i de ma thag tu bcom ldan 'das kyis yan lag gi rgyud dang bshad pa'i rgyud la sogs pa bstan zhes zer ro/).*

[324] *Id.* Wedemeyer quotes Tāranātha's unambiguous statement that the Noble Tradition literature attributed to Nāgārjuna and the *PU* attributed to Candrakīrti "were not spread" and "was not composed and spread" during their lifetimes, but were propagated by a Nāgabodhi who preserved the teachings until late in the first millennium. Wedemeyer 2007, 19-20.

[325] Wedemeyer 2007, 17.

[326] *Id.*

[327] *See, e.g.,* Dalton 2004, 2. Alex Wayman made an argument placing the *Vajra Rosary* in the fifth century, but, closely analyzed, it is not a strong argument. Wayman 1991, 96-98. Wayman's arguments are that: (1) Tāranātha reported that the Tantras were held secret for 300 years before being made more public by the siddhas; (2) there is epigraphic evidence from the fifth century for the ten incarnations of Vishnu as to which the *Vajra Rosary* converts the first five into an embryology, some of the text of which is set out below, in the section of this examination on philosophy; and (3) based on his own speculations regarding groupings of the instincts [*vasana, bag chag*] in the Vaiṣnava system, which he himself characterizes as

Geoffrey Samuel, in his comprehensive recent study of the origin of Tantra, in a move typical of modern scholarship, defines Tantra as "the development of the relatively coherent set of techniques and practices which appears in a more or less complete form in Buddhist and Śaiva *texts* in the ninth and tenth centuries CE."[328] Steven Weinberger, relying in part on Yukei Matsunaga's work, describes the earliest Tantras mainly characterized by the use of spells and rituals for controlling nature as developing at the latest by the first quarter of the seventh century, followed by texts retrospectively designated as "Action Tantra" dating from roughly the seventh century, and by the *Manifest Enlightenment of Vairocana*, which presents a three Buddha family structure with the emphasis moving from the Śākyamuni family to the Vairocana family, during the first half of the seventh century. He finds that the *Compendium of Principles Tantra*, the focus of his study, developed into its final form by the middle of the eighth century. The *Compendium of Principles* and texts related to it are characterized by "continued development of distinctly tantric contemplative practices, deities in their wrathful reflexes, and the introduction of practices involving sex and violence," with the associated mandala expanding the three Buddha family structure to five, with, for the first time, Vajrapaṇi taking a central role.[329] Weinberger finds that the development of the doctrines and practices of the *Compendium* and related texts produced the next phase of Indian Buddhist Tantra, the so-called Mahāyoga Tantras that include the *Secret*

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speculative and based on the obscure. As to (1), it makes sense if Tāranātha was right, which is hard to know. As for (2), it doesn't make sense since the *Vajra Rosary* could have predated the embryology or just adopted it at some later date. As for (3), I wouldn't quarrel with Professor Wayman's own characterization. All of this supports Wedemeyer's point made in his dissertation, *see* below, as to the speculative nature of such dating of the Tantras.

[328] Samuel 2008, 9 (emphasis added).

[329] Weinberger 2003, 25-37.

Community, which expanded the practices involving ritualized sex and violence.[330] Weinberger concludes:

> The tantras grouped together under the rubric of Mahāyoga reflect the continued development of extreme or radical practices found in inchoate form in the *Compendium of Principles* and the family of texts that developed out of it. In particular, we find more advanced forms of wrathful practices and sexual practices (for instance, the *Secret Assembly Tantra* was taught when the Supermundane Victor was residing in the female vagina). It seems unlikely that the introduction of practices involving the subtle body and the manipulation of life-energies at internal psycho-physical centers (and the subtle levels of consciousness associated with them) occurred with these tantras. Certainly the later commentarial traditions include such practices, but the evidence suggests that the earliest traditions of the tantras themselves do not.[331]

Because the *Vajra Rosary* extensively addresses the subtle body and life-energy practices that Weinberger argues are not present in the "earliest traditions" of the *Secret Community*, which Weinberger dates as "before 746 CE,"[332] presumably he and most scholars would date it rather late, probably in the ninth or tenth centuries, shortly before it was found, as we shall see, by Zhi ba 'od's guru, Mantrakalaśa.

While dating of the revealed Tantras and Sūtras remains controversial, there is a growing scholarly consensus regarding the dating of the Noble Tradition śāstric literature, its interaction with the Tantras and Explanatory Tantras such as the *Vajra Rosary,* and the identity of the authors of the *PK* and *CMP*, Nāgārjuna and Āryadeva as being the same persons who authored the famous philosophical works. Consistent with the consensus holding that the Nāgārjuna who wrote the *PK* was not the famous Madhyamaka

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[330] Weinberger 2003, 34-36.

[331] Weinberger 2003, 37 (footnote omitted). Weinberger presents evidence for his argument that the *Secret Community* has many features showing the influence of the *Compendium of Principles*, 272-73.

[332] *Id.,* 36.

philosopher who lived in the first part of the first millennium, Yukei Matsunaga's oft-quoted and respected textual study of the *Secret Community* Explanatory Tantras, of which the *Vajra Rosary* is one, posits "fabrications made in the interest of various schools of Tāntric Buddhism,"[333] particularly made by scholars of the Noble Tradition in order to valorize the *PK*. In his 2007 book on Āryadeva's *CMP*, Christian Wedemeyer, while he states that "it seems certain that the development of this [Noble Tradition] school took place in the ninth and early tenth centuries,"[334] differs from the earlier Western scholarship regarding the traditional Tibetan claim. Pointing out that the great Tibetan historian Tāranātha also recognized that the Noble Tradition developed in the ninth and early tenth centuries, Wedemeyer notes how Tāranātha's critical historical awareness could encompass without contradiction the claim that the *PK* and *CMT* were in fact the works of the Madhyamaka "Father and Son," Nāgārjuna and Āryadeva, transmitted through visions or through preservation of the teachings by other means.[335] He notes,

> Tāranātha's formulation might also (indeed, might better) be understood as a seventeenth-century Tibetan articulation of a widespread pattern of historical understanding evident in a broad range of Indian (and Tibetan) Buddhist contexts since the early first millennium. His presentation encapsulates a set of distinctive motifs that are pandemic in the historiography of Buddhist scriptural production. The theoretical models underpinning his discussion are neither restricted to esoteric not to Tibetan historiography, but have functioned throughout the Buddhist world as devices for those traditions discursively to digest the conspicuous fact of near-constant scriptural revelation over the course of (at least) a millennium, while simultaneously

[333] Matsunaga 1967, 844.

[334] Wedemeyer 2007, 35.

[335] *Id.,* 7-36.

> validating these revelations by referring their origins to beings of unimpeachable authority: generally buddhas, bodhisattvas, or major saints.[336]

In his doctoral dissertation, Wedemeyer had argued that there was insufficient evidence to support what had then become (and still is) the received Western academic perspective that the written Tantras, and Tantra in general arose at the end of the first millennium.[337] There, Wedemeyer traced the fictive narrative structure that had dominated Western academic discourse since William Erskin's 1813 account of "Elephanta" and B. H. Hodgson, concluding that "among the several arguments which have been advanced over the last two centuries purporting to establish the history of Buddhist Tantrism and the Ārya Tradition, not one stands up to critical scrutiny."[338] Having cleared away this distracting narrative, Wedemeyer turned to the evidentiary record in the hopes of finding some independent evidence on which to base the Tantric chronology. However, he could not, finding that: the lack of traces of Tantra in the historical record proved little; literary analysis was of no help; the physical data, archaeological, numismatic and so forth were inconclusive; and that relying on references to Chinese translations and the reports of foreign travelers was also methodologically unsound.[339] Wedemeyer ended his discussion with a recommendation that we regard the historical data on Buddhist Tantra "merely as an open text—available for multiple 'readings'."[340] In recommending this, Wedemeyer argued that inasmuch as "one cannot

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[336] *Id.,* 26.

[337] Wedemeyer 1999, 27-72.

[338] *Id.*, 71.

[339] *Id.,* 73-150.

[340] *Id.,* 154.

help but find the general absence of early Tantric traces remarkable,"[341] we should consider the received view as one possible paradigm along with the possibility that the Noble Tradition literature was inspired but not written by the famous Madhyamakas Nāgārjuna, Āryadeva and so forth, "that the traditions might have been initiated by the ascribed authors and evolved over the years as oral texts, gradually incorporating various developments along the way before being textually codified…."[342] Finally, Wedemeyer contended that "one may also coherently and legitimately entertain the possibility that the Ārya Tradition literature…was, in fact, written by the ascribed Madhyamaka authors."[343]

Wedemeyer's 2007 analysis of the dating of the *CMP*, of course, is informed by almost twenty additional years of scholarship. However, his focus in 2007 is the written text of the *CMP* rather than Tantra in general, and I believe that, in the spirit of openness that I am normatively privileging, there continues to be reason to question what has become the consensus view that Buddhist Tantra first developed in the seventh and eighth centuries. If my critique of Matsunaga's conclusions about the relative dating of the *Vajra Rosary* and the *PK* has merit, then there may also be additional reason to question the dating of the Noble Tradition literature as well, but that is beyond the scope of this thesis.

Not much has changed since Wedemeyer's dissertation; we still know very little. Wedemeyer bases his 2007 conclusion that the Āryadeva who composed the *CMT* was not the Āryadeva who authored the earlier Madhyamaka works on textual references in

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[341] *Id.,* 155.

[342] *Id.*, 155-57.

[343] *Id.,* 157.

and to the *CMT*, and relies for the establishment of *termini post and ante quem* principally on the *CMP*'s citation of the works of Kambala and Padmavajra.[344] This, along with his conclusion that the Tibetan historians Tāranātha, A myes zhabs and Gos Lotsāwa were aware of the historical problems posed by the conflation of the "Tantric" and "Madhyamaka" Āryadevas and Nāgārjunas and the revelation of the *Secret Community Tantra* by Buddha, and solved those problems by positing later revelations, analogous to Rnying ma *terma* being uncovered, and the existence of a common literary trope in the literature making the same type of move, appear to be the basis for his position, rather than some new archeological evidence or the like.[345]

I think that dating issue is not quite resolved. First, the textual references locating the *CMP* in the ninth or tenth centuries apply only to a specific recension of the *written* text.[346] As Wedemeyer noted in his dissertation, and as I will discuss in more detail below concerning Matsunaga's findings, despite the profusion of Mahāyāna texts at the beginning of the first millennium and Tantric texts at its end, oral Tantric teachings along the same lines as the written text could have pre-dated the written text by centuries, and the written text itself could have undergone a long evolution.[347] As for the Tibetan historians, who were active in the 16th and 17th centuries who wrote *half a millennium* after the events in question, I think that one could use the same skeptical approach about

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[344] *Id.,* 11-14.

[345] Wedemeyer 2007, 17-35.

[346] Wedemeyer states: "Taken in the aggregate, the extant evidence suggests that the authors of the esoteric *writings* lived rather later than the homonymous authors of the exoteric *texts*." *Id.,* 9 (emphases added).

[347] Reliance on oral transmission is also not without problems. *See, e.g.* Steinkellner 2004, 6 and discussion below.

their views as Wedemeyer used to raise questions about the reliability of the received wisdom of Western scholars about those same events.

What is at stake? What does the hermeneutic of suspicion suggest? Could it be that we are privileging literature over practice?[348] Is it coincidental that scholars trained in translation of texts would privilege… the book?

The preoccupation with filiation and dating is characteristic of treating what Roland Barthes calls "Texts" as "works":

> The work is caught up in a process of filiation. Are postulated: a determination of the work by the world (by race, then by History), a consecution of works amongst themselves, and a conformity of the work to the author… [T]he Text… refers to the image of an organism which grows by vital expansion, by "development" (a word which is significantly ambiguous, at once biological and rhetorical); the metaphor of the Text is that of the network; if the Text extends itself, it is as a result of a combinatory systematic (an image, moreover, close to current biological conceptions of the living being).[349]

To test the received wisdom of defining Tantra as something limited to "works," we should reflect, as David Thacher suggests, on an alternate view of reality. So I will, briefly, sketch one, treating Tantras as "Texts" rather than "works." We will see, however, that the paucity of the evidence cuts both ways.

As shown by James Hartzell, although it is important to distinguish between Tantric "ideas that are incorporated into the Tantric system" and "Tantra,"[350] there is an abundance of evidence of a Tantric approach which can be found in the Vedas, and is

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[348] As Donald Lopez points out, "Buddhist Studies has long placed its faith in the text, to be excavated with philology and explicated with comparative philosophy, with no need for living Buddhists." Lopez 1995, 279.

[349] Barthes 1977, 161.

[350] Hartzell 1997, 278-79 n.298.

further developed in the Brāmaṇas and Upaniṣads.[351] Hartzell finds, contrary to Weinberger's assertion that "the introduction of practices involving the subtle body and the manipulation of life-energies at internal psycho-physical centers" [352] did not even occur in the Mahāyoga Tantras like the *Vajra Rosary,* that "[t]he evidence pretty strongly suggests the doctrine of the inner winds of the body as personal versions of the Winds—*i.e.* the atmospheric fire as one of the three cosmic fires (along with the solar and earthly fires)--was well established in the early Vedic tradition," and that "although the Tantric subtle-body doctrines are not present in the earliest Vedic literature, the seeds of the ideas were already present."[353] He concludes: "A wide variety of aspects of Tantric symbolism derives—in a more evolved and more complex form, with different philosophical and teleological emphases and underpinnings—from material that was already present in the earliest Vedic literature."[354] Forgetting about the *text* and writing about "yogic practice, in the sense of a developed set of techniques for operating with the mind-body complex," Geoffrey Samuel states that "[o]ur best evidence to date suggest that such practices developed in the same ascetic circles as the early *śramaṇa* movements (Buddhists, Jainas and Ājīvikas), probably in around the sixth and fifth centuries BCE."[355] Samuel describes the practice, prominent in the Brāhmaṇas, of ascetics accumulating *tapas,* that

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[351] Hartzell 1997, 71-123, 170-71, 577-87.

[352] Weinberger 2003, 37.

[353] Hartzell 1997, 124, 125.

[354] Hartzell 1997, 125. Hartzell also notes the features of Tantra that do not appear in the *Brāmaṇas* "in any germinal form," including seed syllable mantras, the aim of liberation as opposed to immortality through these practices, sexual rites not concerned with procreation, the central role of elaborate visualizations of deities (although there is an idea of "entering deities"), male/female couples and Buddhist notions of emptiness and the like. Hartzell 1997, 125-27.

[355] Samuel 2008, 8.

seems be identical or very close to the *tummo* practice featured in the *Vajra Rosary* and many other Tantric texts:[356] This practice "'saturates' the devotee, making him a reservoir of heated potency. This power may manifest itself as a sexual and fecundating energy…."[357]

Hartzell surveys references to magical and sexual religious rites in the Vedic period, [358] quoting L.M. Joshi, who points out that, as in the Tantras, "In the Vedic literature the place for the practice of magic is usually a cemetery or the seat of flesh eating demons," and mentions the rite at *Śatapatha Brāmaṇa* 8.4.3.7.8 where men and women play the roles of Gandharvas and Apsarases, and *Ṛg Veda* 10.136.6 where the long-haired Muni is said 'to move on the path of the Gandharvas and Apsarases'."[359] Samuel notes,

> Whether or not we use the term "shaman" for the long-haired *muni,* the *vrātya* or for that matter for the *ṛṣis* themselves, it is clear that we have a tradition of figures who communicate with the gods while in ecstatic states, and who have visionary powers as a result of their divine contact. These figures exercise *tapas* in some sense, and this is seen in terms of the accumulation of sexual or quasi-sexual "heat."[360]

Samuel also describes the *mahavrāta* ritual described in the *Jaiminīya Brāmaṇa* and the *Śrauta Sūtra*s, which "appears to have involved ritual intercourse between a *brahmacārin* and a prostitute."[361]

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[356] Samuel 2008, 155-65.

[357] Samuel 2008, 156, *quoting* Kaelber 1989, 144.

[358] Hartzell 1997, 170, *quoting* Joshi 1966 at 118.

[359] Samuel 2008, 154-65.

[360] Samuel 2008, 158. This, says Samuel, explains the importance of the celibate, the *brahmacārin. Id.*

[361] *Id.*

If the above conclusions about the very ancient pedigree of Tantra are correct, then it is not a great leap to speculate that after Śākyamuni left the palace, wandering about the countryside, studying under a number of different teachers with multifarious approaches, he would have encountered Tantric-type practices of one sort or another. Buddha certainly witnessed all sorts of strange ascetic practices,[362] and participated in some himself: describing his austerities to Śāriputra, he says, "I would make my bed in a charnel ground with the bones of the dead for a pillow."[363] If the story of Śākyamuni's life is accurate, before he left palace life, harem, and wife, Śākyamuni would have experienced passion, sex, sensuality and love. Given his emphasis on *upāya* during his forty-five year teaching career, during which he undoubtedly taught students of a "passionate" nature, it is not too hard to imagine that he would have made use of a Tantric-type approach on appropriate occasions. If we take the more or less standard accounts of Buddha's life and teachings as expressed in the *Nikāya's* as true, we could conclude that he was the sort of genius who was at least was capable of taking whatever Tantric practices existed at the time and changing their philosophical and teleological emphases, just as he did with the then-existing Indian religion generally. While whether he actually did so is probably a question that we will never have sufficient evidence to answer,[364] why should we close our minds to the possibility?

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[362] *E.g., see* Ñāṇamoli 1995, 493-97.

[363] *Id.*, 175. Hartzell reports that Buddha knew of practices where sexual union between male and female ascetics was a means of salvation," Hartzell 1997, 171, quoting Banerji 1992, 29-30; however, my edition of Banerji 1992 does not contain this information.

[364] "We do not know and cannot know what the historical Buddha might really have said in more than a very approximate way." Samuel 2008, 32.

Although Mark Tatz considers the *Upāyakauśalya Sūtra*, dating from the first century B.C.E., as a cautionary tale praising chastity, I think that the Sūtra can just as easily be seen as a rather thinly veiled description of Tantric practice. In the *Sūtra*, Ānanda sees the Bodhisattva "together with a woman on the same couch."[365] Thinking that this is a transgression, Ānanda brings the Bodhisattva to Buddha. While Ānanda is telling Buddha about this shocking behavior, the Bodhisattva levitates to the height of a palm tree, and asks Ānanda whether someone who has transgressed could "sit in the atmosphere." Buddha explains:

> The Bodhisattva great hero who is skilled in means, who is endowed with the thought of omniscience, will seek uninterruptedly for omniscience, even to the point of abiding among a holy retinue of women and enjoying, playing with, and taking pleasure in it.[366]

Buddha explains that the woman had been the Bodhisattva's wife for two hundred lives, so, when she saw him, "The thought arose in her mind, 'If the Bodhisattva . . . were to sit with me on a couch, I . . . would generate the thought of supreme, right and full awakening.'"[367] Then, according to the Sūtra, the Bodhisattva comes to the woman's house: "He thought about the earth-equivalency—the spiritual exercise of equating the internal and external elements of earth. He took that sister by the right hand, and they sat down on a couch."[368] The story ends with the Bodhisattva reciting a verse to the effect

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[365] Tatz 2001, 30.

[366] *Id.*, 31.

[367] *Id.*, 32.

[368] *Id.*

that desire is the range of the foolish, and the woman reciting a verse rejecting sense objects and "desires censured by the Buddha."[369]

Mark Tatz, who translated the Sūtra, espouses a prudish interpretation of this story:

> The point of these episodes, however, is that the Bodhisattva is willing to sacrifice his own spiritual advancement and delay his obtainment of nirvāṇa. He does not stray down the path of "erotic yogis" for whom unchastity is kind [sic] of blessing. Those who maintain celibacy in the *Upāya* are able to prove it by displays of levitation. The older yogic lore that spiritual power is lost by seduction—a lore that is codified in vinaya—is not contradicted.[370]

Tatz explains in a footnote that in this "earth equivalency spiritual exercise," "spiritual exercise" is

> "literally, 'dharma door' (*dharma-mukha*)….In this discursive meditation, the earthy (i.e. solid) components of the (female, etc.) body are conceived as being the same as earth (soil, etc.); the aim is avoidance of lust. See *VM* [*Visuddhimagga*] 11:31, 41; 18:19.[371]

With some trepidation, because Tatz has done a thorough case study of this Sūtra while I have not, it strikes me that there is quite another possible interpretation. First, Tatz's contentions that this *dharma-mukha* has to do with avoiding lust or denigrating the female body in service of that are not well supported. The sections of the *Visuddhimagga* relied on say nothing about the female body or the avoidance of lust. 11:31 refers to the "internal earth element" as the head, hair, bone etc. of the body, not specifying gender; 11:41 to meditating in retreat on those elements of the body; and 18:19 describes how the meditator becomes aware of the earth element by means of consciousness or contact.

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[369] *Id.,* 32-33.

[370] *Id.*, 16.

[371] *Id.,* 94.

Nothing in those sections has anything to do with women or lust. However, 11:37 does describe the five "winds" of the body, parallel to the *Vajra Rosary'*s detailed description of the energy-winds named, meditated on and mastered by the Tantric yogi.

Thus, "earth-equivalency" per the *Visuddhimagga* is *at least* simply a meditation on the internal earth element of one's body rather than one of avoiding lust.[372] But, while certainly not conclusive, it is quite possible that in fact this *dharma-mukha* of "earth-equivalency" itself refers to a Tantric practice. Tatz's translation of *dharma-mukha* as "dharma door" is a highly abstracted one. The primary meaning of *mukha* is "mouth." The *Vajra Rosary* uses *kha,* the equivalent of Sanskrit *mukha,* or its honorific, *zhal*, in a variety of contexts. One of the most common is to refer to the vagina of the yoginī, as in "The partaking of the mouth/ Of the yoginī/ Is supreme wisdom."[373] Here we see how the act of translation itself embodies and even magnifies all of the hermeneutic issues we have been discussing.

In addition, while Tatz identifies levitation with celibacy, levitation is also commonly thought of as one of the eight mundane *siddhi* enjoyed by Tantric yogis.[374]

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[372] Meditation on the disgusting features of rotting flesh and skeletal bones to counter lust *is* a common practice in Nikāya and Mahāyāna monastic Buddhism, but this does not appear to be such a meditation.

[373] *VR* 26B, ch. 13, v. 27. I am following Alaṃka here, whose version I have found to be better than the Lhasa text more often than not, who has *zhal* rather than the Lhasa *VR*'s *kun.* I think *zhal* makes more sense: Lhasa has *rnal 'byor ma kun kun spyod ni,* "partaking of all the yoginīs," while Alaṃka's version is *rnal 'byor ma zhal kun spyod ni, "*partaking of the mouth of the yoginī." *Spyod,* "conduct," has the connotation in Tantric writings of Tantric sexual yoga; the context of the verse is that it concludes the chapter called "Explaining the Term Great Bliss," relating to the "great bliss" experienced "during the time of innate (or, alternatively translated, orgasmic) [ecstasy]." *VR* 24B, ch. 13, vv. 1-2. A similar reference in chapter sixty-two of the *Vajra Rosary*, describing the mixing of yogis and yoginīs in the *gaṇacakra* ritual, is even clearer: "By putting together/ [Your] thumb and ring finger,/ You should taste/ The hero and yoginī in succession/ With the tip of [your] tongue./ You should always place/ [Your] mind on the mouth [*kha la sems ni rnam par bkod*]/ In the center of the lotus./ You should make/ The unexcelled offering!" *VR* 91A, ch. 62, v. 19.

[374] Lessing and Wayman 1968, 220 n.13. The *siddhi* in question is listed by Mkhas grub rje as seventh, Tib. *zhing skyong,* literally "sky-walking."

The condemnation of desire at the story's end could well be simply an apologetic, added to protect those not ready for such a teaching or to be on the safe side in a conservative or monastic environment. Thus, I think there is a strong indication in the *Upāyakauśalya Sūtra* of the presence of Buddhist Tantra, employed for liberative purposes, much earlier than the latter part of the first millennium.

Pursuing this line of open-minded inquiry then, one would ask why these teachings would not have been recorded in the councils and then found their way into the textual canon. I can think of two logical responses. First, as noted by Geoffrey Samuel, "Buddha's teaching to his advanced disciples was likely to have consisted of personal advice appropriate for the specific needs of each person,"[375] and may well have been privately given and not heard by anyone else. Secondly, teachings regarding Tantric or Tantric-type practices would have been, at least for a time, closely held. This is stressed in the *Vajra Rosary* and many Tantric texts. As the *Vajra Rosary*, which uses the word "secret," *gsangs,* eighty-three times, puts it, "It should not be revealed/ In any way:/ That is as well known/ As breathing."[376] One need look no further than the Eleusianian Mysteries to conclude that secret practices, even those involving tens of thousands of people over hundreds of years, can remain secret. As noted by Noel Robertson, "On the following days the new initiates were fully engaged in rites within the sanctuary,

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[375] *Id.*, 136.

[376] *VR* 10A, ch. 3, v. 6. Although clearly there was a proliferation of Tantric texts at the end of the first millennium, there is no indication that such texts were widely distributed prior to the end of the twentieth century.

especially in the great hall… What they did from day to day is unknown."[377] If the Greeks were capable of keeping a secret, perhaps, at least until the latter part of the first millennium,[378] so were the Indians.

Stein notes that in twelfth century Tibet, "teachers refused as a rule to transmit esoteric teachings other than by word of mouth and in a manner that linked teacher and disciple personally."[379] Given the secrecy in which these teachings, if they existed, would have been held, to conclude that the absence of textual or art historical evidence shows that Tantra did not exist is not logical, but does show our obsessional reliance on texts. Yet, we reject texts that say that Buddha taught Tantra, while we accept texts that say Buddha taught ethics, like the eightfold path, or wisdom, like selflessness. And we accept orality on some matters but not as to others. As noted by Wedemeyer, "There is a clear and consistent lack of early Vinaya manuscripts, and yet, in light of this evidence, scholars are nonetheless happy to hypothesize that in fact these texts were known and followed, albeit preserved in an oral tradition and not committed to writing."[380] These inconsistencies alone should cause us to question our methodology.[381]

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[377] Robertson 1998, 562. *See also* Wasson, Hofmann and Ruck 2008 at 19; Mylonas 1947, 140. Mylonas notes that the literature on the subject of the secrecy of the rites was too voluminous to elaborate. *Id.,* 146 n.5.

[378] The efficacy of the "sealed" nature of Tantric texts deserves a full-length study. Given the public awareness of "sealed" tantric practices, at least in 9-12th century Kashmir, Hartzell 1997, 492-556, there is a real issue as to whether the culture of secrecy was better observed prior to that time. While the existence alone of written texts does not prove that Tantric practices were publicly known, tying the existence of Tantra to texts does presume a certain level of disclosure at the outset.

[379] Stein 1972, 158. Stein quotes some sources, but unfortunately does not identify them. Of course, at a certain point, not later than the tenth century, there is an explosion of esoteric written texts, of which the *Vajra Rosary* is a prime example.

[380] Wedemeyer 1999, 109.

[381] With the excavations of the Dunhuang manuscripts, we have another textual source that allows us to trace the progress of the development of Tantric practice, but also to serve as a touchstone for our existing

If not persuaded by the contents of the *Upāyakauśalya Sūtra*, we should consider Asaṅga's fourth century[382] *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra* or *Universal Discourse Literature.* There, in the course of advocating the "transmutation" of the five sense faculties, Asaṅga says, "In the transmutation of (sensation, even in) sexual union, highest mastery is attained in the station of the buddhas' bliss, while in the unaddicted vision of the consort."[383] David Snellgrove, referring to this passage, writes, "It is by no means improbable that already by the fifth century when Asaṅga was writing, these techniques of sexual yoga were being used in reputable Buddhist circles, and that Asaṅga himself accepted such a practice as valid."[384] Samuel, considering the verse and Snellgrove's interpretation of it, defines his way out of the problem, the problem being the acknowledging of Buddhist Tantric practice at such an early date:

> The point is well taken, but one should also note that there is nothing particularly transgressive in Asaṅga's text. The reference is explicitly to practices carried out in the context of a marital relationship, not by supposedly celibate Buddhist practitioners [fn. omitted]. There is no suggestion here of a context such as that of the *kāpālika*-style practitioner, with its transgressive use of sexual substances in frightening and dangerous places to attract dangerous female spirits.[385]

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biases. In analyzing ritual manuals, Jacob Dalton finds a progression of Tantric practices over some two hundred years at the end of the first millennium that evolve from "the external shrine to the body's interior." Dalton 2004, 26. As we shall see, however, the *Vajra Rosary* has aspects of all three stages, which suggests either that the *Vajra Rosary* is an anthology of sorts, which will be discussed below in part C, 3 of this chapter, or that Dalton's analysis of the three stages being chronological rather than as coexisting strands of practice is wrong. In addition, while these ritual manuals certainly show Tantric practice at a particular time and place, they say nothing about whether similar practices were performed hundreds or thousands of years earlier. Scholars today generally assume that findings such as Dalton's are generalizable to show that Buddhist Tantra did not emerge until *texts* prove it.

[382] *See* Maitryanātha/Āryāsaṅga 2004, *xiii.*

[383] *Id.,* 89.

[384] Snellgrove 1987, 127.

[385] Samuel 2008, 275. Samuel's reference to the marital relationship follows Snellgrove's translation of the Sanskrit *dāra* as "wife." We shall see in the *Vajra Rosary* the use of "wife," as well as "mother," "daughter," "sister" and even "mother-in-law" to refer to various kinds of sexual consorts. *See, e.g., VR* 63B-64A, ch. 44, vv. 11-23. Alaṃka 218A-219B.

The best Samuel can say, grudgingly is, "There is at least a possibility, then that some kind of sexual yoga existed in the fourth or fifth centuries."[386]

The above example of Samuel's reluctance to acknowledge Buddhists engaged in Tantric practices is typical. Even Hartzell makes it a point to distinguish between "Tantra" and "proto-Tantra," and is reticent to overstate the case for an early dating of Buddhist Tantra: "[T]here are many streams of contribution to what becomes the Tantric tradition—however, that does not mean that when we find instances of these contributing streams in earlier strata of the traditions that we can then conclude that 'Tantra' existed already at these earlier dates."[387] The elements of the ninth and tenth century texts that Samuel considers to constitute the "relatively coherent set of techniques and practices" that he uses as a working definition of Tantra is also typical of how scholars define Tantra: "[E]laborate deity visualizations, in which the practitioner identifies with a divine figure at the centre of a *Maṇḍala* …; fierce male and particularly female deities; the use of transgressive 'Kāpālika'-style practices associated with cremation-grounds and polluting substances linked to sex and death, and internal yogic practices, including sexual techniques, which are intended to achieve health and long life as well as liberating insight."[388]

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[386] Samuel 2008, 276.

[387] Hartzell 1997, 278-79 n.298.

[388] Samuel 2008, 9. *See also id.* at 220, where Samuel concludes that practices suggested by the revelation of Meitreya to Asanga is not fully developed as Tantra because "*there is no reason to suppose* the employment of sexual practices…nor are there *indications* of actual identification with the Buddha or other deity…." (Emphases added).

We protest too much, I think. Why are we trying so hard to define Tantra in a particular way, to narrow its definition to a specific checklist of attributes found in texts, in order to defer the date of the emergence of Buddhist Tantric practice? One would think that we would be familiar enough with Wittgenstein's concept of the "family relationship" to acknowledge at least some measure of definitional flexibility. Yet, we find ourselves in a definitional shell game: If Buddhist Tantra is defined in terms of a list of attributes set forth in texts, then, since the texts emerged late, Buddhist Tantra emerged late. If Buddhist Tantra is defined in terms of mandalas, then since the political term *maṇḍala* did not describe the political situation in northern India under after the fall of the Guptas,[389] then Buddhist Tantra could not have existed until then.[390] If creation stage rituals or visualizations as various deities are taken as the *sine qua non,* then the emergence of Buddhist Tantra would be pegged to documentary or archaeological evidence of those particular rituals or deities.

But if we define Buddhist Tantra as harnessing the technology and energies of the body, gross and subtle, particularly the energy associated with sexual union and *tapas* or *tummo,* to produce experiential states for a Buddhist soteriological purpose, which, we will see in detail in Chapter Three is the subject of much of the *Vajra Rosary,* then it seems to me that we should seriously entertain the possibility that Buddhist Tantra was being practiced for centuries before the end of the first millennium or even that the

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[389] *See, e.g.,* Davidson 2002, 134-35.

[390] Although mandalas also have an ancient pedigree in India (as well as other cultures such as the Australian aboriginal), Samuel points out that they lack the "critical" features of having a center and non-central components that are emanations of the center. He concludes; "The fully fledged Tantric *maṇḍala* is a model of a specific kind of state…In such a state, in principle, the centre is reduplicated at the various regional capitals, where local rulers imitate on a lesser scale the splendor of the royal court at the main centre." Samuel 2008, 227.

Buddhist scriptures may have been correct in ascribing the Buddhist Tantric teachings to Buddha himself. While there is a normative element to such an hermeneutic choice, it seems to me that it leaves undisturbed an open-minded creativity consonant with the better Western hermeneutic arguments described in Chapter One as well as both the traditional Indo-Tibetan Buddhist view and that view as explicated by Wedemeyer in his 2007 book.[391] While debate on the subject is welcome, at least to me it does not seem that the evidence is convincing enough to foreclose these other possibilities.

Indeed, the point of contention here is based not on evidence, but on the meaning of the *absence* of evidence, a thin reed indeed on which to rely, and one particularly open to the pre-judgment and assumptions of the empirical reader. In law, when evidence is not sufficient to support a factual finding, we rely on presumptions, such as the presumption of innocence. Where these presumptions are substantive, they reflect our deepest cultural values. Here, presuming that there must be written evidence in order to establish the existence of Tantra before a certain date may also reflect such values, which may include both contemporarily laudable values such as a sense of modesty about making factual findings about events in antiquity as well as outright prejudice against antinomian practices. My point is that we should reflect on this and determine what our approach tells us about ourselves.

While I am arguing for an hermeneutically open-minded approach to the history of Tantra, and against over-reliance on the contents or absence thereof in textual "works" as the primary arbiters regarding the existence or nonexistence of Tantric practice, there are some works-based arguments that should be considered and further explored. For

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[391] *E.g.* Hirsch 1967, 203.

example, Hartzell notes, based on literary sources, that "at least after Abhinavagupta," *i.e.* 1020 C.E.,[392] (Śaiva and Buddhist) Tantric practices were hardly secret in Kashmir:

> Tantra had become very public due to its patronage in royal courts, and had gained a degree of intellectual respectability…. Certain versions of Tantric practices had apparently worked their way into the upper classes, providing a ready rationalization for husbands and wives to visit Tantric "gurus" at night…. Some of the Buddhist nuns apparently had a less than stellar reputation, since they appear to have been involved in Tantric sexual yoga practices that were no longer entirely secret….[393]

If this was the first larger-scale dissemination of at least the outlines of Tantric practice, why do we see it at this time? Is it because prior to this time there was no Tantric practice to speak of, or because only at this time did theretofore secret Tantra become the subject of texts, whose subject matter then found its way into the public domain?

A key issue here is the timing of the explosion of texts that accompanied the Mahāyāna movement and its relationship to Tantric texts. If, starting in the early first millennium, everything Buddhist became the subject of a written text, and Tantric practice in the Buddhist context existed, why don't we see written Tantras in this early period? Ernst Steinkellner summarizes the transition in Buddhism generally from an oral to a written culture,

> When Buddhism first came to Tibet in the 7th to 9th centuries, [fn. omitted] it was no longer a tradition with a primarily oral culture of transmission. Authoritative scriptures had long been developed into various canons, and writing and copying had become part of Buddhist life soon after the beginning of our era. The sacredness of the numerous Buddhas' words had expressed itself ritually in the Mahāyāna 'Cult of the Book'. Dogmatic, philosophical, poetic, narrative, didactic, apologetic literatures were composed and transmitted. In short: the written text and its main carrier, the manuscript, had become indispensable. When the great Buddhist universities were founded

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[392] Abhinavagupta died in 1020 C.E; Zhi ba 'od was born in 1015 C.E.

[393] Hartzell 543-44.

> by, for example, the late Gupta and early Pāla kings after the fifth century A.D., libraries and scriptoria were an essential part of these establishments. [394]

However, because Steinkellner is not writing about Tantra, the evidence on text production in the exoteric venue hardly would be dispositive as to whether the same shift from orality occurred in the esoteric venue, giving us grounds to infer that Tantra, like Sūtra, was primarily a written doctrine and therefore that the absence of written Tantric texts can be taken as persuasive evidence of the absence of Tantra.

It does, however, seem to me that when we combine the evidence of widespread textualism in Buddhism generally with the profusion of textual production of Tantras and the spreading of Tantric ideas in Kashmir, while the burden of proof (or what we call technically that of "going forward with the evidence") doesn't quite shift, we should be looking for at least *some* evidence that esoteric teachings existed but were not written down until the end of the first millennium. I do think that we have such textual evidence in the *Upāyakauśalya Sūtra* and the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra* on the Buddhist side in addition to the much earlier textual evidence found in the Vedas, Brāmaṇas and Upaniṣads, and the *mahavrāta* ritual. But unless we are hermeneutically open to the possibility, we would not be looking for that evidence and, even if seen, might not recognize it.

What just about everyone who has written on the subject agrees on is that the currently extant *written* Tibetan text that is found in the *bka' 'gyur* emerged during the

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[394] Steinkellner 2004, 6. It is, however, conceivable that esoteric material could have remained in oral form despite the increasing emphasis on written texts.

adult life of Zhi ba 'od in the mid-eleventh to early twelfth century.[395] I will continue the discussion there.

B. The Emergence of the Current Text

Encountering Tantra in twenty-first century America is encountering a religious practice in most respects that has been largely removed from its social and cultural setting and isolated from its historical origins. Since, according to the dialogical algorithm we are working with, the meaning of the *Vajra Rosary* will encompass the past and the present, it is important that we have a good understanding of how Tantra functioned in the Indian and Tibetan societies of its origin and development. Clearly, this is a collective task for scholarship in general, and far beyond the scope of this essay. Nevertheless, because the purpose of at least the academic component of this essay is to promote transparency and dialogue with the objective of illuminating common prior assumptions and creating common knowledge, here I will attempt to give an overview of some of the more prominent features of the setting in which Tantra arose.

1. Background: Tantra, Monasteries and State Power in India and Tibet

Generally speaking, monasteries have functioned at the core of Buddhist life and religious practice:

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[395] The other translators mentioned by Tsong kha pa are either contemporary with Zhi ba 'od (Marpa) or postdate him (Chag lo tsa ba, Byams pa'i dpal, Zhang lo tsa ba). However, Tsong kha pa does refer to the "old" translations, which could be significantly earlier. Tsong kha pa 2010, 232.

> It is well known that the survival of Buddhism has always depended upon the health and strength of its monasteries. Although it soon developed as a religion, the practice of which was available to layfolk, the layfolk have always depended heavily upon monastic communities for the performance of rites and ceremonies, and even more important to note, it is the monasteries that preserve the doctrine in a traditionally acceptable form.[396]

The great Buddhist monasteries of Vikramaśīla, from whence came Atīśa and Alaṃkakalaśa, Nālandā, Odantapuri and Somapuri had significant land holdings, and housed thousands of students each. While wandering *siddha*s had a critical role in the formation of Tantric doctrine, Tantra was mainly translated, taught, and practiced in monasteries.[397]

In India and, later, in Tibet, monasteries were economic as well as religious entities. The primary source document for monastic practices in North India during the fifth and sixth centuries, the *Mūlasarvāstivaāda-vinaya*, makes it clear that monks "were expected—even required—to have personal property and private wealth…Some Mūlasarvāstivādin monks, those who were 'well known and of great merit,' were even expected to be quite wealthy."[398] The picture painted by the *Mūlasarvāstivaāda-vinaya* is of monks who:

> pay debts and tolls and transport taxable goods; own their own furniture and have the means to pay for any damage they might do to that of other monks; carry personal seals; pay for their own medicine and healing rituals; leave estates, sometimes huge; borrow money from laymen inherit property from both other monks and laymen; accept and service permanent endowments; make loans and charge interest; accept and use negotiable securities; provide care for sick and dying laymen, with the understanding that, when the layman

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[396] Snellgrove 1987, 306.

[397] Snellgrove 2002, 307. This is also shown by how the *Vajra Rosary* describes mantras only elliptically, decipherable only by one who had knowledge of Sanskrit grammar. Such persons would be found primarily in the Buddhist educational institutions, the monasteries. *See, e.g., VR* 29A, ch. 15, v. 25, and discussion, *infra,* in Chapter Three, "Secrecy."

[398] Schopen 2004, 5.

> died, his estate would go to the monastery; and receive precious and semiprecious materials, sell books, receive gold in various forms, accept money…, sell the property of deceased monks, hire and oversee laborers, and buy food.[399]

While scholars have debated whether the monastic economy was parasitic or productive,[400] like its Indian antecedent, the Tibetan monastery was an economic entity with economic relationships to its monks, patrons and the economy as a whole, trading in what Pierre Bourdieu would call "religious capital."[401] Primarily governed by the *spyi 'i sa,* "general property," system, patrons contributed money, produce or land to separate funds maintained by a monastic *nyer ba,* "director," who was generally free to keep personally the interest or profit made on the fund over and above cost of the religious services provided to the patron. These decentralized treasuries, writes George Murphy, "may have been as important to Inner Asia as that of the double-entry bookkeeping in the West."[402] The positive and negative effects of this system were summarized by George Murphy:

> There is evidence of misdirection of social savings into private fortunes by corruption and bribery, through the sale of positions and degrees within monasteries. Funds were disbursed in conspicuous religious consumption or monument building which might have gone to capital investment. There was loss of male manpower to the economy, and influence on the demographic characteristics of the population by way of changed fertility rates.
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> But the monasteries financed by their system of decentralized

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[399] *Id.,* 15. Schopen points out that these financially sophisticated and potentially monks "did not have much good to say about monks who did engage in asceticism, meditation, and doctrinal learning." *Id.*

[400] *E.g. compare* Miller 1961 *with* Murphy 1961.

[401] "Bourdieu's concept of 'religious capital'…is close to Weber's idea of religious 'qualification.' It represents 'accumulated symbolic labor' and is connected to the 'constitution of a religious field' where a group of religious specialists is able to monopolize the administration of religious goods and services." Swartz 1996, 75.

[402] Murphy 1961, 439-440.

> accounts had positive aspects. They brought some social order and peace to Inner Asia and provided sanctuary for persons and for goods. They concentrated capital and acted as primitive banks. They facilitated travel and trade ….[403]

Thus, from the very outset of monastic Buddhism, there has been a strong economic dimension to the provision of religious services to the general population and within the monastery itself. These considerations will be revisited when we look at the function of Tantra in determining its meaning and that of the *Vajra Rosary*.

In the chaos following the fall of the Tibetan empire, monastic life and monasteries were suppressed and then, to a degree, abandoned, and it was not until the tenth century that monasticism started to spread again from the surviving monasteries in A mdo, and in Gu ge in the person of Ye shes ‘od, among others. In the late tenth century, economic conditions combined with a conviction among Tibetan Buddhists of the importance of a strong monastic base.[404] Local temples and monasteries sprung up in Central Tibet during this period, and monk missionaries were given the old temples that had languished since the time of the royal dynasty or were given land for new temples and monasteries.[405] The smaller temples were often affiliated with larger monasteries or temples, but little is known about how the funding of these institutions worked.[406]

By the twelfth century, however, monasteries were ubiquitous in Tibet, many of them politically and economically powerful.[407] This had coincided with the spread of

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[403] *Id.,* 441.

[404] Davidson 2005, 86.

[405] *Id.*, 101.

[406] *Id.,* 104.

[407] Stein 1972, 75.

Tantric teachings and the formation of Tantric lineages, described by Snellgrove, Davidson and many others in the academic literature, that gave rise to the four main orders and various subsidiary groupings of Tibetan Buddhism. Given that some of the most prominent distinguishing features of the various orders and groupings have to do not with philosophical view but with Tantric teaching lineages, Tantra clearly had a role in shaping the social and political environment of Tibet.

In his discussion of Tantra and the state, Geoffrey Samuel cites Gupta and Gombrich regarding the increasing role of Śaiva Tantra in Hindu polities, reflected by the increasing importance of Durgā in state religion, citing their statement that "for at least the last thousand years, perhaps longer, the concept of power in its political and social application has been intimately connected with Tantric theology—so intimately, one might suggest, that the one cannot be adequately understood apart form the other."[408] He also cites Alexis Sanderson's assertion that the *Netra Tantra* is "in effect, a manual for a Tantric Śaivite priest to take over virtually the complete role of the royal *purohita* and *rājaguru*,"[409] and Sanderson's and David White's research to the effect that *Kaula Tantra* became virtually the state religion in various parts of South Asia.[410] White writes, "In their seventh-to-eleventh century heyday, these forms of Kaula theory and practice were so compelling, as direct paths to gnosis, power, and godhead, that they won the adherence of some of the great royal houses of the period: the Somavaṃśis, Candellas and

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[408] Samuel 2008, 297, *citing* Gupta and Gombrich 1986, 123.

[409] *Id.*, 298, *citing* Sanderson 2004.

[410] I*d*., 299.

Kalacuris, whose kingdoms stretched across the Vindhya range and beyond from Rajasthan to Assam."[411]

As contrasted with his description of Hindu polities, Samuel presents no parallel account of Buddhist Tantra serving as state religion other than in Tibet, and there with some important qualifications, discussed below. Davidson himself observes, "Nor does the evidence support the model that Buddhist esotericism is the pale imitation of Śaivism…"[412] and I have discussed above how Davidson's theory is rather that Buddhist Tantra only metaphorically "reflects the internalization of the medieval conceptual and social environment."[413] Yet, we do see Tantra closely involved with Buddhist political entities in Tibet.

Perhaps the most famous instance of the connection of Tibetan Buddhist Tantra to economic and political power is that of the relationship of the Sa skya lamas, beginning with Sa skya Pandita and expanding dramatically with his nephew, 'Phags pa, with the Mongols. In 1244, the Mongol prince Godan requested or ordered Sa skya Pandita, whose reputation was renowned for his prodigious scholarship in Sūtra and Tantra, to meet with him in order to arrange the submission of Tibet to the Mongol empire. Sa skya Pandita's nephew 'Phags pa deepened the relationship with the Mongols, and the patron-priest relationship was established with the patron using his power to assure Sa skya dominance in Tibet and the lama providing for the spiritual needs of the patron. Tantra was an essential part of this, and in 1253 'Phags pa initiated Qubilai Khan, his queens and

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[411] *Id.*, 299, *citing* White 1998, 198.

[412] Davidson 2002, 113.

[413] *Id.*, 115.

ministers into the Hevajra mandala. In return, Qubilai gave him Tibet.[414] 'Phags pa identified Qubilai with Mañjuśrī and as the universal monarch (*cakravartin*), and Qubilai granted the Buddhists tax-exemptions, supplied money for the construction of monasteries and provided artisans and slaves to work on the monasteries' land.[415] While Qubilai also sought assistance from, and brought to his capital representatives from, many different religions, and the argument can be made that in propitiating Hevajra, he was simply and shrewdly pacifying Tibet, this episode clearly demonstrates the power of Tantric doctrine in the worldly sphere.

Samuel deems the contrast between both Qubilai's polity and that of the Śaivite kings discussed above on the one hand, and that of Tibet on the other, to be significant. He maintains that, due to its harsh climate and poor communications, Tibet was a very difficult place to maintain central authority, arguing that "traditional Tibet can best be regarded as a *stateless society.*"[416] He notes that after the first diffusion of Buddhism in Tibet and through the kingships of the seventh and eighth centuries, when there was some measure of state power intertwined with religion until the collapse of the Tibetan state after the assassination of Khri gtsug lde brtsan (Relbachan) in 838 CE, "Buddhism survived and flourished in Tibetan societies because it established itself outside the context of state sponsorship, as part of Tibetan village communities."[417] There was

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[414] Powers 1995, 387-88. This was part of Qubilai's effort to consolidate his empire, and he also reached out to Moslems in order to lessen his dependence on Chinese advisors and officials, to Taoists, and even to the small Christian community in China. Fairbank 1964, 460-64.

[415] Fairbank 1964, 462.

[416] Samuel 1982, 215.

[417] Samuel 1993, 556.

indeed power at stake in the adoption of Tantra in Tibet, but, according to Samuel, power in a different context than we post-moderns would usually conceive:

> The folk religion…was concerned with power; with defense against the dangerous powers of the physical and social environment, and with the utilization of the beneficial powers of the Buddhist clergy (primarily the lamas) for the good of the community. So, in effect, was the cult of Enlightenment, at any rate as pursued through the Tantras…. Power here was the power of the personal religious teacher, the *tsawé lama*, and of the Buddhist Tantric deities who were accessed through him. Ultimately this power was internalized within the practitioner and became available to help others.[418]

In addition, Samuel finds a direct connection between the decentralization of political power in Tibet and the shamanistic form of Tibetan Tantric Buddhism:

> Centralized regimes typically have law codes and ethically oriented clerical religions based on a single dominant deity or divine figure who exemplifies their ideal pattern. In the absence of this specification of the bases of social life, the patterns of society and of religion take a different form… In place of one supreme, officially endorsed deity, one typically finds a variety of such figures, each with their own slightly different mode of living. The manipulation of power in such a society involves the manipulation of these individual forces (or powers) just as much as the manipulation of labor-power and of land. This is the essence of shamanism.., and it is what the shamans (the lamas, in the Tibetan case) provide for the clientele. My suggestion is that Tantric Buddhism was adopted by stateless populations throughout the Himalayas and in Tibet in large part because it was believed to provide a superior set of techniques for manipulating those powers.[419]

Based on Samuel's research, we can derive two significant points. First, historically we do not see a centralized regime in Tibet as we do in the Śaivite Indian regimes, where there was a direct relationship between Tantra and state power. Second, and this follows from the first point, the interest of those practicing Buddhist Tantra was not a product of pleasing royalty or currying favor with officials, but, particularly if

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[418] *Id.*

[419] Samuel 1993, 563. We see both the "white magic" and the "black magic" typical of shamanic power in *Vajra Rosary* chapters sixty-six and sixty-seven.

Samuel is correct in his description of the Tibetan Buddhist religious system as essentially shamanistic, was related to manipulating deities, for the good of the community and for helping others. This is not to say that at an individual level Tibetans of all walks of life were not self-interested,[420] but it does say that this was in spite of rather than because of their religious practices.

On the other hand, a closer look at Tibetan history reveals some flaws in this argument. While, as Samuel stresses, there was no *enduring* central religio-political authority in Tibet, there were a number of local regimes in which various religious orders and personalities dominated the political landscape in theocratic or ecclesiastical rule. Some prominent examples of this are seen in Sa skya pa rule in conjunction with the Mongols, Lama Zhang, the 'Bri kung bka' brgyud, the kingdom of Sde dge, the kingdom of Co ne,[421] and Bla brang.[422] There were instances of conflict between monastic power centers, including armed conflict, on an ongoing basis.[423]

In addition, hierarchies of wealth and status were preserved in the monasteries. Generally speaking, monks from lower classes without their own wealth were foreclosed from the ability to undertake the lengthy studies necessary to obtain high positions in the monastic orders because they were obliged to undertake many of the more pedestrian

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[420] Davidson focuses on translators like 'Brog mi who were interested in material possessions, but concludes even in 'Brog mi's case that he was primarily motivated by religious factors, Davidson 2005, 208-09. Samuel notes more pedestrian advantages to monastic life such as getting an education or escaping from harsh conditions typical of the Tibetan villager or nomad. Samuel 1993, 558-59.

[421] *See* Tuttle 2011.

[422] Thanks to Gray Tuttle for pointing out these examples. Personal Communication 5-10-11.

[423] *See* Stein 1972, 75-82.

tasks necessary to run the monastery, or might serve as the servants of richer monks.[424] And, at least in the Dge lugs tradition, since formal Tantric training at the Tantric colleges followed the lengthy dge shes curriculum, the higher Tantric training was also a function of class and social status. And certainly nowhere was that more prominently on display than in Zhi ba 'od's Gu ge.

So, while the picture is complex, economics, politics and worldly status had roles to play within Buddhist monastic institutions and such considerations were, in more than a few cases, intertwined with Tantra and Tantric practice.

2. Overview of the "Second Diffusion" of Buddhism in Tibet

After the fall of the Gupta and Puṣyabhūti dynasties in the mid-seventh century, North India, where Tantra became institutionalized in the various monasteries, was a very unstable place, governed by a patchwork of states with shifting alliances, and enduring military raids from various directions. The overall population declined, as did the merchant guilds, which had been an important source of support for Buddhist monasteries. The adverse conditions in North India resulted in a contraction of the geographic distribution of Buddhist communities, contributing to the importance of the remaining Buddhist monasteries. In the sphere of religion, North India encountered Śaiva cults and deities from the south, including ascetic groups such as the Kaulas, Kāpālikas and Pāsupatas.[425] It is this environment that Davidson considers inspired and determined the form of Buddhist Tantra.

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[424] *See* Stein 1972, 140-42.

[425] *See generally* Davidson 2002 and 2005; Snellgrove 1987.

Buddhism had traditionally first appeared in Tibet in 233 C.E.; however the first successful transmission, the *snga dar*, "earlier diffusion," took place during the reign of Srong btsan sgam po during the first half of the seventh century.[426] Buddhism continued to spread in Tibet, mainly among the upper classes, during the reigns of the subsequent kings, including Khri srong lde btsan in the latter part of the eighth century, and Khri ral pa can in the first part of the ninth. Monasteries were established under royal patronage. Tradition has it that Khri ral pa can was so enamored of Buddhism that he neglected his official duties and alienated various factions, leading to his assassination and replacement by King Glang dar ma in 838, reputedly an enemy of Buddhism who destroyed Buddhist images and texts and was himself assassinated.[427]

Glang dar ma's demise was followed by a period of political instability in central Tibet, traditionally characterized as a "dark age."[428] However, despite the confusion in central Tibet, interest in and patronage for Buddhism remained strong in Eastern and Western Tibet, setting the stage for the *phyi dar*, "later diffusion" of Buddhism, catalyzed in Western Tibet by the sending of twenty-one Tibetan young monks to India, two of whom returned to Tibet in 978 with scriptures and some Indian scholars. One of those two young monks was Rin chen bzang po, who was soon joined in Western Tibet by

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[426] Powers 1995, 126.

[427] *See generally* Bu ston 1999, 182-203.

[428] Powers 1995, 133-37. A detailed account of this period can be found in Davidson 2005, 61-83. Davidson points out that Central Tibetans' support of Buddhism had much to do with the Tibetan perception of empire, their sense of its loss, and the consequent degradation of Tibetan life…Empire building had become an extension of Buddhism's 'magical' effect and mostly benign domestic influence in early Tibet…." *Id.* 72-73. This view reflects Davidson's identification of Buddhism, particularly Tantric Buddhism, with modalities of power. Another way to look at Davidson's theory is through the lens of meme theory: that the meme, *i.e.* cultural gene, of Buddhism or Tantric Buddhism attached itself to that of the memes of power and/or security. *See generally* Blackmoor 2000.

Atīśa, the great scholar and abbot from Vikramaśila Monastery. The figure who sent the twenty-one monks and thus was responsible for the initiation of the *phyi dar* was King Tsen po kho re, who renounced his throne and became the royal monk Ye shes ‘od.[429] Subsequently, Ye shes ‘od’s grand-nephew, the royal monk Byang chub ‘od invited Atīśa to Western Tibet, where he stayed for a few years before departing for Central Tibet.

Orthodox Dge lugs tradition holds that, although they were sponsored by Ye shes 'od and his successors, Rin chen bzang po and Atīśa were the catalysts of the second diffusion and were primarily responsible for reforming Buddhism at that time.[430] The more contemporary accounts of Snellgrove, Kapstein and Davidson put less emphasis on the importance of the Rin chen bzang po and Atīśa, stressing the earlier penetration of Buddhism,[431] the importance of the Eastern Vinaya monks,[432] or that the *phyi dar* was a "pan-Tibetan phenomenon," respectively.[433]

3. Ye shes 'od and Rin chen bzang po

Ye shes 'od, along with Rin chen bzang po and Atīśa, is the key figure in the Western Tibetan Renaissance and certainly in the *Mnga' ris rgyal rabs*, the *History of Western Tibet*, written by Ngag dbang grags pa, a direct student of Tsong kha pa, in

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[429] Tibetan history is no exception to the re-imagining of history in light of subsequent events and politics. Davidson's recent work in examining what he contends is the retrospectively granted pre-eminence of events and persons in Western Tibet, as contrasted with Kham, Davidson 2005, 112-115, and Samten Karmay's 2001 essay in which he concludes that King Glang dar ma “personally remained Buddhist and during his reign Buddhism certainly continued to flourish,” Karmay 2005, 29, are examples of scholarship on this subject.

[430] *See, e.g.,* Tsong kha pa 2000, 42**.**

[431] Snellgrove 2002, 473.

[432] Davidson 2005, 84-116.

[433] Kapstein 2006, 95.

1497.[434] Ye shes 'od sent delegations to Kashmir specifically in search of the *Compendium of Principles*, *Secret Community* and the *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṃgīti*.[435] Ye shes 'od is also famous on account of his royal *Proclamation*, *bka' shog,* that was made and circulated in 986. It is a sweeping restatement of Mahāyāna doctrine, and condemnation of Tantric practices of the time,[436] which Ye shes 'od roundly condemns as non-Mahayanist, even non-Buddhist. At the time, as shown in Table 4, below, Atīśa was four and Rin chen bzang po twenty-eight years old, and Zhi ba 'od would not be born for another twenty-nine years, so one must question the received wisdom we will see on the subject that generally conflates their views.

[434] Vitali 1996, 89-95. Vitali notes that the manuscript he translated was incomplete, and the "original ornate title is lost." *Id.,* 89.

[435] Weinberger 2003, 313.

[436] For a description of these practices, *see* Davidson 2005, 78-79.

TABLE 4. Selected Chronology of Western Tibet *Phyi dar*[437]

		YO[438]	RZ	A	BO	ZO	(ages)
947	Ye shes 'od born	0					
958	Rin chen bzang po born	11	0				
978	Rin chen bzang po returns to Tibet	31	20				
982	Atīśa born	35	24	0			
983	Byang chub 'od born	36	25	1	0		
986	Ye shes 'od's *Proclamation*	39	28	4	3		
1015	Zhi ba 'od born	68	55	31	32	0	
1024	Ye shes 'od dies	77	64	40	41	9	
1042	Atīśa arrives in Guge		82	58	59	27	
1046	Atīśa to central Tibet		86	62	63	31	
1054	Atīśa dies		96	70	71	39	
1055	Rin chen bzang po dies		97		72	40	
1076	*Chos 'khor*				93	61	
1077	Byang chub 'od dies				94	62	
1092	Zhi ba 'od's *Proclamation*					77	
1111	Zhi ba 'od dies					96	

Ye shes 'od's *Proclamation* starts with a short summary of Buddhist doctrine, summarizing the three vehicles of the *śvravaka*, *pratyekabuddha* and *bodhisattva*. Then he gets right to the point: "You tantrists, who live in villages, have no connection with these Three Ways."[439] He continues:

> Imprisoned in the dirt of the five kinds of sensual objects and women,
> It is astonishing to say the "we are Dharmakāya."
> * * * *
> False doctrine called rDzogs chen is flourishing in Tibet.
> The views of this doctrine are mistaken.

[437] Compiled from various sources, including Ngag dbang grags pa, Chattopadyaya 1999, Roerich 1978, Bu ston 1999, Kapstein 2006 and Davidson 2005.

[438] YO – Ye shes 'od; RZ – Rin chen bzang po; A – Atīśa; BO – Byang chub 'od; ZO – Zhi ba 'od.

[439] Karmay 1998, 9. Karmay did not find the text of the *bka' shog*. His translation of the *bka' shog* is derived from the polemical response of the Rnying ma Sog zlog pa blo gros rgyal mtshan (1552-1624) and is annotated with the latter's commentary disputing many of the passages of the *bka' shog*.

Heretical Tantras, pretending to be Buddhist, are also spread in Tibet.
* * * *
As "sexual rite" has become popular the different classes of people are mixed.
* * * *
By offering faeces and urine,
Semen and menses to pure divinities,
Alas! you will be reborn in a mire of rotting corpses.
* * * *
By way of retribution for indulging your lust in your "sexual rite",
Alas! You will be reborn as a uterine worm.
You worship the Three Jewels with flesh, blood and urine,
Ignorant of "enigmatic" terminology you practise the rite literally,
A Mahāyanist such as this, will surely be reborn as a demon.
What a strange Buddhist adhering to such practices!
If these practices, like yours, bring about Buddhahood,
Then hunters, fishermen, butchers and prostitutes,
Would surely have attained Enlightenment by now.[440]

As we will see in Chapter Three, every one of these practices is reflected in the *Vajra Rosary*.

4. Zhi ba 'od

Zhi ba 'od was the first translator in the Tibetan royal family. Although a monk, the colophons to the *Vajra Rosary* and his other translations describe Zhi ba 'od as "King of Tibet," *bod kyi lha btsan po,* the title used by the early Tibetan kings.[441] As noted by Samten Karmay in his study of Zhi ba 'od's *Proclamation*:

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[440] Karmay 1998, 10-12 (internal footnotes omitted). Roberto Vitali points out that Sog bzlog pa's statement that Ye shes 'od did not oppose *rdzogs chen* was correct, and that Karmay's translation of the passage and his dismissive interpretation of the *Proclamation* "led tibetologists in the past to see Ye shes 'od as a bigot. I believe that the real sense of the *bka' shog* as a pledge to avoid dubious practices in favour of a correct interpretation of the Tantra-s has been overlooked." Vitali 1996, 230 n.328. Karmay's study of Zhi ba 'od's *Proclamation* is very comprehensive as to Zhi ba 'od's background and the information contained in the various of the colophons to the Zhi ba 'od translations, but Karmay did not have access to Nga dbang grags pa's *History of Western Tibet,* a rich source.

[441] *VR* 105B, Colophon. It is unclear to what extent he exercised royal authority after he became a monk. It is possible that he used the title "King" simply as a member of the royal family. But royal he certainly was, and his access to the treasury described by Nga dbang grags pa would support the view that he was King or very close to it. *See* Karmay 1998, 17-18.

> The important role that Pho-brang Zhi-ba-'od played in re-establishing Buddhism in Tibet in the second half of the 11th century has rather been neglected by Tibetan Buddhist historians and consequently by Western writers on the history of Tibetan Buddhism.[442]

One tradition recounted by Ngag dbang grags pa attributes Ye shes ‘od’s accomplishments and very birth to a prior incarnation of Zhi ba 'od:

> During the time when Chos was discarded, after 47 generations [of rulers], the incarnated ... king Srong.nge was born, like a second Pun.ta.ri.ka flower, as a son in the line of the protectors (kings). *It is said that, owing to Zhi.ba.'od's previous prayers and the power of his compassion*, the incarnation of the divine race of Byang.chub sems.dpa'-s, the manifestation of the king of kings on earth, who abandoned worldly life in order to protect human beings, bla.ma Byang.chub sems.dpa' *Ye.shes.'od was born to emancipate human beings in these very mNg'.ris.stod*//[443]

Zhi ba 'od was the grand nephew of Ye shes 'od: the son of Lha lde, who was the son of Ye shes 'od's younger brother, Srong lde. He was the younger brother of Byang chub 'od, famous for his efforts in inviting Atīśa to Tibet. Like his older brother Byang chub 'od, possibly following the tradition started by Ye shes 'od that the younger sons become monastics so as not to challenge the oldest brother's secular authority, Zhi ba 'od became a monk. This is unclear, however, as it seems that he retained a good deal of

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[442] Karmay 1998, 17. (Footnote omitted; emphasis added)

[443] Vitali 1996, 108; Ngag dbang grags pa, 51-52. Vitali does not comment on this passage. In the context of the *Mnga' ris rgyal rabs* this statement is surprising, because, although Ye shes 'od, Byang chub 'od and Zhi ba 'od are clearly the heroes of the narrative,[443] there is nothing suggesting that Zhi ba 'od had this kind of pre-eminence. And, of course, there is an issue of timing since Ye shes ‘od was sixty-eight years old when Zhi ba ‘od was born. Thus “Zhi ba ‘od’s previous prayers” must refer to a prior incarnation, or a previous person with the same name. I believe the former is the case as I cannot find any reference to another person in the lineage with that name, although the possibility of another Zhi ba ‘od cannot be entirely discarded given the paucity of the records and our consequent knowledge of the period. Immediately following the life histories of the three, the *Mngari rgyal rabs* inserts:

> To Ye.shes.'od, who had the moral strength of renunciation; to pho.brang Byang.chub.'od, who was the holder of the treasure of philosophical views (lta) and practice (spyod); to Zhi.ba.'od, who bowed to the greatness of masters possessing compassion, to the mes.dbon.gsum Tibetans pay homage.

Id.

temporal authority. He was active as a translator and sponsor of translations, and, like his great uncle Ye shes ‘od, was the author of the *Proclamation*, in which he detailed a large number of Tantric texts as Tibetan in origin or otherwise inauthentic and not conducive to liberation.[444]

According to the *History of Western Tibet,* it was Zhi ba ‘od who heard about the *Vajra Rosary,* searched for it, and then sent his own teacher, Mantrakalaśa, after it with four hundred *zho* of gold. Mantrakalaśa found the *Vajra Rosary* somewhere “in the direction of Oḍḍiyana, *i.e.* Kashmir[445] or the Swat Valley, and brought it back to Zhi ba ‘od, who then translated it with the Indian pandit Sujana Śrījñāna. Because it is the primary source, and apparently was not know to Samten Karmay when he completed his fine studies of the matter, the *History of Western Tibet’*s description of the life and deeds of Zhi ba 'od bears quoting in full:

> [Byang.chub.'od's] younger brother Srong.lde was ordained in the fire male monkey year[446] [and] was given the name Zhi.ba.'od. He was forty-one [at that time]. He survived thirty-four years after his elder brother's (i.e. Byang.chub.'od's) death. at that time (i.e. at the time of his ordination), since, jointly with his nephew mnga'.bdag rTse.lde, he decided to follow the tradition of the noble deed of their extraordinary ancestors and to disseminate

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[444] Although Sakya Pandita, who is the first source chronologically who mentions the *Proclamation*, uses the verb *zer* to describe it, suggesting at least some measure of hearsay if not skepticism. Karmay 1980, 11.

[445] Indeed, for practical purposes connected with Buddhist Tantric texts, "India" meant Kashmir. David Snellgrove notes that the "India" to which Srong brtsan sgam po sent Thon mi sam bho ta is usually understood as Kashmir. Snellgrove 2002, 386, 416. Sog bzlog pa states: “Furthermore, as regards the new translations [made] during *bstan.pa phyis.dar* (sic), the lands Kha.che [and] Bal.po were the main centres of translation [during the times of] Na.ra, Mai.tri, Shanti and [later] Dam.pa rGya.gar [and] Jo.bo.rje. As [the focus of these activities] reached O.rgyan, master *pan.chen*-s achieved [important] results [there].” Vitali 1996, 187 n.264. Vitali concludes: "Two phases have thus to be distinguished: the first in Bal.po and Kha.che from the time of Na.ro.pa until that of Dam.pa rGya.gar, and the second in O.rgyan during a less clearly defined period. Sog.bzlog.pa presumably wished to mean that the diffusion of what was known in Tibet as *snags.gsar.ma* went from Bal.po and Kha.che to O.rgyan." *Id.* That Mantrakalaśa went first to Kha.che in search of the *Vajra Rosary*, then found it in Oḍḍiyana (*O rgyan*) may contribute to shedding some light on this. For a detailed picture of Kashmir in the 9th-12th centuries, see Hartzell 1997, 492-556.

[446] *I.e.* 1056. Vitali 1996, 118 n.80.

the teachings in an enduring way, he worked at translations of dam.pa'i Chos, and together they established receptacles of the triple jewel. As he had previously invited many Tibetan masters, he paid his respects to them. As he received many teachings, in order to transfer excellent virtue to all human beings, he perfected an unlimited amount of merit and wisdom. Furthermore, he made the three ril.ba-s of the 'jam.ri of the dBu.trse in Tho.gling and a golden mchod.rten with a 'khor.lo hnat Shing.sgra'i rtse.mo.

In the 'og.khang ("ground floor"), he made the complete cycle of gods of the 'Jam.dpal mtshan.brjod dkyil.'khor and, in the bar.khang ("middle floor"), the statue of rje btsun 'Jam.dbyangs chen.po the size of lha.bla.ma's own body, the statue of "jam.dpal smra.ba'i rgyal.po, studded with all kinds of jewels, which was made at mkhar.sgra (i.e. Shing.sgra mkhar) in the style of Central India[447], seventy-four clay statues and many minor dkyil.'khor-s; [all these] were placed in [Tho.ling] gSer.khang. In the dBu.rtse, he made the complete Bun.rig rtsa.ba'i ("root") dkyil.'khor, the assembly of gods of the Rigs.kyi gzhon.nu.ma'i dkyil.'khor, which were of clay. Masons; carpenters; plasterers of the walls; painters of the murals; sculptors in clay; casters in gold, iron and copper alloys; all together 223 [artists] and their assistants were gathered to [work on] the 'og.khang. In the sheep year[448], the foundations were planned and laid. In the monkey year[449], the walls and roof were raised. In the bird year[450], the clay statues were made. In the dog year[451], the murals were painted. In the pig year[452], the great painting of the [gods] faces was accomplished. The name "jam.dpal rnam.'phrul bla.med 'Dzam.gling.rgyan was given [to the gSer.khang]. As for gsung.rten, all the works he translated, and the long, middle and short versions of Yum, were written in gold. The jewel in the crown of 'Dzam.gling, the supreme of all learned masters, Dznya.na.shi.mi.tra, the great master A.ti.sha.shri.mi.tra and De.wa.dznya and the great master of Kha.che Ra.han.ta and the great master Gag.tra.ka, [and] many rGya.gar and Kha.che pan.di.ta-s were invited. He (Zhi ba 'od) gave to the great master A.ti.sha in particular a full bre of gold [dust]. As this bla.ma (Zhi ba 'od) was the translator, they together translated dPal.mchog rtsa.'grel; Bud.dha.tsa.ri cha.'grel; Tshad.ma; De.ko.na.nyid bsdus.pa 'grel and tig (ti.ka); Tshad.ma.rgyan 'grel and tig.ka (ti.ka) [and] many major and minor esoteric and exoteric works. As he thought of translating rDo.rje 'phreng.ba, which

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[447] "rGya.gar dBus.kyi sku' i.e. Ma.ga.dha." Vitali 1996, 119 n.84.

[448] *I.e.* 1067. *Id.,* n.85.

[449] *I.e.* 1068. *Id.,* n.86.

[450] *I.e.* 1069. *Id.,* n.87.

[451] *I.e.* 1070. *Id.,* n.88.

[452] *I.e.* 1071. *Id.,* n.89.

was a secret Tantra (gsang.sngags) [only] transmitted orally (bshad.rgyud) [in mNga'.ris.stod], he sent [someone] to search for it above Kha.che of India (Kha.che thod, i.e. somewhere in the mountainous area overlooking the Vale) [but] it was not found. Later, he provided Man.triga.ka.la.sha with four hundred zho of gold.[453] The latter was sent to search for [rDo.rje 'phreng.ba], [and] found it in the direction of dBu.rgyan. As [Zhi ba.'od] acted as lo.tsa.ba for this bla.ma (Man.triga.ka.la.sha), the work was translated and he [thus] performed many great deeds.//

He established the means of support for the forty monks of the dbu.sde ("monastic community") at Sang.dar. He established [the grant of] thirty [measures] of supplies in favour of Tsha.tsa.sgang chos.skor in Pu.hrang. He completed [supplying] innumerable implements for these [temples].

At that time, he summoned pan.di.ta-s from rGya.gar and Kha.che, and Blo.ldan shes.rab, sGrang.ti Dar.ma snying.po, dBus.gTsang.gi dge.bshes and Byang.chub ye.shes, altogether 121 [masters] including their own disciples. Zhang.zhung.ba rGyal.ba shes.rab was invited [together with] all the dge.bshes-s and mkhas.btsun-s from Pu.hrang, Gu.ge and Mar.yul. For three years (lo.gsum.du), the wheel of Buddhism was turned in Gu.ge. Moreover, since he invited A.ti.sha himself and lo.tsa.ba-s and dge.ba'i bshes gnyen-s, he was the patron of the translations. He was a recipient of religious teachings, a donor, a maker of religious books, gtsug.lag.khang-s and mchod.rten-s; he allocated public funds for each member of the dbu.sde-s ("monastic communities"), innumerable [deeds were performed by him]. Bla.ma Zhi.ba'od was a great patron of offerings to the teachings and the holders of [those] teachings. As he personally carried the banner of the teachings, he safeguarded Buddhism for forty-four years and died in the iron female hare year[454] [455].

In addition to the *Vajra Rosary,* Zhi ba 'od translated the

Śrīparamādyatantramantra- kalpakhaṇḍa (Dpal mchog dang po'i sngags) (Toh. 488);

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[453] Paying for texts is hardly unusual in this venue. 'Brog mi offered 500 ounces of gold to Gayādhara for the *lam 'bras*. *Dmar ston chos kyi rgyal po*, [2001], p. 90*: pan ḍi ta mang 'gar mu gu lung du spyan drangs nas lo lngar bzhugs pa dang/ gsung ngag ma lus par gnang bar zhal gyis bzhes/ lo tsa bas lo re la gser srang brgya brgya ste lnga lnga brgya 'bul bar khas blangs nas chos kyi nyan shad byed cing …/* Stearns 2001, 91.

[454] *I.e.* 1111. Vitali 1996, 120 n. 94.

[455] *Id.*, 118-120 (footnotes and parentheticals containing Tibetan equivalents omitted unless otherwise indicated). I do have some issues with Vitali's translation. With reference to the *Vajramālā*, he translates *bshad rgyud* as "[only] transmitted orally [in mNga'.ris.stod]," when *bshad rgyud* is simply the nomenclature of "explanatory Tantra."

with Mantrakalaśa, the *Dpal mchog dang po'i rgya cher bshad*; (a commentary on the *Śrīparamādyatantramantrakalpakhaṇḍa*,);[456] the *Sahajamaṇḍalatryāloka (Lhan cig skyes pa'i dkyil 'khor gsum gsal)* (Toh. 1539); with Guṇāśrībhadra, the *Tattvasaṃgrakārika*; the *Kalāpalaghuvṛttiśiṣyahitānāma*, probably the earliest translation into Tibetan of a Sanskrit grammar; and, with Mantakalaśa, he revised the *Paramādiṭīkā (Dpal mchog dang po'i rgya cher bshad pa)* (Toh. 2512).[457] With Atīśa, he translated the *Dpal mchog rtsa 'grel* and sponsored the translations of several other works.[458] At or near the same time he was translating the *Vajra Rosary*, Zhi ba 'od translated the *Kalachakra Tantra* with the Kashmiri pandit Dha na ta la.[459] 'Gos lo tsā ba adds that Zi ba 'od "was a scholar in all the sciences of Buddhist and heretical doctrines."[460]

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[456] *K* Vol. 72, No. 3335. *See* Karmay 1998, 21.

[457] According to the Nyingma Edition of the sDe-ge bKa'-'gyur/bsTan-'gyur, Zhi ba 'od was the translator of Toh. 445, 488, 1539, 2512, 4266 and 4284.

[458] Bu ston, 217; Roerich 1978, 37; Karmay 1998, 22-29; Vitali 1996, 107-121; Nga dbang grags pa 51-68. Ngag dbang grags pa's *History of Western Tibet,* completed in 1497 C.E., Vitali 1996, 95, is the most detailed primary source on the lives of Ye shes 'od, Byang chub 'od and Zhi ba 'od. Being a history of *Mnga' ris*, as contrasted with Bu ston's more general overview of the history of Buddhism in India and Tibet, it is much more detailed than Bu ston's, although the focus is on the royal family and not on important figures such as Atīśa or Rin chen bzang po. The *Blue Annals* to some degree relies on Bu ston, Roerich 1978 at *viii*, although there were other sources 'Gos relied on, such as his "main source," the *Red Annals* (*Deb ther dmar po* or *'tshal pa'i deb ther*). Roerich 1978. Karmay relies principally on the *Blue Annals* and on Ka thog tshe dbang nor bu's *rGyal ba'i bstan pa rin po che byang phyogs su byung ba'i rtsa la bod rje lha bstan po'i gdung rabs tshig nyung don gsal yid kyi me long*, written in 1745. Karmay 1980, 28 (this work is contained in the *Collected Works of Ka thog tshe dbang nor bu*, H. P. 1977, Vol. IV, No. 156).

[459] Vitali writes:

> Zhi.ba.'od's translation of *rDo.rje 'phreng.ba* is associated by *Nyang.ral chos.'byung* with a newly translated version of *Dus.'khor* made by Zhi.ba.'od with Kha.che pandita Dha.na.ta.la (p. 465 lines 16-17: "Zhi.ba'od.kyis Kha.che pan.di.ta Dha.na.ta.la spyan.drangs.nas Dus.'khor bsgyur/skad.gsar bcad byas/ rDo.rje 'phreng.ba bsgyur", "As Zhi.ba'od invited Kha.che pan.di.ta Dha.na.tal.la, *Dus.'khor* was translated by adopting a new lexicon *rDo.rje 'phreng.ba* was [also] translated"). This version of the *Kalachakra* is ignored in *mNga'.ris rgyal.rabs.*

Vitali 1996, 319 n.494.

[460] Roerich 1976, 244.

5. Mantrakalaśa

Zhi ba 'od's "own Indian master Mantrakalaśa"[461] was, according to the Nyingma Edition of the Sde ge bka' 'gyur/Bstan 'gyur, the translator of Toh. 488 (with Zhi ba 'od),[462] 1247,[463] 1784,[464] 1842[465] and 2512 (filled in missing portions with Zhi ba 'od),[466] all of which appear to be Tantric works. According to the *Gting skyes rnying ma rgyud*, another collaboration of Zhi ba 'od and Mantrakalaśa was the *King of Mahāyāna Realization, the "Glorious Primordial Excellence."*[467]

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[461] Karmay 1998, 21.

[462] *Dpal mchog dang po'i snags kyi rtog pa'i dum bu zhes bya ba, Śrī paramādya mantra kalpakhaṭika nāma, Section of the Glorious Supreme Primordial Mantra Realization*. According to the Catalogue, the *Sde dge* colophon states that Rin chen bzang po was unable to find the complete text, which was later found and translated; that the translation was done at Tho ling; and that the *Blue Annals* (p. 354) states that Zhi ba 'od worked with many *lo tsa ba*s and *paṇḍita*s to translate and fill in the missing portions of the *Śrī paramādya tantra*. According to Weinberger, the *Śri paramādhya mantra kalpakhaṇḍa nāma* that Zhi ba 'od and Mantrakalaśa translated was part of a single textual tradition with the *Dpal mchog dang po zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i rtog pa'i rgyal pa, Śri paramādya nama māhāyanakalparaya*, Toh. 487, translated by Rin chen bzang po and Śraddhakaravarman, and that together the two constitute per Bu ston a concordant Tantra for the root text of the Yoga Tantra corpus, the *Compendium of Principles Tantra*. Weinberger 2003, 92-132. Weinberger contends that the *Secret Community* was the next phase in the development of Tantra after the *Compendium of Principles*.

[463] *Lhan cig skyes pa'i rnal 'byor dam pa'i 'grel pa snying po rab tu gsal bar byed pa zhes bya ba, Sahajasadyoga vṛtti garbhaprakāśa nāma*, *Clarifying the Essence: the Commentary on the Holy Sahaja Yoga*, a commentary of the *Sahajayogakrama*, Toh. 1246.

[464] Nāgārjuna's *Dpal gsang ba 'dus pa'i rgyud kyi rgyud 'grel zhes bya ba, śrīguhyasamājatantrasyatantratīkā-nāma*, *Tantric Commentary of the Glorious Secret Community Tantra*.

[465] Lakśmī's commentary on the *PK*, *Rim pa lnga'i don gsal bar byed pa zhes bya ba, Pañcakrama vṛttārthavirocana nāma*, *Clarifying the Meaning of the Five Stages*.

[466] Ānandagarbha's *Dpal mchog dang po'i rgya cher bshad pa, śrī paramādi ṭīkā*, which is a commentary on the *Srīparamādyanāmamahāyānakalparāja*, Toh. 487, originally translated by Śraddhākaravarman, Kamalagupta and Rin chen bzang po.

[467] Vol. 17, Tk.243. See Tibetan and Himalayan Digital Library, www.thdl.org/xml/ngb/showNgb.php?doc=Tk.243.bib.xml&mode=tst&l=3v4t. According to THDL (per Steven Weinberger, editor of this portion): "The fourteenth-century Tibetan polymath bu ston rin chen grub (1290-1364) explains in his Yoga Tantra history (*rnal 'byor rgyud kyi rgya mtshor 'jug pa'i gru gzings*) that the Indians sh+rad d+hA ka ra bar ma and ka ma la gup+t and the Tibetan rin chen bzang po translated this

Mantrakalaśa is also the translator of Śrī Lakśmī's *Pañcakrama-ṭīkā-kramārtha-prakāśikā*, which, according to Alex Wayman, was the only commentary he could find other than the *PU* that quotes the famous forty verses from the *Vajra Rosary*'s chapter fifty-nine.[468] Wayman notes that Mantrakalaśa's translation of four of the forty verses is identical to that of the *PU,* and on that basis concludes that Mantrakalaśa, who Wayman guesses lived in the 12th century, had memorized the verses. Karmay's research establishing that Mantrakalaśa was Zhi ba 'od's teacher provides an earlier date for Mantrakalaśa and a different basis for explaining the identical Tibetan translation.[469]

As we have seen, according to Nga dbang grags pa, Mantrakalaśa obtained the text of the *Vajra Rosary* from Oḍḍiyana. Discussing the various editions of the *Vajra Rosary*, Tsong kha pa refers to "the Indian book of Paṇḍita Mantrakalaśa," so evidently there was an extant Sanskrit text as late as the early fifteenth century.[470] Mantrakalaśa was thus deeply familiar with Zhi ba 'od's translation of the *Vajra Rosary*; indeed, he may have been a participant in it, or at least might have been consulted by Zhi ba 'od. One also wonders if the Man triga ka la sha whom Ngag dbang grags pa states was sent by Zhi ba 'od to Oḍḍiyana to find and then purchase the text of the *Vajra Rosary* was this very

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text, but the translation was incomplete because parts of the Indian text were illegible and the latter part of the second section as well as the third and fourth sections of the text were missing. After rin chen bzang po died, an Indian text was obtained from the Kashmir region, and the Indian scholar man+t+r ka la sha and the Tibetan Prince zhi ba 'od filled in the missing gaps and translated the text from the second section on (that is, from chapter 13 on)." This is the same story as the Catalogue gives for Ānandagarbha 's *Dpal mchog dang po'i rgya cher bshad pa.* See n. 391 above.

[468] Wayman 1991, 120.

[469] The intertextuality among the *VR, PU, PK* and Śrī Lakśmī's *PK* commentary referenced here and, in part, by Yukei Matsunaga, *see* below, merits a full philological study.

[470] Tsong kha pa 2010, 62 ("Thus, though there appear to be many such variations, the chapter divisions of the translation by Sujana Śrījñāna and Zhiba Öd and the Indian book of Paṇḍita Mantrakalaśa seem to be correct…."). Whether Tsong kha pa was referring to a Sanskrit version of the Tantra, or composition of Mantrakalaśa, or was confusing Mantrakalaśa with Alaṃkakalaśa is intriguing, and unclear.

same Mantrakalaśa. Roberto Vitali equates the two in his index, but gives no explanation.[471] I think this is a fair conclusion, and places Mantrakalaśa at the heart of the Tibetan *Vajra Rosary*.[472]

6. Zhi ba 'od's Proclamation

Zhi ba 'od presided over an extraordinary gathering of Buddhist scholars and translators. The temple of Tho ling was the center of learning in Western Tibet. Karmay surmises that Tho ling had "the character of the later Tibetan great monasteries," and that even if Zhi ba ‘od were not acting as king, "it would not be far-fetched to assume that [Zhi ba 'od] exercised a certain amount of politico-religious power over the religious establishments of his ancestors."[473]

The *Proclamation* itself recites that it was composed in the water monkey year (*chu sprel*), which would have been 1032 or 1092 C.E.[474] Initially, Karmay surmised that 1032 was the year, but then revised his opinion in light of evidence (contradicting the *Blue Annals*' failure to mention Zhi ba 'od in connection with the 1076 C.E. *chos 'khor,* "Religious Council of the Fire Dragon") that Zhi ba 'od was in fact the patron, along with

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[471] Vitali 1996, 613.

[472] In my research, I read that Mantrakalaśa was the son of Tārakalaśa and the grandson of Kumārakalaśa, who translated Nāgārjuna’s commentary on the *Uttaratantra*, the eighteenth chapter of the *Guhyasamāja Tantra* (Toh. 1784A) considered to be an explanatory Tantra, so *gsang 'dus* may have been a family interest. Despite many hours of searching during the finalizing of this thesis, I have not been able to find the source of this. If this was in fact the case, one wonders whether Alaṃkakalaśa had any connection to this lineage. Kumārakalaśa was at Tho-ling, where he translated the *Mañjuśrīmūlatantra* by order of Zhi ba ‘od’s older brother, Byang chub ‘od. Roerich 1978, *x* n.4.

[473] Karmay 1998, 18.

[474] Karmay 1998, 29-30.

King Rtse lde, of the *chos 'khor*,[475] and because the *Proclamation* stresses the tradition of the *bka' gdams pa*, which did not exist before the coming of Atīśa in 1042.[476]

Because its correct interpretation may bear on the question of the authenticity of the *Vajra Rosary* or a correctly nuanced view of Zhi ba 'od's beliefs about the correct application of Tantric doctrine and practice, his *Proclamation* merits close attention. It is mainly a listing of seventy-two "translations" and groups of works or texts with commentaries, with relatively little explanation. The *Proclamation* begins by stating immediately after a short introductory paragraph: "The Tantras (mentioned below), their commentaries and *sādhana*, old and new, composed in the guise of the Word of the Buddha and claiming to be of Indian origin, were written by the Tibetans themselves and are as follows."[477] He then lists most of the works, and adds:

> None of these provides perfect means, and since they do not help in attaining Buddhahood, no one should take them as a path or even resort to them. Those who have taken vows as monks must observe their monastic rules, and (when) they take up the practice of Mantrayāna they should make efforts to observe the vows of the Tantras belonging to the class of Kriyā, Upayā [sic], Yoga and even the *Guhyasamāja*, etc. without breaking their monastic vows.
>
> Although the Tantras belonging to the group of the *ma rgyud* Tantras are excellent, they nevertheless cause many monks to break their monastic vows as a result of not knowing the implications of certain terminology. Because of this, there is nothing wrong even if they are not practised at all.
>
> In particular, the theories of the Great Perfection are mixed up with those of the Hindu doctrines. So if one practises these, one will be led into evil rebirths. Since they thus obstruct one from attaining Enlightenment, under no circumstances are they suitable for practice.[478]

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[475] Karmay references the account of Lo tsā ba blo ldan shes rab, which he interprets as being a contemporary record of the *chos 'khor* of 1076.

[476] Karmay 1998, 30.

[477] *Id.,* 31.

[478] *Id.,* 37.

Read closely, rather than being an across the board condemnation of Tantra or even of certain antinomian Tantric practices, the *Proclamation* seems aimed at keeping *genuine* Indian Tantric practices and scriptures separate from adulterated Tibetan creations or modifications, the "New Age" Tantra of its time.

7. Translations of the Vajra Rosary

While I have been working with the translation of the *Vajra Rosary* from the Lhasa *bka' 'gyur*, various sources attest to other translations and revisions. Indeed, Alaṃka's *Commentary* appears to be based on a different translation, and Alaṃka clearly had different versions of the *Vajra Rosary* text in front of him, as noted by his quoting different versions as alternative readings.[479] Tsong kha pa, in his *BIL*, a summary of completion stage practice as presented in various texts, noted that were are a number of translations of the *Vajra Rosary* circulating during his time, including the "old translations."[480]

> The colophon to the Lhasa *bka' 'gyur* version of the *Vajra Rosary* states:
>
> Translated, edited and finalized by the Indian Abbot Sujana Śrī Jñāna and great text translator, monk Zhi ba 'od, the King of Tibet, in the temple of Tho-ling, *dpal med lhun gyis grub pa,* the sanctuary [of Ye shes 'od], the center of the earth.[481]

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[479] For example, in his commentary on *VR* ch. 13, Alaṃka notes, "The essence of that" is the nature of ecstasy and so forth, because of pervading them. As it is said: "Or, the nature of all of them." Or, *some [versions of] the text* say, "It is not the nature of that." (*De'i ngo bo zhes bya ba ni dga' ba la sogs pa'i rang bzhin te/ de rnams la khyab byed nyid kyi phyir ro/ ji skad du/ yang na thams cad kun bdag nyid/ des gsungs so/ yang na de'i ngo bo ma yin pa zhes gzhung kha cig las 'byung ste/*). 96B.

[480] Tsong kha pa 2010, 232.

[481] *VR* 105A-B. The Lhasa Tibetan reads *thugs dam sa'i snying po tho ling snying pod pal dpe med lhun gyis grub pa'i gtsug lag khang du rgya gar gyi mkhan po su dza na shrī dznyā na dang sgra sgyur gyi lo*

The index in the *Nyingma Catalogue* lists Sujana Śrī Jñāna only with respect to the *Vajra Rosary*; he is not listed as the translator of any other works in the *bka' 'gyur* or *bstan 'gyur*.

I believe that it is possible that our "Indian Abbot" is Atīśa, Tib. *Mar me mdzad dpal ye shes*, whose ordained name is usually mentioned as "Dīpaṃkara Śrī Jñāna."[482] *Sujana* simply means "a good or virtuous or kind or benevolent person."[483] While this would be a unique appellation for Atīśa, one not found in the *bstan 'gyur*,[484] it has to be a possibility, since none of the historical sources I have reviewed refer to a "Sujana Śrī Jñāna," and Atīśa and Zhi ba 'od were together in Tho ling from 1042 to 1046.[485] In 1042, Atīśa was 86 and Zhi ba 'od 27 years old. While it is curious that I have not found any references to Atīśa in connection with the *Vajra Rosary,* the colophon does refer to "the Indian abbot [*mkhan po*] Sujana Śrī Jñāna." Alaka Chattopadhyaya reports that the post that Atīśa had at Vikramaśila was in fact *mkhan po*, and Atīśa is listed as *mkhan po* in various colophons.[486] However, there were other Indian Abbots who were at Tho ling at the time who were also denominated as *mkhan po*s: Śraddhākaravarman is referred to as *mkhan po* in the Sde dge colophon to the *Abhibodhikramopadeśa*, Toh. 1806; and Mantrakalaśa himself is referred to as *mkhan po* in the

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tstsha ba chen po bod kyi lha btsan po bla ma dge slong zhi ba'i 'od kyi zhal snga nas bsgyur cing zhus te gtan la phab pa.

[482] Chattopadhyaya 1967, 31.

[483] Monier-Williams, 1223.

[484] Chattopadhyaya 1967, 32.

[485] *See* Table 4, *supra.*

[486] *Id.,* 33.

Śrīparamādyamantrakalpakhaṇḍa, Toh. 488.[487] So it is possible, but not conclusive, that "this lama" for whom Zhi ba 'od "acted as translator" was Atīśa himself.[488]

In his *BIL*, Tsong kha pa refers once to "the Zhi Ba Od translation revised by Dar Ma brTson 'Grus."[489] No one by that name is found as a translator in the *Nyingma Catalogue*, but Dar ma brtson 'grus is Marpa's name, so it is possible that this refers to him.[490] In several places in *the BIL*, Tsong kha pa refers to the "Chag translation" of the Vajra Rosary.[491]

According to 'Gos lo tsā ba, Zhang lo tsā ba, whose birth name was Phur pa skyabs, from an early age obtained numerous Tantric teachings in many lineages from more than seventy teachers. He journeyed to India and Nepal, where he studied Sanskrit grammar and logic with the mahāpaṇḍita Ratnarakṣita.[492] As for his translations, 'Gos lo tsā ba writes: "He made many translations, including that of the rDo-rje 'phreṅ-ba and

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[487] The colophon reads, in relevant part, *thugs dam sa' i snying po tho lding du / rgya gar gyi mkhan po paṇ ḍi ta mkhas pa chen po mantra kā la sha dang….*

[488] Ronald Davidson advises that, given the paucity of our knowledge of what was happening at this time, and the shaky reliability of Tibetan sources, and the plethora of similar names, it is better to assume that Sujana Śrījñāna was a separate person, not Atīśa. Personal Communication 2-16-11.

[489] Tsong kha pa 2000, 27.

[490] Marpa is listed in the index of the *Rnying ma Catalogue* as the reviser of the translation of Nāropa's *Śrī devīkālī sādhana*, Toh. 1781, and his *Śri cakrasaṃvara vikurvaṇa caturviṃśatideśapramāṇa śāsana*, and the co-translator of Rājaputra Meghavegin's *Vajrapāṇyanalajihva vṛtti muktāvali nāma*, Toh. 2185, *Bhagavad vajrapāṇyanalajihva guhyasaṃveśa sādhana nāma*, Toh. 2186, and *Vajrapāṇyanalajihvapuras sarakalpa yogacaryā mārgāṣṭaka nāma*, Toh. 2188. But the *Catalogue* indicates that Marpa was the translator of the *Śrī-jñānavajra-samuccaya-tantra; dpal ye shes rdo rje kun las btus pa*, the *Wisdom-Vajra Compendium Tantra*, Toh. 450, which is one of the *Secret Community*'s explanatory Tantras. Marpa is a key figure in the *Secret Community* transmission, holding many lineages. Pan chen so nam grags pa 1996, 63-64.

[491] *See, e.g.,* Tsong kha pa 2010, 259.

[492] Roerich 1978, 447.

other texts, as well as composed many hidden precepts, etc.,"[493] and notes that, of his many visions, "[w]hen he was translating the 'Phreṅ-ba (rDo-rje 'phreṅ-ba) [*Vajra* Rosary] wonderful signs were observed."[494] According to 'Gos lo tsā ba, he died in 1237 C.E., which means that his translation post-dated that of Zhi ba 'od, which of course may suggest that he was unaware of Zhi ba 'od's translation or considered it inaccurate or incomplete.

Bu ston reports that Khro phu lo tsa ba byams pa'i dpal, "the translator of Tho phu," translated the *Vajra Rosary* among many other Tantric and non-Tantric works.[495] According to Bu ston, Byams pa'i dpal worked with the Kashmiri pandita Buddhaśrījñāna, leading one possibly to surmise that this could be one of the old translations referred to by Tsong kha pa.[496] However, 'Gos lo tsā ba identifies Khro phu lo tsā ba as Byams pa dpal and Tshul khrims shes rab (1173-), the primary interpreter for the mahāpandita Śakyaśrī during the latter's stay in Tibet, beginning in 1204 C.E.[497] In his notes on the *Vajra Rosary*, Tsong kha pa refers to a translation by Rā: "in the translation of Zhi ba 'Od there is the phrase '*nāma iti*,' but there is no *nāma* in the translations of Rā and Dharma Btson 'grus."[498] He also refers to the translator "Rva."[499]

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[493] *Id.*, 448.

[494] *Id.,* 447.

[495] Bu ston 1999, 227-28.

[496] Bu ston was in the direct lineage of Khro phu lo tsā ba, Roerich 1978, 711, within several generations, so one would think that his account would be at least *prima facie* reliable.

[497] Roerich 1978, 710.

[498] Tsong kha pa *Notes* 1A.

[499] *Id.*

While it is possible that Tsong kha pa's reference to the "old translations" is to the *Rnying ma* corpus, I have not found them there, although more research remains to be done. Professor Jamspal suggested that the reference may be to handwritten manuscripts that were discarded or lost after one translation was made with wood block printing, doubting that Tsong kha pa would have been referring to the *Rnying ma rgyud*, as to do so would have been too controversial.[500] David Snellgrove notes that Tibetan script had been in use since about 630 CE, and suggests that translations of Indian works were attempted earlier that Śantarākṣita's coming to Tibet in 767,[501] so it is possible that it is that time period to which Tsong kha pa is referring.

8. Alaṃkakalaśa, Stengs pa lo tsā ba, and Alaṃka's Commentary

It is clear that Alaṃkakalaśa based his *Commentary* on a Sanskrit version—and, possibly, on translations other than Zhi ba 'od's—because of the significant differences between Zhi ba 'od's translation and the *Vajra Rosary* as it is quoted in the *Commentary*. That Alaṃka was translating from Sanskrit is very clear in reviewing aspects of the Tibetan that make no sense unless the material is back-translated into Sanskrit.[502] This cannot be a matter of corruption of transcription errors due to the many substantive differences and use of Tibetan synonyms in the respective versions. The *Commentary*'s chapter one makes it clear that Alaṃka had a text that appeared to encompass the entire

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[500] Personal Communication, 2006.

[501] Snellgrove 2002, 440.

[502] *E.g.* Alaṃka 45A (the name of the Tib. *dung phyur,* "one hundred million" energy-wind as "realized by A and RA" makes no sense unless Alaṃka was translating the Skt. *arbuda*, "one hundred million," which can indeed also mean "awakened by A and RA.").

Tantra, because he comments on all eighty-two questions, and quotes from all the later chapters of the Tantra, including the last, sixty-eight, with a sort of "sneak preview" of what is to come.

Perhaps because the *Commentary* was never completed, there is no general colophon at the end of the text. Rather, colophons appear at the end of each chapter. At the end of the first three chapters, the *Commentary* states: "Composed by A langka ka la sha de ba." At the end of the sixth through twenty-second chapter,[503] "Composed by Pandita A langka ka la sha." At the end of the twenty-third chapter through thirty-ninth chapters, "Composed by Pandita A laṃ ka ka la sha." At the end of the fortieth chapter, the spelling changes back to A langka ka la sha, then at the end of the forty first through forty-fifth chapter to A laṃ ka ka la sha. Only at the end of the forty-fifth chapter is there any reference to any Tibetan translator: "Translated by Stengs pa lo tsā ba up to half of the forty-fifth chapter."[504]

According to 'Gos lo tsā ba gzho nu dpal, Alaṃka's co-translator, Stengs pa lo tsā ba, was born in 1107 C.E.[505] At the age of six, Stengs lo had a vision of a country, which many years later, he recognized to be India. At the age of ten, says 'Gos, "he recited some mantras of Acala and was able to cure the ailments of others by blowing on the patient." He had a troubled home life, and became a monk at age 15. After receiving full ordination, he wanted to go to India, and earned money for the trip, twelve golden *zho*, by copying two volumes of the *Śatasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*. He finally reached India,

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[503] There is no colophon or apparent ending for chapters four and five.

[504] *Le'u bzhi bcu rtsa lnga pa'i phyed bar du stengs pa lo tsā bas bsgyur ba'o.* Alaṃka 220A.

[505] Roerich 1978, 1052.

after, "when he reached Diṅ-ri, Ārya Avalokiteśvara in the guise of an old man, showed him the road," and studied in Maghada under Tsa mi sangs rgyas grags pa. He returned to Tibet, then went again to India again, where he studied Sūtra and Tantra under thirteen scholars.[506] Then, writes 'Gos,

> After extensive study in India, Stengs pa invited the paṇḍita Alaṃkadeva (Alaṃkāradeva), a descendant of the Kasmirian Trilocana (sPyan gsum-pa, a famous grammarian)…He made numerous translations and revised existing translations: … the Kālacakramūlatantra (Dus-'khor rtsa-rgyud. Probably the Kālacakra-nāma-tantrarāja, Kg. rgyud-'bum, No. 362), and the Cycle of Nāgārjuna (the Guhyasamāja), according to the method of the paṇḍita Alaṃkāradeva. At that time he spent five years in India. Then having again come to India, he studied for three years the Mahāvibhāśā (Bye-brag bśad-pa chen-po; there exists a report that half of the Bye-brag bśad-pa had been translated during the reign of Khri-sroṅ lde-btsan). He brought to Tibet the Sanskrit text of this book. After that he and Alaṃkāradeva translated it, but after finishing two thirds of the text, the paṇḍita passed away.
>
> Instead of a funeral rite, they held a great religious assembly of 48 religious chairs. In general, he possessed a clear vision of the maṇḍala of the sixty-two deities of the Saṃvara parivāra, and of many dharmapālas. He became the teacher of great scholars, such as Gro-luṅ-pa chen po and others, and the Master of the Doctrine. He passed away at the age of 84....[507]

Recalling Tsong kha pa's reference to "[t]he commentary made by the pandit Alamkadeva or Alakakalasha on the explanatory Tantra *Vajra Rosary* up to the middle of the forty fourth chapter,"[508] and considering the partnership between Stengs pa lo tsā ba and the Indian pandit, it appears that Alaṃkakalaśa, Alamkadeva and Alamkāradeva are

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[506] *Id.* 1052-53. Gendun Choepel notes that many of the Indian manuscripts preserved at Ngor have the Sanskrit version of Steng lo's name [Śīlākara] written on them (as a mark of ownership). *Id.*, 1053.

[507] *Id.*, 1053-54.

[508] Tsong kha pa 2000, 44. As noted, the *bstan 'gyur* commentary goes up to the forty-fifth chapter. Stengs pa lo tsā ba's colophon, in which he says he translated Alaṃkakalaśa's commentary *up to* half of the forty-fifth chapter suggests: (1) Alaṃkakalaśa may have completed the *Commentary*, but it was only partially translated; and/or (2) Tsong kha pa erred in saying that the *Commentary* ran to the middle of the forty-fourth chapter *or* Tsong kha pa was using a different translation, now lost, that was a chapter short on the translation.

the same person. Indeed, the Sde dge recension has Alangkakalashadeva (in the Tibetan, *a langka ka la sha de ba*, and Peking and Snar thang have Alaṃkadeva (in the Tibetan, *a lam ka de ba*).[509] Pan chen bsod nams grags pa describes Alaṃkakalaśa as "Alaṃkakalaśa, Alaṃkara-upādhyāya or Prajñākaragupta of Vikramaśīla, *circa*, 1200 A.D. Contemporary with Kālacakra-pāda the elder,"[510] and he is listed in the bibliography as "Alaṃkārakalaśa," so it appears that this pandit is known by at least six names.[511] With Nyi ma grags, he is the translator of Nāgabuddi's *Kramāntarbhāvanopadeśa-nāma-prakaraṣa*,[512] a commentary on the *Pañcakrama.* The *Nyingma Catalogue* lists Alaṃkakalaśa as the translator of the *Commentary*, Toh. 1795 and the *Kramāntarbhāvanopadeśa-nāma-prakaraṣa*, Toh. 1812; Alaṃkadeva as translator of the *Ucchuṣmajambhalsādhana-nāma,* Toh. 3743, the *Bhagavatyāmnāyānusāriṇi,* Toh. 3811 and the *Haribhaṭṭajātakamāla,* Toh. 4152; and Alaṃkāradeva as translator of the *Vinayasūtravṛttyabhidānasvavyākhyāna-nāma,* Toh. 4119; and Prajñākaragupta (*Shes rab 'byung gnas sbas pa*) as the translator of the *Pramāṇavārttikālaṃkāra,* Toh. 4221 and the *Sahāvalambanirṇaya-nāma,* Toh. 4255. There is also an Alakakalaśa who is the commentator on the *Yoginīsanjaratantram.* The (Hindi) introduction to that work states that there is no indication that Alakakalaśa and our commentator Alaṃkakalaśa are not different persons,[513] and the Library of Tibetan

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[509] *See, e.g.* Alaṃka 33B.

[510] Dragpa, 108.

[511] "Alaṃkāra" is listed in the *Nyingma Catalogue* as the author of the *Ten Principles of Suchness (de kho nyid bcu pa; daśatattva,* Toh. 1895), but there is no indication that is person is Alaṃkakalaśa.

[512] Toh. 1812.

[513] Alaṃkakalaśa 1998, 23.

Works and Archives seeks further information on whether these *mahapanditas* were in fact the same person. There may be good reason to think so based on the style of the two commentaries. Both authors have colophons at the end of each chapter, in much the same wording. And the introduction to each succeeding chapter is in the same style.

Go lo tsā ba's history, referring to "the Cycle of Nāgārjuna (the Guhyasamāja), according to the method of the paṇḍita Alaṃkāradeva" suggests that there may have been more commentaries by Alaṃkakalaśa on the *Secret Community*, and even an overall system. In his *Source of the Ocean of Deeds*, 'Jam mgon a myes zhabs notes that the *Secret Community* in India had seven commentarial traditions: Superiors (Ārya); Buddhaśrījñānapāda (Jñānapāda); Śantipa; Lalitavajra; Smṛtijñānakırti; Āndagarbha; and Kālacakra-Guhyasamāja.[514]

C. Placing the Vajra Rosary in Context

1. *Was it an Indian Text or a "Gray" Text?*

Because its translation was a collaboration between a Indian and a Tibetan, the text itself was procured from Oḍḍiyana,[515] and it has an explicit discussion of sexual yogas and references to the Yoginī Tantras and even to the supposedly later-composed *Kalachakra Tantra*,[516] the *Vajra Rosary* could be a paradigm of what Ronald Davidson

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[514] A myes zhabs 1985, 198-201. Further research would hopefully determine the lineage of the "method of Alamkāradeva."

[515] Tradition holds that the *Secret Community Tantra* was revealed to King Indrabhūti of Oḍḍiyana. Freemantle 1971, 13.

[516] *VR* 45A, Ch. 23, v. 49; 84B, ch. 58, v. 6. Tradition has it that the *Kalachakra*, like the other Tantras, was preached by Buddha. Modern commentators, arguing for a late date for the *Kalachakra*, generally rely on the *Kalachakra*'s references to Islam as evidence. The argument made here as to the progressive

calls a "gray" text.[517] Nga dbang grags pa's account of the procurement of the *Vajra Rosary* does raise some questions. Why was the *Vajra Rosary* so difficult to find? Interestingly, the colophon to the *Śrīparamādyatantra- mantrakalpakhaṇḍa*, Toh. 488, translated by Zhi ba 'od and Mantrakalaśa, states that Rin chen bzang po couldn't find the text and so didn't translate it, but Zhi ba 'od did,[518] so the instance of the *Vajra Rosary* is not the only one where the efforts of Zhi ba 'od and Mantrakalaśa to find a lost text were successful. So we need to ask, having sent Mantrakalaśa off to find the *Vajra Rosary* in Oḍḍiyana, what kind of transaction ensued? Was this *Vajra Rosary* composed *for* Zhi ba 'od, on the basis of a memorized text or out of whole cloth?

Davidson addresses a similar situation involving the *Root Text of the Mārgaphala*, the most important and most secret text of the Sa skya tradition, attributed to 'Brog mi. He surmises that Gayādhara, "exactly the kind of Indian paṇḍita that Rongzom noted in his contemporary criticism of the Sarma system: Rongzom claimed that Indian Paṇḍitas find out whatever Tibetans wanted and composed new works en route to Tibet,"[519] may have produced the text for 500 ounces of gold by augmenting a general text in his possessions with specific esoteric instructions. Davidson supports his thesis by noting some duplicity practiced by Gayādhara, who "was certainly not above creating an

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development and emendation of texts amplifying Buddha's original teachings meets this and other such arguments.

[517] Davidson 2005, 119, 148-51.

[518] The colophon of the Sde dge recension states: *dpal mchog dang pol as rtog pa'i rgyal pot hams cad kyi mchog rdzogs so// // thugs dam sa' i snying po tho ling du / rgya gar gyi mkhan po paṇḍi ta mkhas pa chen po mantra kā la sha dang / sgra bsgyur gyi lo tsā ba lha btsan po dge slong bla ma zhi ba' i 'od kyi zhal snga nas bsgyur cing zhus te gtan la phab pa // // lo tsā chen po rin chen bzang po yis // dpal mchog dang po'i rgyud 'di bsgyur ba la // bar bar dpe ma rnyed pas ma 'gyur nas // bdag gis ' bad pas dpe btsal rnyed pas bsgyur.*

[519] Davidson 2005, 187.

artificial persona for himself, a persona that would provide him with esteem, income, and access to the great clans…."[520] Davidson finds 'Brog mi's complicity in this to be only a remote possibility because, "having reviewed his oeuvre in some detail—that he was a scholar of extraordinary ability and intellectual integrity, more so in fact that Gayādhara."[521]

Davidson's evidence here, though impressively marshaled, is circumstantial. Character evidence, the key to Davidson's surmise, is generally problematic: even the most depraved among us spend most of our time in ordinary activities. For this reason, in general, the law does not permit even live testimony about character to establish that a person acted in conformity therewith on a particular occasion.[522] While we are not in a court of law here, as Professor Davidson himself told me, we really know very little about what really happened in Tibet a thousand years ago, [523] so in speculating on thin evidence there is fertile ground for Eco's "empirical reader" to run riot.

Here, Tsong kha pa's mention of Mantrakalaśa's "Indian book" of the *Vajra Rosary* may be an indication of authenticity, although I suppose—though such a practice is not included by Davidson in his description of "gray" texts—that Mantrakalaśa or someone else could have composed the entire text in Sanskrit. And, unlike Davidson's findings relating to Gayādhara's character flaws, I have found no such indication

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[520] *Id.* According to Davidson's research, Gayādhara appears to have been a shady character indeed: "Gayādhara is also depicted by all the sources as having significant difficulties in telling the truth, for on his second trip we find him masquerading as Maitrīpā, deceiving the translator of the Guhyasamāja system, Gö-lotsāwa Khukpa Lhetse, until Gayādhara was recognized by one of his own disciples…." *Id.,* 178.

[521] *Id.,* 188.

[522] *See, e.g.,* F.R.E. 404 (a).

[523] Personal Communication 2-16-11.

regarding Mantrakalaśa, although I have not done extensive research in that regard. Moreover, as mentioned above, in his *BIL*, Tsong kha pa references the "old translations" of the *Vajra Rosary.* In addition, Zhi ba 'Od's *Proclamation* strictly limiting the categories of "authentic" scriptures[524] would seem to indicate that he was most zealous in assuring the authenticity of texts. It is reasonable to presume that, given his role in finding and translating the text, Zhi ba 'od was knowledgeable of the circumstances of the *Vajra Rosary.*

So, while further research remains to be done, at this point there is no reason to assume that the *Vajra Rosary* is not an authentic Indian text.

2. Were the Five Stages Added Later, to Validate the Noble Tradition? Yūkei Matsunaga's Theory

Citing Yūkei Matsunaga's 1964 article, "A Doubt to Authority of the Guhyasamāja-Ākhyāna-Tantras," Christian Wedemeyer puts it delicately: "[T]he current state of research on this topic suggest that these explanatory Tantras were still in a formative state at the time the Noble Tradition works were redacted."[525]

In his oft-cited short article, Matsunaga asserted that in the first sixty-seven chapters of the *Vajra Rosary* there were no references to the five stages of Nāgārjuna's *PK*, and that references to the five stages only occur in the *Vajra Rosary'*s last chapter,

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[524] Davidson notes that in the *Proclamation* Zhi ba 'od excludes not only Tibetan creations but "works of excellent Indic pedigree are castigated as well" as "not conducive to liberation." Davidson 2005, 153-154.

[525] Wedemeyer 2007, 42. Wedemeyer seems to take Matsunaga's analysis at face value. *Id.*

the sixty-eighth.[526] Based on this and that three verses of the *Vajra Rosary* were identical to the *PK* and were in prose and not metered verse like the surrounding verses of the *Vajra Rosary*, he concluded that the *Vajra Rosary'*s chapter sixty-eight had taken the three verses from chapter four of the *PK,* and that, therefore, chapter sixty-eight had been added to the *Vajra Rosary* only *after* the composition of chapter four of the *PK.* Matsunaga also found that the first chapter of the *PK* had been added to the *PK after* chapter 68 of the *Vajra Rosary* had been added.[527] Based on these findings, Matsunaga asserts:

> Why were such additions repeated so often? We may say it was because the school wanted to increase the authority of the Pancakrama. The system of "Five orders" of the Pancakrama is found neither in the Guhyasamaja-tantra nor in the first 67 chapters of the Vajramala-tantra. But it was necessary for the Pancakrama to have its authority in the Tantra. Then the scholars of the Saint school added the 68th chapter which is closely connected with the system of "Five orders" to the 67 chapters, of the Vajramala-tantra which are the basis of the Pindikrita-sadhana, but not of the Pancakrama. And, moreover they interpolated into the Vajra-japa-krama some verses which they pretended to be the quotation from the Vajramala-tantra with a view to empowering the Pancakrama by the authority of the Akhyana-tantra.[528]

I think Matsunaga's conclusions are questionable for a number of reasons. Given the propensity in Indian and Tantric literature for the emendation of texts, and the process of accretion, the intertextuality cited by Matsunaga is not surprising. As noted by Jan Nattier in her study of *The Inquiry of Urga,* because many texts were memorized, as they still are today, it was common for a scribe working on a text to be recording it based on

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[526] Matsunaga has a number of other observations about the relative chronology of the *Secret Community* explanatory Tantras, the *PK,* the *Pindikṛta-sadhana* and the *PU,* but, in light of what I am arguing below, I think these all need to be reexamined.

[527] Matsunaga 1967, 843-44.

[528] Matsunaga 1967, 842-43.

someone's orally transmitted recollection of a text that might be written *somewhere*, but is not in the possession of those creating the text.[529] The many versions of slightly varying texts in the Tibetan canon attest to this as well.[530] This is frequently overlooked by modern scholars, who are so focused on the written text. In addition, there are a host of other kinds of textual interpolations that can cause confusion in the relative dating of texts, including multiplication of epithets, completion of standard lists, recalling a passage from another scripture, filling in blanks, giving additional or different examples, changes in the order of material, or, on occasion, adding new material intentionally.[531]

In this case, I believe that the textual analysis Matsunaga relied on is not correct, and that, indeed, the opposite conclusion can be drawn. He argues:

> A few years ago I studied the interaction between the Vajramālā-tantra and the Pañcakrama. The main point of that thesis is as follows. We cannot find any reference to the system of the 'five orders' of the Pañcakrama [*PK*], either in the Guhyasamāja-tantra or in the chapters 1 to 67 of the Vajramālā-tantra. But in the last 68th chapter of the Vajramālā-tantra, the system of the 'five orders' appears. In that chapter three verses are irregular in syllabication, and the same verses are found in the fourth order of the Pañcakrama. In the Vajramālā-tantra the verses before and after the three verses just mentioned are regular in form, while in the Pañcakrama the verses before and after the three are irregular. This indicates that the Vajramālā-tantra took the three verses from the Pañcakrama. It is therefore presumed that the 68th chapter of the Vajramālā-tantra was added after the Pañcakrama had been written.[532]

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[529] Nattier 2003, 58-59.

[530] In his autobiography Denma Löcho Rinpoche tells of being beaten by his less than sophisticated teacher for sometimes substituting synonyms in his recitation of memorized texts. Yeshi, http://www.loselingmonastery.org /index.php?id=58&type=p.

[531] Nattier 2003, 51-57, 61-63.

[532] Matsunaga 1967, 843-842. Matsunaga cites an earlier article, "On the relations between the Vajramālā-tantra and the Pañcakrama," Bunka, 20-4, 1956, pp. 24-37. However, the article appearing there does not concern the Vajramālā or the *PK*. I am attempting to find the earlier article, but have not been successful so far. It may be that in the earlier article Matsunaga has given additional reasons for his thesis that may undercut my arguments here. However, he does give "the main point of that thesis" in his 1964 article.

First of all, both the *Vajra Rosary* and the *PK* were Sanskrit texts before they were translated into Tibetan. Matsunaga's argument that someone (presumably Zhi ba 'od and Sujana Śrījñāna) took the Tibetan translation from the *PK* for those verses and inserted it into the translation of the *Vajra Rosary* says nothing about the Sanskrit versions. At most, assuming that the Matsunaga's argument that prose must be prior to verse is well taken, this would suggest only that Zhi ba 'od and Sujana Śrījñāna had the Tibetan translation of the *PK* in front of them when they were translating the *Vajra Rosary*, and, perhaps rather than translate directly the Sanskrit of the *Vajra Rosary* into Tibetan, they took the Tibetan translation directly from the Tibetan *PK*. One could speculate that Zhi ba 'od and Sujana Śrījñāna, recognizing that the Sanskrit was the same or similar to that of the *PK*, and knowing that senior translators in their community, Rin chen bzang po and Śraddhākravarman, had already translated it in the *PK*, simply adopted it as their own. Matsunaga's argument, at most, suggests only that the *PK* was *translated* into Tibetan before the *Vajra Rosary* was *translated* into Tibetan.[533] Such a conclusion would not support his contention about the sequence of the *creation* of chapter sixty-eight of the *Vajra Rosary* and the *PK*.

Secondly, even if we look just at the Tibetan, I am not sure why Matsunaga concluded that prose must always precede verse. While there are very similar (not identical) prose verses in *VR* ch. 68, vv. 5-8 and *PK* ch. 4, vv. 19-21, the verses before

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[533] Davidson asserts that in his 1096 *Proclamation,* Zhi ba 'od denominated the *PK* as inauthentic, which would cut against my argument here. However, I believe that the work Davidson is referring to might not be the *PK, Five Stages,* but the *Rim lnga'i 'grel ba*, or *Five Stages Commentary,* which is the only reference to the *PK* I see in the Proclamation. *See* Karmay 1998, 35, 39. Karmay has the text, reconstructed from So zlog pa's commentary as noted above, as *rim lnga'i 'grel ba klu'i byang chub kyis mdzad zer ba dang,* which I would translate as "The *Five Stages Commentary,* supposedly by Klu'i byang chub." "Klu'i byang chub" could be the name of an author who wrote a commentarial work on the *PK,* or could be a reference to "the enlightened [*byang chub*] Nāgārjuna." But Nāgārjuna is usually referred to in Tibetan as *Klu sgrub.*

and after the similar verses do not concern the same subject matter. It is not as if the author (in this case, translator) of the *Vajra Rosary* took *PK* prose and neatly transformed it into verse.[534]

Third, and perhaps most importantly, contrary to what Matsunaga states, there *are* references to the "system of 'five orders'"[535] in the earlier chapters of the *Vajra Rosary.* Chapter twenty-three, where Buddha says at the outset that he is going to teach "self, mantra and so forth, *in exact stages,*"[536] discusses the third of the five stages, "self-consecration," using virtually (*bdag bying brlab* v. *bdag la byin brlab*; the insertion of the *la* does not change the meaning and can be ascribed to meter) the same nomenclature for that stage as chapter sixty-eight and the *PK*.[537] The *Vajra Rosary* describes this as "abandoning ordinary conceptuality,"[538] to know that the body is, in reality, a palace of deities,[539] which is the essence of the third stage, self-consecration or illusory body.

Although the exact nomenclature that is used in the *PK* does not always appear, which, again, may not be surprising given that we are comparing separate translations of the original Sanskrit texts, there are many terms used in the literature to describe the five

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[534] I should stress again that perhaps in his other writings Matsunaga has provided more detail.

[535] Matsunaga 1967, 842.

[536] 42A, ch. 23, v. 1, although I must point out that "in exact stages," *ji lta ba rim pa rnams,* is not in the Lhasa recension, but is in Alaṃka's version. Lhasa reads: *bdag nyid sngags sogs byed pa yis*, with only three lines in the verse; Alaṃka has: *bdag nyid sngags sogs dbye bas/ ji lta ba bzhin rim pa rnams.* Alaṃka 153A.

[537] *VR* 44B, ch. 23, v. 40 (*snang ba thams cad rnam par spangs/* ***bdag bying brlab*** *pa'i rang bzhin can/ kun la khyab pa rmad du byung/ rang rig pa yi rnal 'byor mchog//*); *VR* 101A, ch. 68, v. 16 (***bdag la byin brlab*** *rim pas kyang/ dngos grub brgyad ni thob par 'gyur/ snang ba la sogs dbye ba shes/ mchon par byang chub rim pa thob//*); *Five Stages* ch. 3, v. 1 (***bdag la byin gyis brlab pa'i rim/*** *brtse bas bdag gis bshad par bya*).

[538] Alaṃka 174A.

[539] *VR* 48A, ch. 26, v. 1 (*lus ni gnag gis shes pa/ lha rnams kun gyi pho brang mchog//*).

stages of the perfection stage. Chapter twenty-three explains the "commitment of the three realities," which appears to refer to the practices of body and speech isolation, and, in describing the dissolution of the HŪṂ into "mere sound,"[540] mere sound into "supreme sky," and supreme sky into clear light,[541] to mind isolation, the second of the five stages, as well.

The very first chapter, according to Alaṃka, references the first and second of the five stages, speech and mind isolation.[542] In his commentary on chapter three, Alaṃka explains that this state of the four ecstasies is what is referred to in the *Mahāyoga* Tantras as manifest enlightenment and the state of integration, the fourth and fifth of the five stages.[543] Chapter forty, explains Alaṃka, refers to the latter of the five stages, manifest enlightenment[544] and integration, although, as in the first chapter, they are not described in the chapter with the same nomenclature as in chapter sixty-eight.[545] Alaṃka explains how the Tantra refers to each of the five stages: "Having abandoned conceptuality, meditating and what is meditated on, attachment and detachment, on this stage you are even 'free from abandoning,'"[546] "because [this stage] is especially nobler than the stage of vajra repetition."[547] "'You surpass the state of all things, 'all things' [meaning]

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[540] Alaṃka says this is "in the emptiness of the actuality of perfect sound." *Id.*

[541] *VR* 44B, ch. 23, vv. 42-45

[542] Alaṃka 7A, 8A.

[543] Alaṃka 38B.

[544] Alaṃka 209A.

[545] Alaṃka 208A.

[546] Alaṃka 209A, The Lhasa *VR* does not have this verse.

[547] *Id.*

luminance[548] and so forth" "because [this stage] is especially nobler than the stage of mental purification."[549] "'You abandon the three worlds' … free of [even] the conception of the three worlds as in the nature of an illusion" "because you are free from the stage of self-consecration."[550] And "you are free of passion and dispassion,"[551] "abandoning passion because you are free of the stage of consort and concentration."[552] "You abide in the great commitment,"[553] "the aspect of integration."[554] That the nomenclature associated with the descriptions of the five stages is different or less clear than that of the commentarial works like the *Five Stages* is not surprising at all in light of the traditional explanation that the descriptions of practice become clearer as one proceeds from the *Root Tantra* to the explanatory Tantras and, finally, to the commentarial works. That indeed is the hallmark of the Noble Tradition system.[555]

Finally, there are examples of intertextuality between the *Vajra Rosary* and the *PK* that suggest the kinds of memorization issues discussed by Nattier, although, again, we are only dealing here with the Tibetan translation, which says nothing about the priorities of the Sanskrit texts in question. The *PK*'s fourth order, verse seventeen, states:

> *mtshan mo snang ba'i cha ste gsal ba nyi ma'i zer 'gyed snang ba mched pa yin/*
> *mtshams ni snang ba thob par rang gi rang bzhin rnams kyis lan cig min par'gro/*

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[548] The first of the stages of subtle body dissolution, *snag ba,* "luminance," also "white appearance.

[549] Alaṃka 209A.

[550] *I.e.* illusory body. Alaṃka 209A.

[551] *VR* 60B, ch. 40, v. 6.

[552] Alaṃka 209A.

[553] *Id.*

[554] Alaṃka 209A-B.

[555] Wedemeyer 2007, 5-6.

mtshan min nyin par ma yin mtshams min gang zhig rang bzhin rnams dang rnam bral ba/
de ni byang chub skad cig yin par bla ma mchog bshad rnal 'byor pa nyid yul//

The corresponding verses from chapter sixty-eight of the *Vajra Rosary* are:

snang ba mtshan mo'i cha ru 'gyur/ nyin mo snang ba mched pa'o/
mtshams ni snang ba thob pa'o/ de ltar snang la sogs mtshan nyid/
mtshan min mtshams dang nyin mo min/ kun rtog rlung ni spong bar byed// //4//

de ni skad cig mngon byang chub/ mtshan nyid skad cig mar ni brjod
[from verse 5].

Luminance serves as part[1]of the night/ The day is radiance.
Dawn is imminence./ Thus, the characteristics of luminance and so forth
Are not night, and are not dawn or day,/ [But] cause the abandoning/
Of the conceptual energy-winds. //4//

It is instant enlightenment,/ [Its] character is called momentary.
[from verse 5].[556]

Looking at them side by side, with the *Pañcakrama* (*PK*) text in bold:

TABLE 5. *PK v. VR*

P1. *mtshan mo snang ba'i cha ste/*	V1. *snang ba mtshan mo'i cha ru 'gyur*
P2. *gsal ba nyi ma'i zer 'gyed snang ba mched pa yin/*	V2. *nyin mo snang ba mched pa'o/*
P3. *mtshams ni snang ba thob par/*	V3. *mtshams ni snang ba thob pa'o/*
P4. *rang gi rang bzhin rnams kyis lan cig min par 'gro/*	V4. *de ltar snang la sogs mtshan nyid/*
P5. *mtshan min nyin par ma yin mtshams min/*	V5. *mtshan min mtshams dang nyin mo min/*
P6. *gang zhig rang bzhin rnams dang rnam bral ba/*	V6. *kun rtog rlung ni spong bar byed//*
P7. *de ni byang chub skad cig yin par/*	V7. *de ni skad cig mngon byang chub/*
P8. *bla ma mchog bshad rnal 'byor pa nyid yul//*	V8. *mtshan nyid skad cig mar ni brjod/*

There are clear parallels in 1-3, 5, 7 and possibly 6; P4 is parallel to V8 although in P8 and V8 there is the parallelism of *bshad* and *brjod*. Interestingly, elements of P4 and P8

[556] *VR* 100A, ch. 68, vv. 4-5.

that are unaccounted for in *VR* ch. 68 are found in the second to last line of *VR* ch. 53, v. 3: *rang gi ngo bo rnam pa mchog.* This tantalizingly suggests the kind of memorization mistakes noted by Nattier.

Finally, stylistically and thematically, chapter sixty-eight seems to belong with the rest of the Tantra. It ends with the assembled offer praise and thanks for the teaching, just as the questions in chapter one ended with praises and thanks. Neither chapter sixty-seven nor any of the earlier chapters have such a theme. *Without* chapter sixty-eight, the Tantra would seem to be ending in the middle.

In sum, particularly given the fact the there are explicit and implicit references to the five stages in earlier chapters of the *Vajra Rosary,* there are many possible explanations for the intertextuality between the Tibetan translations of chapter sixty-eight of the *Vajra Rosary* and chapter four of the *PK* other than the one advanced by Matsunaga. His arguments say nothing about the Sanskrit texts. Even just looking at the Tibetan translations, there seems to be little evidence for his conclusion that the earlier chapters have no reference to the five stages, and therefore that chapter sixty-eight was a later addition, much less for his leap that the scholars of the Noble Tradition sought to increase the authority of the *PK* by adding a chapter to the *Vajra Rosary.* Based on the evidence, it is just as likely that chapter sixty-eight of the *Vajra Rosary preceded* the *PK*.[557]

3. The Vajra Rosary as an Evolving "Text"

[557] This also demonstrates the utility of the case study and the collective efforts of scholars, since no one alone can master the vast collection of Tantras and the corresponding commentaries. The process moves forward in a dialectic; each of us conjectures, often erroneously, but that is what moves the process forward.

While all of his conclusions do not seem to be well taken, Matsunaga's insight that the terminology of chapter sixty-eight, at least in the Tibetan translation, was somewhat different than that of the preceding chapters does have some validity. But chapter sixty-eight is hardly the only place where the *Vajra Rosary* shows stylistic variation. Does the *Vajra Rosary* appear to be a unitary text or is it better thought of as an anthology?

As will be shown in detail in Chapter Three, the same topics are covered in different chapters of the *Vajra Rosary*, and there are sometimes inconsistencies. While these may be hermeneutically reconciled, they still appear as inconsistent. For example, while chapter sixty-two states that ejaculation is a "fault" in the practice[558] and that the guru "should…control the vajra, delighting the deities in whatever way,"[559] *i.e.* control release and not reach orgasm, chapter fifty-four refers to "conventional enlightenment spirit falling into the yoginī."[560] Chapter six exclusively employs the mantra HŪṂ HOḤ for vajra repetition, while chapters fifteen and twenty-two use OṂ ĀḤ HŪṂ.[561] Chapter fourteen is a discussion of the various meanings of "vajra" and "lotus," while chapter forty-two discusses the meaning of "vajra." Chapter sixty-two returns to a description, that we saw in chapter forty-four, of the five types of yoginīs from the five Buddha clans, how they look, and what the proper signals and responses are. Chapters two and sixty-five both contain fairly detailed descriptions of the qualities of the good guru. Chapter

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[558] *VR* 91A-91B, ch. 62, vv. 25-26.

[559] *VR* 91B, ch. 62, v. 27.

[560] *VR* 80B, ch. 54, vv. 166.

[561] This also caught Tsong kha pa's attention, and he discusses the fact that the *Vajra Rosary* contains two methods, concluding they are both effective methods for combining the Life-energy and Evacuative energy-winds in the heart center. Tsong kha pa 2010, 315-17.

two says the disciple should offer his "wife, sister or daughter" to the guru (and Alaṃka indicates that this means what it says),[562] while chapter forty-four says that "wife" is a woman with a mole, "sister" is a washerwoman, and "daughter" is a dancer.[563] Chapter fifty-four describes the same second and third initiations as chapter two, as does chapter sixty-two, and the descriptions are somewhat differing. Chapter five discusses emptiness in a general way, but later chapter forty-nine returns to the subject, correlating it with the sixteen emptinesses almost identical to those set out in Candrakīrti's *Introduction to the Middle Way.*[564] There are other examples.

Overall, the text is symmetrical, with praises found in chapter one and at the end of chapter sixty-eight, but between the first and the last chapters there are sequences of chapters that seem to follow one from the other, relating to the same subject matter, but there are also a number of exceptions, where subjects appear to be out of sequence. The following groupings of chapters make thematic sense: chapters 9 and 10 relating to the vow and the commitment; 17 and 18 relating to the chakras and the channels; 19 and 20 on the instants and the ecstasies; 21-25 concentrating on vajra repetition practice, including the crucial connection with emptiness in 25; 26-41 relating to the chakras, the channels and cutting off conceptuality; 42-48 explaining terms; 49 and 50 relating to emptiness; 51-53 describing the luminances; 54 and 55 detailing the twenty rituals and their meaning; 56 and 57 on the role of yogic bliss; 58 and 59 deriving the meaning of the

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[562] "'Daughter' [means] female child. 'Wife' [means] your own wife. 'Or girl' [means] sister's daughter. 'Sister' [means] your own sister. 'You should offer' [means] you should give." Alaṃka 40A.

[563] *VR* 63B-64A, ch. 44, vv. 11-23. Alaṃka 218A-219B.

[564] One could make an argument here, similar to Matsunaga's about chapter sixty-eight, that chapter forty-nine was inserted into the *Vajra Rosary* to validate the *PU,* also attributed to Candrakīrti. This would be complicated by the fact that the *PU* quotes the *Vajra Rosary* fairly extensively, and has a famous commentary on *VR* chapter fifty-nine, the famous "forty verses."

entire perfection stage from the syllables *evam* and *evam mayā* and so forth; 60 and 61 on the inner offering; 62 and 63 relating to the *gaṇacakra*; and 66 and 67 on mundane *siddhis*.

On the other hand, the placing of some material seems rather random: the naming of the energy-winds and conceptualities in chapter 3; the discussion of emptiness in 5; the hermeneutical exposition of vajra and lotus in 14; and there is Matsunaga's critique of 68. Another factor to consider is that the chapters do vary tremendously in length and style; some are tremendously detailed and lengthy; others are short and general. And, as shown above, chapters on related topics, as shown above, are not usually found to be sequential. Another thing to consider is that chapter thirty-two of the *Vajra Rosary* uses the Yogacāra terms *ālayavijñāna*, "fundamental consciousness," and *kliṣṭamanas*, "addicted mind,"[565] terms rejected by the Madhyamakas, yet chapter forty-nine sets forth the sixteen emptinesses in virtually the same form as great Madhyamaka Candrakīrti.[566] Finally, the *Vajra Rosary* explicitly says in some chapters that it is following the Mahāyoga Tantras and in others that it is adhering to the Yoginī Tantras.

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[565] *VR* 54A, ch. 32, vv. 3, 5. One can find numerous statements to the effect that the *Yogacāra* view permeates Tantra. Guy Newland's observation is fairly typical: "That the mind has great power over objects, and is intimately involved with them, is a vital message of the Mind Only system. Another name for the Mind Only system is the Yogic Practice system (*yogacāra*). This name points to the fact that Mind Only ideas probably derive, in part, from the experiences of advanced meditators. Newland 1999, 48. David Snellgrove speculates that the strong influence of *Yogacāra* in Dunhuang may be related to the effort of Hsüan-tsang, whose main purpose in visiting India was to bring back *Yogacāra* texts. Snellgrove 2002, 457 n.136.

[566] The presence of *Yogacāra* terminology gave rise to an hermeneutic issue when Madhyamakas like Tsong kha pa were called upon to interpret the *Vajra Rosary*. As noted by Professor Wayman, Tsong kha pa states in his commentary on the *Vajrajñanasamuccaya*: "The '*ālaya*' and '*kliṣṭamanas*' mentioned in this Tantra (the *Vajramālā*) are the same terms explained in other texts but have different meanings." Wayman 1977, 203. Wayman theorizes that what Tsong kha pa meant is that these *Yogacāra* terms do not refer to the fundamental consciousness and so on but to imminence, radiance and luminance. Wayman asserts that the *âlayavijñyāna* should be interpreted as imminence or near-attainment, the stage directly following clear light in the incarnation process (and preceding it in the death process) characterized by the inner sign of pitch darkness and total loss of awareness. *Id.*

Jacob Dalton's "three stage" analysis would also suggest that the *Vajra Rosary* is an anthology because, as we shall see in Chapter Three, it contains elements not only of all three stages ("offering" is used fifty-eight times in the text), but also offerings toward external shrines:

> The first stage in this process corresponded to the first half of the eighth century, when the first 'internal' Yoga tantras were composed. These works cast the Buddhist subject as the buddha at the center of the ritual, so that the oblations which were previously directed towards an external shrine were now offered to oneself. The second, intermediate period is represented by the early Mahāyoga tantras, and spanned the second half of the eighth and the early ninth century. During this period, ritual worship moved to the body's interior, with particular attention given to the details of male and female sexual anatomy. Thus the visualized maṇḍala was generated inside the vagina at the point of sexual union, and it was worshipped by means of pleasure generated through the performance of *coitus reservatus*. The third period is characterized by the later Mahāyoga tantras, most of which were eventually classified as Anuttarayoga. This period unfolded gradually over the ninth century, with Buddhajñānapāda of the first quarter of the ninth century being a transitional figure. Overall, this period witnessed the development of increasingly sophisticated technologies for describing and manipulating the body's subtle internal energies, These complex systems were mapped onto the ritual space of the body's interior, a space that had first been opened during the intermediate period.[567]

If, however, Dalton is wrong about the chronological sequencing of the various stages, and they represent concurrent *upāyic* practices, geared towards different levels of disciple, or different developmental circumstances in a disciple's life, then the author of the *Vajra Rosary* could have simply been collecting various methods that existed at the time, be it 400 BCE or 1000 CE.

It would be of great interest to compare the various chapters in the original Sanskrit to see if there are differences in style and meter and the like. Perhaps some day, hopefully soon, we will find Mantrakalaśa's "Indian book," but, until then, this most

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[567] *Id.,* 26-27.

felicitous path to answering the question of the timing and single or multiple authorship at least the written text is foreclosed to us. Lacking that evidence and just considering the Tibetan text as we have it, on balance, it appears that the *Vajra Rosary* is a compendium of related teachings. Whether the text itself evolved over time or was dictated or written at one time, or whether the text is the product of contributions by a number of different authors or compilers or just one will have to await further evidence.

Would drawing the conclusion that the *Vajra Rosary* is a collection of perfection stage teachings set down by different compilers at different times contrary to Buddhist tradition? I think not. In discussing the transmission of the *Secret Community Root Tantra,* Alaṃka notes that, "having been transmitted via the Compiler, Vajrapāṇi or Mañjuśrī, it came into the world of people."[568] In the world of people, things go awry: this is the first noble truth. Perhaps that is why Alaṃka, describing a directly conflicting view of when the explanatory Tantras were taught, says, "This view is also agreeable."[569]

4. Zhi ba 'od as "Neo-con"?

Both traditional accounts and contemporary Western scholarship agree that Atīśa and the royal family of western Tibet were, more or less, puritanical "neo-conservatives," determined to reform degenerate Tantric practices. For example, Tsong kha pa writes in his *Great Stages of the Path*:

> In the later dissemination of the teaching to Tibet, some who fancied that they were scholars and yogis misconstrued the meaning of the collections of Tantras. Because of this, they did great damage to the maintenance of ethical discipline, the root of the teachings. This excellent being [Atīśa] refuted

[568] Alaṃka 3A.

[569] *Id.*

> them well. Moreover, he caused their erroneous conceptions to disappear and then reinvigorated the flawless teaching.[570]

David Snellgrove notes,

> Atīśa's attitude, like that of so many of his contemporaries, whether Indian or Tibetan, would seem to have been ambivalent. Having practiced his religion earlier in life under the guidance of famous Tantric yogins, he could scarcely be expected to change his views later in order to please a few leading people in Tibet, who wanted a far more thorough "reformation" than he was prepared to countenance."[571]

And Ronald Davidson, in his discussion of "The Invention of Neoconservative Orthodoxy,"[572] states, referring to Zhi ba 'od:

> Shiwa-Ö, a royal prince of Gugé-Purang who took the monastic precepts in the manner of some of his predecessors, claimed that some of these materials were not conducive to liberation, and identified all of them as "Tibetan in composition" . . . . Well-accepted standard works of esoteric practice, such as the *Pañcakrama*, also are identified as inauthentic. . . . All together, they provide us with a perspective on Shiwa-Ö, that he was less concerned with the standards applied by Gö-lotsāwa about the same time and considered that the works in question were deleterious to Tibetans' practice of the monastic path, so they could be eliminated. Shiwa-Ö concluded this section by warning that the coded language (*sandhyā-bhāṣā*) of the *Mother-tantras* (i.e. *yoginī-tantras*) was misunderstood by monks, who were breaking their vows as a result. Thus the continuing tension between the graphic language and antinomian practices of the siddha scriptures was especially problematic to this scion of the West Tibetan royal house.[573]

These characterizations of the motivations of Western Tibetan royalty, however, seem somewhat one-sided when we consider that not only was the *Vajra Rosary not*

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[570] Tsongkhapa 2000, 42.

[571] Snellgrove 2002, 481. It is important to remember that in no way did Atīśa denigrate Tantra; to the contrary he places Tantra at the pinnacle of his most famous *Lamp for the Path to Enlightenment*. Atīśa 1997, 158. Atīśa's point there was that monks should not engage in sexual yoga: "Because the *Great Tantra of the Primordial Buddha/* Forbids it emphatically,/ Those observing pure conduct should not/ Take the secret and wisdom initiations.// If those observing the austere practice of pure conduct/ Were to hold these initiations,/ Their vow of austerity would be impaired/ Through doing that which is proscribed." *Id.*

[572] Davidson 2005, 151.

[573] *Id.,* 154.

excluded from authentic scripture by Zhi ba ‘od’s *Proclamation*, but that the Tantra was obtained at great expense and translated by the same Prince Zhi ba ‘od, and, perhaps, Atīśa himself. This explicit description of initiation ritual, as discussed above, is a challenge to the received view of the "neoorthodox" nature of the "rulers of Purang." It indicates that, even if Zhi ba 'od was part of a "neo-conservative" movement, he was certainly no prude, at least by our standards, and we will have to look more closely at the applicability of such terms.

Although one could argue that Zhi ba 'od's primary interest was curtailing sexual yoga *by monastics*, who but monks would have the time and ability to perform such extensive rituals? Indeed, based on manuals composed by monastic authors composed from the late tenth to the early twelfth centuries, Isabelle Onians concludes that the sexual yoga of the second and third initiations were intended *for* monastics, so long as they properly understand reality. She argues that the incorporation of such erotic relations from outside their tradition was so successful that "some Tantric monks appropriated the originally alien tradition to the demanded exclusion of their non-monastic colleagues."[574]

Most contemporary Western writers assume, citing scant or no evidence for the proposition, that these sexual practices occurred with some regularity.[575] Only Hartzell

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[574] Onians 2001, 300, 301.

[575] "The use of sexuality for religious purposes is almost as shocking in the Indian environment as it is in the West but was considered acceptable in secrecy since the purpose of an action denotes its ethical value in the Buddhist system. Accordingly, sexuality between consenting members in a secret ritualized context leading to awakening can be considered a profoundly religious event." R. Davidson, "Atisha's Lamp for the Path," in Lopez 1995b, 292. "There doubtless developed a curious and in many ways unacceptable mingling of monastic life and the use of tantric practices involving a female partner, which were manifestly a breach of monastic discipline." Snellgrove 2002, 469.

paints a detailed picture of tantric sexual practices in Kashmir during the 9th-12th centuries, based on literary sources.[576] He summarizes his findings:

> 1) real sexual Yogas were in widespread use in Buddhist and Hindu Tantric practices at least up through the eleventh century; 2) group sexual rites were held at night in a variety of secret locations, and were accompanied by the ingestion of various stimulants; 3) these group sexual rites were essentially non-sectarian--i.e. though run by members of various sects, the rites were open to members of other sects; 4) there were a variety of secret communication codes in use for identifying the locations and times of these sexual congresses, and these codes were taught to the initiates; 5) the nighttime sexual rites of the Tantrikas eventually became widely known about in Kaśmīri society, as evidence by Kṣemendra's satires; 6) in some circumstances young women were selected as Tantric consorts at an early age and protected for that purpose; 7) in other circumstances women ran the sexual congresses themselves and served as Tantric gurus; 8) Tantric practitioners were well aware of the potential for procreation as a result of their activities, and specific typologies of classification are outlined for "Tantric children" based on when and how they might be conceived; 9) the specifics of the progression of sexual union were integrated in detail into the Tantric doctrines. We also know, particularly from the several stages outlined in Buddhist Tantric practice, and from the sophisticated developments of Tibetan Tantrism, that monastic or celibate Tantra became well-developed, whereby initiates would engage with meditative or artistically depicted visualizations of goddesses or female consorts without actual sexual intercourse between a yogi and a yoginī.[577]

Nevertheless, there is another range of potential explanation of the initiations that should be considered: that these ostensibly sexual practices are metaphoric and, however they were practiced, were not intended for actual physical enactment. Or, if they were so intended, the physical enactment was not the main point. Or, if it was, that true Tantric sex had a very different meaning than that apparent to ordinary perception and conception. Indeed, "the Tibetans almost universally elected to continue the reception of

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[576] Hartzell, 1997, 492-556 ("Certain versions of Tantric practices had apparently worked their way into the upper classes, providing a ready rationalization for husbands and wives to visit Tantric "gurus" at night to indulge their sensual appetites under cover of religious devotion.") *Id.,* 543-44.

[577] Hartzell 1997, 847-48. Of course, there is a real question as to how much we can rely on literary sources, which may present a distorted view of actual events.

the three 'higher' consecrations in a visualized rather than physical form."[578] Given the multivalent nature of Tantric writing, none of these interpretations can be excluded. In his *Vajra Rosary Notes*, Tsong kha pa states:

> Regarding the meaning of the parts, if we explain following the tradition of the *Guhyasamāja*, just as explained in the *Pradīpodyottana*, you have the four [parameters], literal, general, hidden and ultimate, and, because this Tantra is a Tantra which is explained to be common to the two [mother and father] Tantras, if we explain it following the tradition of the father and mother tantras, we explain it according to the two explanations of outer and inner and interpretive and definitive.[579]

In accordance with this hermeneutic, the overt sexual interpretation of the description of the second and third initiations would be the literal (*yi ge*) meaning only, and not the general, hidden or ultimate meanings. In view of the focus of the *Vajra Rosary* on the completion stage, the non-literal meanings may well relate to subtle body practices, the illusory body, clear light, and enlightenment itself.[580] It would be curious if a completion stage yogi would limit his understanding to the literal.

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[578] Davidson 1995, in Lopez 1995b, 293. David Snellgrove concludes:

> The more reputable, but not necessarily the more famous yogins, lived either as laymen, or totally celibate, or they gained proficiency in sexual yoga before taking vows as a monk. . . . These were clearly the standards which all reformers expected and there was never any suggestion that tantric theory and practice were an unwelcome addition to the Indian Buddhist heritage. The Tibetans seems to have had no contact with any Indian teachers who thought otherwise or who ever spoke out against the tantras.

Snellgrove 2002, 469-70.

[579] *Tsongkhapa Vajra Rosary Notes*, 2B (*yan lag gi don la 'dus pa'i dbang du byas nas bshad na sgrom gsal las ji ltar bshad pa bzhin du yig don dang spyi don dang/ sbas pa dang mthar thug dang bzhis 'chad la/ rgyud 'di rgyud gnyis kyi thung mong gi bshad rgyud yin pas pha rgyud dang ma rgyud gnyis ka'i dbang du byas nas 'chad na/ phyi dang nang gi bshad pa gnyis su 'chad de drang nges kyi bshad pa'o*).

[580] The first chapter of Tsong kha pa's Commentary on the *PU* has numerous examples of these sorts of explanations of the hidden and ultimate meanings of various passages. *See* Tsong kha pa 1999.

Lest it be said that this is an apologetic hermeneutic initiated later than the translations of the *Vajra Rosary*, a similar cautionary note was taken some 500 years earlier, in a translation guide, the *Word-Combination, A Two Part Work*:

> The tantras of secret mantras are to be secret by regulation, for it is unacceptable that they should be explained and shown to those who are unfitted. Although meanwhile their translation and practice have been allowed, *their enigmatic language has not been explained so that they have been taken literally and their practice has been perverse*.[581]

If this is the case, that the overtly sexual description of the initiations is the literal meaning only, and Zhi ba 'od interpreted these parts of the *Vajra Rosary* in more profound terms, what would be the implications for my theory that his translation of the *Vajra Rosary* is inconsistent with the received characterization of him as a neo-conservative? I think the primary implication is that we would have to re-focus what it meant for Zhi ba 'od to be a neo-conservative. While much of the scholarship imbues the position of the Gu ge royal family with moralistic tones, if Zhi ba 'od himself did not take these practices literally, then his neo-conservatism would be completely practical and not value-laden. But that still leaves one to wonder why, if Zhi ba 'od thought Yoginī Tantras and the like which could be taken to encourage monks to break their vows of celibacy should not be practiced, he would translate the *Vajra Rosary*, which could be just as easily misconstrued. Thus, even if the initiations are not meant to be taken literally, the received wisdom fails to explain Zhi ba 'od's sponsorship of the *Vajra Rosary*.[582]

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[581] Snellgrove 2002, 443 (emphasis added).

[582] One aspect that needs to be further explored is the impact of secrecy. While one might argue that Zhi ba 'od translated the *Vajra Rosary* with its antinomian language because he assumed it would be kept secret, the question is: secret from whom? The obvious audience for the translation was monastic, the very audience about whom Zhi ba 'od was concerned. The other possibility is that the *Vajra Rosary* was

Along with Zhi ba ‘od and many others, the leading figures of the second propagation, Atīśa and Rin chen bzang po, as discussed above, were deeply engaged in the translation of Tantric works. R.A. Stein’s comment about the intentions of the royalty of Western Tibet seems to be a more accurate description of what was actually occurring:

> They were simply careful to offer a symbolic interpretation, especially to the uninitiated and to lay people, of ritual acts which taken literally would offend common morality. Their reform consisted mainly of a rigorous distinction between the types of behavior expected at different levels of mental training and holiness: ordinary men had to regulate their conduct according to ordinary morality.”[583]

So the recovery and translation if not the creation of the *Vajra Rosary* seems to contradict the received characterization of his and Ye shes 'od's and even Atīśa’s mission as one of puritanical downgrading of Tantric yogas under the guise of “purifying” corrupt Tantric practices.

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intended to be held very closely, limited to a select subgroup of initiates, and for this reason Zhi ba 'od sponsored its translation although there was the risk that if secrecy was breached it could be misinterpreted. This seems unlikely, but the possibility should be explored.

[583] Stein 1972, 72.

Chapter Three:

The Teachings of the *Vajra Rosary*, As Interpreted by Alaṃkakalaśa

In accordance with the requisites of a case study that the "case" be presented "in-depth," this chapter is a detailed summary of the teachings of the *Vajra Rosary,* together with Alaṃka's *Commentary* and some of my own observations. This summary is organized thematically, with an eye towards the task here, determining how we should interpret this Tantra. A complete first English translation of the Tantra itself is annexed as Appendix A and a translation of Alaṃka's chapters twenty-three and twenty-four as Appendix B.

The *Vajra Rosary'*s teachings are extensive and interwoven. The text fills one hundred and four *dpe cha*; the translation, in free verse is four hundred seventy three pages long. Alaṃka's commentary is twice as long, Material on various topics is found in different chapters, and most of the material relates to many topics concerning the perfection stage. So a summary can only give an overview.

A. The Setting and The Eighty-Two Questions[584]

The first chapter of the *Vajra Rosary* Tantra, entitled "The Setting of the Tantra: Invocation, Questions and Activities of the Students and so forth," describes the teaching

[584] The full title of the Tantra is given in Sanskrit as *Śrī-vajramālabhidhānamahāyoga-Tantra-sarva-Tantra-hridaya-rahasya-vibhedakam-iti*, "Opening the Secret Heart of All Tantras: The Great Yoga Tantra, the Clear Expression of the Glorious Vajra Rosary." This is followed by homage to Mañjuśrī, Vairocana, Vajradakini and the Three Jewels. *VR* 1B.

of the *Vajra Rosary* by Buddha himself, followed by eighty-two questions[585] about perfection stage yoga propounded by Vajrapāṇi, the interlocutor throughout the Tantra. After chapter two, which discusses the teacher and student and initiatory empowerment, the balance of the *Vajra Rosary* responds to these questions. These questions[586] are essentially a topical index to the Tantra, and perusing them gives an overview of the subject matter, although they do not always convey the entire meaning of what is discussed in the particular chapter responding to the question(s).[587] For example, the first question, "What of the name *Vajra Rosary*?" is answered in the third chapter, but that chapter also contains a listing of the names of all of the one-hundred eight energy-winds and all one-hundred eight conceptualities related to them.

The opening sentence of this first chapter is nearly identical to that of the *Secret Community Root Tantra*, with Buddha "dwelling in the vaginas of the Vajra Queens, the essence of the body, speech and mind of all the Tathāgatas," with the additional language "with clear realization through the immeasurable Great Seal,"[588] meaning, according to Alaṃka, "the formless nature of clear light speech,"[589] which is realized through vajra repetition, the first of the five stages of the perfection stage set forth in chapter sixty-eight

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[585] *VR* 6B-8B, ch. 1 vv. 42-65. Verse references are to those in the complete English translation of the *Vajra Rosary*, Appendix A. There are no numbered verses in the Lhasa recension.

[586] *See* Appendix A, pp. 11-16.

[587] There are sixty-eight chapters and eighty-two questions; chapters one and two are not responsive to any of the questions, but cover preliminaries, the setting of the Tantra and empowerment, respectively.

[588] The opening sentence of the *Root Tantra* is: "Thus have I heard: Once the Blessed One was dwelling in the vagina of the Vajra consort of the Essence of the Body, Speech and Mind of all the Tathāgatas." Skt. *Evaṃ mayā śrutam ekasmin samaye bhagavān sarvatathāgatakāyavākcitta-hṛdayavajrayoṣidbhageṣu vijahāra.* Freemantle 1978, 117. Thus, at the outset, this *Vajra Rosary* explains Buddha's internal state, and the methodology involved: Great Seal or *Mahāmudra* yoga. It is unclear why Freemantle uses the singular for "vagina" in light of the Sanskrit locative plural.

[589] Alaṃka 7A.

of the *Vajra Rosary* and in the *Five Stages*. As Buddha taught the Tantra, Buddha, the Vajra Queens and "zillions of great Bodhisattvas" were all engaged in realizing the Great Seal, with their lotuses "supremely delighted" with the bliss of nonduality, which Alaṃka notes connotes as the stage of mind isolation.[590]

Singled out in this gathering are thirty-two bodhisattvas whom Alaṃka identifies as the thirty-two deities of the *Secret Community* Akṣobhya maṇḍala. Smiling at the retinue, Buddha enters the *Vajra Rosary* concentration and radiates a great matrix of light rays from all of his pores putting many of the attendees into the state of non-dual union of Vajradhara, causing them to be completely overwhelmed. Buddha then emanates from his vajra path, *i.e.* his penis, a rosary of vajras that enters the crown chakras of the bodhisattvas, causing them to experience great bliss. Praising the Buddha at length, they think to themselves that they should ask him about the meaning of this vajra rosary. Reading their minds, Buddha abandons his dispassionate, ordinary form, and, emitting his own consort from his secret vajra, embraces her. The bodhisattvas "amazed, their eyes wide open, were seen to be as if placed in a painting and were speechless."[591] Buddha then says OṂ ĀḤ HŪṂ and emits the *Secret Community* mandala deities. Vajrapāṇi's eighty-two questions conclude the chapter, the answers to which "not spoken of anywhere in the Action, Performance, or Yoga Tantras,"[592] according to Tsong kha pa, "explain most of the meaning of the [*Secret*] *Community*."[593]

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[590] Alaṃka 7B.

[591] *VR* 5B, ch. 1, v. 29.

[592] *VR* 8A, ch. 2, v. 2.

[593] Tsong kha pa 2010, 63.

Alaṃka's lengthy commentary begins with an account of Buddha's Tantric enlightenment and his Tantric teachings, culminating in the teaching "on top of the peaks of Western Uḍḍiyana"[594] of the "small" or "shorter" *Vajra Rosary Tantra*, a condensation of the *Vajra Rosary* in twelve thousand lines, presumably lost. After this, he taught the version of the *Vajra Rosary* closer to what has come down to us "in the Western Mountains of Uḍḍiyana, the Lord, from the perspective of the ten Terrifics in the form of glorious Vajrasattva, principally in order to control the ten Directional Protectors, taught the two Tantras: the *Vajra Rosary* in twelve thousand lines and the *Shorter Vajra Rosary*."[595] Alaṃka gives two versions of the timing of the teaching of the oral personal instructions, and the root, branch[596] and explanatory Tantras: one that they were respectively taught in the four ages or *yugas*; and another that they were all taught by Buddha during this age immediately after the teaching of the brief version of the *Secret Community Tantra*.[597] Alaṃka says of the latter, "This view is also agreeable.[598]

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[594] Alaṃka 4A.

[595] Alaṃka 3B-4A.

[596] According to Longchenpa, "branch" tantra is one that focuses on one of the ten "essentials" of Tantra: outlook, meditation, behavior, initiation, mandala, charismatic activity, commitments, capacities, worship and mantras, while a root tantra encompasses all of them; an explanatory tantra expands upon and clarifies them. Longchenpa 2000, 2.

[597] Alaṃka 3A (Sde dge) (*de yang sdud pa po phyag na rdo rje'am dpal gyis brgyud nas mi'i 'jig rten du 'ongs so/ de la rdzogs ldan dang gsum ldan dang gnyis ldan dang rtsod pa can gyi dus su zhal gyi gdams ngag dang rtsa ba'i rgyud dang yan lag gi rgyud dang bshad pa'i rgyud la sogs pa la 'jug pa zhes bya ba ni kha cig smra'o/ gzhan dag ni rtsod pa'i dus 'di nyid du sems can thams cad rjes su gzung ba'i phyir nyung ngu'i rtsa ba'i rgyud bstan pa'i de ma thag tu bcom ldan 'das kyis yan lag gi rgyud dang bshad pa'i rgyud la sogs pa bstan zhes zer ro/).*

[598] *Id.* Wedemeyer quotes Tāranātha's unambiguous statement that the Noble Tradition literature attributed to Nāgārjuna and the *PU* attributed to Candrakīrti "were not spread" and "was not composed and spread" during their lifetimes, but were propagated by a Nāgabodhi who preserved the teachings until late in the first millennium. Wedemeyer 2007, 19-20.

Alaṃka's account of the setting of the Tantra, and his elucidation of his hermeneutic scheme illustrated by detailed commentary on the first words of the Tantra is followed by his word commentary, which is approximately twice as long as the Tantra itself, although it only covers forty-three chapters and part of the forty-fourth, out of sixty-eight. In the beginning of the word commentary, Alaṃka describes the hermeneutic scheme he is employing, which can be seen at work in his commentary on the *Vajra Rosary's* opening verse, *Evam mayā śrūtam . . . .*[599] Alaṃkakalaśa applies the four procedures as the third part of a tripartite interpretive scheme consisting of: (1) necessary introductory words; (2) condensed meaning; (3) and subsidiary meanings, and then adds an analysis based on the internal and external meaning, yielding six categories. Because Alaṃkakalaśa refers to the "six parameters" (*mtha' drug*), what we have here seems to be a variant of the six-parameter/four procedure system of the *PU*, here consisting of: (1) literal; (2) general; (3) secret; (4) ultimate; (5) external and (6) internal.

B. The Guru-Disciple Relationship

At the outset of chapter two, entitled "The Examination of the Teacher and Student and Empowerment," admonishing Vajrapāṇi to listen well, before answering the actual eighty-two questions from the first chapter, Buddha[600] addresses the subjects of the Tantric teacher, student and empowerment or initiation, the process by which the student is authorized to practice Tantra, crucial to avoid both the master and student going to a

[599] Alaṃka 4a-7a.

[600] Over the course of the Tantra, Buddha is sometimes referred to as "The Vajra Lord," "Vajrasattva," the "Vajrin" etc.

"great unbearable hell."[601] The qualities of the Tantric master are described,[602] and also those of the student who would be a proper vessel for the teachings, repeating the well-known admonition that both the master and student first examine each other for twelve years "just as one tests a jewel by rubbing and gold by burning."[603] Once found, the student should venerate and serve the teacher with great respect.

A more detailed discussion of the qualities of the guru in found in chapter sixty-five. The guru, who has all of the six perfections[604] secretly delights in the practices of the *Secret Community*, but behaves externally like a *śrāvaka*, and gives disciples personal instructions step by step.[605] Many other good qualities are described: he is "guileless and has abandoned those with bad conceptions" and has "a mind [set] on delivering sentient beings."[606] He is an expert in all Tantric practices and is able "to bestow the secret empowerment with perfect wisdom and compassion, not fearing the personal instructions of tantra."[607] In chapter sixty-six, the disciple is admonished not to spit, speak boldly, watch gambling, and the like, or to step over the guru's shadow. Before the guru, the disciple should appear "fearfully, with clasped palms…promising to give all his possessions, shy and looking down."[608]

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[601] *VR* 8B, ch. 2, v. 7.

[602] *VR* 8B, ch. 2, v. 8 ("He has attained empowerment and knows reality, has genius and a compassionate nature, profound, magnificent and immaculate, he abjures harm and violence.").

[603] *VR* 8B-9A, ch. 2, vv. 9-11; Alaṃka 36B.

[604] *VR* 96A, ch. 65, v. 11.

[605] *VR* 96A, ch. 65, v. 12.

[606] *VR* 96B, ch. 65, vv. 16-17.

[607] *VR* 96B, ch. 65, v. 14.

[608] *VR* 97B, ch. 66, vv. 2-4.

C. The Meaning of "Vajra Rosary" and "Secret Community"

In the beginning of the third chapter, entitled "The Terminology of the *Vajra Rosary*," Buddha answers the first of Vajrapāṇi's questions, "What of the name *Vajra Rosary?*"— explaining that the name "*Vajra Rosary*" also refers to the "thirteenth stage, the genuine state of the fourth ecstasy, the ecstasy of universal emptiness." This thirteenth stage is presumably that referred to in the second chapter as corresponding with the third empowerment, the wisdom-knowledge empowerment, referred to there as "true union." Alaṃka explains that this state of the four ecstasies is what is referred to in the Mahāyoga Tantras as manifest enlightenment and the state of integration and in the Yoginī Tantras as innate or orgasmic ecstasy, reflecting the status of the *Vajra Rosary* as common to both branches of Tantra. The text states that this rosary pierces all of the conceptual energy-winds, but cannot be penetrated by them, leading into the principal task of the chapter, which is the naming of the "more that one-hundred and eight" energy-winds.[609]

The meaning of *Guhyasamāja*, *Secret Community*, is discussed in chapter four. It is called "Community" because it involves mingling or mixing (*'dres pa*) during sexual yoga "when the two secret channels perfectly join and touch," which results in the

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[609] Many texts name the ten main energy-winds. When I asked Denma Lochö Rinpoche about the names of the energy-winds beyond the ten main ones, he wished me good luck and told me to follow the text. Personal Communication. One theory, expressed by Alaṃka, is that the 108 energy-winds are the ten primary and secondary energy-winds minus the Pervasive energy-wind which arises only at death, making nine, times the six major chakras, making fifty-four, times two for the day and the night, making one-hundred eight. Alaṃka 44B. Tsong kha pa 2010, 225-27. Tsong kha pa, analyzing this issue, concludes: "Whatever the case, though it seems to be the meaning of that *Tantra* that the hundred and eight wind-energies are not non-comprised of the ten wind-energies, as it also seems difficult to posit the pattern of circulation of each of nine wind-energies in order in each of six wheels, we must still investigate this question." *Id.,* 227.

blazing of *tummo,* which awakens the channels and fills them with enlightenment spirit from the crown chakra.[610] This makes the body, speech and mind of the yogi become "of one nature;" the elements become "as one taste." "Then, the enlightenment spirit melts/ From all the places,/ Becoming as one nature,/ And then the [central] channel,/ As the fruition of one thing,/ Becomes of one taste./ That is called 'mingling'.//"[611] Alaṃka explains that the mingling also includes the mixing of the perfection (literally, the vajra) of body, speech and mind that is embodied in the Tantric Buddha, Vajradhara; the mixing of the vajra with the secret lotus, "the lotus of the goddess," referring to the sexual organs, "just like when the external sun rises it opens the lake-born lotus;"[612] and the mixing of the various Buddhas, bodhisattvas, consorts and deities, emanations of Buddha's body, described in the setting of the Tantra in chapter one. Mingling also refers to the creation stage practice of meditating the three concentrations.[613] In his commentary on chapter four, Alaṃka states that "Community" also refers to the vajra repetition mantric practice of placing Sanskrit syllables on the petals of each chakra,[614] and, in addition, to the stage of Tantra, *i.e.* sexual yoga.[615]

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[610] *VR* 12B, ch. 4, vv. 3-5.

[611] *VR* 12B-13A, ch. 4, vv. 5-6.

[612] Alaṃka 53A.

[613] Alaṃka 53B.

[614] Alaṃka 53B.

[615] *VR* 12B, ch. 4, v. 3.

D. Non-Conceptuality

The term "non-conceptual" (*nirvikalpa, rnam par mi rtog , rnam rtog med pa*) is used thirty-three times in the *Vajra Rosary.* Non-conceptuality is deployed as a synonym for emptiness[616] and it is used to describe the fourth ecstasy, innate ecstasy occurring when the enlightenment spirit dissolves in the navel chakra and "is born in the Great Bliss Wheel [crown chakra]."[617] When one engages in sexual yogic practices, it is done not in a state of ordinary sexual conceptual fantasy and the like, but in a "non-conceptual state,"[618] the yogi having consumed all of the conceptual energy-winds.[619] Chapter sixty-two, concerning the *gaṇacakra,* states that through the sexual ritual of wisdom and method, the guru is teaching through non-conceptuality, leading you to achieve the supreme attainment.[620] The text describes as "true yoga" the part of the practice of vajra-repetition where the yogi counts the one hundred eight conceptual energy-winds in the "supreme practice of non-conceptuality."[621] When the enlightenment spirit overflows from the crown chakra, it goes to the wind chakra between the eyebrows where it is held there by the yogi in a state of "non-conceptuality."[622] When the "great non-conceptual energy-wind" flows through the central channel, overcoming the conceptual energy-

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[616] *VR* 13A-B, ch. 5, vv. 2, 5.

[617] *VR* 18B, ch. 8, v. 5.

[618] *VR* 63A, ch. 44, v. 16.

[619] *VR* 20B, ch. 10, v. 10.

[620] *VR* 91B, v. 28.

[621] *VR* 23A-B, chapter 12, vv. 16, 22.

[622] *VR* 33A, chapter 17, v. 8; Alaṃka 125B.

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winds: "Non-conceptual bliss/ Will be achieved/ Through the reality/ Of mantra."[623] The achieving of the state of non-conceptuality is crucial: "Whoever always achieves/ Non-conceptuality/ Effects all actions/ And becomes an expert."[624]

Chapter thirty-six is entitled "The Characteristics of Non-Conceptuality." There the Tantra explains that one who knows when the non-conceptual energy-wind arises will attain the state of Vajrasattva. This non-conceptual energy-wind, and its corresponding mental state, abandons all duality, "Free from the state/ Of meditation/ And non-meditation/ It is the great wisdom/ Of Mahāyoga."[625] Non-conceptuality is the one characteristic of self-consecration or illusory body, the third of the five stages.[626]

The Great Seal itself, the object of Tantric practice, is non-conceptuality: "The seal of the wisdom/ Of the Tathāgatas/ Is the state/ Of non-conceptuality,/ The abode of indestructible/ Vajrasattva,/ The great bliss/ Of non-conceptuality,/ Naked, like sky.//"[627] The *Vajra Rosary* has a number of different practices designed to accomplish this, including the following. The yogi should find a peaceful place, by a riverbank or a tree at a crossroads, or where three roads come together. There, he should repeat the mantra of the Vajra Rosary, OṂ VAJRAMĀLE ĀḤ HŪṂ HŪṂ PHAT SVĀHĀ, one million times.[628] This will cause the energy-winds "to be robbed by thatness, clearing away the

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[623] *VR* 41B, ch. 22, v. 37

[624] *VR* 41B, ch. 22, v. 30.

[625] *VR* 58A, ch. 36, v. 2.

[626] *VR* 58A, ch. 36, v. 4.

[627] *VR* 64B-65A, ch. 46, v. 3.

[628] *Id.* vv. 7-8.

mind's conceptuality."[629] One who meditates in this way, abandoning conceptuality, becoming "the incarnation of extremely pure sky,"[630] can gain "complete realization in one instant."[631]

E. The Four Empowerments and Sexual Yoga

In chapter two, Buddha describes the four empowerments required for perfection stage practice. The four empowerments have fourteen stages, eleven for the first and one each for the second, third and fourth, to be given at proper times during the lunar month. The required consort is described as a woman between sixteen and twenty years old, herself empowered, with a special faith in Tantra. "Otherwise there will be no success; you would be far from attainment."[632]

To begin, the student should offer "an especially tender woman, wife, sister, or daughter"[633] to the guru, and should make valuable material offerings to him.[634] Then the guru makes love to the "Mother Seal"[635] offered, and the student puts the enlightenment

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[629] *Id.* v. 8.

[630] *Id.* v. 11.

[631] *Id.* v. 10.

[632] *VR* 9B, ch. 2, v. 12.

[633] *VR* 9B, ch. 2, v. 23. To the extent that the *Vajra Rosary* should be construed as a whole, Chapter forty-four suggests that this is not meant to be taken literally; that the reference is to code words for yoginīs with various characteristics. *See* discussion in Chapter IV, *infra.*

[634] *VR* 9B, ch. 2, vv. 25-26.

[635] Because Alaṃka's version of the tantra just has "seal," *phyag rgya*, and is missing the "mother," *yum*, that is found in the Lhasa *VR*, it is unclear from the text whether the woman offered, with whom the guru makes love, is one of the women referred to above who are offered to the guru. Here, "mother" may be an indication of gender, respect, or might have been added to keep the meter in the Tibetan; it probably does not refer to the disciple's actual mother. But, unfortunately, because Alaṃka's version is missing the term, he has no explanation for it.

spirit of the guru[636] into his mouth by joining his thumb and ring finger, which engenders great bliss in the student.[637] The student mentally places the syllable HŪṂ PHAT at the tip of his penis, and shakes it, producing ecstasies. The consort, considered as the Vajra Queen, exclaims "How blissful!" and she is handed to the student. The text is quite explicit: "The yogi will not attain Buddhahood by any other means."[638]

Chapter eight describes the increasingly blissful states of ecstasy as being born in the crown chakra and dissolving in the navel chakra, although the Tantra subsequently describes in much greater detail this "reverse" generation of the ecstasies, as well as the "forward" method. Sexual yoga, "the equal union of vajra and lotus," while causing the reality of energy-wind "to be held in the central channel," through the placing of mantras at the tips of the sexual organs,[639] "bestows all bliss."[640] All of this is only to be practiced pursuant to the personal instructions of the "good guru."[641] Chapter nine concerns itself with the various levels of meaning of the vows necessary to protect the practice. The first aspect of the Tantric vow, which Alaṃka denotes as conventional, is not emitting semen, one of the connotations of "the spirit of enlightenment."[642] The yogi is warned not to

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[636] Given that this is not ordinary sexual activity, and that ejaculation is a "fault" in the practice, *VR* 91A-91B, ch. 62, vv. 25-26, this does not appear to refer to post-orgasm ejaculate, but to a substance generated prior to that. *But see VR* 80B, ch. 54, vv. 166-68; Onians 2001, 173-77.

[637] *VR* 9B, ch. 2, vv. 27-28.

[638] *VR* 10A, ch. 2, v. 32. For an extended discussion of these practices, *see* Onians 2001, 173-77. The *Secret Community Root Tantra* specifies that the yogi "should begin all yogas with the union of the two organs, for this is the unbreakable sacred law of all siddhis." Freemantle 1971, 98.

[639] Alaṃka 69B.

[640] *VR* 18B-19A, ch. 8, v. 6.

[641] *VR* 19A, ch. 9, v. 8.

[642] *VR* 19A, ch. 9, v. 1.

consort with a long list of various unworthy persons, hypocrites, nihilists, greedy monastics and so forth "even for a finger snap,"[643] and to beware childish seductive consorts, and not to reveal Tantric ritual implements or Tantric yogic practice even to the Tantric guru,[644] let alone anyone else.

Chapter forty-four, the last full chapter Alaṃka's commented upon, discusses in detail the various types of "seals," categorized in the Tantra as reality, [645] action, commitment and "Great Seal."[646] Most of the discussion has to do with the female " action seal" who is sexual consort practicing with the yogi. First, however, the Tantra discusses "outer" meaning of "seal." First is the seal of *karma*: that "because of an inconceivable collection of mutual dependencies,"[647] "through the definitive ripening of *karma* you are completely sealed." [648] Next, briefly mentioned, is the "seal of reality," which is that "all things, not having intrinsic existence, are naturally sealed."[649] The "commitment seal" is that of inseparable wisdom and compassion of the bodhisattvas, which benefits others,[650] "spontaneously manifested by the power of prayer," purifying

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[643] *VR* 19A, ch. 9, v. 5.

[644] *See* Alaṃka 72A, specifying that the guru referred to in the Tantra refers in fact to the Tantric guru bestowing the empowerment. While this seems curious, the main point here is to keep the practice secret.

[645] Tib. c*hos*.

[646] *VR* 62B, ch. 44, v. 1.

[647] Alaṃka 216A.

[648] *VR* 62B, ch. 44, v. 1.

[649] *VR* 62B, ch. 44, v. 2.

[650] *VR* 62B, ch. 44, vv. 2-3; Alaṃka 216A-B.

the Buddha field.[651] Finally, the "great seal" is "the nature of that which lacks inherent existence."[652]

Turning to the "secret" meaning, the Tantra discusses the "action seal," *i.e.* the sexual consort, who assists in "producing in the yogi serviceability towards the object of the innate."[653] The Tantric guru shows by example the conduct of the third empowerment.[654] The "reality seal" in this context is the yogi experiencing union with the consort himself, with the accompanying state of "the wisdom of that reality."[655] The "commitment seal" here refers to the Tantric consort: "He finds a woman with gentle speech, wisdom and white eyes, adorned with form and youth."[656] The "great seal" of secret meaning is the non-conceptual state of great bliss emptiness wisdom attained by the yogi as a result of practicing yoga with the Tantric consort.[657]

Like the perfections, there are six kinds of seals, as follows:

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[651] Alaṃka 216B (*smon lam gyi stobs kyis lhun gyis grub pa'i phyir ro*).

[652] *VR* 62B, ch. 44, v. 4.

[653] Alaṃka 216B (*las rung thob pa skye zhes bya ba ni lhan cig skyes pa'i yul la las su rung ba nyid bskyed pa'i phyir*).

[654] Alaṃka 217A (*ji ltar dpes mtshon mtshan nyid ni*, "the characteristic of showing exactly by example)".

[655] *VR* 62B, ch. 44, v. 6; Alaṃka 217A.

[656] *VR* 62B, ch. 44, v. 7.

[657] *VR* 62B, ch. 44, v. 9.

TABLE 6. The Seals

Seal	Mantra	Family	Called	Manifestation	Element	Taste
Low caste woman	YAṂ	Lotus	Mother-in-law	Central Channel Energy-wind	Great Space	Bland
Washer-woman	RAṂ	Jewel	Sister	Crown Chakra Channel of flowing semen	Water	Sour
Moled Woman	LAṂ	Vajra	Wife	Life-energy, Channel of Flowing Urine	Wind	Salty
Dancer	BAṂ	Action	Daughter	Body, Channel of Moving Blood	Fire	Bitter
Undertaker	AṂ	Wheel	Daughter-in-law	Evacuative energy-wind, Channel of Melting Tears (in throat chakra)	Space	Spicy
Brahmin woman	HAṂ	Vajrasattva	Mother	Portion of the Peak of Inflation Channel (in crown chakra)	Earth	Sweet[658]

To the extent that the *Vajra Rosary* is to be construed as an entirety, the nomenclature of the seals here, "wife," "sister," and "daughter" and so forth could suggest that the references in chapters two and fifty-four to offering them to the guru in connection with the second initiation was not meant to be taken literally, and that the consort who is made love to by the guru is not a close relative of the disciple, but a fellow practitioner. Alaṃka explains why the different yoginīs are given family names. For example, "'The washerwoman is called sister' because she resembles that very one, by increasing white dharma" and "'The moled woman is known as wife' because she is the

[658] *VR* 63B-64A, ch. 44, vv. 11-23. Alaṃka 218A-219B.

cause of bliss in every way causing [the yogi] to experience thatness, the antidote of all conceptualities."[659] The chapter concludes that the state of the seal "is in the sphere of the Yoginī Tantras."[660]

The second, secret, and third, wisdom-knowledge, empowerments are described in detail as the nineteenth and last of the twenty rituals described in chapter fifty-four. In the nineteenth ritual, "empowerment," the vajra master gives the disciples the four kinds of initiatory empowerments for the creation stage, starting with the vase empowerment, and then gives the perfection stage empowerments. The disciple meditates the consciousness aggregate as Akṣobhya, and the guru gives him "a crown ornament for empowerment to accomplish benefit for living beings;"[661] Ratnasambhava as the source of good qualities and gets a crown ornament of silk and flowers on his head; Amitābha and the guru places a vajra in his hand; Amoghasiddhi in the form of a sword; and the form aggregate as Vairocana and receives the name empowerment. Holding the vajra and bell, he is Vajrasattva, and receives the master empowerment. Then the guru gives the disciple a vajra name[662] and encourages them in the Bodhisattva conduct, and calls the disciple Vajrasattva. During this phase, the guru tells the disciple that he is "bestow[ing] vajra practice, the actual state of the five wisdoms, by which the eggshell of ignorance is opened."[663] The Vajra Master then gives the non-reversible empowerment

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[659] Alaṃka 218B.

[660] *VR* 64A, ch. 44, v. 25.

[661] *VR* 77B-78A, ch. 54, vv. 127-30.

[662] *VR* 79B, ch. 54, v. 149.

[663] *VR* 77B-78A, ch. 54, v. 132.

and then, visualizing the disciples as the various deities in the mandala, the great vajra empowerment.[664]

The stage is now set for the special creation stage empowerments that set the stage for perfection stage attainments: "There is nothing that cannot be done by a yogi who knows reality…practicing in the sense pleasures, knowing [everything] as illusion, a dream, things arising from relativity. As a reflection, make unequalled benefits for sentient beings!"[665] The disciple who wishes this empowerment prostrates to the guru, saying "Just as you are, Great Soul, make me like that!"[666] In a charnel ground, at midnight, with "one especially liberated by the mantric vehicle…a fortunate lady seal,"[667] the master gives the secret initiation: "Whatever conventional enlightenment spirit falling into the yoginī…the disciple, free from conceptuality, should taste."[668] The Vajra Master says: "Just as Vajradhara in the past empowered the sons of the Conqueror, so will I empower you, sons, with the liquid spirit of enlightenment spirit!"[669]

Then the disciple asks for the wisdom empowerment, "then, the great-natured guru consecrates the seal in order that the supreme be achieved. After that, he gives her

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[664] *VR* 79B, ch. 54, vv. 153-59.

[665] *VR* 80A, ch. 54, vv. 160-61.

[666] *VR* 80B, ch. 54, v. 163.

[667] *Id.,* v. 164.

[668] *VR* 80B, ch. 54, vv. 166-68. This does suggest ejaculation, as contrasted with the statement that ejaculation is a "fault" in chapter sixty-two. *VR* 91A-91B, ch. 62, vv. 25-26.

[669] *VR* 80B, ch. 54, v. 168.

to the disciple," and she "bestows limitless bliss."[670] The Tantra is very explicit about these activities.[671]

The Tantra also specifies here that without the wisdom empowerment, "not knowing the personal instruction in this, the meditation on the creation stage, rejecting this knowledge, you won't become enlightened by other methods."[672] This practice should be done in stages: "The yogi and yoginī should know it gradually."[673] After the disciple requests that the supreme state be bestowed on him and that all sentient beings attain whatever they wish.

The locus for most if not all of the sexual yogic practices is the *gaṇacakra*, described in detail in chapter sixty-two. The *gaṇacakra* is the "assembly circle" of yogis and yoginīs and the Vajra Master, where various rituals take place. This is described as "the supreme ritual…by which the supreme attainment arises…."[674] The yoginīs engaging in the practice should be equally adept in method and wisdom, and should not be more than twenty-five years old.[675] In a beautiful place, at midnight, a flower mandala is made, offerings are given, and one meditates that all things are equal: "One who finds a contradiction/ Between scripture/ And worldly things/ Should not enter."[676] The Vajra Master sits in the center of the mandala and the other yogis and yoginīs take their

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[670] *Id.* vv. 170-71.

[671] *See, e.g., VR* 80B-81A, ch. 54, vv. 173-78.

[672] *VR* 80B, ch. 54, v. 179.

[673] *Id.,* v. 180.

[674] *VR* 89B, ch. 62, v. 1.

[675] *VR* 90A, ch. 62, vv. 5-6, 10.

[676] *VR* 90A, ch. 62, vv. 7-9.

respective places in the mandala, and you relate to all of them as the mandala deities.[677] One should observe proper conduct, not talking, arguing, spitting, laughing, spreading legs and so forth, or dancing or singing.[678] Inner and outer offerings are made, and the second, secret initiation is accomplished: "You should taste/ The hero and yoginī in succession/ With the tip of [your] tongue…,"[679] as is the third, the wisdom-knowledge initiation.[680] If any "wicked dakinis" come to the *gaṇacakra*, you should welcome them, but only the Vajra Master should speak to them.[681]

While all these activities should be done by the Vajra Master, if the Vajra Master isn't present, the Vajra Assistant will do, and if there is no Vajra Assistant, anyone can preside, acting as Vajrasattva.[682] The presiding one "should summon again and again yoginīs of various types," and he might commit the fault of ejaculating.[683] At this point, if you wish to offer your "mother, sister or daughter," you should do so, at which time the guru "should…control the vajra, delighting the deities in whatever way,"[684] reiterating that he is to control release and not reach orgasm.

The balance of chapter sixty-two returns to a description, which we saw in Chapter forty-four, of the five types of yoginīs from the five Buddha clans, how they

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[677] *VR* 90A, ch. 62, v. 11.

[678] *VR* 90, ch. 62, vv. 12-13.

[679] *VR* 91A, ch. 62, v. 19.

[680] At least, that is how I am interpreting verse twenty's "In the middle of the lotus bud/ Is said to be the seat/ Of the heroes." *VR* 91A, ch. 62, v. 20.

[681] *VR* 91A, ch. 62, vv. 22-23.

[682] *VR* 91A, ch. 62, v. 24.

[683] *VR* 91A-91B, ch. 62, vv. 25-26.

[684] *VR* 91B, ch. 62, v. 27.

look, and what the proper signals and responses are. For example, the yoginī from the Amitābha clan has a face "glowing with light, round, smooth and gentle, and long-eyebrowed."[685] She shows the yogi the lotus gesture, and he responds with the tortoise.[686] Chapter sixty-three is a glossary for the secret language to be used by the yogis and yoginīs at the *gaṇacakra*. One-hundred one terms are defined, covering ritual objects, sexual yoga, impure body substances, common words such as "hungry" and "buy," caste and *jati* terms, body parts and times of day.[687]

F. Hermeneutics Within the Vajra Rosary

As an "explanatory" Tantra, the *Vajra Rosary's* general function is to expand upon the *Secret Community Root Tantra*. There are points, however, where the Tantra explicitly engages in hermeneutic analysis.

Chapter fourteen concerns the hermeneutics of sexual union in Tantric practice, illustrated by the concept of the union of vajra and lotus, which pervades all levels of Tantric practice. The Sanskrit word *vajra* (Tibetan *rdo rje*) means "vajra," and is also a common euphemism for "penis." Likewise, Sanskrit *pad ma* means "lotus flower" and can also mean "vagina." The thirteen levels of meaning set forth for vajra and lotus are as follows:

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[685] *VR* 91B, ch. 62, v. 31.

[686] *VR* 91B, ch. 62, v. 32.

[687] *VR* 92B-93B, ch. 62, vv. 3-41.

TABLE 7. Ch. 14: Vajra and Lotus

Vajra	Lotus
1. Energy-wind discerning *A*	8-petaled heart chakra
2. Energy-wind overcoming the 8 consciousnesses	The 8 conventional consciousnesses[688]
3. Compassion	Emptiness
4. Light rays of the vajra "sun" (penis)	Lotus that opens to them (vagina)
5. Enlightenment spirit (semen)	Crown chakra
6. Speech of the teacher	Listening of the student
7. Serenity (*śamata*, *zhi gnas*)	Insight (*vipassana, lhag thong*)
8. Great bliss in the mouth of the yoginī	The mouth of the student
9. *Lingam*	Yoginī's vagina
10.The 72,000 channels	The channel through which the enlightenment spirit descends
11.Vajra seat above the moon maṇḍala	Yourself as Vajradhara
12. The supreme empowerment[689]	The disciple
13. The syllable *E*	The syllable *VAM*[690]

In his commentary on this chapter, Alaṃka notes that the first four explanations above are from "having followed the *Mahāyoga* Tantra in the four modes of meaning."[691] Although he does not say which is which, following his (and the *PU*'s) Four Mode scheme, the *literal* meaning would be 2, where, for ordinary people, "the eight conventional consciousnesses… engage in the three realms;"[692] the *general* would be 3,

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[688] *VR* 26B, ch. 14, vv. 2-3. The eight conventional consciousnesses (the six sense plus the addicted and foundational) engaging in cyclic existence are overcome and united by the energy-wind vajra. *Id.*

[689] The Tibetan here, *dbang bskur*, literally "bestowing power," obviously supports the term "empowerment;" however, this is a translation of the Sanskrit *abhiṣeka*, from the root *sic*, to sprinkle in the sense of anointment. *See, e.g.* Onians 2001 at 164. I use both "initiation" and "empowerment" to describe particular initiatory rituals depending on the context, but, particularly given our sensitivity to power relationships in this context, we should be aware that "empowerment" is very much a loaded term. With that awareness, we can proceed.

[690] *VR* ch. 14, vv. 2-18.

[691] Alaṃka 102B.

[692] *VR* ch. 14, v 4.

with the doctrines of compassion and emptiness directed primarily at exoteric Buddhist, and practitioners of the lower Tantras and the creation stage; the *secret* would be 4, as Alaṃka says, "in order to teach the explanation of that with the nature of intense passion;"[693] and the *ultimate* meaning would be 1, with the vajra "discerning the letter *A*," which states Alaṃka, "is ultimate, the vajra of the aspect of emptiness."[694]

Alaṃka then explains 4-8 are the Four Modes following the *Yoginī Tantras*.[695] 5, "enlightenment spirit" and the "crown chakra," would be the *ultimate* meaning because they are the causes of the higher stages of the enlightenment process in the perfection stage; 6's "speech of the guru" and "listening of the disciple" the *literal* meaning;[696] 7's "serenity" and "insight," directed towards exoteric Buddhists, would be the *general* meaning; and 8's vajra "in the lotus face of the yoginī" and lotus as "the mouth of the disciple," references to the secret initiation, is the *secret* meaning.

The balance of the *Vajra Rosary'*s explanations of the meaning of vajra and lotus are, per Alaṃka, drawn from *both* the *Mahāyoga* and *Yoginī* Tantras, *i.e.* are common to both. Although Alaṃka doesn't state that 9-13 are concordant with the Four Modes, they certainly can be read that way: 9, the *lingam* and the yoginī's vagina constituting the *secret* meaning; 10, the channels, focusing primarily on the first of the five completion stages, vajra repetition, and 11, the seat above the moon mandala with yourself as Vajradhara, referring to the creation stage, being the *general* meaning; 12, "the supreme empowerment," "the cause of perfect reality," constituting the *ultimate* meaning, as made

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[693] Alaṃka 102A.

[694] Alaṃka 101A.

[695] Alaṃka 103B.

[696] Alaṃka 102B.

clear by Alaṃka's statement that "'perfect reality' [means] in natural clear light having the character of exact realization;"[697] and 13, the syllables *E* and *VAM* constituting the *literal* meaning, "*E* is stated as 'lotus' because the shape of the E letter is like the lotus of a goddess."[698]

In chapter forty-one of the *Vajra Rosary*, Vajradhara[699] defines and discusses the "reality realm," the *dharmadhātu*. This is defined as the unseen element pervading all things, "just as sesame oil is in a sesame seed, and just as fire is in wood."[700] It is not even seen by intelligent ordinary people "because it is covered by adventitious stains."[701] The reality realm is only seen by the meditator on the two stages who practices the yoga of emptiness wisdom, meaning "emptiness wisdom characterized by body isolation which serves as the antidote to subject and object."[702] Seen in this way "all things are explained as a *bhaga*," and the "sphere" of reality as enlightenment spirit.[703]

And in chapter forty-two, the *Vajra Rosary* again explains the term "vajra." With the nature of the five Buddha wisdoms, "it dissolves[704] into the five [main] channels," These seed syllables that produce the vajra are located according to the Tantra "in the

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[697] Alaṃka 104B.

[698] Alaṃka 104B.

[699] Called the "Vajra Lord," *bcom ldan rdo rje*, in the Tantra. *VR* 60B, ch. 41, v.1.

[700] *VR* 61A, ch. 41, v. 3.

[701] Alaṃka 210B.

[702] Alaṃka 211A (*gzung ba dang 'dzin pa'i gnyen por gyur pa'i stong pa nyid kyi ye shes lus rnam par dben pa'i mtshan nyid de*).

[703] *VR* 61A, ch. 41, v. 6. *C.f.* Steppenwolf 1968, *Born To Be Wild* ("Take the world in a love embrace, fire all of your guns at once, and explode into space.")

[704] I am following Alaṃka here, 212B; the Lhasa *VR* has *brten*, "relies on," *VR* 61B, ch. 42, v. 2, but the meaning is similar.

center of the navel lotus"[705] and according to Alaṃka "in the center of the jewel."[706] Alaṃka says that this is "in the form of a triangle within, in the shape of a vajra of eight petals" and explains that the Tantra's "located in the center," means located within the secret nose tip."[707]

Like the description of the *bhaga* in the preceding chapter, the vajra has several layers of meaning. One meaning is that of a drop of enlightenment spirit,[708] "known as the state of the commitment,[709] referring to "those who abide in the commitment because of abiding in the characteristic of the thought of equanimity regarding the outer seal [*i.e.* sexual consort].[710] Another is "formless,"[711] "because ultimately, it is nature-less, form and so forth are absurd."[712] And it is the basis of Vajrasattva[713] "because it is natural clear light, the support of Vajradhara."[714]

Chapter forty-six, only six verses in length, describes "the definitive meaning of the Great Seal." Following on and going beyond the previous chapter's description of the

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[705] *VR* 61B, ch. 42, v. 4.

[706] Alaṃka 212B.

[707] *Id.* Recalling that in chapter twenty-four the secret nose tip was described as extending from the navel chakra to the end of the central channel at the tip of the vajra or lotus, there is no conflict here. Alaṃka 166A.

[708] Alaṃka 212B-213A.

[709] *VR* 61B, ch. 42, v. 5.

[710] Alaṃka 213A (*phyi rol pa'i phyag rgya dang ro mnyam pa'i rtog pa'i mtshan nyid la gnas pas na dam tshig la gnas pa rnams so*).

[711] *VR* 61B, ch. 42, v. 5.

[712] Alaṃka 213A (*don dam par rang bzhin med pa nyid kyis* [following P. and Snar's *kyis* instead of Sde dge's *kyi*] *rnam pa la sogs pa mi 'thad pa'i phyir ro*).

[713] *VR* 61B, ch. 42, v. 7.

[714] Alaṃka 213B.

body mandala, the Great Seal is "the seal of the wisdom of the Tathāgatas," "the state of non-conceptuality."[715] Thus, "self-awaring yogis abandon the conceptual aspects of the aggregates, elements and sense media."[716] Not only that, such yogis "abandon meditation, what is meditated upon, meditative equipoise and the two stages."[717]

In chapter sixty, the completion stage teachings of the *Vajra Rosary* are analogized to the traditional Vedic *puja*, or fire offering.[718] It is the "inner nature" that "is the supreme fire offering:"[719] "a fire of the seed of instinctual consciousness, the kindling of the five aggregates and great yogic wisdom."[720] In order to make the offering, the two sexual organs unite, fanning the fire in the center of the navel chakra.[721] This "fills up with butter" *i.e.* enlightenment spirit melting from the crown chakra, with HAṂ as the "small ladle" of the *puja*, the penis as the "large ladle," and "the vagina…as the hearth."[722] Completing the analogy, "the aggregates become the sacrificial firewood;

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[715] *VR* 64B, ch. 46, v. 3.

[716] *VR* 65A, ch. 46, v. 4.

[717] *Id.,* v. 5.

[718] *See generally* Y. Bentor 2000, for an excellent discussion of the interiorization of the fire offering in India and Tibet. There, however, the focus is on the *Śri-Vajraḍāka Tantra* and commentarial works, and the *Vajra Rosary* is not mentioned. Bentor subdivides interior fire rituals into five categories: (1) based on inner heat and the subtle body; (2) offerings of great bliss performed with a consort; (3) food ritual; (4) mental; and (5) offerings of wisdom which destroy ignorance, noting that "no single Tibetan work I have consulted recounts all five of these categories in a straightforward manner." *Id*. at 596 and n. 10. Arguably, the *Vajra Rosary* presents all five, although the food ritual may be a stretch, with the sole reference to food being that "the secret lotus fills up with butter." *VR* 88A, ch. 60, v. 4.

[719] *VR* 87B, ch. 60, v. 1.

[720] *Id*., v. 2.

[721] *Id.,* v. 3.

[722] *Id.,* vv. 4-5.

the butter is explained as enlightenment spirit."[723] This internal offering satisfies the deities of the body, constituting "the unexcelled divine commitment."[724]

In chapter sixty-five, the *Vajra Rosary* associates the Three Jewels with aspects of Tantra:

TABLE 8. The Tantric Three Jewels

Buddha	Dharma	*Sangha*
Mind	Speech	Body
HŪṂ	ĀḤ	[725]
Avadhūtī	*Lalanā*	*Rasanā*
Formless Realm	Form Realm	Desire Realm
Sambhogakāya	*Dharmakāya*	*Nirmaṇakāya*
Luminance (*āloka*)	Imminence (*ālokāpalabdha*)	Radiance (*alokābhāsa*)[726]

G. The Four Ecstasies and the Four Instants

Closely related to sexual yoga are the four ecstasies, already mentioned above, and the four instants. Chapter nineteen is a very short summary of the four "instants" of sexual yoga: Variety;[727] Ripening;[728] Triumph;[729] and Beyond Characteristics.[730] Variety

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[723] *Id.,* v. 6.

[724] *Id.,* vv. 6-9.

[725] Presumably OṂ stands for the *sangha* here, but the corresponding verse doesn't appear.

[726] *VR* 95B, ch. 65, vv. 2-9.

[727] *Rnam pa sna tshogs.*

[728] *Rnam par smin.*

[729] *Rnam par 'joms.*

is the various types of kissing and foreplay; Ripening is when the bliss in the channels reaches the throat; Triumph is "innate" or "orgasmic"[731] wisdom, with "the character of a vajra rosary, the formless instant, complete manifest enlightenment;" and Beyond Characteristics is "the formless instant, complete manifest enlightenment, surpassing the semen that emerges from the channels."[732] The chapter ends with the statement that "the four wisdoms and the four emptinesses are realized from the four instants."[733] Because he notes that the next chapter addresses these same topics, Alaṃka has little to say about this chapter.[734]

Chapter twenty focuses on an analysis of the four ecstasies, "not clearly expressed in other Tantras,"[735] in the forward and reverse order, and here we also have a more detailed description of the four instants. The four ecstasies are: Ecstasy;[736] Supreme Ecstasy;[737] Transcendent Ecstasy;[738] and Innate Ecstasy.[739] In the "reverse method,"

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[730] *Mtshan nyid bral.*

[731] Tib. *lhan cig skyes pa* or Skt. *sahaja* mean "born together," therefore "innate" or, in the sexual context, where the two organs are together, "orgasmic."

[732] *VR* 36B-37A, ch. 19, vv. 3-6.

[733] *VR* 37A, ch. 19, v. 7.

[734] Alaṃka 136A. Tsong kha pa notes that the demarcation between chapters 19 and 20 differs in the various translations of the *Vajra Rosary*. Tsong kha pa 2010, 62.

[735] *VR* 38A, ch. 20, v. 17.

[736] Tib. *dga'*; Skt. *ānanda.*

[737] Tib. *mchog tu dga'*; Skt. *paramānanda.*

[738] Tib. *dga' bral*, lit. "free from ecstasy"; Skt. *viramānanda*, lit. "the end of ecstasy" or "cessation of ecstasy."

[739] Tib. *lhan cig skyes pa dga'*, Skt. *sahajānanda*. Explaining these, Alaṃka quotes the *Hevajra Tantra*: "Slight bliss is Ecstasy/ Supreme Ecstasy is more than that/ Transcendent Ecstasy is free from passion/ The fourth is free from these." Alaṃka 136B.

Ecstasy is located in the navel chakra; Supreme Ecstasy in the heart; Transcendent Ecstasy in the throat; and Innate or Orgasmic Ecstasy in the crown chakra. Alaṃka explains that this starts with the support of the letter A in the navel chakra, and ends with the innate in the crown chakra "because in it there is the indestructible shape of the syllable HA."[740] In the forward method, these are the other way round, with Ecstasy starting in the crown chakra with the melting of the enlightenment spirit there by the wisdom fire,[741] and the more intense ecstasies experienced in the throat, heart and navel chakras, respectively.[742]

Then the four instants are described in somewhat greater detail and correlated with the four ecstasies, all in the context of the "reverse" method. Variety is the experience of "looking, attracting…and kissing on the mouth,"[743] and causes Ecstasy. "Ripening" is (all in the context of sexual yoga) when the two organs meet and cause the fire in the navel chakra (*tummo*) to melt the enlightenment spirit in the crown chakra, overcoming conceptuality and giving rise to Supreme Ecstasy[744] and being the cause a little later of Innate or Orgasmic Ecstasy.[745] It is centered in the heart chakra.[746] The

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[740] Alaṃka 137A.

[741] Alaṃka 137A.

[742] *VR* 37A-B, ch. 20, vv. 3-4. Alaṃka specifies in more detail the places where the ecstasies are experienced: Ecstasy is felt in the crown chakra meaning "the thirty-two petals at the endpoint of the wind chakra," Supreme Ecstasy in the throat chakra meaning "to the endpoint of the fire chakra," and Innate Ecstasy from the navel chakra to the secret place, 137A-B, which should be experienced by "meditation on actual orgasm" (*don gyi lhan cig skyes pa bsgoms pas*) "through the force of the personal instructions of the guru." 137B.

[743] *VR* 37B, ch. 20, v. 5.

[744] *VR* 37B, ch. 20, vv. 6-7. Alaṃka also mentions "tugging hair" here. 137B.

[745] Alaṃka 137B-138A.

[746] *VR* 37B, ch. 20, v. 12.

instant of Overcoming is identified with the throat chakra and Transcendent Ecstasy, where the entire central channel is experienced as undifferentiated, as the enlightenment spirit falls straight down from the crown, unimpeded.[747] The instant Free From or Beyond Characteristics, associated with Innate Ecstasy, is the "peaceful state of great bliss,"[748] explained by Alaṃka as "Free from the characteristics of the three other [ecstasies], abandoning passion and dispassion."[749]

The Tantra then explains the "forward" method, stating that after the practices of the energy-winds explained in chapter twelve, the rising stream up the chakras, from the navel to the crown chakra, is the cause of achievement of the yogi. In this method, Ecstasy and Variety are associated with the navel chakra; Supreme Ecstasy and Ripening with the heart chakra, which is also stated to be "the supreme basis of all emptiness accomplished by the yogi;"[750] Transcendent Ecstasy and Overcoming with the throat chakra; and Innate Ecstasy and the instant Free From Characteristics with the crown chakra.

As described in detail in chapter twenty-seven, yoginī deities sit within the channels.[751] By arousing them through sexual yoga, retaining enlightenment spirit, one

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[747] *VR* 37B, ch. 20, v. 8; Alaṃka 138A.

[748] *VR* 37B, ch. 20, v. 9.

[749] Alaṃka 138A. Alaṃka appears to be quoting the *Mandala Ritual of the Arising of Glorious Heruka*, *dpal he ru ka 'byung ba shes bya ba'i dkyil 'khor gyi cho ga*; *śrī-herukabhūta-nāma-maṇḍalavidhi*, Toh. 1261, 323A, although this quote appears in a number of texts.

[750] *VR* 37B, ch. 20, v. 12.

[751] Either of the three main channels, center, left and right, following the Lhasa *Vajra Rosary*, 38A, ch. 20, v. 15, or the chakra channels of the four or six main chakras, following Alaṃka's version of the Tantra. Alaṃka 139A. I am following Alaṃka here, instead of the Lhasa *Vajra Rosary*'s "sixteen thousand." Alaṃka 139B. The "sixteen emptinesses are described in chapter forty-nine of the *Vajra Rosary, infra.*

experiences the instant of Free from Characteristics, and a great awakening with the nature of the sixteen emptinesses.[752]

H. Secrecy

The meaning of the *Vajra Rosary* "should not be revealed in any way:/ That is as well known/ As breathing.//"[753] Tantric practice or aspects of it are described as "the supreme secret reality," "hid[den] in the Tantras,"[754] "the supreme secret."[755] Disciples are admonished not to reveal Tantric ritual implements to those who have not promised to adhere to the commitments of Tantric practice, and not to disclose the activities of Tantric yogic practice to monks remaining "in the vow," presumably that of celibacy, or even to the Tantric guru,[756] let alone anyone else.[757] And one who reveals personal instructions to unsuitable disciples "will go to Howling Hell in this very life!"[758]

Concrete expression of how this concealed knowledge was intended to remain secret is seen in the instruction regarding the crucial mantras for vajra repetition, HŪṂ HO and OṂ ĀḤ HŪṂ, which are not explicitly stated in the Tantra, but, rather, are elliptically described in terms of Sanskrit grammar. For example, OṂ is described as

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[752] *VR* 38A, ch. 20, v. 16. Professor Thurman notes that this can be interpreted to be the significance of the "sixteen year-old girl" referred to in chapter two, above. Personal Communication, November 28, 2006.

[753] *VR* 10B, ch. 3, v. 6.

[754] *VR* 16B, ch. 6, v. 40.

[755] *VR* 19A, ch. 8, v. 8.

[756] *See* Alaṃka 72A, specifying that the guru referred to in the Tantra refers in fact to the Tantric guru bestowing the empowerment. While this seems curious, the main point here is to keep the practice secret.

[757] *VR* 19B, ch. 9, vv. 8-9.

[758] *VR* 20A, ch. 9, v. 17.

follows: “First, write the first letter,[759]/ Having the fifth vowel,[760]/ Having the last part/ Of the last one of the group.[761]/ It is expressed/ As the seed of the body.”[762]

I. The Taxonomy of the Energy-Winds and Conceptualities

The energy-winds are explained by Alaṃka to consist of the ten better-known root and branch energy-winds, nine of which (minus the life energy energy-wind) are found in each of the six chakras, making fifty-four, moving both in the day and night, [763] resulting in one-hundred eight.[764] Adding the life energy energy-wind would make “more than one-hundred eight.”[765] The *Vajra Rosary*, however, gives these energy-winds rather colloquial names, describing how the energy-winds grasp objects,[766] beginning with “Sending and Grasping, One Hundred Million, Intoxicating, Stupid, Cooling, Itching, Mucus, Axe,” and so forth. Since we only have the Tibetan for these names of energy-winds, the task of comparison is made difficult. Back-translating into Sanskrit, however, yields some insight. For example, Alaṃka comments that “The ‘One-Hundred Million [Tib. *dung phyur*] [Energy-wind]’ is supported by the Extreme Power Channel.

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[759] *I.e. "a."*

[760] *I.e.* "*u,*" so "*au,"* equivalent to *"o."*

[761] *I.e. anusvāra*, making "*OṂ*."

[762] *VR* 29A, ch. 15, v. 25.

[763] *VR* 11B, ch. 3 vv. 24-25.

[764] *VR* 12B, ch. 3 v. 37.

[765] *VR* 10B, ch. 3 v. 8.

[766] *See Abhidharmakhośa* Ch. 2, v. 33: “Pride, Inflating, Expanding are [how] they are attracted to their own phenomena, [how] they touch the mind.” *Nga rgyal khengs pa rgyags pa ni/ rang gi chos la chags pa yi/ sems ni yongs su gtugs pa’o***.**

'Realized by A and RA,' [it is called] One Hundred Million; the two winds are the Evacuative Wind."[767] This seems rather strange unless one realizes that "realized by A and RA" could be rendered in Sanskrit as *arbuda* (*/bud* being an alternate root for */budh* and */bund*, meaning known or realized), and that *arbuda* is also Sanskrit for "One-Hundred Million."[768] There are other instances of this phenomenon, illustrated in the notes to the translation.[769]

As explained in more detail in the *CMP*, meditation on the energy-winds is the preparatory stage of the first of Nāgārjuna's five stages, vajra repetition. In accordance with the well-known notion that the subtle body energy-winds are the mounts of the subtle-mind conceptualities, chapter three concludes with the naming of the one hundred eight conceptualities. This appears to be at variance with the usual count of 80 instincts well known in the literature.[770]

J. Overcoming the Conceptual Energy-Winds

Since conceptuality rides on the mount of the energy-winds, and conceptuality must be overcome on the path to Buddhahood, the *Vajra Rosary* discusses how and why

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[767] Alaṃka 45A (*Dung phyur zhes bya ba ni shin tu shugs kyi rtsa la brten nas a dang ra* [per Peking and Snar thang; Sde dge has *ri*] *dag gis rtogs pa zhes bya ba ni dung phyur te*).

[768] Jayabhadra, writing in the ninth century, discussing the etymology of *rahasyam*, "secret," notes that "*Ra* is said to mean 'penis,' and the syllable *ha,* 'vulva'." Gray 2005, 440.

[769] I am pursuing further research on the names of the energy-winds in an attempt to identify whether they are so called in other systems. The energy-winds' colloquial rather than technical names, with the incorporation of various puns and so forth suggests a mnemonic device, which may make sense if this tradition was primarily oral.

[770] Interestingly, the Tibetan rendering of the Sanskrit quotes from the *VR* of Alaṃka's *Commentary* differs from that of the *Vajra Rosary* text, Alaṃka's Commentary's wording suggesting the translation of the Tibetan *rang bzhin* was of the Sanskrit *prakṛti*, "instinct," as contrasted with the less technical translation of *rang bzhin* as "nature." The Lhasa *Vajra Rosary* has *rlung gi rang bzhin rgyu ba yin*, 12B, while Alaṃka has *rang bzhin rlung gi mtshan nyid yin*. 52B.

these energy-winds should be overcome. Much of this discussion is in the context of the practice of vajra repetition, and that will not be repeated here.

Commenting on chapter thirty-five, Alaṃka says that the energy-winds to be eliminated are "conceptual," "in that they are conceptualities of desire and so forth produced by the force of the energy-winds.[771] As the Tantra itself says, "Those energy-winds *are* conceptuality."[772] Practicing this yoga, "you make everything the essence of emptiness,"[773] "because it serves as the cause of the reality of natural clear light through the force of meditating the two stages."[774]

The conceptual energy-winds having been eliminated, chapter thirty-six discusses the rising of the "great energy-wind of non-conceptuality,"[775] "formless energy-wind,"[776] "the cause of perceiving directly the reality of a form of supremely natural clear light,"[777] which is the cause of Vajrasattva, which is who one becomes on the last of the five stages of the completion stage, integration.[778] Once the conceptual energy-winds are abandoned, "you abandon all duality," precisely because you are free of those energy-winds.[779] With the arising of this non-conceptual energy-wind, you are free from all of

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[771] Alaṃka 198A.

[772] *VR* 57A, ch. 35, v. 2.

[773] *Id*.

[774] Alaṃka 198A.

[775] *VR* 57B-58A, ch. 36, v. 2.

[776] Alaṃka 200B.

[777] *Id.*

[778] *Id.*

[779] *Id.*

the channel knots,[780] and you are free from drops of enlightenment spirit and the sound that occurs when the enlightenment spirit falls.[781]

In chapter thirty nine, the Tantra teaches that the abode of the Life-energy energy-wind is, contrary to what may be thought in the world, in the secret anus, the energy center between the perineum and the tip of the penis, or, as Alaṃka notes, the womb or womb channel.[782] The energy of this center is inherently non-conceptual, and is the original energy in the production of living beings, generating consciousness in process leading to birth, "fainting"[783] in the move from clear light to the other empties, then to the production of the elements, aggregates, sense media, instinctual natures and so forth.[784]

K. Engagement of the Senses in the Tantric Way

Chapter nine discusses how the yogi's sense powers "enter and completely fill the [sense] objects." Alaṃka explains that this is actually a form of withholding engagement of the ordinary sense powers because here the movement is by the bodhisattva, for example Kṣitigarbha for the eye sense power, towards the sense goddess, here Rūpavajrā and so forth.[785] Thus, contrary to non-Tantric vows, such as found in the *vinaya*, the *Vajra Rosary* emphasizes the vow of engagement with sense objects. But this is no

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[780] Alaṃka 201A.

[781] Alaṃka 201B.

[782] Alaṃka 117A.

[783] Alaṃka 117B.

[784] The role of the energy-winds in the birth process is discussed in greater detail in *VR* Chapter thirty-two, and in the dissolution or death process in Chapter thirty-three.

[785] Alaṃka 70B.

ordinary engagement. Rather, the yogi engages them "in empty, non-dual illusion, by the bliss experienced in the wisdom-knowledge empowerment."[786]

L. Emptiness in the Vajra Rosary Yogic System

The word, "emptiness" is used one hundred twelve times in the Tantra. It is the principal subject of chapters five, twenty-five, forty-nine and fifty, but is referenced throughout the Tantra.

The subject of chapter five is the nature of emptiness and its connection with the yoga of the *Vajra Rosary*. In a word, the understanding of emptiness is indispensable to the yogic path charted by the *Vajra Rosary*, and, at the same time, is its ultimate goal.[787] Chapter five's presentation of emptiness stresses the selfless nature of persons and things, and "has left behind the reifications of self, life, reincarnations, humanoids, *Manu, Manuja*, agent, experiencer, knower and creator."[788]

Because the *Vajra Rosary* predates some of the finer distinctions later drawn among Buddhist tenet systems, one can find elements of *Yogacāra* idealism mentioned later in the text, such as the "foundational consciousness" or *ālayavijñāna*, along with *Madhyamaka* or centrist philosophy, including many elements of what is now regarded generally as the "highest" system, *Prasaṅgika Madhyamaka* or Dialectical Centrism. For example, in chapter five, Buddha notes that while emptiness is "free from the context of expressing and expressed, mere names alone are also wonderful self-arising wisdom,"

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[786] *VR* 19B, ch. 9, v. 10.

[787] Although chapter one of Alaṃka's *Commentary* discusses the second question of chapter one, "What is emptiness," in the much longer and detailed word commentary section it omits the Tantra's chapter five, and resumes in the middle of chapter six. Alaṃka 23A.

[788] *VR* 13B, ch. 5, v. 10.

and adds that "I am teaching [reality] as conventional expression."[789] The notion of conventional reality being purely nominal is a hallmark of *Madhyamaka*. On the other hand, great bliss, which the Tantra equates with emptiness, "is explained as introspectively known (*rang rig pa*)."[790] The self-awareness of consciousness, a prime feature of *rdzogs chen* and *Yogācāra-Svātantrika* thought, is rejected by the Madhyamakas. [791]

Emptiness is not described in a vacuum, but in order to link it to and stress its importance in the practices of the perfection stage yoga described, beginning with the statement that "only through yoga do you realize that suchness and non-conceptuality, the unique selfless nature of the self of person and things, emptiness and self-awareness are always present in the nature of everything."[792]

In chapter twenty-five, the Tantra explains "the words of emptiness," referring to "the characteristic of emptiness-wisdom,"[793] probably a reference to *śunyatā jñāna*, "emptiness-wisdom," from the mantra *oṃ śunyatā jñāna vajra svabhāva atmako ham*[794] found in Chapter 3 of the *Root Tantra* and in the various *Guhyasamāja* prayers and practices performed to the present day. Here, it is specified at the outset that emptiness-wisdom abides "in the body, always remaining as the nature of everything."[795]

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[789] *VR* 14A, ch. 5, v. 12.

[790] *VR* 25A, ch. 13, v. 13.

[791] *See* Williams 2000, *xiii*.

[792] *VR* 13B, ch. 5, v. 2.

[793] *VR 47B*, ch. 25, v. 1.

[794] OṂ, emptiness-wisdom, of the nature of vajra, that is me!

[795] *VR* 47B, ch. 25, v. 1.

"Emptiness" is "the characteristic illuminating all things,"[796] the "true reality."[797] This applies to everything, even to the key event of the non-conceptual energy-winds entering the central channel;[798] indeed, "emptiness is the actuality of the central channel," and of Akṣobhya, who abides there, "the actuality of the energy-wind of clear light."[799] The other part of "emptiness-wisdom," "wisdom," is "great bliss, filled with enlightenment spirit."[800] The Buddha-field of emptiness is Sukhāvatī and the Buddha field of bliss is Amitayus; emptiness is Vajradhātvīśvarī and wisdom Vajradhara; the left main channel, *lalanā* is emptiness and right, *rasanā*, is wisdom.[801] The union of these is the last of the five stages, integration.[802]

Chapter forty-nine contains an extensive discussion of emptiness. The yogi who knows the formulation of the sixteen[803] emptinesses, the main subject of this chapter, "will know emptiness."[804] Emptiness is "the inner nature of all things, the antidote to conceptuality and the purification of wrong view."[805] The sixteen divisions of emptiness

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[796] *VR* 47B, ch. 25, v. 2.

[797] Alaṃka 171B.

[798] Alaṃka 171B.

[799] Alaṃka 172A.

[800] *VR* 47B, ch. 25, v. 5.

[801] *VR* 47B-48A, ch. 25, vv. 7-10; Alaṃka 172B-173B.

[802] Alaṃka 173A.

[803] Dolpopa, quoting the *Vajra Rosary*, discusses eighteen emptinesses, but, unfortunately, doesn't explain how. Dolpopa 2006, 346. Alaṃka, in the word commentary on *Vajra Rosary* chapter thirty-six, does refer to eighteen emptinesses. Alaṃka 201B.

[804] *VR* 66B, ch. 49, v. 1.

[805] *VR* 66B, ch. 49, v. 2.

here is almost identical to that found in Candrakīrti's *Introduction to the Middle Way*:[806]

In sum,[807]

TABLE 9. Emptiness

VR Emptiness Type[808]	*VR* Description	Chandra Emptiness Type[809]
1. Outer	Free from focusing on outer objects	2. Outer
2. Inner	Without "outer," no conception of "inner"	1. Inner
3. Inner and outer		3. Inner and outer
4. Great	Being free from the habitat world	5. Immensity
5. Wisdom by which one sees things as empty	Later causes contemplation in perfect mirror wisdom	14. (?) Of defining attributes
6. Emptiness of the emptiness of non-things	The opposite of *VR* (4),	4. Emptiness of emptiness
7. Ultimate	Knowing in the ultimate a false thing	6. Emptiness of the ultimate (*i.e.* of nirvana)

[806] In this respect, the *Vajra Rosary* seems to contradict David Snellgrove's assertion that in the "earlier period," the *Prasaṅgika* school "seems to be scarcely known," Snellgrove 2002, 439, although whether this is true depends on when this particular portion of the *Vajra Rosary* appeared. *See* discussion at chapter II, C, 3, *supra.*

[807] Comparing *VR* 66B-67B, ch. 49, vv. 2-13, with Candrakīrti 2002, 93-96, 314-23 (Mipham's Commentary), ch. VI, vv. 180-201. Like the *Large Sutra on the Perfection of Wisdom, see* E. Conze 1975, 14-48, Candrakīrti lists twenty emptinesses, explaining that four, which appear to be the last four, were used by Buddha in summarizing when speaking in brief. Candrakīrti 2002, 93, v. 180.

[808] *VR* 66B-67B, ch. 49, vv. 3-13.

[809] Candrakīrti 2002, 93-96; Candrakīrti 1988, 284-315. Translations of the types of Chandra's emptinesses are taken from Candrakīrti 2002.

8. Compounded[810]	Engaging in the character of one's own conceptuality	7. Compounded
9. Uncompounded	Abandoning thing and no-thing	8. Uncompounded
10. Extreme[811]	Prayer for the benefit of sentient beings not perceived as joyful for one's self	15. Of the unobservable
11. Beyond extremes	Abandoning conceptuality	9. Beyond extremes (beyond extreme positions)
12. Lacking beginning and end	Prayer for worldly beings	10. Beginningless and endless
13. Without rejection	The self naturally purified of the stain of passion	11. Of what should not be spurned
14. Of self-identity	The marks and signs of his form body	12. Of essential nature
15. Of all things	Emptiness of the wings of enlightenment, lacking arrogance in practice	13. Of all phenomena
16. Of no-thing	The very non-perception of emptiness, a non-thing is emptiness	16. Of non-things

The reason "you analyze emptiness" is "because it is the antidote to the instincts."[812]

Chapter fifty rather cryptic, continues focusing on the importance of emptiness, "pervading the six chakras because it dwells in the center of all things."[813] "Inseparable

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[810] *'dus byas stong pa nyid. VR* 67A, ch. 49, v. 6.

[811] *shin tu stong pa nyid. VR* 67A, ch. 49, v. 7.

[812] *VR* 67B, ch. 49, v. 14.

[813] *VR* 67B, ch. 50, v. 2.

from the conventional, emptiness is the ultimate."[814] The Tantra explains that "the Vajra Rosary is like that," reflecting the title of the chapter: "The Characteristic of Producing the Vajra Rosary of Emptiness." With this foundation, the Tantra describes "the support of life-energy" as "a blue body, three faces, three eyes and six excellent arms,"[815] *i.e.* Akṣobhya, the central figure of the *Ārya Guhyasamāja* mandala, arising from HŪṂ and the vajra family. "He dissolves the energy-winds that produce conceptuality, clears away the harmful ones, eliminating all duality," resulting in "great illusion, great emptiness, the marvelous ground of the Buddha."[816]

M. Great Bliss and Its Relation to Emptiness

"Great bliss," used ninety-two times in the Tantra, is a form of psychophysical ecstasy that is both a cause and byproduct of perfection stage yogic practices, and of enlightenment itself. Great bliss is what was experienced by the Vajra Queens in whose vaginas Buddha resided at the outset of the Tantra, what overcame the bodhisattvas as they listened to Buddha at the outset of the Tantra. At one level of Tantric hermeneutic, great bliss is referred to as the "state of Vajrasattva," *sattva*, hero, referring to the holding of conventional enlightenment spirit at the tip of the *vajra* during sexual yoga.[817] At another level, great bliss also refers to the abandoning of dualities of all kinds, manifesting the state of emptiness. Of course, these two levels are intimately connected because great bliss overcomes conceptuality, enabling the yogi to realize emptiness.

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[814] *Id.*

[815] *Id* v. 3.

[816] *VR* 68A, ch. 50, vv. 5-6.

[817] Alaṃka 93B, 96A.

Thus, in chapter thirteen, entitled "Great Bliss," it is described as intimately connected with, and in fact as *being* emptiness, realizing the promise of the Heart Sutra's "Form is emptiness; emptiness is form":[818] "Emptiness, great emptiness,/ Extraordinary emptiness,/ Supreme of supreme,/ The abode of emptiness/ And other-emptiness,/ It is of the nature/ Of the five skies."[819] This empty great bliss "enters into every pleasure."[820] At the higher of the five stages, great bliss "'liberates from all addiction' because, after the attainment of clear light mind, it avoids the conception of the aggregates [that may arise from] the illusory body. 'It enters into every pleasure' because, through the cause of natural clear light, manifest enlightenment having the nature of outer and inner, it attains completely."[821] It is the stream that flows through the five major energy channels of the subtle body,[822] and manifests in each of the three bodies of a Buddha.[823] The discussion in chapter thirteen concludes with the clear statement that great bliss is achieved "only through yoga," and not through outer methods, even by the creation stage

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[818] Indeed, the current fourteenth Dalai Lama's book on the *bla ma mchod pa* prayer, based in large part on the *Vajra Rosary*, is entitled *The Union of Bliss and Emptiness*. T. Gyatso 1988.

[819] *VR* 25A, ch. 13, v. 6.

[820] *VR* 25A, ch. 13, v. 5.

[821] However, unlike later interpretations of Centrist philosophy, great bliss is "self-cognizing." Alaṃka 95A commenting on *VR* 25A.

[822] Alaṃka 94B.

[823] "Having the nature of the five vajra wisdoms" refers to the truth body, *dharmakāya*; "having the nature of the five Buddhas" to the enjoyment or beatific body, *sambhogakāya*; and "the stream falling from the five channels" to the emanation body, *nirmaṇakāya*. Alaṃka 94B commenting on *VR* 25A.

of Tantra,[824] meaning, according to Alaṃka, it is to be achieved "by the nature of concentration having the characteristic of method and wisdom."[825]

N. The Yoga of Vajra Repetition and Opening the Heart Knot

Vajra repetition is the yogic technique that leads to the first of the five stages, speech isolation. The *Vajra Rosary* is regarded by many in the tradition as being the ur-text on this subject. The subject of the sixth chapter is the yoga of energy-wind and mantra, specifically the opening of the three-fold knot in the center of the heart chakra through the practice of the two-syllable mantra, HŪṂ HO, taking the name of "sound" and "drop" and located in the heart and center of the eyebrows respectively.[826] If this mantra is repeated for six months under the proper circumstances, the *Vajra Rosary* states, the yogi will open the heart drop and, without doubt, achieve the supreme state.

Above the knot is the Life-energy energy-wind, and below the Evacuative energy-wind. When the knot is constricted, the Life-energy energy-wind moves in the heart center in the form of the five main energy-winds[827] in the five channels of the heart chakra. [828] When that energy meets the navel knot, it moves in five channels there,[829] and

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[824] *VR* 26A, ch. 13, v. 26.

[825] Alaṃka 100A.

[826] According to Alaṃka, HŪṂ is the Life-energy energy-wind, and HO the Evacuative energy-wind 61B (*srog dang thur sel gyi slung gnyis HŪṂ HO*). Alaṃka explains that HŪṂ is to be meditated in the center of the heart knot and HO in the center of the eyebrows. 60A. Personal instructions are key here, as stressed in the *Vajra Rosary*, Alaṃka's *Commentary*, and Buddhist Tantric teachings in general.

[827] Life-energy, Evacuative, Upward, Pervading and Equalizing. For a description of these "root" winds, see K. Gyatso 2002, 26-7.

[828] Inflated, Developed, Crazy, Drinking and Friend. Lati Rinpoche writes:

> Initially, five channels of the heart form simultaneously - the central, right and left channels as well as the Triple Circle of the east [front] and the Desirous One of the south [right].

the five "branch" energy-winds[830] move out from there in the lower part of the body. When the channels of the navel, then heart, and then throat chakras are agitated by the energy-winds, a person produces great ignorance, hatred and lust, respectively. When the channels of the crown chakra are agitated, all of the channels fill with enlightenment spirit. Then when the conceptualities corresponding with the various energy-winds overcome the Life-energy energy-wind at the heart center, the energy-winds go down into the tip of the vajra, facing downwards. But rather than going downwards, the navel chakra energy-winds of ignorance mix with those of the heart chakra characterized by attachment, and, in a kind of Tantric version of the twelve links of dependent arising, produce consciousness and the sense powers, leading to a strengthening of the instinct associated with conception, leading to repeated rebirth in cyclic existence.[831]

The only way to overcome this karmic process is to open the heart center through meditational effort, merging the Life-energy and Evacuative energy-winds in the heart

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> The channel-wheel at the heart is composed of the central, right and left channels, around which are eight petals or spokes - four at the cardinal directions and four at the intermediate directions.
>
> After that, three channels form simultaneously - the Free of Knots channel that abides with [and behind] the central channel, the Household One of the west [back], and the Fiery One of the north [left]. These are called the eight channels that initially form at the heart [not to be confused with the eight channel-petals of the heart].

Lati Rinpoche and Denma Löcho Rinpoche 1979, 64.

[829] Crescent Moon, Mole [on the body], Serving, Dewlap and Liver.

[830] *Naga, Kurma* [Tortoise], *Kṛkalasa* [Lizard], *Devadatta* and *Dhanujit*.

[831] Alaṃka's *Commentary* resumes at this point, so, at least in the Sde dge and Snar thang recensions consulted, there is no commentary on chapter six up to here.

center's indestructible drop,[832] leading to the five wisdoms and the five clairvoyances, and mundane and transmundane attainments. This method, says the *Vajra Rosary*, is the only one: only "the reality of mantra"[833] and not ritual, activities, negation, the ecstasies or even meditation leads to Buddhahood.

The *Vajra Rosary* describes just how to do this, in an isolated place, in the proper posture, prefaced with the warning that nothing will be accomplished without personal instructions from the guru. Using the various groups of Sanskrit vowels and consonants, the Vajrin elliptically describes the mantra HŪṂ HO in such a way that one not versed in Sanskrit would be unable to figure out the mantra. Combining these sounds with inhalation and exhalation, "reducing effort little by little,"[834] leads to the opening of the heart knot.[835] Tsong kha pa says of this point:

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[832] *See* Tsong kha pa 2010, 310-325. Tsong kha pa says, referring to the *Vajra Rosary,* "Here, what is not clearly stated in any other Tantra, the extremely secret point, is this yoga of opening the channel-knot of the heart center by the vajra recitation." *Id.*, 313.

[833] *VR* 16A, ch. 6, v. 27.

[834] *VR* 17B, ch. 6, v. 49.

[835] Tsong kha pa states:

> Thus, the *Vajra Rosary Sixth Chapter* expresses the need for opening the heart center channel knot, that, if you open that with the reality of mantra, you will achieve the superknowledges of sword and pill, etc., and the Great Seal accomplishment, that the reality of mantra is the repetition combining HUM and HO with inhalation and exhalation, and that if you practice it for six months, you will certainly achieve (accomplishments).
>
> Here, you might wonder, "Well, is it the teaching of reality that the vajra repetition of the two syllables opens the channel knot? Or is it the vajra repetition of the three syllables?"…Therefore both the two-letter and three-letter vajra repetition are undoubtedly intended by the *(Vajra Rosary) Tantra* to open the channel knot.
>
> As for how to open it, from the same text:
>
> Having named the sound (HUM) and the drop (HO),
> By opening with the two winds
> You cause the opening of the ignorance-knot.

> [It is] the point which is greatest secret of secrets, hidden within other Tantras. So [while I] explain this, you should listen. Within all three of those [the heart, throat and crown chakras], the definitive meaning *HŪṂ* syllable, the seed of the heart, is the master merger within the *dhūti* channel [central chamber] of the released heart channel-knot. Why? The release of the heart channel knot is the freedom from mental constructions. It is the supreme of causes of cutting off [the instinctual constructs]; because, unless you hold the wind-energies there without moving, those wind-energies become the chief thing that moves the constructs to obscure and deprive [you of accomplishments].[836]

This can be achieved in six months' constant practice.[837]

Chapter twelve sets forth a more detailed explanation of the *Vajra Rosary*'s system of practice of vajra repetition, which may in fact be the most detailed explanation of this crucial part of the perfection stage found in any Tantra. In his discussion of vajra repetition in his *BIL*, one of a handful of texts part of today's Tantric college curriculum, Tsong kha pa relies most heavily on the *Vajra Rosary* in his discussion of that subject.[838]

> For example, just as when the chamber of a bamboo is blocked, putting a long spoon in there and pulling it in and out opens it up, the inhalation and exhalation of the wind also opens up (the knot) like that.
>
> The same (text) states:
>
> The being who is lacking the A HAM,
> Is like a tree whose root is cut.
>
> If you lack the knowledge of the definitive meaning of A HAM, it is like having the root (of your practice) cut off. (It continues):
>
> A is explained as the Life-energy energy-wind,
> And likewise the evacuative wind is said to be HAM.
> As for those two becoming one,
> That is renowned as A HAM.
>
> That is what is stated [in the *Vajra Rosary*]. This method merges the vitalizing and evacuative winds in the home of the heart center indestructible.

Tsong kha pa 2010, 315-17 (footnotes and page references omitted).

[836] Tsong kha pa 2010, 320-21.

[837] *VR* 17A, ch. 6, v. 45.

[838] Denma Löcho Rinpoche told me several times that inasmuch as the *Vajra Rosary* is not part of the Tantric college curriculum, it is not studied and that I should therefore stick closely to its text. Personal

Alaṃka notes, quoting the *Śrī-Herukābhyudaya-nāma*,[839] that the practice of mantra (*e.g.* as briefly discussed in chapter eleven) must be mastered before taking on the reality of the energy-winds, consisting mainly of "meditat[ing] on the five or ten kinds of energy-winds and … causing [them] to be identified precisely."[840] The chapter begins with a discussion of necessity of knowing the three main drops[841] which are the subject of perfection stage meditative concentration, and concentrates thereafter on the light ray drop, also known as the "wind drop," located at the tip of the conventional nose. This drop should be meditated as having the size of a mustard seed, and serves as the cause of clear light speech.[842] In it are compressed the five types of energy-wind, which have the nature of the five Buddhas and corresponding colors and elements, summarized by Alaṃka:

Communications 10-7-08 and 7-18-09. Apparently though, as late as the 14th century, initiations into the *Vajra Rosary* were still being given. Roerich 1978, 320.

[839] Toh. 374, 13B.

[840] Alaṃka 83B. As noted in the discussion of chapter three, above, there is an open issue as to whether the one-hundred eight energy-winds are composed of variants of the 4 main (excluding the Pervading energy-wind) and five branch energy-winds.

[841] "Drop," Tib. *thig le*, Skt. *citra* (the first definition given by Lokesh Chandra for *thig le*) is etymologized by Alaṃka as follows: "Energy-wind drop" and so forth, because of having [Skt. *ra*] the state of knowing [Skt. *cit*], [it is] a drop [Skt. *citra*]. 83B.

[842] Alaṃka 84A.

TABLE 10. The Five Main Energy-winds

Energy-Wind	Buddha	Color	Element	Aggregate	Wisdom
Life-Energy	Akṣobhya	Black	Water	Consciousness	Dharma Sphere
Evacuative	Ratnasambhava	Yellow	Space	Sensation	Equalizing
Ascending	Amitābha	Red	Fire	Motivation	Discriminative
Equalizing	Karmavajradhara[843]	Green	Wind	Perception	Accomplishing
Pervading	Vairocana	White	Earth	Matter	Mirror-like[844]

The energy-winds should be conceptually counted in accord with 21,600 breaths per day, in eight meditation sessions, four in the day and four at night, divided among the various energy-winds/Buddhas and the four chakras.[845] This is done initially for twenty-seven days. The process is then reversed, so the conceptualities that ride on the energy-winds are eliminated, and only the energy-winds remain. The Tantra describes how the various correspondences between energy-wind, Buddha, wisdom and so forth are put into practice, and Alaṃka expands upon the description. Alaṃka explains that, "You should know the five types of energy-wind as manifest enlightenment in five aspects through the purification of the five wisdoms,"[846] and explains how the practice is done:

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[843] Amoghasiddhi.

[844] At one point in the chapter, when these parallels are first presented, Alaṃka 90A, he reverses the assignments given here of discriminative and accomplishing wisdoms, giving the former to Amoghasiddhi and the latter to Amitābha. Indeed, later in the chapter, 92A, he reverts to the version given above, which is fairly standard in Buddhist Tantric practice.

[845] For a precise account of how this is done according to Tsong kha pa, *see* Tsong kha pa 2010, 227-236; Wayman 1991, 219-20.

[846] Alaṃka 90A.

> In the first session of the day, red colored light rays move from abiding in the fire maṇḍala at the throat through the right nostril. In the second session, blue colored light rays move from abiding in the wind maṇḍala at the navel through the left nostril. In the third session of the day in the afternoon, golden colored light rays move from abiding in the secret lotus earth maṇḍala through both nostrils. In the fourth session white colored light rays slowly move from the water maṇḍala that abides in the heart lotus through both nostrils. Similarly in the night also.[847]

Further practice instructions are given in Alaṃka's glossing of the text, along with particulars regarding time measurement. The yogi practicing this text will achieve speech isolation.

Chapter fifteen continues the detailed explanation of vajra repetition, referred to as "the reality of mantra,"[848] in more depth, this time via the three-syllable mantra OṂ ĀH HŪṂ rather than HŪṂ HOH as stated in the sixth chapter.[849] The practice involves identifying, inhalation, holding and exhalation with the three syllables.[850] The focus is on the heart drop.[851] The repetition is not outer but rather is internal: there is no sound. The mantra is non-dual with the energy-winds and the maṇḍala deities, and should be repeated with perfect concentration and equanimity.[852] The personal instructions of the teacher to the student are crucial here.[853]

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[847] Alaṃka 90B.

[848] *Snags kyi de nyid* or *snags kyi de kho na nyid*, Skt. *tattva.*

[849] Tsong kha pa notes that "both the two-letter and three-letter vajra repetition are undoubtedly intended by the [*Vajra Rosary*] *Tantra* to open the channel knot. Tsong kha pa 2010, 315-17.

[850] Alaṃka 105B.

[851] Alaṃka 106A.

[852] *VR* 28A, ch. 15, v. 8; Alaṃka 106B.

[853] *VR* 28A, ch. 15, v. 9; Alaṃka 107A.

After discussing the various stages of perfection stage practice, chapter fifteen turns to a general discussion of the personal instructions on vajra repetition, starting with differentiating the chakras and inhaling, holding and exhaling the breath as non-dual with various mantras, elements and deities, very difficult to understand without a teacher's personal instructions. Not surprisingly, this section is followed by verses emphasizing study with and offerings to the guru, and, after initiation, the drawing of the maṇḍala with "a pencil made from human bone, [on] a ground of blazing jewels, or the well-spread ashes of a charnel ground."[854] Having made offerings, one should then recite the incomparable mantra, OṂ ĀḤ HŪṂ, which is not stated as such in either the Tantra or by Alaṃka, but is described elliptically in terms of the Sanskrit vowels and consonants.[855]

Chapter thirty-four explains another aspect of the practice of vajra repetition, the yoga of the "gathering of the dakinis" in the stage of Tantra. This, says the *Vajra Rosary,* is supreme wisdom "because it serves as the cause of not perceiving the form of the absence of attachment."[856] The key aspect here is the overcoming of conceptuality, and particularly that of the aggregates, accomplished by the blazing of the dakinis in the navel chakra.[857] Then the conceptions of object and subject are gathered in the heart, "like a

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[854] *VR* 29A, ch. 15, v. 23.

[855] For example, HŪṂ is described as follows: "The [last] part of UṠMA [the last line of syllables, *ṣa, śa, sa,* [and] *ha*], having the sixth vowel [*a, ā, i, ī, u, ū* ....], with the last part of the last group [*anusvara*, *ṃ*], manifests the state of the vajra of mind." *VR* 29B.

[856] Alaṃka 196B.

[857] "For the purpose of completion, by the force of overcoming the form of the stick syllable A in the place of the navel chakra." Alaṃka 197A.

butterfly [drawn to the flame]," and are "incinerated."[858] This is done by using the techniques of vajra repetition described in chapter twelve of the Tantra.[859] Alaṃka says: "'Gathering the dakinis' is causing the gathering of the seeds of the five Buddhas in the place of the heart, which are made to be invisible, [and] therefore are expressed as dakinis who gather, expressed in order to know that."[860]

Chapter forty-one of the Tantra discusses how, by meditating the syllable HŪṂ in vajra repetition, the yogi withdraws the energy-winds into the central channel, going on to achieve instant enlightenment. The description of the essential subtle body components starts with the emanation and heart chakras, described as having sixty-four and eight petals and facing upwards and downwards and embodying the Evacuative and Life-energy energy-winds, respectively, "in the mode of a kiss,"[861] looking "like a basket."[862] They produce ordinary conception and the instinctual natures, and are associated with the two main side channels: so the *lalanā*, the left channel is associated with body, Vairocana and the Life-energy energy-wind, and the *rasanā*, the right channel with speech, Amitābha and the Evacuative energy-wind.[863]

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[858] *VR* 56B-57A, ch. 34, v. 4.

[859] Alaṃka 197B. This chapter also concludes with the statement that "in the vast wisdom of the dakinis, you will know the yoga of service." *VR* 57A, ch. 34, v. 6. *See* Lessing and Wayman 1980, 200 n.36 ("By service, Mkhas grub rje has already indicated that he means the four members of muttering.")

[860] Alaṃka 196B. (*mkha' 'gor rnams sdud pa zhes bya ba ni chos kyi 'khor lor gnas pa'i sangs rgyas lnga'i sa bon sdud par byed pa ni mi snang bar byed pas gang de'i phyir bsdus pa'i mkha' 'gror brjod de rig* [following P. and Snar. instead of Sde dge's *rigs*] *pa'i ngo bo la brjod do*.)

[861] *VR* 41A, ch. 22, v. 28.

[862] Alaṃka 150B.

[863] *VR* 41A, ch. 22, v. 29; Alaṃka 150B.

The *avadhūtī*, the central channel, is supreme and non-conceptual, located between the two side channels. If one overcomes the energy-winds through the method outlined in the third chapter, above,[864] and one's awareness abides in the central channel, one will "achieve complete enlightenment in a single moment."[865] The method for achieving this starts with the meditation of calm abiding, followed by creation stage practice in which one seals the nine sense orifices. Then one mentally and single-pointedly merges the mantra HŪṂ with the inhalation, holding and exhalation of the breath through the cycle of 21,600 daily breaths. "After [mentally] repeating for one month, in an unbroken supreme continuum, you will attain in one instant."[866] To do this, you look up from the navel chakra, called here the "secret lotus," to the opening in the center of the heart chakra above. This opens the knots there and, reversing the upwards and downwards Life-energy and Evacuative conceptual energy-winds moving in the side channels, you enter the central channel.[867] The "great non-conceptual energy-wind"[868] arising in the central channel cuts off the instinctual conceptions of body and speech originating in the heart and emanation chakras, and opens the energy-wind at the top of the central channel in the wind chakra between the eyebrows.[869] This is the culmination

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[864] Alaṃka 151A. *I.e.* the meditational analyzing of each energy wind as set forth in chapter three in the context of that chapter's statement that: "From the supreme space, non-conceptuality arises, overcoming the instinctual conceptions of energy-wind." *VR* 1B, ch. 3, v. 23.

[865] *VR* 41B, ch. 22, v. 32.

[866] *VR* 41B, ch. 22, v. 35.

[867] Alaṃka 152A-B.

[868] *VR* 41B, ch. 22, v. 37.

[869] *Id.* v. 38.

of vajra repetition, and it produces intense and constant ecstasy in the yogi, who appears to all as energetic, joyful and ecstatic, with a "pleasant, copper-colored face."[870]

O. Sound and Mantra

Key to vajra repetition and many other aspects of Tantric practice is sound and mantra. The first discussion of sound in the Tantra is found in chapter seven, and although the syllable does not appear in the chapter, Alaṃka explains that the primary sound referred to is the syllable A, which has the nature of wisdom fire is located in both ordinary beings and yogis in the center of the navel chakra. Indestructible and of the nature of clear light, in ordinary beings this syllable A gives birth to grasping consciousnesses, including that of the foundational consciousness. More detail is given in chapter eleven about sound and the syllable A, so this chapter is primarily introductory.

In chapter eleven, the *Vajra Rosary* returns to the subject of sound, principally to that of the syllable HŪṂ, described as "mere sound," abiding in hollow of the lotus, *i.e.* the eight channels, of the heart chakra, and the syllable A, the mere sound residing in the navel chakra. In one of many delightful etymologies pervading the (to this point) lost Sanskrit text, which makes no sense in the Tibetan, Alaṃka notes:

> "Mere sound" is "*ada*" [Sanskrit for] eating. *Na* [means] the negative [of that]. [So] what is not eaten is *nāda*. That very thing alone is mere *nāda* [sound]. "Because it is more subtle than the measure of an atom," [mere sound is] the Protector who creates the rosary of ecstatic light.[871]

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[870] *Id.* v. 39.

[871] Alaṃka 79A. As Professor Thurman noted, "When you visualize Dharmakāya in the creation stage, form is dissolved, but as Khedrup Je says, don't dwell in picture of a black void, just go into state of infinity that includes everything. You arise to embrace all of it, so you arise as a squiggle, as a that, you are

Although superficially discussing sound, the text is laden with deeper esoteric meaning. For example, the Tantra states that this mere sound, the syllable A, "dissolves in the state of great emptiness, the transparent state of great bliss."[872] Alaṃka notes that this means "having the nature of universal emptiness, the actuality of natural clear light, which is perceived at the end of emptiness, extreme emptiness and great emptiness."[873] As summarized by the Fourteenth (current) Dalai Lama:

> [T]here are four such levels called the four empties. These empties do not refer to the emptiness of inherent existence. These four empties are so called because of their being empty or devoid of the subtle energy that serves as the basis of the coarser levels of consciousness.
>
> When the levels of conceptuality--which are specified as being of eighty different types--cease, then the four empties begin. and within the four empties the latter ones are more subtle than the earlier ones; thus the most subtle is called the "all empty." Why is it called the all empty? Because the earlier levels of subtle consciousness have ceased. The earlier levels are called "the vivid white appearance," "the vivid red or orange increase of appearance," and "the vivid black near-attainment." The all-empty level is called "the mind of clear light," which for us is the ground of all mental life.[874]

Here we see how the *Vajra Rosary*'s poetic rendering, unpacked by Alaṃka, remains at the center of current Buddhist Tantric practice.

Chapter six introduced the vajra repetition practice of reciting the mantra HŪṂ HO;[875] chapter twenty-two, in its encyclopedic fashion, the *Vajra Rosary* also discusses

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all of everything. So what would you eat? You have no interior, and since you're everything, there's no need to eat. So you individuate." Personal Communication 2-20-06.

[872] *VR* 21B, ch. 11, v. 9.

[873] Alaṃka 81A.

[874] Mitchell and Wiseman1997, .

[875] Quite the opposite of ho-hum.

the much better known mantra used for many purposes in Buddhist Tantra. Here Buddha Vajradhara describes the three-syllable mantra, OṂ ĀḤ HŪṂ, described as the "essence" or "heart"[876] of the three bodies because, Alaṃka explains, "it reverses the impurities of the body and so forth, because of the continuum with the pure body and so forth."[877] OṂ, vajra body, itself consists of three syllables, A, U and Ṃ.

The first part of OṂ, the syllable A, is in the center of the heart chakra and goes up to the wind chakra between the eyebrows. It is the Life-energy energy-wind, non-dual and non-conceptual, and pervades up to part of the crown chakra as well, and is the supreme letter because as the element of space it underlies all expression, and thus awakens the throat chakra, the chakra of speech.[878] A also embodies the meaning of the formless realm, "because by the power the syllable A you accomplish the four meditative absorptions…or," says Alaṃka, "because the four formless absorptions are epitomized by the four chakras."[879] The syllable U is located in the throat chakra, luminous and blazing, and extends up to the top of the crown chakra. It embodies the form realm with its seventeen divine levels constituted by the four concentrations inasmuch as "in enjoying the six tastes," explains Alaṃka, "by meditating on the form of the deity, realizing that they lack intrinsic nature, you are free from the passion of desire, which is called the

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[876] *snying po*. *VR* 39B, ch. 22, v. 1.

[877] Alaṃka 144B. For a comprehensive discussion of the four formless absorptions and the four concentrations. *See generally* Lati Rinbochay and Denma Lochö Rinbochay, 1983.

[878] *VR* 39B, ch. 22, vv. 4-5; Alaṃka 145A. Alaṃka stresses the importance of the seed syllables: "Without faith in that very thing/ The seed syllables being the actuality of mantra/ You will be unable in the channels/ To begin to cause movement,//" Alaṃka 145B.

[879] *VR* 39B, ch. 22, v. 6; Alaṃka 145B.

'form realm'."[880] The last part of OṂ, the syllable Ṃ, is located in the crown chakra and is a drop of enlightenment spirit, "the seed of great bliss," "completely filled with luminosity, like a moon mandala."[881] Its height is twelve finger widths upwards from the throat chakra, extending to a point 4 finger widths above the crown chakra,[882] and embodies the twenty places of the desire realm.

So, when you know the meaning of the syllable OṂ, you awaken all three realms, but as pure, in the nature of Vairocana, who is the purity of the material aggregate, "because of the emptiness, in ultimate reality, of the actuality of the three realms."[883] The activities associated with OṂ involve the breath emerging from the two nostrils having the nature of the Life-energy and Evacuative energy-winds, the blood and semen moving in the lower part of the body causing fire to blaze in the wind and crown chakras.[884] The next syllable of the three-syllable mantra is ĀḤ, the seed syllable of speech, in the nature of Amitābha, located in the middle of the throat, red in color, purifying the form realm.[885] Like OṂ, ĀḤ consists of three parts: short A and short A, which combine to form a long Ā, and Ḥ. The short A syllables were explained previously in the discussion of A-U-Ṃ, or OṂ, as the Life-energy energy-wind extending from the heart chakra to the wind chakra, and is synonymous with *śūnyatā jñāna*, emptiness wisdom.[886] The syllable Ḥ,

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[880] Alaṃka 146A.

[881] Alaṃka 146A.

[882] Alaṃka 146A.

[883] Alaṃka 146B.

[884] *VR* 40A, ch. 22, vv. 11-12.

[885] Alaṃka 148A.

[886] Alaṃka has an interesting discussion here about the meaning of the *Vajra Rosary*'s statements in ch. 22, v. 15 that the first syllable A, the Life-energy energy wind, is "classified as two, life-energy and effort

without any vowel at the end, consists of the Life-energy and Evacuative energy-winds.[887] The last syllable of the three-syllable mantra is HŪṂ, the seed syllable of mind, and the essence of Akṣobhya, located at the heart. Like OṂ and ĀḤ, HŪṂ also consists of three parts; here, H, Ū and Ṃ. H is the Evacuative energy-wind, located inside the perineum. Ū is the Pervading energy-wind, located in the center of the throat chakra. Ṃ is the Life-energy energy-wind, located in the wind chakra.

Vajrapāṇi then asks which of the three, OṂ, ĀḤ or HŪṂ, Vairocana, Amitābha or Akṣobhya, is the main one, and the answer is unequivocal: "The heart seed is the Lord,"[888] the syllable HŪṂ in the heart of Akṣobhya, "because all things rely on mind,"[889] which gives rise in conjunction with the arising of the two principal energy-winds, Life-energy and Evacuative, to the one-hundred eight instinctual conceptions. These give rise to cyclic existence on the occasion of misknowledge; but this can be reversed by a yogi who properly practices meditation on the breath,[890] stopping the one-hundred eight energy-winds or ten main energy-winds and the instinctual conceptions.[891]

[*srog dang rtsol ba*, presumably *prāṇāyāma*], bringing together [sense] objects and [sense] powers," in which I think he is saying that although one energy, it appears to be two, with objective characteristics brought about through the instincts in the storehouse consciousness generating a subjective consciousness through interaction with the addicted mentality. Alaṃka 147B. But I am not sure about this.

[887] *VR* 40B, ch. 22, v. 17.

[888] *VR* 41A, ch. 22, v. 24.

[889] Alaṃka 149B.

[890] Alaṃka 149B-150A.

[891] Alaṃka 150A.

P. The Three Drops, Three Nose Tips and Three Main Channels

Chapter twenty-one begins the discussion of the analysis of and practices concerning the "three drops": the "substance" drop located at the tip of the penis or vagina; the "mantric drop" located at the center of the heart chakra; and the "wind" or "light" drop located at the tip of the conventional nose. The context here is vajra repetition culminating in speech isolation, and the more general observations here set the stage for the more detailed teachings of the following chapters.

As a result of completion stage practices, the enlightenment spirit from the crown chakra flows through all the channels. At the moment of the holding of the flowing energy-wind at the tip of the penis and vagina, that is, at the substance drop, the yogi meditates the mantra KSHMĪ[892] at the tip of the penis,[893] which at this point is in contact with the palate, explained by Alaṃka to mean the "lower" palate, "the very long channel in the middle of the vagina."[894] This "causes the attainment of supreme yoga, the supreme basis of all bliss."[895]

As for the mantric drop at the center of the heart chakra, the yogi places HŪṂ there, meditates on it, with its five parts having the nature of the five main energy-winds.[896] In so doing, "everything has the nature of emptiness,"[897] and the yogi/HŪṂ

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[892] Tsong kha pa quotes the *Vajra Rosary* and Alaṃka's *Commentary* as specifying KSHMAṂ here. Tsong kha pa 2010, 280.

[893] Alaṃka 140B.

[894] Alaṃka 140A.

[895] *VR* 38A, ch. 21, vv. 2-3; Alaṃka 140A-B. According to Tsong kha pa, this may be done using either an action (actual) or wisdom (imagined) consort. Tsong kha pa 2010, 280.

[896] Alaṃka 141A.

[897] *VR* 38B, ch. 21, v. 4.

syllable is "free from the range of conceptuality, liberated from all duality."[898] The wind or light ray drop is meditated on by the yogi by visualizing it at the tip of the conventional nose on the face, illuminating with five colors, symbolizing the five wisdoms, repeating the syllable OṂ while counting the energy-winds.[899] Alaṃka explains that the light ray drop is also called the wind drop because it has "the form[900] of collecting the five energy-winds," and that this is "'supreme yoga' because it serves as the cause of one-pointed mind."[901] Meditation on the three drops brings about the five wisdoms and various powers. Alaṃka notes that, dividing the drops into body, speech and mind, the body drop is the wind or light ray drop, which should be meditated by the yogi whose main problem is delusion;[902] the speech drop is the substance or genital drop,

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[898] *VR* 38B, ch. 21, v. 6.

[899] Alaṃka has A instead of OṂ, explaining that the A to be repeated is "the form of the letter A that is all forms because there is nothing outside of it." 141A-B. Professor Thurman feels Alaṃka is right here, citing A as the first letter, the "Brahma big bang." Personal Communication 12/5/06. However, the Lhasa *Vajra Rosary* is consistent on this, stating in the chapter following this one that "OṂ has been explained as the essence of vajra body." *VR* 39B, ch. 22, v. 3. The Sde dge, Stok and Snar thang recensions of the *VR* also have OṂ; however all of the recensions of Alaṃka have A. Alaṃka as well as the *VR* primarily associates A with speech rather than form. *See, e.g.,* Alaṃka 147A ("'The letter A is supreme wisdom' because it purifies speech."). Complicating matters is that OṂ is composed of three letters, the first of which is A. *See VR* 39B, ch. 22, v. 3. Alaṃka 111B. This is probably not a difference in practice; Alaṃka must have been reading a text or texts of the *Vajra Rosary*, now lost to us (or not yet recovered) that had A in place of OṂ. Tsong kha pa does not address the matter in the *Brilliant Illumination of the Lamp*; indeed, the version of the *Vajra Rosary* he quotes avoids the issue entirely: rather than specifying OṂ or A, the line simply says, "The yogi should repeat the supreme mantra *of such a kind*." (*'di lta bu yi sngags kyi mchog/ rnal 'byor pa yis bzlas par bya*). Tsong kha pa 2010 at 284.

[900] Following Peking's and Snar thang's *rnam pa*, "form," rather than Sde dge's *rim pa*, "stage" or "process."

[901] Alaṃka 141A.

[902] Tsong kha pa says that in this context, "delusion" refers to the yogi whose passion and hatred is equal, Tsong kha pa 2010 at 285, and that, in general, the *Secret Community* "is taught for the sake of the person who has lust for the union of the two organs….". *Id.*

for the passionate yogi; and the mind drop is the mantric drop at the heart, for the predominately angry yogi.[903]

The Tantra then addresses the subject of the three main channels of the subtle body, the left, *lalanā*, right, *rasanā*, and central, *avadhūtī*, describing how they are interwoven, and their association with moon, sun and fire, and body, speech and mind, respectively, and how they form knots at the chakras, "in the fashion of a line of lambs [roped together]."[904] The three drops, substance, mantric and wind, are also interwoven and mutually dependent. So, as Alaṃka explains, the substance drop, which consists of enlightenment spirit or semen, enters into the other two drops. The mantric drop, which is the syllable HŪṂ at the heart, incorporates the other two drops because HŪṂ also has the nature of the five energy-winds that constitute the wind drop and the enlightenment spirit of the substance drop. And the wind drop is "not made outside the mantric and substance drops."[905] The chapter ends with what Alaṃka explains is an alternative version of the three drops: positing the wisdom hero, the vajra hero and the commitment hero as the wind, substance and mantric drops, respectively.[906]

Chapter twenty-four is closely related to chapter twenty-one's description of the three drops, although the focus here is on the three "nose tips:" "secret;" "heart;" and "face." The context here is the practice of vajra repetition. Alaṃka notes that the yogi

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[903] Alaṃka 142A. Tsong kha pa notes that, while the meditation on the heart center is preeminent, it is crucial for each yogi to meditate on each of the three drops. Tsong kha pa 2010, 285.

[904] *VR* 38B, ch. 21, vv. 9, 12-13.

[905] *VR* 38B, ch. 21, vv. 9-11.

[906] *VR* 39A, ch. 21, v. 17; Alaṃka 144A.

should meditate on each drop individually.[907] The "secret" or "navel" nose tip is located at the emanation or navel chakra extending to the end of the "channel" or genital chakras, "the hub of the vajra and lotus channels,"[908] where the substance drop is located. Meditation on the secret nose tip "bestows mental bliss on those overcome by lust,"[909] producing great bliss everywhere. The meditation is practiced by holding enlightenment spirit at the tip of the penis or vagina[910] as the case may be, which produces the fourth, most intense, of the ecstasies, innate or orgasmic ecstasy.[911] Tailoring the practice to the particular condition of the yogi or yoginī, the Tantra concludes its discussion of the secret nose by stating that "only one with a greatly lustful mind will know [this] as the supreme yoga."[912] Alaṃka describes "one with a greatly lustful mind" not as a person whose general condition or mindset is lustful, but "whoever is single-minded on the object of great passion."[913]

The "heart" or "central" nose tip is the eight petals of the heart chakra, which is used to meditate "the mind of hatred,"[914] which is not necessarily referring to the mind of someone with an anger management problem, but, Alaṃka notes, the mind "of those

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[907] Alaṃka 170A.

[908] Alaṃka 166A.

[909] *VR* 45B, ch. 24, v.2.

[910] In its description of the "secret nose tip," the *Vajra Rosary* text refers only to vajra, *VR* 45B, ch. 24, v.4, but Alaṃka notes that "the tip of the lotus is also suitable." Alaṃka 166A.

[911] *VR* 45B, ch. 24, v.4.

[912] *VR* 45B, ch. 24, v.5.

[913] Alaṃka 166A (*chags pa chen po'i yul la sems gcig pu gang rnams la yod pa de la de skad ces bya'o*). This
supports Tsong kha pa's statement noted above that it is crucial for each yogi to meditate on each of the three drops. Tsong kha pa 2010, 285.

[914] *VR* 45B, ch. 24, v. 7.

having the lineage of hatred,"[915] referring to the Akṣobhya thirty-two deity mandala of the Secret Community Noble Tradition. Meditating on this nose tip produces wisdom arising as the sound of mantra[916] (in the form of the syllable A, according to Alaṃka)[917] and purifies hatred, creating peace.[918] The three main channels, right, left and central (called "moon, sun and fire," respectively)[919] converge on the "face" nose tip, at the conventional nose, where the light or clear light drop is located. This drop is ordinarily suppressed by delusion, which is overcome by concentration on this nose tip. The clear light drop should be thought of by the yogi as being the "commitment hero," because of embodying the five energy-winds and wisdoms of the five Buddhas.[920]

In order to enter the clear light drop,[921] you meditate the five primary energy-winds arising through the breath moving in and out of the nostrils, as follows. In the first of the daily eight sessions,[922] you meditate the Ascending energy-wind moving from the right nostril, red, the fire element, in the form of Amitābha; in the second, the Equalizing energy-wind moving from the left nostril, green-yellow, the wind element, in the form of

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[915] Alaṃka 166B.

[916] *VR* 45B-46A, ch. 24, vv. 7-8, referring as well to the nature of the mantric drop that is located at the heart center.

[917] Alaṃka 166B.

[918] For Tsong kha pa's discussion of how to meditate on the mantric drop, heavily relying on the *Vajra Rosary*, *see* Tsong kha pa 2010, 287-293.

[919] *VR* 46A, ch. 24, v. 9; Alaṃka 166B-167A.

[920] Alaṃka 167B.

[921] Alaṃka notes at the outset of this discussion, "in order to discuss the perspective of entering the clear light drop," (*'od zer gyi thig le 'jug pa'i sgo nas brjod pa'i phyir*), meaning that what follows is a part of the vajra repetition meditation practice. 168A.

[922] *See* Alaṃka 168A. Given that there are 21,600 breaths in each 24-hour day, Alaṃka 169A, each of the four day and four night sessions has 2,700 breaths. You meditate "constantly, the entire day and night." Alaṃka 169A.

Amoghasiddi; in the third, the Evacuating energy-wind[923] moving strongly from both nostrils, pure yellow, the earth element, in the form of Ratnasambhava; and in the fourth, the Life-energy energy-wind slowly moving from both nostrils, "pure crystal" in color, the water element, in the form of Akṣobhya.[924] The last energy-wind, the Pervading, only circulates from the nostrils at death.[925]

After noting how meditation on the clear light drop can be used for the accomplishment of various mundane attainments,[926] the Tantra reiterates that the three drops serve to liberate people controlled by anger, lust or delusion as the case may be,[927] and instructs the yogi to retreat to "pleasant place, adorned by flowers and water, on a mountain top, apart from people,"[928] and meditate.

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[923] The Tantra does not explicitly identify which elemental mandalas and colors are identified with which energy-wind. Alaṃka identifies the Amitābha fire element with the Ascending energy-wind and the Amoghasiddi wind element with the Equalizing energy-wind, 168B, but makes not specific link to the others. In his detailed discussion of this practice in the *BIL*, Tsong kha pa outlines the correspondences with the other energy-winds indicated above, and gives greater detail on the practice, which involves meditating the primary Buddha energy-wind with the other goddess-elemental elements, so, *e.g.*, the red Amitābha Ascending energy-wind emanating from the left nostril is meditated with the four elemental energy-winds of Paṇḍāravasinī, Tārā, Locanā and Māmakī in that order, which, influenced by the fire mandala, appear as red, reddish green, reddish white and reddish yellow, respectively. *See* Tsong kha pa 2010 at 234.

[924] *VR* 46A-B, ch. 24, vv. 14-20; Alaṃka 168A-169B.

[925] *VR* 46B, ch. 24, v. 19; Alaṃka 169A. There are other positions taken on this; Tsong kha pa agrees with the *Vajra Rosary* and Alaṃka. Tsong kha pa 2010 at 232.

[926] *VR* 46B, ch. 24, v. 21; Alaṃka 169A-B.

[927] Here, unlike earlier in the chapter, except for Alaṃka's reference to the "lineage of passion," it does sound like at least Alaṃka understands the Tantra to be referring to general dominant character traits rather than particular Tantric practice lineages. Alaṃka 170A-B.

[928] *VR* 47A, ch. 24, v. 28.

Q. Yogic Time

The focus of chapter sixteen is on the counting of the energy-winds pursuant to the *Mahāyoga* Tantras, *i.e.* the *Secret Community*, without which one is doomed to wander in the three worlds. The "supreme yoga" can be achieved by one mastering the Life energy energy-wind, the "nature of all,"[929] described by Alaṃka as "the intrinsic nature of the most subtle particles," "a form of emptiness."[930] The guru's instructions here are, as before, critical. In order to focus on these very subtle energies, and to measure the various sessions of meditation on the energy-winds, the yogi must be able to discern various periods of time, from the gross ("the energy-winds are like the six seasons of the year")[931] to the extremely subtle ("the rising of bliss takes three split seconds").[932] These periods may differ, depending on whether they are "outer" (external) or "inner" (internal); that is, whether they are functions of ordinary life, the seasons and the clock, on the one hand, or of subjective meditative experience, "sensed [only] by

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[929] *VR* 30A, ch. 16, v. 1.

[930] Alaṃka 113B.

[931] Spring, summer, rainy season, autumn, early winter and late winter, approximately sixty days each. Alaṃka 114B.

[932] *VR* 30A, ch. 16, v. 9. Āryadeva writes: "If you wonder, 'How does intuitive wisdom emerge in a moment?' It means it appears for one moment (*skad cig*), one instant (*thang cig*), a mere trice (*yud tsam*), the blink of an eye (*mig btsums*), or a mere hand-clap (*thal mo brdabs pa tsam*)….Hence, upon entering into the subtle element, the Luminances fluctuate for a moment, an instant, a mere trice, the blink of an eye, or a hind-clap. Then, one will experience the instinctual natures in a moment, an instant, a mere trice, the blink of an eye, or a hand-clap." Wedemeyer 1999, 289; Wedemeyer 2007 at157.

yogis,"[933] on the other. The following time periods[934] are defined in this chapter of the Tantra and Alaṃka's *Commentary*: [935]

TABLE 11. Yogic Time

Season (outer)	=	Approximately sixty days
(24-hour) Day (outer)	=	60 (24 minute) hours [*chu tsod, dbyu gu* or *tsa sha ka*]
1 (24 minute) "Hour"	=	60 seconds [*chu srang*]
6 inhalations/exhalations[936]	=	1 *tsa sha*
1 inhalation/exhalation	=	6 moments (*skad cig ma*)
1 moment	=	1 finger snap
1 moment	=	3 instants (*thang*)
1 instant	=	1 turning of a mustard seed in the hand
1 instant	=	3 *inner* breaths
1 inner breath	=	A flash, a wink of an eye
A flash, a wink	=	3 *tsam*s
1 *tsam*	=	A clap of the hands
1 *tsam*	=	3 arisings of bliss
3 arisings of bliss	=	The migration of the drop[937]
4 hours (*outer*)	=	1 moment of clear light (*inner*)[938]

The context for this exposition of subtle periods of time is the perfection stage practice of sexual union, where the yogi and yoginī experience the rising of bliss resulting from the migration of the drop to the tips of their sexual organs in "three split seconds (*tsam*)." The process of this extremely subtle, intense practice is terrifying, even

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[933] Alaṃka 115B.

[934] All time periods are "outer" unless otherwise indicated.

[935] Other Tantric systems present somewhat differing definitions and systems. For example, Tsong kha pa notes that other systems posit 64 rather than sixty hours in a day. Tsong kha pa 2010 at 246.

[936] Taking one round of inhalation and exhalation as one unit.

[937] *VR* 30A-30B, ch. 16 vv. 1-12; Alaṃka 114B-115A.

[938] Alaṃka 114B. According to Robert Thurman, the relationship between inner and outer time is like relativity. Personal Communication, April 18, 2006.

for the blissful yogi,[939] who fears the abyss of emission,[940] "the moment of doubt when he falls from a mountain peak."[941] This is the practical methodology for the union of bliss and the meditation on emptiness. Moreover, counting time is itself ecstatic; in each of the three times, past, present and future, there are three parts, and those also are divisible: "To the extent you count that much, thought becomes empty [and] non-dual; you will attain supreme yoga."[942]

Chapter thirty-nine is about time, external and internal. In order to do the yoga of counting the energy-winds, you must know the characteristics of time.[943] The Tantra gives a number of examples of "good" and "bad" times, such as the golden age versus the present time of contention, but also characterizes times found in yogic practice.[944] Of the four ecstasies, the first, "ecstasy," second, "extreme ecstasy," and the fourth, "innate ecstasy" are "good times," but the third, "transcendent ecstasy" or "free from ecstasy" is a "bad time."[945] This is because, according to Alaṃka, while ecstasy and extreme ecstasy

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[939] And presumably yoginī, although the text has the masculine "mantrin," *sngags pa*.

[940] The *Vajra Rosary* text has *rab 'gyed*, "emanation, " "opening" or, per Professor Jamspal, "emission," while Alaṃka's version of the Tantra has *gyang sa*, "abyss." *VR* 30B; Alaṃka 115A. Professor Thurman thinks this may refer to "the certain kind of terror experienced in orgasm, when the energy-winds go to the central channel, the fear of losing traction on one's coarse embodiment, like fear of flying. Here [Alaṃka] is talking about orgasm and bliss and mantra. The three spasms of ejaculations [the "arisings of bliss"] are not necessarily external, maybe they are experienced internally, but that is also a terrifying thing, releasing control." Personal Communication 4/13/06.

[941] Alaṃka 115A. This metaphor is also found in last verse of the *CMP* and also identically in the *PK*, albeit in a different context: "If someone falls from the peak of the king of mountains/ Even if they don't want to plummet, they will/ If one gains the beneficial verbal transmission by the grace of the guru/ Even if they don't want to be liberated, they will be." *CMP* 331.

[942] *VR* 30B, ch. 16, v. 12.

[943] *VR* 59B, ch. 39, v. 1; Alaṃka 206A.

[944] *VR* 59B, ch. 39, v. 4.

[945] *VR* 59B, ch. 39, v. 5.

are "merely a little bliss," and "greater than that, the direct cause of the lineage Tantra," respectively, and innate ecstasy is "heroic in nature," "free from ecstasy is explained as a bad time because it is the essence of losing bliss, and has a dispassionate nature, together with conceptuality."[946] Inhaling and holding the breath are good times, while exhaling is a bad time.[947]

"Inconceivable time,"[948] the "fourth moment" discussed in chapters nineteen and twenty, that of "beyond characteristics,"[949] is expressed in the Tantra as "one time," as in its beginning words, "One time I heard." In this moment time is unitary, all the elements, and you abandon great bliss as well as "wisdom consciousness,"[950] explained by Alaṃka as both kinds of the spirit of enlightenment. This fourth moment of inconceivable time is "free from expressed and expression"[951] because it is "free from the conceptuality of the [third ecstasy] free from ecstasy."[952] You are "definitively liberated from passion and dispassion" "because you are free from emptiness and extreme emptiness;" you "abandon the state of great bliss" because you "are free from great emptiness." The fourth moment

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[946] Alaṃka 207A (*dga' ba dang mchog tu dga' ba dang zhes bya ba gsungs te/ cung zad tsam gyi* [following P. and Snar thang's *gyi* instead of Sde dge's *gyis*] *bde ba dang/ de las lhag pa'i ngo bo brgyud pa'i rgyud* [P. and Snar. have *rgyud pa'i rgyu] dang dngos kyi rgyu'i ngo bo'o/ lhan cig skyes pa zhes bya ba ni dpe'i ngo bo la'o/ dus bzang ste zhes bya ba ni gsum po de rnams dus bzang po'i sgras brjod par bya ba ste/ gong nas gong du bde ba 'phel ba 'bras bu dang bcas pa'i phyir ro/ bral dgar bshad pa dus ngan ni/ bde ba nyams pa'i ngo bo nyid dang/ chags bral gyi bdag nyid can nyid dang/ rtog pa* [P. and Snar. have *rtogs*, "realization" instead of Sde dge's *rtog,* "conceptuality"] *dang bcas pa'i phyir ro//*). This may suggest that the third ecstasy accompanies conventional orgasm.

[947] *VR* 59B, ch. 39, v. 6.

[948] Alaṃka 207A.

[949] *See VR* 36B-37A, ch. 19, vv. 3-6.

[950] *VR* 60A, ch. 39, vv. 7-9; Alaṃka 207B.

[951] *VR* 60A, ch. 39, v. 8.

[952] Alaṃka 207B.

is "the genuine basis of the Great Seal," "because it has the nature of universal emptiness."[953]

R. Birth and Death From the Subtle Body Perspective

Chapter sixteen is the first of several discussions in the *Vajra Rosary* of both ordinary birth and death from the perspective of the subtle body's energy-winds, and how the yogi overcomes this. The death or dissolution process commences when the Evacuative energy-wind[954] stirs up the addicted mind and becomes more powerful, causing the contraction of the sense media because the energy-winds that function conterminously with them become weaker.[955] Then the Evacuative energy-wind is consumed and the Equalizing energy-wind becomes pre-eminent, followed by the consumption of the Equalizing energy-wind as the aggregates contract and the sounds are heard, with the Ascending energy-wind rising in power and the further contraction of the aggregates. Next, as actual death occurs, the Life-energy energy-wind overcomes the Ascending energy-wind, as well as the Pervading and subtle energy-winds, obscuring consciousness in the moment of the discarding of the dead person's aggregates as the Life-energy energy-wind mixes a little with energy-wind in the *bardo* or between state.[956] At this point, due to previous karmic instincts, one faints, although the yogi meditating on the two stages, or on the thatness of mantra and energy-wind, or on the six inhalations

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[953] *VR* 60A, ch. 39, v. 9; Alaṃka 207B.

[954] Called the "Producing Expansion" energy-wind in the Tantra. Alaṃka explains that this refers to the Evacuative energy-wind, and explains the rest of the energy-winds in this section on dissolution in the same way. Alaṃka 118B-119A.

[955] Alaṃka 118B.

[956] Alaṃka 118B-119A.

and exhalations may be able to avoid this.[957] The Life-energy energy-wind then dissolves, along with consciousness, demonstrating, says Alaṃka, the identity of the two.[958]

The Tantra then discusses how the yogi may avoid ordinary death by attaining a vajra body. First, given the short lifespan of people in this time, the yogi is advised to achieve longevity. Then, in terms of the actual internal practice, the yogi assumes the meditation posture, touches the tongue to the middle of the palate, and silently repeats mantra to melt the enlightenment spirit, "drinking" or experiencing this nectar "by applying the flowing Evacuative energy-wind."[959] The yogi recites mantra one-pointedly in this way for the third session of the night, 12-2 a.m., making the vajra body. The mantra for this purpose is elliptically indicated in the Tantra, and spelled out by Alaṃka, as GAH.[960] The external practice involves preparation of an elixir which is fairly exactly described, in a vessel of particular composition, which should be imbibed at bedtime saying the appropriate mantras. Doing this for six months will result arising in the vajra body by the yogi, for whom there is long life, no disease, and no shortage of attractive consorts.

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[957] This is suggested by Alaṃka's *Commentary*, but not by the text of either his or the Lhasa recension of the Tantra. Given Alaṃka's commentary, one can speculate that the Tibetan should have been *sgrub pa*, rendering the verse as "accomplishing the pure part" rather than *sgrib pa*, "obscuring" it. The Lhasa *Vajra Rosary* reads: *skye mched cha ni sgrib par byed/ dag pa'i ye shes mchog gi mchog/*, "It obscures part of the sense bases. It is the wisdom of purity, supreme of supreme." *VR* 31A, ch. 16, v. 22; Alaṃka 119A.

[958] Alaṃka 119A.

[959] It goes without saying that this is a very advanced practice, because, among other reasons, the Evacuative energy-wind cannot flow to the throat without the heart knot being significantly loosened, which happens in the stages of speech and mind isolation.

[960] *VR* 32A, ch. 16, v. 32; Alaṃka 121A.

Chapter thirty-two continues the discussion of the subtle biology of re-birth and birth: how the ten main energy-winds arise and develop before and at conception, in the embryo and as the person matures. The person seeking rebirth thinks he knows the "opportune time" and place.[961] The text from Alaṃka adds, "[But], it is deceiving."[962] In the *bardo* or between consciousness, the fundamental consciousness, the *ālayavijñāna*, which goes from life to life includes the instincts from previous *karma* constituting the addicted mind, the *kliṣṭamanas*, "like a sleeping snake."[963] There, the person-to-be mistakenly sees other forms[964] as a result of the activity of the Life-energy energy-wind which is "like a shadow" for the *bardo* being.[965]

At conception, consciousness is born from the mixing of the fundamental consciousness and addicted mind from the *bardo* with the semen and ovum. The fundamental consciousness carries the instincts. In the first month, the addicted mind takes the form of a fish; in the second, mixed with the mother's blood, the Life-energy energy-wind splits into two, upper and lower, Life-energy and Evacuative, and the embryo has the form of a tortoise; in the third, as a mass of Evacuative energy-wind dries up, the Ascending energy-wind comes into existence and the fetus looks like a wild pig; in the fourth month, the Ascending energy-wind faces downwards and the Pervading energy-wind arises, the fetus in the form of a lion; in the fifth month, the fetus's blood

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[961] *VR* 54A, ch. 32, v. 1.

[962] Alaṃka 190A.

[963] Alaṃka 190A.

[964] Like someone being carried in a palanquin or in a stagecoach who can't get a good view of the outside. Alaṃka 190A.

[965] *VR* 54A, ch. 32, v. 1; Alaṃka 190A. There are significant variations between the *Bka' 'gyur*'s and Alaṃka's texts here, but the overall meaning is fairly consistent.

and semen having increased, the Equalizing energy-wind arises, in the form of fire, and the Equalizing and Pervading energy-winds radiate, causing the body to move and completing the formation of the five aggregates; in the sixth month, the Pervading energy-wind produces the Dragon energy-wind and the earth element produces the two eyes;[966] in the seventh month, the Dragon energy-wind produces the Tortoise energy-wind and the water element produces the ear hole;[967] in the eight month, fire creates the nostrils and the Tortoise energy-wind produces the Lizard energy-wind, which causes one to have a sense of self-awareness; in the ninth month, the wind element produces the feeling of taste and touch, and the Lizard energy-wind produces the *Devadatta* energy-wind; and in the tenth month, the *Devadatta* energy-wind produces the *Dhanujit* energy-wind, which gathers all of the energy-winds.[968]

The above discussion concerns ordinary beings; in the context of a Buddha manifesting an emanation body, the ten months of fetal development are the ten knowledges and ten bodhisattva stages.[969] In this case, the Tantra says, "the child becomes a perfect Buddha."[970]

Following chapter thirty-two's discussion of the subtle biology of birth and growth, chapter thirty-three presents the subtle biology of death: how the ten main energy-winds transform and are consumed at the end of life. As the energy-winds arose,

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[966] *See* Alaṃka 192A.

[967] I am following Alaṃka's *rna bug dong*, "ear hole [and] canal" rather than the *VR*'s *sna bug*, "nostril," because the next month refers to the nose and because in the *Secret Community* system generally, the ears and hearing are associated with the water element and the nose and smelling with fire. *See* Alaṃka 192A.

[968] *VR* 54B-55A, ch. 32, vv. 6-16; Alaṃka 191A-193A.

[969] *VR* 55A, ch. 32, v. 18; Alaṃka 193A.

[970] *VR* 55B, ch. 32, v. 19.

they disappear, "like the setting of the sun."[971] After ten years,[972] the Intoxicated by Inflation energy-wind overcomes[973] the *Dhanujit* branch energy-wind,[974] increasing blood and flesh in the child; after another ten years (at age twenty), the Expanding Water energy-wind (a form of the Equalizing energy-wind)[975] arises, increasing semen and fat in the young person, overcoming the *Devadatta* branch energy-wind. At age thirty, the Water of Expansion energy-wind (a form of the Ascending energy-wind) arises, overcoming the branch Lizard energy-wind, causing the increase of fire and wind. At age forty, the Great Sending and Holding energy-wind (the Life-energy energy-wind), overcomes the branch Tortoise energy-wind. At this point the Life-energy and Dragon (Ascending)[976] energy-winds are both powerful, so they co-exist. By age fifty, however, the Blind, Sending and Holding, and Great Power energy-winds overcome the Dragon energy-wind in stages. By age sixty, the Inflation and Intoxication energy-wind (Evacuative)[977] have overcome the Sending and Holding Life-energy energy-wind, causing the increase of blood and flesh. By age seventy, the Intoxicated Water energy-wind completely overcomes the Life-energy and Ascending energy-winds, and fat and saliva increase. By age eighty, the Life-energy energy-wind again arises, and consumes the Ascending energy-wind, causing fire and wind to increase. The Tantra says that at

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[971] *VR* 55B, ch. 33, v. 2.

[972] Alaṃka notes that the external one year is one day internally. Alaṃka 194B.

[973] *I.e.* "makes it unable to do any activity." Alaṃka 194B.

[974] The *Dhanujit* is the last energy-wind to arise in the development of the fetus. *VR* 55A, ch. 32, v. 16.

[975] Alaṃka 195A.

[976] Alaṃka 195B.

[977] Alaṃka 195B.

this point, due to the transformation of the Life-energy energy-wind, "great enjoyment increases."[978] But then, by age ninety, the body becomes heavy because the Pervading energy-wind starts to go, and the water and wind elements in the body start to mix. Finally, by the age of one-hundred years, one's life energy is exhausted, and you die.[979]

S. The Chakras and the Channels

The focus of chapter seventeen is the description of the six chakras according to the *Yoginī* Tantras:[980] Great Bliss (crown); Wind (between the eyebrows); Enjoyment (throat); Fire (between throat and heart); Reality (heart); and Emanation (navel). In the chakras, there are altogether one hundred twenty-nine[981] channels, as follows: Great Bliss – thirty-two; Wind – six; Enjoyment – sixteen; Fire – three; Reality – eight; Emanation – sixty-four. The Tantra names each of these channels, much as it had named the energy-winds and conceptualities in chapter three, and Alaṃka discusses the names of the channels of the navel and heart (Emanation and Reality) chakras, but not those of the other chakras.[982] Some additional attention is given to a description of the Wind

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[978] *VR* 56B, ch. 33, v. 12. Something to look forward to, although the Tantra's text, according to Alaṃka, says nothing about increasing but does says that the octogenarian "'has the pride of enjoyment' because with the aspect of gathering the energy-winds, he is proud." (*longs spyod nga rgyal bcas zhes bya ba ni rlung thams cad nye bar bsdu ba'i rnam pas de nga rgyal dang bcas pa'o*). 196A.

[979] The chapter ends by saying that you should know this in detail "from the *Tantra of the Gathering of the Dakinis*," which, oddly, is the name of the next chapter of the *Vajra Rosary*. This may suggest that it was added at some point, although Alaṃka notes that this merely refers to "yoginī Tantras that discuss that." Alaṃka 196A-B. This could also be a reference to the *Ḍakiṇijālasaṃvarasarvabuddhasamāyoga*, found in the *Mahāyoga* section of the *Rnying ma rgyud 'bum*. *See* Eastman 1983, 3.

[980] Alaṃka 124A.

[981] The Tantra says that these total "more than 131," but all of the Sde dge, Peking and Snar thang versions of the *Commentary* have 129 here, and the various numbers do in fact add up to 129. Alaṃka 125A.

[982] The *VR*'s description of the channels should be compared with the description of same in Tsong kha pa's *Sngags rim chen mo*, *Great Stages of Mantra*. *See* Wayman 1991 205-06.

Chakra at the forehead and Fire Chakra below the throat.[983] Because these chakra channels are the basis for the yogi's body, it is crucial that these channels be identified and meditated on: "Without ascertaining the stages of the channels, without the aggregates (of the body), the yogi cannot achieve great wisdom."[984] The channels should be meditated on as having the form of deities, who are named in chapter twenty-seven of the Tantra.

The Tantra then moves to the process of the functioning of the channels in completion stage practice, in the *bardo* following the yogi's death, and in the creation of a Buddha. First, the production of enlightenment spirit in sexual yogic practice is described, with the blazing of fire, *i.e. tummo*, in the navel and fire chakras, that causes the falling of great bliss/female hormonal fluid and enlightenment spirit in the left and right main channels, respectively.[985] The Tantra then describes the role the main channels play in the *bardo*, when the former yogi, now in the between, under the influence of previous karma and the wish to emanate, conceives lust for the mother, resulting in the arising of the seed of the new person and the resultant birth. Finally, as Alaṃka makes clear, through the internal holding of enlightenment spirit during completion stage sexual yoga at the highest level, the channels do not arise, but that is supreme wisdom and supreme bliss.[986]

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[983] *VR* 33A, ch. 17, vv. 7-8.

[984] *VR* 34A, ch. 17, v. 25.

[985] *See* Alaṃka 130 A-B.

[986] *VR* 35A, ch. 17, v. 37; Alaṃka 131 A-B.

The subject in chapter eighteen is the enumeration of the channels within the chakras, their emanation and expansion, and their dissolution. The total number of channels within the body are derived by taking the eight groups of letters in the Sanskrit alphabet, multiplying them by the three of the four main chakras other than the crown chakra to yield twenty-four, multiplying again by trio of body, speech and mind, yielding seventy two, then multiplying again by one thousand, amounting to a total of seventy-two thousand,[987] whose nature is the letter A, objective reality.[988] On the "deity stage," presumably the creation stage, the yogi visualizes each of the channels as deities, in the nature of action consorts.[989] The chapter then transitions to a discussion of thirty-two channels, in the crown chakra and also by multiplying the eight principal channels of the four main chakras. This also relates to the yogic practice of analyzing the eight collections of consciousness in eight sessions, and to the thirty-two Sanskrit letters.[990]

Chapter twenty-seven names and describes the goddesses who embody the channels in the chakras, sixty-four in the navel chakra, eight in the heart, sixteen in the throat and thirty-two in the crown chakra.[991] The names have the same colloquial flavor as found in the names of the channels and conceptualities described in chapter three. All of the goddesses have three faces and six arms, and sit in the half-lotus bodhisattva

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[987] *VR* 35B, ch. 18, vv. 1-9; Alaṃka 132B-133A.

[988] Alaṃka 132B.

[989] Alaṃka 133A.

[990] Alaṃka 133B. Some of the *Commentary* is missing for this discussion, or Alaṃka's version of the Tantra did not contain it, so some of this is hard to follow.

[991] Compare Hartzell 1997, 348, with the names of the chakra channel goddesses from the *Ḍākārṇava-mahā-yoginī-tantra-rāja*.

posture,[992] and each is a member of one of the five Buddha families, explained by Alaṃka as having the symbolic attribution or purification embodied in that family.[993] Only fifty-six goddesses are named in the navel chakra; to obtain the total of sixty-four to correspond to the number of channels, the Tantra says "the count is always increased by eight."[994] They hold various implements whose significance is explained by Alaṃka; various vajras in their right hands, along with a wheel and jewel, and in the left hands blue lotus flowers and a sword. They are smiling,[995] which causes bliss to increase, with Amoghasiddhi on their crowns,[996] and are of different colors, depending on their Buddha family.[997] Putting the name of each goddess in the three-syllable mantra,[998] you make offerings to each, causing them "to bestow [on you] the reality of desire,"[999] the character of a Buddha.[1000]

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[992] "Because of the non-differentiation of the purity of the conventional and the ultimate." Alaṃka 178A.

[993] Alaṃka 177A. For example, the "action" clan is that of "Amoghasiddhi, the actuality of the purification [or, as suggested by Robert Thurman, "symbolic attribution"] of the wisdom of accomplishing activities." *Id.* The goddesses of the navel chakra are of Amoghasiddhi's action family "because [they have] the very essence of activity with the character of what is to be achieved and the means for achieving." Alaṃka 177B.

[994] *VR* 49B, ch. 27, v. 11.

[995] "Because [their] sole reality is peacefulness and because they look at conventional things in amazement." Alaṃka 178A.

[996] *VR* 49B, ch. 27, vv. 12-14.

[997] Alaṃka 177B.

[998] *E.g.* OṂ BEDHANI ĀḤ HŪṂ. Alaṃka 178A.

[999] *VR* 49B, ch. 27, v. 15.

[1000] Alaṃka 178B.

Nine goddesses sit in the heart chakra, also with three faces and six hands, sitting in the bodhisattva posture, blue in complexion, three-eyed, fangs slightly bared,[1001] with vajra, wheel and jewel in the right hands and sword, lotus and bell in the left. The sixteen goddesses in the throat chakra have a lotus, wheel and vajra in their right and sword, bell and jewel in their left hands, and are red in color, sitting on sun disks.[1002] The thirty-two goddesses in the crown chakra are white and sit on moon disks. With peaceful expressions, they carry a wheel, hook and vajra in their right and a lotus, lasso and jewel in their left hands. They are dancing, and have Vairocana on their crowns.[1003] You offer the mantras of each of the goddesses in all four chakras in a similar fashion. They are delighted by he offerings made to them, and "intoxicated" by the sexual union of the yogi and yoginī.[1004]

Chapter twenty-eight follows chapter twenty-seven closely and concerns the channel goddesses, explaining when and how the deities arise in the channels, which "are supreme yoga, the source of all attainments."[1005] In a sense, this short chapter embodies the Tantric way of using desire to engage the world. The arising of the deities follows from the sense media engaging with sense objects as a result of previous karmic instincts, which wakes them up. [1006] [1007] Without the stirring of these previous instincts and the

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[1001] With the ferocity of lust, says Alaṃka. 179A.

[1002] Sun disks being "the means of burning with the antidote for conceptualization." Alaṃka 179B.

[1003] Alaṃka explains the rationale for the first three names of the crown chakra goddesses, then says that the rest are as in the Tantra. 179B.

[1004] *VR* 51A, ch. 27, v. 36; Alaṃka 180B.

[1005] *VR* 51A, ch. 28, v. 1.

[1006] Alaṃka explains that engaging the sense objects "is because of approaching (*mngon par phyogs pa*)" them, probably a reference to the sixth bodhisattva stage.

sense media engaging in sense objects, "the channels will not arise" and "the awakening of the deities will not happen."[1008] Consonant with this, "actual bliss" "in the center of the heart" is achieved "through the form of the grasped and the grasping" of the sense and mental powers and their objects.[1009]

In chapter twenty-nine, more detail is given about the channels and chakras, in the context of producing ecstasy according to the yoginī Tantras. The cause of ecstasy relates to the sixteen "intermediate" channels (*mtshams kyi rtsa*), so called because they emanate from the center of the chakra in the intermediate directions,[1010] four of which are located in each of the four main chakras.[1011] Alaṃka says that "just as the lotus is pervaded by the subtle essence of [its] sinews, so it pervades the secondary channels of the ecstasies and so forth."[1012]

[1007] Although the text of the Tantra in the *Bka' 'gyur* does not mention any particular yogic practice in this chapter, Alaṃka's version of the Tantra has "From compressing the breath within," which Alaṃka says means that "the energy-winds are perfectly endowed with consciousness," "'compressing within' [meaning] entering into the interior of the group [of channels]." Alaṃka 181B. The meaning here is not particularly clear to me, *i.e. tsogs,* "group" or "collection" could refer to the channels or to the aggregates. It should be noted that the text of Alaṃka's word commentary here differs significantly from Alaṃka's quotation of the same in his earlier discussion, in chapter one of the *Commentary*, 25B, of the eighty-two questions in which the text is *dbus ni nang du 'dus pa yin*, "by gathering within the central [channel]," which argues in favor of "group of channels."

[1008] *VR* 51B, ch. 28, v. 5.

[1009] *VR* 51B, ch. 28, vv. 6-7.

[1010] *See* Lati Rinpoche and Denma Löcho Rinpoche 1979, 64.

[1011] *VR* 51B, ch. 28, v. 3; Alaṃka 183B ("In those very ones, four types of thread in each chakra") (*de rnams nyid la 'khor lo so so la snal ma rnam pa bzhi*….).

[1012] Alaṃka 183B commenting on *VR* 52A, ch. 29, v. 4: "Filled with the watery subtle essence of the lotus, it causes the increase of great bliss."

Chapter thirty continues the discussion of the channels, but primarily focusing on the three main channels in the "stable vajra body,"[1013] which refers here to the third of the five completion stages, illusory body.[1014] Energy-wind flows through the one-thousand twenty-four channels in the form of "blood," "sun" or, as per Alaṃka, *rdul*, *rajas* or "energy."[1015] Enlightenment spirit flows in the left main channel; blood and sun in the right; and when the energy-wind moves in the central channel, you will experience it as fire.[1016] The yogi practices the stage of "spreading" (*spro ba*) the three channels, developing them in eight sessions, and the yogi reaches ecstatic awareness of seventy-two thousand channels.[1017] Then the yogi practices making the three main channels, *lalanā*, *rasanā*, and *avadhūtī,* become one.[1018] It is difficult to do this; "abandoning the sound drop is the secret foundation of all bliss," harking back to chapter twenty-three's

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[1013] *VR* 52B, ch. 30, v. 1. Alaṃka says that this body is "hard, firm like a diamond," and abides on the perfection stage in the meditator. 184B.

[1014] The *CMP* uses the terminology "vajra body" in connection with body isolation. Wedemeyer 2007, 87, 170-74; however, the practices described there involve the three Buddha clans becoming one rather than the three channels becoming merged in the central channel, described just below. Indeed, in the *CMP*, the student asks the vajra master how to reduce the three clans to one, and the master answers, interpreting the cryptic language of the *Root Tantra*, that this happens only *after* one transforms not only into the body vajra of body isolation, but the speech and mind vajras, 173, indicating that the three clans become one only after the three isolations, *i.e.* at the third stage of the illusory body.

[1015] Alaṃka 185A.

[1016] Alaṃka says that "'What is known through the movement of the energy-wind in the center' is the falling of fire of energy-wind and time that is fleeting in the place of the central [channel]." (*shes bya dbus su rlung rgyu bas zhes bya ba ni dbus kyi gnas su rnam par mi rtog pa'i rlung dang dus kyi me 'bab pa'o*). 185B.

[1017] *VR* 53A, ch. 30, vv. 9-10.

[1018] *VR* 53A, ch. 30, v. 11; Alaṃka 185A-B.

description of the dissolution of the syllable HŪṂ, as Alaṃka notes that the sound drop consists "of substance and echo."[1019] [1020]

In chapter thirty-one, the Tantra explains the three "intermediate channels" in the crown chakra, referring to the three main channels as they pass through the crown chakra.[1021] Practicing deity wisdom, mantra and yoga,[1022] you unite the purities of mind, speech and body, and have the bliss of the triple-hero practice.[1023] Like the roots of a tree, the three main channels in the crown chakra anchor the 72,000 channels of the body and the aggregates and elements.[1024] Their purification, resulting from seeing the nature of the three channels, becomes the three doors of liberation, emptiness, signlessness and wishlessness.[1025]

The three channels unite in the heart chakra, because it is the place of the mind,[1026] and become one, manifested as three in yogic perception as the purities of the

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[1019] Alaṃka 186B. The sound drop "has the character of supporting Life-energy," and is "'explained as nearly black' because it is the essence of non-perceiving" (*nag po'i rtsar ni rnam par bshad/ ces bya ba ni mi dmigs pa'i ngo bo nyid kyi phyir ro/*). *Id.*

[1020] Tsong kha pa notes that "although such and such a treatise sometimes explains clearly 'the art of injecting the *rasanā* and *lalanā* wind-energies into the central channel,' most of the explanations are usually unclear." Tsong kha pa 2010, 139.

[1021] Alaṃka 188A: "The three channels located in the head [refers to] …the *lalanā* and so forth."

[1022] The wisdom of the deity "illumines the transmundane innate;" the mantra of the deity is the syllable HŪṂ; and the yoga of the deity is "through analyzing the conceptual energy-winds." Alaṃka 187A.

[1023] *VR* 53B, ch. 31, vv. 2-3; Alaṃka 187A-B. The "wisdom hero" is the complete enjoyment body, "the sole province of the yogi;" Vajrasattva is the truth body; and on account of them, the "commitment hero," the emanation body, is blissful.

[1024] *VR* 53B, ch. 31, v. 6; Alaṃka 188A.

[1025] Alaṃka 188B.

[1026] Alaṃka 189A.

falling of blood, semen and fire in the body.[1027] When they unite, "they have the character of an eclipse; when applied a little, the character of a partial eclipse."[1028] These are the signs of ordinary death.[1029] For liberation from birth and death, you should definitively know the three channels as the main one, the central channel.[1030] The yogi knows this from the extensive yoginī Tantras.[1031]

Chapter thirty-seven focuses on the disappearance of the channels. The channels arise when the sense powers are joined with the sense objects,[1032] "produced by the union of mental engagement and energy-wind."[1033] This gives rise to the instinctual natures[1034] and the one-hundred eight channels and causes conceptuality and the constant return to the cycle of birth, old age, sickness and death.[1035] The way to break the cycle is by de-reifying the sense powers and their objects through the wisdom that purifies them of their "thing-ness."[1036] This is accomplished by understanding that things are "devoid of any ultimate nature" through the standard techniques of meditating on emptiness, such as

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[1027] *VR* 53B, ch. 31, v. 11; Alaṃka 189A.

[1028] *VR* 53B, ch. 31, v. 12.

[1029] Alaṃka 189A-B.

[1030] Alaṃka 189B (*skye ba dang 'chi ba dang thar pa'i gnas skabs … gtso bo nyid du yongs su shes pa*).

[1031] *VR* 53 B, v. 13.

[1032] *VR* 58A, ch. 37, v. 2.

[1033] Alaṃka 202B.

[1034] *Id.*

[1035] *VR* 58B, ch. 37, v. 3.

[1036] *VR* 58B, ch. 37, v. 4.

"[neither] one [nor] many," the "diamond slivers," etc.[1037] When you do this, the channels disappear.[1038]

Chapter forty-two describes how the vajra, with the nature of the five Buddha wisdoms, "dissolves[1039] into the five channels," which Alaṃka explains are the *lalanā*, *rasanā*, *avadhūtī*, *Devadatta* and *Dhanujit.* These channels have the nature of the five wisdoms and of purifying[1040] the five elements, and are expressed by the seed syllables AM, RAM, LAM, BAM and YAM.[1041]

In chapter forty-seven, the Tantra refers the "eight *rasa*s" or the eight moods famous in Sanskrit literature since the *Nātyaśastra*,[1042] but in the context of the particular channels that produce certain effects in the yogi. These seem be associated with the eight moods discussed in the literature. The next to last verse of the chapter says that

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[1037] Alaṃka 202B. As the Tantra says, "From the yoga of meditating emptiness, you definitively know the reality of objects; the logic vajra conquers all." Alaṃka explains that the logic vajra is the five great syllogisms of *madhyamaka*: the diamond slivers, *rdo rje zegs ma*; the production and cessation of existence and non-existence, *yod med skye 'gog*; the production and cessation of the four limits, *mu bzhi skye 'gog*; supreme relativity, *rten 'brel chen po*; and free from the one and the many, *gcig dang du bral*. Alaṃka 203A.

[1038] *VR* 58B, ch. 37, v. 5; Alaṃka 203A. This is an apt completion stage parallel to the common analogy used to explain the use of desire in Tantra, that of wood-born insects eating the wood that sustains them. *See*, *e.g.*, Yeshe 1987, 25.

[1039] I am following Alaṃka here, 212B; the Lhasa *VR* has *brten*, "relies on," *VR* 61B, ch. 42, v. 2, but the meaning is similar.

[1040] Alaṃka 212B.

[1041] *VR* 61B, ch. 42, vv. 2-4.

[1042] *VR* 63B, ch. 47, vv. 1-8. *See generally* Hartzell 1997, 593-601 for a discussion of the importance of *rasa* in Tantra. Alex Wayman discusses the nine moods, a later development, in the context of Śri Rāhuguptapāda's *Prakāśanāmaśrihevajrasādhana* and a work of Śrī Lakṣmī applying the moods to Tantric conduct, the erotic with the goddess Nairātmyā, the heroic in staying in a charnel ground, etc. Wayman 1991, 327-28. The nine moods are referred to in the *Vajra Rosary*'s famous discussion of the first words of the Tantra at VR 87A, ch. 59, v. 40 ("Getting turned on and getting to orgasm, being in the nine moods of the theater, and the thought of mantra and consort are the conduct of Vajrasattva; *rgod dang rtse mo byed pa dang/ gar gyi nyams dgur ldan pa dang/ sngags dang phyag gya rnam rtog pa/ rdo rje sems dpa'i spyod pa'o//*)."

"knowing as the moods of erotic and so forth awakens the process described above,"[1043] in which the yogi experiences the effects of trembling etc. When the Partial Inflation channel[1044] is filled in the context of the ecstasies, the yogi trembles, the erotic mood.[1045] The Destruction by Inflation channel[1046] causes the body hairs of the abdomen to stand up, showing what might be the wrathful mood.[1047] The *Nasara* channel[1048] causes the burning of the abdomen, which produces floating, which could be associated with the humorous mood.[1049] Development of the Tortoise channel[1050] causes the changing of colors, which could be associated with marvelous mood.[1051] Development of the Great Head channel[1052] causes fainting and pain, suggesting the mood of revulsion.[1053] Opening the Great 'Ur 'Ur channel[1054] makes your hair stand on end, the mood of terror.

[1043] *VR* 33B, ch. 17, v. 17.

[1044] This is the tenth of the sixty-four channels in the navel chakra. *VR* 33A, ch. 17, v. 10.

[1045] Tib. *sgeg pa*, Skt. *śṛṅgāra*. The correlation of the eight moods here is my own. Further research is in order.

[1046] I could not find a channel with this name.

[1047] Tib. *drag shul*, Skt. *raudra*.

[1048] I could not find a channel with this name.

[1049] Tib. *bshad gad*, Skt. *hāsya*.

[1050] Alex Wayman quotes a work of Ratnākaraśānti, the *Piṇḍikṛta-sādhanopāyikā-vṛtti-ratnāvali*, PTT, Vol. 62, p. 69-3, 4, that states *sku rdo rje ni rus sbal gyi rtsa* , "the body vajra is the Tortoise channel," which Wayman parenthetically indicates is "the right *nāḍī*, *i.e.* the *rasanā*, right main channel. Wayman 1991, 118. The Tortoise *energy-wind* is one of the five branch energy-winds.

[1051] Tib. *rmad byung*, Skt. *adbhuta*.

[1052] One of the channels of the heart chakra. *VR* 33B, ch. 17, v. 17.

[1053] Tib. *mi sdug pa*, Skt. *bibhatsa*.

[1054] So called because it makes the sound "rrrrrrrr." Personal Communication with Prof. Lozang Jamspal. This could be the Great Sound channel in the heart chakra. *VR* 33B, ch. 17, v. 17.

Developing the Great Ecstasy channel[1055] "causes tears to drip," consistent with the compassionate mood. And opening the Great Intoxication channel,[1056] which causes the life-energy energy-wind to dissolve, leading you to "experience trance, no-mind and great bliss"[1057] would be the last of the eight moods, the heroic.[1058]

Chapter fifty-seven is focused on the body, but from the point of view of the *Yoginī* Tantras, where the channels are the goddesses, "pervaded by all-bliss, expressed as the [male] deities."[1059] The four instants of Ecstasy and so forth and sexual activity from flirting to orgasm are explained as goddesses, as is the external consort, the yoginī, who rouses the channels of the body.[1060]

T. The Buddha Families

In chapter forty-three, the Tantra discusses the various Buddha families, starting with the five main ones discussed in the *Root Tantra*,[1061] "in order to train the element of

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[1055] This could refer to the Intoxicated by Great Ecstasy channel in the heart chakra. *VR* 33B, ch. 17, v. 17. In fact Alaṃka's version of the Tantra has "Great Ecstasy" for this channel. 127B.

[1056] Another of the channels of the heart chakra. Alaṃka 127B.

[1057] *VR* 65B, ch. 47, v. 7.

[1058] Tib. *dpa' bo*, Skt. *vira*.

[1059] *VR* 84A, ch. 57, vv. 1-2.

[1060] *Id.* vv. 3-4.

[1061] Alaṃka says that this appears "in the form of the Tantra, through the analysis of cause, effect and means" (*rgyud du zhes bya ba ni rgyu dang 'bras bu'i dang thabs kyi dbye bas rgyud kyi rnam pa la'o*). 214A.

living beings who are pervaded by the five addictions."[1062] The Tantra then notes that they are also divided into one-hundred families, but all can be expressed as Vajrasattva. There are countless ways of enumerating the families in accord with the various addictions and inclinations of sentient beings.[1063] There are as many Buddhas as there are channels, which, during the perfection stage, are reduced from 72,000 in stages by dividing by the one hundred clans and the twenty-four places until there are the three main channels that merge into the central channel, which then dissolves into clear light great bliss.[1064]

U. The Body Mandala

In both the creation and perfection stages the yogi imagines and then effectuates his body as a mansion containing all of the *Secret Community* deities, here numbered thirty-two. Chapter eighteen discusses the thirty-two deities of the *Secret Community* body mandala, the inhabitant mandala of the creation stage, and how the process of dissolution of the yogi's body mandala proceeds, with the sense media bodhisattvas such as Kṣitigarbha and so forth absorbing into the corresponding sense object goddesses such as Rūpavajrā and so forth, and the elemental goddesses such as Locanā dissolving into their corresponding Buddha, such as (in the case of Locanā) Vairocana, as Alaṃka

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[1062] Alaṃka 213B-214A. I believe the "element" here is the "Reality Sphere" or *dharmadhātu* discussed in chapter forty-one. *VR* 60B, ch. 41, v. 3. In the *Root Tantra*, the five clans are emanated, *see, e.g.,* Freemantle 1971, 75 ch. 13, vv. 30-42 ("Make the five Buddhas approach the maṇḍalas, then send them out by means of the five rays, and enlightenment will be attained; the emanation of all mantras is twofold, emanation and withdrawal should be done distinguishing between the three Vajra Bodies…."). Freemantle notes that "'twofold' refers to the two stages, that of creation and that of realization; 'emanation and withdrawal' belong to the stage of creation." *Id.* 159, n. 10.

[1063] *VR* 62A, ch. 43, vv. 4-6.

[1064] Alaṃka 214B -215B.

explains, "because the objective reality is not different from the phenomena."[1065] The five Buddhas themselves dissolve into the three vajras of body, speech and mind,[1066] and then into the singular reality/bliss.[1067] Here the *Vajra Rosary* also further describes dissolution as proceeding "into mere letter," which Alaṃka explains means "the mere form of experience, your own mind," then into "the drop," explained as "inexpressibility, with the nature of subtlety and knowing," then into "sound," meaning "natural clear light which is like resonating sound, then into "clear light," explained as "the thatness of emptiness that is free from all elaboration," [1068] and synonymous with "stainless enlightenment spirit, the great peace of Vajrasattva, wonderful non-dual wisdom, the bliss of the fourth empowerment and the supreme state of the four ecstasies."[1069]

Chapter forty-five summarizes in part the body mandala of the Secret Community Noble tradition, but only places relatively few of the thirty-two deities at particular parts of the body. The five aggregates are the five Buddhas: form is the "Conqueror of Conquerors," JINAJIK (Vairocana); consciousness the "Vajra Holder" VAJRADRIK (Akṣobhya); feeling the "Jewel Holder," RATNADRIK (Ratnasambhava); perception "Crossing Over from Cyclic Existence," AROLAṂKA (Amitābha); and compositional factors the "Wisdom Holder," PRAJÑĀDRIK (Amoghasiddhi).[1070] The elements are:

[1065] Alaṃka 135A. I have not seen this particular teaching on dissolution elsewhere.

[1066] The five Buddha clans being dissolved into three; as Alaṃka notes, "Ratnasambhava being dissolved into the class of delusion" (*i.e.* Vairocana), "because delusion and pride are one." Alaṃka 135A

[1067] *VR* 35A, ch. 18, v. 18.

[1068] *VR* 35A, ch. 18, v. 19; Alaṃka 135A.

[1069] *VR* 36B, ch. 18, vv. 20-21.

[1070] *VR* 64A, ch. 45, vv. 1-2; Alaṃka 27B.

earth as "Ignorance Ecstasy," MOHARATĪ (Locanā); water as "Hatred Ecstasy," DVEṢARATĪ (Māmakī); fire as "Passion Ecstasy," RĀGARATĪ; wind as "Vajra Ecstasy," VAJRARATĪ; and space as Vajradhatuiṣvarī.[1071] The five sense goddesses are: form as Rūpavajrā; sound Śabdavajrā; scent Gandhavajrā; taste Rasavajrā; and touch as Sparśavajrā, Vajradhatuiṣvarī. The sense media are the bodhisattvas: eyes are Kṣitigharba; ears Vajrapāṇi; nose Ākhāṣagharba; tongue Lokeśvara; body Avaranaviṣkambini; mind Samantabhadra; and the channels as Meitreya. Supreme wisdom is Mañśjuśrī, and "the entities of the body"[1072] are the ten Terrifics.[1073]

In chapter sixty-four, the body mandala of *Secret Community* practice is described in detail, with the deities of the Noble Tradition mandala placed on the body of the guru. As the Fourteenth Dalai Lama writes:

> The origins of the instructions on the *Lama Choepa* (guru yoga) practice are traced back to the explanatory tantra called Vajramala, in which the visualization of the mandala deities on the guru's body as explained according to Guhyasamaja and Heruka has great merit and advantages.[1074]

The five male and four female Buddhas are described as sitting in the various aggregates and elements, respectively.[1075] The bodhisattvas are placed on the sense organs, with Mañjughoṣa placed on the mental faculty and Sarvanirvaraṇaviṣkambhini "on the lump with the nature of the four elements."[1076] The Terrifics are placed at the

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[1071] *VR* 64A, ch. 45, v. 3; Alaṃka 27B.

[1072] *lus kyi chos rnams*, *VR* 64A, ch. 45, v. 7.

[1073] *VR* 64A, ch. 45, vv. 4-7; Alaṃka 27B.

[1074] T. Gyatso 1988, 11.

[1075] *VR* 94A, ch. 64, vv. 4-8.

[1076] *VR* 94A-B, ch. 64, vv. 9-12.

root of the hands, shoulders, mouth, secret place, knees, top of the head and bottom of the feet.[1077] The beginning of the chapter explains that the enlightenment spirit in the thirty-two channels in the crown chakra constitutes the body mandala;[1078] the division of the parts of the letters forms the speech mandala, with twenty-seven members;[1079] and the distinguishing of "the instincts of desire and so forth" is the mind mandala with twenty-eight parts.[1080]

Chapter sixty-eight also describes how the yogi's body transforms into the measureless mansion, very similar to the sadhana in use today, with parts of the yogi's body corresponding to, or becoming, the parts of the mansion, *e.g.* "the shins, thighs, biceps and forearms are explained as the eight pillars, eye consciousness as the mirrors…,"[1081] with the mind "stated as the central lotus, the conceptual energy-wind as the perfect support."[1082] The parts of the human body are analyzed in terms of their corresponding elements and Buddha families,[1083] and then various places in ancient India are put in correspondence with the places of the yogi's body.[1084]

[1077] *VR* 94B, ch. 64, vv. 13-16.

[1078] *VR* 93B-94A, ch. 64, vv. 1-2.

[1079] Consisting of the vowels, *a, ā, i, ī, u, ū, ri, rī, li, lī, e, ai,* and *o, au, aṃ, aḥ,* and the consonantal groups *ka, ca,*
ṭa, ta and *pa, ya, ra, la, wa, ṣa* (presumably standing for all three sibilants) and *ha,* for a total of twenty-seven. *VR* 94A, 95A, ch. 64, vv. 2, 22.

[1080] *VR* 94A, 95A, ch. 64, vv. 3, 23.

[1081] *VR* 101B, ch. 68, v. 22.

[1082] *VR* 101B, ch. 68, v. 25. The entire description can be found at *VR* 101B-102B, ch. 68, vv. 19-36.

[1083] *VR* 102B-103A, ch. 68, vv. 37-44.

[1084] *VR* 103A-B, ch. 68, vv. 45-50.

V. The Three Luminances

In ordinary death, first the coarse body dissolves, earth, water, fire, wind, then consciousness, then the subtle body dissolves and a trained yogi can perceive the so-called three luminances, luminance (*āloka, snang ba*), radiance (*ālokābhāsa, snang ba mched pa*) and imminence (*ālokopalabdha[ka], snang ba nye bar thob pa* or *nyer thob*). These states are employed by the yogi, particularly in mind isolation, as part of the elimination of the most subtle instincts and propensities, necessary to approach Buddhahood.

Chapter fifty-one, entitled "Explaining the Night and the Day in Detail," is short, profound, and not really about the night or the day. Lacking a commentary, what follows is my own interpretation.

The first verse says, "You should know the night," says Vajra Lord, "as wisdom." And, "having dissolved all the elements, [the yogi] goes, becoming part of the night as a moon, the moon being characteristic of Nirvana."[1085] This refers to yogic process of attaining liberation, through the steps of dissolution which are practiced in the creation stage, then actually done in the completion stage, where the elements and corresponding deities are dissolved, followed by the dissolution of the subtle body into luminance, whose subjectivity is described as a moonlit night sky, radiance or sunlight, imminence or completely darkness, followed by clear light.[1086] The moon can also refer to the

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[1085] *VR* 68B, ch. 50, v. 1.

[1086] In his discussion of uncommon synonyms, Tsong kha pa quotes the *PK*, in which wisdom is imagined as a moon disc and also notes that in the *PK* "luminance is the relative, radiance is the imaginary, and imminence is the perfect." Tsong kha pa 2010, 359. Chapter IV, v. 17 of the *PK* states in the first verse,

sambhogakāya or beatific body, a body made of energy-wind, in which the yogi arises after simulated or real death, and from which, out of compassion, s/he will emanate in the form of a Buddha.[1087]

The second verse points out that there are two types of wisdom – here referring to enlightenment – "conventional and ultimate," and that you should know both "as conventional objects of knowledge," reminding us not to get carried away with the thought of the "ultimate," which, like the conventional, is merely a dependent designation. That being said, the Tantra tells us that "the ultimate wisdom abandons touch," which refers to the *sambhogakāya*, in which form the yogi/buddha cannot interact with ordinary beings and things. Blissful as that state may be, the Tantra tells us that there is a problem: "Whatever bliss is free from touch, that bliss is hard to attain."

The solution is found in the third verse: "The day is explained as means," completing the wisdom/means pairing. "At that time the real thing is born: the Sun."[1088] Lest there be any doubt to whom this refers, the Tantra adds, "He always becomes the Lord of the *bhaga*."[1089] So, as means, the yogi/buddha arises from the *sambhogakāya* into the *nirmāṇakāya* or emanation body, and is born in human form as Buddha and can now interact with the world.

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mtshan mo snang ba'i cha ste gsal ba'i nyi ma'i zer 'gyed snang ba mched pa yin, "the night is the part of luminance; the spread of sun rays is radiance." Toh. 1802. *See* Thurman 1995, 257.

[1087] *See, e.g.,* K. Gyatso 1982, 95-101.

[1088] *Gang tse dngos las skes nyi ma*. *VR* 68B, ch. 50, v. 3.

[1089] *Id.,* The *VR* refers to the "Buddha Sun" in other places as well: 6A, ch.1, v. 36 (only Alaṃka's version has "sun": "Oh Lord! Sun of the Wisdom Vajra!" Alaṃka 19B; *VR* 12B, ch. 4, v. 1 ("Sun of the three vajras"); *VR* 51B, ch. 28, v. 6 ("The clear light of the Buddha Sun").

The interaction between the moon, *sambhogakāya*, and the sun, *nirmāṇakāya* is explained by the fourth verse: "The worldly aspect becomes the Sun. From the Sun, the moon is born." This refers to crucial fact that all evolution takes place in the world, where "touch" is indeed found, where the teachings of a buddha can be heard and give rise to the evolution of others, who practice the completion stage, attain liberation, than emanate to continue the cycle. The moon and the sun, the Tantra says, are, in reality, non-dual, "But,/ In order to blaze,/ He becomes the Sun/."[1090]

Finally, again lest we be carried away into thinking that any of this has any inherent super-reality that isn't entirely empty, in the last verse of the chapter the Tantra says: "The ultimate that is/ Subjected to analysis,/ And the body that is/ Free from passion,/ Subtle, invisible and empty,/ And the peaceful state/ Of clear light,/ Do not abide anywhere."[1091]

The next chapter, fifty-two, concerns itself with "Explaining the Vowels and Consonants in Detail," but here the Tantra is not talking about grammar. Rather, the vowels are luminance[1092] and the consonants radiance, "produced from the state of clear light."[1093] "From the secret joining of these two,[1094] great bliss which is produced in the

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[1090] *De las gnyis med ngo bor bshad/ 'bar ba'i phyir ni nyi mar 'gyur*. *VR* 68B, ch. 50, v. 4.

[1091] *VR* 69A, ch. 51, v. 5.

[1092] *VR* 69A, ch. 52, v. 3.

[1093] *Id*., v. 2. *See also* Tsong kha pa 2010, 293-94 (summarizing the *Root Text of the Concise Five Stages*, attributed to Nāropa, to the same effect).

[1094] *I.e.* the joining of luminance and radiance. Because this chapter is preceded by the chapter on the night and the day, *i.e.* luminance and radiance, and followed by the chapter on the "interval" just preceding enlightenment, one wonders if the "joining" of luminance and radiance, manifested by the joining of the drop of white enlightenment spirit from the crown and the red female hormonal substance from below, is a reference to luminance-imminence, *nyer thob*, *saṃdhyalokopalabdhaḥ*, usually characterized by utter darkness, a reference absent here.

center is 'the commitment of the alphabet."[1095] While the Tantra provides no further details on this practice, Tsong kha pa notes that "you will achieve the clear light of retention…with the yoga of the subtle vowels and consonants abiding in the navel channel…."[1096]

Having described the "night and day" in chapter fifty-one as luminance and radiance, respectively, in chapter fifty-three the Tantra turns to the "interval," *mtshams*. The context here is the very final stages of the enlightenment process, particularly the fourth of the five stages, *abhisaṃbodhi*, manifest enlightenment.[1097]

The interval is the very instant, so subtle as to be "inconceivable,"[1098] before manifest enlightenment. It is "free from light and non-light,"[1099] *i.e.* it is visible and invisible, apparent and non-apparent. It arises from the wisdom vajra,[1100] "the supremely peaceful place at the peak of the knot, like the core of a pea."[1101] While the interval is not the end,[1102] it is this instant – the interval -- which "purifies cyclic existence,"[1103] and, in

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[1095] *VR* 69A, ch. 52, v. 4.

[1096] Tsong kha pa ascribes this to Tathāgatavajra, but does not identify the work. Tsong kha pa 2010, 211.

[1097] Tsong kha pa discusses *mtshams*, "interval" or "twilight" in some detail, and explains the *Five Stages*' discussion of the term in the context of this stage of manifest enlightenment in his *The Ultimate Personal Instruction: Explanation of the Stage of Manifest Enlightenment*, *Man ngag gi mthar thug mngon par byang chub pa'i rim pa'i bshad pa rjes mdzad pa bzhugs so*.

[1098] *VR* 69A, ch. 53, v. 3.

[1099] *VR* 69A, ch. 53, v. 1.

[1100] *Id.* The wisdom vajra is "in the lotus bud of the heart, flanked by the Life-energy energy-wind above and the Evacuative energy-wind below." *VR* 15A, ch. 6, v. 8.

[1101] *VR* 69A-B, ch. 53, v. 5.

[1102] *Mthar ni yang dag mi 'gro gnag*, "the interval, not going to the end." *Id.* v. 3.

[1103] The interval is the subject of the *PK*'s chapter 4, vv. 17-18:

> 17. The night is the part of luminance; the spreading of the sun rays is luminance-radiance; and luminance-imminence is engaged repeatedly through your own instinctual natures. What is neither night nor day nor the interval is free of the instinctual natures. It is explained by the guru the moment of enlightenment, the object of the yogi.
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> 18. The end of the interval goes beyond the entire mass of imperishable darkness and, here, the instant before the sun rises is explained as the stainless, perfect end. The supreme master teaches outer enlightenment to the disciple, dispelling the darkness [*vinihatatimiro* as contrasted with *rab rib bral bas,* "impartially."] In an instant, he will achieve the unpolluted inner bliss of a Buddha's enlightenment.

(My translation). The Tibetan is,

> 17. *mtshan mo snang ba'i cha ste gsal ba nyi ma'i zer 'gyed snang ba mched pa yin/*
> *mtshams ni snang ba thob par rang gi gang bzhin rnams kyis lan cig min par 'gro/*
> *mtshan min nyin par ma yin mtshams min gang zhig rang bzhin rnams dang rnam bral ba/*
> *de ni byang chub skad cig yin par bla ma mchog bshad rnal 'byor pa nyid yul//*
>
> 18. *mtshams kyi mtha' ni 'jig min mun nag tshogs ni ma lus gang du 'das pa dang/*
> *ji srid nyi ma ma shar skad cig 'dir ni dri med yang dag mtha' ru bshad/*
> *slob dpon mchog ni rab rib bral bas slob ma la ni phyi rol byang chub bstan/*
> *nang gi bde ba rnyog bral sangs rgyas byang chub skad cig dag gis thob par 'gyur//*

and the Sanskrit:

> 17. Āloko rātribhāgaḥ sphuṭaravikiraṇaḥ syād divālokabhāsaḥ saṃdhyālokopalabdhaḥ prakrtibhir asakṛd yujyate svābhir etat | no rātrir nāpi saṃdhyā na ca bhavati divā yaḥ prakṛtyā vimuktaḥ sa syād bodhi[sattva]kṣaṇo' yaṃ varagurukathito yo [30 A] ginām eva gamyaḥ
>
> 18. Naiçaṃ dhvantaṃ vinastaṃ vyapagatam akhilaṃ sāṃdhya-tejas yasmin bhāsvān nodeti yāvat kṣaṇa iha vimale darçayed bhūtakoṭim | Çisyāyacāryamukhyo vinihatatimiro bāhyasambo-dhidṛṣtyā prāpnoty adhyātmasaukhyaṃ vyapagatakaluṣaṃ buddhabodhiṃ kṣaṇena.

La Vallée Poussin 1896, 42.

See also Thurman 1995, 257. In his *The Ultimate Personal Instruction: Explanation of the Stage of Manifest Enlightenment*, *man ngag gi mthar thug mngon par byang chub pa'i rim pa'i bshad pa rjes mdzad pa bzhugs so*, Tsong kha pa, explaining this passage from the *PK,* says: "By 'The night is the part of luminance; the spreading of the sun rays is luminance-radiance; and luminance-imminence is engaged repeatedly through your own instinctual natures' [and] by 'What is neither night nor day nor the interval is free of the instinctual natures,' [Nāgārjuna means that] it is the joining of the four emptinesses and the dawn." 7B (my translation). The role of the instinctual natures [*rang bzhin*, *praṛkti*] in the stages beyond mind isolation is a topic requiring further research. Denma Löcho Rinpoche explained to me that the instinctual natures are eliminated at the end of mind isolation and that the reverse *nyer thob* that follows final mind isolation does not have the "fainting" that follows dissolution of the seven ignorance instincts, so that there would be no "interval" or "gap" there. Personal Communication 10/7/08. Professor Thurman strongly disagrees with my translation of verse 17, and would translate it: "Twilight is luminant imminence, and gradually one's instinctual natures become nonexistent."

In the *BIL*, Tsong kha pa puts it, "[T]he process of birth and death is caused by wind-energy, and the arisal of the four voids is during the period between the dissolving and arising of the energy mobilizing the natural instincts. Thus, the natural instincts are derived from the increased movement of the three

particular, purifies the consummate sense experience of union with "Vajradhara's queen," as it purifies the interval between this life and the next one for any sentient being.[1104]

"Deathlessly born from the vajra and lotus," *i.e.* from sexual yoga, "it perfectly mixes with the moon and the sun," which probably includes both mixing with luminance and radiance, and, "abiding in the center," with the left and right main channels. [1105] Because at this stage, the Night Lord, *i.e.* enlightenment spirit, arises, "the upper state," perhaps referring to the drawing of enlightenment spirit to the crown, remains in the form of some drops, some of which are also abandoned and some of which are unobservable.[1106]

W. Etymology as Esoteric Instruction

The *Vajra Rosary* is most well know, via the *PU*, for its etymological analysis of the first forty syllables of the Tantra, which are the same as the *Secret Community Root Tantra.* That is not however, the only way in which the Tantra employs this technique.

In chapter forty-eight, the Tantra explores the esoteric meanings of the word *ahaṃ*, Sanskrit for "I," another of the *Vajra Rosary*'s many ways to liberation:

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luminances, and thus it is said that the three luminances are the root of the natural instincts of all beings." Tsong kha pa 2010, 256.

Given the language of *PK*, chapter 4, verse 17, it appears that the instinctual natures are still, somehow, active, even their "last traces" as Prof. Thurman says. If that is the case, how are they active? I wonder whether, at this final stage, the instincts have been purged of their "negative" aspects and operate as pure energy, fueling the transformation to Buddhahood, much in the way that the entire subtle body is transformed into energy/deity, which then operates in Buddhahood, where a Buddha uses anything and everything in the service of enlightened activities. Or, perhaps, following Tsong kha pa's statement in the *BIL* above, the instincts exist during luminance etc., but are not "mobilized."

[1104] *VR* 69A, ch. 53, v. 4.

[1105] *VR* 69A, ch. 53, v. 2.

[1106] *VR* 69A, ch. 53, v. 6.

"Whoever perfectly knows the support of the word "I" exhausts the fetters of the wheel of A HAṂ, the character of the fetters of cyclic existence…."[1107]

A, "the most supreme of all forms,"[1108] "is the exhalation of the Tathāgatas, skilled in making the emanation body and achieving all aims."[1109] HAṂ "dwells in the body but does not produce the body…abandoning all forms…the essence of the Truth Body."[1110] It is "the out-breath of the mind of Vajradhara, free from achieving all aims."[1111] HAṂ is located at the hairline, "spreading a thousand rays of light," and A at the navel, "as a moon."[1112] A is the Life-energy energy-wind and HAṂ the Evacuative.[1113] When A and HAṂ come together, there is cyclic existence, which is therefore known as "A HAṂ."[1114] Yet, "dwelling free from conceptuality, A HAṂ does not abide anywhere."[1115]

Chapters fifty-eight and fifty-nine explain the first words of the *Secret Community Root Tantra*. This chapter starts with the first word, EVAM, Sanskrit for "Thus," as in "Thus have I heard," the beginning words of many Tantras and Sutras.[1116] Starting with

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[1107] *VR* 65B, ch. 48, v. 1.

[1108] *VR* 65B, ch. 48, v. 2.

[1109] *VR* 66A, ch. 48, v. 3.

[1110] *VR* 66A, ch. 48, vv. 4-5.

[1111] *VR* 66A, ch. 48, v. 6.

[1112] *VR* 66A, ch. 48, v. 9.

[1113] *VR* 66A, ch. 48, v. 10.

[1114] *VR* 66A, ch. 48, v. 11.

[1115] *VR* 66A, ch. 48, v. 12.

[1116] The *Vajra Rosary* says that "two seals are stated at the beginning of the Tantras," *VR* 84B, ch. 58, v. 3, and is "the epitome of the meaning of all Tantras." *Id.* v. 8.

the classic sutra definition, E is explained as emptiness; VAM as compassion.[1117] Moving to the Tantric sphere, the union of E and VAM yields a "drop," the product of "wonderful, supreme yoga."[1118] E is Buddha and VAM the Reality Seal; E as the support, the lotus or vagina, and VAM the supported, the vajra or penis.[1119] In E, the "sphere of secret space or the lotus of the triangular vagina," sits VAM, Vajrasattva, who also represents Yamāntaka, Heruka, Kālacakra, the Primordial Buddha and so on.[1120] "Whoever lacks the two syllables E VAM," the Tantra concludes here, "lacks reality."[1121]

Chapter fifty-nine, due to its exegesis in Candrakīrti's *PU*,[1122] is the most famous part of the *Vajra Rosary*, and the only chapter for which we have, at least to my present knowledge, a significant portion in Sanskrit. Here, the Tantra explains the first forty syllables of the *Secret Community Root Tantr*a: *Evaṃ mayā śrutam ekasmin samaye bhagavān sarva tathāgata kaya vāk citta hṛdaya vajra yoṣid bhageṣu vijahāra*, "Thus have I heard: Once the Blessed One was dwelling in the vaginas of the vajra consort of

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[1117] *VR* 84A-B, ch. 58, v. 1.

[1118] *VR* 84B, ch. 58, v. 2.

[1119] *Id.,* vv. 3-4.

[1120] *Id.,* vv. 5-6.

[1121] *VR* 84B-85A, ch. 58, v. 10.

[1122] *See CG*, 78 *et seq.*

the essence of the body, speech and mind of all the Tathāgatas."[1123] The verses explain a full range of completion and creation stage practice in the *Secret Community* system.[1124]

It was not for nothing that Alex Wayman subtitled his book on the subject as "The Arcane Lore of the Forty Verses," because, without the guidance of commentary, they are indeed difficult to understand. Here, the difficulties of translating are most manifest. In many cases, the Tibetan verse is lyrical and not particularly grammatical. Although we have the *PU* version, or, at least, *a PU* version of the Sanskrit, it is difficult to give the *PU* Sanskrit version of the *Vajra Rosary* verses in chapter fifty-nine priority over the Tibetan translation because, even though the *Vajra Rosary* was expressed (in written or oral form) in Sanskrit before it was translated into Tibetan, the eleventh century translators and the fourteenth century commentators like Tsong kha pa probably had many more versions of the Sanskrit than we do. Thus, even though my intent here is to represent the *Vajra Rosary* as much as possible as it was found by Mantrakalaśa for Zhi ba 'od without later (perhaps apologetic) commentary, the commentary is very helpful in making sense of the verses. However, we must remember that it *is* commentary from hundreds of years after the recovery of the text, and does not necessarily reflect the principal meaning intended by the author(s) of the *Vajra Rosary*. Each of the Sanskrit

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[1123] This chapter of the *Vajra Rosary*, as repeated and commented upon in the *PU*, is the subject of Alex Wayman's *Yoga of the Guhyasamājatantra, The Arcane Lore of Forty Verses*, Wayman 1991. Wayman sought to place the verses interpreting the *nidāna* syllables in the context of later commentary. In the spirit of the case study of the *Vajra Rosary* my approach is different: understanding these verses in the overall context of the *Vajra Rosary* itself. In his study, Wayman generally does not do this.

[1124] Wayman notes that "repeated consideration of these forty verses with great labor of collecting commentarial materials for them, finally convinced me that they represent a sequence of yoga…." Wayman 1991, 173. Wayman rejects the only grouping of the *nidāna* verses he found, that of Kumāra in his brief commentary, *Ṭippaṇīhṛdayādarśa*, and proposes his own. 175-80.

verses corresponding to the forty syllables has the syllable in question in the first word of the commentary, a fine mnemonic device.[1125]

The first syllable, E, is "holy wisdom, the nature of the instant free from passion,"[1126] recalling the third ecstasy, Transcendent Ecstasy, and the instant of Overcoming, described in chapter twenty of the *Vajra Rosary*. In his *CG*, or "*Annotated Commentary*" on the verse as repeated in the *PU*, Tsong kha pa notes that this refers to the first stage of the dissolution of the subtle body, luminance, and in particular to the thirty-three instinctual natures associated with aversion.[1127] The second syllable, VAM, refers to "means," "the "consciousness which is radiance, like rising bamboo…producing lust,"[1128] explained by the *PU* and Tsong kha pa as the second stage of subtle body dissolution, when the forty instinctual natures associated with attachment become predominant after dissolution of those of aversion.[1129]

MA, the third syllable of the *nidāna*, expresses ignorance, "the very root of great knowledge,"[1130] which Tsong kha pa explains is the third of the subtle body dissolutions, or, going in reverse from clear light in the birth process, the first step in reincarnation, imminence.[1131] Going in reverse towards birth, the other luminances, radiance and

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[1125] For example, E – *ekāro*; VAM – *vaṃśas*; MA – *mahāvidyā*; YĀ – *yāti*; ŚRU – *śrutaṃ*; TAM – *tam*; E – *eṣo*; KA – *kaḥ*; SMIN – *asmiṃś*; and so forth.

[1126] *VR* 85A, ch. 59, v. 2.

[1127] For a list of these, *see* Wayman 1991, 185 and Wedemeyer 2007, 775-78.

[1128] *VR* 85A, ch. 59, v.3.

[1129] *CG,* 79.

[1130] *VR* 85A, ch. 59, v. 4.

[1131] *'od gsal rang nyid kyi rtsa ba ni ma rig pa'o/ zhes sbrel bas nyer thob bstan te, "*Through connecting [the verse], 'The root of it, clear light, is ignorance,' he teaches imminence." *CG,* 80.

luminance, arise in turn. YĀ describes luminance, "the name of that first of the three consciousnesses of migrators," which transforms into "great emptiness," *i.e.* imminence, and then into "clear light."[1132] SHRŪ again equates the three subtle consciousnesses of luminance, radiance and imminence with the root of the instinctual natures of all sentient beings.[1133] TAM represents the rise of the energy-winds in the reverse order, that of birth, that grasp the five sensory objects of each luminance.[1134]

E is the great element of wind, which is the mount of the three luminance-consciousnesses, and propels them as they take the form of the instinctual natures, as explained in more detail in chapter thirty-two of the *Vajra Rosary*.[1135] KA continues the description of the progress of the embryo, with consciousness combining with the four elements.[1136] SMIN stands for the five elements becoming the five aggregates, SA for the five wisdoms, and MA for the five sense media. [1137]

What appears to be a description of dissolution of the subtle body followed by reincarnation of the subtle followed by the gross body is now followed by a reference to breath control, *prāṇayāma*, in the verse on YE, which, assuming there is a carefully scripted order to these verses,[1138] would be the key to understanding the sequence up until

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[1132] *VR* 85A, ch. 59, v. 5.

[1133] *VR* 85A-B, ch. 59, v. 6.

[1134] *VR* 85B, ch. 59, v. 7.

[1135] *VR* 85B, ch. 59, v. 8. However, there is an important distinction. Although the *PU* and the *CG* (and Wayman, citing *VR* ch. 32) describe this "wind" as one of the four elements, *i.e.* wind, fire, water and earth, chapter thirty-two describes it as the Life-Energy energy-wind. *VR* 54B, ch. 32, v. 6; Alaṃka 190A-B. The *PU* and *CG* do not link the wind described here to the energy-winds described in chapter thirty-two.

[1136] *VR* 85B, ch. 59, v. 9.

[1137] *Id.,* vv. 10-12.

[1138] Wayman's schema for the forty verses is as follows:

this point as being one of yogic practice, of *simulated* dissolution.[1139] YE describes the practice of breath control, done in conjunction with the silent recitation of OṂ ĀḤ HŪṂ.[1140]

BHĀ[1141] represents how, from the three luminances,[1142] the instinctual natures again arise, and depending on virtuous or non-virtuous karma, birth in a good or bad state

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I. The Stage of Generation.

A. Evaṃ mayā śrutam.	Yoga (=Sevā)
B. Ekasmin samaye.	Anyuoga (= Upasādhana)
C. Bhagavān Sarva.	Atiyoga (=Sādhana)
D. Tathāgata.	Mahāyoga (= Mahāsādhana)

II. The Stage of Completion.

E. Kāyavākcitta.	Pratyāhāra and Dhyāna (= kāyaviveka) Prāṇāyāma (= Vajrajāpa) Dhāraṇā (= Cittavisuddhi and Svādhiṣṭhāna – Sevā
F. Hṛdaya-vajrayoṣid.	Anusmṛti (= Abhisaṃbodhi) – Upasādhana
G. Bhageṣu vijahāra	Samādhi (= Yuganaddha) – Sādhana and Mahāsādhana

Wayman 1991, 178. One need not agree with all of Wayman's conclusions, most of which are buttressed by commentarial works (*see id.* 180 for a list of the main ones used) to appreciate the immense value of his commentary as a teaching tool. Whether the author(s) of the *Vajra Rosary* intended these forty verses to be a *complete* guide to the practices leading to enlightenment is another, probably unanswerable, question; they certainly contain much of that path. While Wayman may not have been Indian or Tibetan (at least in his most recent life), his commentary deserves to be part of the literature and amply deserves and rewards study.

[1139] Wayman analyzes *evaṃ mayā śrutam ekasmin samaye* as pertaining to the creation stage yoga practices of *yoga* and *anuyoga*. Wayman 1991, 178. Of course, up until YE, the description also pertains to ordinary life, death and re-birth. Drawing on the *BIL*, Wayman notes the correspondences between the ordinary "basic time" and the extraordinary "path time" of the five stages of completion as follows:

Basic Time	*Time of the Path*
1. Inhalation and Exhalation	Diamond Muttering [Vajra Repetition]
2. Dissolution of the elements	Purification of the Mind [Mind Isolation]
3. Clear Light of Death	Personal Blessing [Illusory Body]
4. Intermediate State body	Revelation-Enlightenment [Manifest Enlightenment]
5. Birth	Pair-united [Integration]

Wayman 1991, 223.

[1140] *VR* 85B, ch. 59, v. 13.

follows.[1143] GA identifies the five aggregates with the five Buddhas and the "five types of perfect enlightenment."[1144] With VAN, "one with nature of the three wisdoms" knows the four elements as the four elemental goddesses, Locanā etc., "bestowing a Buddha's enlightenment."[1145] SA represents the bodies of the Tathāgatas, and the bodhisattvas associated with the six sense media, Kṣitigharba etc. in the *Secret Community* mandala and body mandala.[1146] RVA describes the ten Terrifics in their places in the mandala and body mandala,[1147] and TA makes the crucial point that "the different gods and goddesses do not exist, but are taught for the sake of living beings."[1148]

Thus, with THĀ, the yogi, experiencing the three luminances, should contemplate all kinds of sense objects.[1149] With GA the sense powers of the yogi go to their respective objects, both being "mere luminance,"[1150] the experience of which, according to Tsong kha pa, is "just the mere bliss void inseparable wisdom of the three

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[1141] BHA in the *CG*. 84.

[1142] At least that is how it is glossed in the *CG*: "The conceptual instinctive natures again arise from these three luminances," *snang ba gsum po 'di las rang bzhin gyi rtog pa rnams slar yang 'byung ba*. 84.

[1143] *VR* 85B, ch. 59, v. 14.

[1144] *VR* 86A, ch. 59,. v. 15.

[1145] *Id.,* v. 16. The *CG* explains that one with the "nature of the three wisdoms" is one who has experience "of the three, luminance, radiance and imminence, after engaging in meditative equipoise relying on the subtle mediation on the lower door," *'og sgo'i phra mo bsgoms pa la brten nas mnyam gzhag tu snang mched thob gsum gyi ye shes bdag nyid can gsum*, *CG,* 85, *i.e.* mastering the subtle creation stage.

[1146] *Id.,* v. 17.

[1147] *Id.,* v. 18.

[1148] *Id.,* v. 19.

[1149] *Id.,* v. 20.

[1150] *Id.,* v. 21.

luminances."[1151] Logically following from this, with TA, when the sense power reaches its object, the yogi should make an offering.[1152] KĀ states that in the creation stage[1153] the three Buddha bodies, *Dharmakāya* or Truth Body, *Saṃbhogakāya* or Beatific Body, and *Nirmāṇakāya* or Emanation Body are taught as different, but in the perfection stage "they transform into one."[1154] YA represents the purification of those seemingly different and conventionally true characteristics of the body of a Buddha (per the *CG*, the illusory body)[1155] through immersion in the clear light consciousness of the perfection stage.[1156] This purified illusory body, the object of "the path of words," *i.e.* mantra or vajra repetition, as VĀK, has "the nature of wisdom" and "in order to benefit sentient beings, manifests just like a rainbow."[1157] With CIT, the correspondences of the three luminances are explored: luminance as mind (*citta*, *sems*), wisdom and emptiness; radiance as mental function (*caitasika*, *sems byung*) and extreme emptiness; and imminence as ignorance and great emptiness.[1158] And TA explains that the yogi knowing the nature of the three luminances and the instinctual natures abandoned with each,

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[1151] *snang ba gsum gyi ye shes kyi bde stong dbyer med pa tsam nyid do*. *CG,* 88.

[1152] *VR* 86A, ch. 59, v. 22.

[1153] *CG,* 89.

[1154] *VR* 86A-B, ch. 59, v. 23.

[1155] *CG,* 90.

[1156] *VR* 86B, ch. 59, v. 23.v. 24.

[1157] *Id.,* v. 25.

[1158] *Id.,* v. 26.

should then engage in the "conduct" (*caryā*, *spyod pa*)[1159] and thus will attain the vajra body.[1160]

HRI describes the emanation body, in which the Tathāgata "abides conventionally… engaging in desires just as he wishes,"[1161] and with DA, "forcefully taking the perfection of the Buddhas, you practice."[1162] Similarly, with YA, the "Prince of Yogis can do whatever he wants without obstruction, always remaining entranced by the yoga of non-entrancement."[1163] With VA, "by uniting vajra and lotus, you know the parts of the three wisdoms,[1164]…always dwelling in bliss,"[1165] and in JRA, "by illusion-like concentration, you play with all things."[1166] YO is, not surprisingly, for yoga,[1167] particularly, according to the *PU*, the yoga of the illusory body.[1168] SHĪ because one has also accomplished the cessations, abandoning activity and non-activity.[1169] Here the Lhasa *Vajra Rosary* adds the syllable BHE, lacking in the *PU*, which assimilates it to the

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[1159] Tsong kha pa says that the "conduct" meant here is that for attaining the illusory body as well as "learner's union," but not that of "non-learner's union." *CG,* 91.

[1160] *Id.,* v. 27.

[1161] *VR* 86B, ch. 58, v. 28

[1162] *Id.,* v. 29.

[1163] *Id.,* v. 30 (*mnyam par ma bzhag rnal 'byor gyis/ rtag tu mnyam par 'jog par 'gyur).*

[1164] Per the *PU* and *CG,* luminance, radiance and imminence. *CG,* 93.

[1165] *Id.,* v. 31.

[1166] *VR* 86B-87A, ch. 58, v. 32. According to the *CG,* it is called vajra, "hard," because it is *jimbha*, "swollen" or "stretched." *CG,* 93.

[1167] *VR* 87A, ch. 58, v. 33.

[1168] *CG,* 93.

[1169] *VR* 87A, ch. 58, v. 34.

discussion of SHĪ, stating that just as the lotus is untainted by mud, the yogi's essence is uncorrupted.[1170]

BHA concerns itself with the yogin as a member of a Buddha family, "engaging the entire world realm with [his] wisdom body."[1171] GE states that the yogi's home is wherever he is engaged in great bliss, and SHU explains that the conventions of twilight, day and night are used to express the three luminances.[1172] These verses show the yogi, in the state of integration, re-entering the world of beings and the conventional. There, with BI, the yogi uses conventional names, with JA experiences the betweens of birth, living and death, all of which is really the energy-wind of mind, with HA experiences the various moods and sexual yoga, and, finally, with RA, has the form of natural clear light.[1173]

X. The Five Stages and (Two Systems of) Six Yogas of the Perfection Stage

According to the seminal commentary of the Noble Tradition, *The Five Stages,* the five stages of the perfection stage are: (1) the vajra repetition stage (*vajrajāpa, rdo rje bzlas pa*), leading to speech isolation (*vag-viveka, ngag dben ba'i*); (2) the universally pure stage (*sarvaśuddhiviśuddhi*), leading to mind isolation (*citta-viveka, sems dben*); (3) the self-consecration stage (*svādhiṣṭāna, bdag la byin brlab*), leading to the illusory body (*māyākāya, sgyu lus*); (4) the supremely secret bliss enlightenment stage (*parama-*

[1170] *Id. See CG,* 95.

[1171] *VR* 87A, ch. 58, v. 35.

[1172] *Id.,* vv. 36-37.

[1173] *VR* 87A-B, ch. 58, vv. 38-41. Extensive further discussion of the *nidāna* verses is found in the *PU,* the *CG* and Wayman 1991.

rahasya-sukhābhisambodhi-krama) leading to manifest enlightenment (*abhisaṃbhodi, mngon par byang chub*); and (5) integration (*yuganaddha-krama*, *zung du 'jug pa*). There are a variety of synonyms for these stages used in the literature.[1174] According to Tsong kha pa, "the Noble [Nāgārjuna] makes the perfection stage into five stages, taking the vajra recitation as the first, which follows the system in the final chapter of the Explanatory Tantra *Vajra Rosary*."[1175]

The six yogas, which are stated in the *Secret Community Further Tantra,*[1176] are ancient, almost the same as those in the *Maitrī Upaniṣad*:[1177] (1) withdrawal (*pratyāhāra, so sor sdud*); (2) absorption (*dhyāna, bsam gtan*); (3) breath control (*prāṇāyāma, srog rtsol*); (4) retention (*dhāraṇā, dzin pa*); (5) recollection (*anusmṛti, rjes su dran*); and (6) concentration (*samādhi, ting 'dzin*). The five stages and the six yogas are two ways of conceptualizing steps towards the inconceivable. The *Vajra Rosary* discusses both schema.[1178] Since these stages and yogas encompass the entire perfection stage, in a sense, most of the Tantra concerns them. Here, however, I will only discuss the more explicit references or clear or probable applicability of these stages and yogas.

Chapter ten concerns itself with the many levels of the Tantric commitment of "eating," which is interpreted in terms of each of the five stages. There are many levels

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[1174] *See* Wedemeyer 2007, 49-53.

[1175] Tsong kha pa 2010, 157.

[1176] *I.e.* chapter eighteen of the *Secret Community Root Tantra,* considered to be an explanatory Tantra.

[1177] Wayman 1977, 164.

[1178] Tsong kha pa has an extensive discussion of the various Indian and Tibetan commentators who sought to reconcile the five stages with the six yogas. Tsong kha pa 2010, 159-178. Wayman equates *prāṇāyāma* with *vajrajāpa*; *dhāraṇā* with *sarvaśuddhiviśuddhi* and *svādhiṣṭāna*; *anusmṛti* with *abhisaṃbhodi*; and *samādhi* with *yuganaddha*. Wayman 1977 at 173.

of meaning here. "Eating" refers to the inner offering of the creation stage,[1179] as well as that of the student ingesting enlightenment spirit during the second, "secret," initiation, where the student eats from the "lotus vessel." In the perfection stage, the yogi "eats" the conceptual energy-winds, Alaṃka explains, referring to the state of vajra-repetition whose aim is speech isolation.[1180] He then "perfectly unites with the three [types of] consorts,"[1181] which Alaṃka explains refers to both the three kinds of consorts and the three luminances, leading to the yogi eating "in the vessel explained as the Great Seal,"[1182] which Alaṃka explains refers to clear light and mind isolation, reversing the one-hundred six[1183] instinctual natures.[1184] The commitment continues with the yogi performing the commitments of self-consecration and the illusory body, and the last two of the five stages, manifest enlightenment and integration, as well as commitments of both the *Mahāyoga* and *Yoginī* Tantras. Throughout, the yogi "drinks compassion,"[1185]

[1179] Alaṃka explains that each of the meats represents a commitment of one of the five Buddhas:

> [I]t states "elephant" etc. because of the great size of the body like an elephant, the form of Vairocana. ["]Horse["] because of going quickly, because of the essence of purifying the wind element, the form of Amoghasiddhi. ["]Dog["] because of having a long tongue, the form of Amitābha. ["]Cow["] the form of Ratnasambhava because it is known as wealth. "human" because of having a consciousness like a person, the form of Akṣobhya.

Alaṃka 75B.

[1180] Alaṃka 76B.

[1181] *VR* 20B, ch. 10, v. 11.

[1182] *VR* 20B, ch. 10, v. 11.

[1183] In the *CMP*, Āryadeva refers to "the hundred and sixty instinctual natures." Wedemeyer 1999, 349.

[1184] Alaṃka 76B-77A.

[1185] *VR* 20B, ch. 10, v. 5.

in that, explains Alaṃka, he does not "abandon… the mind [inclined] towards the benefit of sentient beings."[1186]

Chapter fifteen of the Tantra states that the practice of vajra repetition is part of the "three yogas,"[1187] which Alaṃka identifies as part of each stage of Tantra: in the creation stage, beginner yoga, supreme maṇḍala triumph and supreme evolutionary triumph, together with the division of the hundred families,[1188] all part of the *Secret Community* sadhana, which result in body isolation, the first of the six stages[1189] described by Alaṃka; in vajra repetition, the inhalation, holding and exhalation with the three syllables, leading to the first of the five stages of the perfection stage, speech isolation, the second stage; luminance, radiance and imminence, leading to mind isolation, the third; the bodies of truth, enjoyment and emanation in connection with the illusory body, the fourth; "the result of which is the isolation of conventional truth;" in the stage of manifest enlightenment, the fifth stage; and emptiness, extreme emptiness and great emptiness, leading to the natural clear light of universal emptiness; and in the

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[1186] Alaṃka 75B.

[1187] *VR* 28A, ch. 15, v. 12.

[1188] In the Supreme Maṇḍala Triumph, the maṇḍala absorbs the ordinary world; in the Supreme Evolutionary Triumph, the mandala's activity triumphs over normal worldly evolutionary actions; and in the hundred clans practice there is a deity in every part of the body, not just the body maṇḍala. So here, the subtle creation stage is merging into the beginning level of the perfection stage. There is no perception of ordinariness: *e.g.* your fingernail is Locanā. The body is isolated from perception of anything ordinary. Shit becomes elixir. So body isolation has two aspects, creation stage and perfection stage. Personal Communication with Robert Thurman, 2/22/06. *See also* Cozort 1986, 51; Lodoe 1995, 42-45.

[1189] *See* Alaṃka 108B. In this, Alaṃka is following the *Root Secret Community Tantra*'s sixth chapter. *See* Tsong kha pa 2010 at 156. The commentarial schema in the Noble Tradition involves five stages, as in the *PK*. Indeed, the final chapter of the *Vajra Rosary* sets forth the five stage schema. *See* Tsong kha pa 2010 at 157. Tsong kha pa explains that there is no contradiction here, since everyone is talking about the same process, differing only on whether to include some stages within others. Tsong kha pa 2010, 158.

stage of integration, the final stage of perfection, the yogas of cause, effect and non-duality.[1190]

Throughout the perfection stage, emptiness and compassion are paramount: "The main one exhausting the nature of thing and no-thing, emptiness and compassion indivisible!"[1191] Here, Alaṃka explains that "wisdom and compassion are of just one nature in the respective six stages." Unpacking the terse verse of the Tantra, Alaṃka explains the essence of the perfection stage and its stages:

> "**Having the characteristics of the perfection stage**" [means] complete knowledge of the letter A, which illustrates natural, primordial, unborn objective reality.[1192] "**Without support**" because you abandon the support having the characteristic of the deity generated in the creation stage. "**Non-objectifying**" because, relying on the stage of vajra repetition, you abandon the entering, arising and emerging [breaths]. "**Not inherently real**" [means that] through the stage of mental purification you realize the natures and luminances as lacking inherent reality. [In] "**Supreme of supreme**," ["][of][1193] supreme["] because of the characteristics of the trio of luminance and so forth…. "**Non-existent**" because in the stage of self consecration you abandon the means of expression. "**Formless**" because in the stage of manifest enlightenment you abandon all forms, coarse and subtle. "**Unchanging**" because by lacking all conceptions of difference you has the very form of union. "**Supreme of the great**" because in the path of no more learning you are also quite supreme.[1194]

Chapter twenty-three explains the "commitment of the three realities," which appears to refer to the practices of body and speech isolation, and probably to mind

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[1190] Alaṃka 108A.

[1191] *VR* 28B, ch. 15, v. 13.

[1192] Professor Thurman notes here that the single syllable *Prajñāpāramitā* is "*A*," and in the Vedas, Brahma says "*A*" after *pralaya*, annihilation, which then becomes fire and the creative force of speech. Personal Communication 3-24-06.

[1193] Following P. and Snar., rather than Sde dge here.

[1194] Alaṃka 108B-109A.

isolation, the second of the five stages, as well,[1195] although those terms are not used here.[1196] Rather the Tantra at this point refers to "self, mantra and so forth, in exact stages,"[1197] and the *Commentary* to "self, mantra and wisdom."[1198]

The first, the commitment of "self," describes the *Secret Community* body mandala of the Noble Tradition in detail: the five Buddhas, Vairocana, Ratnasambhava, Amitābha, Amoghasiddi and Akṣobhya are the five aggregates of form or matter, sensation, discrimination, emotion and consciousness, with their respective mantras, JINAJIK, RATNADRIK, AROLIK, PRAJNADRIK and VAJRADRIK;[1199] the four female Buddha consorts, Locanā, Māmakī, Paṇḍaravāsinī and Tārā, are the four elements

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[1195] As will be discussed in connection with chapter sixty-eight, *infra*, body isolation straddles the creation and perfection stages. In the *BIL*, Tsong kha pa quotes this chapter in his discussion of body isolation. Tsong kha pa 2010, 199.

[1196] The *Commentary* does refer to "body isolation" at the end of the discussion of the body mandala. Alaṃka 161A. It seems that the Tantra's reference to "wisdom" here refers to the latter part of vajra repetition, taking place after meditation on the energy-winds, which culminates in mind isolation, and also to the final stages. Alaṃka does say at the outset of the discussion of "wisdom" that "'abandoning all the conceptualities of speech' means the actuality of *prāṇāyāma*, which would place it within the stage of speech isolation. 162B. Tsong kha pa notes that "the *Vajra Rosary* states often and explicitly how the mind isolation voids are generated from the perspective of the vajra recitation's blocking the circulation of the wind-energies…." Tsong kha pa 2010, 384. However, later on, Alaṃka indicates that the Tantra is referring to clear light mind and to recollection (*rjes su dran pa, anusmṛti*). As noted by Wayman, Tsong kha pa's commentary on the *PK* states:

> */sgron ma rab gsal las sor bsam gñis sems dben daṅ/*
> *srog rtsol rdor bzlas daṅ/ ḥdzin pa ḥod gsal daṅ/*
> *rjes dran daṅ ting nge ḥdzin zung ḥjug tu ḥdus par bśad de/*
>
> According to the *Pradīpoddyotana*, (among the six members) *pratyāhāra* and *dhyāna* are incorporated in secret state of mind (*citta-viveka*); *prāṇāyāma* in diamond muttering [vajra recitation] (*vajrajāpa*) (i.e. secret state of speech, *vāg-viveka*); *dhāraṇā* in clear light; *anusmṛti* and *samādhi* in pair-united (*yuga-naddha*).

Wayman 1991, 167.

[1197] *VR* 42A, ch. 23, v. 1.

[1198] Alaṃka 153A.

[1199] Alaṃka explains the interpretive and definitive meanings of these mantras, 155A-B, and those of the elemental goddesses. 156A-B.

of earth, water, fire and wind, with their respective mantras, MOHARATI, DVEṢARATI, RĀGARATI, and VAJRARATI; the five form goddesses, Rūpavajrā, Śabdavajrā, Gandhavajrā, Rasavajrā and Sparśavajrā[1200] are the five sense objects of form, sound, scent, taste and touch; the eight bodhisattvas, Kṣitigarbha, Vajrapāṇi, Ākāśagarbha, Lokeśvara, Sarvaṇivaraṇaviṣkambhini, Mañjuśrī, Meitreya and Samantabhadra, are respectively the visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory, tactile and mental consciousnesses, the body's sinews (and the sphere of instincts) and the individual channels ("the supreme basis of all bliss, with the nature of all things"[1201]; and the ten Terrifics, Yamāntakṛt, Prajñāntakṛt, Padmāntakṛt, Vighnāntakṛt, Ḍakarāja, Acala, Nilaṇḍaṇḍa Mahābala, Sumbha[rāja], and Uṣṇīṣacakravartin, are, according to Alaṃka,[1202] respectively, the right hand, left hand, mouth, penis tip, left shoulder, right shoulder, right shin, left shin, soles of the two feet, and top of the head, and they each embody one of the ten knowledges.[1203]

[1200] The verse which should describe Sparśavajrā is missing from the Lhasa, Stok Palace, Sde dge and Snar thang recensions of the *Vajra Rosary*. Alaṃka's version of the Tantra describes her, but does not name her: "By the division of smooth and rough, you know that very thing as touch, the form that is grasped for the main one." Alaṃka 157B. Alaṃka does name her as Sparśavajrā in quoting the *Sekoddeśa* on this subject. *Id.*

[1201] *VR* 44A, ch. 23, v. 30.

[1202] The Tantra gives the body locations (only eight of them, without "upper" and "lower," which are found in Alaṃka's version, 160A) without specifying which Terrific goes where. The places given here are according to Alaṃka's quotation of the *Sekoddeśa*, Toh. 361, which differs slightly from Alaṃka's word commentary on the Tantra's verses 31 and 32 of this chapter. Alaṃka 160.

[1203] As with the other members of the mandala, Alaṃka discusses the interpretive and definitive meanings of the names of the Terrifics (*e.g.* "Yamantakṛt" [meaning] the Terminator of Yama. ["]Yama["] is a hell being. He is called that because he is the terminator of concentration through great anger. [This is] the interpretive meaning. ["]Yama["] is ignorance. He is called that because he perfects through the actuality of clear light. [This is] the definitive meaning.") and specifies the ten knowledges. 160B. In discussing the interpretive and definitive meanings of Yamantakṛt, Alaṃka is playing with the dual meaning of Skt. *anta*, as "to terminate" and "to perfect."

Body isolation is related closely to the perfection of divine pride, and Alaṃka notes here that "'The reality of the self' [means] the actuality of the lords, Vairocana and so forth, who abide precisely as the reality of the completely imaginary five aggregates…."[1204] Similarly, the Tantra says that Locanā embodies "delusion…expressed as ecstasy."[1205] Alaṃka elucidates: "Having thought that 'delusion is expressed as purity,' whoever has ecstasy for Vairocana, the purity of delusion, 'is Locanā' because she appears as the lack of intrinsic nature in [even] a part of the earth element."[1206] Many of the deities are described as "delighting" in their own nature or as embodying "pleasure,"[1207] consonant with Tsong kha pa's explanation that "great bliss itself is the definitive meaning deity, and meditating as sealed by that is the great art which isolates one from notions of ordinariness."[1208] Next, the Tantra discusses mantra, speech isolation, differentiating between various forms of mantra such as "snake," in the form of the A syllable, "headless," meaning without OṂ at the beginning, or "tail-less," lacking SVĀ HĀ at the end. Alaṃka explicitly connects the meanings of

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[1204] Alaṃka 153A.

[1205] *VR* 42B, ch. 23, v. 11.

[1206] Alaṃka 155B.

[1207] *E.g. VR* 42B, ch. 23, v. 4: "In that is the actuality of Vairocana, and the cause of taking delight in all of them" (*der ni rnam snang ngo bo dang/ thams cad spro bar byed pa'i rgyu*); *VR* 42B, ch. 23, v. 5: "The sensation aggregate, the character of Ratnasambhava, the nature of the pleasure of the Tathāgata" (*thorn ba'i hung poor bshad/ rim chen 'byung ldan nyid kyi mtshan/ de bzhin gashes pa'i sprogs bdag nyid*). *Spro ba* here is probably Skt. *rati*, "to delight in," "to find pleasure in," with a heavy connotation of sexual pleasure or desire. However, there is multivalence in the term, used throughout, which can mean either *prapañca* or *rati*, "emanate" or "radiate" on the one hand, or "pleasure" or "take delight in" on the other. The terms are related, with *rati*, the sexual urge, being a form of *propañca*, proliferating, elaborating, emanating or radiating out. Actually, in Tantra, these two are not so distinct, so the multivalent/ambivalent (but not ambiguous) term is well-employed here. It would be helpful to see if texts on the same subject use *prapañca* or *rati* in this context.

[1208] Tsong kha pa 2010,203.

these mantras with the first chapter of the root Tantra,[1209] which describes the emanation of the thirty-two mandala deities.[1210]

The last subject of the chapter is wisdom, "abandoning all duality, equalizing all things. All things are as a body of singularity, abandoning all the conceptualities of speech."[1211] Here the yogi goes beyond the "empties" of luminance, radiance and imminence, which are analogous to the stages of death following the cessation of breathing and bodily functions (what we would call clinical death) where the instinctual conceptions dissolve, to the state of clear light. This is the state denominated as mind isolation in the five stages system. The Tantra describes the yogic visualization of the dissolution process, which becomes actual in the completion stage, the mantra OṂ ĀḤ HŪṂ dissolves: OṂ into the drop or dot at its top, then into the A of ĀḤ; ĀḤ into the *visargah*, the two dots at the end, then into the HŪṂ; and HŪṂ into HAM (*i.e.* the vowels at the bottom disappear), HAM into the *bindu* or drop at the top, the dot into sound,[1212] the sound into "mere sound,"[1213] mere sound into "supreme sky," and supreme sky into clear light.[1214] This state gathers all of the stages, as well as all outer objects and

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[1209] Alaṃka 162A.

[1210] It seems as if this may be a key to the formation of mantras for the thirty-two deities, as in OṂ VAJRADRIK HŪṂ PHAT SVĀ HĀ.

[1211] *VR* 44B, ch. 23, v. 39.

[1212] Alaṃka says this is "sound whose nature is an echo." 163B.

[1213] Alaṃka says this is "in the emptiness of the actuality of perfect sound." *Id.*

[1214] *VR* 44B, ch. 23, vv. 42-45. Wedemeyer, discussing the *CMP*, notes that the drop "dissolves either into voidness directly (as seemingly advocated here) or, often in contemporary practice, first into the *nāḍa* (traditionally, a subtle sound-energy, but understood in contemporary Tibet to refer to another graphical element looking like a squiggle on top of the drop) and then into voidness." Wedemeyer 2007, 109. The *Vajra Rosary* dissolution practice described here, which is consistent with chapter eleven's statement that "whoever knows just that [mere sound] achieves the state of no rebirth," *VR* 21B, ch. 11, v. 1, is thus closer to the "traditional" practice. Further research should be pursued here on possible correspondences with the

the ten main energy-winds. The yogi who accomplishes this becomes a Buddha, a Vajradhara, an Heruka, a Kālacakra.

The subject of the brief chapter twenty-six is the third of the five stages, that which this chapter calls "self-consecration,"[1215] also known as the stage of the illusory or magic body, called here "the divine wisdom body." The main point here is, "abandoning ordinary conceptuality,"[1216] to know that the body is, in reality, a palace of deities.[1217] Through identifying the chakras with the six Buddhas (including Vajradhara), and the other inhabitants of the Akṣobhya *Secret Community* mandala, you purify the addictions, poisons and aggregates, cutting the knot of cyclic existence.[1218] Following the procedures discussed in chapter twenty-three, you place mantras of the deities at the

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Kashmir Śaiva Tantra's use of the concept of *dhvani*, defined by Monier Williams as "empty sound without reality." *See, e.g.,* Muller-Ortega 1989, 118 (Abhināvagupta notes that "there always arises a spontaneous sound (*dhvani*) which is termed the supreme, the great Heart. That self-consciousness in the Heart in which the entire universe without remainder is dissolved, present at the beginning and at the end of perception of objects, is called in the authoritative texts the vibration (*spaṇḍa*)…For that vibration, which is a slight motion of a special kind, a unique vibrating light, is the wave of the ocean of consciousness, without which there is no consciousness at all.")

[1215] *See VR* 101A, ch. 68, v. 17, for a description of the third stage of self-consecration as such. *See also* Wedemeyer 2007, 243-52 for Āryadeva's description of this stage in the *CMP*. Wedemeyer notes how crucial this stage is to "the techniques of engaging the world via a compassionate, omnipotent, divine emanation body" emphasized by the Noble Tradition. 103. Here in the *Vajra Rosary* we have some of the "personal instructions" that the *CMP*'s Vajra Master urges the student to get at the end of the discussion of this stage. As a description of the body mansion, this chapter per Alaṃka (175B-176A) also applies to the creation stage, which, in this regard, sets the stage for the actual creation of the illusory body in the self-consecration stage. In this regard, one should keep in mind the *Vajra Rosary*'s later statement: "The practice of the creation stage and the completion stage – wherever those two become one, that is called integration." *VR* 101A, ch. 68, v. 13.

[1216] Alaṃka 174A.

[1217] *VR* 48A, ch. 26, v. 1.

[1218] *VR* 48A, ch. 26, v. 4; Alaṃka 174B. The eight bodhisattvas stand for the eight consciousnesses, including the storehouse consciousness and the addicted mind of *yogacāra* thought, *VR* 48B, ch. 26, v. 6, Alaṃka mentioning "joints of all limbs and the joints of all sinews stated as the duo of the storehouse consciousness (*kun gzhi*) and addicted mind (*nyon mon pa can gyi yid*)," Alaṃka 175A, from which I infer Samantabhadra and Meitreya, respectively. The ten Terrifics are the reality of "faith, effort, recollection, concentration, wisdom, the power of faith, the power of effort, the power of recollection, the power of meditation and the power of wisdom," *VR* 48A, ch. 26, v. 7, though Alaṃka does not specify which is which. 175B.

various points of the body, and so identifying the body, you abide in the stage of self-consecration, enjoying the five sense objects in both the creation and perfection stages.[1219] Doing so, you should ignore external deities and counting mantras,[1220] and achieve "illusion-like concentration,"[1221] the defining characteristic of self-consecration.

The major theme of chapter thirty-eight appears to be a correlation of the six chakras to the "six yogas" of the completion stage.[1222] In addition, although the chapter is entitled "Meditating on the Six Chakras," much of it describes the emptiness that pervades them, being the key to any such meditation. At the outset, the channels of the six major chakras are elliptically enumerated.[1223] The wind chakra has six "spokes;"[1224] the fire three; the navel sixty-four; the throat sixteen and the crown thirty-two.

The first chakra to be described is the wind chakra, located between the eyebrows.[1225] But immediately we are reminded of the crucial fact of the emptiness of the objects of completion stage practice: "Like [the hidden part] of the half moon, emptiness abides in the wind chakra."[1226] This is so "because it lacks intrinsic existence in ultimate reality," and so it appears as a "great illusion." It produces beings from

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[1219] Alaṃka 175B-176A.

[1220] *VR* 48B, ch. 26, vv. 11-12.

[1221] Alaṃka 176B.

[1222] The six yogas relate to techniques, as contrasted with the five stages, which relate to attainment. Cozort 1986, 66.

[1223] "Six spokes; half of that; similarly, eight times eight is more than it; eight times two; and eight times four." *VR* 59B, ch. 38, v. 2.

[1224] Here the channels are described as spokes because of their shape. Alaṃka 203B. In the first line of verse 2, in his word commentary Alaṃka has *rtsibs*, "spoke," instead of *rnam pa*, "type." *VR* 59B, ch. 38, v. 2.

[1225] Alaṃka 204A.

[1226] *VR* 59A, ch. 38, v. 3. (*don dam par dngos po las rang bzhin med pa'i phyir*). Alaṃka 204A.

enlightenment spirit[1227] and is explained as life-energy. It is not in the sphere of the experts, including, according to Alaṃka, completion stage practitioners.[1228]

Emptiness also pervades the fire chakra,[1229] located below the throat chakra, "because it exists within as empty by nature." [1230] The chakra arises as a drop from the syllable HAṂ and pervades all, "because it pervades the entire body which becomes warm."[1231] It is "unelaborated,"[1232] and thus "abandons vowels and consonants."[1233] It increases bliss.[1234]

The emptiness within the navel chakra has "the state of indestructible sound,"[1235] "moving like a snake's tongue,"[1236] and "lacks form."[1237] The syllable HŪṂ in the heart chakra, "abides as mere sound," "like an echo,"[1238] "passionless, active and place-less."[1239] Emptiness is in the enjoyment chakra, "as the supreme aspect of the

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[1227] Alaṃka 204A.

[1228] *VR* 59A, ch. 38, v. 4; Alaṃka 204A.

[1229] *VR* 59A, ch. 38, v. 5.

[1230] Alaṃka 204A (*rang bzhin gyis khong stong du yod pa'i phyir*), which could also be translated, less philosophically, as "because it naturally exists as a cavity."

[1231] Alaṃka 204A (*kun khyab ces bya ba ni dro bar gyur pa nyid kyi* [following P. and Snar. rather than Sde dge's *kyis*] *lus thams cad la khyab pa'o*).

[1232] Alaṃka 204A.

[1233] *VR* 59A, ch. 38, v. 6.

[1234] *Id.*

[1235] *VR* 59A, ch. 38, v. 7. "In the form of the syllable A, because it is like an echo." Alaṃka 204B.

[1236] *Id.* Alaṃka has "A body that moves like a snake's lightning tongue." 204B.

[1237] *VR* 59A, ch. 38, v. 9.

[1238] Alaṃka 205A.

[1239] *VR* 59A, ch. 38, v. 9.

unbound."[1240] It has the form of the syllable OṂ, and "has the nature of relativity because of having the nature of cause and effect."[1241] In the chakra of great bliss, in the head, it has the form of the syllable HA, the actuality of the spirit of enlightenment,[1242] "abandoning all characteristics, peaceful, fearless and inexpressible."[1243] Yet it transcends characteristics "because it is expressed free from the forms of the syllables HA and A."[1244] And "it transcends the sphere of speech because of being in the innate bliss that arises from it."[1245]

As for the major theme here, at the outset of the chapter, the Tantra says: "Practice exactly whatever characteristics of the state of the six yogas, the branch that supports what you wish for."[1246] As explained in Chapter eighteen of the *Secret Community Root Tantra*, also more commonly known as the *rgyud phyima, Tantric Appendix*, the six yogas of the completion stage are: (1) withdrawal (*so sor sdud, pratyāhāra*); (2) absorption (*bsam gtan, dhyāna*); (3) breath control (*srog rtsol, prāṇāyāma*); (4) retention (*dzin pa, dhāraṇā*); (5) recollection (*rjes su dran, anusmṛti*); and (6) concentration (*ting 'dzin, samādhi*).[1247] As noted there, "Practicing the six

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[1240] *VR* 59A, ch. 38, v. 10.

[1241] Alaṃka 205A.

[1242] *Id.*

[1243] *VR* 59B, ch. 38, v. 13.

[1244] Alaṃka 205B.

[1245] *Id.*

[1246] *VR* 59B, ch. 38, v. 1 (*sbyor drug go 'phang mtshan nyid ni/ ji lta ji lta ba bzhin sbyor//*).

[1247] *See* [*Secret Community*] *Tantric Appendix, Rgyud phyima*, Toh. 443, LH 530B, v. 141 (*so sor sdud dang bsam gtan dang/ srog rtsol de bzhin 'dzin pa dang/ rjes su dran dang ting 'dzin te/ sbyor ba'i yan lag drug tu bshad//*). *See also* Wayman 1991, 44-50. The *Kālacakra* Tantric system also has the six yogas, albeit in a somewhat modified form. For an extensive discussion, also very helpful in understanding the

branches of service, you will supremely attain. Otherwise, when you practice, the supreme accomplishment will not arise."[1248] Though as stated above, the six yogas are centered on technique, they are associated with certain of the five stages: withdrawal and absorption with body isolation; breath control with speech isolation; retention with clear light; and recollection and concentration with integration.[1249]

Alaṃka mentions the connection of the six yogas to the six chakras, but does not go into detail, and in discussing the chakras makes no explicit connection to any of the yogas.[1250] He says, commenting on the first verse of the chapter:

> "**Furthermore**" [means] as before. It is connected with "The characteristics of the state of the six yogas." The state of the six yogas and the character of the chakras are connected to "**Listen to the explanation**," [meaning] to the thorough explanation through the actuality of the unerring view. If someone asks how, in response to that he says "**exactly**," [meaning] through the actuality of the unerring view. "**Whatever yoga**" [means] by abandoning the sequence. "**The branch that supports what you wish for**" [means] the support of beings through whatever they wish for.[1251]

Secret Community system, *see* K. Gyatso 2004, 391-584. A fine discussion of the history of the six branch or *ṣaḍaṅga* yoga is found in chapter two of Wallace 2001, starting with the six-phase yoga found in the *Maitrī Upaniṣad*, and comparing the variations of the six-phase yoga cited in Śaiva, Vaiṣṇava and Buddhist texts. The six yogas discussed here in connection with the completion stage are also to be distinguished from the "six yogas" of the creation stage, *yoga, anuyoga, atiyoga, mahāyoga, supreme mandala triumph* and *evolutionary triumph*, discussed in chapter thirty-five of the Tantra. *VR* 57A, ch. 35, vv. 3-6; Alaṃka 198A-199B.

[1248] Toh. 443, LH 530B, v. 140 (*bsnyen pa yan lag drug gis ni/ byas pas sgrub pa mchog tu 'gyur/ gzhan du bsgrubs par gyur na ni/ dngos grub mchog ni 'byung mi 'gyur//*).

[1249] Lodoe 1995, 52.

[1250] Indeed, with respect to what I think is a direct connection in the Tantra to the third yoga, breath control, where the Tantra says, in the transition from the third chakra discussed (navel) to the heart chakra, "you abandon breath control," *VR* 59A, ch. 38, v. 10, Alaṃka merely says "'You abandon breath control' because of the stopping of the energy-wind." 205A. However, with respect to the fire chakra, he does note that "increasing great bliss" refers to "two kinds of great bliss," 204A, which may be a reference to ecstasy and bliss, two of the five components of absorption. It is also quite possible that Alaṃka did not elucidate more connections between the descriptions of the six chakras and the six yogas because they were obvious to his audience, or perhaps because he wanted future scholars in a degenerate age to have to think for themselves.

[1251] Alaṃka 203B. The verse commented on is: "Then, furthermore, listen/ [And] I will explain. / Practice exactly whatever/ Characteristics of the state/ Of the six yogas/ The branch that supports/ What you wish for." *VR* 59A, ch. 38, v. 1. In his commentary on the *Vimalaprabhā*'s discussion of the six chakras in the

The idea of a correspondence between the chakras and the six yogas is supported by the somewhat unorthodox order the chakras are discussed, starting with wind, then fire, the going upwards from the navel chakra.[1252] The correspondence would be:

TABLE 12. Correspondence Between the Chakras and the Six Yogas

Yoga	Chakra
1. Withdrawal (*pratyāhāra*)	Wind (Between eyebrows)
2. Absorption (*dhyāna*)	Fire (Between heart and throat)
3. Breath Control (*prāṇāyāma*)	Emanation (Navel)
4. Retention (*dhāraṇā*)	Reality (Heart)
5. Recollection (*anusmṛti*)	Enjoyment (Throat)
6. Concentration (*samādhi*)	Great Bliss (Crown)

In withdrawal, one withdraws the sense powers from the sense objects,[1253] so the Tantra's reference in the verses on the wind chakra to "appearing like a water moon" and "great illusion" seem consonant with the yoga of withdrawal. Absorption has five components: conception, discernment, ecstasy, bliss and single-pointed mind.[1254] The

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Kālacakra system, in particular the verse that "Due to the power of the spiritual mentor's precepts, these givers of death [the chakras] bestow life and health," Bu ston notes that this is "due to the six-phased *yoga*." Wallace 2004, 73 n.81.

[1252] Although Alaṃka's reference to "by whatever yoga" meaning "abandoning the sequence," may suggest that if there is a correspondence between the six yogas and the six chakras, it is not in a particular order. *VR* 58A, ch. 38, v. 1; Alaṃka 203B.

[1253] *Tantric Appendix*, Toh. 443, LH 530B, v. 142.

[1254] *Id.,* v. 144 (*rtog dang dpyod dang dga' ba dang/ de bzhin bde ba nyid dang yang sems kyi rtse gcig nyid dag ste/ lnga po der ni bsam gtan bsdu//*).

Tantra notes that the emptiness in the fire chakra, the second one discussed, "increases bliss."[1255] "Bliss" and "ecstasy" are two of the five components of the second of the six yogas, absorption, and, in fact, Alaṃka remarks that the Tantra's "increases bliss" refers to the "two types of great bliss."[1256] The verses on the fire chakra conclude with "Because all three worlds are made into one, [that emptiness] is the Creator."[1257] It may be no coincidence that Nāropa, in his *Commentary on a Short Teaching on Initiations*, discussing the fifth stage of absorption, says "Because concepts of form and so forth have been pacified, there is 'pacification' appearing vividly as the three realms. This is the sole and ultimate emptiness."[1258]

Thus the third chakra discussed, the emanation or navel chakra, should correspond to breath control or vajra recitation. And in fact the Tantra describes the chakra as "having the state of indestructible sound,"[1259] and, as we have seen in prior chapters concerning the practice of vajra repetition, "it is free from counting."[1260] Moreover, the next verses on the heart chakra, which should leave the third yoga, breath control, and correspond to the fourth of the six yogas, retention, in fact says just that: "It abandons breath control."[1261] In addition, the vase breathing techniques for igniting

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[1255] *VR* 59A, ch. 38, v. 6.

[1256] Alaṃka 204A.

[1257] *VR* 59A, ch. 38, v. 6.

[1258] Toh. 1351, 246a5, quoted in K. Gyatso 2004, 468.

[1259] *VR* 59A, ch. 38, v. 7.

[1260] *VR* 59A, ch. 38, v. 8.

[1261] *VR* 59A, ch. 38, v. 10.

tummo, which are part of the stage of vajra repetition, take place right at the navel chakra.[1262]

Retention, the fourth of the six yogas, logically corresponds to the heart chakra, the fourth of the sixth chakras as described by the *Vajra Rosary*. The *Tantric Appendix* states: "Imagining your own mantra at the heart, placing the life-energy in the form of a drop…is explained as being retention."[1263] The fifth of the six yogas, recollection, should be associated with the enjoyment chakra in the throat. And again, this is borne out by the second verse on that chakra, which refers to "the taste of liquor."[1264] The quality of the crown chakra, the sixth chakra described in the Tantra, is described by the *Vajra Rosary* as "supremely abiding,"[1265] which is just what one would expect as describing the last and highest of the six yogas, concentration.

The title of chapter forty is "The Fruit of the Secret," which, Alaṃka explains, refers to the latter of the five stages, manifest enlightenment[1266] and integration,[1267] and, in particular to the great seal. Not known to creation-stage yogis,[1268] this state is supremely peaceful and non-conceptual,[1269] "because it lacks the conceptions of self and

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[1262] *See, e.g.* K. Gyatso 2004, 495.

[1263] Toh. 443, LH 531a, v. 148.

[1264] *VR* 59B, ch. 38, v. 7.

[1265] *VR* 59B, ch. 38, v. 13.

[1266] Alaṃka 209A.

[1267] Alaṃka 208A.

[1268] *I.e.* it is "free from the activities of mantra and Tantra," *VR* 60B, ch. 40, v. 5, because it lacks the meditation of seed syllables and moon discs and so forth of the creation stage. Alaṃka 209A.

[1269] *VR* 60B, ch. 40, v. 2.

other."[1270] It is the "great" seal, "because it bestows great ecstasy." [1271] It is attained "because of integration through vajra-like concentration."[1272] Although this state is "the epitome of *Mahāyoga*,"[1273] "you learn the wonderful supreme essence from the *Yoginī* Tantras, causing the taste of great wisdom to descend."[1274] This is most likely a reference to the *tummo* practices, common to all Tantras,[1275] but particularly emphasized in the practice of the mother or *Yoginī* Tantras.[1276] This and similar statements establish the *Vajra Rosary* as a "common" Tantra, *i.e.* basis of practice for father Tantras such as the *Secret Community* and *Yamāntaka* and for mother Tantras such as *Heruka* and *Vajrayoginī*.[1277]

Having abandoned conceptuality, meditating and what is meditated on, attachment and detachment, on this stage you are even "free from abandoning,"[1278] "because [this stage] is especially nobler than the stage of vajra repetition."[1279] "'You

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[1270] Alaṃka 208B.

[1271] *Id.*

[1272] *Id.*

[1273] *VR* 60B, ch. 40, v. 3.

[1274] *Id.* Alaṃka explains: "Because it is realized from the Wisdom Dakini Tantra" (*ye shes kyi mkha' 'gro ma'i rgyud las rtogs par bya ba nyid kyi phyir*). Alaṃka 208B. I have not been able to locate a Tantra by that name, *Jñānaḍākinitantra*, which may mean that it is lost or that Alaṃka was referring generally to the Yoginī Tantras, which would be consistent with Alaṃka's version of the Tantra, *rnal 'byor ma yi zhal las rtogs*, "realized from the *mouth* of the yoginī," as compared with the Lhasa *VR*'s *rnal 'byor ma rgyud las bslab pa*, "learned from the *Tantra* [which could also be translated as *lineage* or *continuum*] of the yoginī." *Id.*

[1275] Cozort 1986, 72.

[1276] Tsong kha pa 2010 at 216.

[1277] This chapter also ends with the admonition that "you should know from the Yoginī Tantras the supreme wisdom of the supreme yoga." *VR* 60B, ch. 40, v. 7.

[1278] Alaṃka 209A, The Lhasa *VR* does not have this verse.

[1279] *Id.*

surpass the state of all things, 'all things' [meaning] luminance[1280] and so forth" "because [this stage] is especially nobler than the stage of mental purification."[1281] "'You abandon the three worlds' … free of [even] the conception of the three worlds as in the nature of an illusion" "because you are free from the stage of self-consecration."[1282] And "you are free of passion and dispassion,"[1283] "abandoning passion because you are free of the stage of consort and concentration."[1284] ""You abide in the great commitment,"[1285] "the aspect of integration."[1286]

Chapter sixty-eight, the last chapter of the *Vajra Rosary,* titled "The Epitome of All Attainments," summarizes the five stages, details the body mandala and other correspondences of the *Secret Community* Noble Tradition deities, summarizes the arising and the destruction of the energy-winds, and ends with the great host praising Buddha Vajradhara for the teaching of the *Vajra Rosary* and receiving final instructions from Buddha.[1287]

[1280] The first of the stages of subtle body dissolution, *snag ba,* "luminance," also "white appearance.

[1281] Alaṃka 209A.

[1282] *I.e.* illusory body. Alaṃka 209A.

[1283] *VR* 60B, ch. 40, v. 6.

[1284] Alaṃka 209A.

[1285] *Id.*

[1286] Alaṃka 209A-B.

[1287] While Yukei Matsunaga asserts for textual reasons that this chapter was added later in order to provide a scriptural basis for the five stages of the *PK*, it is definitely noteworthy that the praise by the audience at the end of the chapter, symmetrical to that at the beginning of the Tantra, makes perfect sense in tying the Tantra together; the final praises are found neither in chapter sixty-seven, where one would expect them if it was the ending chapter of the work, or in any other chapter. However, given that at least one Sanskrit version of the Tantra contained significant obliterations, it is possible that those missing portions contained the ending praises and that the existing chapter sixty-eight was, as Matsunaga suggests, added later.

The epitome of all attainments is the supreme wisdom of all Buddhas.[1288] This is described in terms of the fourth empowerment, which follows the three signs of luminance, radiance and imminence, at which time the intelligent yogi sees reality.[1289] The three luminances cause the five clairvoyances and, in that sense, are all like the day. However, on another hermeneutic level, the three luminances correspond to *parts* of the day: luminance as part of the night; radiance as the day; and imminence as the dawn; but on yet another level of meaning, the ultimate meaning, have nothing to do with the times of day; but cause the abandoning of the conceptual energy-winds.[1290] The abandoning of these energy-winds is "instant enlightenment" (*skad cig mngon byang chub*), "one instant of emptiness," beyond conceptuality, the "supreme instant."[1291] The yogi attains bodily stability by holding enlightenment spirit at the tip of the vajra, applies it to energy-wind, and then, using the mantra HŪṂ HO, brings the enlightenment spirit upwards.[1292]

"Integration" (*zung du 'jug pa*), the fifth and final of the five stages, makes possible the attainment of the Vajra Seal, and is attained by merging the creation and perfection stages, rejecting the duality of *samsara* and *nirvana*, or mixing conventional

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[1288] *VR* 100A, ch. 68, v. 1.

[1289] *VR* 100A, ch. 68, v. 3. This verse is preceded by a verse stating that Kṣitigharba, Vajrapāṇi, Mañjuśrī, Viṣkambhini and Meitreya consecrate the eye and so forth, but this seems to be out of place. Verse eleven of the chapter refers to "the five nectars explained above," but, other than the five bodhisattvas named in verse two, there is no "five" of anything, so perhaps these relate to verse eleven's statements that "the five nectars explained above are called elixirs," and are for "turning iron into gold." *VR* 101A, ch. 68, v. 11. Or, the reference could be to prior chapters.

[1290] *VR* 100B, ch. 68, vv. 3-4.

[1291] *VR* 100B, ch. 68, vv. 5-8. Here the Tantra does not explicitly use the term "non-conceptual," but describes it in contradictory terms, such as "It has a modest form/ And is immodest."

[1292] *VR* 100B-101A, ch. 68, vv. 9-10.

and ultimate reality.[1293] Before that, there is the first stage, vajra repetition, where "knowing the characteristics of energy-wind, you cut the winds of conceptuality." Then there is the second stage, referred to here as "perception of mind" (*sems la dmigs pa*). Then the third stage, self-consecration (*bdag la byin brlab*), where the eight attainments are accomplished, is followed by the fourth stage, where one knows the division of the luminances, "manifest enlightenment" (*mngon par byang chub*). Then, there is the final stage of integration, where "you gather all attainments." This, the Tantra says, "You will accomplish in this very life without any doubt," by "entering into non-conceptuality through the concentration of integration in the great attainment of the Great Seal."[1294]

Y. The Forty-Nine and the Six Yogas of the Creation Stage and the Twenty Rituals

Although concentrated on the perfection stage, perhaps because the final stage of integration sees the creation and perfection stages as non-dual, the *Vajra Rosary* does teach aspects of the creation stage. Indeed, its longest chapter, fifty-four, concerns creation stage rituals.

In chapter thirty-five, in the context of the overall structure for cutting off the conceptual energy-winds, the key to advancement to Buddhahood, the Tantra sets out the forty-nine divisions of Tantric yoga. In order to accomplish this, after hearing and thinking about Tantra, you receive initiation.[1295] Then you practice the forty-nine yogas

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[1293] *VR* 101A, ch. 68, vv. 11-14.

[1294] *VR* 101A-B, ch. 68, vv. 15-18.

[1295] *Id.*

of the creation stage, in six main categories that the Tantra calls the "six yogas."[1296] These are somewhat but not completely sequential in terms of practice, and today most of them are incorporated into Tsong kha pa's long *Guhyasamāja sadhana* in use today. The Tantra notes that the creation stage in general creates direct perception in the yogi,[1297] and Alaṃka remarks, "It should also be perceived as very profound."[1298]

The six yogas are: (1) the "first yoga," with its fifteen divisions, including meditating on the mandala, mantra and the vital points, and pre-conditions for all of this such as stabilizing meditation, clearing obstacles and meditating on emptiness; [1299] (2) *Anuyoga*, with five aspects;[1300] *Atiyoga*, with four;[1301] *Mahāyoga*, with six;[1302] the Great

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[1296] *VR* 57A, ch. 35, v. 3; Alaṃka 198A. Davidson, relying on the *Kṛṣṇayamāri-tantra* and Wayman's discussion in his *Yoga of the Guhyasamājatantra*, notes that *yoga*, *anuyoga*, *atiyoga*, and *mahāyoga* are identified in some *mahāyoga* Tantras as denoting various visualizations in the creation stage, but his description is at odds with the detailed description of the same given in the *Vajra Rosary* and described by Alaṃka described below. Davidson 2005, 74.

[1297] *VR* 57A, ch. 35, v. 6.

[1298] 199B.

[1299] According to Alaṃka, the fifteen divisions of the first yoga are divided into "mandala" and "body," as follows:

> As for the secondary practices [*'khor*], in that there are ten types: [1] investigation of one's own mind; [2] purification of the placing of mindfulness; [3] meditation on the four offerings and [4] the four abodes of Brahma; [5] perceiving in a particularly noble state; [6] expelling obstacles; [7] meditating on emptiness; [8] meditating on the stages of wisdom; [9] meditating on the measureless mansion; and [10] meditating on the mandala of faith. For the body, there are five: [1] meditating on the ultimate mandala; [2] preliminary consecration of the mantra of emptiness; [3] rising from the ocean of wisdom; [4] purifying the cyclic existence of the intermediate state by opening the vital points; and [5] meditating the reality of the dharma sphere and teaching by mantra.

Alaṃka 199A.

[1300] Alaṃka says these five are the "stages of manifest enlightenment." 199A. This refers to the creation stage practice of generating symbols of the five Buddhas from seed syllables: in the parlance of Professor Wayman, the moon of Akṣobhya; the red moon of Ratnasambhava; the seed syllable of Amitābha, the hand symbol of Amoghasiddhi and the image of Vairocana. Wayman 1991, 229.

[1301] *I.e.* (1) the aggregates, (2), elements, (3) sense media and (4) consecration of those. Alaṃka 199A.

Accomplishment branch of *Mahāyoga*, with four;[1303] Accomplishment, with three;[1304] Supreme Mandala Triumph, with five;[1305] and Supreme Evolutionary Triumph, with twelve.[1306] [1307]

After that, the yogi meditates the completion stage, in particular vajra repetition on the mantric drop and the wind chakra,[1308] perhaps referring to the repetition of HŪṂ HO to open the heart knot described in chapter six, which is "taught in sequence" and "serves as the cause of clear light speech."[1309] Meditation on the reality of energy-wind and mantra overcomes the conceptual energy-winds, which inhere "in the actualities of the one-hundred eight instinctual natures."[1310] This is done by counting the 21,600 daily breaths each of which has "the three energy-winds that enter, abide and rise," *i.e.* OṂ ĀḤ

[1302] *I.e.* the blessings of (1) body, (2) speech, and (3) mind; and meditation on the (4) commitment hero, (5) wisdom hero and (6) concentration hero. *Id.*

[1303] *I.e.* (1) dividing the consorts, (2) gathering them, (3) the initial joining of vajra and lotus and (4) expressing the mantra of passion. *Id.* In the next chapter, Alaṃka says "It is *Mahāyoga* because it is free from the creation stage yoga." Alaṃka 201A. But then, just a page later in the *Commentary* he says: " As for "The great *Mahāyoga* Tantra," is the *Secret Community* and so forth that teach the two stages [*i.e.* generation and completion]." Alaṃka 202A.

[1304] *I.e.* (1) expressing the benefits of accomplishment, (2) the offering of bliss and (3) being taught by the offering mantra. *Id.*

[1305] *I.e.* meditation on the body mandala of the creation stage, the envisioning of the body parts as composed of (1) Buddhas, (2) consorts, (3) bodhisattvas and (4) Terrifics, followed by (5) meditation on the supreme king of the mandala. Alaṃka 199A-B.

[1306] *I.e.* (1) subtle yoga, (2) and (3) two types of repetition, (3) having performed the activities, melting, (4) summoning by the four goddesses, (5) arising, (6) having emerged, praising the five lords, (7) gathering the wheel of the mandala, (8) generating Vajrasattva by the stage of egg-born, (9) the ritual of nourishing the body, (10) tasting the nectar, (11) the ritual of outer eating, and, (12) having requested [them] to go, sleeping. Alaṃka 199B.

[1307] Wayman 1991 has an extensive discussion of the "six yogas." 156-63, 344-48. *See also* Bentor, "Do The *Tantras* Embody What the Practitioners Actually Do"? (unpublished paper).

[1308] Alaṃka 199B.

[1309] *Id.*

[1310] Alaṃka 199B.

HŪṂ, "in the manner of a water-wheel by day and night."[1311] Such a meditator "will no doubt achieve supreme wisdom."[1312]

Chapter fifty-four is an extensive and detailed discussion of creation stage rituals, which are still practiced today. This is the longest chapter of the Tantra, and, perhaps reminding us that the peak is supported by the entire mountain, the *Vajra Rosary* brings us down the slopes a bit to the "twenty rituals" of the creation stage.

The twenty rituals are: [1] Preliminary service; [2] Purifying the land; [3] Banishing spirits; [4] Occupying the land; [5] Inspecting the thread line; [6] Consecration; [7] Banishing obstacles; [8] Making the mandala threadline clear; [9] Placing the dagger;[1313] [10] Consecrating the vessel; [11] Consecration of the Lords; [12] Bathing; [13] Purifying; [14] Making offerings; [15] Consecration of the offerings; [16] the ritual cake; [17] Consecration of the disciples; [18] The fire offering according the ritual; [19] Empowerment; and [20] Requesting [the deities] to go.[1314] The nineteenth and twentieth rituals have been discussed above in the context of the four empowerments and the sexual yogas, and that discussion will not be repeated here.

The first ritual, "Preliminary service," involves the clearing away of obstacles by "the shaking of a finger warning the devils," the rituals of *anuyoga*, and the recitation of the twenty-four syllable mantra of Viṣkambini ten thousand times, followed by ten thousand repetitions of the three letter mantra, OṂ ĀḤ HŪṂ.[1315] "Purifying the land,"

[1311] Alaṃka 200A.

[1312] *VR* 57B, ch. 35, v. 10.

[1313] At the ends of the lines - in the four directions?

[1314] *VR* 69B, ch. 54, vv. 2-5.

[1315] *VR* 69B-70A, ch. 54, vv. 6-10.

the second ritual, means selecting the place to practice, "isolated from people…near water…not too close or too far from a village" and "far from the king's palace." There, you sweep the ground.[1316]

Then, you engage in the third ritual, "banishing spirits" occupying the ground by making a teak dagger,[1317] washing it while reciting the three-syllable and the hundred-syllable mantras, and then digging with it a certain distance or until you reach groundwater (or you do this mentally), then you let the spirit who lives there go, reciting the mantra OṂ MAHĀ KRO DHA DZWA LĀRKA HŪṂ PHAT with the mantra also visualized on your palms placed together, then striking your palms on the ground, adding other mantras, and offering the ghost or spirit the *torma*, the ritual cake.[1318]

Next the Vajra Master "occupies the ground," the fourth ritual, "with equanimity and without discomfort," by making the ground smooth and "smearing [it] with the five types," *i.e.* cow dung, urine, milk, butter and yoghurt.[1319] Then, preparatory to the drawing of the mandala, the Master performs the fifth of the twenty rituals, laying out the "thread line, which sets the dimensions of the mandala to be drawn,[1320] and then the sixth, in which the Vajra Master consecrates the mandala design after placing relics or jewels there, by repeating the three-syllable mantra with PHAT and SVĀ HĀ one-hundred eight

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[1316] *VR* 69B-70A, ch. 54, vv. 11-12.

[1317] *See* Mayer 1991 ("Not only was the *kīla* known and used in India in some form or another, but that characteristic form that we now call the Tibetan-style *phur-ba* might also be of surprisingly orthodox Indian provenance, and this in turn implies that the allegedly 'apocryphal' texts describing it might also in fact be genuine translations from Sanskrit.").

[1318] *VR* 70A, ch. 54, vv. 13-16.

[1319] *Id.,* vv. 17-19. The drawing of the mandala is also described in the *Secret Community Root Tantra*. *See* Freemantle 1979, 40, ch. 4, vv. 7-10.

[1320] *Id.,* vv. 20-21.

times, together with other mantras, and washing with foot water on the thread line.[1321] The seventh ritual, the "banishing of obstacles," is done by placing the words SUṂ BA, GRIHNA BA YA and so forth in the primary directions on the mandala.

In the eighth ritual, "making the mandala threadline clear," the mandala is described in detail, with Akṣobhya in the center, and Vairocana, Ratnasambhava, Amitābha and Amoghasiddhi in the east, south, west and north, respectively, and the elemental goddesses of Locanā etc. in the intermediate directions starting with the southeast, on the various variegated lotuses, sun and moon seats, "a delightful retinue, making hatred [*i.e.* Akṣobhya] joyous."[1322] The bodhisattvas sit two each in the four directions, and the sense goddesses and Terrifics are also placed in the mandala. All have three faces and six arms, and the various hand implements are described, as is the environment, symbolizing the divine mansion, as the outer rings. In short, the thirty-two deity *Ārya Guhyasamāja* mandala is fully described,[1323] which is "the reflection of one's own body."[1324]

In the ninth ritual, "placing the dagger," you "summon the wicked ones" and "strike with the dagger." The dagger's three points are marked with OṂ, ĀḤ and HŪṂ, and then it is placed in the prime and intermediate directions, various mantras, including that of Uṣṇīṣacakravartin, are said, and, at the end, you strike with the dagger.[1325]

[1321] *Id.,* vv. 22-25.

[1322] *Id.,* v. 32.

[1323] *VR* 71B-72A, ch. 54, vv. 30-43.

[1324] *VR* 72A, ch. 54, v. 44.

[1325] *VR* 72A-73A, ch. 54, vv. 48-53.

The tenth and eleventh rituals are the "consecration of the vessels" and "of the five [Buddha] Lords." For the consecration of the vessels, ten vessels or six made of pure jewels are filled with the five medicines, the five fruits etc., adorned with jewels and jasmine, and filled with water with saffron, mush, camphor and sandalwood. The vessels are consecrated by saying the mantras of each of the five Buddhas, and inviting them from realm of Akaniṣta with light ray hooks to enter the vessel, which you lift up.[1326] Then you emanate the four elemental goddesses, making offerings to each while saying mantras, and to Yamāntaka and the other deities. Then finish by saying the essence, hundred syllable and three syllable mantras and visualizing yourself as the deity offer the contents of the vessels.[1327]

For "consecration of the Lords," you visualize the deities of the *Secret Community* mandala[1328] in the measureless mansion in Akaniṣta heaven "embracing their own reflection bodies,"[1329] light rays emanating from them. The master and the disciple say mantras, and the deities are invited to descend into the practitioners. Offerings are made to the outer deities; then "having made [oneself into] the deity, you should make offerings to yourself," "having divine pride."[1330] The deities are consecrated by the

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[1326] *VR* 73A, ch. 54, vv. 54-57.

[1327] *VR* 73A-B, ch. 54, vv. 58-64.

[1328] Here, the mandala referred to is the *Mañjuvajra* 19-deity mandala rather than the *Ārya* 32-deity mandala. *VR* 74A, ch. 54, v. 70("You should invite Mañjuvajra. He sits on his own particular seat, invited to the middle of the mandala…." [*'jam pa'i rdo rje spyan drang bya/ dkyil 'khor dbus su spyan drang ba rang gi gdan gyi dbye ba la bzhugs*….]). However, seven verses later the text refers to the Akṣobhya 32-deity mandala. *VR* 74B, ch. 54, v. 74 ("You should worship the mothers [*i.e.* goddesses], harmful ones [*i.e.* Terrifics], and the sinless [*i.e.* bodhisattvas], who are created [and] the Lord of the mandala who arises from the family of great hatred." [*ji ltar bskyed pa'i yum rnams dang/ gnod byed kha na ma tho med/ zhe sdang chen po'i rigs las byung dkyil 'khor dbang phyug mchod bya zhing//*]).

[1329] *I.e.* consorts. *VR* 74A, ch. 54, v. 67.

[1330] *VR* 74B, ch. 54, v. 74.

smoke of the vessel from camphor and agru,[1331] and more mantras are spoken. At this point, "you should see the supreme mandala in all its detail."[1332]

Then you perform the twelfth ritual, "bathing," by pouring milk and other substances over the mirror-reflections of the deities, "just as with a newborn."[1333] Then you "purify," the thirteenth, by visualizing Vajrasattva, burning mustard seeds and making the lotus-turning mudra as you give up the addictions.[1334] You then do the fourteenth ritual of "making offerings," saying the appropriate mantras and making the appropriate hand gestures,[1335] followed by the fifteenth, the "consecration of the offerings," done by saying mantras, followed by making prostrations.[1336] This is followed by the sixteenth ritual of the *torma* or ritual cake, blessed with offerings and given to pacify ghosts, accompanied by the saying of "the ten wrathful mantras" and concluding with the burning of sesame and additional mantras, all specified in the Tantra.[1337]

Following all of this, the disciples themselves are prepared to be consecrated, the seventeenth ritual. The vajra master does this by washing them with various substances, "cleansing the stain of mind," sprinkling water, "purifying the stain of karma," placing

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[1331] *Agru* is less prized than sandalwood; most prized is white sandalwood, then red, then *agru*. Personal Communication with Lozang Jamspal.

[1332] *VR* 74B, ch. 54, vv. 75-77.

[1333] *VR* 74B, ch. 54, v. 78.

[1334] *VR* 74B-75A, ch. 54, vv. 79-81.

[1335] *VR* 75A, ch. 54, vv. 82-84.

[1336] *VR* 75A, ch. 54, vv. 85-86.

[1337] Presumably, the mantras of the ten Terrifics. *VR* 75A-B, ch. 54, vv. 86-94.

the respective bodhisattvas on the sense faculties, establishing the body mandala, with the appropriate mantras. Then a thread is tied around the left arm of the disciples, flowers are scattered on them, other rituals are done, then a dagger is thrown and the disciples sleep that night in whatever direction the dagger falls. At dawn the master interprets the dreams of the disciples, tormas are given, and the disciples ask the masters for the teachings.[1338] The guru explains "what is to be done and not done."[1339]

The disciple then visualizes himself as the Vajra Master, and requests empowerment. He or she says: "Here, in the ocean of cyclic existence, covered with addictions, crocodiles and sea monsters, waves stirred up by the wind of karma, oh, Ocean of Compassion, alas, I am drowning…Help me!"[1340] The guru gives the disciple "nectar," and tells him to protect it. The nectar is made from, among other things, shit, piss, and "a girl's clothing from which drips bright blood, smeared with blood and semen, mixed with tree resin." This is put in a vessel for the disciple, so he doesn't forget this secret blend. The disciple drinks the nectar.[1341] Then Vajradhara, "filled with the scent of burning the incense," as a result of the eighteenth ritual, "the fire offering according to the ritual," descends into the disciples as the guru says the mantra *oṃ tiṣtha mahā krodha āveṣaya hūṃ*.[1342]

[1338] *VR* 75B-77A, ch. 54, vv. 95-111.

[1339] *VR* 77A, ch. 54, v. 111.

[1340] *VR* 77A, ch. 54, vv. 114-15.

[1341] *VR* 77A-B, ch. 54, vv. 118-120.

[1342] *VR* 77B, ch. 54, vv. 121-22. The nineteenth and twentieth rituals are discussed above in the context of empowerment and the sexual yogas.

The next chapter, fifty-five, explains the meaning of the main rituals set out in the preceding chapter. The preliminary rituals up to empowerment are related to the eight mundane spiritual accomplishments. One also practices the first five of the six perfections: giving, ethics, patience, effort, meditation of offerings to the Buddha and concentration. The sixth perfection, wisdom is attained through the knowledge wisdom empowerment with the consort: "Through the empowerment of knowledge wisdom, you perfect transcendent wisdom, abiding in secret and so forth, the cause being the passionate person."[1343] The sensual enjoyment of the secret and wisdom knowledge empowerments are transformed "by the cause of equalizing wisdom," so that "when you make offerings to the guru with faith, the result is the state of Vajrasattva."[1344] The creation stage empowerments of water and so forth and the name empowerment are "for the purification of the five wisdoms" and that of non-reversal is "for the purification of the thought about sentient beings."[1345] So powerful are these Tantric practices that "the subtlest particle of the mandala is equal to the worship of all the Tathāgatas," because it is "the cycle of result."[1346] "You attain empowerment, the very purest sphere of reality, and, by the knowledge wisdom [empowerment], you attain the very essence of reality."[1347]

Despite the description of matters pertaining to the creation stage that occupy part, albeit a small one, of the *Vajra Rosary,* the Tantra is clear that such practices are

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[1343] *VR* 82A, ch. 55, v. 4.

[1344] *Id.,* v. 5.

[1345] *Id.,* v. 6.

[1346] *Id.,* v. 7.

[1347] *Id.,* v. 8.

preparatory only and will not, in themselves, lead the practitioner to enlightenment. Passages such as the following are found in several places in the Tantra: "You don't need vows,/ You don't need burnt offerings,/ You don't need rosaries,/ You don't need counting./ As far as this is concerned,/ You don't need the division/ Of the creation stage,/ You don't need the so-called/ Accumulation of austerities.// By just the yoga of mantra/ The oral tradition of the guru/ And by practicing for six months,/ The supreme state/ Will be achieved."[1348]

Z. The Inner Offering

In chapter fifty-six, the Tantra explains the ritual of the inner offering, which "is the state of the ritual of worshipping the body." Here, rather than engage in the worship of external things such as statues or mandalas, "you should always worship the [Three] Jewels and so forth with shit and piss."[1349] But it is the Mind Vajra that is "chief," and the Mind Vajra is the subject of all offerings, inner and outer.[1350]

Here, as elsewhere, the understanding of emptiness and relativity is crucial: "The mind vajra itself is chief, [but] that mind also is non-existent because it has the character of emptiness. Emptiness likewise is formless, because of which all things are like space."[1351] So, you are instructed to "worship the three channels," but realizing that

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[1348] *VR* 17B-18A, ch. 6, vv. 55-56. *See also, e.g., VR* 26B, ch. 13, v. 26.

[1349] *VR* 82B, ch. 56, vv. 1-2.

[1350] Giving credence to Christian Wedemeyer's theory of connotative semiotics as applied to the five meats and nectars of the inner offering. *See* Wedemeyer 2007b.

[1351] *Id.,* v. 3.

"they do not exist other than mind."[1352] Because of this, you are not lacking anything for practice: "You yourself abide as the nature of the mind of Vajrasattva," so "always offer just your own body."

So the yogi practices, indeed lives, as perceiving "the five pure families," but "discern[ing] them as one family."[1353] So, when your visual sense power engages, "having summoned Rūpavajrā, you should make offerings to Kṣitigharba," and so on with each of the sense powers, including the mental sense power where, "summoning Dharmadhātuvajra, you make offerings to Mañjuvajra."[1354] At the same time, however, "outer, inner and both are not perceived,"[1355] and thus "you should abandon the distinction of wanting and not wanting…you should never say that a yogi is 'fortunate' or 'unfortunate.'"[1356]

The inner offerings to the Mind Vajra take various forms: when you engage in desires and sense objects, you offer them to the guru; the "flower of perfect ecstasy" of the vajra sun and lotus are also so offered; conceptuality, like incense, is "totally burnt up by the fire of *tummo*" and offered to the Mind Vajra; as the vajra enters the lotus, you offer the indestructible sound of the yogi; then "the light rays of mantra, like the clear light of a blazing lamp."[1357] In short, "whatever you are enjoying here, relying on all the senses, these are all the Mind Vajra."[1358]

[1352] *Id.,* v. 4.

[1353] *VR* 83A, ch. 56, vv. 5-6.

[1354] *VR* 83A-B, ch. 56, vv. 8-13.

[1355] *VR* 83B, ch. 56, v. 14.

[1356] *VR* 83A, ch. 56, v. 7.

[1357] *VR* 83B, ch. 56, vv. 15-20.

In chapter sixty-one, the ritual of "eating the five nectars" associated with the five Buddha families is described, the nectars being Vairocana – shit; Akṣobhya – piss; Amoghasiddhi – meat; Amitābha – semen; and Ratnasambhava –blood.[1359] They are mixed with the semen and hormonal fluid of the practitioner and consort, and other more conventional ingredients, and eaten by the practitioner and his co-practitioners, then friends and servants.

To practice the ritual the yogi is instructed to build a house in a wilderness, with a secret underground room.[1360] The practitioner, who "abandons passion and dispassion," and consort purify themselves by eating fruit, etc. and repeating the Suṃbharāja mantra 100,000 times,[1361] then the practitioner repeats OṂ ĀḤ HŪṂ for one month.[1362] The consort is young, sexy and beautiful, "without craving, but with a lustful mind…without thought construction, but very learned." With her "the practitioner should desire until semen emerges."[1363] The male and female sexual fluids are put into a "lotus vessel,"[1364] and left for seven days. Then bull, horse, dog, cow and human meats are added to the

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[1358] *VR* 83B-84A, ch. 56, v. 22.

[1359] *VR* 88A-B, ch. 61, vv. 1-3.

[1360] *VR* 88B, ch. 61, vv. 4-5.

[1361] *Id.,* vv. 6-8. The Suṃbharāja mantra is OṂ SUṂ BHA NI SUṂ BHA HŪṂ HŪṂ PHAT/ OṂ GRIHN̲A GRIH̲NA HŪṂ HŪṂ PHAT/ OM GRIHN̲A PA YA GRIHN̲A PA YA HŪṂ HŪṂ PHAT/ OM Ā NA YA HO BHA GA WĀ NA PIDYA RĀ DZA HŪṂ HŪṂ PHAT. *Id.,* v. 9.

[1362] *VR* 88B-89A, ch. 61, v. 10.

[1363] *VR* 89B, ch. 61, v. 11-13.

[1364] Probably referring to the "lotus vessel" described in connection with the vase initiation described in verses 121and 127 of chapter 54, *VR* 77B, particularly in view of verse seventeen's instruction to place the ingredients "without companion…in the lotus vessel made from good sandalwood," *VR* 89A, ch. 61, v. 17; however, "lotus vessel" is also used to mean "vagina" in the Tantra, *see VR* 19B, ch. 9, v. 7; *VR* 27B, ch. 14, v. 18, so it is also possible that the hormonal fluids are smeared on the vagina, then left for seven days (!), then what remains after seven days is added to the other ingredients.

lotus vessel, and OṂ ĀḤ HŪṂ is said for twenty-one days.[1365] Then the ingredients are placed in a sandalwood vessel on which is the mantra DZAḤ HŪṂ BAM HOḤ, and then more conventional substances, goat milk, sesame oil, butter and sugar are added.[1366] Pills are made from the mixture, which is left to dry in the shade. They should be consumed "with vajra brothers, sisters and relatives, [and] after a month, [with your] friends and servants.[1367] From this practice various attainments will be achieved, including "complete realization of the Great Seal."[1368]

AA. Peaceful and Wrathful Activities

In addition to the super-mundane attainment of enlightenment, Tantra has a more worldly aspect, the "mundane" siddhis. These are of two kinds, peaceful and wrathful. These are discussed in chapters sixty-six and sixty-seven.[1369] According to chapter sixty-six, peaceful and extensive activities are those of ordinary ritual; the others are not. The Tantra's instructions for the four activities can be summarized as follows:

[1365] *VR* 89A, ch. 61, v. 16.

[1366] *VR* 89A-B, ch. 61, vv. 17-18.

[1367] *VR* 89B, ch. 61, vv. 19-20.

[1368] *Id.,* v. 22.

[1369] If Matsunaga 1964 is right, and chapter sixty-eight was a later addition, then these two chapters would have ended the Tantra, which may make some sense stylistically. However, as noted above, chapter sixty-eight as written does put a nice wrap on the Tantra from a literary perspective, ending with the praises with which it began.

TABLE 13. Peaceful and Wrathful Activities

	Peaceful	Extensive	Power	Killing
Moon	Waxing	Waxing	Waning	Waning
Direction	North	East	West	South
Color	White	Yellow	Red	Black
Mind	Loving	Joyful	Desirous	Angry
Time	Dawn	Morning	Noon	Midnight

The Tantra also specifies the intermediate directions for certain fierce activities: killing in the Southeast; anger in the Southwest; punishing in the Northwest; and hypnotizing in the Northeast.[1370]

Chapter sixty-seven specifies how to perform four "fierce repetitions" of the Terrifics: Yamāntaka, for controlling and expelling; Aparājita for exorcising ghosts and putting out fires; and Hayagrīva, for neutralizing poison. These should be performed in "a fearsome charnel ground, a terrifying, terrifying place, smeared with the blood of a human skull."[1371] The form to be practiced is to be drawn with a mixture of semen and menstrual blood, and should be "clear and scary."[1372]

For Yamāntaka, the Tantra gives the mantra for controlling and summoning, then specifies a procedure for expelling. For this, while reciting a different mantra, you make a potion of seeds, salt, mustard, poison, datura juice and blood to draw a wind mandala

[1370] *VR* 97B-98A, ch. 66, vv. 5-12.

[1371] *VR* 98B, ch. 67, v. 3.

[1372] *VR* 98B, ch. 67, v. 4.

marked with vajras. In the center, you write the name of whatever it is you want to accomplish, and you practice constantly for seven days.[1373] For Aparājita, you place your hands on the head of the person to be cured, you visualize two sun disks on which there are HŪṂ's, and reciting the mantra, you visualize the two suns in the heart of the one to be exorcised burning up the ghost.[1374]

For Hayagrīva, you visualize the person to be cured as a triple-stacked wisdom being with the wisdom being on a moon disk at her heart, visualizing light rays from the wisdom being filling up the body of the afflicted person. This blazing expels the poison. Then you visualize your right hand as a moon on which is written HAṂ, you say a mantra and then visualize "an unbroken stream of water" pushing the poison down from the patient's head and out of his feet. Then you say a longer mantra, also specified in the Tantra, and add, "Please dispel the poison and so forth from so and so."[1375] The chapter ends with, "Having followed the *Root Tantra*, you should know the rest in detail," a reference to the *Secret Community Root Tantra,* chapters fourteen and fifteen. There, the procedures are given in greater detail than in the *Vajra Rosary,* but there are no lengthy mantras as there are in the *Vajra Rosary.*[1376]

[1373] *VR* 98B-99A, ch. 67, vv. 5-16.

[1374] *VR* 99A-99B, ch. 67, vv. 20-21.

[1375] *VR* 99B-100A, ch. 67, vv. 23-27.

[1376] *VR* 100A, ch. 67, vv. 31. *See* Freemantle 1971, 88-110. The *Root Tantra* specifies, among many other things, that the ones "to be cast out or destroyed" include those who "speak ill of the Mahāyāna." *Id.* 93-94.

BB. The Conclusion of the Tantra

At the end of chapter sixty-eight, after describing the body mandala, and explaining the correspondences between the five main energy-winds and places in the body and Buddha families,[1377] and how the energy-winds are destroyed and then arise again in the life cycle,[1378] the assembled offer praise and thanks for the teaching, ending with "Thus to you, placeless space,/ Unelaborated and unsullied,/ With a mind equal to space,/ Unbounded one,/ We bow down, offering praise."[1379]

The Tantra ends with the command that the commitment of the *Vajra Rosary* should be practiced at all times, continuously, and that the ten Terrifics should be pacified with offerings of ritual cakes and mantras, which echoes Alaṃka's statements (or is the source for them) that the *Vajra Rosary* in twelve thousand lines and the shorter *Vajra Rosary* were taught "from the perspective of the ten Terrifics in the form of glorious Vajrasattva, principally in order to control the ten Directional Protectors."[1380] The last substantive verse of the Tantra states: "In order to care/ For sentient beings,/ Having taught various emanations,/ Vajrasattva will remain/ At all times,/ Day and night.//.[1381]

[1377] *VR* 103B-104A, ch. 68, vv. 52-59.

[1378] *VR* 104A-104B, ch. 68, vv. 60-63.

[1379] *VR* 104B, ch. 68, vv. 65-70.

[1380] Alaṃka 4A (*de'i rjes su 'u rgyan du nub kyi ri la bcom ldan 'das dpal rdo rje sems dpa'i gzugs kyis khro bo bcu'i sgo nas gtso bor phyogs skyong bcu 'dul ba'i phyir*).

[1381] *VR* 104B, ch. 68, v. 74.

The colophon states: "Translated, edited and finalized by the Indian Abbot Sujana Śrī Jñāna and great text translator, monk Zhi ba 'od, the King of Tibet, in the temple of Tho-ling, *dpal med lhun gyis grub pa,* the sanctuary [of Ye shes 'od], the center of the earth."[1382]

[1382] *Thugs dam sa'i snying po* could also refer to a temple of "the yidam Kṣitigharba," although there is no reference to such a temple in Tucci 1989 or Vitali 1999. The Nyingma Catalogue translates the colophon to the *Śriparamādiṭīkā*, Toh. 488, also translated at Tho ling by Zhi ba 'od and Mantrakalaśa, presumably identical to that of the *Vajra Rosary*, as "Tr. at the *vihāra* of dpal dpe-med lhun-gyis grub-pa at Tho-ling in the province of Gu-ge." *See also* Karmay 1998, 19-22.

Chapter Four

Application of the Algorithm to the *Vajra Rosary*

Let us now look at the *Vajra Rosary* through the hermeneutic approach outlined in Chapter One. Initially, and I stress that this is but the first step of a multiphase process, we will apply the algorithm proposed in Chapter One to two possible interpretations of the *Vajra Rosary.* One interpretation is inspired by Ron Davidson's interpretation of Tantra, *i.e.,* that soteriological concerns are "subordinated to the paradigm of dominance, hierarchy, and regal power." The other hermeneutic would see the *Vajra Rosary* as primarily a guide to yogic experience, in a soteriological context, with the objective of personal transformation in accord with the Buddhist path as explained in the literature. This is not a litmus test of the validity of either approach, but a methodology for deepening our understanding of this profound Tantra.

A. Application of the Algorithm - First Level: Finding the "Main Meaning"

1. Plain Meaning (+10%)

Introducing his *motif* of domination and royal power, Davidson asserts that, "Fortunately we only need read the texts and examine the rituals to determine that Mantrayāna has built into it a sustaining metaphor ….."[1383] Does the text of the *Vajra*

[1383] Davidson 2002 at 121. That there may be a metaphor at work is a different issue than whether that metaphor illustrates the meaning of the text, but at this level of analysis, limited to the natural meaning of the words of the text, the two would coalesce. When we get to the aspect of "function," if we find in the *Vajra Rosary* the metaphor Davidson emphasizes, we would have to examine whether the metaphor expresses the function of the text, and, even if we do not find such a metaphor predominating in the language of the text, we would have to consider whether it nevertheless reflects the text's function.

Rosary reveal on its face that soteriological concerns are subordinated to "dominance, hierarchy and royal power"?

At the outset of the Tantra, Vajrapāṇi says to Buddha, "I beseech you to teach me/ Perfection stage yoga!"[1384] The questions in Chapter One of the *Vajra Rosary* that form the outline of the text are explicitly directed to the techniques of the perfection stage, as is most of the text of the Tantra that answers those questions. The plain meaning of the vast majority of the *Vajra Rosary* seems fairly clearly to be instruction in perfection stage yoga. However, it is worth noting here that in certain respects this explanatory Tantra, precisely because it *is* explanatory, has a plainer meaning than the *Root Tantra*.

Nevertheless, a close reading of the plain language of the Tantra does reveal elements that, although in the broad sense are part of the Tantric system of guru yoga, production of the ecstasies and the mundane *siddhis* that accompany the much greater transmundane attainment of enlightenment, are not strictly instruction in perfection stage yoga. These include the numerous instructions to disciples to give the guru things of value, sexual yoga consistently described from the male point of view, and the spells for control and killing of others as well as expelling demons and curing snakebite. So the plain language reveals a picture that is not black or white.

In addition, as even a cursory reading of the text of the *Vajra Rosary* will show, this explanatory Tantra is often not clear on its face and is deliberately written to function on multiple levels, as we see in Chapter Fourteen of the *Vajra Rosary* on the various meanings of "vajra" and "lotus." While the *Vajra Rosary* lacks the *Root Tantra's* most

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[1384] *VR* 6B, ch. 1, v. 41.

famous obscure statement that "you should kill living beings,"[1385] the *Vajra Rosary*, as noted in the next paragraph, tells you *how* to kill living beings, raising the very same hermeneutic issues that plague those interpreting the *Root Tantra* inasmuch as the actual killing of living beings would, in nearly all circumstances, violate fundamental religious and cultural norms.

The focus here though is whether the plain language of the text of the *Vajra Rosary* supports Davidson's general conclusion about Indian esoteric Buddhism as being primarily about domination or royal power or other worldly considerations or whether it is mainly about perfection stage yogic techniques for personal transformation.[1386] Because, as shown in Chapter Three above, the great majority of the text concerns itself with the architecture of the subtle body, emptiness, the five stages, and specific yogic practices, I would say that the plain meaning of the text as a whole is soteriological or yogic rather than political or economic. Because the picture, based on the plain language

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[1385] *See generally* Broido 1975.

[1386] Davidson's description of what constitutes the perfection stage emphasizes the sexual aspects of the practice, de-emphasizing much of what is discussed in the *Vajra Rosary* and other texts which discuss the perfection stage. *See* Davidson 2002b, 57. Davidson writes:

> Broadly speaking, "perfecting stage" involves two or sometimes three levels of ritual. Generally there is some form of internal yogic practice…and the disciple is authorized to engage in this behavior with the second of the four consecrations…Here, the master copulates with a consort and the ejaculate is taken in by the disciple as a sacrament. The other level in the "perfecting stage" is that of sexual practice…via…the third of the four fundamental consecrations…Over and above the two major venues, we find the employment of sexual yoga in the tenth century in the fortnightly meetings, the *gaṇacakra*, in which yogins and their consorts come together…a ritual sexual practice would also be consummated…. *Id.*

While sexual union does play an important role in the perfection stage, conflating the perfection stage with sexuality is misleading and, I would argue, incorrect, like equating government with military power or marriage with sex. Traditional definitions of the perfection stage refer to sexual union in the context of one of the components of innateness, but there is more to it than that alone. For example, "The completion phase is innateness, nonconceptuality, and the totality of all aspects, free from the concepts of faces, arms, colors, and shapes." Kongtrul 2008, 124.

of the text, is to some degree mixed, using those terms in their ordinary meanings, passing for now the larger issue of the interdependence of those two terms, I would make the judgment that 7% of the total 10% for this category falls within the ambit of "soteriological" meaning, while 3% of the total of 10% has a meaning that is "worldly."

2. Intellectual History/Authorial Intent (+10%)

The obvious difficulty we encounter here is determining the identity of the author, not to mention the dating of the text in order to determine "what it was like to be an intellectual in that [spatio-temporal] region."[1387] As Hirsch notes, "A stable and determinate meaning requires an author's determining will, and it is sometimes important, therefore, to decide which author is the one being interpreted when we confront texts that have been spoken and respoken."[1388] Inasmuch as the *Vajra Rosary* is a Tantra, and is found in the *bka' 'gyur*, Buddhist tradition holds the author of the teaching to be Buddha, which is how it is presented in the Tantra itself. To the extent that this was in fact so, or to the extent that the author considered himself[1389] to be participating in the Buddha's tradition or mindstream, while it might be easy to assume that the authorial intent here was of a soteriological and yogic nature, at the outset we have to acknowledge all of the difficulties attendant on trying to determine the actual mindset of a the founder of a religion about whom little is known apart from legend.

[1387] Rorty 1998, 268.

[1388] Hirsch 1967, 126.

[1389] Most probably *him*self, although not excluding the possibility of the author being a woman, someone like Śrī Lakṣmī or Ma gcig lab sgron. Roland Barthes makes a similar point about authorship in his distinguishing of "works" from "Texts": "[I]n ethnographic societies the responsibility for a narrative is never assumed by a person but by a mediator, shaman or relator whose 'performance' — the mastery of the narrative code —may possibly be admired but never his 'genius'." Barthes 1977, 142.

While Vajrapāṇi is the principal interlocutor, there is no indication in the text as to the identity of the person who first recorded the Tantra in written form. From historical sources, the *History of Western Tibet*, we are told that the text was obtained by Mantrakalaśa in the vicinity of Oḍḍiyana after he had been given by Zhi ba ʻod four hundred *zho* of gold to procure it. If, as recent scholarship argues, the Buddhist Tantras were authored in the eighth and ninth centuries, then it is possible that Mantrakalaśa was within a small number of degrees of separation from the author, and possible, although, as discussed above, highly unlikely, was himself the author.

While, as noted by Anthony Thiselton, "[t]o be unaware of the author's name, however, is not to be ignorant of his character, concerns and gifts,"[1390] one arguably can only be aware of the latter qualities through the text itself unless one can generalize based on other evidence extrinsic to the text. Lacking such extrinsic evidence, interpretations based on authorial intent, which intent is based only on the text, would be circular, and there would be, in effect, double counting. In such a case, this component of the algorithm should be omitted. Extrinsic evidence, however, could consist of other texts by the same author on the same subject, and, if the text is highly stylized and recognizable as part of a genre, the intent of the author in adopting a particular genre may be seen in the common Rortian intellectual history surrounding that genre of text. The *Vajra Rosary* is clearly an example of such a stylized text, representative of a genre,[1391] in this case the Tantric genre in which the author continues *buddhavacana*, the speech of the Buddha, and particularly perfection stage Tantric writing. Similar styles respecting the setting for

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[1390] Thiselton 2003, 1451.

[1391] *See* Hirsch 1967, 68-126.

the Tantra are seen in not only in the Tantras but also in the Mahāyāna Sūtras, and the discussion of subtle body physiology and yogic technique is found in many other perfection stage Tantras and their commentaries.

So, in terms of a Rortian "intellectual history," which "bracket[s] the question of what activities which intellectuals were conducting" in favor of ""a sense of what it was like to be an intellectual in that [spatiotemporal] region,"[1392] it is not difficult to conclude that the author here, whenever he lived, was a yogi-scholar, probably a monk or ex-monk, deeply familiar with yogic practice as well as the common literary trope in which the Tantra is written, and also familiar with Buddhist Tantric ritual and philosophy. The level of detail about the subtle body, particularly the one-hundred and eight energy-winds with their descriptions, not found in at least in the writings in use today in the Tantric colleges,[1393] indicates a special familiarity with subtle body physiology, possibly reflecting many years of meditative practice.

I think it is fair to say that the author's intention and his or her intellectual history can fairly be represented as perpetuating and deepening the yogic system described in the Tantra, rather than expressing some differing agenda. Buddhists were particularly sensitive to the fact that on occasion less than meritorious use was made of Buddhist texts and practices—we see this in Ye shes 'od's *Proclamation* and many other places. But that less than dharmic motivation most likely did not occur to the author of this text in

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[1392] Rorty 1998, 267-68.

[1393] Personal Communication with Denma Löcho Rinpoche, 10-7-08. Rinpoche was the former disciplinarian of Gyume Tantric College, where the curriculum focuses on the *Secret Community*, and former abbot of Namgyal Monastery.

creating it, regardless of whether it was later used for collateral or even political purposes.

While there were greedy yogis in the culture, even Davidson's review of 'Brog mi ascribes mainly soteriological motivation. While Zhi ba 'od did pay handsomely for the text, and Mantrakalaśa was apparently the intermediary, there is no evidence to suggest that this was mainly a financial transaction. As discussed in Chapter Two, Mantrakalaśa was a prolific translator and specialized in the *Secret Community*. I have seen nothing to impugn his motives. As for the translators, who brought the *Vajra Rosary* into its present form in Tibetan, Zhi ba 'od and, perhaps, Atīśa, there is no particular evidence impugning their motives. Zhi ba 'od was already, if not King, then royalty, with plenty of money and prestige, not to mention his monastic vows that would preclude doing work in the dharma for his own material gain. While, following Bourdieu, one could argue that true motive here is by definition disguised self-interest, that claim will be addressed in the function and power components of the algorithm.

So I would give 8% of the total 10% to soteriological meaning, and 2% to worldly objectives.

3. Model Reader (+10%)

Whom does the text contemplate as the audience? Here, given the technical nature of much of the text, it is fairly clear that the intended audience, Eco's model reader, "a sort of ideal type whom the text not only foresees as a collaborator but also

tries to create"[1394] were Tantric practitioners or scholar exegetes. It is hard to imagine who else would have the interest in it or the patience to read it.[1395]

While, given the history of Tantric literature during the Tibetan Renaissance, where large amounts of gold were paid for teachings and manuscripts by wealthy monastic or lay Buddhists interested in Tantra, a history with particular relevance to Zhi ba 'od, one could argue that in part the model reader contemplated by the author, procurer or translator of the text could have been a practitioner or scholar exegete with the resources to make a significant donation, my reading of the text does not reveal that the text is mainly directed towards persons with financial or political resources as opposed to those interested in developing their yogic practice and potential. Indeed, some of the explicit antinomian sexual yogic practices discussed in the *Vajra Rosary* might well have deterred many potential donors.

There is no praise of particular actual or potential donors or, as far as I can see, language in the text analogous to "Once upon a time" for children, that seeks the collaboration of anyone other than potential yogis or yoginīs. However, in the *Vajra* Rosary's description of the *Gaṇacakra* ritual, there is a description of ritual involving the enactment of the *Secret Community* mandala with yogis and yoginīs arranged around the central figure, the Vajra Master.[1396] In this, the *Vajra Rosary* might be seen as a precursor of, for example, the *CMP,* with its discussion of perfection stage practice "with elaboration," contemplating a ritual involving a large number of people and a significant

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[1394] Eco 1995, 9.

[1395] Again, while a text might have intended uses other than being read, those uses will be dealt with in the function and power relations part of the algorithm. Eco's model reader assumes someone who *reads.*

[1396] *VR* 90A, ch. 62, vv. 10-11.

cost.[1397] While this constitutes a relatively minor part of the Tantra, one could see this as contemplating the participation of persons with means to arrange and finance such rituals, although this is much more clearly seen in the *CMP* and the *BIL*. Nevertheless, one cannot deny the connection to the mandala configuration so emphasized by Davidson, here at the center of perfection stage ritual.

7% soteriological; 3% worldly.

4. Commentary (+10%)

Similarly, Alaṃka's *Commentary*, as well as the *PU*, the *BIL* and many others, illustrate the commentarial tradition of the *Vajra Rosary* that places it firmly in the religious-soteriological-yogic camp. Unlike, for instance, some of the Tantras claimed to be inauthentic in Zhi ba 'od's *Proclamation*, I am not aware of any traditional commentarial claim that the *Vajra Rosary* is not what it purports to be, or that treats it as having some worldly aim. There is Yukei Matsunaga's assertion that chapter sixty-eight of the Tantra was added later in order to promote the authority of the Noble Tradition, but because I believe that assertion is questionable, as discussed in Chapter II, C, 2, above, even if we treat it as some kind of commentary, I am giving it little weight. 9% soteriological; 1% worldly.

5. Past Function (+25%)

Now we come to the "modern" part of the algorithm, where we disregard the literal and traditional meaning of the text, the author's intent and the ostensibly intended

[1397] Wedemeyer 2007, 116-117, 277-305. *See also* Tsong kha pa 2010, 553-555.

audience and we look for what we would say was *really* going on. It is here in particular that, in the approach I am proposing, we will have to weigh religious versus social, economic and political factors in validating interpretations of what was and is the principal function of the *Vajra Rosary*.

While acknowledging the yogic aspect of Tantra, Davidson emphasizes the importance of Tantra's social consequences. For example, he notes, "Far from being *simply* a series of complex internal yogic meditations, the Lamdré also became an icon for the emerging power and authority of the Khön clan in southern Central Tibet."[1398] On a grander scale, he concludes:

> The renaissance is *really* the story of the great Central Tibetan clans' employment of Tantric and yogic documents to help their society, which was just emerging from a catastrophic collapse. That process of disintegration eventually led to the subsequent rebirth of Tibet.[1399]

Here again, it is (really) the *really* that presents both the problem and the solution. While the Lamdré may have acted to augment the Khön clan's power and Tantric documents may have galvanized Tibetan society, the issue that will drive the discussion deeper through the instrumentality of the hermeneutic algorithm is whether that is *really* what Tantra is about: mainly a social or political phenomenon rather than yogic or soteriological one.[1400]

[1398] Davidson 2005, 14-15 (emphasis added).

[1399] Davidson 2005, 60.

[1400] Again, we need to be precise about the discussion of the *use* of yogic enlightenment technology, a component of its meaning. If the technology of the *Vajra Rosary* and similar teachings really does promote enlightenment, release from suffering and so forth, then it should come as no surprise that it would be considered "valuable" in the worldly sense and would be used in worldly ways, even fought over, as all things of value are. I do not think that means that we can assume that enlightenment technology is no different than other things of value and finds its meaning *only* in value. Given our economic system and its emphasis on material wealth, while the privileging of material value is not surprising, it should be the subject of our hermeneutic suspicions.

As Daniel Dennett says, "It is only because an artifact works that we infer the intention of the artificer."[1401] While Davidson, in the thrall of the protective strategy that many would still agree justifies bifurcating the social from the spiritual, does not engage the possibility of yogic, soteriological function, and so does not discuss whether the artifacts, in this case the practice described in the texts, "work," if we are to seriously think about the primary meaning or meanings of the Tantra, we can no longer avoid that question. In the same way, I agree with Davidson that we can no longer simply discuss the spiritual and soteriological, and think that we can leave the social and political and so forth off to the side.

Since the vast majority of the *Vajra Rosary* is about perfection stage practice, in order to better assess its function as a preliminary matter in aid of our determination of function, we should attempt to make—and we should discuss—whether the practices described there are efficacious or not. If the practices described result in the states described, that would suggest that the yogic practices themselves might be the primary or at least a primary function of the Tantra; if not, we can assume its function was (and is) something other than is described. If we are to weigh, to choose, we should engage this question. Bracketing the question leaves key assumptions covert, and makes broader discussion and progress in understanding the meaning more difficult, if not impossible.

There are some difficulties here. First, we are dealing with mostly subjective states of mind, whose objective measurement is problematic. Second, there are strong cultural barriers erected that discourage such an inquiry. As described by Thurman, both the etic and emic perspectives on this are blocked by what he calls the "obstructive

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[1401] *Id.* at 177, *quoting* Wimsatt and Beardsley 1954, 4.

presuppositions," four for modern philosophers and four for Buddhist practitioners. [1402] These include for modern philosophers "a sense of the non-perfectibility of human understanding" and for the Buddhist practitioners "a sense of the vast difference between their own state of 'ignorance' and the 'enlightenment' of the Buddhas and bodhisattvas."[1403] In addition, within the Tibetan tradition, while the secrecy regarding the practices has been diminished with the fourteenth Dalai Lama's pronouncements on the issue, secrecy regarding the *results* of the practices remains quite intact through the vehicle of modesty surrounding spiritual accomplishment, *i.e.* one who is spiritually accomplished would be too modest to reveal it.[1404]

Logically, the first level of inquiry into the efficacy of religious practice in validating a textual interpretation is one's own personal experience or lack thereof, which can and should, in the proper context and right time and place, be communicated to others not only as direct testimony as to the efficacy or lack thereof of the practices, but also in order that one's prior assumptions and potential biases be transparent.[1405] On a second level, our judgments about the efficacy of religious practices are founded on our knowledge of the experiences of others, gleaned through observation of behavior,

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[1402] Thurman 1984, 6-7.

[1403] *Id.*, 6, 7. Thurman does not ask the reader to overcome these particular presuppositions, but rather, "most importantly, I shall trust that they suspend dogmatic prejudgment of the issue of the perfectibility of human understanding, having realized the arbitrariness of either theistic or materialistic insistence on a fundamental imperfection in human genius, either dogma or 'fact' arising as a philosophical or 'scientific' buttress of authoritarian social structure, in ancient and modern cases, respectively." *Id.,* 8.

[1404] Interestingly, this attitude seems to be directly contradictory to that of the Buddha as depicted in the Pali canon, where he made no bones about proclaiming his realization.

[1405] As of the final revisions to this thesis, I am still pondering what the right time and place for such disclosures would be, and, honestly, have not come to a conclusion. I realize that, given my argument here, lack of disclosure on my part is inconsistent. Inconsistency, however, may not always be a bad thing. *See* Parfit 2011, *xlii*.

conversations, spiritual biographies, autobiographies and hagiographies and, recently, scientific experiments.[1406] As noted by one modern study, "often during times of meditation there are powerful subjective experiences which individuals claim have radically altered their lives, given them a new sense of meaning a purpose, new values, and a new relationship not only with themselves but with other people and the world around them."[1407] Thus far, there has been little research done regarding specifically Tantric practices, but we can anticipate that the future will see such studies as well as those that have focused on more general meditative practices. While beyond the scope of the present study, all of this material should be brought to bear in determining the validity of any interpretation that, as it must, makes assumptions about the efficacy of Tantric yoga.[1408]

I have argued above that based on the evidence of Tantric practices prior to the emergence of the texts we now call "Tantras," we should continue to entertain the possibility that Tantra, and perhaps even the *Vajra Rosary*'s teachings existed long before the emergence of the written text late in the first millennium. However, given the antiquity of the matter and the lack of textual or archeological artifacts from that period, it is difficult to do anything other than speculate about what the function of the *Vajra*

[1406] *See, e.g.* Lutz 2008, 2 ("[T]he brain regions underlying emotions and feelings are modulated in response to emotional sounds as a function of the state of compassion, the valence of the emotional sounds and the degree of expertise"); Richard Davidson 2007, 173 ("The findings support the idea that, after extensive [focused attention] meditation training, minimal effort is necessary to sustain attentional focus. Expert meditators also showed less activation than novices in the amygdala during [focused attention] meditation in response to emotional sounds…. This finding may support the idea that advanced levels of concentration are associated with a significant decrease in emotionally reactive behaviors that are incompatible with stability of concentration."); Benson 1982; Shapiro 1984.

[1407] Shapiro 1984, 14. *See also* Samuel 2008, 351.

[1408] It is here that I believe Ann Taves' proposals will prove very useful. By expanding the definition of "religious" to "special," her proposed methodology will make it much easier to measure various religious experiences across cultures. *See* Taves 2009.

Rosary might have been at that time, if it existed. So we will begin our discussion of function at the beginning of the second millennium.

At that time, the "Indian book" obtained by Mantrakalaśa from Oḍḍiyana at Zhi ba 'od's request was translated into Tibetan by Zhi ba 'od and, perhaps, Atīśa or another Indian pandit. From that time, although as discussed above, there was increasing public knowledge about Tantra, at least in Kashmir, we have no indication that the text of the *Vajra Rosary* was not, as best we can tell, like such texts at the time, closely held, and translated, read and commented upon by exegetes and advanced practitioners. Subsequently, the *Vajra Rosary* was widely quoted in the commentarial literature such as the *PU*, the *BIL* and Dolpopa's *Mountain Doctrine*, so it must have been, to some extent, copied and distributed.[1409] The *Vajra Rosary* became a central part of the Noble Tradition literature on the *Secret Community*; indeed, some assert with Yukei Matsunaga that the explanatory Tantras were created to validate the Noble Tradition commentaries. So, we will also have to examine the primary function of the Noble Tradition literature in evaluating what function the *Vajra Rosary* came to have in the centuries after its translation. And we need to be open to the possibility that the *Vajra Rosary* had more than one function over time and/or more than one function at a time.

a. Function As the Practices Themselves

Tibetan Tantric literature is replete with detailed descriptions of the states described in the *Vajra Rosary*. The very name of the Tibetan biographical work, *rnam*

[1409] *Mountain Doctrine* is a veritable encyclopedia of quotations from various texts. However, the *Vajra Rosary* is the fourth most frequently cited tantra, ahead of the *Secret Community Root Tantra* itself, and follows only the *Kālacakra* and *Hevajra* tantras and the *Expression of Mañjuśrī's Ultimate Names*. Dolpopa 2006, 28.

thar, "complete liberation," assumes that the primary content of a life is measured in spiritual terms. Yet, the Tibetans were keenly aware that there was more to life than this. As noted by Turrell Wylie,

> Tibetan "biographies" are essentially religious in content and purpose, and are replete with references to the innumerable initiations and teachings received by the lamas, as well as their accomplishments in the realm of the mystic and occult. They begin with the lama's lineage, his early education, his advanced training, and the various manifestations of his wisdom and power in teaching, meditation, and performing rituals. The biographies are not limited exclusively to religious matters: the multiple roles of meditator, socio-religious leader, and medical practitioner played by the lamas serve to introduce significant data on political and social institutions….[1410]

The Tibetan concept of the *rnam thar* shows that the difficulties we have in taking religious and non-religious matters together is peculiarly our problem, a consequence of the protective strategy that disables us from considering the two together or measuring the one against the other.[1411] Stearn's and Davidson's work with *rnam thar*s of Virūpa and Gayādhara shows that the Tibetans had no compunction about identifying human character flaws and the role of money and power without assuming religious considerations were subordinate to them.[1412] It is probably also worth mentioning that seeing religious and non-religious phenomena on a continuum is consistent with both Mahāyāna Buddhism and the Tantric way. Indeed, the *Vajra Rosary* would bar people

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[1410] Wylie 1968, 649.

[1411] I have experienced something similar in teaching Contemporary Civilization to Columbia undergraduates. We start the semester with a fairly intensive exposure to Plato and Aristotle and the Stoics, and after five weeks, the students' critical faculties have moved into high gear. Then we read the Hebrew Bible, New Testament and Qur'an. In what appears to be a miraculous transformation, most of the students' critical abilities seem to evaporate, being replaced by questions like "Why is God so mean to the Egyptians?" The particular student's religious belief does not seem to matter. After the change in their critical acumen is pointed out to them, the discussion improves, slowly. For many students, there is clearly a great resistance to applying critical reasoning to religion.

[1412] A review of the *rnam thar* literature with a view towards ascertaining whether there is a Tibetan way of *measuring* the impact of these worldly issues on religious considerations as opposed to adopting a protective strategy dichotomizing those two types of factors remains to be done.

like us from even entering the *gaṇacakra*, the circle of Tantric worship: "One who finds a contradiction/ Between scripture/ And worldly things/ Should not enter."[1413]

Descriptions of the practices and their efficacy are represented by their authors, such as Mi la ras pa, Tsong kha pa and 'Jigs med gling pa as well as the present Dalai Lama and many others, as being accurate descriptions of the result of Tantric meditation.[1414] While we cannot exclude the possibility that all of these people, many of whom seem to have lived exemplary, ethical lives, and who demonstrated in their philosophical writings keen intelligence, were either delusional or were perpetuating a fraud, it seems unlikely. Anyone asserting such a thesis –which is not to my knowledge advocated by any reputable scholar[1415] –would have to assume that these paragons of Buddhist ethics were violating the general and monastic prohibitions on false speech. In addition, if *all* of these people were lying, one would assume there would be some

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[1413] *VR* 90A, vv. 7-9.

[1414] Particularly with the Tibetan diaspora starting in 1959 there has been significant anthropological and sociological work done with the refugee communities and individual practitioners. There is a vast literature by and about the present Dalai Lama, a Tantric practitioner. English translations of *rnam thar* (biographical) and *rang rnam* (autobiographical) literature include: Rato 1977; Trungpa 1977; Dowman 1984; Thurman 1989; Aris 1989; T. Gyatso 1990; Willis 1995; Edou 1996; J. Gyatso 1998; Dowman 2000. There are many others.

[1415] Davidson characteristically emphasizes the flawed humanity of the Tantric masters:

> …I have approached those of saintly aura and sought humanity where others seek holiness, having looked for the fragile edges of their personalities while the tradition affirms the impenetrable core of their personas. My compulsion to extend praise to these gentlemen proceeds despite our differences, for much that they did I have found disturbing or even, at times, dishonorable.

Davidson 2002, *xi*. But acknowledging the flawed humanity of Tantric practitioners is different than challenging the efficacy of Tantric practice. Indeed, from the Buddhist point of view, it is those very flaws, particularly those involving attachment and desire, that draw them to Tantra, and it is with them in mind that Buddha taught Tantra in the first place. Alaṃka, for example, notes that Buddha taught the *Secret Community Root Tantra* "after….he looked at the realm of living beings, pervaded by the [five] corruptions of lives, views, addictions and fate and living beings." Alaṃka 1B (*de'i rjes su slar yang tshe dang lta ba dang nyon mongs pa dang skal ba dang sems can gyi snyigs mas khyab pa'i sems can gyi khams la gsigs te*).

evidence of that. Absent such evidence, there is no reason not to assume they are telling what they believe to be the truth.

This leaves the possibility of some sort of collective delusion or habitus. Certainly, collective delusion could take the form of literary trope, but the descriptions in the literature are of exact meditational states, and, given the remarkable creativity and output evident in Tibetan literature, one could reasonably assume that most if not all of the authors would have known the difference between repeating a myth regarding states of consciousness and giving instructions for attaining and using those states for soteriological ends. Thus, we end up in the same place: if these descriptions are inaccurate, they must be deliberately so, and for that proposition, there is no evidence.

So, it seems that there is some evidence that the practices described in the *Vajra Rosary* have at least some generalized efficacy, and there does not appear to be any significant evidence to the contrary.

b. The "Domestication" Function of the Explanatory Tantras

As noted in Chapter Two, while the received opinion on the matter is that the explanatory Tantras "domesticated" the antinomian practices described in the *Secret Community Root Tantra*, that is not so clear given many of the practices clearly prescribed in the *Vajra Rosary*. However, even if we take the received wisdom as a kind of commentarial tradition, and thus take it as true to some degree, it still can be seen as having a highly soteriological purpose: the adaptation of Buddhist practice to changing times and mores, the essence of the Buddhist principle of *upāya*, means.[1416]

[1416] In this way, we can see the explanatory Tantras and "domesticating" commentaries as the precursors of what some now derogatively call "New Age" Buddhism, a Buddhism adapted to sell in our scientific,

c. Perfection Stage Tantra's Function As a Kantian Standard

If the perfection stage practices do not deliver what they promise in terms of a practical path to high levels of meditative concentration and ecstasy and wisdom leading to Buddhahood, then the question becomes whether they are efficacious in some other way. The notion of the possibility of Buddhahood in one or several lifetimes could be a potent ground for a belief and ethical system, whether or not the particular techniques were fact or fiction. As suggested by Paul Griffiths,

> Immanuel Kant suggested that human beings need an idea of highest perfection in order to have a standard to apply in making determinations of an axiological kind.…[B]uddhalogical doctrine may usefully be thought of as an attempt to construct a notion of something maximally great, a systematic attempt to define and list those properties that something must have in order…to be maximally great, and so also as the basis for and fullest representation of, Buddhist axiological commitments.[1417]

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materialistic, anti-religious times. *See, e.g.* Bachelor 1997. Stephen Batchelor, writing for the general public, advocates for a western "Buddhism" divorced from traditional historical and cultural trappings. Robert Thurman writes in *Jewel Tree of Tibet*, his adaption of the *bla ma mchod pa* practice to a Western audience:

> Buddhism, as merely a set of responses to the needs of beings, develops as they need them. It isn't some system that emerges as a thing-in-itself out of some reality. It is not a dogma, a structure built up on the basis of reality. Buddhism is, actually, simply, an endless series of methods and arts of opening doors to reality that fit with any particular person's location and place. "Buddhism" can emerge as Christianity. It can emerge as Judaism. It can emerge as humanism.

Thurman 2005, 16.

[1417] Griffiths 1994, 58 (footnote omitted).

More practically, advanced Tantric "techniques are obviously only practiced by an élite, but they nourish even the layman's religious life insofar as they are illustrated by countless hagiographic anecdotes."[1418]

Thus, even if there were no efficacy to the practices themselves, there still could be a soteriological function for the promulgation of texts like the *Vajra Rosary* equivalent or analogous to the function of miracles in many religious traditions.

d. Non-Religious Functions

Finally, if we assume that the practices are not efficacious, or even if they are, we should look at the range of other functions the *Vajra Rosary* and similar texts may have performed. There is nothing "un-Buddhist" or "un-Tibetan" about this kind of analysis. Many of Buddha's earliest discourses focused on worldly matters, work, marriage, social obligations and the like.[1419] From the earliest days of Buddhism as a state religion in many different venues, in allowing a role for the local *yakṣa* deities, Buddhism acknowledged not only the transmundane values of liberation and the like (*lokottara*), but also the worldly values that were the specialty of the local deities (*laukika*).[1420] And, no later than Ye shes 'od's *Proclamation,* Tibetans were keenly aware of the dark side that came along with (mis)use of Tantra.[1421]

[1418] Stein 1972, 186.

[1419] *See, e.g.,* Bodhi 2005, 115-42.

[1420] *See, e.g.,* Samuel 2008 146-52.

[1421] Tibetans themselves often take skeptical views of the mundane motives of "holy" persons. But these things are generally talked about rather than written down. Personal Communication with L. Jamspal, 2-18-11.

(A). The Problematic Evidentiary Record

The problem we face at the outset is that we have very little knowledge of the complex of cultural, social and economic conditions that existed on the ground at the end of the first millennium. As Kurtis Schaeffer noted in his study of Bu ston's letter to the editors of Buddhist texts, (and we know more about Bu ston, who was productive in the 14th century, than we do about the translation and editing of Buddhist texts at Tho ling in the 11th century),

> We have as yet made far less progress in the study of the actual events, the day-to-day activities that went into the creation of such an enormous body of Buddhist literature. [fn. omitted] The economic, social, political, or institutional realities that constituted the making of a canon are still only poorly known. Who paid for the work? What sorts of laborers were involved and how many, and how might the systems of management that were no doubt necessary for the successful completion of such a large project have been organized? Further, what range of religious significance did the making of a canon hold, either for its patrons, its readers, its editors and scribes….?[1422]

(B). Dominance, Hierarchy and Regal Power

Ronald Davidson's works make a good entry point because they present a variety of arguments made to date for a functionality other than a soteriological one, but they are not the end of the discussion. In *Indian Esoteric Buddhism*, Davidson makes the point that the *Secret Community*, as well as in the *Chakrasaṃvara* and *Hevajra* systems, "united the practices associated with generating a maṇḍala (the generation process, *utpattikrama*) and the psychosexual yogic practices (the perfection process: *niṣpanna-krama*)…."[1423] He emphasizes that completion or perfection stage practices were allied

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[1422] Schaeffer 2004, 267.

[1423] Davidson 2005, 36.

"with a new series of consecrations,"[1424] the four initiations described in chapters two and fifty-four of the *Vajra Rosary*. "As the new systems became codified in the ninth century," he writes, "the consecrations were said to provide access to the ritual or yogic practices."[1425] Davidson stresses the relationship between consecration or initiation and coronation in his metaphor of royal power.[1426] So I think it is fair to say that Davidson's argument about the primacy of the paradigm of power and domination could apply to perfection as well as creation stage texts and practices, and many of the examples he gives are drawn from perfection stage literature.

But while the motif of royal power may have reflected the social structures of the time, which, as discussed in Chapter One, is not particularly remarkable, to contemplate that Zhi ba 'od sought to obtain and translate the *Vajra Rosary* in furtherance of "dominance, hierarchy, and regal power" might seem somewhat problematic in view of the fact that Zhi ba 'od, being of royal family, had all of these already. Subject to the considerations raised below, one could argue with some force that he didn't have to "configure… his practice through the metaphor of becoming the overlord of a maṇḍala of vassals" because he already *was* the overlord.[1427] While Zhi ba 'od in one sense might be the exceptional case, in another sense he was not: Buddhism often entered a new

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[1424] *Id.*

[1425] *Id.*, 37. And Davidson emphasizes the reappearance of the completion stage meditator "through the birth of the deity in the maṇḍala" as the purification of death, "through the union of phenomenal appearance and emptiness." *Id.* at 38.

[1426] Just as "[t]he monk obtains consecration [*abhiṣeka*] form his preceptor [*vajrācārya*] so that he takes pride in himself as a divinity [*devatābhimāna*] and will be given dominion over a circle of divinities [*maṇḍala*], of different families [*kula*]," "[t]he prince obtains coronation [*abhiṣeka*] from his priest [*purohita*] so that he is recognized as composed of fragments of divinity [*devamśa*] and will be given dominion over a circle of vassals [*maṇḍala*] of different lineages [*kula*]. Davidson 2002, 122.

[1427] Davidson 2002, 2.

culture from the top down, which is also a good argument that those initially adopting it did not do so to gain any worldly advantage.

It is also worth noting here that Zhi ba ‘od, in becoming a monk at the age of forty-one, would have renounced, at least to some degree, his royal prerogatives. From that time,

> [H]e was the patron of the translations. He was a recipient of religious teachings, a donor, a maker of religious books, gtsug.lag.khang-s and mchod.rten-s; he allocated public funds for each member of the dbu.sde-s ("monastic communities"), innumerable [deeds were performed by him]. Bla.ma Zhi.ba'od was a great patron of offerings to the teachings and the holders of [those] teachings. As he personally carried the banner of the teachings, he safeguarded Buddhism for forty-four years and died in the iron female hare year.[1428]

Due to the paucity of the historical record, we have very little to go on in determining Zhi ba ‘od’s actual motivation. But even assuming that there was some mundane psychological intent, such as surpassing his older brother Byang chub ‘od at whose behest Atīśa came to Tibet, the notion that those worldly objectives should predominate over central tenets of Buddhist Mahāyāna values centrally contradicts not only those latter values of selflessness and renunciation which characterize Buddhism from the outset, but also particularly Atīśa’s own *Lamp Illuminating the Stages of the Path*, which, along with many other texts, specifies that Tantra should *only* be practiced *after* mastering and consistent with those values. If Davidson were correct that the mission of the Noble Tradition was to domesticate Tantra within the Buddhist paradigm, and that such mission was successful, *that* would seem to be a soteriological, religious motivation rather than one of domination and so forth.

[1428] Vitali 1996, 120 .

I suppose though that it is possible that Zhi ba 'od was an exception to the general rule. Davidson's *Tibetan Renaissance* advances the theory that the translation movement, discussed in his chapter, "Translators as the New Aristocracy," "was mainly a question of the clash of institutional cultures" and

> really came about because of the disparity between the aristocratic and royal standards of appropriate conduct, on the one hand, and the decidedly inappropriate behavior of individuals or groups in Tibet…employing…such practices as sexual yoga or murderous assaults…even though this is exactly what some Indians had actually done….[1429]

The result of the prodigious efforts made by the translators "provided its protagonists with a sense of entitlement that could match the credentials enjoyed by the older aristocracy…sufficient for them to attract disciples and resources."[1430] Here Davidson is not exactly claiming that the translators were motivated by these worldly things, but he certainly asserts them as the primary result, again, largely ignoring the issue of whether these translations also had a soteriological purpose. In the worldly sphere, however, Davidson is not arguing that all or even most translators were acting with an eye toward political or economic power. He writes:

> Whereas many of the eleventh-century translators did not seize the opportunities for political power as they were presented to them, it is clear that the most famous exercised varying degrees of political and economic authority and that virtually all doing so were translators of tantric Buddhist texts.[1431]

For Davidson, the biographies of Rwa lo rdo rje grags pa (Ralo) and 'Brog mi-lo tsā ba shā kya ye shes (Drokmi) are paradigmatic. Ralo's spectacular career of ritual

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[1429] Davidson 2005, 120.

[1430] *Id.,* 129.

[1431] *Id.*

murder and black magic did not detract from his ability to succeed as a translator in garnering a large amount of secular power. Continuing his metaphor of the importance of royal power, Davidson generalizes from Ralo's experience:

> Although the exceeding of religious parameters and the wielding of temporal influence had been predominantly the prerogative of the landed gentry, the translator's religious training did grant them certain forms of legitimacy that their familial associations might not (and, in some cases, could not) provide, especially capital accrual and land tenure, but also the commandeering of resources for building projects… Some of the esoteric translators ended their careers by renouncing their vows (Drokmi), fathering illegitimate children (Ralo), or establishing a nice little harems for themselves of willing female disciples (Marpa and Ralo), in this way emulating the behavior of the feudal gentry, who bequeathed estates principally through patriarchal primogeniture…[M]any of the eleventh-century esoteric masters handed down their lines to their direct progeny or to members of their clan, thereby fusing clan and religion ….[1432]

However, treating 'Brog mi and Gayādhara at greater length, and even reveling in 'Brog mi's greed and Gayādhara's duplicity, Davidson acknowledges that worldly goals cannot explain their achievements:

> [T]he combination of an avaricious Tibetan with a self-absorbed Indian seems, on the face of it, a recipe for disaster. Yet Drokmi's ['Brog mi's] and Gayādhara's achievements belie that estimation, for the larger purpose of literary translation cannot be wholly subsumed into a neat paradigm of self-promotion…Neither promoted himself as an author, even if both were acknowledged authorities. The care and attention to detail evident from the more than sixty translations by Drokmi do not speak of an individual concerned solely with himself, and if his need for wealth was egregious, so was his expenditure of effort on behalf of his tradition…
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> …If their behavior occasionally challenges our moral suasion, their linguistic and literary accomplishments should challenge our own dedication to the value of intellectual and spiritual enterprise.[1433]

[1432] Davidson 2005, 140.

[1433] *Id.* 208-09.

Thus, even with his overarching theory about the subordination of soteriological concerns to those of power and the like, Professor Davidson recognizes "the value of intellectual and spiritual enterprise" in what the translators were doing.

On the other hand, the extremely high status of Tantra and Tantric texts in the eyes of the Ngari royal family cannot be ignored in assessing the function of the *Vajra Rosary* and similar texts. While Zhi ba 'od was presumably at or near the top of the social pyramid in Gu ge, social capital is a wasting asset. The arrogation of Tantric texts and their translation to the royal family can be viewed as functioning to enhance and preserve the leadership's social status, much like the collection of artwork by royalty in many parts of the world. That art may have been created "for art's sake"[1434] does not mean that it did not *also* function as an emblem of royal prerogative and, yes, "dominance, hierarchy, and regal power." The same can be said of Tantra. While Tantra may have been created with a soteriological purpose, like Dennett's sad-irons, it may have come to have an entirely different function.

Using Pierre Bourdieu's reasoning, we might go further. He writes, "Symbolic capital, a transformed and thereby *disguised* form of physical economic capital, produces its proper effect inasmuch, and only inasmuch, as it conceals the fact that it originates in 'material' forms of capital which are also, in the last analysis, the source of its effects."[1435] One could argue that the very distinctions of Buddhist dharma that separate the spiritual from the worldly realm embody this kind of transformation. Such an argument, of course, is totalizing in the sense that it assumes the primacy of material

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[1434] I am grateful to Gray Tuttle for bringing my attention to this analogy. Personal Communication, 5/10/11.

[1435] Bourdieu 1977, 183.

factors, but must certainly be considered in any weighing of the worldly versus the spiritual, especially given the dominance of materialism in the contemporary worldview.

Some thirty years before Davidson's more fulsome treatment of the Tibetan Renaissance, R.A Stein, in his survey, *Tibetan Civilization*, covered many of the same issues. Tracing the temporal privileges, including tax immunity, food, valuables, land and serfs, of religious hierarchs and monasteries from the time of Khri srong lde btsan's rule in the eighth century,[1436] Stein describes in some detail "the endless feuds between great monasteries and religious orders [that] nearly always had economic and political reasons."[1437] He notes how even "disinterested saints" became the objects of disputes "precisely because the possession or control of such a saint was a source of revenue and political prestige,"[1438] and describes 'Brog mi's sale of Tantric initiations, Marpa's purchasing of Tantric teachings in India with gold, Gnyos lo tsha ba's desire to corner the Tantric market,[1439] and Marpa's greed.[1440] Stein describes the consistent Tibetan critique, much of it satirical, of greedy lamas using religion as a cover for worldly objectives, from the Gesar epic to 'Brug pa kun legs, to the contemporary practice of *bstan bshig,* "destroying the realm," where skits lampoon the excesses and hypocrisy of organized religion.[1441] Yet Stein, like Davidson, recognizes that even within the grit of human

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[1436] Stein 1972, 138-45.

[1437] *Id*., 146.

[1438] *Id*., 147.

[1439] Davidson and Stearns cast some doubt on this. Davidson 2005, 143; Stearns 2001, 220.

[1440] Stein 1972, 146-52

[1441] *Id.,* 152-55.

foible, "[t]hough they may only have been a minority at any time, some monks took their religion's commandments seriously and translated them into deeds."[1442]

(C). Patronage

It is clear that Bu ston, at least, considered the manuscript canon to be property of the patron, and not that of the monastery or its abbot.[1443] Schaeffer emphasizes two motivations for Bu ston's vehemence in ensuring that the texts were of the highest standards: "the importance of such craftsmanship for the preservation and propagation of Buddhist literature, of Buddhist doctrine, in Tibet" and "that the manuscripts, indeed the whole venture, were in fact the property of the Lord of the Manor at Zhwa lu."[1444] Again, one could argue that in Zhi ba 'od, the roles of patron and translator coalesced, so it is difficult to see how his motivation was influenced by patronage. As for Mantrakalaśa, while Zhi ba' 'od was Mantrakalaśa's patron, Mantrakalaśa was also Zhi ba 'od's guru. So while we might speculate that in procuring (or writing?) the *Vajra Rosary* Mantrakalaśa was trying to please his patron in derogation of the duties of the guru to the student to act only in furtherance of the disciple's wellbeing, there is no evidence of that being the case. However, we again must consider the immense social value of the procuring and translating of the *Vajra Rosary* in the ecclesiastical if not theocratic culture of Ye shes 'od's and Zhi ba 'od's Gu ge.

[1442] *Id.,* 152. The first monk so describes by Stein here is Ye shes 'od.

[1443] Davidson 2005, 273.

[1444] *Id.,* 277.

(D). Profit

If the *History of Western Tibet* be believed, Zhi ba 'od gave Mantrakalaśa four hundred zho of gold when the latter went off to find the text, and there is nothing said about any refund. Four hundred zho of gold was a considerable sum, worth six *bre*[1445] of barley during a famine when people were eating human flesh, and much more in normal times.[1446] Someone made some good money here, so there was undeniably an economic aspect to the function of the *Vajra Rosary* at the time. We also may wonder whether Sujana Śrījñāna, whether he was Atīśa or not, was financially rewarded for the translation, and whether there were financial aspects to the other translations. But, as noted above, we have little or no evidence of any of this, unless one takes as evidence the normal presumption that people need to be paid for their work in order to live.

(E). Politics

I have discussed in Chapter two that state power in Tibet was diffuse; indeed, Geoffrey Samuel called Tibet a "stateless society." As discussed above, this does not mean that there was no state power in Tibet; only that the center would not, for very long, hold. From the time of the rise of Tantra during the second propagation, there were many occasions where powerful monasteries were at the center of theocratic rule. However, Davidson does not claim that Tantric practitioners amassed political power only because of their practice. Rather, he illustrates the creation of a new kind of nobility in the persons of the new translators. I will return to this topic in discussing power relations, below.

[1445] About six kilos.

[1446] Van de Kuijp 1994, 611.

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While Zhi ba ‘od was certainly exceptional in that he was translator, patron and royalty, given what we know about his life, even allowing for some exaggeration in the hagiographical description of the *History of Western Tibet,* it is hard to conclude that, at the time he obtained and translated the *Vajra Rosary,* its function for him and those involved in the translation effort at Tho ling was anything other than primarily spiritual or soteriological. While we can speculate about psychological or other factors at play, we have no evidence for them.

But we do have the Bourdieuian social field at Tho ling and elsewhere in Tibet over the balance of the second millennium, within which Tantra played an important social and political role. It is undeniable that in Tho ling society, possession and translation of the *Vajra Rosary* and similar Tantric texts brought with them a large amount of social capital, precisely because of the heavy soteriological component of that society. To say however, that the *Vajra Rosary* functioned as social capital at the same time it functioned as what we might call soteriological capital is recognizing one of Bourdieu’s main points. Yet we need not blindly subordinate the soteriological to the social, because while there are totalizing ideologies and hermeneutic approaches that do so, while we can respect their contribution, we need not subscribe to them. If a totalizing view of the religious field is taken assimilating it to the amassing of and competition for power, then the argument proves too much for ordinary language, for it would then undermine the distinction between the spiritual and the political, the selfless and the selfish and so forth. While ultimately, in the higher stages of the Tantric perfection stage where consciousness moves beyond conceptual thought, where the is no difference

between words, the algorithm inhabits the world of conceptuality, of conventional reality, where words carry the ordinary meanings ascribed to them, "beautiful without examination." There is where we can have dialogue.

Even accepting Davidson's conclusions about the social and political effect of Tantric literature at the time of its emergence at the end of the first millennium and through the Tibetan Renaissance, I am persuaded that the *Vajra Rosary* and texts like it had their primary functions in the yogic and soteriological domain. Particularly given the technical nature of much of the *Vajra Rosary*, the testimony of the efficacy of its and similar practices, current scientific evidence that meditation has some efficacy, Zhi ba 'od's role in bringing the *Vajra Rosary* to Tibetans and his exemplary life as described and lack of incentive to be seen as using Tantra and its translation for goals of domination and so forth, and Professor Davidson's own more nuanced remarks in the more specific descriptions of translators of the Tibetan Renaissance, but acknowledging some inevitable infiltration of worldly objectives as Described by Davidson, Stein and others, I think in terms of its past function it is fair to ascribe 66.6% of the total of 25%, or 16.65%, of the *Vajra Rosary'*s meaning as soteriological and yogic, and 33.4% of the total, or 8.35%, to worldly goals including but not limited to those described by Davidson.

6. Present Function (+15%)

While there are vast differences between the function of the *Vajra Rosary* in the Buddhist cultures of India and Tibet and its function in twenty-first century American, nevertheless, some of the above considerations apply to the present function of the *Vajra*

Rosary. If the practices described were efficacious, there is no reason why they should not continue to be so. Even if not efficacious, they still could serve as valence for the Buddhist ethical system. We have practitioners today who continue to vouch for the efficacy of the practices, and, as with those who did so in the past, there is no reason to believe they are lying. However, there is one very significant difference: now, unlike during the Tibetan Renaissance, there are presently, if anything, less worldly benefits to be gained by translating or practicing the *Vajra Rosary* and similar texts than there were in Tibet in the eleventh century.

Given the diminishing of Tibetan culture after the 1959 diaspora, and the general diminishing of the importance of religion in the world, there is not the same kind of cultural homogeneity and religious fervor that previously existed in Tibet, even under the difficult circumstances there during the Tibetan Renaissance. One bright side is the spread of Tibetan Buddhism in the West and in Taiwan, but, while there may be some *cachet* involved in the practicing of texts like the *Vajra Rosary* or translating them into English or Chinese, it is hard to see that in this culture this is intended to or that it would in fact produce much worldly benefit, much less something associated with domination or power.

The one exception to this is that Tantric masters still are very much revered, and are economically supported by Tibetans and, increasingly, Westerners, Japanese and Taiwanese. Tantric teachings, once secret, are now the subject of many books, and Tantric initiations are commonplace, often given to people with interest in, but not a great deal of background in Buddhism.[1447] Donald Lopez notes that with the end of the "patron

[1447] A perusal of the Winter 2011 issue of the *Snow Lion Buddhist Magazine and Catalogue* shows how Buddhist Tantra is being intensively marketed in the United States. The featured story is about the Dalai

and priest" (*yon mchod*) relationship with China, "Tibetans in exile, led by the Dalai Lama, have thus been forced to turn to new patrons—in Europe, the Americas, Australia, Japan, and Taiwan—for whom they perform the role of the priest by giving religious instructions and initiations and from whom in return they receive financial contributions and political support for the cause of Tibetan independence."[1448] Again, in Pierre Bourdieu's terms, this is a trade of symbolic for economic capital, which, ironically, "can only be performed on the condition that the logic of the functioning of the field remains misrecognized."[1449]

It may well be that, apart from the potential efficacy of the practices described in the *Vajra Rosary*, its primary function today is a supportive one as a part of the overall Tantric corpus. Because it is not *per se* part of the Tantric college curriculum, it is not studied on its own. However, it remains one of the most widely quoted Tantras in the texts that are used in the curricula, particularly because it is so heavily relied on by Tsong kha pa in his *BIL*, which is one of the primary texts studied, particularly regarding the practice of vajra repetition, the key to the opening up of the heart chakra, itself the key to the rest of the five stages.

Lama's upcoming *Kālacakra* initiation, which is also the subject of a full-page advertisement on page four. On page nine is an article and book advertisement about Vajrayāna refuge; on page ten an announcement of a retreat on Cittamani Tārā; on page fourteen announcements for Dzog Chen teachings; on page sixteen an announcement for Tārā and Chod retreats; on page seventeen there announcements of teachings on the Guhyasamāja perfection stage and the Dalai Lama giving a Yamāntaka initiation, together with more Dzog Chen retreats; and on page twenty a full page announcement of a month-long teaching on *Lam'bras* by the head of the Sa skya order, and another on page twenty-five of his giving the Vajrakīlāya empowerment. In the book advertising section at the end of the publication, there are many books advertised on Tantric subjects. Snow Lion 2011.

[1448] Lopez 1998, 206. June Campbell writes that "hundreds of *dharma* centres have been established by Tibetans all over the world, their assets running into billions of dollars," Campbell 2002, 2, although her sole source for this assertion appears to be an article in *Time Magazine. Id.,* 202 n. 2.

[1449] Bourdieu 1990, 68.

So, the analysis of the present function of the *Vajra Rosary* coalesces in large part with the present function of Tantra in general. There are certainly financial considerations at play, particularly when Westerners with money seek *entre* to the secrets of Tantric practice. Indeed, Tenzin Dorjee, in his introduction to Yangchen Gawai Lodoe's *Paths and Grounds of Gudhasamaja According to Arya Nagarjuna,* notes that "Tantric literature has today become a market commodity due to our materialistic attitude…."[1450] However, if we look at the motivation of the parties, it is hard to see economic considerations as the centerpiece of the matter. Westerners seeking to become Tantric practitioners are not doing so to obtain any worldly benefit; if anything there could be negative consequences to progress in worldly matters were their affiliation to be known. Tibetan lamas may be, in part, financially motivated, if not for themselves then for their culture, but, again, given the strong ethical prohibitions against using Tantra or dharma for any kind of personal gain, including economic gain, it is hard to presume that such motives are predominant; there is no evidence of that.[1451] People being people, there will always be exceptions. But there is no indication that any such activity, which I would presume, is anything but aberrational.[1452]

So, while many of the same considerations apply to the present function as to the past, while I recognize the large potential for the corrupting influence of Western wealth on traditional Tibetan Buddhist ethical systems, I would give a smaller percentage, 25% compared with 33.34% for past function, to economic considerations, yielding 11.25% of

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[1450] Lodoe 1995 at *xix*.

[1451] In many years of attending Tantric teachings, public and private, I have never been directly or indirectly asked for money or anything of value.

[1452] One could make a similar argument about psychotherapists. While some are in it strictly "for the money," one would be hard put to defend the proposition that money is what psychotherapy is "about."

the total of 15% for soteriological meaning and 3.75% for the mundane spectrum of meaning, primarily economic.

7. Power Relations (20%)

Given the primarily technical nature of the text, while there are literal references to "power" in the *Vajra Rosary*, most of them are clustered in Chapter two on "empowerment."[1453] Chapter two specifies that unless the disciple receives "genuine empowerment" from the guru, "Both master and disciple/ Will go to a great/ Unbearable hell!"[1454] Chapters sixty-six and sixty-seven concern themselves with rituals for, among other things, "controlling" and "killing."

That the literal references to power and so forth are limited is hardly, of course, the end of the story, for in this part of the algorithm, we are mindful of Bourdieu's insight, similar to Marx's notion of "false consciousness," that "the logic of the self-interest underlying all practices—particularly those in the cultural domain—goes 'mis-recognized' as a logic of 'disinterest'."[1455] So our scrutiny here only starts with the language of the text. The practice of guru yoga and the treatment of women in the text will also call upon us to consider the role of the *Vajra Rosary* in organizing those relations in the "real" world as well as in an idealized world of religious practice. This is not only on account of modern Western hermeneutic theories, for Tantra itself and the *Vajra Rosary* in particular is intensely interested in all of the elements of the real world, for those elements, particularly desire, power Tantra itself.

[1453] Skt. *abhiśeka* has the same connotations of power as Tib. *dbang bskur*. *See* Davidson 2002, 123-31.

[1454] *VR* 8B, ch. 2, v. 7.

[1455] Swartz 1996, 76-77.

In Chapter Two, we outlined a number of the connections in early second millennium Tibet between secular power and strong, if not centralized, ecclesiastical authority. While the historical record does not reflect that Tantra played the usual role one thinks of in terms of religious power, like the dominant role of Islam in politics today, or the role of the Catholic Church in the economies and politics of Europe, certainly the kingdom of Gu ge in which Ye shes ‘od and his descendants ruled, could certainly be said to have many elements of a theocracy. While Samuel has argued that Tibet was more of a “stateless” society, and even given the preeminence of the Geluks historically, there have always been competing denominational groups in Tibet, the Sakyas, Nyingmas and Kagyus in addition to the closely related but non-Buddhist Bons, there was and is a definite connection in Tibetan history and culture between worldly power and Tantra.

On the other hand, one can argue that, perhaps because of the climate, the great distances on the plateau, the harsh conditions, and perhaps also because of the doctrinal flexibility that characterizes the preeminent Buddhist notion of *upāya*, Tibetans generally tend to be independent. Also, perhaps stemming from Buddha’s non-judgmental approach and his instruction to rely on one’s own experience, and the instruction to examine a Tantric guru very closely over a long period of time before accepting him as one’s teacher, within the fairly wide variation of devotional intensity and choice of lamas and *yidams* in Tibetan religion, Tibetans tend to keep their own counsel in religious matters. Geoffrey Samuel observes, summing up his *Civilized Shamans,* his anthropological and historical study of Tibetan Buddhism:

> David Snellgrove’s description of the Sherpa *gompa* of Jiwong in the 1950s… spoke of the monks’ “strong sense of personal responsibility and their wide

> freedom of action"…This is the positive converse to Sherry Ortner's view of Sherpa society as individualistic and atomistic…Few who know the Tibetans would disagree with Snellgrove's assessment….
>
> [T]he Vajrayāna came to present to the Tibetans a way of being, and a form of social and political activity, capable of flowing around and beyond any kind of hierarchical structure. In a world where life is increasingly dominated by bureaucratic control, that ideal may continue to have an appeal to Tibetans and to other peoples.[1456]

So, as discussed in the function part of the analysis, there are definite connections between Tantra and worldly power, and we can see this in the very fact that the *Vajra Rosary* itself was procured and translated by the royal family itself. Now we turn to what we see in the text of the *Vajra Rosary.*

(A). The Guru-Disciple Relationship

The primary relationship in the *Vajra Rosary*, as in many Tantric texts, is that of guru and disciple. This is not surprising at all; guru yoga—devotion to the teacher—is fundamental to all Buddhist practice,[1457] particularly Tantric practice, and the paradigmatic prayer to the guru, the *Lama Chöpa*, is based on the *Vajra Rosary*.[1458] One could certainly make a case for the predominance of mundane power relationships here inasmuch as the *Vajra Rosary* praises the guru throughout,[1459] instructs the disciple to

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[1456] Samuel 1991, 570, 573. As far a contemporary developments, one cannot ignore the present Dalai Lama's March 14, 2011 announcement relinquishing the Dalai Lamas' role as the head of the Tibetan polity and government, which has been the case since 1642: "The essence of a democratic system is, in short, the assumption of political responsibility by elected leaders for the popular good. In order for our process of democratization to be complete, the time has come for me to devolve my formal authority to such an elected leadership."

[1457] *See, e.g.,* Pabongka 1993, 251-97.

[1458] T. Gyatso 1988, 11.

[1459] *VR* Ch. 2, vv. 8-10;

venerate and serve him,[1460] directs offerings of valuables to be made to him,[1461] and places him at the center of the yogic sexual ritual.[1462] From a mundane perspective, one could view the prescribed conduct as that of a slave to his master: "Fearfully, with clasped palms,/ Receiving instruction/ With hands on crown,/ Promising to give/ All [his] possessions,/ Shy and looking down,/ The disciple should remain/ Before the guru."[1463]

On the other hand, the reason the guru deserves such veneration is because of his good qualities,[1464] and because the key to success in the practice is empowerment by and the personal instructions of the guru,[1465] and success in the practice leads to Buddhahood. And all gurus are not entitled to the deference and support of all disciples. Alaṃka notes that just as the guru tests the disciple for twelve years before imparting advanced teachings, the disciple tests the guru as well, for the same twelve year period.[1466] Davidson emphasizes here the importance of particularly unexcelled yoga Tantra in

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[1460] *VR* Ch. 2, v. 7 ("Venerate and serve the guru with great respect"); ch. 2, v. 10; ch. 2, v. 26 ("Please accept me as a servant"); ch. 66, v. 4 ("Fearfully, with clasped palms,/ Receiving instruction/ With hands on crown,/ Promising to give/ All [his] possessions,/ Shy and looking down,/ The disciple should remain/ Before the guru").

[1461] *VR* Ch. 2, v. 25 (gold, jewels and cloth); ch. 2, v. 26 ("all of your possessions"); ch. 15, 15, vv. 21-22 ("gold, brocaded garments, jewels and so forth of the finest quality, countless servants and laborers…things that are hard to find"); ch. 54, v. 162 ("then pay the guru"); ch. 55, v. 5.

[1462] *VR* Ch. 2, v. 24 ("You should offer/ An especially tender woman,/ Wife, sister, or daughter,/ With great faith,/ To the guru."); ch. 54, vv. 170 ("The great natured guru/ Consecrates the seal").

[1463] *VR* 97B, ch. 66, v. 4.

[1464] *VR* ch. 2; ch. 65, vv. 10-17.

[1465] *VR* ch. 6, v. 31; ch. 8, v. 8; ch. 10, v. 19; ch. 12, v. 39; ch. 13, v. 27; ch. 14, v. 18; ch. 17, v. 25; ch. 18, vv. 11, 23; ch. 20, v. 17; ch. 21, v. 17; ch. 23, vv. 34, 52; ch. 28, v. 10; ch. 32, v. 23; ch. 36, v. 7; ch. 38, v. 13; ch. 39, v. 10; ch. 42, vv. 3, 7; ch. 44, v. 5; ch. 45, v. 8; ch. 49, v. 14; ch. 52, v. 4; ch. 54, v. 184. Many chapters of the *Vajra Rosary* have such statements in their last verse.

[1466] "Just as one tests/ A jewel by rubbing/ And gold by burning,/ Similarly, he tests the disciple/ For twelve years." *VR* 9A, Ch. 2, v. 11. Alaṃka explains that this testing is mutual; the disciple also tests the guru in this manner. Alaṃka 36B.

attracting disciples and resources,[1467] yet the *Vajra Rosary* explicitly instructs the guru to abandon a disciple who is not a proper vessel for Tantra "even if he has great wealth."[1468]

(B). The Role of Women and of Sexuality in the Vajra Rosary

It is inarguable that Buddhist Tantra, whether taught by Buddha Śākyamuni or emerging at the end of the first millennium, developed in a patriarchal environment.[1469] Whereas in ancient India, there is evidence of some measure of freedom and social mobility for women, as the economy became more settled and agricultural, women lost these[1470] and became, in many respects, property: "Woman has been a chattel in India ever since the later Vedic times when she was included in the list of *dakṣiṇa* along with items like cattle, horses, chariots, etc.…. In the *Sanatujatiya* section of the *Mahabharata* five marks of true friendship are enumerated; one of these is to share one's wife with a friend."[1471] By the time of the *Manu Smṛti*, the "Laws of Manu," dating from around 100 C.E., women were not independent and were subject to the authority of the men in their lives.[1472]

[1467] Davidson 2005, 129.

[1468] *VR* Ch. 9, v. 16.

[1469] As noted by Bernard Faure, "The Buddhist saṅgha was (and remains) a patriarchal institution…." Faure 2003, 14. And, "A consistent feminine critique could well shatter Buddhism in its foundations. It is indeed clear that not only the basic dogmas of Buddhism but the symbolic economy in which they are inscribed as well derive from a masculine ideology." Faure 1998, 281.

[1470] Bhattachariji 1987, 33-34. Sita Raman writes: "The long experience of gender inequality on the subcontinent prevents its dismissal as mere feminine fancy." Raman 2009, Vol. I, *xiii*.

[1471] Bhattachariji 1987, 54.

[1472] Chakravarti 1988, 5.

Discussion of Buddhism and women seems to be a collection of "on the other hand's." There has been a long history, from the very beginning of Buddhism, of the subordination of women, as nuns and otherwise.[1473] On the other hand, there is also an abundance of the rhetoric of equality.[1474] Bernard Faure invokes Katherine McKinnon's description of how gender inequality is syntactic.[1475] On the other hand, Lama Yeshe writes, "[W]hile in ordinary sex it is the man who enters the woman's body, in true tantric embrace it is the woman's energy that penetrates the man!"[1476] June Campbell describes the *gsang yum*, "secret consort," historical practice whereby some otherwise celibate monks practiced, and continue to practice, sexual yoga with Tibetan or, today, Western women under a strict veil of secrecy, that, in the case of Western women if not all women, is psychologically confusing and potentially destructive.[1477] On the other hand, Miranda Shaw criticizes the feminist critique of Tantric Buddhism as a projection of Western scholars' own culture of oppression of women that they then seek to universalize,[1478] stressing that a woman's history should emphasize the subjectivity of women more than how men view women.[1479] Emphasizing the positive, Shaw writes:

> Tantric yogis and yoginis assembled in a network of pilgrimage sites throughout India, where they met other Tantrics, practiced their outer and

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[1473] *See, e.g.,* Faure 2003, 21.

[1474] *See, e.g.,* Harvey 2000, 361-79.

[1475] Faure 2003, 14, *quoting* McKinnon 1982.

[1476] Yeshe 1987, 136.

[1477] Campbell 2002, 98-110. Campbell had first-person experience with this. Miranda Shaw remarks, "I have no doubt that it happened. She was emotionally coerced into a sexually abusive and exploitative relationship." Shaw 1998 at 4.

[1478] Shaw 1994, 196; Campbell 2002, 5.

[1479] *Id.*

> inner yogas, and staged elaborate rituals. In this open and freewheeling religious setting, there were no formal barriers to the participation of women. Tantric sources express no prohibition of women's full participation alongside men or assumption of leadership and authority over men….
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> …[W]omen were present and fully participated in Tantric circles as a matter of course. For example, Kāṇha had an equal number of male and female students, and his foremost disciple was a woman. Pha-dam-pa sangs-rgyas had a large number of women among his fifty-four teachers and had twenty-four female students who attained enlightenment. Two of the four most accomplished disciples of Jñānamitra were women. One of the two best disciples of Śāntigupta was a woman, Dinakarā. When the princess Śrīsukhā became a Tantric guru, hundreds of women in her retinue became her disciples and became accomplished yoginis. The adept Bodhivajra, one of Kāṇha's disciples, reportedly had hundreds of yoginis among his disciples. Among the students of the adept Nāropa, reportedly two hundred men and one thousand women attained complete enlightenment….[1480]

Peter Harvey also presents a generally positive picture of the effect of Buddhism on women, finding that Buddhism improved the status of women relative to their position in Brahmanism, and promoted the spiritual wellbeing of both women and men. He concludes: "Moreover, amongst laywomen, in societies where Buddhism has been the dominant religion, women's freedoms, rights and status have often been compared favourably with those in many others in Asia or, until recently, the West,"[1481] and also notes that in Tibet in the twentieth century women were substantially equal to men in terms of the ownership of property, marriage autonomy, inheritance and sexual

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[1480] Shaw 1994, 74. It's not irrelevant that Shaw's positive view of Tantra is itself "Tantric" in the sense that, particularly in the creation stage, Tantra is nothing if not optimistic, positing the practitioner as a deity in an ideal universe. Campbell criticizes Shaw, arguing that the historical instances cited by Shaw "fail to convey… the process by which many of these very early recorded achievements came to be eroded…and how the female became 'fixed' in a different and inferior position" and that they "do not translate into the social and religious structures of Tibetan society." Campbell 2002, 11. The method I am proposing would extend this dialogue and encourage measuring and discussing *the extent* to which the respective arguments are valid. What *weight* do we give Shaw's examples of outstanding women practitioners in our analysis of women's role in Buddhist Tantra, and in the validity, for us, of Buddhist Tantra itself?

[1481] Harvey 2000, 410.

freedom.[1482] Yet, Kurtis Schaeffer notes that of the approximately one-hundred fifty spiritual autobiographies of Tibetan Buddhists from the eighth to twentieth centuries, only three or four are by women,[1483] and notes how the subject of his research, a seventeenth century Tibetan Buddhist nun, praying to be born a man, was an example of the "internalization of negative Buddhist conceptions of women."[1484]

Similarly, Ronald Davidson catalogues the evidence showing the decline in women's participation in Buddhism in India from the seventh century that, perhaps not coincidentally, reflects the rise of the popularity of Buddhist Tantra. He shows a dramatic decline in donations by women, mostly nuns, and inscriptions attributed to women during the medieval period compared with earlier,[1485] and notes that "esoteric specialists have yet to uncover a single text or lineage that preserves instructions about yogic or sexual practices that relate to women's position,"[1486] concluding, "The data are sketchy, but they indicate that women's numbers precipitously declined during the period of esoteric Buddhism, particularly in high status and authoritative religious positions."[1487] On the other hand, Geoffrey Samuel writes,

> As for the politics of gender in South Asian societies, Tantra by itself could scarcely have reversed the long-term processes by which the status of women in South Asia became increasingly confined and restricted, but it did at least enjoin and legitimate a more positive and equal relationship between the sexual partners who were involved in its practice at the time. Even this was a

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[1482] *Id.,* 408.

[1483] Schaeffer 2004, 4.

[1484] *Id.,* 37.

[1485] Davidson 2002, 93-95.

[1486] *Id.,* 97.

[1487] *Id.,* 93.

> difficult and unstable position to uphold. Perhaps that is as much as we can reasonably ask of it.[1488]

Perhaps Bernard Faure said it best: "Buddhism is paradoxically neither as sexist not as egalitarian as is usually thought."[1489]

The principal focus on women in the *Vajra Rosary* is as consorts of the male practitioner of sexual yoga, particularly the second, "secret," and third, "wisdom knowledge" initiations. Although Davidson does not make this point, if one adopts his view of the power of the royal paradigm in Tantric Buddhism, to the extent it is more than a folk myth, one could easily see the *droit du seigneur* at play here.[1490] It may disturb us to read in chapter two that sexual yoga involves girls as young as sixteen[1491] and that the disciple is encouraged to offer "An especially tender woman/ Wife, sister, or daughter,/ With great faith,/ To the guru."[1492]

Whether and how these rituals took place is a matter of scholarly controversy. A plain reading of the *Vajra Rosary* and Alaṃka's *Commentary* suggests that these rituals probably did take place, at least in India.[1493] Chapter two of the *Vajra Rosary* is quite explicit about the practice, stating, "The yogi will not attain Buddhahood by any other

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[1488] Samuel 2008, 350. It is also relevant here that one of the fourteen Tantric "root downfalls," albeit the fourteenth, is "criticizing women." Tharchin 1999, 120.

[1489] Faure 2003, 1.

[1490] *See* Wettlaufer 2000 for a collection of ethnographic sources regarding this practice in India from the eighteenth century.

[1491] *VR* ch. 2, v. 22. Alaṃka has an alternate wording referring to a twelve year old. Alaṃka 39B.

[1492] *VR* ch. 2, v. 24.

[1493] This conclusion is buttressed by Ye shes 'od's *Proclamation* that would not have been necessary had these practices not been occurring and also by Atīśa's admonitions to monks to refrain from the second and third initiations. *See also* Gray 2007, 97, 131.

means."[1494] The descriptions of the initiations in chapters two and fifty-four are graphic, and seem to have literal as well as connotative significance. And Isabel Onians points out that there are many ritual manuals in the *Secret Community* tradition that describe the practices in explicit detail.[1495] However, the intention of the Tantra is *not* to encourage ordinary sexuality and male ejaculation. To the contrary, the *Vajra Rosary* refers to "release" as "faulty conduct."[1496]

Alaṃka's word commentary on the offering to the guru in the initiations is straightforward: "'Daughter' [means] female child. 'Wife' [means] your own wife…'Sister' [means] your own sister."[1497] This offering is especially pleasing to the guru, explains Alaṃka, "because like your own life, [these] shouldn't be given up."[1498] But here we should also keep in mind the polysemous nature of Tantric writing: Alaṃka glosses "sixteen years old" as "representing four: the four branches of Variety; the four of service and so forth; the four harmonies and so forth, and the four ecstasies, because she becomes the cause for manifesting [these]."[1499] And as for "wife, sister and daughter," chapter forty four of the *Vajra Rosary* says that "wife" refers to a woman with a mole, of

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[1494] *VR* 10A, ch. 2, v. 32.

[1495] Onians 2001, 175 (describing the procedure in Vāgīśvarakīrti's *Saṃkṣiptābhiṣekavidhi*, and noting, "It is beyond the scope of this thesis to go into the many variations on the procedures here described. Some are certainly more bizarre than others, including prescriptions for the apparently homosexual '*fellatio'*. Sometimes the teacher's consort is not required to offer her *śoṇita;* elsewhere the mingled fluids are scooped up in a leaf or other utensil, and so fed to the student.")

[1496] *VR* 91A-B, ch. 62, v. 26.

[1497] Alaṃka 40A.

[1498] *Id.* (*lhag par yid 'ong zhes by aba gsungs te/ rang gi srog dang 'dra ban yid kyis yongs su dor bar mi by aba nyid kyi phyir ro*).

[1499] Alaṃka 39B (*brgyad gnyis lo lon zhes gsungs te/ bzhi brdar* [P. and Snar have *d̲äs rdar*] *byas pa sna tshogs pa'i yan lag bzhi dang/ bsnyen pa la sogs pa bzhi dang/ rgyu mthun pa la sogs pa bzhi dang/ dga' ba la sogs pa bzhi mngon par gsal bar byed pa'i rgyur gyur pa nyid kyi phyir ro*).

the vajra family, with the mantra LAṂ, Life-energy, the channel of flowing urine, the element of wind and/or a salty taste, with similar references for "sister" and "daughter."[1500]

Reading chapters two and forty-four together would support the interpretation that the initiation practices did not involve close female relatives of the disciple being offered to the guru, but rather took place between consenting yogis and yoginīs mainly in the context of personal initiations into very high levels of practice and in the *gaṇacakra*. This interpretation is supported by the description in chapter two of consorts: the "slim-bodied sixteen year old" "has achieved empowerment and has special faith in yoga tantra."[1501] Reading the reference to "wife, sister and daughter" connotatively rather than denotatively, as Wedemeyer suggests with respect to the inner offering of beef, dog, semen and feces, seems to me to be the most reasonable interpretation here, although the status of women as chattels in India, described below, does give me pause in that conclusion. The imaginative (and shocking) "giving up" of one's wife to the guru connotatively is the giving up of one's entire world, connotatively like the giving up of one's body described in Śāntideva's *Bodhicaryāvatāra*[1502] or the giving up of the entire universe in the *Lama Chopa*[1503] and many other prayers and visualization practices.

[1500] *VR* 63B-64A, ch. 44, vv. 13-23.

[1501] *VR* 9B, ch. 2, vv. 22-23. David Gray makes a similar argument, that mother, sister, daughter and wife are "women within the guru's retinue, who together with him and his male students constitute the adept's alternate family." Gray 2007, 115.

[1502] Śāntideva plays with the same kind of connotative meaning: "I make over this body to all embodied beings to do with as they please. Let them continually beat it, insult it, and splatter it with filth. Let them play with my body; let them be derisive and amuse themselves. I have given this body to them. What point has this concern of mine?" Śāntideva 1995, 21.

[1503] T. Gyatso 1988, 98-110. Indeed, the secret initiation embodies the *bla ma mchod pa* secret offering of consorts to the guru: "I offer even illusion-like consorts, of youthful splendor, slender and skilled in the sixty-four arts of love....". *Id.,* 107.

Similar to the Barthes-inspired *coup d'oeil* described by Wedemeyer as to beef, dog, etc., in the second, secret initiation, a practitioner experiences "the enlightened state of communion? It's just a fact: look as I offer my wife, sister and daughter, my whole world!"[1504] And in the third initiation, the guru gives them back to the disciple, integrating the ultimate reality of the emptiness of all things with the conventional reality of life as known and lived. It is also worth mentioning that Ye shes 'od's *Proclamation*, though it seems to catalogue the antinomian practices of Tantra that, in his view, were erroneously being done literally, does not mention the giving of a wife, daughter or sister to the guru.

Among the most extensive discussions of the practices of the sexual yogas is that based on Puṇḍarīka's commentary on the *Kālacakratantra* and Abhinavagupta's writings on the subject found in James Hartzell's doctoral dissertation. Hartzell concludes that it is "very clear that in the perfection stage of the 11th century Indian Buddhist Tantric practitioners using Sanskrit as their communication medium, sexual Yogas were central to the perfection stage process, and the children who were sometimes conceived during these practices and were highly valued and protected, as were young ladies who were groomed for the position of Tantric consorts from an early age."[1505] Puṇḍarīka's commentary is explicit:

> Having meditated into existence the smoke etc., and having made the thought motionless, Having purified [it--the *citta*] in the middle [channel], one should bring the supremely indestructible into being. Having placed the thunderbolt (*vajra*) in the lotus, one should make the *prāṇa* enter into the drop, And [make] the drops [enter into] the *cakras*; The *yogi* should always have a

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[1504] *See* Wedemeyer 2007b, 406-07.

[1505] Hartzell 1997, 911.

> blocked-up *linga*, and should always hold back his semen during the penetrations with his lightning bolt … while in sexual embrace with his great consort …. Filled with the twenty-one thousand and six hundred supremely indestructible moments, he himself should become the great king, the lightning-bolt being.[1506]

While Puṇḍarīka's commentary is in some respects more explicit than Alaṃka's, there are many similarities. In chapter eight, Alaṃka describes the same practice, although it is in the more awkward form of a word commentary:

> "Realizing the equal union of vajra and lotus" because it is experienced by the practice of meditative equipoise on the two organs. "Bestows all bliss" [means] causing the attainment of mundane and transmundane bliss. "By holding the reality of energy-wind" [means] in the space of the vajra and lotus. "Cause to hold" [means] placing the seed [syllables of] BYA and DHYE [on the tip of the vajra and lotus, respectively], or the process of "pressing with the foot [on the] ground," or by the force of holding the energy-wind directly. Because of that very thing, "you know the reality of energy wind" and so forth….[1507]

Hartzell also discusses Puṇḍarīka's measures for birth control and provisions for taking care of any children born as a result of imperfect Tantric practices or deliberately conceived.[1508] Whatever the actual practice of sexual yogas was and is, we should directly analyze, in historical context and in today's context as we interpret the *Vajra Rosary*, the extent to which the Tantra plays a role in the subjugation of women, and how meaningful that role is compared and weighed against other roles embodied in the *Vajra Rosary.*

There is no question that the *Vajra Rosary*, like nearly all such texts, is written from the male point of view. Most all of the references to women are to women as sexual

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[1506] *Id.* at 912, *quoting* the end of the commentary of *Kālacakratantra* 5.127, Rinpoche 1994, 102.26-33.

[1507] Alaṃka 69B, commenting on *VR* 18B-19A, ch. 8, vv. 6-7's more cryptic "The equal union of/ Vajra and lotus/ Bestows all bliss.// By knowing the reality/ Of energy-wind,/ You cause it to be held/ In the central channel…."

[1508] Hartzell 1997, 923-28.

consorts. In fact, other than as the names of certain of the energy-winds, all of the Tantra's references to "girl," "woman" and "women" are as sexual consorts or to their hormonal substances or menstrual blood used in ritual.[1509] Miranda Shaw's arguments notwithstanding, I would say, reluctantly but assuredly, that the *Vajra Rosary* objectifies women and subordinates them to men.

Is the extent to which the *Vajra Rosary* merely reflects the attitude of the cultures in which it originated rather than *increases* the subordination of women a mitigating factor? Discussing gender-based imagery in Mahāyāna Buddhist thought, Jose Cabezón notes: "In patriarchal societies, where culture as a whole has been male dominated, it is not surprising that, in the religious sphere, symbols both created by and relevant to men have been propagated as the norm and the ideal."[1510] I would say that the answer is "no." While the overall context of a society's domination of a given group might be relevant to a given author's intent, here we are looking at simply the operation of power. That the *Vajra Rosary* is one of many instrumentalities of oppression does not mean that it was not and is not effectuating the domination of women by men. I agree with Bernard Faure when he says, "We need rather to submit these principles to a thorough ideological critique, to recognize their ambivalent origin, in order to exploit tactically their liberating potential."[1511]

[1509] *See* Faure's discussion of this aspect of "the rhetoric of subordination" in Faure 2003, 66-90.

[1510] Cabezón 1985, 181.

[1511] Faure 2003, 330.

(C). Peaceful and Wrathful Activities – Magic

Chapters sixty-six and sixty-seven describe rituals with worldly ends, curing snakebite and expelling demons and also for killing and controlling. Mi la ras pa's sorcery for revenge is well known, and Davidson describes similar stories.[1512] This kind of thing was in demand, and unscrupulous yogis, including charlatans, sold these practices and texts relating to them. It could be that these chapters, included near the end of the text, were added as *de rigueur,* but, there they are.

* * * *

So, while most of the *Vajra Rosary* has a primarily soteriological meaning, we do see power operating to raise not only the spiritual but also the worldly status of the guru and to implement in direct ways the subordination and domination of women by men. While Harvey, Samuel and Shaw have positive, but general, things to say about Buddhist Tantra's treatment of women, I am more persuaded by Davidson's and Shaeffer's hard data on the decline of women's participation in Buddhism during the rise of more widespread practice of Buddhist Tantra at the end of the first millennium. While an argument can be made that most of the sexual ritual took place in the *gaṇacakra* among freely consenting yogis and yoginīs, given the general weaker position of women in India and (perhaps less so but nevertheless still dominated by men) in Tibet, and Hartzell's research about children born of Tantric unions, I see a large potential, recalling June Campbell's testimony, even today, of abuse. Finally, the language of the *Vajra Rosary* does not diminish these concerns, as it objectivizes woman as a sexual consort, ignoring

[1512] *See, e.g.,* Davidson 2005, 136-141.

and thereby denying her subjectivity.[1513] Because, among other things, this involves half or more of humanity, I do not see any reason to find a less than maximal operation of power relations in the *Vajra Rosary.* Power 20%.

8. Critical Reader Bias (-10-20%)

I am the critical reader here, and I confess to be biased in favor of finding the *Vajra Rosary* to be primarily soteriological in nature. This has to do with my own psychological predisposition, open-minded attitude towards beliefs of all kinds, personal interest in and practice of Tantric Buddhism, and training at Columbia, where I found kindred spirits. On the other hand, I am a lawyer with decades of experience investigating crime, fraud and greed in many of its forms, so I am a practiced skeptic. More to the point with respect to the algorithm, I have done a case study with in-depth research of the *Vajra Rosary,* so pursuant to this self-reflexive last part of the first level of the algorithm, we deduct 10% from the soteriological interpretation.

* * * *

So, we are now in a position to see the results of the algorithm applied to two interpretations of the *Vajra Rosary*: one of soteriological concerns being "subordinated to the paradigm of dominance, hierarchy, and regal power"; and the other seeing the *Vajra Rosary*'s meaning as mainly soteriological, with the objective of personal transformation in the Buddhist context:

[1513] *See, e.g.,* Irigaray 1985, 13-46.

TABLE 14. Calculating the Algorithm

	Dominance, Hierarchy And Worldly Power	Soteriology And Personal Transformation
Plain Meaning (+10%)	**3**	**7**
Intellectual history (+10%)	**2**	**8**
Model Reader (Eco) (+10%)	**3**	**7**
Commentary (+10%)	**1**	**9**
Past function (+25%)	**8.35**	**16.65**
Present function (+15%)	**3.75**	**11.25**
Power Relations (+20%)	**20**	**0**
100%		
(Critical Reader's bias)		
Without Case Study (-20%)		
With Case Study (-10%)	**____**	**(10)**
= Provisional Meaning	**41.1**	**48.9**

B. Application of the Algorithm – Second Level: Identifying Multiple Meanings and Multivalence

Application of the algorithm has indeed identified multifarious interlocking meanings in and surrounding the text of the *Vajra Rosary.* First of all, while Davidson's privileging of dominance, hierarchy and regal power over soteriology and self-transformation is, for all the reasons stated above, overstated, his metaphor is helpful in helping one understand how Buddhist Tantra came to reflect the form of the society in which it matured. And, application of the algorithm shows that a significant portion—

more than 40%—of the meaning of the *Vajra Rosary, is* associated with themes of dominance, hierarchy and worldly power.

In addition, working through the algorithm has brought a number of other considerations to the fore, which, although subordinate to the overall soteriological meaning, are, as Betti would have called them, "meaning-full forms." Some of the more important of these are:

--The economics of Buddhist Tantra in the medieval period in India and Tibet, where it was not unusual for large sums of money to be involved in the obtaining of texts, and where, at times, both clans and royalty put their resources into the Buddhist Tantric enterprise;

-- The economics of Buddhist Tantra today, where a network of Western students of Buddhist Tantra support the Buddhist Tantric infrastructure;

-- In a larger sense, the viewing of Buddhist Tantra as a form of what Bourdieu calls "religious capital";

-- The Buddhist Tantric attitude towards women, which I have found to be mixed, with a sense of objectification found in the *Vajra Rosary* and other texts;

-- The relationship between guru yoga, key in all forms of Buddhist Tantra, and worldly forms of hierarchy and power;

-- Competition within Buddhist Tantra, both historically and today, over lineage, with its worldly implications.

It is crucial to keep in mind the many levels of both soteriological and social meanings expressed in the *Vajra Rosary* itself and explained in Alaṃka's *Commentary.* Consistent with the *PU'*s hermeneutical system, these levels of meaning are directed to

different groups of people, from non-Buddhists, through the various types of Buddhist practitioners, to practitioners of Tantra and, among those, to the different levels of disciples. The "jewel-like" disciple will grasp the subtle and profound secret meaning as well as all the other levels of meaning, while the less evolved will only grasp the less subtle meanings. With increasing urbanization, then print media, and now mass and social media and the Internet, Tantric teachings originally meant only for jewel-like disciples carefully screened by their gurus are now available to all. Were it not for these developments, and the paradigm shift they have abetted that has, in effect, undermined the previous protective strategy that immunized religion in general from critical scrutiny, we would not be in a position where we are striving to understand the "main meaning," albeit provisional, of the *Vajra Rosary.* Nevertheless, we should keep in mind that teachings like the *Vajra Rosary* by their very nature contain multiple levels of meaning.

Since we are in a new paradigm where religious and non-religious factors are now on a level playing field where they can now freely compete and be judged, the work necessary to understanding how all of these factors interact has only recently begun. For example, we know little about how monasteries operated in medieval India and in Tibet, and we are only beginning to understand the role of Tantric practice in attracting patrons, then and now. When I say "we," I am being somewhat presumptuous, for it is certain that there are many who have or may be researching these matters, and it is also certain that I have overlooked important evidence and misinterpreted relevant data. But that is why the disclosure compelled by the algorithmic method is so positive: my mistakes should be obvious as my common prior assumptions are pulled out of me by the

algorithmic process, and my biases made more transparent. The next round of scholarship, be it mine or my colleagues', will, hopefully, be better.

C. Application of the Algorithm – Third Level: Further Discussion and Reflection; Multivalence in the Vajra Rosary

The dichotomizing force of the duality between the "religious" and "worldly," the "spiritual" and the "material" has been the energy source driving my hermeneutical argument. It is a direct offspring of the "protective strategy" still functioning powerfully in the background as we move to a new paradigm. Even with the theoretical justifications for abandoning that protective strategy set forth in the first chapter, which I believe are compelling, this cultural force field made it very difficult for me to actually *weigh* religious factors versus non-religious factors. But this makes sense; if we are moving to a new paradigm, it is a new one, and feels as yet unfamiliar.

The results of my application of the algorithm surprised me. Applying each component, from plain meaning to function and power relations, I found things I had overlooked, and, forced to make a quantitative judgment, delved deeper into the complexities of the arguments. I found more evidence for the preeminence of "domination, hierarchy and royal power" than I imagined I would, and, at the same time, realized that the many worldly sequelae of Tantra were deeply connected to its soteriological value. Ultimately, whether one follows Munidatta or Davidson, the sacred finds its meaning in the profane and the profane in the sacred. The algorithm operated on interpretation in an abhidharmic way, breaking down the components of the various interpretations to the point where it became clear that each interpretation was composed of the same building blocks.

But, without thoroughly breaking the respective arguments apart through the algorithmic process and examining the evidence of each from the various conflicting hermeneutic perspectives, the respective interpretations would have continued passing as ships in the night, the soteriological relying mainly on the components of plain meaning, author's intent or intellectual history, model reader and commentarial tradition, and the social relying mainly on function and power relations. By forcing the battle to be fought on each front, each aspect of each argument, the soldiers of the intellectual war, are held accountable. While there was a winner of the battle of the first level of the algorithm, and a score, the results on reflection are more ambiguous, but richer.

For example, beyond the history that in many ways justifies his thesis (but in many ways does not), there is something familiar and compelling about Davidson's metaphor of the overriding significance of "domination, hierarchy and power." Why? What preconception or bias does this reveal? One could argue that a materialistic view of peoples' motivations is our culture's default position; that Adam Smith's *homo economicus* started the job, and today neuroscience may be completing it, aided and abetted through ever more subtle forms of persuasion through the Internet and social media, mostly designed to sell products that will make us happy. This view is comforting because it justifies maintaining the *status quo*: if there is no possibility of escaping a materialist paradigm, then we are, in a sense, off the hook. We can continue living our lives as creatures of habitus, deflecting any internal or external imperative to change because we may be too distracted by the next click to even think about it. On a societal level, the materialist paradigm justifies irregular distribution of wealth and privilege as well, downplaying agency in favor of a more deterministic viewpoint.

There is, however, another possibility that would account for the power of Davidson's metaphor, but also free it from this materialist paradigm. What if the metaphor ran more powerfully in the opposite direction? What if, rather than originating in the "feudalization of Indian society in the early medieval period," "domination, hierarchy and royal power" find their source in the human mind itself, reproducing themselves in the social and political reality that human minds construct? As Buddha said in the *Dhammapada*: "Mind is chief and takes the lead…If the mind is polluted, whatever you do or say leads to suffering, which will follow you, as a cart trails a horse."[1514] Tantra does indeed include a great deal of the language of "domination, hierarchy and power," but it is directed, not at worldly objects—that would not even be dharma—but at the mind.

In the *Secret Community* mandala described in the *Vajra Rosary,* while it is true that there are vassal deities surrounding the principal one, the dominating central deity is Akṣobhya, the Mind Vajra, consciousness, the Life Energy energy-wind abiding in the heart.[1515] And who are the dominated "vassals" in the mandala? Mainly, the sense powers and objects that, in ordinary form, bind us to the materialistic view. Only when dominated, subordinated and controlled by mind do the sense powers become the bodhisattvas of the mandala and the sense objects the sense goddesses.

[1514] Chos-'phel 1985, 3.

[1515] *VR* 42B, ch. 23, v. 9; *VR* 47B, ch. 25, v. 4; ch. 54, vv. 30, 128; ch. 68, v. 41. Alaṃka states, "The state of vajra mind" [means] the seed [syllable] of Akṣobhya," 111B, and "The seed of mind" is the syllable HŪM, in the very heart of Akṣobhya. That very one is the main one of all, because all things rely on mind." Alaṃka 150A.

Domination *is* a central theme not only in Tantric Buddhism but the in Mahāyāna itself. But the object of domination is not other persons, but the unruly and inflated ego. As a corrective, Śāntideva describes how to engender jealousy towards one's self:

> "Do this! Stay like that! You must not do this!" This is how he should be subjugated and punished if he disobeys.
>
> If, despite being instructed in this way, you do not do it, you it is, Mind, that I shall punish. All faults rest with you.
>
> Where are you off to? I can see you. I shall knock all the insolence out of you.[1516]

The rituals of Tantra are indeed characterized by these same themes, with the same goal: subjugation of the unruly mind and the forces that cloud its vision, the path to Buddhahood.[1517] At the very same time, we should recall the key role of the critical wisdom of discrimination, also a prerequisite to Buddhahood, embodied in "The Tathāgata Amitābha,/ Completely illuminating/ All elaborations,/ Knowing the distinctions/ Of all beings,"[1518] counseling us that no area of inquiry, be it social, political or spiritual or soteriological, should be exempt from thorough examination.

[1516] Śāntideva, 102-03.

[1517] *See, e.g.,* Cantwell 2008, describing the rnying ma *sgrol ba,* "liberative killing," *phur pa* ritual based on Dunhuang documents: "The ritual which became the classic context for the performance of *sgrol ba* – the carefully structured summoning of evil forces into an effigy which is then stabbed, releasing the consciousness of the victim(s) into a buddha field, is witnessed in the regular rites of numerous wrathful deities…. Thus, a central function of *sgrol ba* is directly and forcibly to destroy one's primal enemy, ignorance, using ritual and contemplative techniques. Typically, this might entail the extension of the violent methods of sacrificial-exorcistic ritual [fn. omitted] towards the more inward and soteriological goal of liberating one's own mind, as well as those of others, from the 'evil spirits' of ignorance." Cantwell and Mayer 2008 at 6-7.

[1518] *VR* 42B, ch. 23, v. 7.

Conclusion

So, how should we interpret the *Vajra Rosary*? The first level of the application of the algorithm tells us that the primary meaning of the *Vajra Rosary* is yogic and soteriological rather than political or economic. But, there is undeniably a background of economic and political activity in the history of this and similar Tantric texts that appears to be part of the Tantric mix from the earliest days of Tantra. Application of the algorithm tells us that this political and economic activity, while significant, appears, however, to be subordinate to soteriological concerns, rather than constituting what is distinctive about the *Vajra Rosary* and similar texts. There is little doubt, as described in detail by Ronald Davidson, that the Tantric movement was of immeasurable importance in assuring the survival and spread of Buddhism during the Tibetan Renaissance, and there is little doubt that the Tantric movement is of great importance in Tibetan Buddhism's struggle to survive today. But this, I submit, has less to do with the imaginativeness of the literature or the metaphor of domination that Davidson describes and more to do with the efficacy of the system of practice described in that literature to open the human mind and ameliorate the suffering of the human condition.

And, as a reading of Chapter Three and of the English translation of the *Vajra Rosary* and the excerpts from Alaṃka's *Commentary* show, the system of practice described there is profound and amazing. Our culture has nothing like it. The personal transformation contemplated by the practices described in the Tantra challenges all of our preconceptions about what being human can be, and thus demands of us as readers, in

order to appreciate it, a radical open-mindedness that may be beneficial to us even if we never become Buddhists or Tantric practitioners.

But "power" indeed "is everywhere,"[1519] including in the text of the *Vajra Rosary.* While power is employed in the *Vajra Rosary* primarily to subjugate, then eradicate, delusion and egotism, the causes of suffering, it is also true that the Tantra addresses women almost exclusively as sexual partners, which is not tolerable to us at all. While there may be cultural mitigating factors involved, our sensitivity to these issues in our culture of equality and individual rights makes a difference in determining the meaning of Tantra. We weigh and judge these things, without the "protective strategy" that immunized them for so long, and they are problematic.

The *Vajra Rosary* and other Tantric texts speak on a number of different levels, and can be misinterpreted in different ways. One way is by taking their language only at the literal level, which Ye shes 'od sought to curb in his *Proclamation*. Another way to misinterpret these texts would be by de-emphasizing, bracketing or ignoring the main event, *i.e.* the yogic and soteriological teachings of the texts, and portraying the practitioners and translators of these texts as merely interesting people for us to study solely on account of their use of religion to accomplish mundane goals. They *were* interesting, but that is not the main event here.

The other conclusion I have reached is concerning the overriding importance of dialogue and reflection along the lines stimulated by application of the algorithm. I have been very impressed by the diversity of the subjectivities of, and the different data collected by, the various interpreters of Buddhist Tantra, and how, based on those

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[1519] Foucault 1978, 93.

different lenses and foci, one hermeneut's white is another's grey if not black. I believe that the unveiling of the various prior assumptions of the interpreters and their engaging in detailed discussions revealing both their prior assumptions and their posterior conclusions is crucial for a rational assessment of the validity of the different points of view based on the assessment of the relative *weights* of the different spiritual and worldly considerations, for the benefit of all concerned. For, ultimately, ascertaining the meaning of Tantra is a collective task. If Buddhist Tantra, or Buddhist-style Tantra, new age or old school, is to play a meaningful role in our culture it will be because we, through discussion and reflection as a society, have decided its meaning is valuable for us.

Thus, I have tried to bring Wisdom and Method and *Truth and Method* together. I have advocated here a method whose essence is open, transparent discussion and reflection, for a time and place where we tend to talk at and past each other and to rely on experts and polemic. The proposed method also contemplates a new paradigm, where we honestly and boldly address and weigh religious and non-religious factors together. I am hopeful that, by emphasizing the provisional nature of the algorithm and stressing the importance of all interpretations, even those that are subordinate to the main one, the balance is right.

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Appendices

A. *The Vajra Rosary Explanatory Tantra*, Complete English Translation.

B. Alaṃkakalaśa's *Commentary* on the *Vajra Rosary*, Chapters 23 and 24.

In preparing the translation of the *Vajra Rosary,* I have relied primarily on the Lhasa recension. I have checked all of the text through Chapter 44 against Alaṃka's version set forth in his *Commentary,* and have spot-checked the Tibetan against the *Sde dge, Snar thang,* and Stok Palace versions, but have not done so systematically.

In preparing the translation of the *Commentary,* I have relied primarily on the *Sde dge,* but had the advantage of consulting the *Dpe bsdur ma* critical edition throughout. Also, I checked all of Alaṃka's quotations of the *Vajra Rosary* against the Lhasa *Vajra Rosary.*

While this translation is complete, and, I believe, accurate, it should be checked against a complete critical edition of the Tantra. It is my hope that the Sanskrit text will someday be recovered, and also that the missing part of Alaṃka's *Commentary,* if indeed Alaṃka completed it, will be found.

The Vajra Rosary Explanatory Tantra

Chapter One

The Setting of the Tantra: Invocation, Questions and Activities of the Students and so on, from the Mahāyoga Tantra, the Clear Realization of the Glorious Vajra Rosary[1520]

Tantra [Volume] *Ca*. In Sanskrit, *Śrī-vajramālābhidhāna-mahāyoga-tantra-sarva-tantra-hridaya-rahasya-vibhedakam-iti*. In Tibetan, "Opening the Secret Heart of All Tantras: The Great Yoga Tantra, the Clear Expression of the Glorious Vajra Rosary."

I pay homage to
The noble youthful Mañjuśrī.
I pay homage to
Great Vairocana Buddha.
I pay homage to
Glorious Vajraḍaka.
I pay homage to
The Three Jewels.

I heard these words at one time. The Lord was dwelling in the vaginas of the Vajra Queens, the essence of the body, speech and mind of all the Tathāgatas, with clear realization through the immeasurable Great Seal.[1521] //1//

All of them, together with zillions[1522] of great Bodhisattvas associated with the limitless Vajra family, were engaged in the activity of manifesting the realization of the Great Seal.[1523] //2//

By the delight of the experience of the great bliss of nonduality, the[ir] lotuses were supremely delighted. //3//

[1520] The chapter headings appear at the end of the chapter in the Tibetan. Here, they are also placed at the beginning of each chapter, in accord with contemporary literary convention.

[1521] Compare the opening of the root Tantra, translated by Freemantle as "Thus have I heard: once the Blessed One was dwelling in the vagina of the Vajra consort of the Essence of the Body, Speech and Mind of all the Tathāgatas," Skt. *Evaṃ mayā śrutam ekasmin samaye bhagavān sarvatathāgatakāyavākcitta-hṛdayavajrayoṣidbhageṣu vijahāra.* Freemantle 1971, 117. Thus, at the outset, this Explanatory Tantra explains Buddha's internal state, and the methodology involved: the Great Seal. It is unclear why Freemantle uses the singular for "vagina" in light of the Sanskrit locative plural. *Id.*

[1522] Lit. many one hundred thousand million ten millions. Alaṃka has *de'i grangs kyis ni rnam par bcad pa dang lhan cig tu zhes bya ba'i tha tshig go*, "By counting them, [they are] 'determined'." Alaṃka 6B.

[1523] Lhasa *Vajra Rosary* has *kyi*; Alaṃka has *kyang*, which makes more sense.

Confronting the suchness of non-conceptual intuitive wisdom by seeing and experiencing all things just as they are, in this way, becoming expert in the unexcelled pledge empowerment of Vajradhara, //4//

Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Pledge Vajra,[1524] Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Hatred Vajra,[1525] Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Passion Vajra,[1526] Bodhisattva Mahāsattva [Permanent] [Action] Vajra, //5//

Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Wisdom Vajra,[1527] Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Earth Vajra,[1528] Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Water Vajra,[1529] Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Fire Vajra,[1530] and Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Wind Vajra,[1531] //6//

and seventy-two thousand Bodhisattvas connected with the Great Pledge family headed by these, and furthermore, in this way, zillions of Bodhisattvas connected with the Great family, //7//

Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Space Goer,[1532] Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Expanding Space,[1533] Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Space Scent,[1534] Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Space Touch,[1535] //8//

Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Definitive Liberation by Quarters,[1536] Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Vajrasattva,[1537] Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Vajra Essence,[1538] Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Vajra Wisdom,[1539] //9//

and Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Vajrapāṇi, Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Vajra King,[1540] Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Vajra Pledge,[1541] Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Vajra Reality,[1542] //10//

[1524] Per Alaṃka, Amoghasiddhi. 2B.
[1525] Per Alaṃka, Akṣobhya. 3A.
[1526] Per Alaṃka, Amitābha. 3A.
[1527] Per Alaṃka, Ratnasambhava. 3A.
[1528] Per Alaṃka, Locanā. 3A.
[1529] Per Alaṃka, Māmakī. 3A.
[1530] Per Alaṃka, Pāṇḍarāvasinī. 3A.
[1531] Per Alaṃka, Tārā. 3A.
[1532] Following Alaṃka's *dri*, "scent," rather than the Lhasa VM's *zla* ba, "moon." Per Alaṃka, Śabdavajrā. 9A.
[1533] Per Alaṃka, Rūpavajrā. 9A.
[1534] Per Alaṃka, Gandhavajrā. 9A.
[1535] Following Alaṃka's *reg* pa, "touch," rather than the Lhasa *VM*'s *gtsug* tor, "crown." Per Alaṃka, Sparśavajrā. 9A.
[1536] Per Alaṃka, Rasavajrā. 9B.
[1537] Per Alaṃka, Samantabhadra. 9B.
[1538] Per Alaṃka, Kṣitigarbha. 9B.
[1539] Per Alaṃka, Mañjuśrī. 9B.
[1540] Per Alaṃka, Lokeśvara. 9B.
[1541] Per Alaṃka, Vajrasamāya. 9B. Akaśagarbha?
[1542] Per Alaṃka, Meitreya. 10A.

Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Vajra Enjoyment,[1543] Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Vajra Crown,[1544] Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Subduing by Power,[1545] Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Non-Conceptual Crown,[1546] //11//

Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Non-Conceptual Sound,[1547] Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Non-Conceptual Reality,[1548] Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Non-Conceptual Pledge,[1549] Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Vajra Ecstasy,[1550] //12//

Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Vajra Supreme Ecstasy,[1551] Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Vajra Variety Ecstasy,[1552] and Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Innate Vajra,[1553] //13//

and, moreover, the great Bodhisattva Mahāsattvas, who were specially liberated by the Vajra Vehicle, sat together. //14//

Furthermore, the Lord turned the Wheel of Reality, totally consummated Buddha deeds, completed the accumulation of merit and intuitive wisdom, [and], smiling at the retinue, he sat down. //15//

Then, the Lord, having seen the vast great retinues of Bodhisattva Mahāsattvas, in order to make them suitably receptive, having entranced himself in the concentration of the "Vajra Rosary, Vajra Vehicle of Perfect Enlightenment,"[1554] sat radiating a great matrix of light rays from all of his pores. //16//

Those Bodhisattva Mahāsattvas who attained supreme happiness by being touched by that great matrix of light rays [were] just like Lord Vajradhara, having non-dual union. //17//

Then, the Bodhisattva Mahāsattvas, having felt delight, bliss and joy, were overwhelmed.[1555] Furthermore, also at that time, the great matrix of light rays was gathered back into the Lord's hair tuft.[1556] //18//

[1543] Per Alaṃka, Bhogavajra. 9B. Sarvanivaraṇaviṣkambin?
[1544] Per Alaṃka, Uṣnīṣacakravārtin. 9B.
[1545] Per Alaṃka, Yamāntaka. 10A. Robert Thurman relates that the Fourteenth Dalai Lama said: "Yamāntaka is the bulldozer; Guhyasamāja is the limousine." Personal Communication.
[1546] Per Alaṃka, Prajñāntakṛt. 10A.
[1547] Per Alaṃka, Padmāntakṛt. 10A.
[1548] Per Alaṃka, Vighnāntakṛt. 10A.
[1549] Per Alaṃka, Acala. 10A.
[1550] Per Alaṃka, Takkirāja. 10A.
[1551] Per Alaṃka, Nīladaṇḍa. 10A.
[1552] Per Alaṃka, Mahābala. 10B.
[1553] Per Alaṃka, Sumbharāja. 10B.
[1554] See also Alaṃka 11B for variant reading.
[1555] Or, "fainted dead away" [*brgyal bar gyur*]. The argument for "overwhelmed" is that Buddha is giving ecstasy, not unconsciousness, and that *brgyal ba* would be followed by *sang nas,* which it isn't. To the contrary, the next thing that happens to them is that light rays from Buddha's vajra enters into their crown

Then, from [Buddha's] vajra path,[1557] light rays in the form of hooks came out and touched the totally overwhelmed ones, and from [his] vajra path a veritable rosary of vajras entered into [their] crown wheels and remained there. //19//

And again the Bodhisattva Mahāsattvas experienced great bliss. By the expression of the Vajra syllable HŪṂ again emanating from the nose at the center of the heart of each one, the net of light rays entering the[ir] crown wheel[s], the very experience of great bliss, great light rays were emitted [and] the Bodhisattvas sat on their respective seats.[1558] //20//

Then, those [Bodhisattvas], as if coming out from under water, were made to be blissful and, having seen the Lord's magic display, eyes wide open, praised the Lord with one voice: //21//

Oh Lord!
Filling up with
Innate[1559] ecstasy,
Becoming one taste!
Oh Lord!
Supremely refreshing!
Oh! Transcending the
Sphere of the path
Of speech! //22//

Oh Lord!
Just like your
Joyous state,
The three worlds are truly
Blissful!
Oh my! Innate ambrosia!
[From] tasting the flavor,
Great compassion arises! //23//

---

wheels and they experience great ecstasy. Could this happen if they were unconscious? Also, Alaṃka gives no support for the "fainting" reading. However, Nathan Katz notes: “Hermeneutical shock is symbolized by fainting: when the Mahāyāna teachings of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* were first announced, the *śrāvaka*s in the audience passed out; similarly, when the Tantric teachings of the *Guhyasamāja* were promulgated, the bodhisattvas fell senseless to the ground, and the same situation ensued when the *Hevajra* teachings were promulgated.” Katz 1984, 188 [citations omitted].

[1556] Skt. *ūrṇākoṣa*.

[1557] While Tibetans generally use *mje* for "penis" or the Sanskrit/Hindi *linga*. Personal Communication with Prof. Lozang Jamspal, *vajra* is a common term for penis in this and other Tantras.

[1558] Alaṃka’s version makes it clear that the light rays were emitted with the HŪṂ syllable from the Bodhisattvas' heart wheels to their crown wheels. Alaṃka 13B. Snar Thang agrees with Lhasa here.

[1559] In Sanskrit, *sahaja* is not used for ordinary sexual experience. Personal Communication with Prof. Lozang Jamspal.

Oh Lord of all living beings!
You clarify all purposes
Of beings,
You open the Great Seal,
The single flavor
Of the three realities! //24//

Oh Lord!
Delighted in great yoga,
Cutting all fetters!
Oh Lord,
You are greatly delighted,
Surely you make beings
Fortunate! //25//

Oh my!
The Vajra Vehicle is bliss!
Please bestow
Great delight and joy!
Oh my!
Mantra is magnificent!
You achieved the state
Of originality! //26//

Praising the Lord with these verses and more, they gathered together again. Desiring to ask about the essence of the nature of the very subtle state of the "expression of the Vajra Rosary," they were delighted, and, wanting to listen with one-pointed minds to the speech which delights, with hair [standing] on end and with bated breath,[1560] they paid homage to the Lord again and again, and each sat on his own seat, eagerly anticipating. //27//

The Lord knew the thought process of minds like theirs. Furthermore, having entered into the meditative equipoise of the "realization of the Vajra Rosary," he emitted his own consort from [his] secret vajra. Abandoning dispassionate form, having taken an erotic appearance[1561] and so forth, he embraced his own consort. //28//

[1560] Although Alaṃka says this breathing was "particularly noble." 16B.

[1561] The nine "moods," *nyams*, *rasa,* are: (1) *sgeg pa*, *śṛngārā*, erotic; (3) *drag shul*, *raudra*, wrathful; (2) *dpa' bo*, *vIra*, heroic; (6) *snying rje*, *kāruṇya*, compassionate; (7) *mi sdug pa*, *bibhatsa*, revolting; (4) *bzhad gad*, *hāsya*, humorous; (5) *rmad byung*, *adbhuta*, marvelous; (8) '*jigs rung*, *bhayānaka*, terror; (9) *zhi ba*, *śanta*, peaceful. *See* Wayman 1977, 22, 327-8. Alaṃka explains that Buddha had all of these moods: "The Lord has an erotic aspect simultaneously through a state of meditative absorption. By not fearing conceptuality, he is heroic. By experiencing the taste of nectar, he is radiant. Holding fierce weapons, he is fearsome. Because he is in the mode of humor, he is smiling. Because of removing obstacles and [because] the division goes spreading the wheel of command, he is fearsome. Due to the actuality of [his] naturally great compassion, he is compassionate. Because of serving as the cause of spreading new mandala wheels, he is wonderful. Because he has no ultimate aspect, he has the *rasa* of peace." Alaṃka 17A-B.

Furthermore, having become immersed in the Great Seal yoga, they [the Bodhisattvas] saw the very form of the one like that, and they were amazed, their eyes wide open, and they were seen to be as if placed in a painting, and became speechless, and the retinues [of Bodhisattvas] stayed there. //29//

Then, the Lord, stirred up by[1562] his own consort, and, giving up the Great Seal yoga, from his own body, speech and mind, stated OṂ AH HŪṂ, the essence of the family of the Vajra Queen. //30//

Then, just after saying these words, instantly from the hair pores of the Lord all the Tathāgatas and Consorts and the Fierce Kings were emitted.[1563] //31//

Having been emitted, each was sitting in his or her own seat on the eastern side and so forth of the Lord. Some were in the form of Vairocana; some were in the form of Ratnasambhava; some were in the form of Amitābha; and some were in the form of Sumbharāja and Uṣnīṣacakravartin through the [rest of the] Conquerors. //32//

Then, the Lord sat for a little while, not saying anything. Then, all the Bodhisattvas, speaking in one voice, made this pronouncement: //33//

Oh my!
Great Vajra Family!
You teach the meaning of
The Vajra Rosary! [1564]
Oh my!
You illuminate the Vajra Vehicle,
You teach the meaning
Of the Reality Sphere!

Saying that three times, they prostrated to the great Vajradhara, and they sat down. Then, at that time, in that moment, a second, a flash, having seen that gathering of the great, vast retinue of Bodhisattvas and Mahāsattvas, Vajrapāṇi prostrated to the Lord and said these words: //35//

Oh Lord!
God of the Wisdom Vajra!
Abiding inside in the

[1562] I am following Alaṃka, who has the instrumental *rig mas* here.
[1563] Alaṃka 18B has both *byung bar* and *phyung bar*.
[1564] This is the first instance where the Lhasa *Vajra Rosary* refers to the itself, but Alaṃka's version does not, having *rdo rje theg pa*, "vajra vehicle," instead of *rdo rje phreng ba*, "vajra rosary." Alaṃka 19B.

Secret lotus!
Lord of the Great Vow Yoga!
From your compassion,
Listen to my words! //36//

The Buddhas
Of the Fortunate Eon
Desiring intensely
The Vajra Vehicle,
[And] these[1565] Bodhisattvas
And Mahāsattvas,
Presented with bodies
Prostrate. //37//

In the time of the
Five degenerations,
Future beings,
Having little diligence
And little merit,
Have many bad views
And short lifespans.
I request that [those] beings
Attain the supreme state![1566] //38//

By means of that,
Those Buddha children
And future sentient beings
Will quickly be perfectly liberated
From cyclic existence![1567] //39//

To the principal one,
Great Lord Vajradhara
I pray in this way.
Oh Thou, Chief of Beings,
By your kindness
I seek[1568] supreme reality. //40//

I would wish to ask
A little about the secret
Of all Buddhas,

[1565] The *Vajra Rosary* often has *rnams*, and Alaṃka *dag*, for the third person plural suffix.
[1566] Sde dge agrees with Lhasa for this and next verse.
[1567] Alaṃka suggests an alternative reading: *ji lta bu zhe na/ de'i phyir pha rol tu phyin zhes gsungs te/ nyan thos kyi byang chub la sogs pa'i mtshan nyid dang bral ba la'o/ yang na bsdus nas zhes bya ba ni 'dod pa'i yon tan lnga'i spyod pas zhes bya ba'i tha tshig go//* Alaṃka 21A.
[1568] Alaṃka's reference to *'tshal* is in his commentary on the following verse.

The concentrated meaning
Of all Tantras,
The two unexcelled stages,
The realization of the
Vajra Rosary!
I beseech you to teach me
Perfection stage yoga! //41//

[By] what words in the
Glorious Community
In the Unexcelled Yoga Tantra
Did the Great Sage [speak of]
The 84,000 reality aggregates?[1569] //42//

Saying these words,
He sat down in front [of Buddha].
He prostrated [his] body [saying]:

O Great Wisdom
Lord,
Vajrasattva, Guru of beings! //43//

You attained the state
Of the three realities,
One taste with the three vajras.
Please teach me
The hidden meaning
Of Tantric yoga! //44//

What of the name
Vajra Rosary? [1][1570]
What is the Community? [2]
What is emptiness? [3]
What is the division
Of the drops? [4]
What is the sound? [5]
The secret? [6]
The commitment? [7] //45//

What is the vow? [8]
The mere sound? [9]
The reality of wind? [10]

[1569] There are 80,000 antidotes to the *kleśa*s referenced in the *Abhidharmakośa*: 21,000 for each of attachment, hatred and ignorance, and 21,000 for all of them together. Personal Communication with Lozang Jamspal 1-22-08.

[1570] These bracketed numbers identify the number of the question identified by Alaṃka. 23A-33A.

Great bliss? [11]
What about the union of
Vajra and lotus? [12]
What of the yogi of
The reality of mantra? [13]
In how many energy-winds [14] and chakras [15]
Does the yogi abide? //46//

What are the channels
In the yogic body?[1571] [16]
The instants of
Variety and so forth? [17]
The four ecstasies, [18]
And the "drops" of
Substance, mantra, and wind? [19] //47//

The three syllables? [20]
And[1572] the three realities? [21]
Similarly, the three nose tips? [22]
The emptiness wisdom
Of the body? [23]
And how then
Do the deities remain [there]? [24] //48//

What are their names? [25]
How, O Protector,
Do they arise and disappear? [26]
Please describe clearly
The genuine creation
Of the ecstasies! [27] //49//

The previously described channels,
How do they always
Move in the vajra body? [28]
These three intermediate channels,
How are they said to be important? [29] //50//

How do the energy-winds arise [30]
And, Oh Master,
How do they dissolve? [31]
As for that, O Master,
How does one perfectly achieve

[1571] Reading *lags* as honorific, rather than *gang lags* as "why?" *See* Alaṃka 25A.
[1572] Following Alaṃka, the three syllables are the subject of the twentieth question and the three realities of the twenty-first; therefore *gang* should probably be read *dang* here. Alaṃka 24B.

Merging them[1573] into the ḍākinī, [32]
Cutting off the energy-winds
Of conceptuality? [33] //51//

How does [the mind] arise as non-conceptual? [34][1574]
How do the channels disappear [35]
And how does one undertake
The six practices? [36] //52//

What are the characteristics of time? [37][1575]
Also, what is the result of the secret? [38]
What is the Reality Sphere [39]
And[1576]Vajra [40]
And the division
Of the families? [41] //53//

How many are the
Divisions of seals? [42]
What are the aggregates
And so forth, [43]
And the sense media?
What is the name
Of the Great Seal? [44] //54//

Where do the division
Of tastes [45] and
The sound of self [46] abide?
Where does the summary
Of the divisions
Of emptiness [47]
And emptiness arise? [48] //55//

What is day and what is night? [49]
What are the symbols of the
Vowels and consonants [50]
[And] the arising
Of the interval? [51] //56//
Of the twenty rituals, [52]
What is the reason [for them]

[1573] *I.e.* the energy-winds, *sdud pa* is transitive. *De ni* refers to the energy-winds per Alaṃka. 26B.
[1574] Although Alaṃka characterizes this question as concerning vajra recitation. 26B.
[1575] Missing in Alaṃka. *See* 27A. But the thirty-eighth question refers to the preceding question about the "experience of inconceivable time," *bsam gyis mi khyab pa'i dus nyams su myong ba'i rjes la//* Alaṃka 27A.
[1576] Following Alaṃka with "and" instead of "of."

And what are [their] results? [53]
How did you state
The offering ritual? [54] //57//

Similarly, how did you describe
The nature and name
Of the Goddess? [55]
What about "Thus I and so forth"
Stated in the beginning
Of the Tantra? [56]
How did "These words"
And so forth, the beginning words,
Become so extensively elaborated? [57] //58//

What about burnt offering
Of the inner essence? [58]
What did you say about
The eating of the five nectars, [59]
The assembly of the host
Of yoginīs, [60][1577]
Similarly, the secret symbols [61]
And the mandalas
Of the vajra
Of body, speech and mind? [62] //59//

How do you explain
The names of Buddha,
Holy Reality and Sangha? [63]
What is the explanation
Of Guru, Teacher,
Preceptor and Vajradhara? [64-67] //60//

What good qualities
Should a student have
To be a vessel
For Yoga Tantra? [68]
How many are
The divisions of practice[1578]
Of that? [69] //61//

What are the results of that like?
What is peace, increase, power?

[1577] Unlike all of the preceding questions, Alaṃka does not quote this question verbatim, although he says that the ritual feast is the subject of the sixtieth question.
[1578] Per Alaṃka, *spyod* not *dpyod*.

Similarly, what is killing,
Expelling, transfixing
And what is to be performed? [70]
What are the fierce activities
And mantric verses?
O Protector, what is the recitation
Of the fearsome one? [71] //62//

When you accomplish
The eight Attainments,
How do you get the
Five clairvoyances? [72]
Yogis seeing reality, [73]
Enlightenment in one instant, [74] //63//

The stable body and agelessness, [75]
Through taking elixirs, [76]
The practice[1579] of alchemy, [77]
And the great attainment
Of the Vajra Seal, [78]
O Guru of Beings,
How are these accomplished? //64//

The body mansion,
What is the nature of that? [79]
How do the places
And so forth abide in it?
What are the characteristics
Of the Lord of Dissolving [80]
And Enjoyment, [81]
And energy-wind? [82]
How would they subside? //65//

In that way, when he completed
Asking the questions,
Vajrapāṇi, with palms joined,
Sat in front of the
Guru of Beings,
And prostrated.
Then the Master
Said to Vajrasattva,
"Well Done!",
The Protector of Beings

[1579] I believe this should read *sgyur* instead of *'gyur*.

Speaking in verse
In a deep
And pleasant
Brahma voice." [1580] //66//

From the realization of the Mahāyoga Tantra Glorious Vajra Rosary, the first chapter on the setting of the Tantra: invocation, questions and activities of the students and so forth.

Chapter Two

The Examination of the Teacher and Student and Empowerment

Then the Vajra Lord,
Truth Speaking World Protector,
Called out to Vajrapāṇi:

"I will definitively answer
[Your] perfect questions. //1//

The summary of the meaning
Of the essence,
All things hard to discern,
The things you have asked,
Oh Vajra God,
Lord of great secrets,
The answers to [your] questions,
The supreme secret,
Not spoken of anywhere
In the Action,
Performance
Or Yoga Tantras,
I will explain
Clearly and definitively. //2//

His eyes flashed, [1581]
And he taught
The supremely wonderful
And, filled with compassion,
He spoke these words.
Therefore, you should listen well! //3//

[1580] For variant reading of this verse, *see* Alaṃka 33A-B.
[1581] This should be *spyan*. An alternate reading could be "Instantly open your eyes!"

Then Vajrapāṇi requested the Lord to moisten [his] heart with compassion and to resolve all doubts. And [the Lord] gave the explanation, using supremely secret words: //4//

When empowerment
Is the main thing,
All attainments constantly
Are present.
I[1582] will explain
The exact meaning.
So, above all,
Perfectly listen! //5//

When at the outset
The brilliant disciple
[Has] genuine empowerment,
Then he becomes a vessel
For the yoga
Of the perfection stage. //6//

Lacking genuine empowerment,
Even if a practitioner knows
The meaning of Tantra,
Both master and disciple
Will go to a great
Unbearable hell!
Thus venerate and serve
The perfect guru
With great respect. //7//

He has attained empowerment
And knows reality,
Has genius
And a compassionate nature,
Profound, magnificent
And immaculate,
He abjures harm
And violence. //8//

A fortunate one,
[With] a perfect body.
Adorned with signs and marks,
Enjoying only great passion,

[1582] This should be *nga*, not *da*.

He abandons jealousy
Towards objects. //9//

Modest and always delighted,
He is born
From the yoginī's womb.
With extreme conviction
In the Vajra Vehicle,
He turns his back on
The Individual Vehicle.[1583]
The disciple should serve
The guru with these
And similar good qualities. //10//

He finds a perfect guru,
Who, with good, exacting insight,
Having purifies, realizes and
Ripens the stains which are
Characteristic of the disciple, //11//

Just as one tests
A jewel by rubbing
And gold by burning,
Similarly, he tests the disciple
For[1584] twelve years. //12//

Because of that, in that way,
At all times,
They mutually examine
Each other.
Otherwise, obstructions will arise,
And will destroy
Spiritual attainments
And bestow suffering. //13//

Just as a mantra destroys poison,
So a mantra becomes an elixir of
Making virtue.
Therefore, with every effort,
Having understood
The student of mantra, //14//

[1583] Following the Fourteenth Dalai Lama's nomenclature.
[1584] Should be *bar du*, not *par du*.

The guru [gives] empowerment
And so forth
For spiritual attainment,
The exact goal.
Because of that,
The anointed student,
Impure,
Becomes pure. //15//

Vajrapāṇi asked
Great bliss Vajrasattva
About that:[1585]

In Tantra, how is empowerment
Stated to be essential? //16//

Omniscient Vajrasattva,
Resolving all doubt,
By [his] expertise
In suchness,
Described to Vajrapāṇi
The precise meaning. //17//

I will explain
So listen!

Of the divisions of empowerment,
The first is the main one,
The second has the name of secret,
The third is total union, and
The meaning of the fourth
Is supreme. //18//

The main one has eleven divisions,
The twelfth is the secret one,
The thirteenth is true union,[1586]
And the fourteenth
Is ultimate reality.
Each empowerment
Is a specific ground.[1587] //19//

[1585] Vajrapāṇi appears to be asking the Lord/Buddha/Vajrasattva, who are interchangeable here.

[1586] A possible instance of the Commentary being back-translated into the Tantra: *yang dag sbyor*, part of the *Commentary'*s explanation of the meaning of Alaṃka's *Vajra Rosary's snyom par 'jug*, is exactly what the Lhasa *Vajra Rosary* has instead of *snyom par 'jug*.

[1587] This verse is quoted in Yangchen 1995, 107. There are numerous correlations of the bodhisattva grounds to Tantric practice, including the *Root Tantra's* mention of ten grounds, the *BIL'*s identification of

Causal empowerments are
Of three kinds;
You should know the fourth
As result.
I pervade all
With the stages of
The ecstasies and so forth. //20//

On the third date
Of the waning[1588] moon
And, similarly, on the
Tenth and fourteenth,
The guru bestows empowerment
According to ritual
On the student
With good qualities. //21//

A slim-bodied sixteen year old,[1589]
Adorned with form and fortune,
Dark,[1590] wide-eyed,[1591]
With perfect conviction,
A compassionate mind,
And a sweet voice,
Who has achieved empowerment, //22//

And has special faith
In yoga Tantra,
Or a twenty[1592] year old,

---

the ten grounds with the ten winds, as well as the *Vajra Rosary's* identification of the fourteen empowerments with fourteen grounds. *See id. 107-124.* Yangchen Galoe notes that the *Drop of Mahamudra-The Great Seal* also correlates fourteen grounds with the fourteen empowerments, but says that they are not the same thing; rather, as Tsong kha pa stated in the *BIL*, "they are correlated from the point of view of a single concomitant factor," 121, also noting that "in many other texts it is stated that it is as fortunate to receive these empowerments as it is to attain the correlative grounds, and also, they establish the potencies and imprints to attain these grounds [in the long run]." *Id.*

[1588] Alaṃka has "waxing" moon, *yar ngo*, instead of the *Vajra Rosary*'s *mar ngo*, "waning" moon.

[1589] *See CMP* Chapter 10 regarding these practices. Wedemeyer 2007, 307-15.

[1590] *Sngo bsangs*, lit. blueish, pale blue, pure blue, black, per L. Jamspal, *chandala*, low caste; per R. Thurman, with blue wide eyes. Personal Communications. The Sanskrit would be *śyāma*, per Monier Williams: "f. a woman with peculiar marks or characteristics (accord. to some ``a girl who has the marks of puberty' ; accord. to others ``a woman who has not borne children;' also described as ``a female of slender shape' &c.) … [1094,3]." Alaṃka makes clear, however, that this refers to color. 39B.

[1591] *See Secret Community Root Tantra*, Freemantle 1971, ch. 8, v. 6 (*mig yangs* as "wide-eyed").

[1592] Alaṃka has "twelve year old." 40A. *See Secret Community Root Tantra* Ch. 7, v. 36 "Taking a twelve-year-old girl whose mind is composed, distinguishing the practice of his Family, he should worship with his seed." (Freemantle 1971, 49); "Taking a twenty-five-year-old girl, wide-eyed, adorned with youth and beauty, …" Ch. 8, v. 7.

Creates blissful delight.
Otherwise there will be
No success;
You would be far
From attainment. //23//

You should offer
An especially tender woman,
Wife, sister, or daughter,
With great faith,
To the guru.[1593] //24//

Having offered various kinds
Of gold, jewels, cloth
And garlands of flowers,
Seated in front of the guru,
The student says these words: //25//

"Oh Lord!
Beginning from today,
Please accept me as a servant!
Please accept my offering!"

Having pleased [him]
By those kinds of things,
You offer the guru
All of your possessions.
Since the guru is Vajradhara,
Worship the guru! //26//

Then, the Mother Seal,[1594]
Having been perfectly offered
To the Lord,
[The guru] should
Make love to [1595] [her].[1596]

[1593] But see *VR* 63B, Ch. 44: "The brahmin woman is called mother and the washerwoman sister. The dancer is known as daughter. The mole woman is known as wife. You should know the undertaker woman as the new wife, the low caste woman as mother-in-law.".

[1594] *I.e.* your wife.

[1595] The parallel text in the *Root Tantra* is: *ṣoda śābdikāṃ prāpya yoṣitāṃ kāntisuprabhām/ gandhapuṣpākulikṛtvā tasya madhye tu kāmayet*; *lo graṅs bcu drug lon pa ni/ dri daṅ me tog ḥphreṅ brgyan te/ yon tan ska rags māmakīr/ shes rab can gyis byin brlabs la/ de yi dbus su mnyes par bya*, translated by Freemantle as "Taking a sixteen-year-old girl of radiant beauty, he should decorate the mandala with perfumes and flowers, and in the centre love her;" Freemantle 1971, 40, 202, 203. Hevajra Tantra, Ch. 10, "Consecration", v. 6: *Tāvad dhi sevyate mudrā yāvac chukravatī bhavet/* The consort is served until her sexual fluids flow. Farrow and Menon 1992, 121.

[1596] Alaṃka's discussion of these terms suggests a slightly different order.

What emerges and falls
From making love
Is [put] in the mouth
Of the fortunate one.[1597] //27//

You should enjoy that
By joining the thumb
And ring finger.[1598]
Self-cognizing great bliss
Is the wisdom
That arises from that. //28//

Exhaling and inhaling
Are of one taste,
And you should make offerings
With intense ecstasy.
Having placed the mantra
HŪṂ PHAT
On the jewel's door,
You should shake the vajra.
Ecstasies arise[1599]
At that instant
Just like that. //29//

With ecstatic mind,
The Vajra Queen exclaims
"How blissful!"
Then she is handed
To the student.
These words are clearly stated. //30//

The practice of offering the lotus
Should be done like this, and,
Because of EVAM,[1600]

[1597] *See* Onians 2001, 173 (Per the *Samājoṭṭārā* (*Secret Community* ch. 18), the second initiation is described as follows: "By means of [the union of] *vajra* (penis) and lotus (vagina) [the teacher] should gather in all the Vajra [Tathāgata]s and let them all descend into his heart, as vajras of body, speech and mind. Then he should emit them [as semen] via his *vajra* (penis) and let them fall into the student's mouth. This is the best initiation of all the Vajra [Tathāgata]s.").

[1598] Tib. *ming med,* Skt. *anamika*. *Tha* is end, *theb chung* is modern Tibetan for little finger. So *tha ltag* is above the end. Per Lozang Jamspal, this refers to the thumb and ring finger. Personal Communication. Per James Matisoff, "The interest of Zhangzhung for comparative Tibeto-Burman," stedt.berkeley.edu/pdf/JAM/Zhangzhung-reformat.wp3.pdf, the Western Tibetan form for "ring finger" is *srin-lag* or *srin mdzub*.

[1599] Alaṃka's *sngon du 'byung* is glossed by him as *skyes par 'gur*. This is probably just coincidental since these were all Sanskrit to begin with, unless some backing in occurred in the Tibetan versions only.

[Her] sublime face,
Vajradhatuiśvarī herself
Enters into the heart of this one.[1601] //31//

The yogi will not
Attain Buddhahood
By any other means.
Also that very subtle thing
Will be realized
By the yogi of great bliss. //32//

You should serve
With great effort!
The characteristic of
Innate ecstasy
Becomes the main empowerment.
Therefore, you achieve everything
Exactly. //33//

From the realization of the Mahāyoga Tantra Glorious Vajra Rosary, the second chapter on the examination of the teacher and student and empowerment.

Chapter Three

The Terminology of the *Vajra Rosary*

Now, listen more about that one!

The Vajra Rosary's clear meaning
Is totally hidden in the Tantras,
So don't mention [these] questions
To others! //1//

The name, "Vajra Rosary,"
Also is the Thirteenth Stage,[1602]
The genuine state
Of the fourth ecstasy,
The ecstasy of
Universal emptiness.[1603] //2//

[1600] *I.e.* the lotus.
[1601] *I.e.* the student.
[1602] *I.e.* Buddhahood.

It is beyond
The province of speech,
Abandoning all duality.
It is the state
Of all fortunate yogis,
The realm of the speech
Of the yoginīs. //3//

The wisdom of emptiness
And the vajra
Are explained as
The "Vajra Rosary."
Emptiness is the
Secret vajra
And the lotus channel
Is Vajradhātuiśvarī.
Wisdom is supreme great bliss,
Wonderful innate ecstasy! //4//

The vajra is well known
As piercing all thought constructions.
The rosary of them
Is also continuous.
The continuity of those rosaries,
Vajras of enlightenment spirit,
Are called vajra
Because they are indestructible. //5//

Hidden in all [other] Tantras,
It should not be revealed
In any way:
That is as well known
As breathing. //6//

The continuum of the rosary
Cannot be broken.
With the property of
Overflowing ecstasy
It causes the piercing
Of all the conceptual energy-winds.
It cannot be penetrated
By energy-wind. //7//

[1603] *I.e.* the meaning of the ecstasies is universal emptiness, described by Alaṃka as "free from all elaborations." 42B.

By day and by night.
More than one hundred eight
Energy-winds of the nature
Of thought construction
Also clearly arise and perish,
Divided like this,
So listen to the names
Of the energy-winds![1604] //8//

Sending and Grasping[1605]
And One Hundred Million,[1606]
Intoxicating,[1607]Stupid,[1608]
Cooling[1609] and Itching,[1610]
Mucus[1611]and Axe,[1612] //9//

Falling,[1613] Crocodile[1614]

[1604] Possible Sanskrit names of the energy-winds are given in footnotes. Further research will be pursued to verify these and compare them to other schema. *See* Alaṃka Ch. 17 for description of the 129 channels divided by chakra.

[1605] Skt. *mucilinda* [?]. Per Lozang Jamspal, usually *byung rngup, yāmayama* or better, *anāpana*. Personal Communication. Per Alaṃka, the Life-energy energy-wind. 45A. Per Lokesh Chandra, *btang gzung* is *Mucilinda*, the Naga who sheltered Buddha during his meditation under the Bodhi Tree.

[1606] Per Alaṃka, this energy-wind is "realized [*buda*] by A and RA." 45A. Per Lokesh Chandra the Sanskrit for *dung phyur*, "100 million," is *arbuda*, which was translated as "realized, *rtogs*" for "*buda*" (*/bud* being an alternate root for */budh* and /*bund*) "by A and R," *i.e. arbuda*. Per Alaṃka, this second energy-wind is the Evacuative Energy-wind. 45A.

[1607] Skt. *jagala* [?]. Both Alaṃka and the Lhasa Vajra Rosary have *myos pa*, "intoxicated," which could be Skt. *māda.* However, Alaṃka describes this channel as "having relied on the very good channel, having equalized things that are eaten, because of activity that is done as one like flowing water, the Equalizing Wind, which is the Intoxicating [*myos byed*] Wind." 45A. This may suggest Skt. *jagala*, which Lokesh Chandra gives as the first definition of *myos byed*, *ja* meaning, among many other things, "eaten," *gāla* meaning "flowing" per MW; *myos byed* might have been the better translation.

[1608] Skt. *kubiddhi* [?]. *Blo ngan* as Skt. *durmati* or *vimati*, or, per Lozang Jamspal, *kubuddhi*, Personal Communication; per MW "having vile sentiments, stupid." Alaṃka's *rtogs dka'*, 45A, as Skt. *durbhoda* or even *tapas* if *rtogs dka'* was a variant translation of *tapas*, "ascetic," that could have been *dka' thub*. Taking both Alaṃka's *rtogs dka'*, as "realizationally challenged," and the *Vajra Rosary's blo ngan* as "bad-minded" in the sense of defectively-minded, Skt. *kubuddhi* seems appropriate. Perhaps also Alaṃka's "because of being realized with difficulty because it causes the compression that goes above," Alaṃka 45A, also carries this sense in the sense of a "mind freeze" as "a compression above."

[1609] Skt. *śtala* for "cooling"; per MW, *tuṣāra* or *devadruma*.

[1610] Per MW, *kaṇḍū*; per Lozang Jamspal, *śyāmikā,* Personal Communication.

[1611] *Skt. siṅghāṇaka.* [?]

[1612] Per L. Jamspal, Skt. *parśu*; per MW *kuṭhārakā.*

[1613] Reading Alaṃka, 45A, "Falling," *zegs pa*, makes more sense than "particle," *gzegs*: "having held the three types of tangible object, because of fatigue the Falling [energy-wind] is the Definitively Moving Wind."

[1614] Skt. *makara* [?]. This energy-wind is not in Alaṃka, at least not so named.

And Breaking Through Flesh,[1615]
Horrible,[1616] Drinking Bout,[1617]
Mad Desire Sinew,[1618] Child,[1619]
Producing Variety[1620] And Bowing,[1621] //10//

Pride,[1622] Drum[1623] and Sounding,[1624]
God of Wind[1625]
And Piercing Essence,[1626]
Fire, [1627] Time[1628] and Servant,[1629]
Vajra, Supreme Giving
And Mango,[1630] //11//

Bee[1631] and Moonlight,[1632] [1633]

[1615] Per L Jamspal, "Protruding Flesh." Personal Communication. Alaṃka notes: "Because of quickly entering the stamen of the Dharma Wheel, [it is called] Breaking Through the Skin, the Life-energy energy-wind." 45B.

[1616] *Gtsigs* as it appears in the Lhasa Vajra Rosary, can mean in Tibetan "to bear or clench teeth," "important," or "subdue," among other things. *Brtisgs*, which is what Alaṃka has, means "build" in Tibetan. For *gtsigs pa*, Lokesh Chandra has *utkaśṭa*, meaning "immense," "excessive" and the like and *udumbara*, meaning a kind of worm or leprosy. For *brtsigs* Lokesh Chandra has *dātavya* (to be given or paid), *premaṇīya* (fit for exciting love), and *vikaṭa*; *vikaṭa* meaning, among other things, "horrible" and many variations of unpleasant or ugly things (including "large-toothed), which accords with Alaṃka's statement that this wind "eliminat[es] the causing of the feeling of disgust towards wind and excrement." 45B. Per Professor Jamspal, this could be "Baring Teeth," Skt. *vikaṭa*. I'm guessing that the Sanskrit here was originally *vikaṭa,* with the connotation of ugly or horrible (clenched or bared teeth being a manifestation of this). The Lhasa *Vajra Rosary*'s *gtsigs* may have resulted from *vikaṭa* being rendered as *utkaṭa*, which has the primary connotation of large or excessive, not too far off from that of *vikaṭa.*

[1617] Alaṃka has "Drunken Argument," stressing the absence of conceptuality. 45A. Skt. here could be *madakāla*.

[1618] Skt. *madakāma* or *kāmamuḍa*, the lattter found in MW, meaning "infatuated by lust." *Chu ba* per JV and IW lexicons is one of 16 large sinews binding the joints together. Per MW, the Skt. for this is *kaṇḍarā*: "f. a sinew (of which sixteen are considered to be in the Human body); a principal vessel of the body, a large artery, vein &c." So the Skt. for this compound could be *kāmamudhakaṇḍarā.*

[1619] Here, taking Alaṃka's *ṣiṣu*, Skt. for child, young of an animal, pupil, instead of repeating Lhasa *Vajra Rosary*'s *chu srin*.

[1620] Skt. *nānotpādaka* [?].

[1621] Alaṃka has *sdud pa,* Skt. *saṃgraha* [?], which his *Commentary* supports. 45B.

[1622] Skt. *māna* [?].

[1623] Skt. *dundubhi* [?].

[1624] Skt. *rāvaṇa* [?].

[1625] Skt. *vāyu* or *namana* [?]. Per Lozang Jamspal, could also be *maruti.* Personal Communication.

[1626] Skt. *marmataccheda* [?].

[1627] Skt. *agni* [?].

[1628] Skt. *kala* [?]. Not in Alaṃka.

[1629] Skt. *kimkara* [?], lit., "What should I do?"

[1630] Skt. *cuta*, "mango," corresponds with Tib. *tsu ta*. However, Skt. *cūta* is *'dzag byed*, "drip, trickle or leak," which makes more sense given Alaṃka's "supported by the channel that circles three times in the middle of the anther of the Enjoyment Wheel, [and] because it enters the Life-energy energy-wind as if dripping [it is called] the Dripping Wind." 46A.

[1631] Skt. *bhramara* [?]. Alaṃka has *tsin tsi ri*, [*cinciri*?], which I have not been able to track down.

Kāmboja[1634] and Dreadlocks,[1635]
Black Mustard,[1636] Well Spread[1637]
And Summoning Time,[1638]
Non-Virtuous[1639]
And Relying on Demons,[1640] //12//

Tight Woman[1641] and Throat,[1642]
Totally Clear, [1643]Supreme Giving[1644] and Narcotic,[1645]
Ocean of Pride[1646] and Ganesha,[1647]
Chameleon[1648] and Earth Mind,[1649] //13//

Good Path[1650] and Supremely Born,[1651]
Stainless,[1652] Child[1653] and Sun,[1654]
Elucidation[1655] and Pressing Sun,[1656]
Powerful-like,[1657] Roar[1658] and Time,[1659] //14//

Vow[1660] and Frog,[1661]

[1632] Skt. *candrikā* [?].
[1633] Alaṃka has *zla ba'i thod*, "Upper Moon."
[1634] The uppermost of the sixteen "Great Kingdoms," *mahājanapada*s, referred to in the *Angutṭārā Nikaya* and *Mahābharata.*
[1635] Skt. *kesarin* [?] or *jaṭila*, meaning “having a mane” and “hairy” per MW respectively.
[1636] Skt. *kalasarṣapa* [?].
[1637] Skt. *prakara* [?].
[1638] Skt. *kalākārṣana* [?].
[1639] Skt. *vṛcchika* [?].
[1640] Skt. *vāmāśarya* [?].
[1641] Skt. _____ [?].
[1642] Skt. *kanta* [?].
[1643] Skt. *viṣkambini* [?].
[1644] Skt. *varadā* [?].
[1645] Skt. *unmataka* [?].
[1646] Skt. *mānasarovara* [?].
[1647] Skt. *ganapati* [?].
[1648] Skt. *kṛkalāsa* [?].
[1649] Skt. *pṛtividhī* [?].
[1650] Skt. *suyāna* [?].
[1651] Skt. *sujata* [?].
[1652] Skt. *nirmala* [?].
[1653] Skt. *śiśu* [?].
[1654] Skt. *surya* [?].
[1655] Skt. *vyanjana* [?].
[1656] Skt. *suryākranta* [?].
[1657] Skt. *balavat* [?].
[1658] Skt. *garjana* [?].
[1659] Skt. *kala* [?].
[1660] Skt. *samvara* [?].
[1661] Skt. *meṇḍaka,* lit. *utpalutagmana* - jumping one.

Black Bee,[1662] Dog[1663] and Mark,[1664]
Plow,[1665] Hunch-backed[1666]
And Straight,[1667]
Earth[1668] and Earth Woman,[1669] //15//

Brahmin[1670] and
Place Becoming Nose,[1671]
Family of Mother Deities[1672]
And Moving Tongue,[1673]
Not Talking[1674] and
Drumbeat Cloud[1675]
Husband[1676] and Vast Eye,[1677] //16//

Stainless,[1678] Kāśyapa,
And White Lily,[1679]
Various Beaks[1680] and Level Eye,[1681]
Beautiful,[1682] and Reality Staff,[1683]
All Beings,[1684] Lightness[1685] and Firm,[1686] //17//

Calling [for] Food,[1687] Donkey[1688]

[1662] Skt. *bhramara* [?].
[1663] Skt. *kukkura* [?].
[1664] Skt. *nimittaka* [?].
[1665] Skt. *hala* [?].
[1666] Should be *sgur po*. Skt. *kubja* [?].
[1667] Skt. *ṛjuka* [?].
[1668] Skt. *pṛtivi* [?].
[1669] Skt. *bhūcarī* [Lokesh Chandra] or *pṛtivigamana* [?].
[1670] Skt. *brahmana* [?].
[1671] Skt. *nasikivikarsthāna* [?].
[1672] Skt. *matrikakula* [?].
[1673] Skt. *jibhacalana* [?].
[1674] Skt. *muni* [?].
[1675] Skt. *dundubhimegha* [?].
[1676] Skt. *ramaṇa* [?].
[1677] Skt. *akṣivi`sāla* [?].
[1678] Skt. *nirmala* [?].
[1679] Skt. *śuka* [?].
[1680] Skt. *nanāuṣṭha* [?].
[1681] Skt. *smākṣa* [?].
[1682] Skt. *ruci* [?].
[1683] Skt. *dharmaḍaṇḍa* [?].
[1684] Skt. *sarvajagat* [?].
[1685] Skt. *sattva* [?].
[1686] Skt. *sthira* [?].

And Lazy,[1689]
Open Mouth,[1690] Great Sound,[1691] Powerful Playing,[1692]
Small Artery,[1693] Ruling,[1694] Dishonest,[1695]
Great Main One[1696] and Always Cheerful,[1697] //18//
Lightning Rosary[1698] and
Making Happy,[1699]
Exhaling,[1700] Ruby Tongue,[1701]
Supreme Bliss,[1702]
Udumbara [Flower], and Delusion,[1703]
Lotus Net,[1704] Lotus Turning,[1705] //19//

Battle-Ax[1706] and Peacock Wind,[1707] [1708]

Oh Vajra Lord!
Thus I have taught
The names
Of the energy-winds. //20//

Oh Lord!
By analyzing the places
Of the winds asked about,
From where do they arise,

[1687] Skt. *aśanāhvāna* [?]. Also could be "Tibetan Food," with interesting implications. But Lozang Jamspal thinks it could be "calling for food." He also thinks that this is the origin of *Bod* for Tibet, calling on the authority. Personal Commnication 2-20-08.
[1688] Skt. *khara* [?].
[1689] Skt. *ālasyā* [?].
[1690] Skt. *prasṛtānana* [?]. Used in *Bodhicaryāvatara* 5:92.
[1691] Skt. *māhārava* [?].
[1692] Skt. *balakrīḍāṇa* [?]. *Rtse* used as verb here.
[1693] Skt. *kṣudranāḍī* [?].
[1694] Skt. *vaśakara* [?]. Per Lozang Jamspal, there is a mantra, *vaśaṃkuru svaha*. Tantra means body protection and mantra means mind protector per medicine text of 5th Dalai Lama, the *Four Tantras*. Personal Communication.
[1695] Skt. *māyāśāṭya* [?].
[1696] Skt. *mahāpramukha* [?].
[1697] Skt. *sadāpriya* [?].
[1698] Skt. *vidyutamāla* [?].
[1699] Skt. *ramaṇa* [?].
[1700] Skt. *prāśvāsana* [?].
[1701] Skt. *rāgajihvā* [?].
[1702] Skt. *samvara* [?].
[1703] Skt. *moha* [?].
[1704] Skt. *padmajāla* [?].
[1705] Skt. *padmāvartana* [?].
[1706] Skt. *praśū* [?].
[1707] Skt. *mayūravata* or *anila* or *vayu* [?].
[1708] Broken down in this way, there are 105 energy-winds.

And spread out?
Good sir! //21//

The Vajra Lord spoke:

As for the character of the
Abode of the energy-wind,
The energy-wind pervading
The six wheels
Always abides [in]
The Reality Wheel,
Pervading migrators
With "life-energy." //22//

At midnight,[1709]
From the supreme space,[1710]
Non-conceptuality arises,
Overcoming the instinctual
Conceptions of energy-wind.
That energy-wind moves
In a nine-fold way,
Abiding in the state
Of the Reality Wheel. //23//

It has a
Nine-fold nature
In the six wheels.
At the end of mid-day,
The energy-winds are caused
To rise up. //24//

Starting from mid-day,
The six wheels have a
Nine-fold nature.
At midnight the energy-winds
Clearly move and, //25//

By division of place,
They go to
Various conceptualities.
Having analyzed the conceptualities,[1711]

[1709] In glossing this and the next verse, Alaṃka has *thun phyed*, half a session, instead of *mtshan phyed*, midnight, raising the question of whether the same thing was intended here.
[1710] Per Alaṃka, the center of the navel. 50A.
[1711] Alaṃka notes: *de rnams zhes by aba ni rnam par trog pa rnams kyi'o*, 50B, raising the issue of phrases from the *Commentary* perhaps making their way back into the main text.

I will explain their names. //26//

Desire,[1712] Hatred,[1713] and Ignorance,[1714]
Inflated,[1715] Pride[1716] and Attraction,[1717]
Jealousy,[1718] Fury,[1719] and Miserliness,[1720]
Dishonest[1721], Hypocrisy,[1722] Bad Dressing, //27//

Untamed Mind,[1723] Desire,
And Sleepy,
Doubt and Egotism,
Joy, Free from Attachment,
And Haughty,
Hidden, Lusting, and Instinct, //28//

Illusion, Delusion,
Great Desire,
Quarrel, Amusement,
Common, Dull,
Conceited Charlatan,
Completely Tormented,
Appearance, Not Peaceful,
Not Vigilant, //29//

Inanimate and False Pride,
Regretful and Unabashed,
Reverence-less, Non-Magnanimous,
Low Mind, Shameless, Fettered, //30//

Shame and Embarrassment,
Retentiveness, Bad States,
Dualistic Mind
And Not Conceited,
Concentrated, Doubt
And Weary, //31//

[1712] Skt. *kama* [?].
[1713] Skt. *dveśa* [?].
[1714] Skt. *moha* [?].
[1715] Skt. *mada* [?].
[1716] Skt. *māna* [?].
[1717] Skt. *abhiniveśa* [?].
[1718] Skt. *īrṣyā* [?]
[1719] Skt. *khroda* [?].
[1720] Skt. *matsarya* [?].
[1721] Skt. *śāṭhya* [?].
[1722] Skt. *māyā* [?].
[1723] Skt. _____ [?].

Power and Illusory Mind
And Strength,
Thinking Mind
And Unconsciousness,
Dissolving and Wild,
Equally Swirling
And Intoxicated, //32//

Not Veda and Having A Little,
Bad Rebirth[1724] and Fragile,[1725]
Unhappy Mind
And Excess Conceptuality,
Fear, Torpor and Sleep, //33//

Craving, Sport
And Crane,
Harmful, Lazy
And Crookedness,
Thinking, Practicing
And Depressed,
Conventional, Real
And Meaningful, //34//

Bestowing and Desiring Joy,
Fear and Trembling
And Nature
Of Mirror Divination,
Clear, Very Clear
And Adulterating,
Connecting
And Nature of Constancy, //35//

Tortoise, Insatiable,
And Harming
Unclear and Pleasant,
Placeless, Many
And Speaking,
Lord and Personhood,
Amazement, Joy
And Bad Being.[1726] //36//

[1724] Skt. *dausthulya* [?].
[1725] Skt. *alpasthāma* [?].
[1726] The total count of conceptualities is 108, broken down this way.

Attracted to cyclic existence,
The three sufferings,
The reality of the lower [states],
The nature of the energy-winds,
Always one-hundred
Plus eight,
Is to move constantly,
Day and night. //37//

From the realization of the Mahāyoga Tantra Glorious Vajra Rosary, the third chapter on the terminology of the Vajra Rosary.

Chapter Four

The Explanation of the Special Terminology of the Community

Now, the Sun
Of the Three Vajras,
Opening the secret lotus,
Dwells in a state of great bliss,
Expressing the meaning
Of the Supreme Community. //1//

The Community is explained
As "mingling."
I will explain mingling to you.
The four wheels
Are not different,
Together with the mantras
According to ritual. //2//

When the hero joins
With the yoginī,
The two secret channels
Perfectly join and touch.
At that time,
Space[1727] expands. //3//

From the space, wind is born.
By that, fire intensely blazes.
The seventy-two[1728] thousand

[1727] *I.e.* the space "located at the navel of the yoginīs." Alaṃka 54B.

Channels are awakened.[1729] [1730]
Radiance pervades
The Great Bliss Wheel
With the supreme state
Of all-bliss. //4//

The enlightenment spirit
Of great bliss
Melts and comes to rest
In the channel.
Because the three vajras
Become of one nature,
The elements become as one taste,
The aggregates are spent, and,
In order to revitalize,[1731]
The ecstasies of energy-winds are born. //5//

Then, the enlightenment spirit melts
From all the places,
Becoming as one nature,
And then the channel,
As the fruition of one thing,
Becomes of one taste.
That is called "mingling." //6//

By terminating all conceptuality
Hidden in the aggregates,
Elements, sense faculties
And objects,
Great bliss is produced. //7//

Revitalizing in the singleness
Of taste,
Is called the mingling
Of the Community,
Supreme secret reality,
Said to be the state

[1728] Per Chandra Das' entry for *rtsa*, "It is mentioned in *Kangyur* that there are 1072 smaller and larger veins in the Human body." *Death, Intermediate State and Rebirth* says 72,000. Lati Rinpoche 1997, 60.
[1729] Per Lozang Jamspal, in Ladakhi they use *sang* for "open," as in "open the window." Personal Communication 4-1-08.
[1730] Alaṃka's Commentary ends here for this chapter, and continues midway through *Vajra Rosary*'s Chapter 6 at Lhasa 16A, for the verse starting with *byed pol as kyi 'bras bur myong//* Snar Thang has the same gap. p. 120 of 498. l. 2. Numbered 116 in block print text. TBRC Snar thang 1455=Sde 1795: W22704; volume: 3286; pages: 1-498.
[1731] Should be *ngal bso ba*, not *pa.*

Of Vajrasattva. //8//

From the realization of the Mahāyoga Tantra Glorious Vajra Rosary, the fourth chapter on the explanation of the special terminology of the Communion.

Chapter Five

The Teaching of the Meaning of Emptiness[1732]

Now, moreover, listen to reality!
The meaning of emptiness
Is very vast.
Emptiness pervades the
Interior of all things
And is their reality. //1//

Truly knowing reality,
Only through yoga
Do you realize that
Suchness and non-conceptuality,
The unique selfless nature of
The self of persons and things,
Emptiness and self-awareness
Are always present
In the nature of everything. //2//

Not in the province
Of the logicians,
The epitome of all things
Is expressed
As the six chakras. //3//

Then, pervading within,
It expands the channel wheels.
It pervades the sky
And causes subtle pervasion,
Having the nature of peace. //4//

[1732] The commentary to this chapter is missing in the Sde dge *Commentary*, although in his commentary on Chapter one, Alaṃka does indicate that the second question is about emptiness, Alaṃka 23A, which seems to suggest that Alaṃka did comment on this fifth chapter and on the next chapter (where Alaṃka's commentary starts in the middle of the chapter), but did not make it into the Sde dge for whatever reason, presumably that it was lost.

It is non-perceivable and
Non-supported,
Formless, addictionless,
Non-conceptually
Supremely peaceful,
Natureless, stainless,
Non-dual, actionless,
Abandoning subject
And object. //5//

Transcending time
And comparison,
Free from the domain
Of rhetoric,
Reality is expressed
Precisely
In all things. //6//

Free from entity
And non-entity[1733]
And insubstantiality,
Liberated from the existence[1734]
Of virtue and non-virtue,
It is entirely unobscured,
Supremely pervading like sky,
Things are born as they are:
That is called reality. //7//

Not coming from anywhere
And not going anywhere,
Only from delusion and mistake
Does it appear
As proliferating. //8//

Abandoning happiness
And suffering,
Not sullied by desire
Or hatred
And so forth,
Free from illusion

[1733] Per Lozang Jamspal, *bhava abhava* is broader than material, so “entity” is better than "substance." Personal Communication 4-8-08.

[1734] Per Lozang Jamspal, "Existence" is better than "possibility" - this is *bhava*, not *saṃbhava*. Personal Communication 4-8-08.

And serious illusion,[1735]
Free from concept, taintless, //9//

It has left behind
The reifications of
Self, life, reincarnations,
Humanoids, persons,
Manu, *Manuja,*
Agent, experiencer,
Knower and creator.[1736] //10//

Not obscured by
The aggregates, experiential media,
Elements,[1737] and so forth
Consciousness and grasping,
Supremely subtle,
It abides in a supreme sky.
In that way, all are
The meaning of emptiness. //11//

Free from the context of
Expressing and expressed,
Mere names alone are also
Wonderful self-arising wisdom.
I am teaching [reality]
As conventional expression. //12//

Because it is
An extremely subtle
Self-awareness,[1738]
You cannot see reality.
Knowing yourself
As your own essence,
Not in the province
Of others outside,
Is explained as
Self-awareness.[1739]

[1735] Reading *'prul* instead of *'khrul, 'bral* instead of *'brel*, *i.e.* Skt. *bhrama* ("mistake, error") and *vibrama* ("serious mistake, error"), both from the past participle of *branta*.
[1736] Reading *mdzad.*
[1737] Reading *khams* instead of *bams*.
[1738] Prof. Thurman prefers "apperception": the state or fact of the mind in being conscious of its own consciousness. Personal Communication. However, I prefer the less technical "self-awareness," which I think conveys the same idea.

The state of all things
Is peace. //13//

Logicians misled
By conceptuality,
Deluded by ignorance,
Do not know the ultimate
And hold conventional words[1740]
As a treasure.[1741]
They do not know
Supreme wisdom,
Yet the logicians advocate
Emptiness. //14//

The yogi who does yoga
And contemplation
Practices it with supremely subtlety.
Emptiness, the perfect vast space,
Leaves behind knower
And knowable.
Free from all forms
Of conceptuality,
It is expressed as the
Wheel of emptiness. //15//

A body with the
Nature of the five aggregates,
In the cave of the six wheels,
Like a crescent moon,
Emptiness abides
In the wheel of wind,
Not half, and not full. //16//

Just as the instincts,
Like a water moon,[1742]
Arising at the instant
Of midnight,
Are explained
As the life wheel of energy-wind,
Perfect meditation in that way

[1739] Per Prof. Jamspal, this is about reality known only by one person; no one outside knows. In response to my question, it is not egotistical because there is no subject and object, it's calm, and therefore we have the next line about peace. Personal Communication 4-15-08.
[1740] Should be *sgra.*
[1741] Or, hold on to a treasury of hostile conventionality.
[1742] *I.e.* the moon reflected in water. *See, e.g.,* Chandrakīrti 2002, 59.

Is meditating on emptiness.[1743] //17//

You meditate to accomplish
The nature of ultimate [reality]
By non-dual yoga
Or due to applying
Cause and effect.
By meditating
On your ultimate nature,
But similarly
On conventional [reality]
You will destroy cyclic existence.[1744] //18//

Just as sesame oil
Remains in sesame
But one can't see it there,
Similarly, emptiness remains
In the body,
But one also can't see it
Because it is obscured.
Knowing this through the instructions
Of the guru,
One who knows reality,
Abandons the conventional.[1745] //19//

From the realization of the Mahāyoga Tantra Glorious Vajra Rosary, the fifth chapter on the teaching of the meaning of emptiness.

[1743] Per Professor Jamspal, meditation on emptiness doesn't really exist; there is only meditation on emptiness because of instincts, which are like a water moon. Personal Communication 4-15-08.

[1744] Per Professor Jamspal, when you apply cause and effect, you say reality "exists," while from the ultimate point of view, it doesn't exist. When you have both in your mind, you destroy samsara. Personal Communication 4-15-08.

[1745] Per Professor Jamspal, maybe once you meditate as per the verse above, on both conventional and ultimate reality, then you abandon conventional reality, like you abandon the raft. Personal Communication 4-15-08.

Chapter Six

The Opening of the Drop and Achieving the Supreme Yoga[1746]

Then listen and
I will explain further.
The opening of the drop
Is unexcelled.
Worldly people,
Isolated from the opening
Of the drop,
Cycle again and again
In cyclic existence. //1//

The drop
Located in the center
Of the hair tuft
Is perfectly explained
As energy-wind.
Opening by the reality of mantra,
Having untied the yogic knot,
Knowing the reality
Of energy-wind.
It is the practice
That excellently opens it. //2//

And for one ignorant
Of that practice
Of the yoga
Of energy-wind and mantra,
Beyond the example
Of expressed and expressible,
[For] those who see
Unclearly or mistakenly,
Lacking meditative concentration
And the object of meditation,
The Buddhas are difficult to attain. //3//

By the kindness of the yoginī,
[This teaching] remains

[1746] Alaṃka's *Commentary* is missing the word commentary for VM 15A-B.

In the lineage,
[Passing] from mouth to mouth.

Again, Vajradhara asked
The Great Bliss Lord: //4//

"Lord of migrating beings,
Please show [how] one
Who knows the supreme yoga
Possessing wisdom of the
Opening of the drop
Unties the knot by practice. //5//

[Then], this migrant
Of the three realms
[Would] swiftly attain
Supreme spiritual accomplishment."

The request having been made
In these words,
The Vajra One said
To the Vajra Lord: //6//

This supreme secret
Is not clearly stated
Anywhere.
Also, as for the
Opening of the drop,
Listen and I'll explain it. //7//

The Wisdom Vajra always
Resides in the space
In the lotus bud
Of the heart.
Flanking [it] above
And below
Abide the Life-energy
Energy-wind
And the great
Evacuative energy-wind. //8//

As for that [bud], it is
Constricted by three knots
In the center,
Difficult to open.
Because of that

It is made supreme and
Dominated by that [constriction],
And one cannot surmount [it].[1747] //9//

When it is dominated by that [constriction],
The [winds] move in five ways:[1748]
Life-energy, Evacuative,
Upward, Pervading and Equalizing, [1749]
Up from the five tips[1750] //10//

Perfectly relying on the
Five channels.[1751]
Inflated, Developed, Crazy,
Drinking and Friend --
You should know these as the
Five channels. //11//

The great energy-wind
Called "Life-energy"
Pervades brilliantly
Beneath the [Wisdom] Vajra,
Above [it], and
In the center of the
Life Wheel,
Also going to
The expanse of space
In the center
Of the [Wisdom] Vajra. //12//

[1747] Based on the used of *bcom* two verses down, the translation in the verse makes sense.

[1748] Per Robert Thurman, when enlightenment spirit flows, it goes all over the place; it is hard to get in the central channel. Personal Communication 4-22-08.

[1749] For a description of these "root" winds, see K. Gyatso, 2002, 26-7.

[1750] Per Lozang Jamspal, the tips of the energy-winds are like *chu sna*, water nose, the leading edge of a flow of water. If you see this in the mountains, it's a good omen. So the energy-winds just go in those five channels. Personal Communication 1-30-06.

[1751] As for "five channels," Lati Rinboche writes:

> Initially, five channels of the heart form simultaneously - the central, right and left channels as well as the Triple Circle of the east [front] and the Desirous One of the south [right].
>
> "The channel-wheel at the heart is composed of the central, right and left channels, around which are eight petals or spokes - four at the cardinal directions and four at the intermediate directions."
>
> After that, three channels form simultaneously - the Free of Knots channel that abides with [and behind] the central channel, the Household One of the west [back], and the Fiery One of the north [left]. These are called the eight channels that initially form at the heart [not to be confused with the eight channel-petals of the heart].

Lati Rinboche 1997, 64.

Having triumphed
By meeting up with the navel knot,
It moves in five ways,
In the five points at the tips --
Crescent Moon,
Mole [on the body],[1752]
Serving, Dewlap[1753] and Liver --
These are the names
Of the five channels. //13//

From the five channels,
The wind-energies that move [are]:
Naga, Kurma [Tortoise],
Kṛkalasa [Lizard],[1754]
Devadatta and *Dhanujit*.
In that way, together with that tip,
Because it goes to the
Lower part of the body, //14//

Agitating again and again
The channels of the Navel Wheel,
When you expand [them]
Through agitation
Great ignorance controls. //15//

Having stirred up the channel
On which rests
The Heart Wheel,
With those channels,
The force of hatred controls. //16//

Again stirring up [those winds],
You produce wonder
In the Supreme Enjoyment [Wheel].
With those channels,
You fall under the power
Of great lust. //17//

Because of the stirring up
Of the upper Great Bliss

[1752] Per the suggestion of Lozang Jamspal. Personal Communication 4-22-08. The dictionary defines *sma* as: DM mi gtsang ba. dma' ba. Btsan-lha. JV humiliate, cast down, humble IW [arch] 1) low; 2) inferior, poor quality, weak.
[1753] The front of an ox's throat.
[1754] Per Lozang Jamspal, *lhas sbyin* should be *lha sbyin*. Personal Communication 5-6-08.

Crown Wheel,
Together with those channels,
You fill up
With enlightenment spirit. //18//

Making the thoughts
Move around
From all of the
Various openings,
The upper ones go downwards.
Having overcome the
Life-energy energy-wind,[1755]
All these enter the tip
Of the vajra,
And face downwards.[1756] //19//

[But] it doesn't go downwards:
The wheel of the knot
Of ignorance
Mixes with the instincts
Of the energy-wind
Of the chariot of consciousness,
[Becoming] the four consciousnesses
Of eye, ear, and, similarly,
Nose and tongue. //20//

Arising from the four points,
Having mixed with
Instinctive consciousness,
Consciousness together with the
Sense powers
Develops the objective realm. //21//

Again, from this very path,
Engaged by this exact process, [or entering respectively]
By the practice of
That very thing of that,
In the moment of using

[1755] Should be *srog gis*. Stok Palace has *srog gi*. 176A.

[1756] I think all of this refers to the normal person and the process of birth, which could be why Alaṃka doesn't comment on it. Alaṃka says as much when he comments on the verse "The actor experiences the effects of karma" below, 55A, "Thus having taught the production of consciousness on the occasion of misknowledge, in order to express the summary of that, he says "Because of that" and so forth, [meaning that] you wander in cyclic existence by the power of instincts for objects of such [a consciousness] mounted on the chariot of wind."

Consciousness,
You increase its instinct. //22//

In that way, consciousness,
Polluted by instincts
From the wheel of samsaric error,
Leads to the nature of action.
That one also,
Through the life process,
Deluded in the three realms. //23//

The actor experiences[1757]
The effect of karma;
Otherwise there is no
Cyclic existence.
Because of that
In order to conquer cyclic existence,
You strive in meditation
To open the drop
In the brilliant state,
Not knowing other ignorant things.[1758] //24//

When you open that
Central knot,
Powers arise[1759]
[And] the yogi attains yoga.
Having attained
The five wisdoms, //25//

You attain
The five clairvoyances, and
Having attained

[1757] Sde dge Alaṃka Commentary resumes commenting here, p. 673 in Lhasa Kangyur block print. Alaṃka 55A.

[1758] Alaṃka explains: "Not knowing other ignorant things" [refers to] the meditator on the thatness of mantra, [and] has the meaning "by the logic previously explained." "Not knowing other ignorant things" [means] by the completion stage yogi. "Other ignorant things" is the intrinsic existence of innate or composed things, that do not exist, because in the creation stage meditation they have [already] been abandoned. If it is not thus, if someone asks what the other ignorant things are, in response to that he says "the central knot," [referring to] the five channels in the space in the center of the heart, within the five channels. "Knot" [means] the tying up that is naturally made. That very thing is expressed as "ignorant" because, by the force of that, one doesn't know the nature of energy-wind and mind. 55B. Although it seems somewhat awkward given his attainment of the clairvoyances etc. as a result of this practice that this yogi does not "know" something, the yogi not "knowing" these "other ignorant things makes sense given his non-conceptual state when the heart knot is opened.

[1759] Snar thang has ster, "bestow"; Lhasa has 'gyur, "arise." Alaṃka has both *'gyur* and *ster*. Presumably he had both texts.

The supreme secret,
The intelligent one
Abides exactly like that. //26//

You don't need a rosary,
You don't need meditation,[1760]
You don't need activities,
You don't need negation.
Only by the reality of mantra
Will you achieve
Complete, perfect Buddhahood!
We don't [even] mention
These distinctions of
Action, dharma
And commitment consorts.[1761] //27//

Not by analysis of the chakras,
And, similarly, not by the
Ecstasies and so forth,[1762]
But by the reality
Of Mantra
Will you achieve
The clear state
Of the Great Seal. //28//

The Emptiness Wisdom Vajra,[1763]
The reality of non-dual bliss,
And the opening
Of the secret drop,
Are the great bliss
That accomplishes yoga. //29//

Opening the eggshell
Of ignorance,
Destroying the mountain
Of [the egoistic] view
Of the transitory collection,[1764]

[1760] This looks like it should be *sgom*, "meditation," rather than Lhasa's *sgo*, "door." Alaṃka has *bsam gtan*, "concentration."
[1761] C.f. G. Harrison: "You don't need no temple . . . Just open up your heart . . . ."
[1762] J. Hartzell notes that in Chapter 29 of the *Tantrāloka* Abhinavagupta "explains that for performing the Secret Rites (*Rahasyavidhi*), all the preparatory initiatory rites must be abandoned . . . This is a radical shift. The entire preparatory and initiatory structure that Abhinavagupta has outlined over the preceding twenty-eight chapters . . . is to be abandoned. . . . " Hartzell 1997, 944.
[1763] Skt. *śunyatā jñāna vajra*, as in the sadhana's *Oṃ śunyatā jñāna vajra svabhava atmako haṃ.*

And accomplishing
The Great Seal
Are declared to be
The supreme performance. //30//

Through the definitive practice
Of the reality of mantra,
You will definitively realize
The clarity of
Lineage and [its] components
From the kindness
Of the yoginī
And the personal instructions
Of the guru. //31//

Whoever recites
Without personal instructions
Makes the mind deluded [about]
The King of Mantras.
That one will only have difficulties.
When you churn[1765] water
It won't turn into butter. //32//

Similarly, a person could
Recite the mantra
To the end of his life[1766]
Without personal instructions,
Not attaining even
An iota of its result. //33//

Some ignorant person,
Wishing to go
To the other shore
Of the four oceans
Doesn't even ask,

[1764] Per Lozang Jamspal, the "heaps" of the transitory collection are made destructive by the ego: "*'Jig tshogs la bdag tu lta ba."* According to the *Avadāna Śataka Sūtra, Hundred Stories Sutra,* each aggregate has four wrong views, destroyed by vajra wisdom, so twenty wrong views are overcome by the stream winner. Every chapter has "destroying the mountain of the egoistic view." *Yām śrutvāshrīmatyā devakanyayā vimṣatiṣikharasamdudgatam satkāyadrṣtiṣailam jñānavajrena bhittvā srotāpayyiphalam prāptam*. "Having heard thus, the glorious divine daughter destroyed the high twenty peaks of the mountain of the view of transitory collection with the thunderbolt of wisdom, manifesting the streamwinner result." *Page 139. Story # 55. See also* Candrakīrti*, Introduction to the Middle Way,* Ch. 6 v.144, p. 387 ("The body is not the self nor does self have a body; the self is not based on the body or body on self. Know that these four relations apply to all *skandhas*; so these are considered the twenty views of self").

[1765] Stok agrees with Alaṃka, having *bsrubs* instead of *bsgrubs*.

[1766] Alaṃka quotes both *ji srid 'tsho yi bar* as well as *ji srid skyes nas mthar* here.

"What is the path?" //34//

That's how they make
Themselves go.
Similarly, the practitioner
Who lacks the personal instructions
That create great ecstasy,
Even though an expert,
[Gets] no result. //35//
Such a practitioner gets angry.
At the moment of anger arising,
There is no result and he goes
To howling hell.[1767]
Therefore with all [of your] efforts[1768]
And with faith,[1769]
Learn the personal instructions
From a guru
Who has the tradition. //36//

Wherefore, infused by the
Lineage's textual transmission
And abiding by the procedures
Of the lineage,
He who strives [for personal instructions]
From the mouth of the yoginī
And the mouth of the guru,[1770]
Should learn supreme reality,
The scriptural tradition
Of the lineage
Of personal instructions
About mantra. //37//

Hearing that, Vajrapāṇi,
To eliminate all doubts,
Prostrated to Great Bliss
Vajrasattva,
And asked: //38//

Whoever learns your
Teaching of supreme reality,

[1767] Reading *ngu 'bod*, howling hell per Stok Palace, lit. crying shouting instead of *du 'bod*.
[1768] Alaṃka has both *'bad pas* and *'bad pa thams cad kyis*, again suggesting he had more than one text in front of him.
[1769] Sde dge Alaṃka has *gus pa*; P. and Snar have *pas*.
[1770] Alaṃka has both *bla ma'i zhal* and *de'i dam pa'i zhal las*.

The Lord's
Unexcelled attainment of the
King of Mantras,
Will [attain] attainments
Instantly! //39//

Then the blessed Vajrin said:

The very explicit reality of mantra,
The supreme secret reality,
I haven't taught to anyone.
Because of the thought that
No one deserved it,
I hid [it] in all the Tantras. //40//

But now I'll teach,
So listen up!
By practicing the
Practice of the mantra,
Which is the unexcelled
King of Mantras,
You will quickly gain
Attainments. //41//

In the beginning,
Draw [the letter]
Of the last [of] USHMA,[1771]
Adorned with the sixth vowel,[1772]
Endowed with the end
Of the last of the groups,[1773]
With the part that lacks a vowel,[1774] [i.e. HŪṂ], //42//

At the end of USHMA [h],
This vowel, endowed as the ninth,[1775]
With the sound of supreme
Visargha at the end [HO:].
[This] you should choose
As the principal mantra, //43//

Thus the name

[1771] *Ushma* is the last row of the Sanskrit alphabet: *sha, hsa, sa, ha*. *See* Panini 8.4.58.
[1772] *a, ā, i, ī, u, ū.*
[1773] That is, *pa pha ba ma*.
[1774] That is, *anusvāra*.
[1775] *a, ā, i, ī, u, ū, e, ai, o* .... [without the semivowels, *r, rr, l, ll*].

Of the two syllables
Is the wonderful sign
Of mantra.
In order to abandon
All grasping,
They take the name
Of sound and drop.
Differentiating
The two winds,
You cause the opening
Of the knot of ignorance. //44//
One who repeats for six months
The cause of the
Supreme Great Seal,
The two supremely
Peaceful syllables,
The object of those desiring
Personal instructions,
Will achieve the brilliant state
Of the sound of the drop,
Causing him accomplish
The desired goal. //45//

[In] a divine place,
Isolated from people,
Free of any disturbing sounds,
Unhindered, fortunate, happy, //46//

[In] a pleasure grove[1776]
Of great bliss,
Enjoying the five sense pleasures,
The main mantra
Will be accomplished.
Here, I'm telling, so listen! //47//

Sitting in a house,[1777]
In the posture of great bliss
The supreme achievement
Will arise.[1778]
The practitioner sits
On the seat of bliss,

[1776] After *skyed mos tshal*, "pleasure grove," Lhasa has *bzhi*, "four," Stok Palace has *zhi*, "peaceful," and Alaṃka has the emphatic or placeholding particle *ni*. I am following Alaṃka here.
[1777] Alaṃka gives an alternate reading here*: bde ba dam pa yi ni gnas*. 61A.
[1778] Alaṃka 61A: *ganggā'i zhes bya ba ni phyag rgya'o.*

Placing his eyes
On the tip of the nose, //48//

He places the nose
In line with the navel.[1779]
Leveling the shoulders and
Appling the tongue to the palate,
The teeth and the lips
Placed comfortably,
He relaxes the inhalation and
Exhalation of breath,
Reducing effort little by little,
Exhaling and inhaling
Exactly like that. //49//

By sitting well
In the full-lotus position,
Having posture like that,
You constantly recite
The two syllables.[1780]
Through opening of the drop,
You will achieve
Great bliss and supreme yoga
In six months.
There is no doubt of this. //50//

This foremost is the stream
Of the channel,[1781]
Abiding as the stainless *Avadhūti*,
The great wisdom reality
Of energy-wind
The cause of Vajrasattva. //51//

Pill, sword, rising corpse,
King, eye medicine, alchemy,
Paralyzing an army,
Standing stationary
And [walking] through walls,
The supreme state
Of wisdom holding, //52//

[1779] Alaṃka refers to both *sna yi lte ba'i tshad du gnas* and *bzhag byas nas*. 61A.
[1780] HŪṂ, the Life-energy energy-wind, and HO, the evacuative wind, per Alaṃka. 61B: *srog dang thur sel gyi rlung gnyis hūṃ ho//*
[1781] Referring to the energy-winds going inside the *avadhūti*. Personal Communication with Lozang Jamspal 6-3-08.

Disappearing, seeing treasure,
Transforming as you desire,
Seeing forms,[1782] alchemy,
Conquering poison,
Entering into fire,[1783] //53//

The state of the five clairvoyances,
And the five wisdoms,
Will be achieved.
In this way,
The state of enlightenment
Is instantaneous. //54//

Having abandoned
Difficult practices,
Possessing perfect
Wisdom and compassion,
As explained, [with] the support
Of great bliss,
You don't need vows,
You don't need burnt offerings,
You don't need rosaries
You don't need counting.
As far as this is concerned,
You don't need the division
Of the creation stage,
You don't need the so-called
Accumulation of austerities. //55//

By just the yoga of mantra,
The oral tradition of the guru
And by practicing for six months,
The supreme state
Will be achieved. //56//

From the realization of the Mahāyoga Tantra Glorious Vajra Rosary, the sixth chapter on the opening of the drop and achieving the supreme yoga.

[1782] Seeing forms underground etc.
[1783] Stok Palace also has *me*.

Chapter Seven

The Explanation of the Word "Sound [*Nāda*]"

Now listen to reality!
One who just
Understands the meaning
Of unexcelled sound
Will get attainments
In this very life. //1//

Sound is also said
To be indestructible,
[Having] the nature
Of stainless
Clear light.
It is liberated from all aspects,
Abiding in the center
Of the navel. //2//

Subtle as a snake's[1784] tongue, [1785]
[It is] wonderful
Non-dual wisdom,
Precious as Brahma,
Viṣṇu, Rudra,
Iśvara,[1786] and Śiva [created]
By the father and mother
Of the creator. //3//

There is no letter
And no lump,[1787]
The elements.
Liberated from
Time and notions.
Birthless and inexhaustible,

[1784] Reading *sbrul* instead of *sprul*.
[1785] Interestingly, Alaṃka has "snake's tongue" as a gloss, perhaps suggesting that the Commentary influenced at least the Sde dge and Lhasa recensions: *glog ltar phra ba'i lce can ni/ zhes bya ba ni glog dang 'dra b'ai lce ni sbrul gyi lce'o//* 65B.
[1786] Per Chandra Das, *rtag zhi pa* is another name for Shiva.
[1787] Confusing here; Alaṃka refers both to *gong du bud med* and *gong bu med cing*, indicating perhaps variant readings in his time.

It's amazing. //4//

Abandoning cravings for
All grasping and so forth,
Without remainder and
Supreme of supreme,
Peaceful,[1788]
It abides in the
Center of all things. //5//

Without concept and
Without support,
Said to be
Consciousness basis of all.
The addicted mind
Causes awakening
Through material objects. //6//

The unexcelled state
Attained by
Supreme non-dual
Yoga,
Non-dual, supreme
And brilliant,
Relies on the
Reality of energy-wind. //7//

Aroused by
the letter HOḤ,[1789]
It awakens
The wheel of fire.
The meaning of
The state of such a sound
Abides in the speech
Of the guru. //8//

From the realization of the Mahāyoga Tantra Glorious Vajra Rosary, the seventh chapter on the explanation of the word "sound."

[1788] Following Alaṃka here. 66A.
[1789] The navel letter in *Kalacakra*.

Chapter Eight

The Complete Demonstration of the Provision of the Great Secret

Then moreover I will explain
The unexcelled secret meaning.
The secret is said to be
The "*bhaga*."[1790]
The *bhaga* is like a
Reality source.[1791] //1//

The basis of the state
Of great bliss,
The cause of
Producing ecstasy,
It is the state of Vajrasattva,[1792]
The clear nature
Of the five wisdoms. //2//

It is great wisdom,
Without elaboration,
Abandoning all conceptuality.
[At] the end
Of transcendent ecstasy,
Supremely subtle,
Innate ecstasy abides
As the nature of all. //3//

The state of the moment
Of transcendent ecstasy
And so forth
Is subtle true
Enlightenment spirit,

[1790] Alaṃka notes the double meaning of *bhaga* here ("good fortune" and "vagina"), stating: "The secret is said to be '*bhaga*'," because of overcoming the addictions and because of not being what is taught to those who do not have the commitment." 68A.

[1791] The ordinary word for triangle is *gru gsum*. Per Robert Thurman, the three corners represent the three doors of liberation. Personal Communication.

[1792] This alternative rendering of the verse shows that the Commentary was translated from the Sanskrit genitive singular of Vajrasattva into prose in the usual way: *rdo rje sems dpa'i*; while the same Sanskrit form was translated into verse with an additional syllable - *yi* - *rdo rje sems dpa' yi*, the extra syllable needed for the meter.

Living to benefit[1793]
The life span,
Abiding like
A weighing scale. //4//

Timeless, non-conceptual,
Empty, birthless, deathless,
It dissolves in the
Emanation Wheel,
And is born
In the Great Bliss Wheel. //5//

Being inconceivably peaceful,
It is passion-free,
Free of attachment
In all migrations.[1794]
The equal union of
Vajra and lotus
Bestows all bliss. //6//

By knowing the reality
Of energy-wind, [1795]
You cause it to be held
In central channel.[1796]
That which is experienced
As rising
Is well known to be "secret." //7//

That very thing is
The supreme secret,
Abiding supremely
In the instruction of the guru.
In the process of
Mutual transmission,
It is known from good guru. //8//

From the realization of the Mahāyoga Tantra Glorious Vajra Rosary, the ninth chapter on the complete demonstration of the provision of great secret.

[1793] Should be *phan par*.
[1794] Or, free from the birth of all beings. This phrase, *'gro kun skye ba med*, is not found in Alaṃka.
[1795] Alaṃka also has *'dzin par byed*. 69B.
[1796] This second line does not appear in Alaṃka.

Chapter Nine

Defining the Word "Vow"[1797]

Then, moreover, listen and
I will explain
The reality that is
The meaning
Of the vow.
Whatever protects the vow
Is called "the spirit
Of enlightenment."
Holding the mind
At the tip of the vajra
Is well known
As keeping it. //1//

When the sense powers
Enter and continuously fill
The [sense] objects,
They remain.
That is explained as
Keeping the vow
And keeping the commitment. //2//

Don't get mixed up
And so forth with the
Unruly, hypocritical, cunning,
Stupid, irritable, deceitful,
Or the faithless,
Or with sophists,[1798] //3//

Or those [just] technically
Holding vows,
Or with monastics
Who are obsessed by wealth,
Or with those

[1797] *See* Alaṃka 70A.

[1798] Per Robert Thurman, a *tarikā* or *rtog ge pa* is not a logician, s/he is a bad logician, a sophist without any position of her own, and just quibbles without staking her own position on the outcome of the argument. Personal Communication.

Disbelieving reality,
Or those who don't know
The ultimate, //4//

Or with nihilists
Or the unethical,
Or with prattlers
Or gossipers,
And you should not
Hang out with them
And so forth
Even for a finger snap. //5//

If you are with
A charming
Action consort,
If she is a childish person,
You won't keep
The commitment
And you will lose
Yoga. //6//

Once you make [it],
You stay in the center
Of the commitment,
And you rely [on] the
Lotus vessel and consort
And so forth,
And you should not
Engage with and enter
Into the commitment
Unenthusiastically.[1799] //7//

You should never reveal
The vessel, damaru,
Chopper knife, book

[1799] That is, assuming that what is literally "with or through connected with being parched, withered, or dry" can be so translated. Per the *Yogacāra-bhumi* glossary, *skam* could be a translation from Skt. *sthala*, which, per Monier Williams, in addition to meaning chapter, mound, prominent part of the body, place, dry land, soil, roof, can also mean "situation." So, perhaps it may mean, "in such a situation . . . don't make the commitment etc. Alaṃka notes: *skam dang 'brel pas 'jug pa dang/ zhes bya ba ni dam tshig la sogs pa la ste/ dad pas ni ma yin no//* 71B, which seems to support the translation of the verse above, positing *skam dang 'brel pas* as a kind of lack of faith. The Lhasa *Vajra Rosary* has *brkam*, "desire," but that seems to lead in a rather un-Tantric direction. Alaṃka's version also makes some sense, but is also grammatically problematic: "You should not engage in the commitment/ [With] hypocrites at the fringes of the commitment/ [Who] reveal the vessel and the seal/ And practice unenthusiastically."

Or counting rosary
To others lacking the commitment.
You should not reveal
The activities
Of yoga practice
And so forth
And the personal instructions
To monks remaining
In the vow. //8//

You should not show
The cloth drawing
And so forth,
And one who does the
Exact practice and commitment
Does not even speak [of this]
To the guru,
Let alone to others.[1800] //9//

Engaging in sense objects
From wherever,
Having bound them, [1801]
Because you engage
Supremely[1802]
Conventional reality
In empty,
Non-dual
Illusion, //10//

By the bliss experienced
In the wisdom-wisdom Empowerment;
By recalling [that] great bliss,
The senses withdraw
From objects. //11//

You definitively abandon
Praising one's self
And belittling others

[1800] Perhaps this means to one's Sūtric guru, or that one shouldn't brag to one's Tantric guru. Or, as Alaṃka notes with respect to verse 14, below, it may mean that one doing advanced perfection stage practices should not even speak of them to one's Tantric guru. I suspect it means all of the above.

[1801] *See Secret Community Root Tantra* (Freemantle 1971), Ch. 7, v. 9-14: "Always direct the mind towards form and the other sense-objects, for they are the secret essences of all the Buddhas gathered together."

[1802] Stok Palace has *lhag*, 361.

And pride of wisdom and so forth.
Oh Intelligent One,
Oh Vajra Lord,
I just explained the
Perfect vow. //12//

A yogi always
Must protect
The commitment
In that way
And so forth.
Otherwise,
He will lose
Yoga. //13//

The Vajra Holder with yoga,
For the sake of attainment,
Should even completely hide
From the guru[1803]
The rosary, crown ornament,
Bone ornaments with
Bracelets and so forth,
The books, meditation drawings,
Skull and so forth
[And] the yoginī. //14//

You shouldn't say mantra
Out loud.
You should not even make visible
The movement of the lips, and,
Vocalizing very little in the throat,
You recite the King of Mantras
Like that.
The unequalled
Spiritual accomplishment
Comes from secrecy.
Because of this,
It is explained as a vow. //15//

Even if he has great wealth,
One not a [proper] vessel
Is said in the Tantra to be faulty.
The guru should abandon [him]

[1803] Alaṃka says *bla ma la yang zhes bya ba ni rdo rje slob dpon la'o*, "Even to the guru [means] to the Vajra Master." 73A.

With effort
For the sake of
Unexcelled attainment. //16//

One who knows yoga
Who is attached to
Food, drink and clothing
And great wealth,
And speaks to
Unsuitable disciples
Of the supreme, wonderful
Personal instructions,
Will go to Howling Hell
In this very life! //17//

From the realization of the Mahāyoga Tantra Glorious Vajra Rosary, the ninth chapter on defining the word "vow."

Chapter Ten

Determining the Meaning of the Commitment[1804]

Then, furthermore,
Listen to reality.
The meaning
Of the commitment
Is unexcelled.
Now[1805] I'll explain the meaning
Of the commitment
Of eating.[1806] //1//

What is explained as eating
Is expressed as the
Five nectars. [1807]

[1804] Alaṃka 73A.
[1805] Reading per Alaṃka *da* instead of *de*.
[1806] *See* S. Katz 1978, 41 ("The great Flemish mystic, John Ruysbroeck (1293-1381), is thus able to express his experience in the fascinating expression 'To eat and to be eaten! This is union!...) Consider also the practice of communion as conceived by Catholics and Greek Orthodox: the actual ingesting of the deity, the blood and body of Christ.

By applying the reality
Of energy-wind,[1808]
You melt [them], and
[They become]
One taste.[1809]
Having again[1810] gone upward
From the vajra path,
You eat it all
In oneness.[1811] //2//

By the commitment
Of body, speech and mind,
The yogi is in one taste
With the three realities.
Whatever arises,
And whatever bliss
Is experienced
In the four wheels.
Always practice eating. [1812] [1813] //3//

The supreme reality
Of the enlightenment spirit
Dissolves in the state
Of great bliss,
Melted by the reality
Of energy-wind,
Eating is good concentration.[1814] //4//

From the bottom
Of the skull bowl,
The yogi always
Drinks compassion,

[1807] Urine, feces, blood, semen and marrow or brain. In *Guhyasamāja*, HŪṂ (center), BRUM (east), AM (south), JRIM (west) and KHAM (north), respectively, in that order.
[1808] By the six stages of *vajrajāpa* described above, by the force of the life-energy and evacuative winds. Alaṃka 74B.
[1809] Alaṃka: *ro gcig ces by aba ni lte ba'i pad ma'i dbus su'o//* Robert Thurman notes that, having gone upward form the vajra path, you eat it all in oneness, going up central channel. You kindle fire in navel and offer essence of the food that you eat in the pit and you swallow it, blessing the food. Personal Communication. Alaṃka's alternative "you eat from the path of the mouth" supports this. 74B.
[1810] Alaṃka has *slar yang sten du song//* 74B.
[1811] There appear to be several variant readings here, *see* Alaṃka 74B.
[1812] Alaṃka indicates that the line *rtag tu spyod pa* is an alternative reading for the *bza' bar bya*. 75A.
[1813] Per Robert Thurman, a yogi experiences a uniform aesthetic; his whole behavior is eating. Personal Communication.
[1814] Or, following Alaṃka, "Through meditative equipoise/ On the food spread/ On the lotus of the goddess. 75A

The great bliss
Of the Bodhisattva. //5//

He pours into the secret lotus,
In the supreme vessel,
Realizing that eating
Is the support,
Mentally drinking the nectars,
Drinking the flavored substances
Of the five nectars,
Such a one who eats
Is Vajradhara. //6//

Elephant, horse, dog
Cow,[1815] Human --
Having mixed the
Enlightenment spirit
With blood,[1816]
You should eat it
In that moment. //7//

That is called
The "five nectars."
By gross and subtle
Thought construction,
The Vajra Holder always eats
Of the vessel
Brilliant in emptiness. //8//

The emptiness
Of transcendent wisdom
Is the bliss
Of the third ecstasy.
The Vajra Holder always eats
In the vessel
Of orgasmic [bliss],
Abiding in the state
Of great bliss. //9//

The peaceful one will eat
All the conceptual wind-energies
In the good vessel.

[1815] Stok has *ba glang*.
[1816] Per Robert Thurman, this does not refer to menstrual blood but to female hormonal essence, while egg is alive. Personal Communication.

By knowing the reality
Of energy-wind,
Abiding in a
Non-conceptual state. //10//

You perfectly unite [with]
The three consorts.
By knowing the
Reality of yoga.
You eat in the vessel
Explained as the
Great Seal. //11//

Abiding in a state of
Breath control,
By gross and subtle
Thought construction,
You confuse
Meditation and no meditation,
In the vessel
Of great life-energy. //12//

The host of the seeds
Of the net of concepts,
Is the kindling
For the aggregates
In the good vessel.
Ripened[1817] by the fire
Of great wisdom,
You eat by realizing
The reality of mantra. //13//

By the wisdom of
The power of the
Great Fierce One
Of the Four Devils, [1818]
Being well settled
In equanimity,
You always eat
In the yogic vessel. //14//

If you eat
The unexcelled three drops[1819]

[1817] Following Alaṃka.
[1818] Aggregates, addiction, Lord of Death, Son of Gods.

Of wind, mantra and substance
In the vessel
Of the indestructible state,[1820]
[That is] transcendent yoga. //15//

Being entranced [in]
Great wisdom,
Unequalled
Emptiness wisdom,
Supreme by the vessel
Of compassion,
Drink and always drink! //16//

The joining of the vajra and lotus
Is explained as
"The commitment of the seal."
He who produces
Supreme thatness
Is in the fortunate vessel. //17//

The yogi drinks,
Experiencing ecstasy,
The supreme reality
That is accomplished,
Free from addiction,
He will achieve the goal
Of the innate Great Seal. //18//

Such commitment and so forth
I did not explain definitively
Anywhere else.
The supreme state
Of Vajrasattva
Is clearly realized
From the speech
Of the guru. //19//

From the realization of the Mahāyoga Tantra Glorious Vajra Rosary, the tenth chapter on determining the meaning of the commitment.

[1819] Alaṃka has *thig le gsum*, but not explicitly as a quote from the *Vajra Rosary*.
[1820] Alaṃka has two versions of this line: one is the same as the Lhasa Vajra Rosary; the other has *bza' bar bya.*

Chapter Eleven

Determining the Meaning of Mere Sound[1821]

Then, furthermore,
I will explain, so listen!
I will explain the meaning of
Mere sound.
Whoever knows just that
Achieves the state of no rebirth. //1//

In the hollow of the lotus
Of the Reality Wheel
Mere sound truly abides. [1822]
It is without desire,
Invisible, non-dual
And taintless, //2//

Incomparable, immobile,
It lacks a foundation,
And lacks a roof.
Lord of the Gods,
Supreme Wisdom
It abandons
Exhaling and inhaling. //3//

Divine God of Yogis,
Such as that is hard to find. [1823]
It is supreme peace,
Great bliss,
Supreme form,
Supremely deathless.
With the natural relativity.
Like tasting wine,
Having supremely
Gone within. //4//

Similarly, it is the abode
Of all states,

[1821] *See* Alaṃka 78B.
[1822] "Mere sound, the final drop." Variant reading identified by Alaṃka, though he also glosses the *pada* as it appears in the Lhasa recension.
[1823] Lozang Jamspal thinks *kyang* after *rnal 'byor rnams* is wrong, and the *kyang* should come at the end, after *phyug*, meaning "even for the gods, this is hard to find." Personal Communication.

The foundation of knowing
The reality of mantra,
The state of realization
Of one's own experience.[1824]

Then Vajrasattva asked
The unexcelled teacher, //5//

Oh Lord,
Knower of peaceful reality,
Can one accomplish reality
By merely knowing
The analysis of the
Reality of mantra? //6//

Then the Vajrin spoke:

The unexcelled reality of mantra,
Superb and more superb subtlety,
Great wisdom and great excellence, //7//

Also the supreme
Quintessence
I will thoroughly explain, so listen!
The non-migrating
Secret state,
Hidden in all the Tantras, //8//

It perfectly abides
As mere sound,
[In the] supreme reality
Of the navel wheel.
It dissolves in the center
Of great emptiness,
The transparent state
Of great bliss. //9//

Non-dual, fearless and
Peaceful,
Imperceptible and
Unconventional.
By applying
Non-dual concentration,

[1824] Reading *rtogs* rather than *rtog* per Alaṃka.

The reality of mantra
Becomes utterly transparent. //10//

It is beginningless and peaceful,
Thing and no-thing,
[With] a principal nature
Of emptiness and compassion
Indivisible,
The nature of the spirit
Of enlightenment. //11//

At that time, initially,
Meditate on emptiness.
You rely supremely upon
A peaceful state
Of non-perception,
A pleasant state
Of naturelessness,
Incomparable emptiness wisdom
And the continuum
Of the spirit
Of enlightenment.[1825] //12//

From the letter HŪṂ
Perfectly arises
Great, wonderful
Yogic wisdom.
The three realities
[Have] the meaning
[Of] a single taste,
The transparent state
Of the central channel. //13//

Again, by ecstatic yoga,
You abandon
Entering and so forth.
The state of great bliss
Is the stainless
Enlightenment spirit. //14//

The instant of Variety
Is indivisible,
Free from the melodies

[1825] This verse appears to go with the preceding four-line verse because in Alaṃka there is no *de ltar....* *phyir* preceding it, while there are such breaks for the preceding and subsequent verses.

Of the nature of expression.
Through the continuity
Of always abiding, however,
The enlightenment spirit descends. //15//

You achieve by the
Yoga of mantra
The mere unproduced
Peaceful drop,
By conducting
The practice of mantra,[1826]
Supreme wisdom is
Self-known. //16//

From the realization of the Mahāyoga Tantra Glorious Vajra Rosary, the eleventh chapter on determining the meaning of mere sound.

Chapter Twelve

Explaining the Reality of Energy-Wind[1827]

Now I will explain
The supreme ultimate
Reality of energy-wind,
So listen!
When the yogi meditates
On energy-wind,
He will reach attainments
Quickly. //1//

The wind drop
Is great wisdom.
The subtle one
And that one
Are the clear state.[1828]
The inexhaustible
Yoga of nonduality

[1826] The last two padas are reversed in Alaṃka.
[1827] *See* Alaṃka 83A.
[1828] Per Robert Thurman, *rlung* is physical; *ye shes* is not. When they touch, there is nonduality. Personal Communication.

Is the delight that makes
All spiritual attainment. //2//

Birthless, ubiquitous, peaceful,
Pervading all [who have] bodies,
Invincible, empty,
Inconceivable,
It abides eternally
As the nature of all. //3//

By yogic meditation
And concentration,
You know the nature of
Your own drops,
The state of all things
Becoming as one,
The cause of the
Reality of mantra. //4//

Liberated from all instincts.
It invites omniscient
Omni-bliss.
You should concentrate
On the light ray drop,
The supreme reality
At the tip of the nose. //5//

Perfectly practicing breath control,
Bestowing the count
Of conceptualities,
The fortunate one has the
Nature of the five wisdoms.
The practice[1829]
Of the five Buddhas.
The form of applying
The five jewels,
Is merely the nature
Of the five elements. //6//

First are the actual
Physical hand gestures,
With the character
Of the repetition
Of counting speech.[1830]

[1829] Alaṃka Sde dge has *mchog ni*; P. and Snar. have *cho ga ni*.

The mind is attracted[1831]
To the great yoga,
The inexhaustible state
Of meditation. //7//

You count the mass
Of breaths,
Analyze the winds,
Realize the division
Of places,
[And] the division
Of the times
Of the channels. //8//

You reverse
The energy-winds,
[And] abandon conceptuality.
So, in sum, [these] six things
Are expressed in
"Inhaling and exhaling."[1832] //9//

Initially, you become certain
That there is similarly
A count of
Twenty-one Thousand
Six Hundred
Inhalations and exhalations
In the day and night. //10//

The state of achieving that number
[Is done] by application
Of that count over
Twenty-seven days.
You count over and over. //11//

You analyze the time limit,
Then you repeat as follows.
During each session,
You should examine

[1830] Appears to be one verse per the breaks in Alaṃka's *Commentary*.
[1831] Alaṃka has *yid ni*, 84B, which makes more sense here.
[1832] Per Robert Thurman, there are six stages or times of the channels: naturally during the day the energy-winds move in different channels in speech isolation/vajra repetition. This is an outline of how vajra repetition ends up with the energy-winds entering abiding and dissolving, so there is no more coarse breathing. Personal Communication

The breath,
By a count of
Two Thousand Seven-Hundred,
Without being
Perfectly definitive. //12//

Having clearly divided
Into twenty-seven days,
By division of the
Four chakras,
You define day and night.[1833] //13//

By control of place,
The Vajrin examines [them]
Separately,
By moving
The channel wheels.
You should practice
The channel wheels,
By the yoga
Of definitive retention
Without inhalation
Or exhalation. //14//

From the twenty-seventh day,
By analysis
Of those channel wheels,
You should examine the state
Of the changing
Of place,
By dividing the places. //15//

As for the place,
By discerning individually
The hundred-eight [energy-winds]
Move intensely,
And there is supreme
Non-conceptual union,
With the character of
Abandoning conceptions,
The nature of all things

[1833] This and the next verse seem divided into six lines each by Alaṃka. Alaṃka's Sanskrit *Commentary* commenting on the Sanskrit Tantra should not necessarily be definitive as to division of the Tibetan text, but Alaṃka's division of units of meaning is certainly relevant here, and I generally accept it as to the division of the Tibetan verses unless there is evidence to the contrary.

The hundred-eight [energy-winds]
Move intensely. //16//

This is true yoga:
The yogi who meditates
On the characteristic
For twenty-seven days
On such places,
His own nature
The yogi together
With [his] notions.[1834] //17//

Reversed by the yoga
The great energy-wind,
Free from thoughts
Moves the channel wheels.
Having accomplished that,
The addictions are completely
Reversed by the yogi. //18//

Definitively and ultimately,
In twenty-seven days,
By beginner's yoga,
By the intelligent one reversing, //19//

Then those [energy-winds] are ceased
By the force of true yoga.
The conceptualities of
Breath control are
Completely abandoned.
The suchness of energy-wind moves.
You should meditate
On the supreme yoga! //20//

By supreme non-dual yoga,
In [another] twenty-seven days,
Relying on the reality of energy-wind,
You purify mistaken yoga. //21//

For that,
With single-pointed mind,
By non-conceptual reality,
The supreme yoga

[1834] Division per Alaṃka.

Of the thatness
Of energy-wind
With perfect effort
Is made clear. //22//

Like making
A mansion,
First, you purify the ground.
Upon it,
Free from obstacles,
You should purify the place well. //23//

The discerning should make
Such a pleasant,
Fortunate, mansion.
Similarly, you should meditate
On the reality of energy-wind,
[Made] supreme by the
Practice of yoga. //24//

Becoming entranced
As before,
By the yoga
Of breath control,
You should meditate
Yogic awareness,
The great wisdom
Of supreme yoga.
First, the reality
Of energy-wind,
Then the reality of mantra
Becomes clear. //25//

As for that, [it is]
Supreme light rays of energy-wind,
The five colors of
Great illumination,
Like the five Tathāgatas,
The very reality of the
Five aggregates. //26//

That purifies the five wisdoms
Causing [them] to move
As the five energy-winds.
The characteristic
Of the reality

Of the five forms
Of manifest enlightenment
Is the supreme state. //27//

The supreme reality [at the]
Tip of the nose,
The very essence
Of the five energy-winds,
Is explained as the "Wind Drop,"
Also illuminating perfect reality. //28//

The mustard seed[1835]
Of the nose
Is also explained
In other Tantras.
Moreover, that mustard seed
[At the] nose tip
Is also the mark
Of breath control.
You abide
In breath control,
Meditating
The five lights
As Buddhas. //29//

From the upper nose
Definitively arise four types:
Right, left, both
And slowly moving.
These are explained as
Being internal time. [1836] //30//

In the times of half a session,[1837]
Taught as going and coming[1838]

[1835] The text from here to third to last paragraph of this chapter are quoted in Nāgārjuna's *PK*, ch. 1, vv. 16-24.

[1836] After quoting *steng gi sna las*, Alaṃka has *ji ltar zhe na de'i phyir gyon dang zhes bya ba la sogs pa gsungs te*, so presumably he had the *Vajra Rosary* text up to *dal bar rgyu dang rnam bzhir 'gyur* or something close to it.

[1837] A session in retreat is about 2.5 hours; so this would be about 1.25 hours. Personal Communication with Lozang Jamspal.

[1838] Alaṃka notes: "However, if someone asks about the method of making the energy-winds that enter, abide and arise go and come, there is no fault: having made the middle verse of 'going and not going and coming' disappear, it will make a summary that has two that are collected." 91A. In other words, the *Vajra Rosary* verse just refers to going and coming, *'gro 'ong ston*, Lhasa *VM*, 24A, and omits the middle verse, "not going." Presumably this refers to the more usual method of vajra repetition employing the *kumbaka*,

At the lotus of the throat,
Heart, navel and secret [wheels],
Taught as abiding respectively. //31//

The element arising
From the right
Is the fire mandala,
Red in color and brilliant,
The movement of the
Lotus Lord.[1839] //32//

The element arising
From the left,
The so-called wind mandala,
Perceived as yellow-green,
Moves the Action Lord. //33//

The element arising
From both,
The mandala of great power,
Perceived as golden in color,
Moves the Great Jewel Lord. //34//

The element that is
Slow and immobile,
Is the water mandala,
Perceived as a pure crystal,
The movement
Of the Vajra Lord. //35//

The winds that abide
Everywhere in the body
Engage in all activities.
This is the form of Vairocana.
They will arise
In the death body.[1840] //36//

---

the holding of the breath at AH, between the inhalation of OM and the exhalation of HŪṂ, in contrast to the HŪṂ HOḤ employed (in addition to the usual method) by the *Vajra Rosary*.

[1839] *See* Wedemeyer 2007, 183. These verses are quoted in the *CMP,* but not quite as they appear here. Āryadeva has two previous verses not appearing here: "Born from the nostril orifice, Fixed [in] the five Buddha clans, The upward-motion of the five airs, Always courses in the body. Moving [in] the superficial nose, [It is] issued forth from that door. They are fourfold: Left and right and both and languid." *Id.,* 183. The text starting with this verse, as pointed out by Wedemeyer, are those cited in the *PK* in Sanskrit. Wedemeyer 1999, 263.

[1840] Per Lozang Jamspal, this should be *'gag par gyur* or should refer to the bardo body. Personal Communication 3-7-08.

This luminance, reality of wind,
Has the nature of the
Five wisdoms.
It is not the province of the
Inexperienced yogi,
And is not known
By the logicians.[1841] //37//

Illuminating all
Of the attainments,
Accomplishing the reality
Of all yogas.
Illuminating the state
Of all reality,
Encompassing the goal
Of all yoga, //38//

The clear state
Of Vajrasattva,
Always remains
As the nature
Of everything.
Supreme reality,
Being extremely subtle,
Is realized from the mouth
Of the guru. //39//

From the realization of the Mahāyoga Tantra Glorious Vajra Rosary, the twelfth chapter explaining the reality of energy-wind.

[1841] Above portion quoted in *PK* ends here.

Chapter Thirteen

Explaining the Term Great Bliss[1842]

Now, listen to what else
I will explain!
The word that illuminates
Great bliss,
The indestructible state
Of Vajrasattva,
Because it is self-cognized
Is the supreme of the supreme.
Devoid of description
By conceptual thought,
It is expressed
As "great bliss." //1//

During the time
Of innate [ecstasy],
Abandoning subject
And object,
Abandoning happiness
And suffering,
Free from non-dual peace,[1843]
The essence
Of the nature
Of all things:
This is called
"Great bliss." //2//

It is the actuality
Of the five vajra wisdoms,
Having the nature
Of the five Buddhas, [1844]
The stream that flows
From the five channels,
Manifesting the state
Of vajra emptiness. //3//

Unreal
And unsupported,

[1842] *See* Alaṃka 93B.
[1843] Alaṃka has both, glossing *'byed* with *bral*.
[1844] Alaṃka has both *lnga yi* and *lnga bdag*. 94B.

Non-dual,
Free from all things,
Abandoning partless
And part, [1845]
It always delivers
From all concepts. //4//

Without migration
And peaceful,
Uncontaminated,
It manifests all blisses.
It liberates from all addictions,
It enters into
Every pleasure. //5//

Emptiness, great emptiness,[1846]
Extraordinary emptiness,
Supreme of supreme,
The abode of emptiness
And other-emptiness,[1847]
It is of the nature
Of five skies. //6//

Its nature unseverable
And unchanging,
It is unboundaried
And supremely penetrating,
Supreme wisdom
Of the Five Buddhas,
Its nature is called "vajra." //7//

Perfectly mixing
Compassion and yoga,
This supremely born bliss,
Three realities in
One taste,
Abandons the expressed
And the expressible. //8//

Abiding in the chakra
Called "Great bliss,"

[1845] Alaṃka has both *tha dad spangs* and *rnam par 'das*, presumably from different versions of the *Vajra Rosary* he had in front of him.
[1846] Alaṃka discusses *shin tu stong pa* before *stong pa chen po.* 95A.
[1847] Alaṃka has no reference to other-emptiness, and analogizes the various emptinesses to luminance etc. to clear light. 95A.

Not in the province
Of the senses,
By supreme, non-dual yoga,
Peaceful, with [its]
Sole characteristic
Being ecstasy, //9//

You attain by the stages
Of the four chakras,
Manifesting the state
Of the four yogas,
Completely filled with
The five emptinesses,
Negated by the
Four components, //10//

Holding at the tip
Of the vajra
Is what makes
The "Mind Hero."
What is filled with
The parts of the five spaces
Is called Vajrasattva. //11//

That very thing
Is the state
Of great bliss.
The fourth pervades
All the ecstasies.
Produced [from] the union
Of the hero and yoginī,
It is indestructible,
Abandoning all distinctions.
Its nature is
Reality. //12//

You yourself know [it]
As feeling.
Not in the province
Of others outside,
Incomparable and
Hard to signify,
And truly abides
In your own mind,
It is explained as
Introspectively known. //13//

Like the extreme ecstasy
With a young woman,
It is experienced as
Supremely clear.
Reality is supreme
And transcendent.
Supreme means
All the sages
And so forth,
The state of clear
Conceptuality.[1848] //14//

It is supreme
And great bliss,
One characteristic
In three realities,
Liberated from existence
And non-existence.[1849] //15//

You realize that
The nature of bliss
Liberates from the suffering
Of the life cycle.[1850]
The mind that has
The nature of peace,
Free from the nature
Of analyzing as dual
Or non-dual,
Cuts off the addiction
That is spoken of
And is free
From worldly conceptions. /16//

It abandons being free
From the conceptions
Of knowing and known,
And is of the nature
Of truth,

[1848] Or, if this should be *bsal*, the state that clears away conceptions.
[1849] Reconstructed as *bhavābhava*, which I am translating as "existence and non-existence." Jan Shlansky-Kittay says that if you meditate on thing and no-thing, you will be liberated from those. Personal Communication.
[1850] Or, as per Alaṃka's version, "You should meditate on thing and no-thing/ The concept of suffering as the nature of happiness/ Has the nature of liberating cyclic existence."

Ultimate, ubiquitous,
Supreme peace,
The excellence that
Bestows reality
For the bliss of living beings.
[It's] time is called
The "end of time."
The "fourth time,"
"Union." //17//

You abandon the conceptuality
That confounds
The life cycle,
And you abandon
The achievement of Nirvana.
The experience of equanimity
Is greatly intoxicating,
Having the character
Of equalizing wisdom. //18//

What is grasped
Are "objects,"
All of them,
Form and so forth,
The grasping power,
The consciousnesses
Of the nature of eye
And so forth. //19//

Free from them
And supremely subtle,
Is wisdom,
[Whose] nature is all-bliss.
Liberated from all suffering,
Abandoning the grasped
And the grasping. //20//

The blissful mind
Is peaceful.
Liberated from the characteristic
Of samsaric suffering,
You are fearless,
[In] non-abiding Nirvana! //21//

With the nature of
Great emptiness wisdom,

Samsaric suffering
Does not arise,
[But,] because in peace
You create compassion,
You do not stay
In blissful Nirvana. //22//

The wisdom of the disciple
Is peace itself;
Of the rhinoceros[1851]
Supreme non-duality.
Great bliss is free from
Their realization of bliss.
Because they are satiated,
The time of Supreme Ecstasy
Is called "Disciple's Wisdom." //23//

Ecstasy free from that extreme,
The Nirvana
Of the self-enlightened,
Is non-dual wisdom
And peace,
Specially created
By great bliss. //24//

It is great bliss that
Knows phenomena,
Causing the holding of the
Enlightenment spirit.
The bliss in all the channels
Abides in the state
Of great bliss.[1852]
The truth that has
The nature of that
Is called "great bliss." //25//

As for that very thing,
It is only [achieved] through yoga,
Not [by] conceptuality
With the nature of thoughts,
Not by propitiation, repetition, or
Fire offerings,

[1851] *I.e.* a self-arising Buddha, a *pratyekabuddha*.
[1852] *I.e. bde ba chen po'i 'khor lo de la gnas pa'i rtsa rnams*. Alaṃka 100A.

Not by concentration or
Restraining the winds,
Not by activity or rosary,
And not by meditation
Of the creation stage, //26//

[But] is achieved somewhat
Through the peaceful empowerments
From the mouth
Of the holy guru.
The partaking of
All the yoginīs
Is supreme wisdom,
Great bliss. //27//

From the realization of the Mahāyoga Tantra Glorious Vajra Rosary, the thirteenth chapter explaining the term great bliss.

Chapter Fourteen

Explaining the Union of the Vajra and the Lotus [1853] 1854

Now, furthermore,
I will explain, so listen!
The equal union of
Vajra and lotus
Would be the perfect attainment.
[Of] yoga
In this very life. //1//

Indestructible is called "vajra,"
Well known as energy-wind.
Discerning the letter A,
Through the wisdom
Of yoga
Always bestows excellence. //2//

The support of that
Is adorned by the

[1853] *See Commentary* 100B.
[1854] *See Secret Community Root Tantra*, Ch. 7.

Eight-petaled heart lotus.
The heart chakra,
The good fortunate[1855] one,
Always abiding as the
Nature of all. //3//

The eight conventional consciousnesses
Are born
On its petals,
Perfectly supporting the
Eye [consciousness] and so forth,
They engage in the
Three Realms. //4//

The energy-wind vajra
That overcomes these
Is called "Vighnāntakṛt."
The consciousnesses and
Whatever is on them
Are called "World Protectors." //5//

The World Deities abide,
Pervading all three worlds.
All [kinds of] Protectors also abide
As the fruit of
Objects and so forth. //6//

As for them [the eight consciousnesses],
Perfectly united by energy-wind,
They are expressed as
"Vajra and Lotus."
You should know
The vajra as compassion
And the lotus as emptiness.
These are known as
The supreme union. //7//

[In] the union
Of vajra and lotus
The vajra is called
The "Sun,"
Having the nature of
A multitude of light rays.

[1855] Sde dge Alaṃka has *bskal pa*, 101A, but P. and Snar. have *bskal ba*.

What opens to them
Is expressed as "Lotus."
The joining of vajra
And lotus.
You should know that yoga
As supreme. //8//

Enlightenment spirit
Also becomes the vajra,
The crown chakra
The lotus.
The supreme union
Which is the union
In that or of that[1856]
Is amazing! //9//

The speech of the guru is a vajra,
In the place of the lotus
Is the vessel of hearing
By good disciples.
The union with him
Manifests as supreme. //10//

Serenity is called a lotus;
In it is the vajra of insight.
When yoga unifies these two,
By meditation
You will see reality. //11//

Abiding in the
Lotus face of the yoginī,
The vajra is unexcelled great bliss.
The lotus is the mouth
Of the good disciple,
The vessel of the meaning
Of the personal instructions.
Those two see
The nature of all yoga,
The meaning

[1856] The *Commentary* states: *De la zhes pa nib de ba chen po'i 'khor lo'i mtshan nyid can gyi pad ma la'o/ de'i zhes bya ba kun rdzob kyi rnam pa'i byang chub sems dpa'o/ sbyor ba gang zhes bya ba ni 'byel pa gang zhig ngo bo nyid dang rlung gzung ba'i stobs kyis sam gyen du rgyu ba'i rim pa'i mtshan nyid can no//* "'In that' means in the lotus having the characteristic of the wheel of great bliss [crown wheel]. 'Of him' means the bodhisattva of the conventional type. 'Whatever union' means any conjunction having the characteristic of forcefully holding the essence and wind or of the higher causal stage [subtle creation stage]." Alaṃka 102B.

Of perfect reality. //12//

The vajra of the wise one
Free from conceptual thoughts
Is explained as the "*lingam*."
The wise one
Free from conceptual thoughts
Calling the vagina a "lotus,"[1857]
And the yoginī
Moistened by the commitment:
Those two perfectly unite
As one entity,
Bringing about the seeing
Of non-dual wisdom. //13//

The 72,000 channels
Are called vajra;
The channel through which
Enlightenment spirit descends[1858]
Is well known as lotus.
As for that [channel],
Because of the complete union,
It produces
Ecstasy. //14//

Also the seat of
The experience of ecstasy
Is also of vajra,
The self-cognizing[1859] Vajradhara
Is a lotus.
On it, those two unite,
The clear state
Of Buddha wisdom. //15//

The supreme empowerment
Is a vajra;
The lotus disciple
Is the good vessel.
Those two supremely unite.
The cause of

[1857] Without the instrumental, deleting the *sa*, or, as in Alaṃka, deleting the suffix, the translation could be more sexually egalitarian: "The *bhaga* of the wise one/ Free from conceptual thoughts/ Is explained as 'lotus'."

[1858] *I.e.* the *lalanā*. *See* Alaṃka 103B.

[1859] Alaṃka has "one's self as Vajradhara is a lotus": *rang nyid rdo rje 'chang pad ma / zhes bya ba ni rdo rje 'chang chen po'o//* 104A.

Perfect reality.[1860] //16//

E is called a "lotus;"
The letter VAM a vajra.
The indestructible reality drop
Uniting those two
Is wonderful. //17//

Thus it is known as
Supreme union.
The vow of the
Vajra and lotus vessel
Is known through the
Personal instructions
Of the yoginī[1861]
And the kindness
Of the guru. //18//

From the realization of the Mahāyoga Tantra Glorious Vajra Rosary, the fourteenth chapter explaining the union of vajra and lotus.

Chapter Fifteen

Explaining the Reality of Mantra[1862]

Listen Vajrin
To the explanation
Of the supreme wisdom
Of the reality of mantra.
By the practice
Of the conduct
Of mantra,
You will achieve attainments
Quickly. //1//

I will discuss repetition

[1860] Here following Alaṃka: *yang dag de nyid kyis rgyu*. 104B.
[1861] Per Robert Thurman, an email could be *man ngag*. Personal Communication.
[1862] *See Commentary* 104B.

According to the formula
Of the mantra,[1863]
[Of] the vajras
Of body, speech
And mind.[1864]
From that you will quickly
Accomplish attainment:
The reality of mantra
Will have gone
To the other shore. //2//

The peaceful state
Of vajra embrace,
The goal of the vow
Of *Great Seal*,
The great wisdom
Of supreme reality,
Are taught as the reality
Of mantra. //3//

The lucid state of
Non-objectifying,
The definitive cause
Of Vajrasattva,
Mantra is manifested
By all good qualities.[1865]
[It is] the vow
Of body, speech
And mind. //4//

Producing that reality
Is supreme wisdom,
Gathering the meaning
Of all reality.
Supremely clear
In the heart lotus,
That very thing
Is unexcelled wisdom. //5//

[1863] Per Lozang Jamspal, this involves the power of memory, a kind of meditation. Personal Communication.
[1864] *I.e.* according to the mantra of OM ·ĀH HŪṂ, as contrasted with the earlier discussion in chapter six of the mantra HŪṂ HOH.
[1865] Alaṃka just says *sngags kyis zhes bya ba la sogs pa,* "by 'mantra' and so forth." Alaṃka 106A.

Repeating for six months
You will become accomplished;
Otherwise not.
The art of supreme yoga
Is well known
To the yogi. //6//

Whatever is stated
As "non-objectifying"
Is called ultimate.
The non-dual repetition
Of mantra
Is by the division
Of snake[1866]
And so forth.
However, three
Indestructible realities
Are collected
In ultimate mantra. //7//

The attainment of repetition
Is unequalled.
If you repeat with
True equanimity,
It becomes the
Unequalled attainment.
It is the brilliant clarity
Of the state of purity.
One who knows this
Is Guru of the World. //8//

The meaning of mantra,
The reality of mantra,
The inexplicit
Personal instructions of mantra,
Who knows these
Is the Guru of the World. //9//

Then Vajrapāṇi, [1867]
Again having prostrated
To the all-knowing

[1866] Per Lozang Jamspal, this is repeating mantra without duality, without clinging, aware but not clinging. *See also* Alaṃka 106B. *See also CMP*, Wedemeyer 1999, 265: "One will only understand mantra reality by following the explanatory tantras. The mantras such as serpent and so on, are those which emerge from the vowels and consonants."

[1867] Following Alaṃka here; Lhasa *VM* has "Vajrasattva."

Guru of beings, Vajrasattva, asked:

"What is the character of mantra? //10//

O Lord, how are [its]
Name, meaning, and nature
Manifested?
What are the meanings
Of the personal instructions
On the reality of mantra,
Of the vows of mantra? //11//

Then the Vajra Lord spoke:

Listen and I will explain
Suchness characterized
By non-dual wisdom
And the supreme meaning
And name of mantra,
The very essence of the result
Of the three yogas.[1868] //12//

Essence gathers the meaning
Of essence,[1869]
Beginningless and peaceful,
The main one exhausting
The nature of thing
And no-thing,
Emptiness and compassion Indivisible!
[These are] the characteristics
That are known
Of the meaning of mantra. //13//

Addictionless and unmanifested,
Supreme of supreme,
Lacking intrinsic nature,
Nameless and natureless,
Supreme great lack of form,
Abandoning all dualities, //14//

Increasing perfect bliss,

[1869] Alaṃka comments: "On account of that, it is said to be 'essence.' Essence means from the creation stage [forward]. 'Said to be the meaning of essence' means, having pursued the completion stage, on account of being free from elaboration, causing the effect of speech isolation." 108A-B.

Increasing the bliss
Of the fortunate ones,
Knowing all
And free from parts,
Non-dual wisdom
Yoga is born! //15//

That reality is ultimate;
Moreover, that reality
Is none other than suchness!
Reality is the state
Of Vajradhara,
The nature
Of the five wisdoms. //16//

All pervading,
Ubiquitous emptiness,
The total conquest
Of all addictions.
Taintless joy,
Free from stain,
Supreme state
Of self-awareness! //17//

The primordial Buddha,
Extra-delighted,
Expands the group
Into parts.
By specifying the place
[According to] personal instructions,
You should gather
By division
Of the chakras. //18//

How is [one's] nature perfected?
What is the division of streams?
What is the practice
According to the clans?
What is the result? //19//

You should study with great effort
What perfectly abides
Through the tradition
Of the guru of perfect form
And so forth,
The stages of true contemplation

And embrace. //20//

Gold, brocaded garments,
Jewels and so forth
Of the finest quality,
Countless servants and laborers,
With faith and devotion,
And so forth, //21//

Whatever he likes
For the teacher,
With things that are
Hard to find,
As for the guru
Who shows the meaning
Of mantra,
You should completely
Fulfill his wishes.
You make prostrations,
And then,
Having perfectly grasped
The meaning of the result, //22//

A pencil made
From Human bone,
[On] a ground
Of blazing jewels,
Or the well-spread ashes
From a charnel ground,
Bestowing attainment! //23//

Having first taken initiation,[1870]
You should [draw with these]
A mandala in front.
As for the offering cake
For Vignāntakṛt,
Offer it like in a great temple.
You should gather
The incomparable mantra
That brings accomplishments
Of body, speech and mind. //24//

First, write the first letter, [1871]

[1870] The *Commentary* notes that this refers to the four Guhyasamāja empowerments. 111A.
[1871] *I.e. "a."*

Having the fifth vowel,[1872]
Having the last part
Of the last one of the group.[1873]
It is expressed
As the seed of the body.
The beginning letter
Becomes double.[1874]
Having the [last] part of UŚMA,[1875]
You should gather
The incomparable mantra,
The supreme essence
Of vajra speech. //25//

The [last] part of UŚMA,[1876]
Having the sixth vowel,[1877]
With the last part
Of the last group,[1878]
Manifests the state
Of the vajra of mind. //26//

The three commitments
Of body, speech and mind
Cause [you] to attain
The three worlds.
The supreme reality
Of the yogi,
The unexcelled gathering
Of mantras,
That very thing
Causes all *attainments*.
Concentrating the meaning
Of all mantras
Is the entire Vajra Vehicle. //27//

It is the supreme yoga
Of all adepts
On this earth,
With its creatures and environment.

[1872] *I.e.* "*u,*" so "*au,"* equivalent to *"o."*
[1873] *I.e. anusvāra*, making "*OṂ*."
[1874] *I.e. "ā."*
[1875] *I.e. śa, ṣa, sa ,ha, i.e.* "*ĀḤ*," the *ḥ* being *visarga*.
[1876] *I.e. "ha."*
[1877] *I.e. "ū*."
[1878] *I.e. anusvāra*.

Unexcelled wisdom yoga!
Essence of Vajrasattva! //28//

Repeating the mantra
According to personal instruction,
The supreme unexcelled wisdom,
According to scripture
For the sake of attainment,
It achieves his
Magnificent attainment. //29//

By wisdom of mantra
In this very life,
The great yoga of
Body, speech and mind,
Explained as "great wisdom,"
The incomparable brilliant mantra,
Causes the enjoyment
Of all desires.
One who always holds
Mantra in the throat
Knows reality. //30//

Causing the accomplishment
Even of all concepts,
Entering into all *maṇḍalas*,
And knowing all commitments,
The good-minded one
Even achieves
The three worlds. //31//

From the realization of the Mahāyoga Tantra Glorious Vajra Rosary, the fifteenth chapter explaining the reality of mantra.

Chapter Sixteen

Teaching the State of the Stages of Counting the Energy-winds[1879]

Now I will explain further
So listen!
One who attains correctly
The unexcelled stage
Of counting,
The stage
Of the energy-winds
As they abide,
Is fortunate.[1880]
The life-energy [wind] abides
As the nature of all.
One who really knows [this]
Can achieve supreme yoga. //1//

One who does not know
The nature of energy-wind
Wanders in the three worlds.
One who, moreover,
Gains familiarity [with it],
[Is in the] lineage
Of those who know
Guru yoga. //2//

The characteristics
Of the seasons
Are like the characteristics
Of energy-wind.
Having summarized,
I should explain.
What is clear
In the *Cloud Glory*, //3//

There are six times,
Well known as the seasons.
It is the time
Of the two applications;

[1879] *See Commentary* 113A.
[1880] Per Stok Palace, *thob pa skal ba bzang*.

That time is sixty days. //4//

When you determine
Day and night
They are well known
As "one day."
There are sixty hours[1881]
In one day and night.
Similarly, an *dbyu gu*
Is a *tsa sha*. //5//

A *tsa sha* is well known[1882]
As the time
Of six exhalations
And inhalations.
In six seconds,
There is one [external] breath.
Its measure
Is the snapping
Of one's fingers. //6//

In one moment [*skad cig*],
There are three instants [*thang*].
As for that,
The mere turning over
Of a mustard seed,
For three [internal] breaths
There is one instant.
That one instant
Is a flash. //7//

In three instants
Is the blinking of an eye.
Further, as for the eye ,
The blink of an eye
Is in the space
Of three split seconds.
The space is
The clapping of hands.[1883] //8//

The rising of bliss takes

[1881] *Chu tshod*.
[1882] This line, as *chu tshod tsa sha ka zhes grags*, appears at the end of the preceding verse in Alaṃka's version. 114B.

Three split seconds.
That is the migration
Of the drop.
The mantrin abides
In bliss in the three [seconds].
He is described
As fearing emission.[1884] //9//

It is explained as
Fearing the three times.
Time is subtle,
With the nature
Of an instant,[1885]
The characteristic of
Past, present and future. //10//

The past is said to be
Three moments.
The present is also
Three moments.
The future is explained
As three moments.
In [each of] those,
There are also
Three moments. //11//

Thus, there is a portion
Of the three moments.
From that, there are three parts;
From those, a part.
To the extent you
Count that much,
Thought becomes
Empty [and] non-dual;
You will attain
Supreme yoga. //12//

The abode of
[The] Life-energy [energy-wind]
Is unexcelled,

[1884] Per Alaṃka, the migration of the drop means "the conventional drop through the perfect practice with the supreme yoginī," accompanied by "fear of the abyss…[like the yogi experiencing "the moment of doubt when he falls from a mountain peak." 115A. Per Lozang Jamspal, you experience bliss in the state of impermanence, like you are at the edge of a precipice. Personal Communication.
[1885] Per Lozang Jamspal, just like splitting atoms. Personal Communication.

Free from direction,
Time and concept,
You abandon reasoning
And characteristics.
The life-energy of that
Arises and dissolves,
The epitome of non-duality. //13//

I should explain further,
So listen!
Whether the life-energy [wind]
Is arising or dissolving,
You realize it
As instantaneous and so forth.
To the extent
It is completely unpacified,
It is the abode of wind,
Not known as the
Place of liberation. //14//

Abiding in the middle
Of the anus [and] the secret [place],
[Its] name is
["]Unproduced.["]
The great part,[1886]
Moreover, is free
From consciousness,
The wisdom body,
Selfless.
What is produced there
Is the supreme
Of the supreme,
Called the supreme
Of living beings.[1887] //15//

It manifests the actuality
Of consciousness.
First, it actualizes the generation
Of reification
Of the four elements.[1888]
At that time, it dissolves

[1886] Referring to enlightenment spirit. Alaṃka 117A.
[1887] *I.e.* the Life Energy energy-wind, as made clear in Alaṃka's text. Tibetan *srog chags* can mean both "living being," Skt. *jīva*, and "life energy," *prāṇa*.
[1888] At 117B, Alaṃka has *skyes pa yi ni ngo bor byed*, but later, at 118A, elaborates as set forth here.

In its own place.
From consciousness
Wind is born. //16//

From that, fire will arise.
From fire, water will arise.
From that, earth is purely produced. From these, the elements
[Arise] as the aggregates,
And because of that,
The sense media,
And, from that,
The instinctual natures
Of consciousness,
Which are more than
One-hundred eight processes. //17//

Just as a person abides,
He dissolves,
The instinctual natures
Going.
The great energy-wind
Of Producing Expansion[1889]
Stirs up the addicted mind,[1890]
[And] attaining power,
Expands,[1891]
Causing the contraction
Of the sense media. //18//

From that, there is
The Expanding Water
Energy-wind.[1892]
Because the Producing Expansion [Energy-wind][1893]
Is consumed,
The very contraction
Of the aggregates
Causes the great body,
In stages,
To make sounds.
From that will arise
The Partial Expansion [Energy-wind][1894]

[1889] Per Alaṃka, the Evacuative Energy-wind. 118A.
[1890] Following Alaṃka here. 118A.
[1891] Again following Alaṃka's version. 118B.
[1892] Per Alaṃka, *mnyam* gnas, the Equalizing Energy-wind. 118B.
[1893] Per Alaṃka, *thur sel gyi rlung*, the Evacuative Energy-wind. 118B.

Gathering the Expanding Water [Energy-wind].[1895] //19//

The elements contract,
Also in precise stages.
From that will arise
The Sending Holding
Energy-wind,[1896]
Consuming the
Partial Expansion
[Energy wind].[1897] [1898] //20//

Then it contracts
The energy-winds,
Obscuring the Pervading
And subtle [energy-winds].
Then, the unbearable
Sending and Holding
[Energy-wind][1899]
Momentarily obscures
Consciousness. //21//

Having been obscured,
From that, even consciousness, Becomes insensate,
And you faint.
It obscures part
Of the sense bases.
It is the wisdom of purity,
Supreme of supreme.[1900]
From that, the life energy
[Energy wind] dissolves
Becoming equal

[1894] Per Alaṃka, *gyen du rgyu ba'i* rlung, the Ascending energy-wind. 118B.
[1895] *See generally* Alaṃka 118B.
[1896] Alaṃka says this refers to the Life-energy Energy-wind. 118B.
[1897] Meaning the Ascending Energy-wind. 118B.
[1898] Per Robert Thurman, the energy-winds are tied up with elements in the coarse body; the deeper wind-energies withdraw from the elements in an order, then the winds are contracted; you bring them in and out; you withdraw energies from the element; each has the four elements; they're constructs. Personal Communication 4-20-06.
[1899] Alaṃka says this refers to the Life-energy Energy-wind. 118B.
[1900] Compare to ch. 53, praising *mtshams*: "The character of the interval/ Is unexcelled./ The interval,/ Free from appearance/ And non-appearance,/Arises from vajra wisdom.// It abides in the center,/ Mixing with non-duality./ It abandons the noble/ And the polluted./ Deathlessly born/ From the vajra and lotus,/ It perfectly mixes/ With the moon and sun.// What perfectly doesn't go/ To the limit,/ That interval/ Purifies cyclic existence.//"

To consciousness. //22//

Supreme reality
Is thus explained.
The dissolving and arising
Of the life-energy [energy-wind]
And exact understanding
Arises through the process
Of the lineage guru. //23//

I will also explain
The reason
For attaining
The vajra body,
Achieving
The deathless state.
One who achieves
The supreme body
Of immortality
Is the support
Of good qualities. //24//

Because of that,
Owing to the short lifespan
Of living beings,
They unable to accomplish
The immortal state.
Thus, with utmost effort,
You should achieve longevity. //25//

O Lord Savior!
Supreme Wisdom!
Transcendent Reality Yoga!
He bowed to Vajrasattva, asking:

How do you dissolve well
Into the lineage
Of the two immortalities?[1901] //26//

Then the Vajra Lord said:

The state that achieves

[1901] Alaṃka has *'chi ba med cing rigs par ni/ ji ltar yang dag thob par 'gyur,* "Immortality and reasoning, how do you achieve them?" 120A. Robert Thurman comments that reasoning means application: "For these guys, ritual movement *is* a reasoning. Understanding is the same as yoga; no 'believin' what you know ain't true.'" Personal Communication 4-20-06.

All actions,
The great deathless yoga,
Ascertains perfect reality. //27//

For the short-lived beings
There is no way
To achieve attainment.
Therefore the good yogis
[Hold] longevity to be a virtue.
For that, first the intelligent one
[Versed in] supreme yoga
Should accomplish
The inner nature. //28//

Touching the tongue
To the middle of the palate,
Repeat the thatness word.[1902]
Having assumed the
Spiritual hero posture,
You should recollect
Perfect yoga.[1903] //29//

You should move the breath
To the tip of the nose,[1904]
And should clearly
Shut the mouth.
The moon arrives
At the place of the palate,[1905]
And melts by the yoga
Of mantra.

[1902] Robert Thurman says this is to be done silently. Personal Communication 4-20-06.

[1903] The Commentary states that "perfect yoga" refers to *sems kyi 'jug pa 'gog pa'i rnam pa'o,* a kind of shutting down of the engagement of the mind. 121A. This stanza is also quoted in Alaṃka 31B in discussing the attainment of "paralyzing an army."

[1904] *I.e.* the conventional nose. Commentary 121A. As for the method, Alaṃka states: *dbugs ni mi 'byung zhes bya ba ni 'od zer gyi thig le bsgom pa'i bdag nyid can no//* "The breath not arising" means having the nature of meditating the drop of clear light. Commentary 121A.

[1905] Alaṃka explains: "'The moon arriving at the place of the palate' means enlightenment spirit in the aspect of a moon. 'One should melt' means by applying the uvula.[1905] If someone asks how, it is stated as the 'yoga of mantra,' the meaning which is 'connected' 'by the unbroken mantra.' [The enlightenment spirit] is melted by means of the uvula. 'By wind yoga' means by applying the falling of the downward voiding wind. 'Drinks' means that one should experience nectar." 121A. "What is particularly surprising about this passage is the characterization [in the *Taītirīyopanishad's Shiksāvalli*] of the uvula as Indra's womb. Indra is of course the great Soma drinker from the Vedas. Throughout the Yogic and Tantric literature we find that the uvula is described as the site where the nectar of immortality (*amrta*, also a common epithet of Soma) drips down, after the *kundalini* or *enlightenment spirit* has risen up to the crown of the head." Hartze11 1997, 582.

The chief of yoga
Should always drink
By the yoga
Of the melting
Of energy-wind. //30//

At the end of the middle
Of the night,
The yogi recites mantra
In one session without stopping,
Making the vajra body. //31//

To summon the life-energy
Of the practitioner,
Always repeat
Without losing the limbs[1906]
The third of the second group,[1907]
Including the vowel.[1908] //32//

Also, you should always
Use the substance,
Producing the stage
Of the five realities.
When you complete
The recitation,
There are never
Any stains arising
On the body.[1909] //33//

As for the vessel
Made of five metals,
You holding it
Until sunrise,
Pouring constantly into it
The blood
Of a young woman
And enlightenment spirit.
The supreme substance
Is called the seven nectars. //34//

[1906] *I.e.* say it clearly.
[1907] *I.e. "G."*
[1908] *I.e. GAH," visarga* per Alaṃka. 121B.
[1909] This and the next three stanzas are quoted in Alaṃka 32A in his chapter six, as well as in his commentary on this chapter.

Drinking the substance at bedtime
Increases [your] lifespan.
Then you should repeat
The king of mantras
OM ĀH HŪṂ seven times. //35//

You should mark
Your right hand
With a flag,
Covering the good vessel,
Purifying it three times
With the mantra
Of one hundred syllables.
Because of that,
You should always
Carry, fill up
And drink
The [substance of]
A young woman. //36//

Also, to give
That [kind of] food,
You make equal parts
Of butter fried rice, beans,
Sunflowers, goat milk,
White sugar and sesame,
With intense faith[1910]
You should make
A fire offering.
At bed time,
Eat the unexcelled food. //37//

Thus knowing the ritual
Through [such] reasoning,
Don't tell anyone!
[The ritual] will quickly
Bestow attainment
On the subtle one,
All as before. //38//

Doing this for six months,
One will arise
In a vajra body.

[1910] Alaṃka has *mos pa*, 123A-B, which I have translated as "with intense faith" in light of the *Vajra Rosary's myos pa*, "mad, crazy."

One should use[1911]
Elixirs and alchemy
With great effort,
Unequalled [for]
Controlling the lifespan. //39//

For the practitioner
Who attains the Great Seal,
There is no old age,
Worm disease, drowsiness,
Stupidity, dry lung,
Energy or bile disease
And so forth, //40//

No inner or goiter disease, pox,
Hemorrhoids, itching,[1912] smallpox,
Leprosy or syphilis.
He has a glorious
Smoke white lotus body,
Shining like a golden river. //41//

He[1913] always attracts
The supreme
Wisdom women.
The goddesses
Have great affection[1914]
For [elixirs],[1915]
[And so] the yoginīs[1916]
Make [him]
A mind hero,[1917]
[So his] natural body

[1911] Reading *bsnyen* rather than *bstan.*
[1912] Skt. *kaṇḍū*. Alaṃka has *gya' ba*, which means the same thing. 123B.
[1913] Per Alaṃka, this "it" refers to the practitioner. 123B.
[1914] Although Alaṃka glosses *mdza' chen*, which I am taking as "great affection," as *tshe phun sum tshogs pa dang mdog phun sum tshogs pa'o*, "of a perfect age and perfect appearance." Perhaps Alaṃka was reading this as *mdzes*, "beautiful."
[1915] Per Alaṃka, this "it" refers to the attainment of taking elixirs. 123B.
[1916] Sde dge Alaṃka has *rnal byor pa*, "yogis." 123B.
[1917] Sde dge Alaṃka has *sems par byed*, 124A, but P. and Snar. have *dpar*, "as hero." *Id.* Alaṃka glosses this as *yid du 'ong ba*, "good looking, comely," which is consonant with the rest of the verse, with its reference to the "natural body." Alaṃka could also have been referring to the *practitioner yoginīs*, which would be unusual in context, since Alaṃka usually refers to the practitioner in the male gender, but not impossible. All in all, though, the reading above makes the most sense to me. Robert Thurman reads this as centering on the yoginī/practitioner and thus being an answer to the male-oriented sexual fluids approach taken by current commentators. Personal Communication. It is also possible that Alaṃka's interpretation varied from the original intent.

Is always saluted
And given offerings. //42//

From the realization of the Mahāyoga Tantra Glorious Vajra Rosary, the sixteenth chapter on teaching the state of the stages of counting the energy-winds.

Chapter Seventeen

Situating the Chakras

Then, further,
Listen to the summary
Of the number and places
Of the channels
Precisely divided
By the number
Of wheels,
Wonderfully supreme. //1//

For the six wheels,
There are sixteen supports,
For the body,
The divine mansion.
Having summarized
By yoga and by place
I will explain. //2//

The channel that abides
As the wind wheel,[1918]
The six-petaled
Energy wind,
Engages space.
Three petals are explained
As the fire wheel.[1919]
Three types of channels
Arise in stages.
Similarly, the enjoyment wheel[1920]

[1918] Per Lati Rinpoche and Denma Löcho Rinpoche, 1997, this should be 16 petals. The Wind Wheel is between the brows. *Id.*
[1919] Per Lati Rinpoche and Denma Löcho Rinpoche, 1997, between the neck and the heart.

Also is perfectly expressed
As sixteen channels. //3//

The eight channels
That abide in the
Reality wheel[1921]
Pervade everywhere.
Similarly, also,
The wheel of emanation
Will also be explained
As sixty-four.[1922] //4//

Thirty-two channels
Are explained as arising
In the Great Bliss Wheel.[1923]
Summarized in that way,
The process is also
Perfectly explained
As constituting more than
One hundred thirty-one[1924]
Channels. //5//

In other [Tantras]
The channels are
Also divided in detail,
Analyzing the[ir] locations
Into seventy-two thousand.
The definitive expression
Is stated in the
One Hundred Thousand.[1925]
It is stated as the
Essence of the essence
In the Small Tantra
Or in this very one. //6//

[1920] Per Lati Rinpoche and Denma Löcho Rinpoche, 1997, at the throat.
[1921] Per Lati Rinpoche and Denma Löcho Rinpoche, 1979, at the heart.
[1922] Per Lati Rinpoche and Denma Löcho Rinpoche, 1979, at the navel.
[1923] Per Lati Rinpoche and Denma Löcho Rinpoche, 1979, the Crown *Wheel*.
[1924] Each of the Sde dge, Peking and Snar thang versions of the *Commentary* has one hundred twenty-nine here. 125A.
[1925] The *Commentary* states: "'From the Tantra which is propagated in stages' [I could not find such a Tantra in TBRC] means it is stated etc. 'Expressed definitively in 100,000' [means] in the Similar to Sky Tantra." 125A. Per the TBRC index, the *rgya cher dpal nam mkha' dang mnyam pa'i rgyud* might refer to the *nam mkha' dang mnyam pa'i rgyud kyi rgyal po* or the *bde mchog nam mkha' dang mnyam pa'i rgyud kyi rgyal po*.

The place in the center
Of the eyebrows
Is the Wind Wheel.
The Open Coiling[1926]
Is unbearable.
Being unbearable has the Characteristic of stability,
The characteristic of the
Six short channels. //7//

Holding is filled
With non-conceptuality.
The three-channeled,
Three-cornered Fire Wheel
Is explained as being
Below the throat.
There are three [channels]:
Stainless, clear and fierce. //8//

[The names of the channels are] [1927]

[1] Perfectly Forceful and
[2] Very Forceful,
[3] Very Good and
[4] Becoming Good,
[5] Great Power and
[6] Unbearable,
[7] Great Beauty and
[8] Great One Born in Front, //9//

[9] Sign of Inflation and
[10] Part of Inflation,
[11] Water of Inflation and
[12] Intoxicating Inflation,
[13] Inflation and
[14] Harmonious Cause of Inflation,
[15] Moistening Inflation and
[16] Holding Inflation,[1928] //10//

[1926] Skt. *Vibagakundali* or *Bangakundali*. "'Opening coil' because having been awakened by A and RA, it turns back. As for the coiling of it, because it proceeds to transform itself [that way] it's called open coiling. 'Unbearable' because it is fierce at the time of incitement by fire. Called 'holding' because it holds in its own place the element of the enlightenment spirit that has overflowed in the head." Alaṃka 125B. Per Robert Thurman, this refers to the pituitary gland center that goes through the brain. When it opens, it turns toward the back; energy comes from the front and coils around. When fire incites the white enlightenment spirit, it melts flowing to the Wind Wheel, then is held there in place. *Mi bzad pa* means excruciating, because it hurts a little. Personal Communication 5-18-08.

[1927] *See* Hartzell 1997, 348 for names of the channels from the *Ḍākārṇavatantra*'s chapter 5.

[17] Rough and
[18] Space Arising and
[19] Rude[1929] and
[20] Unhappy Breath and
[21] Itching,
[22] Ḍākinī,
[23] Bird [on a] Limb,
[24] Face of Mouth[1930]
[25] Daring to Consume,
[26] Unbearable Reification[1931] //11//

[27] Smelly,
[28] Striking and
[29] Dusting and
[30] Voice and
[31] Producing voice and
[32] Cloud,
[33] Seen as Tube and
[34] Continuously Moving,
[35] Main Instant,
[36] Unborn Instant, //12//

[37] Facing Backwards and
[38] Stick,
[39] Pride Stick and
[40] Old and
[41] Joint Belly and
[42] Joint Word, [1932]
[43] Joint Measure and
[44] Taming,[1933] //13//

[45] Place of Joints and
[46] Joint Face,
[47] Joint Light and
[48] Chain[1934] of Joints,
[49] Taming,
[50] Animal[1935] and

[1928] *Commentary* reads '*chang*.
[1929] Alaṃka has "Elephant." 126B.
[1930] Following Alaṃka. I haven't been able to find the meaning of *khva*.
[1931] Per Lozang Jamspal, "Making Terrible Sounds." Personal Communication 9-12-06.
[1932] Alaṃka has "Joint Head." 127A.
[1933] Alaṃka has "Suppressing Another." 127A.
[1934] *Lu gu rgyud* - line to which lambs are fastened, Skt. *śirinkala*. Personal Communication, L. Jamspal.

[51] Radiance,
[52] Stainless and
[53] Pride of Taming, //14//

[54] Belly Casting Water[1936] and
[55] Desire Casting Water,[1937]
[56] Half Hanging Garlands [and Half] Cleaning Garlands,[1938]
[57] Bee
[58] Child,
[59] Bestowing Child,
[60] Questioning,
[61] Leaf,
[62] Throat Leaf, //15//

63] Supreme Mother and
[64] Very Illuminating.

In that way,
Explained as
Sixty-four channels,
The places of the Emanation Wheel
Are filled up
With supreme nectar. //16//

Great Jewel and Lotus,
Great Vajra and
Greatly Powerful One,
Great Headed and Great Sound, Intoxicated by Great Ecstasy
And Great Drunk,

These are in the center of the Phenomena Wheel.
They remain on the lotus
Of the heart. //17//

Enjoyment and
Bestowing Enjoyment,
Sun, Going, Bright and Lucky,
Meditation and Face of Ashes,
Food Gift, Food and Hunger, //18//

Alchemy-elixir

[1935] Alaṃka has "Going to Tame." 127A.
[1936] Alaṃka has "Hanging Garlands," 127A, which seems to make more sense in the context.
[1937] Alaṃka has "Ecstasy of Hanging Garlands." 127A.
[1938] Alaṃka has "Mother of Garlands." 127A.

And Sour Taste,
Fearsome Taste, Taste,
And Crane.
Are located on the
Enjoyment Wheel,
[Their] number expressed
As sixteen. //19//

Above that,
By the process
Of reasoning:
Passionate One,
Lustful Woman,
Life Energy Body,
Drinking Moon,
Bestowing Moon, Treasury,
Desireless, Speech,
Kusha Grass, //20//

Flesh, Charnel Ground,
Mountain, Purity,
People, Corpse, Parrot,
That Having Two Tastes,
Long Battle Cry,
Giving Liquor, Nectar, //21//

Possessing Pearl, Pearl, Ear,
Poisonous Eye, Poisonous Nose,
Lord of Inflation,
Inflation, Craving,
Unconscious with Inflation,
Wonderful Inflation, //22//

Smooth and Supported by.

These are stated as "thirty-two,"
Part of the Wheel
Of Great Bliss,
Bestowing supreme ecstasy. //23//

Subtle and extremely subtle
To the touch,
It abandons
The grasped
And the grasping
One's self being

Of the nature of great bliss,
You give it to others as well. //24//

Thus, you should know
From the guru's speech,
The true stages
Of the channels.
The aggregates and so forth
Will not arise
Without ascertaining
The stages of the channels.
Without the aggregates,
The yogi cannot achieve
Great wisdom. //25//

The body with the nature
Of the five aggregates
Is well known
As the five ḍākinīs.
That very thing,
Through the five elements,
Abides as the five wisdoms.
Therefore, with all effort,
You should know
The channel wheels. //26//

Just as a tree
In the middle of water
Grows quickly,
From it there is fruit
And so forth,
It will give.
In this there is
No doubt. //27//

Similarly, the aggregates
Are like a tree,
Having grown by the water
Of the channels.
Increasing, they bestow
The perfect fruit
Of Omniscience.
You should meditate on
The nature of the channels
Through the actualities
Of the forms

Of deities. //28//

Of the two,
There are two touches.[1939]
If the vajra is present,
At that time
The fire truly blazes.
Then, in the middle
Of the wheel of fire,
The lotuses called wheels[1940]
Will open stage by stage.[1941] //29//

As for this,
From the falling of that
Great bliss of enlightenment spirit
From the channels,
You perfectly achieve
The essence of emanation,
Having condensed [it]
Into a single entity. //30//

It flows down
The sun and moon.
Also, in the center
Of the royal mandala,
You abide in the form
Of a scale.[1942]
Known also as one cause,
Those two [have]
Two kinds of effects. //31//

[From] the right,
The form of a sun
And [from] the left

[1939] Or, per Alaṃka, "By the two banners of touch coming together." 129B.
[1940] Alaṃka has *mig*, "eye." 129B.
[1941] Alaṃka explains: "Now in order to express the procedure of producing the channels, as the components of that, by the warmth of fire pressuring, the enlightenment spirit emerges and there is a meeting of the two victory banners of texture, and here texture means lotus. Because of that very thing being very touchable, it has the nature of a victory banner. 'Present' [*lhag*] [ancient sense of the word] [means] having the power of that which is to be protected and accomplished. . . . The center of the navel is the Emanation Wheel and the two fire wheels abide above, achieving the form of blazing. 'The middle of the Fire Wheel is the Fire Wheel that abides below the Enjoyment Wheel [in the chest below the Enjoyment Wheel.] Lotuses having an eye means by the form of blazing because pervaded by heat. 129B.
[1942] Alaṃka explains: "'"The vaginal chakra" [means that] the two channels abide like a balancing scale when you are connected with the yoginī in the center of the lotus chakra. When both are brought together, you abide in the mode of a jewel sack." 130A.

The form of moon.[1943]
When the right sun arises,
The blood becomes bliss. //32//

When the left moon
Is clear,
Bliss is [white],
Like a *kunda* flower.
The fire that enters
Those two
Abides perfectly
As the seven branches. //33//

At the time
Of the hundred paths,[1944]
When the previous
Energy wind consciousness
Becomes mistaken,
You abide equably
In the space
Of the father,
And at that time,
You fall under the power
Of lust. //34//

The Secret Place is
The channel possessing
The mark of the moon.
When fire and sun arise,
Driven by extreme lust,
You desire supreme passion.
The faces of
Vajra and lotus
Are mixed together,
[And] the tip of the father
Enters. //35//

At that time,
A seed arises.
From the seed
Arises a living being.
Therefore, you arise perfectly.

[1943] Alaṃka has "from the left, the form of a moon" first. 130A.
[1944] *I.e.* after death.

From the channels.
The wonderful fruit is born. //36//

That very thing
Is also enlightenment spirit.
You hold [it],
Gathering the life-energy.
By attaining wisdom yoga
There is supreme wisdom
And supreme reality,
Great wonderful supreme bliss,
Unexcelled supreme bliss. //37//

From the realization of the Mahāyoga Tantra Glorious Vajra Rosary, the seventeenth chapter on
teaching in stages the situating of the chakras.

Chapter Eighteen

Summary of the Channels of the Yogic Body

Now I should explain further.
The respective channels
In the yogic body,
Are always perfect,
Born through
The lineage clans. //1//

This is not stated clearly.
For the sake of
Unfortunate people
Who have given up
Thoughts of faith,
[This] is not clearly spoken of
Anywhere. //2//

For those beings desiring
To be made vessels
Of spiritual accomplishment
Quickly
In the time of

The "five degenerations,"
I will perfectly explain
The spontaneous
Wonderful wisdom, //3//

The channels through which
Enlightenment spirit clearly flows,
The thirty-two in the
Channel wheel of great bliss
Of the yogic body. //4//[1945]

Now, I will explain
The characteristics
Of that place
Of great bliss.
You should know these
In order, by the groups
Ka,[1946] *ca, ṭa, ta* and *pa*,
And *ya, ra la wa, ṣa, śa,*
And *sa,* //5//

When you compress these,
They go into one group.
Moreover, having dissolved
Into enlightenment spirit,
The supreme wisdom of peace,
They go [into one group]. //6//

Having abandoned all notions,
It is the supreme basis
Of all bliss,
Abandoning knower
And known,
Always remaining
As the nature of all. //7//

From that, by division
Into three wheels,
From division into eight channels,
By differentiation into

[1945] For Alaṃka alternative readings of this and the next verse, *see* Alaṃka 24A. The corresponding verses in Alaṃka's Chapter 18 has *rnal byor lus ni bde ba chen po'i/ 'khor lo'i sum cu rtsa gnyis rmad du byung ba/ tsa rnams yang dag bshad par bya/ byang chub sems 'bab gsal// de rnams bde ba chen po'i gnas/ mtshan nyid bshad par bya/ a ka tsa ṭa ta pa sde tshan dang/ ya ra la wa sha ṣa sa/ rigs pas shes par bya//.* 132A.

[1946] Reading *ka* for *ga*.

The mantras of body,
Speech and mind,
It manifests as seventy-two. //8//

Those have the nature
Of proliferating individually,
Dividing into a thousand.
You should "count"
Seventy-two thousand channels. //9//

By dividing into
The three elements
Of wind, bile and phlegm,
Twenty-four thousand.
Dividing wheel into wheel,
Following the definitive
Personal instructions
Of the *Mahāyoga* Tantras, //10//

You should know
From the mouth of the guru,
By differentiating each channel,
The characteristics
Of the stage of deity,
The supreme reality
Of consort yoga. //11//

Adding those together,
Completely relying
On one another,
Again they become
Seventy-two.
From the thirty-two channels
Of the place
Of the channel Wheel
Of Great Bliss,
You arise, moreover,
As Chakrasaṃvara.[1947] //12//

The principal channels
Of each chakra
Manifest as eight.
The "supreme" channels

[1947] The commentary for this reference to "bound up in a wheel" or "Chakrasaṃvara" appears to be missing. Alaṃka 133B.

Of the yogic body
Are the miraculous
Thirty-two.
By discerning
The thirty-two letters,
The chief yogi
Always attains. //13//

Protecting the aggregates,
Elements, objects
And the gate
Of the sense powers,
The luminous mandala,
Thirty-two fold in nature,
Is supreme. //14//

Also within the body mansion,
The so-called *Tathāgatas*,
The Goddesses [of]
Form and so forth,
The princes,
And the Ten Terrifics,
Those very ones
Perfectly sit [there],
Supreme. //15//

Further, as for
The Terrifics
And the princes,
They go within,
Disappearing.
The princes are retracted
Into the goddesses
Of form and so forth. //16//

Of them,
The earth and so forth
Go into the
Five Tathāgatas,
Who, dissolved
Into the vajras
Of body, speech
And mind,
Go. //17//

Having also dissolved into
Singular reality/bliss,
They go.
Liberating from
Object and subject,
It is the supreme support
Of all bliss. //18//

Further, from mere experience,
Again, one dissolves
Into mere letter.
The mere letter dissolves
Into the drop.
The drop also dissolves
Into sound.
The sound into
Clear light.
In the perfect state
Of clear light,
There is the characteristic
Of emanating
And withdrawing. //19//

Liberated from consciousness,
Reality sphere, ultimate,
Great bliss, object, subject,
It is stainless
Enlightenment spirit, //20//

The great peace
Of Vajrasattva,
Wonderful non-dual wisdom,
The bliss of
The fourth empowerment
And the supreme state
Of the four ecstasies. //21//

By these
And so forth
Particular names
It is said to be
The supreme state,
By dividing into
Emanating and dissolving
According to
The exact stages. //22//

Thus you should know
From the guru lineage
The meaning of the process
Of creation and perfection
Characterized by non-dual peace. //23//

From the realization of the Mahāyoga Tantra Glorious Vajra Rosary, the eighteenth chapter on the summary of the channels of the yogic body.

Chapter Nineteen

Extensive Explanation of the Characteristic of The Instants

Then, moreover, [there are]
The characteristics
Of the perfect doctrinal system,
The nature of the moments
Of Variety and so forth,
Listen carefully
To that very thing! //1//

The four instants[1948]
Are stated as:
Variety; Ripening; Overcoming
And Beyond Characteristics.
Having distinguished [them],
I will explain again. //2//

I will analyze the instants
Of those types
Asserted as Variety:[1949] [1950]

Erotically enticing[1951]
Embracing,[1952] kissing,[1953]

[1948] *See* Hartzell 1997, 918-20 for various Buddhist and Śaivite four moment schemes.
[1949] This list is virtually identical to that in the *CMP*. *See CMP* Ch. 10, Wedemeyer 1999, 343-44.
[1950] The balance of this chapter is not commented on by Alaṃka. 136A.
[1951] *Ka ra na, karaṇa.*
[1952] *Ālinġana.*
[1953] *Cumbana.*

Sucking,[1954] fondling breasts,[1955]
Making goose bumps,[1956]
Biting [and] scratching,[1957] [1958]
Swaying,[1959] needling,[1960] and Elbowing/kneeing[1961] and so forth
Are types of the instants
Of Variety.[1962] //3//

When you develop
Bliss of the body,
[In] the seventy-two thousand pipes,
Whatever has gone to the throat,
Is the instant of "Ripening."[1963] //4//

Innate wisdom has
The character of
A vajra rosary.
It is the formless instant,
Complete manifest enlightenment. //5//

Surpassing the semen that
Emerges from the channels,
The instant of
Free From Form.
The four wisdoms
And four emptinesses
Are realized
From the four instants. //6//

From the realization of the Mahāyoga Tantra Glorious Vajra Rosary, the nineteenth chapter on explaining extensively the characteristic of instantaneity.

[1954] *Cuṣana* [?]
[1955] *Kucagrahaṇa.*
[1956] *Pulakatāḍana. See CMP*, Wedemeyer 1999, 344 n.21.
[1957] *Dasanakhadana. See CMP*, Wedemeyer 1999, 344 n.22.
[1958] *CMP* list at this point has *mardana*, "massaging," *CMP*, Wedemeyer 1999, 344 n.23. This is the only term missing from the *Vajra Rosary*, although the *CMP* listing goes on with: "shaking her strings of pearls, ringing with the sounds of bracelets, head-ornaments, and anklets, equipoised on object, sense-organ, vajra, lotus, art, wisdom, intuitive wisdom, and knowable object, exhorting the vowels and consonants, and the three nāḍi . . . ." Wedemeyer 1999 at 344.
[1959] *Dola.*
[1960] *CMP* has *sūci*.
[1961] *CMP* has *kūrpara.*
[1962] *See Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra*, Ch. 6. George 1974, 116, 121.
[1963] There is no commentary for this verse to the end of the chapter.

Chapter Twenty

Analyzing the Characteristics of Ecstasy

Now, further.
The characteristics
Of the four ecstasies
Will be explained
In emergent and reverse order
According to
The exact procedure. //1//

The bliss of Ecstasy
Is first;
Supreme Ecstasy
Is second;
"Transcendent Ecstasy"
Is third,
And the fourth
Is explained
As Innate. //2//

In the "reverse method"
It is stated that
Ecstasy abides
In the Emanation Chakra,
Supreme Ecstasy
In the Phenomena Chakra,
Transcendent Ecstasy
In the Enjoyment Chakra
And Innate
[In the] Great Bliss Chakra. //3//

After that, I will explain
The forward sequence,
With Ecstasy explained as [being]
In the crown Great Bliss Chakra,
Supreme Ecstasy
In the Enjoyment Chakra,
Transcendent Ecstasy
Abiding in the Phenomena Chakra
And Innate Ecstasy experienced

In the Emanation Chakra. //4//

Knowing the experience
Of the Ecstasy of looking,
Attracting, as well as signaling
And kissing on the mouth
Is the characteristic
Of Variety. //5//

Similarly, for the excellent
Yogi and yoginī,
Holding on to sound[1964]
And placing the vajra
In the lotus
Is the supreme[1965] moment
Of the ground of experience.
That very moment
Is called "Ripening,"
You know
That very thing
As the cause. //6//

Abiding in extreme clarity
In the middle
Of the channel,
The furor fire
Also overcomes conceptuality.
It causes the supreme part
Of the great
Chakra of Great Bliss
To melt. //7//

The experience
Of Transcendent Ecstasy
Has the character
Of the instant of Overcoming.
In it is the nature
Of one taste,
Relying on the continuity
Of one channel. //8//

The peaceful state

[1964] Alaṃka is probably better here, with *skra la 'dzin pa*, "tugging on hair." 137B.
[1965] Referring to Supreme Ecstasy.

Of great bliss
Has the character
Of the Innate,
The instant
Free from characteristic,[1966]
The excellent, marvelous
Speech of bliss. //9//

Following the [teaching of]
The reality of energy-wind,[1967]
That very stream
Having gone up,
Causing achievement
By the yogi.[1968] //10//

As for that,
The Emanation Chakra
Is known as "Ecstasy."
The perfect support
Of all bliss
Is said to be
The instant of Variety. //11//

Above that, the Phenomena Chakra
Is the supreme basis
Of all emptiness
Accomplished by the yogi.
The experience is
Supreme Ecstasy,
Having the character
Of the moment of Ripening. //12//

Then, the Enjoyment Chakra,
In the moment of moving up,
The experience of
Transcendent Ecstasy,
The moment characterized
As Overcoming. //13//

[1966] The last sentence of verse nine, and verses ten and eleven are missing from the Lhasa *VR*, and have been reconstructed from *Commentary*. For the third line, "The instant free from characteristic," I am following Alaṃka.

[1967] As discussed in the twelfth chapter. Alaṃka 138B.

[1968] Something appears to be missing or wrong here; I would guess that the text should be *byed pa'o* or *byed pa'i sa*. The meaning appears to be pretty clear though.

The moment with the character
Of attaining the great
Chakra of Great Bliss
Is the experience
Of Innate Ecstasy,
The moment
Free from characteristics. //14//

From arousing
The great space
Of all three channels,[1969]
The perfect form
Of the host
Of yoginīs,[1970]
The experience
Is the uniform taste
Of a single character.
You experience
The great object,[1971]
Again going
Without characteristics. //15//

You experience
The great awakening,
With the nature
Of the sixteen emptinesses.[1972]
The indestructible state
Of great bliss
Is the abode
Of non-dual Vajrasattva. //16//

Thus, this analysis
Of the ecstasies
Is not clearly expressed
In other [Tantras].
By the kindness of the yoginī,
You should know [this]
By the kindness
Of yoginīs,
From the lineage

[1969] Alaṃka has "all the channels" rather than "all three channels," which makes better sense. 139A.
[1970] *I.e.* the names of the channels described in Chapter twenty-seven, *infra*. Alaṃka 139A.
[1971] Given Alaṃka's etymological explanation of the Sanskrit *gocara* for *yul*, "object," *i.e.* "*go* meaning vajra and *cara* meaning the form of conventional enlightenment spirit [semen] in sexual yogic conduct," Alaṃka 139A, I follow Alaṃka's "great object" here rather than the Lhasa *Vajra Rosary*'s "great yoga."
[1972] Following Alaṃka here, instead of the Lhasa Vajra Rosary's "sixteen thousand." 139B.

Of the gurus. //17//

From the realization of the Mahāyoga Tantra Glorious Vajra Rosary, the twentieth chapter on the analysis of the characteristics of ecstasy.

Chapter Twenty-One

Analyzing the Three Drops

Now I will explain further,
So listen!
The three drops are unexcelled.
Just knowing them
Becomes a powerful attainment. //1//

Flowing in all the channels,
The enlightenment spirit melts.
At the moment of holding
The energy wind
At the tip
Of the vajra
and lotus, //2//

The application
Of the drawing in
Of the palate
And the application
Of the mantra KSHMĪ
Causes the attainment
Of[1973] supreme yoga,
The supreme basis
Of all bliss.[1974] [1975] [1976] //3//

[1973] In the *Commentary* on this chapter, in the Sde dge Alaṃka has *mchog gis*; P. and Snar. have *mchog gi*. 140A.

[1974] Robert Thurman says this should be KSHIM, but Alaṃka has KSHMĪ. Personal Communication.

[1975] According to the *Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*, Ballantyne 1995, ch. 3, vv. 39-40, 86, the *prāṇa* (*srog*) is chief among energy-winds, and stays in mouth and nostrils, nostril to heart; the *apāna* (*thur gsal*) is found in the navel to the soles of feet; the *samāna* (*mnyam gnas*) from the heart to the navel (food and drink); the *vyāna*: (*khyab byed*) pervades the entire body; and the *udāna* (*gyen rgyu*) is located from the throat to the head.

[1976] The alternate readings shown here for this and the preceding paragraph are from Alaṃka 24B.

You place HŪṂ
In the center,
In the hub
Of the heart lotus,
The supreme reality
Of the Reality chakra.
Everything
Has the nature
Of emptiness,
Liberated from things
And no-thing,
Protecting the body
Of thatness. //4//

Freed from direction,
Location and time,
It abandons
Above and below.
Abiding in
Its own nature,
Free from mind,
It abandons
The trap of speech. //5//

It is free from continuity
And characteristics,
And free from the range
Of conceptuality.
Liberated from all duality,
It is supremely permanent
And peaceful. //6//

The practicing yogi
Should meditate entirely
At the tip of the nose
The supreme[1977] yoga
Of the drop of wind,
The great illumination
Of the five colors.
The yogi should repeat
The supreme mantra,
The syllable OM. //7//

[1977] In his Critique of Judgment (1790), Kant investigates the supreme, stating "We call that supreme which is absolutely great"(§ 25). He distinguishes between the "remarkable differences" of the Beautiful and the Supreme, noting that beauty "is connected with the form of the object", having "boundaries", while the supreme "is to be found in a formless object", represented by a "boundlessness" (§ 23). Kant 1978.

As before,[1978]
This brings about
The five wisdoms,
Peace and such,
Having the character
Of stages of instinct. //8//

By the division
Of body, speech
And mind,[1979]
These three channels
Are supreme.
Coming together
And dividing,
They mutually interweave. //9//

The Substance Drop
Enters within the two drops:
Mantric and Wind.
The Mantric Drop
Supreme reality,
[Incorporates] the two drops
[Of] Light and Substance. //10//

Further, the Wind Drop
Goes into two drops
Having the nature of
Mantra and Substance,
Perfectly known by the yogi. //11//

The names of the channels
"*Lanlanā," "Rasanā,"*
And *"Avadhutī,"*
Having the character of
Moon, sun and fire,
And nature
Of body, speech and mind,
Are well known
As those very ones. //12//

Pervading above and below,
In the fashion of

[1978] Per Alaṃka, referring to the ritual for analyzing the drops taught in chapter 6. Alaṃka 141B.
[1979] Per Robert Thurman, this refers to OṂ AH HŪṂ breathing. Personal Communication.

A line of lambs, [1980]
Pervading in all the channels,
They abide
Through the process
Of perfect
Personal instructions. //13//

In that way,
Yoga is supremely subtle.
It leaves behind knowing
And knowable.
[It is] the basis
Of all attainments,
The great wonderful Mahāyoga. //14//

Not by purification,
Not by repetition,
Not by rosary,
Not by cessation,
Not by counting time,
Not by fire offerings,
Not by removing,
Not by ceasing;
The peaceful state
Of great wisdom
Is realized only by yoga. //15//

The five clairvoyances,
And, similarly,
The five supreme wisdoms,
Meditating on the three drops,
Perfect peaceful
And other actions
Will be accomplished
By supreme yoga,
The characteristic
Of the wisdom
Of emptiness. //16//

It is said to be
The "wisdom hero,
The vajra hero
And the commitment hero."

[1980] *I.e.* individual lambs roped together in a line. Personal Communication with Lozang Jamspal.

You should know [this]
From the guru lineage
By the analysis
Of the counting of places. //17//

From the realization of the Mahāyoga Tantra Glorious Vajra Rosary, the twenty-first chapter on analyzing the three drops.

Chapter Twenty-Two

Explaining the Essence of the Three Bodies

Listen, furthermore,
To reality,[1981]
The supreme state
Of the three thatnesses,
The essence
Of vajra body, speech
And mind
In the nature
Of the commitment. //1//

I will also explain
The three syllables,
The essence of
Body, speech and mind.
I'll reveal it; you listen!
I'll explain it exactly. //2//

OṂ has been explained
As the essence
Of vajra body:
"The letter A,
The letter U
And the letter M." //3//

ĀH is in the lotus
Of the heart chakra,
Pervading up to

[1981] "Reality," in this connection, refers to the opening of three drops in each letter. Alaṃka 144B.

The chakra of wind.
The great unobstructed wind
Is called Life-energy,
Gathering all.
Partless and free from parts,
Thing and no-thing,
Pervading up to
The part of the chakra
Which is the drop. //4//

Supreme syllable
Of the element of space,
Place of the meaning
Of all mantras,
Awakening all mantras.
Benefitting all mantras,
It awakens the chakra
Of speech. //5//

It is actually the basis
Of the three times.
Governing all elements,
The state of not decreasing
And not increasing.
Seed of enlightenment,
Great bliss,
Perfectly explained as
The formless realm,[1982]
Epitomizing the meaning
Of the four chakras. //6//

U abides in
The Enjoyment Chakra.
Like fire and sun,
Pervading from the end
Of the throat
To the end
Of the crown, //7//

The body of radiance,
Is known as
The "form realm."
Having the nature

[1982] Robert Thurman asserts that Buddha taught the four dissolutions by his teaching of the four formless realms. Personal Communication 1-27-07.

Of seventeen abodes. //8//

Explained as in the
"Chakra of Great Bliss,"
The syllable M
Is just a drop,
Situated in the
Crown of ecstasy,
Starting at a point
Four fingers from the end,
Like the form of a moon.[1983] //9//

The peaceful state
Of great bliss,
Pervader of all channels,
State of the indestructible body,
It is explained as
The "desire realm."
If you collect them together,
There are twenty abodes. //10//

Thus, the wind-energies
Are collected in the places
Of the three channels
Of the three places.
When you know
The symbol OṂ,
You awaken
The three realms.
Vairocana is
The material form
Of beings,
Having the nature
Of a proliferation
Of forms. //11//

The two winds
Of conceptuality
Emerge from the nostrils.
Causing the duo
Of sun and moon,
Hidden within,

[1983] "'The measure of its height is twelve fingers, traversing the end by the measure of four fingers' [means that] its height from the speech [wheel] is twelve fingers. 'Traverse' [means] goes beyond. 'Located above' means located based on the measure of twelve fingers." Alaṃka 146A.

To move.
Fire blazes
At the peak;
Between the brows
Is the life energy
Energy-wind.
Thus the one
Is explained as three. //12//

Determining
The three thatnesses,
Peaceful,
Pervading
The three realms,
Expanding the generative
Seed [syllables].
The letter A[1984] is
Supreme wisdom,
The supreme essence.
Of the vajra
Of speech. //13//

The two A's
And the letter HAM
Become long,
Divided into three,
Collecting the meaning
Of the reality realm. //14//

The letter A[1985]
Was explained previously.
The second one also
Is Life-energy energy-wind.
Having the name
Emptiness wisdom,
Classified as two,
Life-energy and effort,

[1984] The Fourteenth Dalai Lama writes:

> The letter A is a negative particle in Sanskrit. It indicates emptiness, which is the absence, or negation, of inherent existence. When the *Magical Array Tantra* says that "The perfect Buddhas arise from A," this means that the Buddhas dawn from within the noumenal sphere of emptiness; or, put another way, the Buddhas down from meditating on the emptiness of inherent existence.
>
> Also, from the viewpoint of Highest Yoga Tantra, the letter A refers to the indestructible drop within which a Buddha body is achieved.

T. Gyatso 2002, 174.

[1985] Following Alaṃka here.

Bringing together [sense] objects
And [sense] powers. //15//

The [mind]-basis-of-all
And the addicted mentality
Are the essence
Of subject and object.
Becoming as one nature,
It is the excellence
Expressing the vajra of speech. //16//

ĀH from the lotus
Of the Reality Chakra
Becomes the letter ĀH
At the throat,
Completely [made by]
The Life energy [Energy wind],
The Evacuative [Energy wind]
And the letter H.[1986] //17//

Remaining in the middle
Of the throat,
Completely bound,
You clearly express
ĀHAM from the mouth.
The white crane
Of the taste descending[1987]
Is called a "sour" taste.
Being summoned,
It always pervades,
Burning the form realm. //18//

H and, similarly,
The letter U,
They and the letter M
[Make] three,
From the foot
To the top of the head,
Epitomizing the meaning
Of the four chakras.
HA is the wind
With the name of Evacuative.

[1986] Following Alaṃka's topical break here, 148A, which puts the two wind-energies and the letter H in this verse, and "bound" in the following paragraph.
[1987] Or, per Lozang Jamspal, of the *rasanā*. Personal Communication.

It abides in the middle
Of the anus [and]
The secret [place]. //19//

The letter Ū[1988]
Is the pervading wind.
It abides in the middle
Of the lotus
Of the throat.
The letter M
Is the Life-energy energy-wind,
In the Wind Chakra
[In] the forehead. //20//

From the heart,
They become one,
Expressed as the heart seed.
The essence [mantra]
Of Akṣobhya,
Black in color,
Having the name
Of the Formless Realm.
The essence [mantra]
Of vajra body, speech
And mind
Is explained
As three. //21//

Vajrapāṇi put [his] palms
Together,
And again asked
The Omniscient One:

“This being so, I ask
If you would bestow well
The meaning
Of the mantra
Of the three vajras
And the analysis of the places.
In the center of these,
Who is the lord?
Tell me exactly
Which is the main one!" //22//

[1988] Steering a middle course between the Lhasa *VR* and Alaṃka.

"The main one
Is great Vajradhara,"

The Lord said again.

“Your question is
Of the hidden meaning
Stated as
The supreme secret,
Not mentioned
In all the Tantras.
I'll explain,
And you better
Listen! //23//

The seed [syllable] of mind
Is the Lord,
The non-conceptual [one]
Within everything.
Because of that,
The main one
Obscures and, similarly,
Appropriates the others[1989]
And causes
The two winds
Of conceptuality,
To pervade
In the whole body. //24//

It causes [them] to emerge
In the body,
Moving from the nostrils.
It pervades
By the force
Of the path
Of the six chakras
Of migrations. //25//

As a result
Of stopping
All the winds,
The yogi realizes

[1989] *I.e.* OM and A, the seed syllables of body and mind. Alaṃka 149B.

The third one,
The great non-conceptual
Miracle.
[That] person has realized
Reality. //26//

I will explain
The stopping
Of all the winds
As the perfect method.
This tantra explains
That the centers
Of the Emanation
And Reality Chakras
Are as two lotuses. //27//

The two have sixty-four
And eight petals.
Facing upwards
And downwards,
They furthermore abide
In the mode of kissing,
Causing the Life-energy
And Evacuative [energy-winds]
To move. //28//

Those very ones
Are conceptual,
Stated clearly
As the two energy-winds.
The two essences
Of body and speech
Are the *lalanā*
And *rasanā*. //29//

The place of
The supreme *avadhūti*
Is between those two,
Supreme of supreme,
The non-conceptual
Wind of wind-energies,
It goes everywhere
And pervades everything.
Whoever always achieves
Non-conceptuality
Effects all actions

And becomes an expert. //30//

As for the specific
Nature of energy wind,
Whoever overcomes
The one-hundred eight
Energy-winds
Has the lineage to increase
At all times.
A childish yogi[1990]
Does not know [this]. //31//

In this Tantra it is stated
That such a one achieves
Complete enlightenment
In a single moment.
As for that,
When he achieves
The moment,
That moment is called
Supreme. //32//

Furthermore, I will discuss
The method of how that is
To be achieved.
First, the great yogi
Meditates calm abiding
With a good mind. //33//

By practicing
The creation stage,
Having produced the seal
Of the Terrifics,
In the nine
Sense orifices,[1991]
Conventional
In every way. //34//

Repeating HŪṂ
Is incomparable.
After repeating
For one month,

[1990] Practicing the generation, but not the perfection stage. Alaṃka 151A.

[1991] Referring to the placement of the wrathful deities in the Guhyasamāja body mandala during creation stage practice.

In an unbroken
Supreme continuum,
He will attain
In one instant. //35//

Because of which,
If you repeat it,
Looking to
The heart lotus
Or upwards,
You proceed.
Then, by the kiss from
The secret lotus,
Having separated from them,[1992]
The two conceptual winds,
You proceed. //36//

The great non-conceptual
Energy-wind,
Cutting off the vajras
Of body and speech,
Non-conceptual bliss,
Will be attained
Through the reality
Of mantra. //37/

Abiding in the stream
Of the *avadhutī*,
It opens the energy-wind
Between the eyebrows.
The ecstasy
That attains that
Arises continually
And inexhaustibly.
Free from attachment
And so forth,
It is self-awaring
Great bliss. //38//

Here I will explain
The signs of the yogi
Who has achieved mantra.
Here you have

[1992] Following Alaṃka, *bcad*, "cut." 152A.

Rajas and body hair
Standing on end,[1993]
Always with
A joyful mind,
And a pleasant,
Copper-colored face,
Seen by all
As ecstatic. //39//

Duplicating and omitting
In counting
And worldly reality
And similar states
Will not be harmful
To the reality
Of mantra yoga.[1994] //40//

From the realization of the Mahāyoga Tantra Glorious Vajra Rosary, the twenty-second chapter on explaining the essence of the three bodies.

Chapter Twenty-Three

Determining the Commitment of the Three Thatnesses

Now, moreover, listen
To what I'll say.
I will teach the word
Of the three realities,
Divided[1995] into
Self, mantra
And so forth,

[1993] Alaṃka has *'dar*, "trembling," rather than *'dir*, "here;" and *rngul*, "sweating," rather than *rdul*, which, in addition to "particle" or "dust," can also translate Skt. *rajas*, one of the three qualities, specifically "energy," which could encompass trembling and shaking. Alaṃka 152B.

[1994] Alaṃka's version is very different, but nearly all of the differences can be accounted for by copying errors either way:

> Cool and very hot,
> And, similarly,
> Other worldly things
> In him will not be harmful
> To the reality of mantra.

152B.

[1995] Going with Alaṃka's *dbye bas*, "dividing," instead of the Lhasa Vajra Rosary's *byed pa*, "doing."

[In] exact stages. //1//

The supreme yoga
Of one's own reality
Is the cause
Of Vajrasattva,
The self nature
Of all Buddhas,
The sole body
Of all Buddhas. //2//

The indistinct state
Of omniscience
Is made clear
Through the divisions
Of the clans.
Whichever form
Of the five clans
Has the characteristics
Of the five aggregates. //3//

By analyzing as
Subtle, coarse
And so forth,
And with the characteristics
Of obstructive
Or non-obstructive,
The substance
Of the four great elements
Is stated as
The material aggregate.
In that is the actuality
Of Vairocana
And the cause
Of taking delight[1996]

[1996] Per Lozang Jamspal, *spro bar byed* in *thams cad spro bar byed pa'i* rgyu, "the cause of taking delight in all of them," is probably Skt. *rati*, "to delight in," "to find pleasure in," with a heavy connotation of sexual pleasure or desire. Personal Communication 4-17-07. However, there is multivalence in the term, used throughout, which can mean either *prapañca* or *rati*, "emanate" or "radiate" on the one hand, or "pleasure" or "take delight in" on the other. The terms are related, with *rati*, the sexual urge, being a form of *propañca*, proliferating, elaborating, emanating or radiating out. Actually, in Tantra, these two are not so distinct, so the multivalent/ambivalent (but not ambiguous) term is well-employed here. It would be helpful to see if texts on the same subject use *prapañca* or *rati* in this context. In the verses on the elemental goddesses below in this chapter, it is clear that the mantras discussed are "emanation" mantras, corresponding to the two recitation of the same in the Guhyasamāja sadhana. Nevertheless, I am using the terms "delighting in" and "ecstasy for" as illustrative of the deeper meaning here, as a guide to the meditator's state of mind during the "emanation" phases of the sadhana, the Supreme Mandala Triumph

In all of them. //4//

Knowing
Pleasure and pain
As supreme peace,
Cold and hot,
As the supreme
Of supreme,
Is explained as
The sensation aggregate,
The character
Of Ratnasambhava,
The nature
Of the pleasure
Of the Tathāgata. //5//

Knowing elephant,
Donkey, jackal, horse,
Deer, pig,
Paternal and maternal relations,
Friend, kinsmen,[1997]
And so forth. //6//

Is the characteristic
Of the discrimination aggregate,
The Tathāgata Amitābha,
Completely illuminating
All elaborations,[1998]
Knowing the distinctions
Of beings. //7//

The fruit of virtuous
And non-virtuous actions,
[Or], moreover,
Denominated[1999] as neutral,
Is explained as

---

and the Evolutionary Triumph. Of course, it is also significant that *rati* is found in the very mantras for the elemental goddesses: *Moharatī* ("Delusion Delight") and so forth. These and other mantras (without *rati* except in the case of the four elemental goddesses) are what are emanated from the meditator's heart during the sadhana.

[1997] Reading *snag* instead of *snang* per J. When someone dies, they come to take care of the family, the funeral, etc. Personal Communication with L. Jamspal.

[1998] Or, per Lozang Jamspal, translating *spros pa* in *spros pa kun nas gsal* as Skt. *samrati,* "completely manifesting the pleasure of that," putting this in parallel with the verses concerning the other four Tathāgatas, as the type of ecstasy experienced. Personal Communication.

[1999] Following Alaṃka's *ming*, "name," instead of *min*, "not."

The creation [aggregate],
Having the nature
Of delighting in Amoghasiddi. //8//

Cyclic existence,
Thing and no-thing
And so forth
Have the nature
Of arising
As concepts.
Consciousness is
From consciousness,
Having the nature
Of delighting in Akṣobhya.
If you know the aggregates
In that way,
Wisdom of the teachings
And the lineage
Is born. //9//

You know in stages
The appropriate mantras
Of JINAJIK, RATNADRIK,
AROLIK, PRAJNADRIK
And VAJRADRIK.[2000] //10//

The four of Locanā
And so forth
Are considered as
The three realms.
Differentiated as
The four of hardness
And so forth,
Delusion is expressed
As ecstasy,
Well known
As Locanā.[2001] //11//

Peaceful,
Urine, tears, semen
And so forth,
Rely on

[2000] *See Secret Community Further Tantra,* vv. 41-45.
[2001] *I.e.* the eye of ignorance, Buddha's eye.

The special substance
Known as
The water element,
With the nature
Of Māmakī. //12//

Heat, digesting
Food and drink,
And spreading radiance,
Should all be known
As the fire element,
Having the nature
Of delighting in
Paṇḍaravāsinī. //13//

Increasing exhalation
And inhalation, [2002]
Supreme host
Of wind-energies,
Extending and retracting,
Those that function
Above and below,
This is known
As the wind element,
With the nature
Of delighting in
Tārā. //14//

In that way,
You know
The four elements
As supreme yoga,
MOHARATI, DVEṢARATI,
RĀGARATI, [and] VAJRARATI
Those respective mantras,
Directly perceived
Through the ritual. //15//

Through supreme yoga
You know
The mass of objects,
Matter and so forth,
As the character

[2002] Reading *rngub* for *rdub*.

Of the matter
Of the goddess,
With only emptiness
As the sole cause. //16//

The goddess
Of analyzing
As blue, yellow
And so forth,
By the form
Of long and short,
Is Rūpavajrā,
With the nature
Of outer objects. //17//

You should know
The sounds of
Kettle drum, cymbal,
Finger cymbals,
Big cymbals,
Similarly, ear drum
And lute,
Praise and blame,
As Śabdavajrā,
Is the supreme nature
To be grasped,
Awakening awareness. //18//

You should know
Bad scents,
Good scents,
Combined scents
And others
As Gandhavajrā,
The bright red
Grasping consciousness. //19//

You know
Being divided
Into having
Six excellent tastes
Such as salty, bitter
And so forth
As Rasavajrā,[2003]

[2003] Following Alaṃka here to get "Rasavajrā" rather than "Vajrarasa."

The form
That is grasped
Completely. //20//

By the division
Of smooth and rough,
You know that very thing
As touch,
The form
That is grasped
For the main one.[2004] //21//

Depending on
The sense power
Of the eye
And so forth,
The eight collections
Of consciousness
Are known respectively
As the eight bodhisattvas. //22//

The two eyes
Are said to be
Kṣitigarbha,
The wonderful
Bodhisattva,
Delighting
In his own nature
In all kinds
Of forms
And so forth. [2005] //23//

All forms
Of sound,
In whatever fitting
Individual aspect,
The sound consciousness,
Are explained
As Vajrapāṇi. //24//

Enjoying particular scents,
Knowing each one

[2004] The main one is in the form of Guhyasamāja is Akṣobhya, whose partner in the mandala is Sparśavajrā. This verse is missing from the Lhasa Vajra Rosary. The text is excerpted from Alaṃka 157B.
[2005] This verse is missing from the Lhasa Vajra Rosary. The text is excerpted from Alaṃka 158A.

Individually,
You know the characteristic
Of olfactory consciousness as
As Ākāśagarbha. //25//

Enjoying particular tastes,
Differentiating each one
Respectively,
You know the character
Of gustatory consciousness as
As Lokeśvara. //26//

Enjoying particular touches,
Each particular one
Respectively,
You know the character
Of tactile consciousness
As Sarvaṇivaraṇaviṣkambhini. //27//

Enjoying particular
Mental experiences,
Differentiating each one
Respectively,
Is called
"Mental consciousness,"
With the name
Of “Mañjuśrī.” //28//

Perfectly uniting
All the sinews,
Differentiating each one
Respectively,
Having the nature
Of the sphere
Of the instincts,
You know
As Meitreya. //29//

Having the character
Of the individual channels,
The supreme basis
Of all bliss,
With the nature
Of all things.
This is explained
As Samantabhadra. //30//

Thus, the supreme
Eight groups
Of consciousness
Are unexcelled
Perfect reality.
The consciousnesses
Of the visual
And so forth
Sense faculties
Have the nature
Of seeing form
And so forth. //31//

Shins, shoulders,
Backs of hands,
And the two doors,
The characteristics
Of the ten wisdoms
Of all of them
Are well known
As the pervaders: //32//

Yamāntakṛt, Prajñāntakṛt,
Padmāntakṛt, Vighnāntakṛt,
Ḍakarāja, Acala, Nilaṇḍaṇḍa
Mahābala, Sumbha[rāja],
And Uṣṇiṣacakravartin. //33//

In that way,
By differentiating
The places of these,
Completely illuminated
By the three wisdoms,
Having become
As one essence,
The support
Of perfect thatness,
You will know reality
According to ritual
From the speech
Of the guru. //34//

The reality of mantra
Is supreme yoga,
Increasing well

The great wisdom.
Birthless, inexhaustible,
Indistinct, unchanging,
Unobscured, non-dual,
Fearless and peaceful,
It is the supreme state
Of great bliss. //35//

By differentiating
Snake and compressed,
End-less and headless,
OṂ and HŪṂ PHAT SVĀHĀ
Is expressed as "snake,"[2006]
With the form
Of the good qualities
Of [the deity's] own name. //36//

With a name characterized
By compression.
OM and so forth
Do not have feet,
Having the name
Of "end-less."
Having the ending
SVĀ HĀ
But lacking OṂ
Is explained
As "headless."
Everything but OṂ
Is explained
As "headless." //37//

Thus knowing the character
Of the unexcelled reality
Of mantra,
Following the *Root Tantra*,
You should know
The vast meaning of this. //38//

The reality of wisdom
Is supreme yoga,
Abandoning all duality.
Equalizing all things.

[2006] *See* Wedemeyer 1999, 265.

All things are
As a body
Of singularity,
Abandoning
All the conceptualities
Of speech.[2007] //39//

It abandons
All the luminances.[2008]
Having the nature
Of self-consecration,
It pervades everything,
Miraculous,
The supreme
Self-aware
Yoga. //40//

[With] the character
Of the four moments,
Partless, Ubiquitous,
And pervading,
Not known by
Childish yogis
And not known
Conventionally.
Your own ultimate nature! //41//

The divisions
Of the perfection stage
And the reality
Of mantra
Are very clear.
You meditate
The syllable OṂ[2009]
As perfectly dissolving
Into the drop

[2007] Per Lozang Jamspal, there is more joy from the whole body; that is why Śiva is depicted as half man and half woman. Personal Communication.

[2008] Alaṃka has "It is the very nature of all the luminances," 162B, instead of the Vajra Rosary's "It abandons all the luminances." Alaṃka explains: "The very nature of all the luminances" [means] having the form of clear light mind through the stage of the three wisdoms of luminance and so forth." In either event, the subject is clear light mind, which both leaves behind *snang ba*, *ched pa* and *nyer thob*, "luminance," "radiance" and "immanence," and pervades them.

[2009] The Lhasa Vajra Rosary has A, while Alaṃka has OṀ. 163A. Alaṃka explains these dissolutions in terms of the three vajras of body, speech and mind, starting with OṀ for body. This makes sense. In addition, there is no drop in the letter A, but there is in the syllable OṀ. So I am using OṀ.

At the end
Of that very one. //42//

The drop also
Dissolves into A;
A into the mere H
At the end.[2010]
H also
Into the syllable HŪṂ.
The syllable Ū into HAM.
The syllable HAM
Also [dissolves].[2011] //43//

The letter M[2012] is merely
A drop.
The drop also dissolves
Into sound;
The sound into
Mere sound;
Mere sound into
Supreme sky. //44//

That also dissolves
Into clear light,
The fourth manifestation[2013]
Of the state
Of clear light,
The extremely pure
Sphere of reality.
Supreme non-dual wisdom
Awakens and dawns. //45//

Free from the activities
Of speech,
It abandons

[2010] *I.e.* into the *visarga*, the two dots at the end of HAḤ. Alaṃka 163A.

[2011] The Lhasa Vajra Rosary has *yi ge ham yang OM la thim*, "the syllable HAM dissolves into OM," while Alaṃka has merely *yi ge ha yang*, "The syllable HA also." The Vajra Rosary's reappearance of OM does not make sense here, so I have translated the verse in accordance without the Lhasa Vajra Rosary's *OM la thim*, "dissolves into OM," although, as shown, "dissolves" is certainly implied here.

[2012] Alaṃka has "the letter M," 163A, as contrasted with the Lhasa Vajra Rosary's "the letter A." I think Alaṃka is correct here, since the subject of the verse is the dissolving of H-Ū-M, and it is the sound M, represented by the dot at the top of the syllable, that appears as "merely a drop," rather than A, which does not.

[2013] Alaṃka has *'od gsal go 'phang gsal por ni*, "into the clear state of clear light" or "clearly the state of clear light" instead of *'od gsal go 'phang bzhi*, "the fourth state of clear light." 163B.

All duality.
The sole basis
Of the five aggregates,
Perfectly using
The five elements. //46//

The group
Of eight consciousnesses
Isolated,
The six outer sense objects
Gathered,
The ten wisdoms
Collected
By the ten wind-energies,
Thus all the characteristics
Are gathered. //47//

Whoever lives
Through the yoga
Of delighting
In everything
Gets all the attainments
Of the three worlds
He is glorious,
Increasing all fortune
And goodness.
That vajrin
Is Vajrasattva, //48//

Lord Vajrabhairava,
Heruka, Kalachakra,
The great sage
Primordial Buddha,
Samantabhadra,
And Mañjuśrī, //49//

With the nature
Of delighting
In every kind of thing,
Are the basis of a host
Of good qualities
Of various kinds.
The yoga of delighting
In everything
Is the stainless Mahāyoga. //50//

That luminous wisdom,
Non-conceptual
And non-local,
Is explained as
"Going to the sphere
Of reality."
The characteristics
Of the stages
Of creation
And perfection //51//

Are like eight thousand
Hair tips,
Extremely clear
And luminous.
Through analyzing
Scripture and lineage,
You should know [them]
From the lineage guru. //52//

Thus is the commitment
Of the three realities,
Born from the stage
Of the oral lineage,
The supreme
Secret wisdom,
The supreme moment
With the character
Of the fourth [ecstasy]. //53//

From the realization of the Mahāyoga Tantra Glorious Vajra Rosary, the twenty-third chapter on determining the commitment of the three thatnesses.

Chapter Twenty-Four

Determining the Three Nose Tips

Then listen and
I will perfectly explain.
The three names
Of the noses
Appearing in the Tantra

Are secret, heart [and] face.
The process of
The yogi's meditation
Is by the differentiation
Of the three chakras. //1//

Bestowing mental bliss
On those overcome
By intense lust,
It awakens
The channel chakras
By the application
Of the reality
Of energy wind. //2//

Great bliss is produced
Everywhere.
The three realms
Become as one taste.
According to ritual,
You should summon
And control
The great bliss
Of enlightenment spirit. //3//

For the characteristic
Of the moment
Of innate [ecstasy],
You should hold [it],
At the tip
Of the vajra.
That very thing
Is great bliss,
With the character
Of the five wisdoms,
Completely abandoning
All conceptuality. //4//

At the tip
Of the secret nose
Is the Substance Drop.
Only one with
A greatly lustful mind
Will know [this]
As the supreme yoga. //5//

What arises
With the nature
Of a channel chakra
With sixty-four petals
Is explained
As the navel nose.[2014]
[Called] secret,
It bestows all bliss. //6//

The eight lotus petals
Of the heart
Are, moreover, expressed
As the central nose.
Meditating on the mind
Of hatred
Is the cause
Of perfectly emanating
The wisdom mind
That blazes
Secret mantra,
Abandoning all
The conceptualities
Of speech. //7//

Wonderful, great,
Supreme wisdom
Always arises as the sound
Of mantra.
Non-conceptual great bliss
Applied in concentration
Is the supreme bliss.
With the attainment
Of personal instructions,
You happily[2015] triumph,
Because of swiftly
Controlling anger,
[Which is] the single cause
Of the reality
Of peace. //8//

The trio of
Moon, sun and fire
Spread out from the center

[2014] Reading *de yi* as *de ni*, which is a fairly common alteration in the text.
[2015] Following Alaṃka's *bde bar* here. 166B.

Of the three paths.
[This is] explained
As the "face nose." //9//

The characteristics
Of the place
Of the energy winds
And the great wisdom,
The drop, located there
Are suppressed
By the delusion.[2016]
Concentration is victorious
Over supreme delusion,
Abandoning all [reified] things. //10//

Manifesting the nature
Of the five wisdoms,
The five thatnesses
Are the supreme support.
The mere drop
Of clear light of them
Is perfectly supported
At the face nose tip.
You should meditate
Supreme yoga,[2017]
Overcoming the ocean
Of delusion. //11//

That one is
Perfectly explained
As having the name
Of the Commitment Hero.
The commitment
Of all Buddhas
Has the character
Of the five wisdoms. //12//

Those skilled in yoga
Overcome the darkness
Of delusion.
The characteristic
Of omniscient

[2016] Following Alaṃka here. 167A. The Lhasa *Vajra Rosary* would be translated "suppressed by the pearl [*mu tig*]." Alaṃka has *ti mug*, "delusion."
[2017] Per Alaṃka, "supreme yoga" refers to vajra repetition. 167B.

Conceptual consciousness
Abides[2018] as the lineage
Of the five Buddhas.[2019] //13//

Arising from the nostrils
Of the nose tip,
The five energy winds ascend,
Always becoming active
In the body.
They arise from
That door of movement
At the conventional
Nose tip. //14//

There are four types
Of movement:
Left, right,
Both and slowly.
The element arising
From the right
Is the fire mandala.
This good red color
Is the movement
Of the Lotus Lord.[2020] //15//

The element that arises
From the left
Mixes with the mandala
Of wind,
Appearing as pure
Green-yellow,
The movement
Of the Action Lord. [2021] //16//

The element arising
From both,
Appearing as pure yellow,

[2018] Alaṃka has *gnas pa*. 168A.

[2019] In his *Sngags rim chen mo*, starting at *dpe cha* 470, TBRC, *Gsungs 'bum* vol. *ga*, Tsong kha pa comments on the last line of verse 13 through the end of verse 19.

[2020] Verses 15 (starting with "The element arising from the right")-19 are quoted in Sanskrit in the *PK*. *See* Wayman 1977, 72.

[2021] The last line of verse 16, *las kyi mgon po'i rgyu ba'o*, "the movement of the Action Lord," and the first two lines of verse 17, *gnyis ka las ni 'byung ba'i khams/ gser gyi mdog tu snang ba ste*, "the element arising from both, appearing as pure yellow," do not appear in the Lhasa Vajra Rosary, but appear in Alaṃka 168A.

Is the mandala
Of great power,[2022]
The movement
Of the Great Jewel Lord. //17//

The element
That is slow
And not moving,
Appearing as pure crystal,
This is the water mandala,
Moving as
The Vajra Lord. //18//

Arising perfectly from
The three elements,[2023]
What is apprehended
As habitat and inhabitants,
The nature
Of Vairocana,
Arises at the end
Of death. //19//

Always repeat
Those four mandalas
In even contemplation.
Counting the repetitions
Of mantra,
You constantly repeat
Day and night. //20//

Thus, meditate
The energy wind
At the tip of the nose
As having five colors.
By the yoga
Of supreme nonduality,
The mass of light rays
Is stainless.
By this you will accomplish
The activities of pacification
And so forth

[2022] Based on the literature, one would expect Ratnasambhava to be the water mandala, rather than the mandala of "great power." Also, Akṣobhya appearing as the water mandala is novel (at least for me); one would expect him to be the space element.
[2023] Alaṃka has "all the elements." 168B.

By practicing in stages.
You will become
Vajrasattva. //21//

Then Vajrapāṇi
Asked Vajrasattva,
The protector of beings:

Regarding the system
Of the three drops,
Prostrating to your feet,
I have a little doubt about this.
O Terminator of Samsara,
Please clarify! //22//

When meditating
On the three drops,
Substance, mantric
And, similarly, wind,
Does the yogi meditate
[On them] together
Or individually? //23//

O Lord,
Please cut off
All doubt about this!"

Lord Vajrasattva spoke:

To benefit those beings,
Who, controlled
By desire
Are weary[2024]
Of the three worlds,
The substance drop
Is stated. //24//

In order quickly
To liberate
Those people
With wild bodies,
Controlled by anger,
The mantric drop

[2024] Following Alaṃka's *gang zhig skyo ba*, "those who are weary," 170A, instead of the Lhasa Vajra Rosary's *skyob pa rnams*, "protectors."

Is stated. //25//

For those completely
Confounded
By great delusion,
Weary[2025] from the ocean
Of cyclic existence,
In order for them
To attain the result
Of the eight attainments,
An ocean of wisdom,
He states
The wind drop,
The elaboration
Of perfect reality. //26//

Thus, you should think about
And practice
The perfect three drops
Exactly like this
For the sake achievement
In this very life,
To purify all obscurations. //27//

With a single-pointed mind,
In a pleasant place
Adorned by flowers
And water,
On a mountain top,
Apart from people,
You should accomplish
The three wisdoms
With effort,
Gathering all attainments. //28//

From the realization of the Mahāyoga Tantra Glorious Vajra Rosary, the twenty-fourth chapter on determining the three nose tips.

[2025] Following Alaṃka as just above. 170A.

Chapter Twenty-Five

Explaining the Words of Emptiness

Then listen
To the perfect explanation.
The characteristic
Of emptiness-wisdom,
The supreme reality
Abiding in the body,
Always remains
As the nature of everything. //1//

The characteristic
Illuminating all things
Is asserted
As emptiness.
Because of that,
There is great bliss wisdom
The utter purity
Of clear light. //2//

Because of that, it enters
The central channel,
Asserted as perfect emptiness.
Expanding the appearance
Of the conceptuality
Of things,
It causes the severing
Of all conceptuality.
The easing of the conceptual winds is explained
As emptiness. //3//

The worldly realm
Of the great chief,
Akṣobhya,
Is that very thing,
The ground that always
Remains there,
With the name
Of life energy wisdom,
The great formless
Fierce One,

With the characteristic
Of a peaceful nature.[2026] //4//

For him,
Wisdom is great bliss,
Filled with enlightenment spirit,[2027]
Abiding in the state
Of great bliss reality,
Perfect wisdom
As enlightenment spirit. //5//

By the sound
Of that and similar names,
Only great bliss
Is expressed.
If has but one entity,
Expressed as
Emptiness-wisdom. //6//

It is explained
As "Sukhāvati,"
The very sign of attaining
Virtuous bliss.
Abiding happily that way
Is called "Sukhāvati." //7//

In the Buddha-field
Of Amitayus,
The supreme basis
Of all bliss,
Enlightenment spirit,
Is Amitayus.
The light which is born
Arising from him
Is known as Amitābha,
The supreme basis
Of all bliss. //8//

Emptiness is
Vajradhātvīśvarī,[2028]
Wisdom is
Vajraiśvara.[2029]

[2026] Following Alaṃka here, without the *yi.*
[2027] Following Alaṃka here, *byang chub sems kyis gang ba nyid*. 172A.
[2028] As explained by Alaṃka. 173A.

The equal union of them
Is expressed as
“Emptiness-wisdom.” //9//

The wisdom lotus
Is the Lalanā,
Having the flow
Of the female fluid
To the sun.
Further, you know it
As emptiness,
Abandoning all duality. //10//

The vajra of means
Is the Rasanā,
The semen flowing
To the moon.
That is stated
As supreme wisdom.
The supreme state
Of great bliss
Is known
As the supreme joining
Of those two,
Inexhaustible
Emptiness wisdom. //11//

The full moon
Is reality,
Known from the speech
Of the yoginī. //12//

From the realization of the Mahāyoga Tantra Glorious Vajra Rosary, the twenty-fifth chapter determining the word of emptiness.

[2029] *I.e.* Vajradhara, as explained by Alaṃka. 173A.

Chapter Twenty-Six

The Characteristics of the Divine Wisdom Body

Then listen moreover
To what I will explain.
The body is the place
Of emptiness.
One who knows the body
As the palace of all the deities
Is supreme. //1//

Enjoyment, Reality
And Emanation,
The basis of great bliss,
Are also explained
As chakras.
In this way,
All the respective stages
Always perfectly abide.[2030] //2//

The lord of dissolving
And enjoying
Is supremely non-dual
With the deity,
The support of the state
Of perfect nature.[2031] //3//

Because of the state
Of great wisdom,
The perfect support
Of great bliss,
Through the states
Of great anger, great ignorance,
Great envy and passion,
Great wrath and supreme form,
You definitively cut

[2030] Alternate readings indicated for this and the next verse are from Alaṃka's introduction in his Chapter 1. 25A. In the body of the Commentary, the first line of this verse reads: *longs spyod ces bya ba la sogs pa*, "Enjoyment and so forth." 174B.

[2031] For this line in the body of the Commentary, Alaṃka has *des yang dag che dngos po'i go 'phang*, "By that perfect greatness, the state of entity," which Alaṃka says is connected with *rten dang brten pa'i rnam rtog*, "the conception of environment and inhabitants." 174B.

The knot of cyclic existence. //4//

By the differentiation
Of earth, water
And, similarly, fire,
Wind and space,
And by the differentiation
Of the powers
Of form, sound
And, similarly,
Scent, taste and touch, //5//

The sphere of reality,
And the good eye,
Ear, nose and tongue,
Body consciousness
And object of mind,
The storehouse consciousness,
The addicted mind,[2032] //6//

Faith, effort, recollection,
Concentration and wisdom,
The power of faith,
The power of effort,
The power of recollection,
The power of meditation
And the unexcelled power
Of wisdom, //7//

Perfectly knowing [them]
In [their] respective places,
They are manifested
As the deities
Of the body. //8//

By differentiating the names
As before,
By the process[2033]
Of differentiating mantra,
By the yoga
Of placing[2034] the mantras,

[2032] Skt. *kliṣṭomaṇovijñāna.*
[2033] *Commentary* has *rim pa yis*.
[2034] Should be *gtod*?

By the dividing
Of the respective places, //9//

Dividing the perfect places
And goddesses
As definitively done
In scripture,
The yogi always abides
In the state
Of self-consecration.
He enjoys the
Five sense objects
And offers them
With enthusiasm. //10//

You should not bow down
To outer gods
Whose nature is rock
And earth.
Other than that very process
Of self-consecration,
There is no supreme
Thatness yoga
In the three worlds.
Unobscured self-consecration
And so forth
Is the stage of mantra
And mudra. //11//

You should not count
Outer objects.
The yogi achieving thatness,
Desiring a blessing,
[Making] supreme effort
Towards the yoginīs
Is characteristic
Of the art
Of [self-] consecration. //12//

From the realization of the Mahāyoga Tantra Glorious Vajra Rosary, the twenty-sixth chapter on the characteristics of the deity wisdom body.

Chapter Twenty-Seven

Analyzing the Stages of the Four Goddesses of the Four Chakras

Then further
I will explain
The names of those goddesses
By dividing the four chakras,
By counting the types
Of channels, //1//

By dividing the families
Into Action and Vajra,
Lotus and Wheel
And so forth,
By differentiation
Of the four stages,
Through the processes
Of the channels [on which]
They perfectly sit.[2035] //2//

Here, the supreme experience
Of thatness is also
In the five families.
It dwells pervading
In all the experiences
Of feeling.
Born from the family
Of one's own emanation,[2036]
These goddesses perfectly sit:[2037] //3//

Intelligent, [2038] Hot,[2039] Heroic,[2040]
Liberating Action,[2041] Pleasant Minded, [2042]
Mandala Artist,[2043]
And Woman,[2044]

[2035] For the variant readings of this and the preceding verse, see Alaṃka 25A.
[2036] *I.e.* in the navel chakra.
[2037] Commentary missing for the following section.
[2038] Skt. *vedhani*. Alaṃka 178A.
[2039] Skt. *chandika.* Alaṃka 178A.
[2040] Skt. *sattvī* [?].
[2041] Skt. *karmamuktī* [?].
[2042] Skt. *priyamanī* [?].
[2043] Skt. *yantrī* [?].

Perfectly Courageous Buddha,[2045] //4//

Thoroughly Pure[2046] and Beautiful,[2047]
Accomplished,[2048] and Sound
Of Living Emanation,
Powerful Lady of the Treasure, Holding Divinity,
Stainless Lotus Stamen, //5//

Making Continuum
Of the Knots of Wind,[2049]
Copper Faced, Crow Faced,[2050] Sleeping, Not Increasing,
Dark Skinned Kālarātrī,[2051] //6//

Pinnacle Conqueress,
Increasing Good Fortune,
Narajana,[2052] Dog Faced,[2053]
Passionate,[2054] Joyful,[2055]
Charming,[2056] Increasing Effort,
And White, //7//

Increasing the Five Nectars,
Descending Thing,[2057] Very Heroic,[2058]
Five Lotused and Desired,
Illusion,[2059] Pleasant, [2060]
And Friendly,[2061] //8//

Sour, Powerful Drinking Lady,

[2044] Skt. *maila* [?].
[2045] Skt. *Samyaksattvabuddhī* [?].
[2046] Skt. _____.
[2047] Skt. _____.
[2048] Skt. *siddhī* [?].
[2049] Per Lozang Jamspal, *lugu* is a knot used to tie sheep together. Personal Communication.
[2050] Skt. *kākāsya* [?].
[2051] On whom Vajrayoginī tramples.
[2052] River on whose bank Buddha practiced austerities.
[2053] Skt. *shvānasyā* [?].
[2054] Skt. *ragini* [?].
[2055] Skt. *ratī* [?].
[2056] Skt. *srungarī* [?].
[2057] "In Tibetan yoga, a controlled fall that channels the body's subtle energies through the subtle channels to promote higher states of awareness." Chagdud 1992, 239.
[2058] Skt. *ativiryā* [?].
[2059] Skt. *maya* [?].
[2060] Skt. *hidyanjama* [?].
[2061] Skt. *manoramya* [?].

Great Fearsome, Fortunate Karma,
Good Flower, Poisonous Delusion,
Face Upturned,
And Adorned With Trident, //9//

Beautiful, Green Moving,
Always Rotten, Dancer,
Doe-Eyed, Joyfully Passionate,
Variegated Delusory Sporting, //10//

White, Three-World,
Attracting Taste, Stainless,
Agreeing to Go.

The cloaked ones perfectly sit.[2062]
The count is always increased[2063]
By eight.[2064] //11//

Three faces and six arms
Are stainless.
Differentiating the seals
By family,
They are well adorned
With weapons.
Various of the[ir] right hands
[Hold] vajras. //12//

The[ir] left [hands] elegantly move,
[Holding] blue lotus flowers.
In the right [hands]
Are wheel and jewel,
And, similarly, a scimitar[2065]
In the second left [hand]. //13//

They sit well
In the cross-legged
Bodhisattva posture.[2066]
As for the faces,
Three green eyes,
With Amoghasiddhi

[2062] The total is 56.
[2063] Per Lozang Jamspal, intertwined. Personal Communication.
[2064] Making a total of 64.
[2065] Lit. triangular sword.
[2066] Half lotus, right foot on left thigh.

On the crown.
The faces are meditating
With smiles,
Causing the increase
Of all blisses. //14//

By analyzing each one's name,
Augmenting with the three letters,
Perfectly worshipping
With mantra,
You cause [them]
To bestow [on you]
The reality of desire. //15//

These deities perfectly sit
In the center
Of the eight channels
Of the Reality[2067] chakra.
You should know [them] as:

Vajra Sphere,[2068] Lady Guru,[2069]
Vajra Consort, [2070] Great Power,[2071] //16//

Vajra Dancer,[2072] Vajra Face,[2073]
Vajra Dharma,[2074] Good Vajra,[2075]
And Vajra Music.[2076]

They have the character
Of nine
In the Reality chakra. //17//

[With a] form of three faces
And six hands,
They sit well
In the Bodhisattva posture.

[2067] The heart chakra.
[2068] Skt. *vajradhātu* [?].
[2069] Skt. *gurujī* [?].
[2070] Skt. *vajramudra* [?].
[2071] Skt. *mahābalī* [?].
[2072] Skt. *vajralasya* [?].
[2073] Skt. *vajrānana* [?].
[2074] Skt. *vajradharmī* [?].
[2075] Skt. *vajrabhadrī* [?].
[2076] Skt. *vajravādita* [?].

They hold vajra, wheel
And jewel
In the[ir] right hands. //18//

In the[ir] left,
They hold the unexcelled
Sword, lotus and bell.
Blue in complexion,
Three-eyed, the fangs
Of the faces
Are a little bared. //19//

Augmenting each one's
Own names
With the three letters,[2077]
You offer them with mantra.
The deities sit in the middle
Of the lotus
In the sixteen petals
Of the Enjoyment [chakra].[2078] //20//

Lotus Liberator,[2079] White Lotus,[2080]
Increasing Water Lily Lotus,[2081]
Lotus Eye, Lotus Crown,
Lotus Rosary,[2082] Lotus Birth, //21//

Lotus Seat, and Lotus Net.
Similarly, Lotus Light,
Lotus Eye,[2083] Good Lotus,
Sitting Inside Lotus, Lotus Birth,[2084]
Lotus Stamen, and Lotus One.

Thus these are perfectly explained. //22//

With the form
Of three faces and six arms,
They sit well

[2077] Per Lozang Jamspal, like D OM V AH D HŪṂ = DAVID. Personal Communication.
[2078] The throat chakra.
[2079] Skt. *padmatārā* [?].
[2080] Skt. *pundarika* [?].
[2081] Skt. *padmakumud* [?].
[2082] Skt. *padmamālā* [?].
[2083] Duplicates above.
[2084] Duplicates above.

In the Bodhisattva posture.
In the[ir] right [hands],
They brandish
A lotus, a wheel
And a vajra. //23//

In the[ir] left [hands],
They play with a sword,
A bell and a jewel.
Three eyes shining,
Red like the color
Of a red lotus, //24//

They sit on a sun disk
In the Bodhisattva posture.
With the letters
Of their own name,
Their mantra is unexcelled. //25//

The goddesses always sit
On a thirty-two petaled lotus
In the great chakra
Of Great Bliss:[2085]

Quite Awake, Effortful, //26//

Forceful Wheel, [2086]Vajra One,
Jewel Liberator,[2087]
Fire Lotus, Variety Actress,
Enjoying Delusion,
Hatred Vajrī, Passionate One, //27//

Vajra Action,
Passionate Form Vajra,
Sound Vajra, Taste Vajra,
Touched Vajra, Reality Sphere,
Eye Light,[2088] Skull Voice, //28//

Appearance of Scent,
Delightful Taste,
Body Banner, Delightful Mind,

[2085] The crown chakra.
[2086] Skt. *cakravega* [?]. *See* Alaṃka 179B, 180A.
[2087] Skt. *ratnatārā* [?].
[2088] Skt. *Locanārasanī* [?].

Having Element,
Moving Down,
Of Special Mind
Destroying Yama, //29//

Specially Expanding One,
Lotus Hair Standing Up,
Destroyer of All Obstacles,
Hidden Treasure, Blue Stick,[2089]
Very Firm, Great Force,
Self Arising, and Crown Chakra.[2090] [2091] //30//

Thus arising in the middle
Of the channel,
Again the goddesses
Have three faces
And six arms,
Endowed with increasing bliss,
They sit on moon disks. //31//

Stainless, the color
Of a white lotus,
[With] three peaceful faces
[And] three eyes,
They carry a wheel,
A hook and a vajra,
Respectively,
In the[ir] right hands. //32//

Similarly, in the[ir]
Three left hands,
[With] a lotus, a lasso,[2092]
And a jewel,
They are blooming,
Throwing and dancing,
Shining like a white lotus. //33//

They hold Vairocana
On [their] crowns;
Their mantras are
Their own names

[2089] Skt. *nilaṇḍaṇḍī* [?].
[2090] Skt. *uṣnīṣacakrī* [?].
[2091] Totaling thirty-two.
[2092] Per Lozang Jamspal, a *zhags pa* is something you attach to the nose of a *dzo*. Personal Communication.

And the three letters,
In sequence.
They manifest
Supreme thatness. //34//

The vow of body,
Speech and mind
Is the supreme vow.
The thatness of the goddesses
Is supreme.
They always remain sleepy[2093]
In the body. //35//

Served the enjoyments
Of the five desires,
They are perfectly delighted
By the offerings,
Intoxicated by the bliss
Of the [joining of]
Vajra and lotus,
The supreme state
Of Vajrasattva.
Having delighted,
Again they refresh.
They will accomplish the activities Of peace and so forth;
Of this there is
No doubt. //36//

Concentration, yoga,
And so forth,
Practice and mantra,
Activities of shape
And so forth
Are not necessary.
Just a tidbit born
From the teachings
Of the guru is supreme.
Because of this
You should please the guru
With effort and attainments. //37//

From the realization of the Mahāyoga Tantra Glorious Vajra Rosary, the twenty-seventh chapter analyzing the stages of the four goddesses of the four chakras.

[2093] Per Alaṃka, indistinct within the channels. 180B.

Chapter Twenty-Eight

Arising and Disappearing

Then, moreover,
The characteristics
Of arising and disappearing
Will be explained.
The channels are
Supreme yoga,
The source
Of all attainments. //1//

By turning the mind
From objects in front,
You won't go there.[2094]
Existing within
The previous instincts,
The sense powers appear
At that time. //2//

Because of that,
They wake up.
They remain respectively
In the channels.
Having awakened
By that awakening,
The goddess herself [arises]
From the chakra.[2095] //3//

That is described
As the process of arising.
I will also explain disappearing.
Objects also lack substantiality.[2096]
When you mentally engage,
They abide elsewhere. //4//

If the instincts are not awakened,

[2094] All of the recensions of Alaṃka noted in the Sde dge critical edition have *der ni 'gro*, "go there" instead of the Lhasa (and Stok Palace's) *VR*'s *der mi 'gro*, "don't go there," but they also have *la* instead of the *VR*'s las, so the meaning is similar.

[2095] For the variant reading from the beginning of this chapter to here, see also Alaṃka 25B.

[2096] Following Alaṃka's *dngos po med*, "lack substantiality." 181B.

The channels will not arise
And, for that reason,
The awakening
Of the gods
Will not happen. //5//

Actual bliss is in the center
Of the heart.
The clear light
Of the Buddha sun [is achieved]
Through the form
Of grasped and grasping.
As for that, relying
On the twelve light rays,[2097] //6//

Increasing Light, Light Ray,
Radiant, Clear, Shining,
And Blazing Light,
And the eye [sense power]
And so forth,
You grasp the outer form
And so forth. //7//

Illuminating Darkness,
Light, Shining,
Clear Beauty, Clear Light,
And Clear Sun
Are types of outer form
And so forth.
These six are asserted below. //8//

Whatever goddesses arise,
They arise as the wisdom sun.
Furthermore, when
They disappear,
They supremely disappear. //9//

This is the supreme reality
Of yoga,
With the character
Of arising and disappearing.
Following the secret vajra,
You should know [it]

[2097] *I.e.* the goddesses.

From the lineage guru. //10//

From the realization of the Mahāyoga Tantra Glorious Vajra Rosary, the twenty-eighth chapter on arising and disappearing.

Chapter Twenty-Nine

The Characteristics of Producing Ecstasy

Then furthermore listen
And I will explain.
He who perfectly knows
The characteristics
Of generating ecstasy
[Attains] the supreme state
Of Vajrasattva. //1//

As for that,
You perfectly practice
Regarding the channel chakras
Again as expanded
And by reducing[2098]
[The number of] the four chakras,
[Making] more than
One-hundred twenty channels.[2099] //2//

Also the stage
Of the intermediate channels
Depends on the
Sixteen channels.[2100]
Always pervaded
By four times four,
These are the stages
Of ecstasy. //3//

Filled with the watery
Subtle essence of the lotus,

[2098] *I.e.* practicing in the expanded version of six chakras, or reducing them to four. Alaṃka 183B.
[2099] Following Alaṃka here. 183B.
[2100] See also Alaṃka 25B for variant reading of this and the prior verse.

It causes the increase
Of great bliss. //4//

By division
Of the individual chakras,
The letter HA is of four parts.
The very subtle part
Always pervades,
Remaining as the mode
Of support. //5//

From the division
Of the four stages,
You will attain
By differentiating
The sixteen stages.
The nature of the Rosary
Is wonderful!
You will attain the state
Of one taste. //6//

Through experiencing
The individual stages,
Through the application
Of various waters,
Gradually like the water
Of an ocean,
The four ecstasies
Are expressed as
The time of the wheel
Of the four unions.[2101]
Through the practice
Of the Yoginī Tantras
You will accomplish
The supreme state. //7//

From the realization of the Mahāyoga Tantra Glorious Vajra Rosary, the twenty-ninth chapter on producing ecstasy.

[2101] Alaṃka has *dus kyi khor lo*, "*Kalachakra*" or "wheel of time" rather than the Tantra's *khor lo'i dus*, "time of the wheel," and says that "'the wheel of time' is through the example of internal time."

Chapter Thirty

The Armor Characteristic of the Descending Channels

Then, moreover, listen!
I will definitively
Explain thatness
[As] the stream of channels
Always [flowing]
By means of
The stable vajra body. //1//

The 1024 channels
Are always wonderful.
You know [them]
As flowing enlightenment spirit.
They increase all bliss. //2//

You should know
The ever-wonderful
One thousand twenty-four channels
As the flowing of blood,[2102]
Having the nature
Of transferring
The sun. //3//

You should know
The ever-wonderful
One thousand twenty-four channels
As the movement
Of energy-wind.
From the Great Ocean Tantra,[2103] //4//

By dividing the places
Of the body,
They are stated
As twenty-four.

[2102] *I.e.* female hormonal fluid.

[2103] Alaṃka says that this refers to the *Vast as Sky Tantra*, *Akaśasamānatantra* [?] or the great *Vajra Rosary*, Alaṃka 185A, presumably the 12,000 line *Vajra Rosary* taught by Buddha at the same time as the shorter *Vajra Rosary,* presumably this one. *See* Alaṃka 4A. However, in the version of this line found in Alaṃka's chapter one, in the summary of this chapter found in the *Commentary* on the relevant question of the eighty-two questions, the Tibetan is *The Expanding in Stages Tantra*. Alaṃka 25B.

The number of the lords
Of dissolving and enjoyment
Is stated as seventy-two. //5//

Each has a thousand chakras.
Eliminating the dissolving
And enjoyment lords,
But including the main one,
Gives the number
Of the places. //6//

Again summarizing,
In living beings,
The three are divided
Into eights.
By the division
Of day and night,
And through the application
Of the moments of sessions,
You should know the channels
As going internally
Higher and higher. //7//

[In] the left flows
Enlightenment spirit
And moon.
[In] the right blood
And sun.
When the wind moves
In the central one,
You should know [it]
As the awakening of fire. //8//

The names are
The *lalanā*, *rasanā*
And *avadhūti*.
Through the practice
Of spreading them
By each stage,
Each has eight sessions. //9//

The third one goes
As twenty-four.
Due to the lords
Of dissolving and enjoyment,

In stages the count
Is seventy-two.
Again, by the practice
Of spreading those,
By dividing each
Into a thousand,
It always becomes a count
Of seventy-two thousand. //10//

Again, by practice,
The main three
Become one.
At first, it is hard
For the yogi to know
That subtle one
Supremely inconceivable. //11//

Abandoning the sound drop
Is the secret foundation
Of all bliss.
I have explained the character
Of the support
Of life-energy, //12//

From the yoginī tantras
You should know
The one that has
The state of one taste. //13//

From the realization of the Mahāyoga Tantra Glorious Vajra Rosary, the thirtieth chapter on the armor characteristic of the falling channels.

Chapter Thirty-One

Ascertaining the Three Intermediate Channels

Then listen moreover to
What I will explain
About the very essence
Of the intermediate channels,
One who understands
The knotting and arising
Of the channels,

Experiences supreme ecstasy. //1//

Illuminating the wisdom
Of the deity,
Practicing in the mantra
Of the deity,
Ascertaining the meaning
Of the yoga
Of the deity,[2104]
Instantly unites the nature
Of the three realities.[2105] //2//

Pervading[2106] and subtle
In the three worlds,
The perfect support
Of the entire body
You should know
The wisdom hero,
[And] Vajrasattva,
On whose account
The commitment hero[2107]
Is blissful,
As supreme yoga. //3//

Wonderful pervading reality,
Supreme, more supreme
And subtle,
Self-arising
Inexhaustible wisdom,
Thirty-two bodhisattvas fall,
Expanding supremely
All of the channels. //4//

Located in the chakra
Of great bliss,
The nature of all the parts
Is [that of] the root.
The three channels are
In the middle of that,
Also explained

[2104] The wisdom of the deity "illumines the transmundane innate;" the mantra of the deity is the syllable HŪṂ; and the yoga of the deity is "through analyzing the conceptual energy-winds." Alaṃka 187A.
[2105] Alaṃka has *de nyid gsum* rather than *de gsum*. 187A.
[2106] Alaṃka has *khyab*, "pervading," rather than the Tantra's *khab,* "needle." Alaṃka 187B.
[2107] Vajrasattva is the truth body; the wisdom hero the enjoyment or beatific body, and the commitment hero is the emanation body, the yogi. Alaṃka 187B.

As the main ones.[2108] //5//

Moon, sun and fire move,
Pervading all the elements.
Just as some of the roots of a tree
Remain firmly in the ground,
And the trunk, branches,
Leaves and buds
Pervade everywhere,
A person with a head
Pervades supremely
The host of
Aggregates,
Elements,
And
The
Like. //6//

The three doors of liberation
Bind the three realities.
Desire, hatred
And ignorance
Are the three divisions
Of the characteristics
Of the [instinctual] natures. //7//

The three types of characteristics
Of commitments
Are also night, day and twilight.
The characteristics
Of the commitments
Of Buddha, Dharma
And Sangha
Are divided into three, //8//

And the vajra
Of the wisdom
Of emptiness
[Has] the characteristic
Of those three very types.
The characteristics
Of the three yogas
Are causal, fruitional

[2108] Alaṃka 188A: "The three channels located in the head [refers to] …the *lalanā* and so forth."

And environmental. //9//

The three worlds
Include the three divisions
Of wind, phlegm and bile,
Having the characteristics
Of the three worlds:
The desire, form
And formless realms. //10//

The three roots
And one fruit go
To the heart chakra[2109]
From [their] respective places.
They are manifested
As three emanations,
With the nature of body,
Speech and mind. //11//

When applied to that,
Those have the character
Of an eclipse.
When applied a little,
The character
Of a partial eclipse.
Because of that,
When the Life-energy
Energy-wind is overcome,
It has the character of death. //12//

You should "define
Those three [channels]"
As the main channel.
From the extensive
Yoginī tantras,
The yogi clearly knows. //13//

From the realization of the Mahāyoga Tantra Glorious Vajra Rosary, the thirty-first chapter defining the three intermediate channels.

[2109] Because it is the place of the mind. Alaṃka 189A.

Chapter Thirty-Two

Entering Birth, The Person Generated By Energy-wind

Then listen to what
Is further explained
About the character
Of the birth of energy-wind.
When you seek
The opportune time,[2110]
You perfectly know [it]
Just as it is.[2111] //1//

The mind with addictive instincts,
[With] the energy-winds
Makes other forms,
Not knowing existence
In ascertaining the objects,
And deluded by just
Mere energy-wind. //2//

The fundamental consciousness
Having been summoned,
The instincts
Wander within.
Consciousness is held
By the instincts.
By the process
Of mixing with the instincts, //3//

Clothed in the internal instincts,
When they enter
The womb channel
During the time
Of menstruation,
The drop of the melting
Of vajra semen and blood, //4//

They become mixed
And consciousness arises from

[2110] Time refers here to both outer time, determined by the movements of the sun and the moon, and inner time, determined by the movement of breath. Alaṃka 190A.
[2111] However, Alaṃka adds, "[But], it is deceiving." 190A.

The fundamental consciousness.
Just as one is intoxicated
By the taste of *chang,*
The fundamental consciousness
From the instincts
Gives birth to the continuity
Of consciousness. //5//

The addicted mind
Is the Life-energy energy-wind,
Going in one moment.
In the time of the first month,
In the form of a fish. //6//

In the time
Of the second month,
Again mixed with blood,
By division into upper
And lower,
The Life-energy energy-wind
Becomes two.
In the going and coming
Of the Evacuative energy-wind,
It holds the form
Of a tortoise. //7//

Then, in the third month,
When the blood and semen
Are consumed,
The mass of
Evacuative energy-winds
Dry up,
And the Ascending energy-wind
Arises.
Facing upwards,
It abides,
Holding a body
Like a wild pig. //8//

Further, in the fourth month,
Smeared with blood
And semen,
Having summoned
The Ascending energy-wind,
It goes facing downwards,
Also in the form

Of a lion,
The Pervading energy-wind
Radiates. //9//

Then, in the fifth month,
The blood and semen
Having increased,
The Equalizing energy-wind
Having stirred,
In the form of fire,
It gradually goes. //10//

The Equalizing
[And] Pervading energy-winds
Radiate, by which [the body state]
Moves and stirs
In the complete five aggregates.
Thus he again spoke
About these things. //11//

In the measure
Of the time
Of the sixth month,
The earth element
And the two eyes
And the Pervading energy-wind
Spreads the Dragon energy-wind,
Increasing the phenomenon
Of energy-wind. //12//

Then, in the seventh month,
The water element
And the nostrils
Are desired.
The Dragon energy-wind
Having spread
The Tortoise energy-wind,
It spreads non-dually. //13//

Then, in the eighth month,
Fire makes the nostril;
The Tortoise energy-wind
Spreads the Lizard energy-wind,
Causing you to know
Your own nature. //14//

Then, in the ninth month,
The wind element
And feeling of taste,
By the great energy-wind
Known as "lizard,"
It causes the *Devadatta* energy-wind
To spread. //15//

Then, in the tenth month,
The *Devadatta* energy-wind spreads
The *Danujit* [energy-wind].[2112]
It has the character
Of gathering all
The energy-winds. //16//

In the middle
Of the ninth
The pervading element.[2113]
Has the character of subtlety
And non-obstructedness.
In the hollows
Of the channels,
Sinews and intestines,
It develops the nine doors.
Feeling as a supreme body,
It holds the characteristic
Of touching as one.[2114] //17//

The good clear light
Perfectly abides in the sky
Of supreme awakening.[2115]
The ten wisdoms
Of the Buddhas
Should be explained
Like that.
The ten movements

[2112] I am following Alaṃka's *nor rgyal*, "*Dhanujit*." 193A. As noted by Tsong kha pa, "The *Vajra Rosary* and *Revelation of Intention* use the same expressions for the first five, and for the latter five, Naga, Kurma, Kṛkalāsa, Devadatta, and Dhanujit (Dragon, Tortoise, Chameleon, Devadat, and Dhanujit); for this last, some commentaries also call it Dhanajit (*nor las rgyal*)." Tsong kha pa 2010, 226.

[2113] *I.e.* energy-wind. Alaṃka 192B.

[2114] Per Lozang Jamspal, this means that the body is formed but there is no separate sensation. Personal Communication.

[2115] Following Alaṃka's *rab sad,* "awakening," rather than the *VR*'s *ra ba sad*, "awakening the wall." Alaṃka 193A.

Are the ten grounds.
You know [them]
In stages. //18//

The mother is the perfection
Of wisdom.
The vagina is expressed
As the great seal.
The child becomes
A perfect Buddha.
He knows all
And sees all. //19//

The head hair is shaved
And he wears
The red religious robe
Of the womb.
The glorious one
Joins his palms together.
The crown of his head
Touches the ground. //20//

He holds the thirty-two signs
And is adorned with
The eighty marks.
He arouses great wisdom.
He attains the compositional factors
With liberation. //21//

The great hero is without
Thought construction.
He destroys [his own]
Creator flesh.
The five nectars are
The great wisdom.
He always tastes
The five nectars. //22//

The yogi practices
Like a lion.
These supreme things
Are secret:
They are not even stated
Anywhere.
You should know
From the lineage guru

The ascertainment
Of the energy-winds
Of birth. //23//

From the realization of the Mahāyoga Tantra Glorious Vajra Rosary, the thirty-second chapter on entering birth, the person generated by energy-wind.

Chapter Thirty-Three

Detailed Explanation of the Consumption of Life Energy by the Stages of the Energy-winds

Then, furthermore,
[More] should be explained
About how one perfectly knows
The disappearance
Of the energy-winds
As supreme.
As for the character
Of the moment of death, //1//

Here and there
[The energy-winds] assemble,
Dissolving like the stages
Of arising.
The energy-winds go[2116]
Here and there,
Like the setting
Of the sun. //2//

After ten years,[2117]
The energy-wind
Intoxicated by Inflation
Is born.
Having consumed
The *Dhanujit*
Energy-wind,
Like Rāhu [eating] the moon

[2116] Following Alaṃka's *'gro bar gyur*, "go," rather than the *VR*'s *skye ba ni*, "are born." Alaṃka 194B.
[2117] Alaṃka notes that the external one year is one day internally. Alaṃka 194B.

In stages. //3//

After ten years comes,
The Expanding Water
Energy-wind arises,
Consuming the "*Devadatta*"
Energy-wind.
The stage of wind
Is as before. //4//

Furthermore, when
Ten years comes,
The Water of Expansion
Energy-wind will be born,
Consuming the "Lizard"
Energy-wind. //5//

Then another ten years passes.
By the stages
That are born
From the years,
The Great Sending and Holding
Energy-wind
Causes the consumption
Of the Tortoise energy-wind. //6//

Because the Dragon energy-wind
And the Great Sending Holding Energy-wind,
Power and radiance,
Are similar,
When another ten years comes,
They cannot harm[2118]
Because power and ability
Are similar,
Who could harm whom? //7//

Being unable to do [this],
Ten [years] pass.
Attaining the Blind,
Sending/Holding and Great Power
[Energy-winds],
They consume the Serpent
Energy-wind

[2118] The practitioner who consumes these energy-winds?

In stages. //8//

When another ten come,
Blood and flesh increase.
By the stages of inflation
And intoxication,
They cause the consumption
Of the Sending/Holding
Energy-wind. //9//

After another ten years comes,
You summon the
Crazy Water energy-wind,
And fat and saliva increase,
Consuming the Sending/Holding
[And] Serpent [energy-winds]. //10//

Another ten stages passes.
In a year the strength
Of the Sending/Holding
Energy-wind arises.
It consumes the Crazy Time
Energy-wind,
Causing the increase
Of fire and wind. //11//

Having transformed
That Sending Holding
Energy-wind,
Great enjoyment
Will increase.
Then, another ten years
Having passed,
The body of energy-wind
Becomes heavy.
From the stage
Of being pervaded,
And obscured,
Water and wind mix.
From that, another ten years come. //12//

Lacking [a seed],
Like the banana fruit,
By the final action
Of karma,
It cannot root. //13//

Thus, in ten stages,
[In] another [few] months
Or days,
Life shortened,
You should know that
[Your] life energy
Is exhausted.
From the *Tantra of the*
Gathering of the Ḍākinīs[2119]
You should know this
In detail. //14//

From the realization of the Mahāyoga Tantra Glorious Vajra Rosary, the thirty-third chapter on the detailed explanation of the consumption of life energy by the stages of the energy-winds.

Chapter Thirty-Four

The Gathering of the Ḍākinīs

Then listen further
And I will explain.
The great characteristic
Is the supreme wisdom.
The gathering of the ḍākinīs
Is the supreme yoga.
They gather the meaning
Of the essence of the essence,[2120] //1//

Because of which,
The gathering
By the ḍākinīs is called
The ḍākinī collection.
They always sit
In the middle of the navel.
[Their] light is equal
To a thousand suns.

[2119] The next chapter of the *Vajra Rosary*.
[2120] "The essence" is the creation stage and "the meaning of the essence" the completion stage. Alaṃka 196B.

They overcome all
Conceptuality. //2//

The blazing incinerates
The conceptuality
Of the aggregates,
[Leaving] a body
Without obstacles.
Gathering the conceptuality
Of the vajra realm
Again naturally, //3//

[Then] again gathering
There, in the heart
The conceptions of object
And subject,
Incinerating all the fetters,
Like a butterfly
[Drawn to the flame]. //4//

By the application
Of the reality of energy-wind,
By the application
Of the mantric body,
There is, again, no doubt
About the incineration
Of mere conceptuality. //5//

From the *Tantra of the*
Gathering of the Ḍākinīs,
When you know the stage
Of supreme yoga,
In the vast wisdom
Of the ḍākinīs
You will know the yoga
Of service. //6//

From the realization of the Mahāyoga Tantra Glorious Vajra Rosary, the thirty-fourth chapter on the gathering of the ḍākinīs.

Chapter Thirty-five

The Characteristics of Cutting Off the Conceptual Energy-winds

Then furthermore listen
And I will explain
[How] you cut off
The conceptual energy-winds,
[Which], day and night,
Are known as moving
As more than
One hundred and eight.[2121] //1//

Because those energy-winds
Are conceptuality,
To cut [them] off,
That yoga is supremely
Peaceful.
You make everything
The essence
Of emptiness. //2//

If you doubt,
First practice the six [yogas].[2122]
The knower of yoga[2123]
Should practice excellently.[2124]
Then he should recite
Extensively
The vowel-less[2125] letter HA. //3//

Yoga, *Anuyoga*,
Atiyoga and *Mahāyoga*
Have eighteen divisions. [2126]

[2121] For variant, see also Alaṃka 26A.
[2122] *I.e.* the creation stage. Alaṃka 198A.
[2123] *I.e.* the creation stage yogi. Alaṃka 198A.
[2124] *I.e.* achieve body isolation.
[2125] *I.e.* you should recite it silently. Alaṃka 198A.
[2126] This is somewhat confusing; the "first yoga" has fifteen divisions; adding *Anuyoga*, *Anuyoga* and *Mahāyoga* makes eighteen. Alaṃka 199A. But those three latter yogas themselves have thirty-four divisions, all set forth by Alaṃka. According to Alaṃka, the fifteen divisions of the first yoga are divided into "mandala" and "body," as follows:

> As for the secondary practices [*'khor*], in that there are ten types: [1] investigation of one's own mind; [2] purification of the placing of mindfulness; [3] meditation on the four offerings and [4]

You should meditate
On the application
Of the first [*Yoga*]. //4//

There are seventeen [divisions]
Of *Anuyoga* and so forth.[2127]
After that, there is the
Supreme Mandala Triumph,
Supreme yoga,
With five divisions.
Then there is the
Evolutionary Triumph.
There are twelve divisions
Of [that] yoga. //5//

The creation stage,
Is comprised of
Forty-nine divisions.
It is the yoga of manifesting
Direct perception. //6//

Here, in the branch
Of completion stage yoga,
There is the supreme stage
Of vajra repetition.
Overcoming conceptuality,
[It is] unexcelled subtle thatness. //7//

The intelligent yogi[2128]
Meditates as before
According to ritual.
Cutting the fetters
Of cyclic existence,
The great yoga
Is great wisdom. [2129] [2130] //8//

---

the four abodes of Brahma; [5] perceiving in a particularly noble state; [6] expelling obstacles; [7] meditating on emptiness; [8] meditating on the stages of wisdom; [9] meditating on the measureless mansion; and [10] meditating on the mandala of faith." For the body, there are five: [1] meditating on the ultimate mandala; [2] preliminary consecration of the mantra of emptiness; [3] rising from the ocean of wisdom; [4] purifying the cyclic existence of the intermediate state by opening the vital points; and [5] meditating the reality of the dharma sphere and teaching by mantra.

Alaṃka 198B-199A.

[2127] *I.e.* including *anuyoga, atiyoga* and *mahāyoga*. Alaṃka 199A.

[2128] *I.e.* the completion stage yogi. Alaṃka 200A.

[2129] Alaṃka notes: "'Great wisdom' because it serves as the cause of the continuum of natural clear light. 'Great yoga' because it is more distinctively noble than the yoga of the creation stage." 200A.

Meditating perfectly definitively,
You destroy
The conceptual winds.
By repetition
Following the meaning,
You completely adhere
to entitylessness,
One essence
And the emptiness
Of the supported. //9//

You definitively stabilize
Meditation.
The practitioner who
Perfectly meditates
The unexcelled stage
Of vajra repetition,
Will no doubt achieve
This supreme wisdom
Through the stages of that. //10//

From the realization of the Mahāyoga Tantra Glorious Vajra Rosary, the thirty-fifth chapter on the characteristics of cutting off the conceptual energy-winds.

Chapter Thirty-Six

The Characteristics of Non-Conceptuality

Then furthermore listen
And I will explain.
When the non-conceptual
Energy-wind arises,
He who knows
Will attain
The good state
Of the reality
Of Vajrasattva. //1//

The great energy-wind
Of non-conceptuality

[2130] Lhasa 57A-B. Sde dge 245a3-245b1.

Abandons all duality.
It is the nature
Of all things,
Free from the state
Of meditation
And non-meditation.[2131] //2//

It is the great wisdom
Of Mahāyoga,
Place-less and stainless.
All the subtle parts remain
In the center,
Abandoning the sound drop. //3//

Ubiquitous and peaceful,
It is the one characteristic
Of self-consecration.
Free from the characterized
And characteristics,
It transcends
The conceptual instincts. //4//

It transcends the path
Of words and books,
Meditating and meditated.
It is the characteristic
Of great emptiness.
It transcends the portion
Of the aspects of mantras
And mudras,
[And all] types
Of activities. //5//

You should not even read
The action, performance
Or yoga tantras.
The great tantra of *Mahāyoga*
Is the supreme pledge
To be explained. //6//

It is appropriate to explain
At the outset
According to ritual instructions.
Knowing the subsequent stage of that

[2131] For variant reading, *see also* Alaṃka 26B.

Is the supreme state
Of the lineage guru. //7//

From the realization of the Mahāyoga Tantra Glorious Vajra Rosary, the thirty-sixth chapter on the characteristics of non-conceptuality.

Chapter Thirty-Seven

The Practice of Disappearance of the Channels

Then the Vajra Lord spoke:
Listen [and] I will explain
The thatness of the yoga
Of the disappearing
Of the channels. //1//

[With] perfect joining
Of the [sense] objects
And powers,
The channels will arise.
Having arisen,
They go as before,
The unexcelled process
Of creation. //2//

Because of that birth
Of conceptuality,
From that process
Of the special
One hundred eight,[2132]
Birth, old age, sickness
And death
Will return. //3//

Because the wisdom
Of thatness
Purifies objects
By [their] non-thing-ness,
Because of practicing
In that reality,

[2132] Energy-winds.

Because things and objects
Lack thing-ness,
The sense powers
Are not born.[2133] //4//

In that way, they[2134] intertwine
With one another:
Things and non-things
Are emptiness.
Then all the channels
Will disappear,
Relying on the process
Of the chakra,[2135]
From gathering them
There is peace. //5//

All seventy-two thousand
Will become
The channel wheels.
All of these pervade within. //6//

From the yoga
Of meditating emptiness,
You "knowing definitively
The reality of objects."
The logic vajra conquers [all]. //7//

From the realization of the Mahāyoga Tantra Glorious Vajra Rosary, the thirty-seventh chapter on he practice of the disappearance of the channels.

[2133] For variant reading, *see also* Alaṃka 26B.
[2134] The sense powers and their objects. Alaṃka 202B.
[2135] *I.e.* the navel chakra. Alaṃka 203A.

Chapter Thirty-Eight

Meditating on the Six Chakras

Then, furthermore, listen
[And] I will explain.
Practice exactly whatever
Characteristics of the state
Of the six yogas[2136]
The branch that supports
What you wish for.[2137] //1//

Six spokes; [2138] half of that;
Similarly, eight times eight
Is more than it;
Eight times two;
And eight times four. [2139]
Thus is shown the count. //2//

Like [the hidden] part
Of a half moon,
Emptiness abides
In the wind chakra.
Neither half nor full,
It appears like a water moon. //3//

Great illusion
Is the mother
Of all beings;
With the characteristic
Of supporting everything,[2140]

[2136] *I.e.* the six yogas of the completion stage: (1) Withdrawal (*so sor sdud, pratyāhāra*); (2) Absorption (*bsam gtan, dhyāna*); (3) Breath Control (*srog rtsol, prāṇāyāma*); (4) Retention (*dzin pa, dhāraṇā*); (5) Recollection (*rjes su dran, anusmṛti*); and (6) Concentration (*ting 'dzin, samādhi*). *See [Secret Community] Tantric Appendix, Rgyud phyima*, Toh. 443, v. 141 (*so sor sdud dang bsam gtan dang/ srog rtsol de bzhin 'dzin pa dang/ rjes su dran dang ting 'dzin te/ sbyor ba'i yan lag drug tu bshad//*). *See also* Wayman 1977, 44-50. The *Kalacakra* Tantric system also has the six yogas, albeit in a somewhat modified form. For an extensive discussion, also very helpful in understanding the *Secret Community* system, *see* N. Gyatso 2004, 391-584.

[2137] Alaṃka has the variant reading indicated at 26B in the question section, but in the Commentary on Chapter 38, has both, separated by a *yang na*.

[2138] I am following Alaṃka's word commentary here, 203B, which has *rtsibs*, "spoke," instead of *rnam pa*, "type." For variant reading, *see also* Alaṃka 26B.

[2139] *I.e.* the wind chakra has six channels; the fire three; the navel sixty-four; the throat sixteen and the crown thirty-two. Alaṃka 203B.

The wind chakra
Is explained as "life-energy."
It is not in the sphere
Of the experts. //4//

The fire chakra
Is pervaded by emptiness.
In the middle,
Like a drop.
Unchanging,[2141] going everywhere,
Self-arising, pervading all, //5//

It increases bliss.
It abandons vowels
And consonants.
Because all three worlds
Are made into one,
It is the Creator.[2142] //6//

Having the state
Of indestructible sound,[2143]
It abandons all forms.
It moves like
A snake's tongue,
Grandfather[2144] Brahma
And so forth,
Fearless, immobile. //7//

It is not a letter
Or a word.
It abandons the collection
Of elements.
It is free from counting, Inexhaustible, birthless,
Abiding in the navel,
The emanation chakra. //8//

[2140] Because it pervades the entire body. Alaṃka 204A.
[2141] Alaṃka has *yi ge kun la*, "in all letters," instead of *mi 'gyur*, "unchanging." 204A.
[2142] In the word commentary on the next verse, Alaṃka quotes the following:

> Brahma becomes the body vajra;
> The speech vajra is great Śiva;
> The mind vajra is Vajradhara,
> That very one is wondrous Viṣṇu.

204B.
[2143] "In the form of the syllable A, because it is like an echo." Alaṃka 204B.
[2144] Following Alaṃka's *mes po*, "grandfather." Alaṃka 204B.

Abiding in the center
Of the reality chakra, [2145]
As mere sound,
It is stainless,
Free from passion, passionless,
Active and place-less. //9//

Incomparable and non-abiding,
It abandons breath control.
Supreme Lord
Of divine wisdom,
It is hard to find anything
Like that. //10//

Abiding in the enjoyment chakra,[2146]
As the supreme aspect
Of the unbound,
It penetrates supremely.
It dwells in all forms. //11//

By nature relativity,
It is like being drunk
With the taste of liquor.
The first excellence,
It abides within all things. //12//

It supremely abides
In the beginning
And the end.
Lacking characteristics
And lacking appearance,
It abandons all characteristics.
Peaceful, fearless, inexpressible,
It naturally experiences
Its own nature.
It dwells in the chakra
Of great bliss.
You attain [it] from
The lineage guru. //13//

Thus, the great special wisdom,
Your own nature,
Is the six consciousnesses.

[2145] Heart chakra.
[2146] Throat chakra.

Perfectly applying [these]
Above and below[2147]
Is well known
As "yoga." //14//

From the realization of the Mahāyoga Tantra Glorious Vajra Rosary, the thirty-eighth chapter on meditating on the six chakras.

Chapter Thirty-Nine

Explanation of Time and the Measure of Time

Then the Vajra Lord spoke:

Knowing the yoga of collecting
The characteristics of time
Is the unexcelled yoga
Of counting. //1//

Time is explained as
The "measure of time." [2148]
Thinking and free from thinking
Is its own state.[2149]
It perfectly abides
In the twin aspects
Of good times
And bad times. //2//

Having arisen from the nostril
Of the nose,
Always arising
From the outer door,
Compressing within[2150] is stated
As a good time.
And exhaling is asserted
As a bad time.[2151] [2152] //3//

[2147] *I.e.* in the upper and lower places in your own body. Alaṃka 205B.
[2148] *I.e.* "the time that makes the moon and the sun move," *i.e.* external time. Alaṃka 206A.
[2149] *I.e.* internal time, "because that is how it is experienced by yogis." Alaṃka 206A.
[2150] *I.e.* inhaling.

The others are superior
To the bad time.
The supreme good time
Is one's own.[2153]
The golden age,
The third age
And the second age
Are good times.
The time of contention
Is a bad time.
The characteristics
Of the times are thusly stated. //4//

Ecstasy, supreme ecstasy
And innate ecstasy
Are good times;
Transcendent ecstasy
Is a bad time.[2154]
The characteristics of time
Are thus explained. //5//

The times of entering[2155]
And abiding[2156]
Are well known
As good times.
Emerging[2157] is also

[2151] This may be a reference not to ordinary breathing, but to Skt. *kumbhaka*, defined in Monier Williams as "stopping the breath by shutting the mouth and closing the nostrils with the fingers of the right hand." 293.

[2152] In the first chapter of the *Commentary*, in the context of a brief discussion of the meaning of EVAM, Alaṃka quotes a similar verse; I am unsure if it is this verse of the Tantra or from some other source:

> As it is said: From the two nostrils of the nose, [as for] the good time, the bad time and the inconceivable time, coming [inhalation] is called the "good time," going [exhalation] is called the "bad time." It is said that, "Becoming as inconceivable, abandoning life-energy and effort, abandoning exhalation and inhalation, liberated from going and coming, is expressed as "a certain occasion."

Alaṃka 6B. (The last line of the quote has *brjod pa min*, "is not expressed." I have speculated that *min,* "is not," should be *yin*, "is," and have translated it accordingly as "is expressed.") In his word commentary, Alaṃka has something rather different, *srog dang rtsol ba gnyis mnyam pa 'bab gang du/ dus bzang dus ngan de las bzlogs pa'o*, "When breath control falls evenly, it is a good time, reversing from the bad time." 206B.

[2153] *I.e.* having the leisure and opportunity to practice dharma.

[2154] Alaṃka explains that this is because "of having the nature of losing bliss and the nature of being free from passion, and having conceptuality." (*bde ba nyams pa'i ngo bo nyid dang/ chags bral gyi bdag nyid can nyid dang/ rtog pa dang bcas pa'i phyir ro*). 207A.

[2155] *I.e.* inhaling.

[2156] *I.e.* holding.

A bad time.
The characteristics of time
Are like that.[2158] //6//

Time is all the elements.
It is the supreme state
Of one equal taste.
Abandoning
Wisdom consciousness,
Time is expressed as one. //7//

The character
Of the fourth moment
Is free from
The elaboration of thing
And no-thing.
It is liberated from expressed
And expressing.
It is expressed as
"One time."[2159] //8//

It is definitively liberated
From passion
And dispassion.
It abandons the state
Of great bliss.
The basis of the meaning
Of the Great Seal,
It is expressed as
"One time." //9//

Without characteristics,
Without appearance,
It abandons the yoga
Of counting.
You should know
From the lineage guru
That [which is] explained
As the time of thatness. //10//

From the realization of the Mahāyoga Tantra Glorious Vajra Rosary, the thirty-ninth chapter on explanation of time and the measure of time.

[2157] *I.e.* exhaling.
[2158] According to the system of the three breaths. Alaṃka 207A.
[2159] *I.e.* the first words of the Tantra, "One time I heard…."

Chapter Forty

The Fruit of the Secret

Then, further, listen
To the supreme fruit
Of the secret
To be explained,
By which [yogis] go
To the supreme attainment
The Great Seal, the perfect form.[2160] //1//

The secret is explained
As "hidden."
Childish yogis don't know [it]
Or the name
Of the fourth empowerment,
The procedures
Of the oral lineage,
The great wisdom
Of supreme peace
Abandoning all conceptuality.[2161] //2//

The great attainment
Of the Great Seal
Is the epitome
Of Mahāyoga.
You learn the wonderful,
Supreme essence
From the *Yoginī* Tantras,
Causing the taste
Of great wisdom to descend,
Having the quality
Of great thatness. //3//

Your own essence
Is Vajrasattva,
The state that dwells
In the supreme sky.

[2160] Following Alaṃka's *rten*, "form" or "base," rather than the Lhasa *VR*'s *bsten*, "serve."
[2161] For variant reading of this and prior verse, *see* Alaṃka 27A.

It causes the increase
Of blisses.
You transcend the state
Of great bliss. //4//

You are free from knowing
And knowable.
You abandon meditating
And what is meditated on.
You are empty
Of the activities of mantra
And tantra.
You abandon all conceptuality. //5//

You manifest the state
Of all things.
A person of the three worlds,
[Yet] you abandon passion
And dispassion.
You abide in the great commitment.
The countless three worlds
Are one thing.
You are the cause
Of the ultimate attainment. //6//

He thus clarified
The fruit
Of the secret,
Not spoken of
Anywhere else.
You should know
From the *Yoginī* Tantras
The supreme wisdom
Of the supreme yoga. //7//

From the realization of the Mahāyoga Tantra Glorious Vajra Rosary, the fortieth chapter on the fruit of the secret.

Chapter Forty-One

Explaining the Meaning of the Reality Realm

Then spoke
the Vajra Lord:

The Reality Sphere's
State is supreme.
The elements pervading
From the Reality Sphere
Are called
The "Reality Sphere." //1//

All-pervading,
Supremely subtle,
Going everywhere,
Always arising,
[Whatever is] endowed with
The five aggregates,
The four elements,
[Sense] objects, [sense] media,
And consciousness,
Is explained as all phenomena,
Giving birth to
The Lord of Secrets.[2162] //2//

The element that dwells
In the center of these
Is not pervading
And is not in the range
[Of the mind of individuals].[2163]
Just as sesame oil
Is in a sesame seed,
And just as fire is in wood,
Similarly it pervades all things
But is not seen. //3//

Like sky, stainless,

[2162] Alaṃka has *gsang ba'i dbang phyug gi*, "O Lord of Secrets," here, Alaṃka 210A.

[2163] Not pervading " because it is located in what is pervaded, with the nature of lacking elaboration, and not in the range because it is not in the range of individual persons." Alaṃka 210A.

It is the supreme basis
Of all things.
It is pervaded
By all the conceptions
Of object and subject,
But is not seen.[2164]
The yogi sees clearly
By the yoga of
Emptiness wisdom. //4//

The Reality Sphere
Is called "*bhaga* [fortunate]."
The *bhaga* [womb] is also
A jeweled basket.
Because of that
Whatever has the
Good qualities of the Lord
And so forth
Is called *bhaga*.[2165] //5//

Bhaga is explained
As all things,[2166]
["]Sphere["] is stated
As enlightenment spirit.
The cause for beings
Of the three realms
Is explained as "*bhaga*."
Through actual perfect practice,
The sphere perfectly abides
Like a water moon. //6//

Know reality
As the only ultimate.
Like myrobalam placed
On the palm,
So supreme reality appears.
Self awaring, very stainless,
Having exhausted
Thing and no-thing,
Reality always is seen

[2164] "Because it is covered by adventitious stains." Alaṃka 210B.
[2165] Playing on the well-known double meaning of *bhaga*, most famously in Buddha's epithet, *bhagavan*, as "lucky one," or "one who got lucky."
[2166] "Because it gives birth to things having the characteristics of the aggregates and so forth." Alaṃka 211A.

And appears. //7//

It is the clear state
Of the Reality Sphere.
Thus I have explained
Very extensively.
By being free
From object and subject,
[This] wonderful wisdom
Is free from practice. //8//

From the realization of the Mahāyoga Tantra Glorious Vajra Rosary, the forty-first chapter on explaining the meaning of the reality realm.

Chapter Forty-Two

The Explanation of Vajra

Then spoke
The Vajra Lord:
The character
Of the vajra
Is supreme.
Listen [and] I will explain
The meaning of that.
I will explain it exactly! //1//

The vajra is described
As "indestructible."[2167]
It relies on the space
Of the five channels,
The supreme nature
Of the five wisdoms.[2168]
The nature
Of the five prongs //2//

Is earth, water,
And, similarly, fire,

[2167] Alaṃka interprets this to mean "It is said that you cannot break a vajra" because he interprets it to mean "because of the addiction of conceptuality you cannot open it, like an outer vajra [a diamond]. 212A-B.

[2168] For the variant reading of this verse, *see also* Alaṃka 27A.

Wind and space.
You should know
From the lineage guru
The form of the state
Of the space
Of the channels. //3//

The five channels are expressed
By the seed syllables
AM, RAM, LAM,
BAM and YAM.
You should know them
With diligence.
The character of vajra birth[2169]
Dwells in the center
Of the navel lotus.[2170] //4//

It is explained as
A stationary drop,
Known as the state
Of commitment,
And it is filled up
With the supreme nectar.
It has all forms,
But is formless;
It is well known
As vajra. //5//

It has the nature
Of the five wisdoms:
Mirror; equality, individuating,
All-accomplishing
And pure Reality Sphere. //6//

Known as the actuality of those,
The vajra is one's own
Supreme experience
It dwells in the great space,
Peaceful impermanent,
And unaddicted,
The basis of Vajrasattva.
You should know [this]

[2169] *I.e.* the seed syllables. Alaṃka 212B.

[2170] Alaṃka has *nor bu lte bur*, "in the center of the jewel," instead of the Lhasa *VR*'s *pad ma lte ba'i*, "of the navel lotus." 212B.

From the lineage guru. //7//

From the realization of the Mahāyoga Tantra Glorious Vajra Rosary, the forty-second chapter on the explanation of vajra.

Chapter Forty-Three

Summarizing the Meanings of the Various Families

Then spoke
the Vajra Lord,
Summarizing the meaning
Of the division
Of the families:

Now,
The five types
Of families
Were clearly stated
In the root tantra,
Through analyzing
The yoga of emanation,[2171]
The commitment
Of *Mahāyoga*. //1//

The ultimate division
Known in the tantra
Is perfectly stated.[2172]
[As] collected
From that very one,
They are also stated
As divided into
One hundred families. //2//

[2171] I am following Alaṃka's *spro ba*, "emanation," here, Alaṃka 214A, rather than the Lhasa *VR*'s *spros pa*, "elaboration." Alaṃka discusses the two aspects of emanation, emanation and withdrawal, consistent with the *Root Tantra*. In the *Root Tantra*, the five clans are emanated, *see, e.g.,* Freemantle 1971, 75 ch. 13, vv. 30-42 ("Make the five Buddhas approach the maṇḍalas, then send them out by means of the five rays, and enlightenment will be attained; the emanation of all mantras is twofold, emanation and withdrawal should be done distinguishing between the three Vajra Bodies…."). Freemantle notes that "'twofold' refers to the two stages, that of creation and that of realization; 'emanation and withdrawal' belong to the stage of creation." *Id.* 159, n.10.

[2172] *See also* Alaṃka 27B for variant reading of this and the prior verse.

By the yoga
Of elaborating various [deities],
They [all] are expressed
As Vajrasattva.
You see his form,
Like a variegated jewel. //3//

Because of the liberation
By the World Teacher,
Suppressing the various addictions
Of sentient beings
Of various faiths
And of particular
Various inclinations, //4//

Among the scriptures
[There is] one
which in that way
Is the essence of elaborating
The various [inclinations].
By differentiation
Of the countless [families],
By adding the countless divisions, //5//

[You arrive at]
The very division
Of the ultimate family.
By statements in other tantras,
By particular inclinations
Of sentient beings,
When they are collected,
They are divided.
When you gather those,
They are countless. //6//

Dividing by the stages
Of the channel chakras,
There are
Seventy-two thousand.
In those, there are
Thirty-six thousand
In the substances
Of the body and places
And so forth. //7//

But from that division
Of the stages
There are
Twenty-four thousand.
After that, whatever
Is excellently [divided]
By one hundred,
From being gathered into
Seventy-two, sixty four,
Or thirty-two, //8//

Even from twenty-four,
And also thirty and nine.
From that five,
And, because of that,
Three.
Even when collected
As three,
[They become] one. //9//

By the practice
Of the completion stage,
They mix with one another,
[Then] go.
Further, [they go] into the state
Of clear light.
The great bliss
Of non-conceptuality
Is the stainless wisdom
Of nonduality,
The supreme nature
Of the Reality Sphere. //10//

From the realization of the Mahāyoga Tantra Glorious Vajra Rosary, the forty-third chapter on summarizing the meanings of the various families.

Chapter Forty-Four

Detailed Explanation of the Division of the Seals

Then the Vajra Lord spoke.

The division
Of seals
Is unexcelled,
Expressed as Reality,
Action, Commitment,
And Great Seal.
Through the definitive
Ripening of karma
You are completely sealed.[2173]
Whenever there is action,
The result will be like that. //1//

All things,
Not having intrinsic existence,
Are naturally sealed.[2174]
The commitment [seal],
The essence of
Their good qualities,
Sealed by the bodhisattvas, //2//

Is inseparable emptiness
And compassion,
Purifying the Buddha field.
It is the commitment
Of the Tathāgatas
Because of the purifying activities. //3//

The nature of that
Which lacks inherent existence
Is expressed as the Great Seal.
If he knows the action seal,
The mantrin will get
[Some] action.[2175] //4//

[2173] For variant reading, *see also* Alaṃka 27B.
[2174] This refers to the "reality seal" mentioned in the first verse. Alaṃka 216A.
[2175] Alaṃka has *sngags kyis las su rung ba'i blo*, "the mantrin [has] a mental state of serviceability." 217A.

In the wisdom empowerment,
The guru illuminates,
With a compassionate mind,
The characteristic
Of exact seeing,[2176]
The meaning
Of Vajrasattva's own essence. //5//

From him,
Having attained definitively,
You ascertain
From the door,
Of reality.[2177]
Thus is the wisdom
Of that reality;
Thus the character
Of the yoginī. //6//

He is absorbed in[2178]
And expert in
The commitment
And goes to the perfection
Of the reality
Of energy-wind.
He studies the meaning
Of the glorious Community.
He finds a woman
With gentle speech,
Wisdom and white eyes,
Adorned with [beautiful] form
And youth. //7//

Thus he practices
With the seal
In the exact yogic commitment.
When he achieves thatness,
[It has] the character
Of the Great Seal. //8//

[2176] Alaṃka has *ji ltar dpes mtshon mtshan nyid ni*, "the characteristic of showing exactly by example." 217A.
[2177] Alaṃka has *chos nyid ram mkha' nges pa*, "ascertaining the space of reality," which he explains as "penetrating" (*nges pa zhes bya ba ni nges par 'byed pa ste*), 217A, rather than the Lhasa *VR*'s *chos nyid sgo nas*, "from the door of reality," but the reference to the yoginī's *bhaga* is clear in either case.
[2178] Alaṃka has *rtse gcig*, "one-pointed," instead of the Lhasa *VR*'s *zhen la*, "absorbed in." 217A.

Thatness is the state
Of great bliss,
Completely transcending Conceptuality.
Emptiness is stainless wisdom,
The lucid state
Of the Reality Sphere. //9//

Then, moreover,
What will be explained
Is the unexcelled division
Of seals.
By division of families
And the perfections,
Seals are perfectly explained
To be six. //10//

Through the succession
Of YAM, RAM, LAM,
BAM, AM, HAM,
And the goddesses,
The process of offering
Is of one taste.
You should always
Make offerings. //11//

The yogi himself,
In order to attain,
Should play and stay
[With] low caste women,
Washerwomen, women with moles,
Dancers, undertaker women,
And brahmin women. //12//

The washerwoman is born
From the jewel family;
The low caste woman born
From the lotus family.
Similarly, the dancer
Is [from] the action family;
The undertaker woman is [from]
The wheel family; //13//

The woman with a mole[2179]

[2179] Skt. *piplu tilaka*.

Is [from] the vajra family;
And the brahmin woman
Is the wisdom seal,[2180]
Expressed as the family
Of Vajrasattva.
These are the six families. //14//

The brahmin woman
Is called mother
And the washerwoman
Sister.
The dancer is known
As daughter;
The mole woman is known
As wife. //15//

You should know
The undertaker woman
As the new wife,
The low caste woman
As mother-in-law.
By the ritual of wisdom
And means
You should express
Non-conceptually.[2181] //16//

Because of that,
When it becomes
Non-conceptual,
In all attainments,
At all times,
The mind having become
Like a mother,
It also can be
Perfectly explained
As sisters. //17//

You should know the body
As daughter.
Life energy is manifested
As wife.
The daughter-in-law[2182] is

[2180] *I.e.* mother. Alaṃka 219A.
[2181] Alaṃka explains that this means either by "experiencing great bliss or by abandoning thoughts of difference." Alaṃka 219A.

The Evacuative energy-wind.
The energy-wind
Of the central [channel]
Is expressed
As mother-in-law. //18//

Mother is the
Portion of the Peak
Of Inflation.[2183]
Buddha is the
Jeweled vessel.
Sister is the channel
Of flowing semen,
Located in the place
Of the crown. //19//

Daughter is the channel
Of moving blood,
[Each of them have]
An extra half.[2184]
Wife is the channel
Of flowing urine,
Located in the middle
Of that very one.
Daughter-in-law is the channel
Of melting tears,
Particularly located
In the place of the throat. //20//

Mother is explained
As earth.
The water element is expressed
As sister.
You should know fire
As daughter.
Wind is well known
As wife.
Space is explained
As new wife.
Great space is
Mother-in-law. //21//

[2182] Or "new wife," which accounts for her taste as "spicy," below.
[2183] A number of the channels of the navel and crown chakras have names containing "Inflation." *VR* 33A-34A.
[2184] *See* Alaṃka 219B.

Because she is sweet,
Mother.
Sour is expressed
As sister.
Bitter is well known
As daughter
And salty as wife.[2185] //22//

You should know bland
As mother-in-law.
Spicy is well known
As new wife.
You should desire these
With effort,
And one who desires attainments[2186]
Should serve them.[2187] //23//

This is the analysis
Of the action seal
The supreme one
Who relies on
Its good qualities
Engages in the thought
Of that commitment,
The great bliss
Of the Great Seal. //24//

The peaceful state
Of Vajrasattva
Is unexcelled supreme wisdom.
In that way, the clarification
Of the state of the seal
Is in the sphere
Of the yoginī tantras. //25//

From the realization of the Mahāyoga Tantra Glorious Vajra Rosary, the forty-fourth chapter on the detailed explanation of the division of the seals.

[2185] Snar thang recension of Alaṃka ends here.
[2186] Alaṃka's *Commentary* ends here, quoting "one who desires attainments should rely on [them]" without explaining the quote, suggesting that more was intended, and either has been lost, or was not completed. Alaṃka 220A.
[2187] Sde dge recension of Alaṃka ends here.

Chapter Forty-Five

The Aggregates and So Forth and the Sense Media[2188]

Then furthermore
I will also explain
The character
Of the aggregates
And sense media.
The Conqueror
Of Conquerors[2189]
Is stated as "form;"
The Vajra Holder[2190]
As consciousness; //1//

The Jewel Holder[2191]
As feeling;
Crossing Over
From Cyclic Existence[2192]
Is spoken of as perception;
The Wisdom Holder[2193]
As compositional factors
And thus they are spoken of
As aggregates.[2194] //2//

Earth is explained
As Moharatī;[2195]
Similarly, water
As Dveṣaratī;[2196]
Fire as Rāgaratī;[2197]
And, similarly,

[2188] The only Commentary for this chapter is the colophon to it.
[2189] Per Alaṃka (chapter one's quotations from the *VM* in the context of the 82 questions), JINAJIK, Alaṃka 27B, *i.e.* Vairocana.
[2190] Per Alaṃka, VAJRADRIK, Alaṃka 27, *i.e.* Akṣobhya.
[2191] Per Alaṃka, RATNADRIK, Alaṃka 27B, *i.e.* Ratnasambhava.
[2192] Per Alaṃka, AROLAṂKA, Alaṃka 27B, *i.e.* Amitābha, who "crosses over" from his abode in the Western Paradise to help beings.
[2193] Per Alaṃka, PRAJÑĀDRIK, Alaṃka 27B, *i.e.* Amoghasiddhi.
[2194] For variant reading of this and prior verse, *see also* Alaṃka 27B.
[2195] Lit., "ignorance ecstasy."
[2196] Lit., "anger ecstasy."
[2197] Lit., "passion ecstasy."

Wind as Vajraratī;[2198]
Space as Vajradhatuiṣvarī. //3//

Form is explained
As Rūpavajrā;
Sound as Śabdavajrā,
Scent as Gandhavajrā
And taste as Rasavajrā. //4//

Touch becomes
Sparśavajrā,
Vajradhatuiṣvarī;
The two eyes are expressed
As Kṣitigharba;
The ears as Vajrapāṇi,
The nose as Ākhāṣagharba, //5//

The tongue as Lokeśvara,
And the body
As Sarvanivaraṇaviśkambhin.
The mind is expressed
As Samantabhadra
And the channels
As Meitreya. //6//

Supreme wisdom
Is perfectly explained
As Mañśjuśrī,
Pervading everywhere.
Similarly, the entities
Of the body[2199]
Are explained
As the ten Wrathful Ones. //7//

Thus is stated
The body mandala.
You should know
The aggregates
And so forth
[And] the sense media
And so forth
By nondual yoga
From the lineage guru. //8//

[2198] Lit., "vajra ecstasy."
[2199] Per Professor Jamspal, the five senses and the five sense objects. Personal Communication.

From the realization of the Mahāyoga Tantra Glorious Vajra Rosary, the forty-fifth chapter on the aggregates and so forth and the sense media.

Chapter Forty-Six

The Definitive Meaning of The Great Seal

Then, further, [listen to]
What is to be explained:

The character of the meaning
Of the Great Seal.
The result of great yoga
Is peace,
Gathering the meaning
Of great wisdom.[2200] //1//

The great good fortune
Of great bliss
Has the nature
Of the great supreme taste.
The great illusion
Is extremely subtle.
The great of great
Is the great sky. //2//

The seal of the wisdom
Of the Tathāgatas
Is the state
Of non-conceptuality,
The abode of indestructible Vajrasattva,
The great bliss
Of non-conceptuality,
Naked, like sky. //3//

Natureless and groundless,
It is non-dual, selfless
And inexpressible.

[2200] No variation per Alaṃka 27B.

Self-awaring yogis abandon
The conceptual aspects
Of the aggregates, elements
And sense media. //4//

They abandon meditation,
What is meditated upon,
Meditative equipoise
And the two stages.
Free from wisdom consciousness,
They abandon mantra,
Repetition, expression
And service. //5//

Crossing over from the place
Of all things,
They request great wisdom.
You should know
[It] as this great attainment.
The Great Seal is unexcelled. //6//

From the realization of the Mahāyoga Tantra Glorious Vajra Rosary, the forty-sixth chapter on the definitive meaning of the Great Seal.

Chapter Forty-Seven

The Explanation of the Divisions of the Moods

The yogi who knows
The divisions of the
Characteristics of the moods
Will become a knower
Of the great yogas,
A great wisdom one. //1//

He yawns
From all [these] yogas,
Trembling, dusty, [2201]

[2201] *Rdul*, "dust," sometimes means passion; In the *Sankhya* system, *rdul* is *rajas*. Personal Communication with Prof. Lozang Jamspal.

Hair standing on end, floating,[2202]
Changing colors, tears melting,
Dissolving, and courageous:
These are the eight moods.[2203] //2//

When the channel of
Partial Inflation[2204]
Is inflated,
It produces trembling.[2205]
Similarly, when the channel of
Expanding Water[2206]
Is roused,
It is the producer
Of passion. //3//

Similarly, the channel of
Destruction by Expansion
Causes the standing
Of body hairs
Of the abdomen.[2207]
Similarly, the hollow
Of the *na sa ra* [2208] channel
The burning of the abdomen,[2209]
Produces floating. //4//

If you develop
The Great Tortoise Channel,
It causes the changing of colors.
If you develop
The Great Head Channel,
It causes fainting and pain. //5//

[2202] Reading *lding for ldib*.

[2203] These are put somewhat differently in Alaṃka's discussion of the forty-fifth question put by Vajrapāṇi in the first chapter of the *Commentary*:

> "The division of the tastes and" [means], in the time of engaging in the Great Seal, "the eight moods" of trembling, passion, hairs standing on end, breaking into song, shaking, changing the method, breaking down in tears and goodness. It becomes similar to "What are the divisions of the erotic mood?" The question on the subject of that is the forty-fifth.

Alaṃka 28A.

[2204] The Ascending energy-wind. Alaṃka 118B.

[2205] *See also* Alaṃka 28A for variant reading of this chapter to here.

[2206] The Equalizing energy-wind. Alaṃka 118B.

[2207] Reading *lang* or *ldang*, "rise," for *lngar*, "as five" to be consistent with *spu langs*, two verses above.

[2208] *Rasanā*? Skt. *nasa*, "nose"? *Nasara* is not in Lokesh Chandra or Monier Williams.

[2209] *Khong stong*: Hollow body? Interior? Internal? Abdominal?

If you open
The Great 'Ur 'Ur Channel,[2210]
It produces the standing on end
Of the body hairs.
If you develop
The Great Ecstasy Channel,
It causes tears to drip
[In] the cavity. //6//

If you open
The Great Intoxication Channel,
It causes the dissolving
Of the Life Energy energy-wind.
You will experience
Trance, no-mind [and] great bliss.
Then you lose awareness.
Knowing [these]
As the moods
Of erotic and so forth,
Awakens the process
As explained above. //7//

Whoever develops
By invoking the Mantra
JA HŪṂ BAM HOḤ
[And,] similarly,
A LA LA LA LA HO,
Will know by the division
Of individual moods.
Thus, it is the lineage
Of the division of that. //8//

From the realization of the Mahāyoga Tantra Glorious Vajra Rosary, the forty-seventh chapter on the explanation of the parsing of experience.

[2210] This channel makes the sound "rrrrrr." Personal Communication with Prof. Lozang Jamspal.

Chapter Forty-Eight

Explaining the Meaning of the Word A HAṂ

Then spoke
the Vajra Lord:

Whoever perfectly knows
The support
Of the word "I"
Exhausts the fetters
Of the wheel of A HAṂ,[2211]
The characteristic
Of the fetters
Of cyclic existence,
[And] is liberated. //1//

A is the excellence
Of all things.
It dwells particularly
In all bodies.[2212]
It most supreme
Of all forms, "
"All-pervading, Omniscient, Inexhaustible, unobstructed
Spiritual power," [2213] //2//

Simultaneously arising.
It is neither existence,
Nor the peak of existence,
Nor [meditation on] love.
It is the exhalation
Of the Tathāgatas,
Skilled in making
The supreme emanation body
And achieving all aims. //3//

Free from things,
HAṂ dwells in the body
But does not produce the body.
Not manifest beyond the senses

[2211] *Ahaṃ* is "I" in Sanskrit.
[2212] For variant reading up to this point of this verse and prior verse *see* Alaṃka 28A.
[2213] *I.e. sattva*, the best of the three *guṇa*s.

It abandons all forms.[2214] //4//

It is liberated
From thing and no-thing,
Where dwells surpassingly.
All things vanish
And it is the essence
Of the Truth Body. //5//

The out-breath of the mind
Of Vajradhara,
Free from achieving all aims,
[Its] empty nature is Nirvana,
The very nature
Of the Wisdom Body. //6//

Liberated from expressing
And expression,
It is also known
As the syllable HAṂ.
A HAṂ pervades everything,
Everywhere,
Always abiding
As the nature of everything. //7//

A HAṂ specially abides
As the ground pervading
All things.
The person lacking A HAṂ
Is like a tree whose root
Is cut. //8//

HAṂ abides
On the hairline;
A at the navel.
Here, A is explained
As a moon.
HAṂ, which spreads
A thousand rays of light, //9//

Here also relies
On the name of A,
Well known as the support

[2214] For variant reading of this verse, *see also* Alaṃka 28A.

Of HAṂ.
A is explained
As the Life-energy Energy-wind.
Similarly,
The Evacuative energy-wind
Is expressed as HAṂ. //10//

When these two
Become one,
[There is] cyclic existence
[Which] therefore is known
As "A HAṂ."
Dwelling free
From conceptuality,
A HAṂ does not abide
Anywhere. //11//

As for others,
A few also [say] about this
That it is ultimately
Unobservable.
So the egoists say.
Hard to find
In all the tantras. //12//

From the realization of the Mahāyoga Tantra Glorious Vajra Rosary, the forty-eighth chapter on explaining the meaning of the word A HAṂ.

Chapter Forty-Nine

Analyzing the Characteristics of Emptiness

Then spoke the Vajra Lord:
The yogi who knows
The summary of the divisions
Of emptiness
Will know emptiness. //1//

Because it is
A contradictory antidote,
It is universally taught as

The meditation on emptiness.
The inner nature of things, [1]
The antidote to all conceptuality
And the purification
Of wrong view,
Again is asserted
As emptiness.[2215] //2//

Free from focusing
On outer [objects], [2]
There is also
No conceptualizing
Of the inner
And outer nature of things.
Here, this is explained
As the emptiness of
Outer and inner. [3] //3//

Being free
From the habitat world
Is expressed
As great emptiness [4].
The wisdom
By which one sees [things]
As empty [5]
Is also expressed
As emptiness
Because it later
Causes contemplation
In perfect mirror wisdom. //4//

The opposite side of that
Is empty:
Empty of the emptiness
Of non-things [6].
Knowing in the ultimate
A false thing
Is ultimate emptiness [7]
Because of not perceiving
The virtue of giving
And so forth
As constructed. //5//

[2215] For variant reading of this verse, *see also* Alaṃka 28A.

Engaging in the characteristics
Of one's own conceptuality
Is explained
As compounded emptiness [8].
Perfect emptiness
Is uncompounded;
Reason is also not perceived,
Abandoning thing
And no-thing, stated as
Uncompounded emptiness [9]. //6//

Prayer for the benefit
Of sentient beings
And so forth,
Not perceived as joyful
For one's self and so forth,
Is explained
As extreme emptiness. [10]
Abandoning all conceptuality
Is stated as
Emptiness going beyond extremes
[11]. //7//

That very prayer
For worldly beings
Without beginning or end
Is expressed without arrogance.[2216]
The emptiness lacking
Beginning and end, [12]
Not observed in Nirvana,
The nature of virtue
Which is not empty
Is explained as being
"Without arrogance." //8//

Emptiness without rejection [13],
The self naturally purified
Of the stain of passion
And so forth,
Thus is stated
As lacking arrogance.
[Its] nature manifests
As emptiness. //9//

[2216] Per Lozang Jamspal, when realizing emptiness, you don't think that you are benefitting "them," because there is no subject, object or action. Personal Communication.

The marks and signs
And so forth,
The good qualities
Of his form body,
Not seen in others,
[Is] the emptiness
Of self identity. [14] //10//

The things of the wings
Of enlightenment,
Also lacking arrogance
In practice,
Is explained as the emptiness
Of all things. [15] //11//

As for the self
And things that are produced,
The excellence
Of not reifying things,
Cutting all the fetters,
Is stated as the emptiness
Of no-thing. [16] //12//

As stated previously,
In that way
You know emptiness
As a non-thing.
Again, that very non-perception,
A non-thing
Is asserted as emptiness. //13//

In that way
You analyze emptiness
Because it is the antidote
To the instincts.
You should know [this]
From the lineage guru. //14//

From the realization of the Mahāyoga Tantra Glorious Vajra Rosary, the forty-ninth chapter on analyzing the characteristics of emptiness.

Chapter Fifty

The Characteristic of Producing the Vajra Rosary of Emptiness

Then spoke the Vajra Lord:

Emptiness is the cause
Of birth,
The actual experience
Of formlessness.
It pervades all bodies
And is the natural body
Of the five aggregates. //1//

It pervades the six chakras
Because it dwells in the center
Of all things.
It is neither far nor near.
Inseparable from the conventional,
Emptiness is the ultimate.
The Vajra Rosary
Is explained like that. //2//

The characteristics
Of the support of life-energy
Are a blue body,
Three faces, three eyes
And six[2217] excellent arms.
With the right a vajra,
Wheel and jewel,[2218]
[In] the left a bell,
Lotus and very sharp sword,
Brandished and carried,
Respectively. //3//

Arising from vowels
And consonants,
He sits on a moon
And sun seat
On a variegated lotus.

[2217] Following Alaṃka's *drug*, "six," instead of the Lhasa Vajra Rosary's *rgya*, "vast."
[2218] Differs from sadhana, which has vajra, wheel and lotus.

He sits in the bodhisattva posture. //4//

He arises from
The perfect seed syllable HŪṂ
And the family of the great vajra.
He cuts and dissolves
The energy-winds
That produce conceptuality. //5//

He clears away the harmful ones,
Eliminating all duality.
Great illusion, great emptiness,
The marvelous ground
Of the Buddha.
Bestows the result
Of Buddhahood. //6//

One should express
The mantra of this:
OM and VAJRA MĀ LE, similarly
ĀḤ and HŪṂ twice,
Perfectly endowed with
PHAT and SVĀHĀ. //7//

Collecting the supreme mantra
Is unexcelled.
The energy-winds are robbed
By thatness,
Clearing away
The mind's conceptuality.
[In] a peaceful place,
[By] a riverbank,
[By] a tree [at] a crossroad,
Or, where three roads come together,
Clearly repeat [the mantra]
One million times. //8//

You go to supreme attainment
By the yoga
Of the perfection stage.
Its good qualities
Will clearly arise.
You don't need to try
Peaceful [methods]
And so forth. //9//

Complete realization
In one instant,
You know it as
The excellent clan
Of that very one.
This ritual of the Solitary Hero
Accomplishes the Solitary Heroine. //10//

One who meditates
The characteristics of that,
The yogi abandoning
Conceptuality,
The incarnation
Of extremely pure sky,
Goes to his own
Supreme attainment. //11//

From the realization of the Mahāyoga Tantra Glorious Vajra Rosary, the fiftieth chapter on the characteristic of generating the vajra rosary of emptiness.

Chapter Fifty-One

Explaining the Night and the Day in Detail

Then spoke the Vajra Lord:

You should know the night
As wisdom.
Having dissolved
All the elements,
[The yogi] goes,
Becoming part of the night
As a moon,[2219]
The moon being characteristic
Of Nirvana. //1//

You should know
The "two types of wisdom
Of conventional and ultimate,"

[2219] For variant reading of this verse, *See also* Alaṃka 28B.

As a conventional
Object of wisdom.
The ultimate [wisdom]
Abandons touch.
Whatever bliss is free
From touch,
That supreme bliss
It is hard to attain. //2//

What's more, the day
Is explained as means.
Means arises in the day,
And at that time
The real thing is born: the Sun.
He always becomes
The Lord of the *bhaga*. //3//

The worldly aspect
Becomes the Sun.
From the Sun,
The moon is born.
From that, non-duality,
Explained as reality.
In order to blaze,
He becomes the Sun. //4//

The ultimate that is
Subjected to analysis,
And the body that is
Free from passion,
Subtle, invisible and empty,
And the peaceful state
Of clear light,
Do not abide
Anywhere. //5//

From the realization of the Mahāyoga Tantra Glorious Vajra Rosary, the fifty-first chapter on explaining the night and day in detail.

Chapter fifty-Two

Explaining the Vowels and Consonants in Detail

Then spoke the Vajra Lord:

The commitment
Of the vowels and consonants,
Is the intention
[Of the Buddhas]
For the children
Of the Conqueror,
Not stated in other tantras. //1//

You develop
A mandala of letters
Having thirty-three
Consonants,
[With] the characteristic
Of the radiating light
Produced from the state
Of clear light. //2//

The state of radiance
Arises from luminance,
Inexhaustible.
You spread the *ali* mandala,
Having sixteen vowels.[2220] //3//

From the secret joining
Of these two,
Great bliss which is
Produced in the center,
Is "the commitment
Of the alphabet,"
Specially made through
Intentional words,
The supreme subtle wisdom
You should know
From the lineage guru. //4//

[2220] For variant reading, *see also* Alaṃka 28B.

From the realization of the Mahāyoga Tantra Glorious Vajra Rosary, the fifty-second chapter on explaining the vowels and consonants in detail.

Chapter Fifty-Three

Explaining the Interval[2221] in Detail

Then furthermore listen
And I will explain.
The character of
The interval is unexcelled.
The interval,
Free from light
And non-light,
Arises from the Wisdom Vajra.[2222] //1//

It abides in the center,
Mixing with non-duality.
It abandons defiling
And polluting.
Deathlessly born
From the vajra and lotus,
It perfectly mixes
With the moon and sun. //2//

The interval,
Not perfectly going

[2221] The basic meaning of *mtsams* is "interval." *See* Thurman 1995, 257. However I think that "twilight" might also be appropriate here given *VR*'s chapter fifty-one's description of luminance and radiance as night and day, and also because Locho Rinpoche explained that the reverse *nyer thob* that follows final mind isolation does not have the "fainting" that follows dissolution of the seven ignorance instincts, so that there would be no "gap" there. Personal Communication 10-7-08. In his *The Ultimate Personal Instruction: Explanation of the Stage of Manifest Enlightenment*, *man ngag gi mthar thug mngon par byang chub pa'i rim pa'i bshad pa rjes mdzad pa bzhugs so*, Tsong kha pa, explaining this passage from the *Five Stages*, says: "By 'the twilight is the luminance-imminence; one proceeds through these not just once through one's own natural instincts,' [and] by 'with respect to the three time periods and the three luminances it is not the night, not the day and not the interval between them,' [Nāgārjuna means that] it is the joining of the four emptinesses and the dawn." 7B.

[2222] The Wisdom Vajra is discussed earlier in *VR* Chapter 6, 15A :

> The Wisdom Vajra always
> Resides in the space
> In the lotus bud of the heart. Flanking [it] above and below
> Abide the Life-energy energy-wind
> And the great Evacuative Wind.

To the end,
Purifies cyclic existence
Without [any] interval. [2223] [2224]
Its own essence
Is the supreme form,
[Its] characteristic subtlety
Is inconceivable. //3//

It is explained
As supremely purifying
The experiencing
Of Vajradhara's queen,
The interval [between lives]
Of all living beings
Abandoning Transcendent Ecstasy
And so forth. //4//

It is the supremely
Peaceful place at the peak
Of the knot,
Like the core of a pea.
Because the Night Lord[2225] arises
The upper state[2226] remains. //5//

It perfectly remains,
In four aspects
As your own essence
[In the form] some drops.[2227]
Some of the beginning ones
And so forth
Are abandoned.
Some are, moreover,
Unobservable.
It has its own nature,
And is therefore
Inexpressible. //6//

[2223] For variant reading of this chapter up to here, *see* Alaṃka 29A.
[2224] *Mtshams med* also refers to the five acts of immediate retribution, *i.e.* going directly to hell without the interval of the *bardo*.
[2225] *I.e.* the moon, *i.e.* enlightenment spirit.
[2226] The Life energy energy-wind above the knot remains there after the Evacuative energy-wind coming from below is consumed?
[2227] Lozang Jamspal interprets this as meaning that as the enlightenment spirit rises, some drops remain at the crown, throat etc. Personal Communication.

From the realization of the Mahāyoga Tantra Glorious Vajra Rosary, the fifty-third chapter on explaining the twilight in detail.

Chapter Fifty-Four

The Extensive Actions of the Twenty Rituals

Then the Vajra Lord spoke.

The mere names of the twenty aspects are explained as the activities of the masters. To develop well the yoga of mantra: //1//

Preliminary service [1],
Purifying the land [2],
Banishing spirits [3],
Occupying the land [4],
Inspecting the thread line [5],
Consecration [6], //2//

Banishing obstacles [7],
Similarly, making
The mandala threadline clear [8],
Placing the dagger [9],[2228]
Consecrating the vessel [10], //3//

Consecration of the Lords [11],
Bathing [12], Purifying [13],
Making offerings [14],
Making a firm request
For the deities to stay [15],
The ritual cake [16],
Consecration of the disciples [17], //4//

The fire offering
According the ritual [18],
Empowerment [19]
And requesting [the deities]
To go [20].
Thus are the activities
Of the twenty rituals.

[2228] At the ends of the lines - in the four directions?

Whoever knows those
Is a *jagatguru*. //5//

A vajra holding monk
Should do [these].
The shaking of a finger
Warning the devils
Is supreme.
Absorbed in repeating
The three letters,
The vajra vehicle
Especially liberates. //6//

For one who [practices]
The peaceful [activities]
And so forth,
[Liberation] always dwells
In the palm of [your] hand.
By those perfect procedures,
The supreme ritual should be done. //7//

The yogi should undertake
Anuyoga and so forth,
The rituals and so forth.
You should recite
The heart mantra of Viṣkambini,
The supreme twenty-four syllables,
Ten thousand times. //8//

The wise [do this] first exactly,
To clear away all obstacles.
[This] is explained
As "preliminary service." //9/

After that,
When you repeat
Wholeheartedly the three letters
As ten thousand,
It bestows the attainment
Of [getting] whatever you wish for,
Serving as the cause
[Of] attainments in the disciples. //10//

You sweep [the ground]
[In a place] isolated
From people,

Occupying land
Near water.
You should not practice
Too close to
Or too far from a village. //11//

[On] gentle land,
Without [wild] beasts,
Far from the king's palace,
Far from home
Or market time,
Or[2229] in the support
Of the Sugata[2230]
With [your] fingers
You should arrange the mantra
Of the Sugatas.[2231] //12//

Having made
A dagger[2232] of teak,
One *khru*[2233] and four fingers
In length,
You wash it
With the water
Of the three syllables.
With the hundred syllable mantra
Seven times //13//

And the three letter [mantra][2234]
You dig[2235]
To [where you reach] groundwater,
Or, two and one-half *khru*,
Or you mentally purify. //14//

[2229] According to Lozang Jamspal: if you're practicing in your house, not in solitude. Personal Communication.
[2230] According to Lozang Jamspal, image or stupa. Personal Communication.
[2231] According to Professor Jamspal, maybe counting OM AH HŪṂ on the fingers in the Indian way. Personal Communication.
[2232] *See* Mayer 1991 ("Not only was the *kīla* known and used in India in some form or another, but that characteristic form that we now call the Tibetan-style *phur-ba* might also be of surprisingly orthodox Indian provenance, and this in turn implies that the allegedly 'apocryphal' texts describing it might also in fact be genuine translations from Sanskrit.")
[2233] From elbow to end of fingers.
[2234] According to Professor Jamspal, perhaps before this you wrote OM AH HŪṂ on the dagger. Personal Communication.
[2235] According to Professor Jamspal, maybe digging along the thread line. Personal Communication.

You let the ghost
Who lives there go,
[Reciting] OṂ MAHĀ
KRO DHA DZWA LĀRKA, Perfectly endowed
With HŪṂ PHAT
At the end.
Thus, you should
Expel the ghosts,
The mantra visualized
On [your] palms
Placed together. //15//

Striking the palms
Three times on the ground,
Repeat the mantra, saying
UD GTZTSA twice.
Say SARBA BHŪ TA
GRA HA UD GTZTSA,
With the three letters
At the end. //16//

That is explained
As BADZRA STĀ VE.[2236]
Having given the torma
As stated in all [ritual] actions,
Let [him] go.
Afterwards, the Vajra Master
Should start
Occupying the ground. //17//

Without burning[2237]
Or having to purify,[2238]
With equanimity
And without discomfort,
The wise one should also
Make [the ground] even
And smooth like a mirror. //18//

He should smear [the ground]
With the five types,[2239]

[2236] Vajrasattva?
[2237] Reading *tshwa sgo*, "burning," for *tsha rgo*, "salty."
[2238] Reading *ma bsal*, "without having to purify," for *ma gsal*, "unclear."
[2239] *I.e.* of cow parts: Apte p. 587, col. 3: curds, clarified butter, ghee, urine, dung; p. 293: *ba byung lnga* are: cow dung, urine, milk, butter and yoghurt.

Cow dung and so forth.
After smearing, to purify,
The master,
With a wrathful body
And the vajra
Of the Mañjuvajra mandala,[2240] //19//

With the form
Of supreme Acala,
With soft cotton or hemp
Braided in three strands,
Equalizes everything
With the thread line. //20//

He makes part into a square;
The vajrin should hold
Three cubits by three cubits
Into four corners.
He should abandon the fault
Of covering the part
Of the string in its the center. //21//

He should place relics
Or jewels [there].
Having purified well,
He makes the blessing.
Joining the three letters
And also SVĀ HĀ
In the middle of PHAT,
He should also repeat
This mantra very clearly
One hundred and eight [times]. //22//
Then having drawn
The Brahma line,[2241]
He should repeat
The hundred syllable [mantra].
After that, he should scatter
A rain of flowers on it, //23//

Saying the mantra OṂ
And A MO GHA PADMO.
Similarly, later on,
BA SU DHA RI DHA RA twice,

[2240] *I.e.* the nineteen-deity mandala of the Jñānapada system.
[2241] Per Lozang Jamspal, the Brahma line means in the middle. Personal Communication.

[Then] DHA RA NI
MANDA LI HŪṂ. //24//

He should purify by
The hundred syllable mantra
And by washing with foot water
On the thread line
Up to three times.
He should strike the line
With the three syllables.[2242] //25//

The vajrin should again strike
The perfect thread line
At the four corners
And the four doors,
Beginning in the east,
Then the north,
Then as far as the south
And the west,
And in the intermediates. //26//

He should measure
By plumb line
The intermediate [direction]
Of the southeast
And the intermediate [direction]
Of northwest.
He should make a straight line
[Between] the four corners, //27//

Three concentric circles,
Four doors, beautified
By three vajra rosaries.
He strikes the two
Brahma threads.[2243]
From that, Indra's Palace,
A perfect line in all respects,
The visible dwelling place
Of all the Conquerors. //28//

From that, he draws
The vajra-holder.

[2242] Per Lozang Jamspal, striking the line so it leaves a line of water and say OṂ AH HŪṂ. Personal Communication.
[2243] Per Prof. Jamspal, east to west and south to north. Personal Communication.

Moreover, by application
Of actions[2244] or substances,
Jewel powder or flowers
Of five different colors,
In exact stages,
He should draw
The symbolic hand gestures
And so forth. //29//

As for the family
Of Akṣobhya
[In] complexion,
Symbolic hand gestures
And so forth,
Her should place [them]
In the center.
Dividing the respective complexions
Of the Conqueror of Conquerors,[2245]
The Jewel Holder,[2246]
The Transcender
Of Cyclic Existence,[2247]
And the Wisdom Holder,[2248]
He should arrange [them]
In the eastern direction
And so forth. //30//

He should exactly place
Ignorance, hatred, lust
And vajra ecstasy, respectively,
In the intermediate [directions]
Of fire and so forth. //31//

Seven are on
Variegated lotuses
And a moon seats;
Two others are on
A sun [seat].
A delightful retinue,
Making hatred joyous,

[2244] *I.e.* per Prof. Jamspal, hand mudras in substitution of substances. Personal Communication.
[2245] Vairocana.
[2246] Ratnasambhava.
[2247] Amitābha.
[2248] Amoghasiddhi.

Adorned with a row
Of pillars. //32//

With three faces
And six arms,
In the left they hold
The sword of wisdom.
They should offer
To the center mandala
Exactly the forms
And shapes [described here]. //33//

Place vajras and so forth
In the intermediate part
Of the outside form.
On a cloth in the east
And so forth,
Entirely visualize
Meitreya and Kṣitigarbha
In the east,
Mañjuśrī and Vajrapāṇi
In the south,
And Akāśagharba and Lokeśvara
In the west. //34//

Place Sarvanivaraṇa
And Samantabhadra
In the north.
Each has three faces
And six hands,
Carrying a sword
In the left. //35//

Vajrapāṇi sits on
A stainless sun mandala.
For the goddesses
There are moon seats.
All appear above
A variegated lotus. //36//

Place the symbolic hand gestures
And so forth
Arising from the family
Of Vairocana.
Place Yamāntaka
And so forth

In the eastern doors
And so forth. //37//

Each with three faces
And six hands,
Similarly holding a sword
In the left.
Acala and so forth are
In the intermediate [directions],
The actual nature
Of Yamāntaka. //38//

They have three faces
And six hands.
You should think
Of a sword in the left
Because the left
Is the nature of wisdom.
Similarly, the sword
Is stated to be
In the left. //39//

Similarly, place Sumbha
And Uṣṇīṣa below
And above.
The wrathful ones
Are sitting on suns.
Similarly, [on]
Variegated lotus seats. //40//

Similarly, place a figure
Symbolizing a mace
And so forth.
Similarly, five drawings
Of the pure Tathāgatas
Should be placed. //41//

On them, a garland
Of blazing vajras.
Two walls encircled
With nets of jewels,
Yak tails and the cloth
Of goddesses,
Marked with pillars,
Arches and wheels,
Adorned with the figures

Of deer. //42//

Umbrellas and victory banners
And so forth are explained
As adorned with yak tails,
Fans and mirrors
And so forth.
They are supported
By Buddhas. //43//

The mandala
Of the supreme teacher
Is the reflection
Of one's own body.
The activities
Of the Vajra master
Have previously banished
The obstructions. //44//

Therefore you should place
At the eastern door
The word SUṂ BHA
And SUṂ BHA,
With an OṂ first
And with the wonderful part,
Having two HŪṂ's and PHAT
At the end. //45//

The intelligent place
In the south OṂ
And "GRIHNA GRIHNA,"
With two HŪṂ's and a PHAT
At the end.
You should elaborate
In the west OṂ and
Two GRIHNA BA YA's. //46//

After that you also place
In the north OṂ Ā NA YA
HO BHA GA WĀ NA
and BIDYA RĀ DZA,
Placing two HŪṂ's
And a PHAT
At the end. //47//

Having summoned
The wicked ones,
Then the Tantrika
Should strike
With the dagger.
The dagger is made
Of khadira wood,
And has the measure
Of twelve fingers. //48//

[Its] three points are marked
By the three letters.
Repeating individually
The hundred syllables,
Having purified [it]
With mantric water,
Place [it] in the prime
And intermediate directions. //49//

[Saying] OṂ
And the letter GHA twice,
Similarly GHĀ TA YA twice,
"SARBBA DUSTHAṂ PHAT,"
And, similarly,
KĪ LA YA twice, and //50//

SARBA PĀ PAṂ PHAT,
And HŪṂ thrice,
BADZRA KĪ LA YA
BADZRA DHA RA
A DZNYĀ PA YA
TI KĀ YA WĀ KA
TSITTA VAJRA
And the syllables
KĪ LA YA HŪṂ PHAT
At the end,
Strike with the dagger. //51//

OṂ and VAJRA MUD GA RA
VAJRA KĪ LĀ YA Ā KO TA,
SA and two HŪṂ's and PHAT
[At the] end,
Are stated as striking
With mantra and dagger. //52//

The vajra penetrating
The obstructions
And so forth
[Has the] meaning
Of banishing [them].
By the vajra wall
And the net of arrows above,
And the variegated vajra below,
And by the mantra of Uṣṇīṣa. //53//

Through the ritual
Of consecration,
Whether using ten vessels
Or six made of pure[2249] jewels,
Fill [them] up
With the five medicines,
The five fruits,
The five grains and so forth. //54//

Adorn [the vessels]
With the five jewels
And the five leaves of jasmine
And so forth.
Put saffron, musk, camphor
And sandalwood in the water.
Make offerings of flowers
And so forth. //55//

Consecrate each
By the mantra of each one.
[Say] the mantras
VADZRA DRIK, DZI NA DZIK,
RATNA DRIK, Ā RO LIK,
And, similarly, PRA DZNYĀ DRIK, //56//

By light rays
In the form of hooks,
[Invite them] from the realm
Of Akaniṣṭa,
Lift up the vessel yourself.
Then, having invited them,
Let them enter. //57//

[2249] Reading *dag*, "pure," for *drag*, "fierce."

Then emanate the form
Of the goddesses.
After that,
You should place
The others.
You repeat OṂ
And RU RU SPHU RU and,
After that, say
DZWA LA TISHTHA. //58//

Similarly, recite
"IDHĀ LO TSA NI
SARBBA ARTHA
SĀ DHA NE SVĀ HA."
Completing the aspect
Of the Locanā,
You should make offerings
In the center
Of the vessel.[2250] //59//

OṂ and SHAM KA RE
And also, from that,
SHĀNTAM KU RU
And, similarly, GHU TI GHU TI
And GHU TI NE, GHU TI NE,
And GHĀ TA YA twice.
Say the mantra SVĀ HA
At the end. //60//

You should offer
In the center
Of the vessel,
Completing the aspect
Of Māmakī.
[Say] OṂ and KA TA BI KA TE
NI KA TE KA TAM KA TE
KA RO TA BĪ RYE SVĀ HĀ.
Having completed the aspect
Of Pāṇḍarāvasinī,
You should make offerings
In the center of the vessel. //61//

[2250] Reading *bum pa* for *bum ba*.

Place OM and TĀ RE
TUTTĀ RĀ TU RE SVĀ HĀ.
Having completed the aspect
Of Tārā,
You should make offerings
In the center of the vessel. //62//

For Yamāntaka and the others
And so forth,
[Do] all the activities in one:

OṂ NA MAH SA MANTA
KĀ YA VA KA TSI TTA
BADZRA NĀM NA MAH
BADZRA KRO DHĀ YA
MA HĀ DESHTO
TA KA TA BHAI RA BĀ YA
A SI MU SA LA PA RA SHU PĀ
SHA HASTĀ YA
OṂ AM RI TA KUNDA LI
KHA KHA KHĀ HI KHĀ HI
TISHTHA TISHTHA
BANDHA BANDHA
HA NA H ANA
DA HA DA HA
GARDZDZA GARDZDZA
BI SPHO TA YA BI SPHO TA YA
SARBBA BIGHNAM
BI NĀ YA KĀN
MA HĀ GA NA PA TI
DZĪ BI TA ANTA KA RĀ YA
HŪṂ PHAT SVĀ HĀ //63//

Repeat the essence mantra[2251]
Which is all activities,
Up to seven times.
You should make offerings
To the Lord of the family. //64//

Visualize up to seven times
The hundred syllable mantra.
Also say the three letters
Through the process

[2251] Per Lozang Jamspal this refers to OM AH HŪṂ, Personal Communication, but I would think it refers to this long one since the three letters are referenced below.

Of one hundred eight.[2252]
Then with the yoga
Of [visualizing] yourself
As the deity,
You should offer the bowl
Of excellent offerings. //65//

Then, having covered
The incense pot,
Smoking with camphor
And aloe,
You should consecrate
Each one's mantra there
In turn. //66//

In the form[2253]
Of three faces
And six arms,
Like the sky
Free from clouds.
[Their] hands like
The complexions
Of [their] bodies,
Embracing their own
Reflection bodies.[2254]
Arisen from[2255] vowels
And consonants,[2256]
Sitting on
Variegated lotus seats, //67/

Sitting in the center
Of a measureless mansion
In the realm
Of the delightful Akaniṣṭa field,
Together with the mandala retinue,
With the five Buddhas
As crown ornaments,
[Thus] you visualize [them],
Light rays emanating from them. //68//

[2252] *I.e.* one hundred eight times.
[2253] Following Stok Palace's *rnam pa*, "form," p. 457, rather than Lhasa's *nam kha*, "sky."
[2254] *I.e.* their consorts.
[2255] Reading *las* for *la sa*.
[2256] Ignoring the *tshig*, reading *las,* "from," rather than *la sa*, "ground to." Professor Jamspal points out that the vowels are considered to be female. Personal Communication.

The Master having said
The mantra,
You should invite [them]
With [light ray] hooks
Of the five colors.
You say: "E HYE HI
And BA GA WĀN[2257]
SA MA YA MA NU SMA RA
TISHTHA twice
And SA MA YA.
Then A NU SMA RA twice. //69//

[Say] vajra body,
Speech and mind[2258]
And at the end
SVĀ HĀ three times.
You should invite Mañjuvajra.
He sits on his own
Particular seat,
Invited to the middle
Of the mandala,
With the mandala ones,[2259]
And you should worship. //70//

Making offerings
With divine flowers,
Their own respective mantras,
You should worship
The supreme mandala.
"I, this name,[2260]
By applying
Whatever things [I have],
Bow down to this,
The city of the Reality Sphere,
The mandala. //71//

Having thought [of me]
With love, O Lord,
Please accept this.
OṂ SARBBA

[2257] "Oh Lord, come in."
[2258] *I.e. OṂ AH HŪṂ.*
[2259] Following Stok Palace's *khor pa*, "mandala one," rather than Lhasa's *khor ba*, "cyclic existence."
[2260] *I.e.* your own name.

TA THĀ GĀ TA NĀM
BŪ DZO[2261] BA STHĀ NA YA
ĀTMA NĀM NI KONAM[2262]
NI RYĀ TA YĀ MI.["]
The guru says
The three letters. //72//

Having made [oneself
Into] the deity,
Then you should make
Offerings to yourself.
You say: "OM SARBBA
TA THĀ GA TA PŪ DZA
BADZRA SVA BHĀ RBA[2263]
ĀTMA KONY HAM." //73//

Having made your own
Divine pride,
You should worship
The mothers,[2264]
Harmful ones,[2265] and the sinless,[2266]
Who are created
[And] the Lord
Of the mandala
Who arises from the family
Of great hatred.[2267] //74//

After that,
You should consecrate the deities,
Very delightful,
Dressed in various
Divine garments.
[The vessel] smokes
With camphor and agru[2268].
Having purified by mantra,
You should cover [the vessel]. //75//

[2261] Stok Palace has *P* for Lhasa's *B*.
[2262] Stok Palace has *atmāko*, but per Prof. Jamspal, short *A* is better. Personal Communication.
[2263] Stok Palace has *BA* for Lhasa's *RBA,* which makes sense for Skt. *svabāva*.
[2264] *I.e.* goddesses.
[2265] *I.e.* wrathful deities.
[2266] *I.e.* bodhisattvas.
[2267] *I.e.* Akṣobhya.
[2268] *Agru* is less prized than sandalwood; most prized is white sandalwood, then red, then *agru*. Personal Communication with Prof. Lozang Jamspal.

Having said OṂ
And TISHTHA
BADZRA HOH,
You should remain
As the supreme mandala.
The intelligent one says OṂ
And SPA RA[2269] BADZRA HOH. //76//

Scooping up the flowers
With [your] palms
[And] scattering [them],
[You tell] the ones
Excellently remaining there,
That they should go.
You should see
The supreme mandala
In all of its detail. //77//

Having meditated
On the image
Of the Lords
With the good natures
Of the five families,
You bathe [them]
In mirrors and so forth,[2270]
And, similarly, substances[2271]
And milk and so forth,
Just as with a newborn,
Also, offering a bath
[For] all the Tathāgatas,
[Saying] Similarly I offer
The bathing of the body. //78//

In the middle
Of the crown ornament
Of Vajrasattva,
The three letters are intertwined.
You should say SVĀ HĀ
At the end.
You know the ritual
Of that very action.

[2269] Professor Jamspal: spreading?
[2270] *I.e.* pouring water over the mirror reflection of the deities. Personal Communication with Prof. Lozang Jamspal.
[2271] You bathe them with saffron and sugar and so forth. Personal Communication with Prof. Lozang Jamspal.

After that, you should do
The prepared torma. //79//

You should say the mantra
OṂ SARBBA Ā BAR NA
SHUDDHA SARBBA
BĀ BAM and DI[2272]
SHUDDHA BADZRA
HŪṂ PHAT,
With SVĀHĀ at the end. //80//

Having [made] the mudra
Of the PHAM circling
And having burnt
White mustard seeds,
You dispel the addictions.
By [the hand gesture of]
Embracing and turning[2273]
You should give [them] up.[2274] //81//

After that,
According to ritual,
Make offerings well.
You should offer cymbals
And music and so forth
To the Lord.
Afterwards, you say
The respective mantras
Of each [offering]: //82//

OṂ SARBBA TA THĀ GA TA
BUSHPA PŪ DZA MEGHA
And SA MU DRA
And SPHA RA NA SA MA YA
And SHRI YE ĀH HŪṂ. //83//

Each substance has
Its own name.
The aforementioned form
And so forth
Should be said according to ritual,

[2272] Stok Palace has *bu* for Lhasa's *vi*.
[2273] The lotus turning mudra?
[2274] Presumably, the addictions.

[With] the elegant gestures
Of Vajrasattva. //84//

The Vajra Master
Knows the ritual.
With these mantras
You should make consecration.
You should repeat OṂ
And SU PRA TISHTHA
And BADZRA SVĀ HĀ
At the end. //85//

Having placed
The three letters
The essence of
Body, speech and mind,
You should make a rain
Of flowers.
The Vajra Master
With a host of disciples,
Being stirred up by song,
When awakened,
Make prostrations. /86//

["]I, the yogi,
Lord of all actions,
Make the torma,
The accomplishment
Of all goals.["]
Pure and skilled
In action,
With the elegant movements
According to ritual, //87//

He offers with flowers
And so forth,
Chang and various meats,
And similarly sweet milk,
Cooked rice, ground *puri*,
Puri bread,
Many millions
Of peas and pure water
In ten vessels filled with water. //88//

By speaking
The ten wrathful mantras,

According the previous ritual,
All ghosts being
In the center of that,
You give a wonderful
Great torma. //89//

In accordance with
The previous ritual,
Burning sesame
With particular food,
The intelligent one
Should recite the mantras.
This accomplishes all goals. //90//

OM BRAHMA DE VA TĀ
SARBBA INDRA DA SHA
LO KA RAKSHA KA NĀ GA
GANDHARBBA KUṂ BHĀṆDA
YAKSHA BHŪ TA
GA ṆĀ TA THĀ
PRE TA UD[2275] GA TA
PI SHĀ TSI A PA[2276] SMA RE[2277] //91//

DĀ KI NĪ GRA HA[2278]
BI GHNAM MĀ KSHI[2279]
GA NĀH SARBBA
TA THĀ GATA AGNI
MA RA GRA HĀ
OM DZO BHAKSHA
MA HĀ TE DZA
MA NU SHYA NAMA[2280]
BI HIM SA KA
MU DRĀ[2281] MANTRA
A DHI DHO BYAH[2282] CA //92//

GRA HĀ NAKSHATRA
MANUṢA

[2275] Per Stok; Lhasa has U.
[2276] Per Stok; Lhasa has BA.
[2277] Per Stok; Lhasa has SMARA.
[2278] Per Stok; Lhasa has HĀ.
[2279] Stok may have MĀDRA, or that might be better per Lozang Jamspal.
[2280] Stok has SHĀNĀSHĀNAMA.
[2281] Lhasa has MUDRA.
[2282] Stok has visarga, Lhasa does not.

I MAM BA LIM
PRA GRI HNANTUM[2283]
SIDDHI MME
PRAYA TSTSHANTU ME
SANDHA
SA TYA MA NE SHU
KA RA ME SHU
SAT SA HA YA BHA BANTU TSE
DHĀ NA DHĀ NA
SU PA RA NA NYTSA //93//

DHA DĀNTU MA MA TO SHĪ TA
I TI U PĀ TRA NA[2284]
TRO SHA NI SAT VĀ TA NĀ
MA NĀ SHA YANTU[2285] TSE.
First OM
And ĀH HŪṂ PHAT.
At the end SVĀ HĀ,
Making all actions. //94//

Thus reciting this mantra
In the vessel,
Sporting as Vajrasattva,
He consecrates the disciple.
Adorned with the good qualities
[Of] these characteristics, //95//

He washes [them][2286]
With the water
Of sandalwood,
Camphor and musk
Cleansing the stains
Of mind. //96//

Sending all possessions,
Wearing clean clothing
As an offering,
Having made
A multi-storied house,
With decorated textile
Curtains all around,

[2283] Per Stok; Lhasa has PRAGR.
[2284] Per Stok; Lhasa has UPĀTĀNA.
[2285] Per Stok; Lhasa has MANASHAYANTU.
[2286] The disciples.

Perfectly endowed
With the three letters,
The Vajrin sprinkles
The water mantra
In front seven times,
Purifying the stain
Born from karma. //97//

Then you place
Kṣitigharba and so forth
On the eyes and so forth.
Touching each
Of the sense faculties
With the two middle fingers,[2287]
You should say the mantra
And bless [them]
By the yoga
Of the body mandala. //98//

You repeat OM
And TSAKSHU TSAKSHU[2288]
And SA MANTA
And TSA KSHU.[2289]
You say this mantra
MAI TRI SATVA LO TSA NE[2290]
SARBBA ARTHA SĀ DHA NI,
With SVĀ HĀ
At the end. //99//

You put the thumb
And middle finger together.
Having applied foot bathing water
To the feet,
You should repeat
That mantra three times.
You should touch each
Of the disciples' eyes
With the thumb mudra.[2291] //100//

Having said

[2287] Per Lozang Jamspal, the ring and middle fingers. Personal Communication.
[2288] Per Stok; Lhasa has CHAKSHA.
[2289] This mantra is from Stok Palace, per Prof. Jamspal's suggestion. Personal Communication.
[2290] Following Stok Palace's LOCANE rather than Lhasa's LOCANI.
[2291] Per Lozang Jamspal, the thumb sticking up from the fist. Personal Communication.

The hundred syllable mantra
Three times for the thread
Of one cubit and four fingers,
The lasso and the noose
You should purify
With water for washing
The feet. //101//

Wrapping the thread around
Three times and tying [it]
On the left arm
With a knot of three vajras,
You should say this mantra
Three times. //102//

The sound of OṂ
And this mantra of
LO TSA NE,
YA TA TVATTAṂ
SAṂ PRA TAṂ,
The sound of MAṂ BHA BI
SHYANTI,[2292] RAṂ
And RATNA TRA YĀ YA
SIDDHI NA NI DA DA SHA YA
SVĀ HĀ. //103//

Scatter flowers on the disciples.
Then Vajradhara should make
A triangle
By measuring twelve fingers.[2293]
Meditate a blessing
By the three letters. [2294]
You should hand [it]
To the disciples. //104//

Having repeated
The mantra
OṂ and PRA TI BADZRA
And SA MANTA and Ī SHVA RI,
Ending in ĀH HŪṂ SVĀHĀ,
The disciple should throw

[2292] Per Stok; Lhasa has SHUDDHE.
[2293] Measuring on the cord 4 fingers on each side, making a triangle. Personal Communication with Lozang Jamspal.
[2294] *I.e. v*isualizing that a blessing is coming. Personal Communication with Lozang Jamspal.

[The thread] away. //105//

Seeing whatever direction
The dagger falls,
The master and disciples
Should sleep
Facing that direction. //106//

At dawn, [the disciples] request
Of the guru all the meanings
Of whatever is seen [in dreams].
Having focused on that,
As for the fire offering,
By division into peaceful
And so forth,
You should pacify
All activities and obstacles. //107//

Vajrasattva, with elegant gestures,
According to the exact yogic ritual,
Here, as before,
Should give the torma
To pacify obstacles. //108//

Then the disciple
Should make supplication.
Infused with the compassion
Of the Vajra Master,
Having put palms together,
Prostrating to the one
Sitting in front,[2295] //109//

"Oh Great Joyous One,
You are my teacher!
So please listen!
Teach the method
Of great enlightenment!
I seek the great refuge! //110//

Please bestow
That very pledge
And give me the vows![2296]
Oh Lord!

[2295] Assuming *bahuvrīhi.*
[2296] *Scol* instead of *scal* per suggestion of Lozang Jamspal. Personal Communication.

Please let me enter
The supreme city
Of great liberation!"

Then the guru tells him
What is to be done
And not done. //111//

Living beings are thrown
By the thread of *karma*,
Bent by the process
Of spreading colored dust,
These living beings
Are a mandala,
Intrinsically pure, non-dual. //112//

First, visualize yourself
As the Vajra Master,
Yoga Lord of the mandala.
After seeing the disciple
As similar to yourself,
You will accomplish everything.
After that, the disciple
Should make request
For the sake of empowerment
From[2297] a good guru. //113//

Here, in the ocean
Of cyclic existence,
Covered with addictions,
Crocodiles and sea monsters,
Waves stirred up
By the wind of *karma*,
Oh, Ocean of Compassion
Alas, I drown! //114//

By the cataract
Of ignorance,
The work of addiction.
Ocean of compassion,
Ward off bliss,[2298]
Suffering and fear,

[2297] Reading *las* rather than *la*.
[2298] *I.e.* the bliss of Nirvana. *See Lama Chöpa*, v. 53, in T. Gyatso 1988.

Help me!
Vajrin, please listen
To words like these! //115//

Filling up [his] heart
With compassion,
He says to the disciple:

You, son, from this time,
Proclaim the Vajrayana doctrine,
Hold yoga as supreme,
The state of the practice
Of Vajrasattva. //116//

Son, this is nectar,
Protect it!
If you don't,
You will burn!
If you protect [it],
You will accomplish
All attainments! //117//

The wind that dispels
All addictions,
OṂ and PANYTSA A MRI TA
U DA KA and ĀḤ HŪṂ THA,[2299]
The disciple should drink
The five nectars,
Wonderful vajra wisdom. //118//

Because there would be mistakes
In remembering the secret,
Shit and piss and so forth
Fall on the vajra disciple,
Girl's clothing from which
Drips bright blood, //119//

Having taken ghost fire,[2300]
Smeared with blood
And semen,
Mixed with tree resin,[2301]
Having placed [it]

[2299] Lhasa manuscript has *tha*, other recensions should be checked to see if should be *phat*.
[2300] *Yidwags me, pretāgni*, some kind of substance?
[2301] Per Lozang Jamspal, burned in ritual at Likir Monastery to frighten ghosts. Personal Communication.

In the lotus vessel,[2302]
You should put everything
In there. //120//

The Wrathful One
With the nature
Of three vajras,
Standing with
Right [leg] extended,
Lord Vajradhara,
Filled with scent
By burning the incense
Of the great wonderful one
For the students,[2303]
Without doubt would descend. //121//

OṂ TISHTHA MA HĀ KHRO DA
Similarly, Ā BE SHA YA HŪṂ,
The yogi expresses this mantra.
[The deity] clearly descends
Into the disciple. //122//

BADZRA SATTVA HI MA HE
BIDYA RĀ DZA YA BRIDYA
MA HE,
Thus again having empowered
The disciple
With this mantra, //123//

When he sees this
Supreme mandala,
His own body,
Intrinsically pure,
The perfect basis
Of Tathāgatas,
Goddesses and Bodhisattvas, //124//

The supreme secret
Pervading the Wrathful Ones,
The support of Vajrasattva,
The external and internal mandalas,
He should should show

[2302] Per Lozang Jamspal, not the vagina, but some actual vessel. Personal Communication.
[2303] Per Lozang Jamspal, the guru does the consecration waving incense in front of the students. Personal Communication.

Both to him [the disciple]. //125//

Further, the disciple requests:
"Please give me empowerment!"
To take the victorious
Vase [initiation],[2304]
In the good lotus vessel, //126//

In the middle of that,
The good hearted one[2305]
Visualizes Akṣobhya
Arising from a vajra HŪṂ.
He meditates on the wisdom being
Arising from the agitation
Of rays of light
Of his own wisdom seed. //127//

By the very actuality
Of Akṣobhya,
He meditates the aggregate
Of consciousness
As the supreme form
Of Akṣobhya.
Infused with compassion,
The Vajra Master
Places [his] hand
On the head of the disciple. //128//

OṂ and MA HĀ SATVA and,
Similarly, Ī SHVAR TRAṂ
And A BHI SHRĪ NYTSA MI
SVĀ HĀ.
OṂ SARBBA TA THĀ GĀ TA
A BHI SHE KA SA MA YA
SHRI YE ĀḤ HŪṂ,
He repeats after him. //129//

From the bottom of the water,
For the disciple,

"O Three World King,
Pervaded by compassion,

[2304] Per Lozang Jamspal, on the alter next to the guru. Personal Communication.
[2305] Although *blo bzang po* should be agentive for this reading.

I will give a crown ornament
For empowerment,
To accomplish benefit
For living beings." //130//

Having meditated Ratnasambhava,
The source of good qualities,
Who arises from
The seed syllable TRAṂ,
He should give
For the head of the disciple
A crown ornament
Made from decorated silk. //131//

Having expressed the words
OṂ SARBBA TA THĀ GA TA
RATNA MU KUN[2306]
And similar words
And BŪ DZA YA
A TISHTHA and ĀḤ HŪṂ.
And, having expressed this mantra,
He should bestow flowers
On the [disciple's] head. //132//

For the empowerment
Of the vajra disciple,
He again supplicates the guru.
[The guru says:]
"I bestow vajra practice,
The actual state
Of the five wisdoms,
By which the
Eggshell of ignorance
Is opened.
By what I have done,
You will achieve wisdom." //133//

From HRIḤ,
On a perfect lotus,
Visualize in the form
Of Amitābha.
[The guru] puts a vajra
In the right hand

[2306] Stok Palace has *mu ku ta*, Skt. "crown."

[Of the disciple],
And expresses these words
To the disciple: //134//

"Today I will empower you.
This one is he who is
All those Buddhas.
Trusting in the vow
Of Samantabhadra,
Take this vajra
For the sake of
Good spiritual attainment." //135//

Arising from KAṂ
Is a sword,
Also in the nature
Of Amoghasiddhi,
Perfectly held
By the disciple
In an elegant gesture
In the left hand.
This is called the follower
Of the sound of the bell
Of all Buddhas. //136//

"You should always hold [it],
The basis of the Conqueror
Of supreme enlightenment."

After holding the vajra and bell,
He is actually Vajrasattva.
Full of natural good qualities,
He becomes the yoga
Of a master. //137//

Placing [his] hand
On the head of the disciple,
As the very essence
Of Vairocana,
The Vajra Holder [bestows]
The Name Empowerment.
You meditate on
The Form Aggregate.[2307] //138//

[2307] *I.e.* Vairocana is beautiful.

OṂ SARBBA TA THĀ GA TA,
"So and so"[2308]
BADZRA SATTVAṂ
A BHI SHI NYTSA MI SVĀ HĀ //139//

To the Name [Empowerment]
At the end,
You know the purity
Of the Five Aggregates
As the supreme empowerment.
I will explain
The great wonder. //140//

You will attain
The five empowerments,[2309]
These pure five Buddhas.
By dispelling ignorance,
You will attain
The five wisdoms. //141//

Then he gives
The Mantra Empowerment,
The fulfillment of the wishes
Of the disciple of Vajrasattva.
"I will give
The supreme Wisdom Empowerment
Of mantra,
Bestowing spiritual attainments." //142//

Then the six-syllable mantra
Having PHAT SVĀHĀ
At the end,
[Then] the three syllables.
[When the disciple's] mouth
Is filled with pledges,
Purified by the body
Of mantra,
[This] is expressed
From the mouth
Of the guru: //143//

"In order to be given

[2308] Sanskrit is *amuk.* Personal Communication with Lozang Jamspal.
[2309] Water, Crown, Flower, Vajra and Name.

Spiritual accomplishments
By the guru,
You should always hold this,
The supreme wisdom
Of the essence
Of all Buddhas,
Epitomizing all Buddhas." //144//

Then, by particularly
Bringing to mind
The various vows
Of a disciple's behavior,
Purifying his conduct,
The main compassionate one
[Says] to the aspirant:
"I bestow the vow of conduct,
The means of benefitting
Living beings." //145//

Then he should purify
The book, conch, arrow,
Bow and sword
By mantra as before,
Placing [them] one by one
In the hand of the disciple. //146//

This is the vow
Of the practice of Samantabhadra,
Purifying a variety
Of thoughts.
You should always hold [it]
To benefit all sentient beings. //147//

OM SARBA TA THĀ GA TA
Similarly, DHĪ TĀ RA TWA and
DHĀR YA MI and ĀḤ HŪṂ,
Thus you should place
This mantra. //148//

Then, in order to achieve
The prophecy,
The clear-minded one
[Says] to the guru thusly:

"Please prophesize for me
Entering into the Buddha family!"

"I will predict the Lord

Of the family . . .
You are 'Amoghavajra.'" //149//

Then in order to
Encourage the disciples,
From the presence
Of the speech of the guru:
"O Protector, Perfect Lord,
Encourage [us]!
Be firm in the vow
Of Bodhisattva conduct!" //150//

Then, holding the vajra
And the end of the cloth
In the left hand,
Bestowing the gesture
Of fearlessness [in the] right,
The supreme activity
Of encouragement:
"I call you the Lord
Of vajra speech,
The supreme state
Of all Buddhas,
Vajrasattva." //151//

You are the King
Of the three realms,
The embodiment of the source
Of glorious good qualities!
Conqueror of the power
Of demons!
You enter the supreme city! //152//

Then for the disciples
Wishing benefit
He should give
The non-reversible
Empowerment.
"Vajrasattva, please give me
The great non-reversible
Empowerment!" //153//

Then, the Lord
Of Vajra Wisdom,

With rays of light
Invites the wisdom beings,
[And] the Five Buddhas
And so forth [and]
The chakra of goddesses
Progressively arise. //154//

They carry
Vessels in hand,
Filled with the water
Of wisdom.
The Tathāgata, Vajra Holder,
Conqueror of Conquerors,
Jewel Holder,
Liberator from Cyclic Existence, //155//

And the Wisdom Holder,
Respectively, in ignorance,
Anger and passion,
Similarly, Vajraratī,
Yamāntaka, Prajñāntaka,
Padmāntaka, Vighnāntaka -
With complete empowerment
He visualizes all [of these]
As the vajra disciples. //156//

I will give
The great Vajra Empowerment,
Saluted by the three realms,
Arising from the source
Of the three secrets,
All the Buddhas. //157//

Then the Tathāgatas, Goddesses,
[And] Wrathful Ones
Sit in their own places.
Having meditated Mañjuśrī,
Adorned with wisdom vajras,
Place [him, saying:]
OṂ and SU PRA TISHTHA
And BADZRA SVĀ HĀ. //158//

The good minded one
Having expressed the mantra,
Sprinkles flowers
On the disciples.

Then, they offer
Flowers and so forth,
The mandala of disciples
Being like a chakra.
The guru, infused
With compassion,
Then gives permission
To the disciples. //159//

There is nothing
That cannot be done
By a yogi
Who knows reality.
Great hero,
By your kindness,
Now, practicing in
The sense pleasures, //160//

Knowing [everything]
As illusion, a dream,
Things arising
From relativity,
Knowing [everything]
As a reflection,
Make unequalled benefits
For sentient beings! //161//

The disciples who have
Performed [these] activities
Should practice comfortably,
Then pay the guru,
Praising and making
Complete prostrations
Together with
The good people. //162//

Then aspiring [to be]
The *Guhyasamāja* guru,
Facing downwards,
Kissing [the ground],
[The disciples say:]
"Just as you are, Great Soul,
Make me like that!" //163//

Then, one especially liberated
By the mantric vehicle

Divided by actions and things
Arising from the five clans
Is explained as a
Fortunate lady seal. //164//

Having gone into
A charnel ground,
At midnight,
Isolated from people,
Emerges the skill
Of the Vajra Master,
Infused with great compassion. //165//

Whatever conventional
Enlightenment spirit,
Falling into the yoginī,
The epitome of
All Buddhas
Of unexcelled nature,
Arising in the union
[With] the Seal,
However it is found,
By that secret
He should empower. //166//

"This one, arising as
The great pledge
Of all Buddhas,
Taste great bliss,
The elixir from
The Five Realms!" //167//

The disciple,
Free from conceptuality,
Should taste what is left
On the lotus.

"Just as Vajradhara
In the past
Empowered the sons
Of the Conqueror,
So will I empower
You, sons,
With the liquid
Of the enlightenment spirit!" //168//

Then, for the
Wisdom Empowerment,
The guru gathers
All spiritual accomplishment
For the disciples
Who seek the goal.

"Please bestow empowerment
On me!" //169//

Then, the great-natured Guru
Consecrates the Seal
In order that the supreme
Be achieved.
After that,
He gives [her]
To the disciple. //170//

This Great Seal goddess
Bestows limitless bliss.
The son, having taken
All of that,
Should make
An unexcelled offering. //171//

Then, "I bestow
For the sake
Of spiritual accomplishment
The supreme reality
Of the wisdom
Of the goddess,
The goal accepted
As the supreme accomplishment
Of wisdom." //172//

The goddess commands him:
"So, unexcelled heroic son,
Hero, how do you like it?
Are you able to eat
The Enlightenment spirit?" //173//

That perfect one says
"Certainly! Whatever you wish!"
And such.
"The supreme commitment
Is stated just so.

O Goddess, why wouldn't I?" //174//

Then the goddess
Is pleased.
Loosening her hair,
Taking off her clothes,
And opening up
[Her] pure lotus, she says,
"BHANYDZA MOKSHA!"[2310]
Abiding in the middle
Of the vaginal lotus,
Is the channel that moves
As all-bliss,
Urging with [your] finger,
You should enjoy. //175//

You should also play
With [your] tongue.
This produces innate bliss.
When you use
This good wisdom,
Having experienced
Supreme bliss,
With descending bliss,
You should taste it. //176//

Then, Chomdenma,
Having been pleased,
Says the mantra
"BHAÑDZA MOKSHA,"
Places [her] left leg
On [your] head,
[And], with a command,
Teaches perfect reality:[2311] //177//

"Starting today,
Until [you reach]
The heart of enlightenment,
You, son, must create
Unexcelled benefits
For sentient beings,
As in a dream!" //178//

[2310] *I.e.* "EAT LIBERATION!"
[2311] Or, "[And] by [her] word [*i.e.* "Check this out!"]/ Shows [you her]/ Perfect reality!"

Not knowing
The personal instruction
In this, the meditation
On the creation stage,
Rejecting this wisdom,
You won't become enlightened
By other methods. //179//

The son practices
The vow of
The wisdom woman,
The best of the best
Of vows.
Thus, this is
Supreme enlightenment.
The yogi and yoginī
Should know [it] gradually. //180//

"Relying on the state
Of Vajrasattva,
Please bestow the
Supreme state on me!
Manifesting as the result
Of all concentration,
Wishing whatever [they want]
For all sentient beings,
I request unexcelled
Spiritual accomplishment!
In order that you[2312]
Might return again,
Please go to your own places,
BADZRA MUḤ!" //181//

Then, give the leftover torma,
The procedure for those arising
Beyond the [protection] chakra,

U TSTSHISHTĀ
KSHE TRA PA LA
A TI TSAKRA U TSITTA
SU BHO DZAṂ NĀṂ BI BA twice,
BHAKSHA twice and SARBBA and
SIDDHIṂ PRA YATSTSHA ME[2313]

[2312] The wisdom beings.

And OṂ first
[Then] ĀH HŪṂ PHAT SVĀHĀ,
Thereafter you should recite that.[2314] //182//

Holding vajra and bell,
He stands in the position
Of left leg spread out.
As for the nature
Of the Conqueror
Of the three realms,
And the nature
Of the Vajra Master,
He holds the nature
Of the Conqueror
Of the three realms. //183//

Thus from the twenty rituals
He teaches the characteristics
Of the creation stage.
By knowing that very one
As manifold,
You become empowered
From a virtuous guru. //184//

From the realization of the Mahāyoga Tantra Glorious Vajra Rosary, the fifty-fourth chapter on the extensive actions of the twenty rituals.

Chapter Fifty-Five

Teaching the Reason for and the Result of the Twenty Rituals

Then, furthermore,
The reason and the result
Of that to be explained
Is the action explained
As the twenty rituals.
What is the reason
Of the Great Lord?

[2313] Abiding Field Protector, abiding beyond the [protection] wheel, very good food, very good food, eat, eat and always and please give me attainments.
[2314] Presumably, OM, then the body of the mantra, then ĀH HŪṂ PHAT SVĀHĀ.

What would be
The result of that?
Great of Great,
What would you say? //1//

Then the Vajra Lord spoke:

As for the cause and effect
Of the activities
And of preliminary service,[2315]
The cause
Is the eight worldly
Spiritual accomplishments. //2//

In order to clear away
Stinginess and so forth,
You meditate offerings
To the Buddha,
And you perfect
Giving, ethics, patience
Effort and concentration. //3//

Through the Empowerment
Of Wisdom,
You perfect
Transcendent wisdom,
Abiding in secret,
And so forth,
The cause being
The passionate person. //4//

Through events of enjoyment,
By the cause
Of equalizing wisdom,
When you make offerings
To the guru with faith,
The result is the state
Of Vajrasattva. //5//

The completion of
The Water and so forth
[And] Name [Empowerments]
Is for the purification

[2315] *I.e.* the *sadhana*. Personal Communication with Lozang Jamspal.

Of the five wisdoms.
Because of practice,
The completion of Non-Reversal
Is for the purification
Of the thoughts about
Sentient beings.
The completion of Wisdom Vow
And so forth
Is to teach bliss by example. //6//

The subtlest particle
Of the mandala
Is equal to the worship
Of all the Tathāgatas.
In that way, you engage
In the cycle of result,
The worship of all Buddhas,
The purification
Of karmic obscurations.[2316] //7//

You attain empowerment,
The extremely pure
Reality Sphere,
And, by the wisdom
[Empowerment], you attain
The very essence of reality. //8//

The guru also achieves
The supreme state of that offering.
In that way, you will achieve
In a short time,
The supreme vow
Of pure practice. //9//

From the realization of the Mahāyoga Tantra Glorious Vajra Rosary, the fifty-fifth chapter on teaching the reason for and result of the twenty rituals.

[2316] For the variant reading of this paragraph, *see* Alaṃka 29B.

Chapter Fifty-Six

Analyzing the Ritual of the Inner Essence Offering

Then said Vajrasattva:

The unexcelled offering ritual
Is the stage of the ritual
Of worshipping the body
By non-dual equalizing yoga.
You should not prostrate
To a body of rock,
Wood, earth or gold. //1//

You should never make
Consecrations, mandalas
Or fire sacrifices.
You should always worship
The [Three] Jewels and so forth
[And] the Five Lords
[With] shit and piss.
Therefore, you should engage
In that![2317] //2//

The mind vajra itself is chief,
[But] that mind also
Is non-existent
Because it has the character
Of emptiness.
Emptiness likewise is formless,
Because of which all things
Are like space. //3//

In that way you should know
Pure consciousness.
You should also worship
The three channels;[2318]
Because they are all

[2317] For variant reading of this paragraph (the first paragraph is identical), *see* Alaṃka 29B.
[2318] For the variant reading of these two lines, *see* Alaṃka 29B.

In the nature of mind.
They do not exist
Other than mind. //4//

You yourself abide
As the nature of the mind
Of Vajrasattva.
The unexcelled divine form
Is nothing other
Than mind alone. //5//

Because of that,
Analyzing in that way,
Always offer
Just your own body.
Always practicing
As the five pure families,
You discern [them]
As one family. //6//

You should abandon
The distinction
Of wanting and not wanting,
Drinking and not drinking.
You should never say
A yogi is "fortunate"
Or "unfortunate." //7//

Just as there are
Of the types of consorts,
Blue and so forth,
There are three divisions of form.
Having summoned Rūpavajrā,
You should make offerings
To Kṣitigharba. //8//

Authentic song,
Beyond expression
And melody,
Likewise, there are also
Three divisions
Of sound.
Summoning Śabdavajrā,
You make offerings
To Vajrapāṇi. //9//

Camphor, wood
And ficus,[2319]
Similarly, there are
Three divisions
Of scent.
Summoning Gandhavajrā,
You make offerings
To Ākāśagarbha. //10//

Kissing, sucking
And the six tastes,
Similarly, there are
Six divisions.
Having summoned Rasavajrā,
You make offerings
To Lokeśvara. //11//

Joining,
There are three divisions:
Of smearing and embracing.
Summoning Sparśavajrā,
You should make offerings
To [Sarvanivaraṇa]viṣkambin. //12//

All of these
Are outer reality,
Examined and, also,
Not examined.
Summoning Dharmadhātuvajra,
You make offerings
To Mañjuvajra. //13//

Similarly, outer, inner
And both
Are not perceived,
And, having made [them]
Into three in form,
You should make offerings
To the deities. //14//

The five objects,
Definitively abiding,
Arise definitively

[2319] Monier Williams has *jāti* as Ficus infectoria L., a kind of ficus.

As the five tantras.
When you have
Dreams and energy-wind,
You engage in
The five desires. //15//

Through whatever senses
And whatever path,
The practitioner achieves
The object.
You should offer
All of these things
To please
The Great Compassionate One. //16//

By the flower
Of perfect ecstasy
Arise the vajra sun
And the lotus.
You offer flowers
To the Lord,
The supreme commitment
Of the three vajras. //17//

The mode of conceptuality
Has no location.
Thus offer incense
To the Mind Vajra,
That which is
Totally burnt up
By the fire of *tummo*. //18//

Gradually, the vajra
Perfectly enters the lotus
And so forth.
You should offer
To the Mind Vajra
The indestructible sound
Of the yogi. //19//

Perfectly arising
From the syllable HŪṂ,
The brilliant light rays
Of mantra,
Like the clear light
Of a blazing lamp,

You should offer
To the Mind Vajra. //20//

The great bliss abiding in space
Awakens the
Enlightenment spirit,
And, anointed with that,
You should make offerings
To the Mind Vajra. //21//

Whatever you are enjoying here,
Relying on all the senses,
These are all the Mind Vajra.
You should worship
In the vessel
Of eating. //22//

Various kinds of
Laughing, flirting and playing
Please the mind.
Offer the[se]
Doors of liberation
To the Mind Vajra![2320] //23//

From the realization of the Mahāyoga Tantra, the glorious
Vajra Rosary, the fifty-sixth chapter on analyzing the ritual of the inner essence offering.

Chapter Fifty-Seven

The Character of the Goddess

Then spoke the Vajra Lord:

Those who realize
The bliss of yoga
Through the nature
Of dividing the channels,
The supreme character
Of the goddess,

[2320] As stated by Lozang Jamspal, you need enlightenment spirit and wisdom in addition to sense joy; otherwise no good. Personal Communication.

Should always play
With the body,
Explained as its deities. //1//

The body that dances
Wholly ecstatic
With constant all-bliss
Is completely pervaded
By all-bliss,
Expressed as the [male] deities.[2321] //2//

The arising of
The instants of
Ecstasy, Supreme Ecstasy,
Transcendent and Innate,
And amusement,
Intense flirting,
Fainting and waking: [2322]
These are explained
As goddesses. //3//

When manifesting externally,
She becomes as
The perfect union,
Rousing the channels
Of the body,
Thus explained
As the yoginī. //4//

From the realization of the Mahāyoga Tantra Glorious Vajra Rosary, the fifty-seventh chapter on the characteristics of the goddess.

[2321] For variant reading of this and previous paragraph, *see* Alaṃka 29B.
[2322] Orgasm and revival?

Chapter Fifty-Eight

Explaining the First Word "*Evam*"[2323] and Explaining the Reasoning

Then the Vajra Lord spoke:

"EVAM" has two syllables.
E is explained
As emptiness.
Similarly, VAM is explained
As compassion, and //1//

The drop arising from
The union of those two
Is wonderful, supreme yoga.
E VAM, the two,
Are Buddha
And, in short,
The Seal of Reality.[2324] //2//

Oh Great King!
Two seals[2325] are stated
At the beginning
Of the tantras.
E has the character
Of vagina.
You should know [it]
As the support
Which is the lotus. //3//

The supported[2326] is stated
As the "vajra."
The steady one
Is the form of the drop,
Vajradhara remaining on it,
Showing the emanation
Of Variety. //4//

[2323] The Tibetan is E BAM.
[2324] *I.e.* Buddha is conventional and the *dharmamudra* is ultimate. Personal Communication with Lozang Jamspal.
[2325] Variant reading from beginning of chapter to here can be found at Alaṃka 30A.
[2326] Reading *brten*, "supported," for *rten*, "support."

The source of the basis
Of all-bliss
Is great bliss Vajrasattva.
In E, the sphere
Of secret space,
Or, the lotus
Of the triangular vagina,
The yogi sits
On a lion throne,
Supremely manifesting wonder. //5//

Vajrasattva, the VAM vajra,
Is the sign
Of Lord Yamāntaka,
Heruka and Kalachakra,
Primordial Buddha
And so forth. //6//

EVAM is the seal
Of the Tathāgatas,
Expressed as non-dual
Bliss supreme,
Emptiness and compassion,
Inseparable. //7//

In that, the seal
Of the Tathāgatas
Is the symbol
Of non-dual wisdom,
Stated in the introduction
Of all tantras,
The epitome of the meaning
Of all tantras. //8//

Inseparable emptiness compassion
Is expressed as reality.
Whoever lacks
The two syllables E VAM,
Lacks reality. //9//

Whoever knows reality
Shines like refined gold.
The tantra explains well
[That] he who knows reality,
Abiding in the practice
Of mantra, //10//

In that way
Ascertains the meaning
Of EVAM.
The Seal of Reality,
The two syllables
Are perfectly explained
As the first word. //11//

From the realization of the Mahāyoga Tantra Glorious Vajra Rosary, the fifty-eighth chapter on showing the explanation and reasoning of the first word EVAM.

Chapter Fifty-Nine

Explaining the First Words "*Evam Mayā*"

Then listen further
To the explanation.
EVAM and so forth
He who knows
The vast meaning of EVAM
Realizes the that[ness]
Of reality. //1//

E/ E is holy wisdom,[2327]
The nature[2328] of the instant
Free from passion[2329]
And so forth,
Perfect knowledge
In the three worlds.
This is taught
As the root.[2330] //2//

VAM/ The consciousness[2331]

[2327] For variant reading of this verse and the preceding paragraph, *see* Alaṃka 30A.
[2328] Here the *CG* glosses "nature" as *bdag nyid dam rang bzhin gyi rtog pa so gsum* , "nature or the thirty-three instinctual natures. 79.
[2329] Prof. Wayman, following Tsong kha pa's *CG*, translates Skt. *virām* or *virāma*, Tib. *'dod chags bral* as "aversion," referring to the thirty-three instinctual natures associated with luminance. Wayman 1977, 185-86; *CG* 79. *See also* Wedemeyer 2007, 775-76.
[2330] Skt. *ekāropi sato prajñā virāmādikṣaṇātmikā/ Etanmūlam vinirkiṣṭaṃ parijñānaṃ bhavatraye//* The Sanskrit from the *Pradīpoddyotana* for this and the following verses is given in Wayman 1977, 3-22.

Which is radiance,[2332]
Like rising bamboo,
A beautiful tree
Endowed with producing
Lust and so forth,
Is named "means."[2333] //3//

MA/ The very root
Of great knowledge[2334]
Ignorance, is [its] opposite.[2335]
This arises from ignorance;
Therefore the luminances arise.[2336] //4//

YĀ/ The name of that first
Of the three consciousnesses
Of migrators is luminance,
Which transforms into
Great emptiness,
Also going into
Clear light. //5//

SHRŪ/ The three consciousnesses
Heard of[2337] here,
With the characteristics
Of the three lights,
Are the root
Of the instinctual natures
Of the entire realm
Of sentient beings,[2338] //6//

[2331] *CG* has *snang ba mched pa'i rnam par shes*. 79.

[2332] *CG* has *snang ba gsal ba*, Skt. per Lokesh Chandra as *pratibhāsa*; *CG* has *snang ba mched pa*, 79, "radiance"; *PU* has *ālokābhāsa*, Wayman 186.

[2333] Skt. *Vaṃśas tad bhavad ābhāti rāgādriprasavānvitam / ālokābhāsa-vijñānam upāya iti saṃjñitam*. *See* Wayman 1977, 186.

[2334] Per the *CG*, clear light. 79.

[2335] The *PU* version of the verse quoted in the *CG* has *lugs las ldog pa'i ma rig pa'o*, "the ignorance of the reverse method," instead of the Lhasa *VR*'s *ma rig pa ni bzlog pa yin*, "the reverse (or opposite) of ignorance" or "reversing ignorance." *CG* 80.

[2336] Skt. *mahāvidyā svayaṃ mūlam avidyayā vilomataḥ / avidyayā bhavec caitat tasmād ālokasaṃbhavaḥ*. *See* Wayman 1977, 187. The *CG* explains that in the reverse method, birth, clear light gives rise to imminence (the referent of "ignorance" in the *VR* and the *PU*), which in turn gives rise to radiance and luminance. *CG* 80.

[2337] Following the *CG*'s *thos pa,* "heard," rather than the Lhasa *VR*'s *thob pa,* "attained." *CG* 80.

[2338] As Tsong kha pa puts it, "[T]he process of birth and death is caused by wind-energy, and the arisal of the four voids is during the period between the dissolving and arising of the energy mobilizing the natural instincts. Thus, the natural instincts are derived from the increased movement of the three luminances, and

TAM/ It is,
Having asserted themselves,
The energy-winds
Causing the grasping
Of the objects
Of each luminance.
LAM/[2339] Consciousness endowed
With energy-wind
Will abide in beings
Everywhere. //7//

E/ This is the great element
Of wind, the mount
Of the three consciousnesses.
By that [wind],
They go wherever
As the instinctual natures.[2340] //8//

KA/ Consciousness[2341] having taken
The earth which is hard,
The water element
And, similarly, fire and wind,
Will be born in the place
Of the three existences. //9//

SMI/[2342] These composite elements
[Become] as the five aggregates:
Form; feeling; discrimination;
Volition and consciousness.[2343] //10//

SA/ Equanimity, discrimination,
Accomplishing activity,
Mirror and reality sphere --
These are the five wisdoms. //11//

---

thus it is said that the three luminances are the root of the natural instincts of all beings." Tsong kha pa 2010, 256.

[2339] Obviously there is no "LAṂ" following *śrutam* in the *nidāna*, and the *PU* and *CG* do not have it, but have the entire verse as part of the comment on TAṂ. *CG* 81.

[2340] *See* Wedemeyer 1999 glossary, 404, and 293, n.4.

[2341] *CG* has *rnam par shes pas*, 82, rather than the Lhasa *VR*'s *rnam par shes par.* 85B.

[2342] This should be SMIN, and is so in the *CG.* 82.

[2343] The Tibetan *lotsawa*s apparently expanded the Sanskrit for the last half of the verse, which had *saṃskārā* stand in for the middle three of the five aggregates: *rūpavin nāma saṃskārā vigñānaṃ caiva pañcamaṃ*. *See* Wayman 1977, 207.

MA/ The mental sense faculty,
Eye and, similarly, ear, nose
And body [sense faculties] --
These are the sense media
That emerge. //12//

YE/ Whatever three-realm
Sentient beings,
Rely on breath control
All the while repeating
The King of Secret Mantra,
Abandoning recitation
[In] ignorant concentration.[2344] //13//

BHĀ/ From this
The instinctual natures[2345]
Of passion and dispassion
Again arise;
From that, virtuous
And non-virtuous action;
From that arises birth. //14//

GA/ The aggregates
That arise [in] migrations
Are of the nature
Of the five Buddhas.
They are activated
By the name of
"The five types
Of perfect enlightenment." //15//

VAN/ Wind, water,
Fire and earth,
Locanā and so forth,
Are four.
One with the nature
Of the three wisdoms[2346]

[2344] Wayman has "miss the 'mental reading'." Wayman 1977, 8. The Sanskrit is *dhyānādkyāpanavarjitāḥ*, which could also be instruction (*adhy-āpana*) in concentration, a *tatpuruṣa*.

[2345] The version in the *CG* has *BHA/ 'byung ba 'di las rang bzhin yang*, "From this element, again the instinctual natures [arise]." *CG* 84.

[2346] *I.e.* one who has experience "of the three, luminance, radiance and imminence, after engaging in meditative equipoise relying on the subtle mediation on the lower door," *'og sgo'i phra mo bsgoms pa la brten nas mnyam gzhag tu snang mched thob gsum gyi ye shes bdag nyid can gsum*. *CG,* 85, *i.e.* mastering the subtle creation stage.

Should know [this],
Bestowing a Buddha's
Enlightenment. //16//

SA/ All of the bodies
Of the Tathāgatas,
Are marked with four seals.
In the nature of eye
And so forth,
Are the bodhisattvas
Kṣitigharba and so forth. //17//

RVA/ You should discern
The great, powerful
Fierce Kings,
Ecstatically running,
In the cardinal
And quarter directions,
[And] as shoulders [and] limbs. //18//

TA/ Emerging from
This or that clan,
The different gods
And goddesses
Do not exist,
But are taught
For the sake
Of living beings. //19//

THĀ/ Because of this,
The yogi who sees
Non-dually,
By seeing the three wisdoms,[2347]
Should contemplate
Inferior, intermediate
And superior sense objects. //20//

GA/ While each sense power
Goes itself
To its own object,
Whatever the sphere of engagement
Of [that] sense power,
Each one is mere luminance. //21//

[2347] Sanskrit has the ablative *jñānatrayanirdaśanāt*; perhaps the Tibetan should have been *mthong pas*.

TA/ By the path of that sense power,
The practitioner reaches the object.
Likewise, without saying
Anything else,[2348]
To give satisfaction
Should make an offering. //22//

KĀ/ The Savior teaches[2349]
The three bodies
As different.
Through practice
Of the perfection stage,
They transform into one. //23//

YA/ The characteristics
Of Buddha's body
Stated as conventional truth
Become purified in clear light
Through the practice
Of the perfection stage. //24//

VĀK/ This very object
Of the path of words,[2350]
The lord with a body
With the nature of wisdom,
In order to[2351] benefit sentient beings
Manifests just like a rainbow. //25//

CIT/ Mind, mental function
And ignorance,
Are also expressed
As wisdom, means and imminence,
Emptiness, extreme emptiness
And great emptiness.[2352] //26//

[2348] The *CG* has *de bzhin de rnams ma lus par*, "completely…those Tathāgatas," 88, and the *PU sakalaṃ*, "completely," Wayman 1977, 13, in place of the Lhasa *VR*'s *de bzhin de las ma gsungs par*, "not spoken." The *CG* and *PU* seem are, not surprisingly, consistent, and would seem the better choice here, but the sense of the Lhasa *VR* is not that different so I will go with the latter.

[2349] In the creation stage. *CG* 89.

[2350] *I.e.* mantra.

[2351] Wayman notes that the Tibetan does not follow the Sanskrit of the *PU*, which has *sarvasattvahitāc ca-apa*, "apart from the benefit of all sentient beings," Wayman 1977, 270-71, but the Tibetan makes sense here, and it is quite possible that the translators of the *Vajra Rosary* into Tibetan had other Sanskrit texts at hand.

[2352] Per Robert Thurman, these are aspects of the subtle mind, the three faces of Guhyasamāja. Personal Communication.

TA/ When you know the division
Of the instinctual natures
And the luminances,
Then, you should
Engage in the conduct
Abandoning the karmic body;
You will attain
The vajra body itself. //27//

HRI/ Establishing the practice
Of the benefit of worldly beings
In the heart,
The Tathāgata abides conventionally
In the emanation body,
Engaging in desires
Just as he wishes. //28//

DA/ Like a wish-fulfilling jewel,
You bestow all wishes.
Forcefully taking
The perfection of the Buddhas,
You practice. //29//

YA/ Prince of Yogis,
Whatever you want
You can do without obstruction,
By your yoga of non-entrancement
You will always remain
Entranced. //30//

VA/ By uniting vajra and lotus
You know the portions
Of the Three wisdoms.
Whether the mind is
Tainted or untainted,
There you will always dwell
In bliss. //31//

JRA/ By the illusion-like
Concentration,
You play with all things.
Performing the Buddha deeds,
You abide in the ground
Of determination. //32//

YO/ You become yoga,
Extreme yoga
And great yoga itself,
The vajrin and the ḍākinī

Are that very yoga. //33//

SHĪ/ Because you have
Accomplished the cessations,
You have abandoned
Activity and inactivity.

BHE/ Just as the lotus
Is not tainted by mud
Your essence is not corrupted. //34//

BHA/ By totally possessing
The eight qualities,[2353]
All beings become the family,
The great one engaging
The entire world realm
With the wisdom body. //35//

GE/ Whatever the Lord
Engages in,
His home is space itself
By his entrancement
Of great bliss
He always plays there. //36//

SHU/ Here,
The mundane conventions
Of twilight, day and night
In regard to the
Categories of luminance
[Are used] in order to see
The three wisdoms.[2354] //37//

BI/ The various

[2353] Per DM, *tshe ring ba / kha dog phun sum tshogs pa / rigs phun sum tshogs pa / dbang phyug phun sum tshogs pa / tshig btsan pa / dbang che bar grags pa / skyes pa yin pa / stobs dang ldan pa rnams so*. *See* Pabongka 1993, 460-64 ("long life; a handsome body; high family; great wealth; trustworthy speech; great power and fame; being a male; being strong in mind and body." 460.

[2354] Per Robert Thurman, reading this verse with the prior one, because you see twilight and so forth as the wisdoms, you see the path back to engage with beings. Personal Communication, March 2010.

Conventional names
Are designated
By worldly people
By the analysis
Of the three times,
You arise from
The three wisdoms. //38//

JA/ Abiding in betweens
Of birth, endurance
And destruction,
However designated
By the world,
You project
The energy wind
Of mind. //39//

HA/ Getting turned on
And getting to orgasm,
Being in the nine moods
Of the theater,
The thought of mantra
And consort:
Are the conduct
Of Vajrasattva. //40//

RA/ Except for
The great self consecration,
There is no other
Great jewel
In this world.
Like a jewel
Cleansed by fire
It has the form
Of natural clear light. //41//

[Thus] expanding
The meaning
Stated as supreme
The first words,
[“]These words[“]
And so forth,
[In] the root sutra
Of the Secret Community,
Compressing the teaching
Of that very thing. //42//

Knowing according to
The exact stages,
You know the reality
Of achievement
By the sign
Of supreme wisdom,
Not stated clearly
Anywhere else. //43//

By these stages
The yogi is
Sealed in the
Glorious Community.
Thus by this sequence
You know it,
And can benefit
All sentient beings. //44//

From the realization of the Mahāyoga Tantra Glorious Vajra Rosary, the fifty-ninth chapter on explaining the first words, "EVAM MAYĀ."

Chapter Sixty

The Inner Essence Fire Offering

Then moreover listen
And I will explain.
The inner nature is
The supreme fire offering.
The elements moving within
Will be dissolved
In whatever way. //1//

A fire of the seed
Of instinctual consciousness,
The kindling
Of the five aggregates,
And great yogic wisdom
Always will make

A wonderful fire offering.[2355] //2//

The mere sound
Abiding in the center
Of the navel,
Is the secret lotus
Of outer mere sound.
For that, by the fire
Fanned by the wind
Of your own continuum, //3//

There is the perfect union
Of the two organs.
When brilliant radiance blazes,
The secret lotus
Fills up with butter,
Therefore this is called
The vessel. //4//

HAṂ is called the "small ladle;"[2356]
The vajra is expressed
As the large ladle;
The vagina is explained
As the hearth;
And the five senses
The substances
To be burnt. //5//

The aggregates become
The sacrificial firewood;
The butter is explained
As enlightenment spirit.
From the new moon
To the full moon,
For as long as you
Are doing [it],
Invite [them] to come.
The stove is spoken of
As the mere drop;
The large ladle moves. //6//

You should always satisfy

[2355] For variant reading of this chapter up to here, *see* Alaṃka 30A.

[2356] In the fire *puja*, the larger ladle is called *dgang gzar* and the smaller *blugs gzar*. Personal Communication with Lozang Jamspal.

Buddha Moharatī
And so forth,
Rūpavajrā and so forth,
The Bodhisattvas
And the ten Wrathful Kings --
With the fire offering. //7//

Whatever is given
To Vajrasattva,
That is also expressed
As the large offering ladle.
With the mantra perfectly endowed
With HŪṂ PHAT,
You should make the offering,
Pouring into the fire
According to ritual. //8//

When the places of the body
Are delighted by that, [that is]
The unexcelled divine commitment.
Having thus bestowed
As attainments
Whatever desires
You have in mind,
This fire sacrifice
Is called supreme. //9//

From the realization of the Mahāyoga Tantra Glorious Vajra Rosary, the sixtieth chapter on the fire sacrifice of the inner nature.

Chapter Sixty-One

The Ritual of Eating the Five Nectars

Then spoke Vajra Lord:

Drinking the five nectars
Is the supreme reality
That makes all attainments.
The respective families, //1//

Vairocana, Akṣobhya,
Amoghasiddhi, Amitābha
And Ratnadhvaja,[2357]
[Have] the character
Of the five nectars.[2358] //2//

Blood is the Great Jewel Lord,
And semen, Amitābha,
Similarly, Amoghasiddhi
Is meat, and likewise
Akṣobhya is piss.[2359]
Shit is explained
As Vairocana --
These are the five
Supreme nectars! //3//

[In] a pleasant wilderness,
Isolated from people,
Abandoning the tone of sound,
Build a house.
The house should be
Two stories, with a door. //4//

You should make
One story underground
And the others above.
The others you should
Make secret,
So the worldly ones
Only know one. //5//

The practitioner knows
All reality
And knows mantra,
The vast great-minded one.
Firm, compassionate and skilled,
He abandons jealousy
Towards objects. //6//

These are the qualities
Of the chief practitioner.

[2357] Reading *rin chen rgyal mtshan* as an alternative form of *rin chen 'byung ldan*; both indicating Ratnasambhava.
[2358] For variant reading of this and preceding paragraph, *see* Alaṃka 30A-B.
[2359] Lit. vajra water.

The one who has these qualities
Is the best friend
Of practitioners.
He abandons passion
And dispassion.
Effortless and without craving,
An ascetic without anger,
Learned and optimistic. //7//

First, both bodies[2360]
Are purified by fruit
And so forth.
Then you repeat
The mantra urging Suṃbharāja
One hundred thousand times. //8//

OṂ SUṂ BHA NI SUṂ BHA
HŪṂ HŪṂ PHAT
OṂ GRIHN̲A GRIH̲NA
HŪṂ HŪṂ PHAT
OM GRIHN̲A PA YA
GRIHN̲A PA YA
HŪṂ HŪṂ PHAT
OM Ā NA YA HO
BHA GA WĀ NA
PIDYA RĀ DZA
HŪṂ HŪṂ PHAT //9//

Then the practitioner
Should silently
Repeat the three letters
For a month.
Momentarily he will see
Samantabhadra,
Chief of beings,
In a dream. //10//

Then he commands:
"You should serve
A supreme young girl,
Creating incomparable benefit
For sentient beings.
Such a one is Vajradhara. //11//

[2360] *I.e.* the yogi/nī and consort.

A fortunate girl,
Wide-eyed
Adorned with form
And youth,
Without craving,
But with a lustful mind,
Intoxicatingly charming,
And dancing gracefully, //12//

A beautiful one,
With bluish complexion
And swelling breasts,
Without thought construction
But very learned--
The practitioner should desire
Until semen emerges. //13//

Then, having taken both elements,
The face and lotus,[2361]
You should place [them]
In that lotus vessel,
[Waiting] seven days
As a good sign.[2362] //14//

In the second
And third spring months,[2363]
Having taken
Bull, horse, dog, cow,
And human [meats],
[And what was]
From the place of birth,[2364]
Similarly, there, gradually, //15//

There, in that very
Lotus vessel,
You should place [them]
For seven days.
You should repeat

[2361] *I.e.* semen and blood.
[2362] Per Lozang Jamspal, you mix the substances, then smear them on the vagina or lotus vessel. Where substances are put together, that's called the "lotus vessel." This may also be describing how to make pills. Personal Communication.
[2363] I am guessing that this means the waxing and waning of the moon.
[2364] *I.e.* the vagina.

The mantra of the three letters
For twenty-one days. //16//

Without companion,
[In] an isolated place,
You should place [them]
In the lotus vessel
Made from good sandalwood
Arranged with the mantra
DZAḤ HŪṂ BAM HOḤ. //17//

Having brewed in equal parts
Goats milk, sesame oil,
Melted butter and white sugar,
Placing them together
In a vessel, mix [them]. //18//

The wise one should make a pill
With the mere measurement
Of a juniper pit.
Having dried [them] in shadow,
You should produce gradually
And eat [them]. //19//

Eat together with [your]
Vajra brothers, sisters
And relatives,
[And] after a month,
[With your] friends
And servants. //20//

You start on the waning moon
Of the eighth, tenth,
Or fourteenth lunar month
Making ritual cakes from that,
Unexcelled in all activities. //21//

From that attainments
Are also born.
He achieves without effort
Complete realization
Of the Great Seal,
Vast attainments
And the peaceful and so forth.

Learning the reality
Of energy-wind,
You will achieve
Flight. //22//

From the realization of the Mahāyoga Tantra Glorious Vajra Rosary, the sixty-first chapter on the ritual of eating the five nectars.

Chapter Sixty-Two

The *Gaṇacakra* Ritual and Mixing with the Yoginī

Now furthermore listen
And I will explain.
The *Gaṇacakra*[2365]
Is the supreme ritual
By which the supreme attainment
Of the Conqueror's children
Arises from worship. //1//

Together with the yogi,
Who abides [in the feast]
Because of accomplishment,
The Seal knows the sign
And engages in the commitment.[2366]
//2//

Those assembled are most excellent
And are called "*Gaṇacakra*."
All abide in the commitment,
Abandoning all conceptuality. //3//

Abiding in the commitment
With faith in the guru,
Adorned with the good qualities
Of giving and so forth,
If there are not obstructions
Of the "method,"
They engage in the *Gaṇacakra*. //4//

[2365] Lit. "assembly circle."
[2366] For variant reading up to here and preceding paragraph, *see* Alaṃka 30B.

Otherwise, there would be fault,
And they would not accomplish
In the *Gaṇacakra*.
But wisdom is equal to method,
And the companion
Should be good and very wise. //5//

Having abandoned those
More than twenty-five years old,
If of all of method
And discriminating wisdom
There is [but] one,
There is no benefit.[2367] //6//

First, in a beautiful
And pleasant place
You should make
A flower mandala.
That very one [you]
Having placed [one's self]
In meditative equipoise,
Should make various offerings. //7//

Offer the main [mandala deity]
All things, similar to Vajrasattva.
After making
The *Gaṇacakra* offering,
Looking one way
Then the other,[2368] //8//

In a state of faith,
Having meditated
With the view
Of considering all equally,
One who finds a contradiction
Between scripture
And worldly things
Should not enter. //9//

Furthermore, it is stated
In scripture

[2367] *I.e.* you need both.
[2368] Lit.: By the forward and reverse mandala methods.

That you should
Summon at midnight.
You make offerings
To the Master Protector
As you request [him]
To take [his] seat. //10//

The seat should have
The great seal of Vajrasattva.
The Vajra Master himself sits
In the center of the chakra
Of wisdom.
The other mandala ones
You should similarly
Arrange in place
In the mandala.
You should know [them]
As the mandala ones. //11//

In the *Gaṇacakra*
You should never
Talk, argue and the like,
Spit, laugh,
Spread legs and so forth,
Or get up again and again. //12//

The assemblants should do
And know how to do
By gesture [and] signal.
You should not deliberately
Dance and sing
In the *Gaṇacakra*. //13//

You should offer
To the main one
A supreme vessel,
A one-piece [skull],
The best characteristic,
[Or], lacking that,
A three-piece [skull]. //14//

Filling [it] up with divine liquor
And so forth,
Well equipoised,
Offer [it].
For each individual

In the assembly,
Fill up the vessel
With heaps of flowers. //15//

First, give the great ritual cake,
Eating [it] and so forth as before.
Whoever loses [her] ecstasy
Should not drink like that. //16//

Having prostrated again
And again,
You should drink from
The binding gesture.[2369]
Then eat all the food
That has been purified
And so forth,
Completely purifying [it]. //17//

By OṂ ĀḤ HŪṂ
You should purify,
Increase and realize.
Saffron, sandalwood and hero,[2370]
Ice and musk --
These are the five purifying nectars.
You should always use this food. //18//

By putting together
[Your] thumb and ring finger,
You should taste
The hero and yoginī in succession
With the tip of [your] tongue.
You should always place
[Your] mind on the mouth
In the center of the lotus.
You should make
The unexcelled offering! //19//

In the middle of the lotus bud
Is said to be the seat
Of the heroes.
If the hero doesn't know
The characteristics of

[2369] *I.e.* from your cupped palm. Personal Communication with Lozang Jamspal.
[2370] Tib. *dpa' bo*, "hero," is probably Skt., *vīrya*, which can also mean "semen."

Of the genuine hero,
There will be no result
From that [*gaṇa*] *cakra*
That is requesting
All attainments. //20//

Whoever practices
The outer and inner nature
[In] little stages like that,
Will become perfectly attained.
To bestow the effect
Of the *Gaṇacakra*. //21//

One who mingles
With the yoginīs
Should listen
To what I will explain.
When some wicked ḍākinīs
Come in order
To attract attention,
The practitioner at that time
Should not even speak
To them, and[2371] //22//

Should not answer even
With one word,
[But] should welcome [them]
Or make a gesture.
If anyone speaks
A little to them,
It should be
The master himself. //23//

Or, all activities
Should be done
By the vajra assistant,
Because of which,
If there are no other
Vajra assistants,
Whoever [can serve as]
Vajrasattva. //24//

He should summon

[2371] For variant reading of this paragraph, *see* Alaṃka 30B.

Again and again
Yoginīs of various types.
Towards them [however]
There is no perverted behavior.
The Master should act
Like a hero. //25//

By whatever faulty conduct
His body will release,[2372]
Giving rise to great ecstasy.
He should command [them]
To dance. //26//

He should, moreover,
Control the vajra.
Delighting the deities
In whatever way,
If you wish to offer
Mother, sister or daughter, //27//

By the ritual
Of wisdom [and] method,
He should demonstrate[2373]
Through non-conceptuality.
In this, you will doubtless
Achieve supreme attainment. //28//

Take the leftover ritual cake
Go to a great wilderness,
[And] throw it away.
You should say the mantra
KSHMIṂ UTSTSHISHTA
KSHE TRA PĀ LĀ YA SVĀ HĀ[2374] //29//

Further, if you see
A yoginī doing [something] there,
You should recognize her
As follows. //30//

You should know
The excellent characteristics

[2372] *I.e.* experience orgasm. *See* Hartzell 1997, 932, quoting the *Kālacakratantra*, "When the wisdom consort's *dharma* rises, i.e. when she has an orgasm, and the male initiate's 'pleasure' (*sukham*) falls, i.e. when he ejaculates ...."

[2373] Should this be *bsten*, like in Chapter 2?

[2374] "I offer the leftovers to the field protector."

Of the yogi[nī],[2375]
By which [her] face
Is glowing with light,
Round, smooth and gentle,
And long-eyebrowed.
//31//

She rises from the clan
Of Amitābha.
She shows him
The lotus gesture.
The tortoise gesture
Is the response. //32//

Wet[2376]-lipped, almond-eyed,
Golden-complected,
An enchantress,
On her brow three designs,
Placed up to [her] hairline,
She listens well to the news
Of those who died in battle. //33//

If you see this kind
Of ḍākinī,
You should show
The spear gesture.
You draw in [your] left leg
And she shows you
The dancing [gesture]. //34//

Having turned [her] left leg,
You should respond
To the Seal.
She delights in various clothing,
Arising from the family
Of Ratnasambhava. //35//

If you see signs like
Black skin and black clothing,
Curly hair tied
With a silk ribbon,
An outline of a bow

[2375] Although the Tibetan has *rnal 'byor pa*, "yogi," I think the context calls for *rnal 'byor ma*, "yoginī."
[2376] Should be *rlon*?

On [her] forehead, //36//

Her mind always agile,
She is known as "Mamo."
You should show
The bell gesture,
Showing the gesture
To her left.
Know [her] as arising
From the family of Akṣobhya. //37//

Excellent beings
Who come at night,
Short-bellied, pale,
Fat-calved, very pretty,
You should know [her]
As earth-mover.
The conch gesture
Is the response.
She arises from
The family of Vairocana. //38//

Wide-eyed, thick browed,
Hair on all [her] limbs,
Blue [complected], red-eyed,
Limbs thin, arms long,
She is well known
As ḍākinī. //39//

She arises from
The family of Amoghasiddhi.
If you see one like her,
The banner gesture
And the left gesture
Are the responses. //40//

Thus, having known
With effort,
The wise having gone
At night,
You should not fear her
[Even] a little,
[But] because of that
You should worship
That very one! //41//

From the realization of the Mahāyoga Tantra Glorious Vajra Rosary, the sixty-second chapter on the *gaṇacakra* ritual and the yoginī and such.

Chapter Sixty-Three

Explanation of the Secret Words[2377]

Then, moreover, listen
To what I will explain.
Listen with faithful minds
And I will explain
The meaning of secret words
In vajra places
And so forth
[And other] places, //1//

Yoginīs arising
From all clans,
The commitment
Of meeting at night,
Words like these,
And similar secrets. //2//

SAṂ PO TA KAṂ
Is drinking liquor,
BRI RAṂ SHA RU
Is to clearly express,
NI LA NA PA TRAṂ[2378]
A skull,[2379]
And KU LAṂ
Is adorned
With human bone. //3//

KUN DU RAṂ
Is using desire,
TSHA DRUṂ
Eating the six tastes,

[2377] See Wedemeyer 1999, B:62a-b, 300-01.
[2378] So, in Lhasa *ni la na pa tram thod dang*; in Stok *na li ni pa tram thod dang*; and in Alaṃka *na lan pa tram thod pa dang*.
[2379] The variant readings from Alaṃka for these three lines can be found at Alaṃka 30B.

SAṂ PU TAṂ[2380]
Is applying
The two organs,
A LO KAṂ[2381]
Is the name existing.[2382] //4//

SHA RIM GA KAṂ is knowing
You are lucky,
TSA TRA KAṂ is called unlucky,
TUṂ SHAṂ RAṂ is knowing
You are melting,
ME GA MA TRAṂ is said
For musk. //5//

TSANDRA MA[2383]
Is explained as blood,
GA NAṂ[2384]
Is known as shit,
GHA NAṂ,[2385]
Is explained as great meat,
NI DZAṂ[2386]
Is expressed for *soma*. //6/

BHA SA NAṂ[2387]
Is explained as water,
PAKSHAṂ[2388]
Is explained as a limb,
SHU PA[2389]
Is expressed for good,
HO is known as "satisfied." //7//

MARGA[2390]
Is expressed for hungry,

[2380] Following Stok Palace's *sampuṭa*, "coitus."
[2381] Skt. *āloka*, "light."
[2382] Professor Jamspal suggests this should be *ali gang yod pa yi ming*, meaning "whatever vowels are there, it is the name [of the person practicing]. Personal Communication with Prof. Lozang Jamspal, 10-31-06.
[2383] Skt. *candra*, "moon."
[2384] Skt. *gaṇa*, "heap."
[2385] Skt. "strike," "kill."
[2386] Skt. *nija*, "innate," "native."
[2387] Skt. *bhaṣaṇa*, "speech," but also *bahana,* "flowing."
[2388] Skt. "side."
[2389] Skt. *śubhaṃ*, "good."
[2390] Skt. "path."

GHRI TAṂ[2391]
Is explained as path, and
KHYO MA GAṂ NAṂ
Other side,
KA MA YA means do. //8//

NA GA RAṂ[2392]
Means one's own body,
BA TA KA
Means "buy,"
A DZAṂ YA
Means "fire,"
SHA KHAṂ
Means "eat." //9//

RAG MA ḤDOR
Means ritual,
SHA TA KAṂ
Means eat,
Such things are expressed
As "mantra."
SHA RAṂ means cooking dog. //10//

RAṂ BA KA
Is explained as guru,
KA YA
Here means *kṣatrtiya*,
RA GAṂ
Is explained as "*vaiṣya*,"
BE RAṂ
Means *śūdra*. //11//

TSA BAṂ
Means "untouchable,"
SHA RAṂ
Means "having a mole,"
BHA BA TSA KRAṂ
Is shoemaker,
KHAD KOM
Is explained as cremator. //12//

SA MANTRA
Means king,

[2391] Skt. “melted butter.”
[2392] Skt. “person.”

MI RAṂ MA YI
Is expressed for long,
BHA RA HA
Is explained as full,
You should say
BIMKHYA
For pig. //13//

BA LAṂ
Means "fish,"
DI NAM RA
Explained as goat,
NAG TUṂ
Explained as fire offering,
MARTA A HNA
Means bird. //14//

HI RA PHYU
Means flower,
SHA DRUL LAṂ
Incense,
MĀ LA TRI
Is explained as scent,
SHA KU
Is explained as butter lamp. //15//

KA SHI KAṂ[2393]
Is explained as clothing,
KE SA RA
Means face,
PAṂ TRAṂ
Means forehead,
MA LA
Is well-known as eyebrow. //16//

KO BAL YAṂ
Is known as eye,
A DAR
Means teeth,
PAL LA BO
Is known as lips,
PA SHA
Is known as throat. //17//

[2393] *I.e. c*lothes made in Varanasi. Personal Communication with Lozang Jamspal, 11-6-06.

HŪṂ
Is explained as shoulders,
A GU RO
Means arms,
SO SO RU
Is explained as hand,
SHRI PANG LE
Means breast. //18//

DZA TAṂ PHA LAṂ
Means arms,
DAL NAṂ
Means navel,
PADMA DZA
The secret place path,
KA TAṂ BA KAṂ
The two thighs. //19//

BE SAṂ
Is explained as shin,
TSWA GA NA
Is expressed for foot,
BA RA A KA KE SAR
Is perfectly explained as nails. /20//

As for PADMA GAR NI GA,
Light,
SHA KRA KU SU LAṂ
As bed,
SHAG TU
Is expressed for "son,"
NA LA NI RNA LAM
As without teacher. //21//

GO BAG SHMA
Is expressed for all paths,
SA GA RAṂ
Is explained as old,
SA LAṂ
Means delicious taste,
AKSHO RAṂ RIM
Is explained as not tasty. //22//

MRĪ GAṂ
Is explained as not speaking,

PA GO LA MU DAṂ
As singing,
MI TRA
Is expressed for "dancing,"
SHAPTA
Is explained as putting on airs. //23//

SPAR SHA
Is well-known as noose,
RASA[2394]
Bringing food to the dancer,
RU PAṂ
As a mountain peak,
TWA NE HA
Is explained as killing. //24//

PĀ RĀ BA TA
Is expressed for dying,
TA MA LĀ KO SE MA
As country,
PHA LAṂ
Is expressed for city,
PRA NA
Is explained as village. //25//

THYA NYA
Is explained as "life,"
KU RU TA RA
Is expressed for skill,
NA YA NA
Means consciousness,
A BHI NA BAṂ
Is explained as placing. //26//

RU DHI RA[2395]
Is expressed for embracing,
KU MU RA
Is explained as day,
KAN NYA
Is well-known as night,
DA SA
Is explained as half a day,
And DA PI

[2394] Reading *rasa* for *ras*.
[2395] Skt. for "blood."

Is known as part of the night. //27//

From the realization of the Mahāyoga Tantra Glorious Vajra Rosary, the sixty-third chapter on the explanation of the secret words.

Chapter Sixty-Four

Explanation of the Mandala of Body, Speech and Mind

Then furthermore listen,
And I will explain!
The body mandala
Of body, speech and mind
Flows as enlightenment spirit
As the thirty-two [channels]
Located in the head. //1//

Distinguishing each of those
You should know [it]
As the Body Chakra.
By division of the parts
Of the letters,
You know [it]
As the Place for Speech. //2//

Distinguishing the instincts
Of desire and so forth,
You know [it]
As the Mind Mandala.[2396]
Oh great hero,
Listen to the explanation
Of body, speech and mind! //3//

The bodies of the Conquerors
Are respectively situated
In the body
Of this Vajra Master.
First, the Body Vajra
Sits in the form aggregate. //4//

[2396] For the variant reading of this chapter up to here, *see* Alaṃka 30B.

Then the Space Vajra sits
In the feeling aggregate.
The Vajra
Of the Lord's Speech sits
In the discrimination aggregate. //5//

The Actions Vajra sits
In the motivation aggregate.
The Vajra
Of the Lord's Mind sits
In the consciousness aggregate. //6//

Also in the flesh and so forth
Of this one,
The element of earth,
Sits Transcendent Lady Locanā.
In the blood and so forth,
The element of water,
Sits Transcendent Lady Māmakī. //7//

In the element of fire,
Heat and so forth,
Sits Transcendent Lady Pāṇḍaravāsinī.
In the element of wind,
Akṣobhya and so forth,
Sit Transcendent Lady Tārā. //8//

On his two eye organs
Is Tathāgata Kṣitigharba.
On his two ear organs
Is Tathāgata Vajrapāṇi. //9//

On his two nostrils
Is Tathāgata Akāśagarbha.[2397]
Tathāgata Lokeśvara
Sits on his tongue.[2398] //10//

On his mental faculty
Sits Tathāgata Mañjughoṣa.
On the lump with the nature
Of the four elements

[2397] Or *Gaganagañja.*
[2398] Stok Palace reverses these, beginning with *de yi*.

Designated as "body,"
Sits Tathāgata
Sarvanirvaraṇaviṣkambhini. //11//

In all the body's joints,
Tathāgata Samantabhadra,
In all the body's sinews,
Tathāgata Meitreya. //12//

On the root of the right hand
Is Tathāgata Yamāntaka,
On the root of the left hand
Is Tathāgata Aparājita.
Sitting on the lotus of the mouth
Is Tathāgata Hayagrīva. //13//

Sitting in the secret place
Is Tathāgata Amṛtakuṇḍalinī,
Sitting on the right shoulder
Is Tathāgata Akṣobhya,
Sitting on the left shoulder
Is Tathāgata Takkirāja. //14//

Sitting on the right knee
Is Tathāgata Nīlandaṇḍa,
Sitting on the left knee
Is Tathāgata Mahābala. //15//

Sitting on top of his head
Is Tathāgata Cakravartin,
Sitting below [his] feet
Is Tathāgata Sumba. //16//

All of the Tathāgatas sit here
In his entire body,
Called the "body mandala,"
The body
Of Vajrasattva himself. //17//

By dividing Vajrasattva,
All of these perfect Buddhas,
Are the Buddha bodies
Without remainder.
The yogi in this birth
Will quickly attain Nirvana. //18//

He bestows virtue on you.
Therefore, all the Victors
Sit in the body
Of the Vajra Master.
If you see [it],
There is benefit, hey! //19//

The *Mahāsattva*
In the later time,[2399]
Therefore, by all sentient beings,
Having made efforts
By the goods offered
To the deity,
Serves the guru. //20//

Then, meaningfully seeing,
The Bodhisattva known as great,
Having prostrated
With joy and rejoicing,
Sheds tears for the guru
[And] sits in the mandala
Of speech and mind. //21//

Having said "Well done,"
The Lord
Says these words:
A, ā, i, ī, u, ū,
ri, rī, li, lī, e, ai, and
o, au, aṃ, aḥ,
The so-called vowels, //22//

The groups of *ka, ca,*
ṭa, ta and *pa,*
ya, ra, la, wa, ṣa,[2400]
And *ha,*
He knows the mandala
Of speech,
Having emitted all
[Of the sounds of] speech,
The instincts of desire
And so forth,
Twenty-eight in number.[2401] //23//

[2399] *I.e.* the degenerate age.
[2400] *Ṣa* here presumably stands in for all three sibilants.
[2401] Counting the above as written, however, totals twenty-seven.

By increasing well
The mandala of mind,
You will know
The glorious supreme actions.
Thus the [*Secret*] Community yogis
Increase the supremely wonderful
Supreme commitment
Of the three vajras.
The Lord of Practice knows [this]. //24//

From the realization of the Mahāyoga Tantra Glorious Vajra Rosary, the sixty-fourth chapter on the explanation of the mandala of body, speech and mind.

Chapter Sixty-Five

Developing the Words of the Buddha, Holy Reality, Sangha and So Forth

Then spoke the Vajra Lord:

Gathering all the characteristics
Of Buddha, the Holy Reality,
And Sangha,
The guru, teacher,
And master,
Vajradhara and the disciple, //1//

You become
The stainless mind: Buddha.
You speak perfectly
As the Dharma.
You make [your] body
"The Sangha,"
The place of the host
Of bodhisattvas.[2402] //2//

[2402] This paragraph and the first two lines of the preceding one are identical to Alaṃka's text. 31A.

Buddha is explained
As the syllable HŪṂ,
Speech is expressed
As the syllable ĀḤ,
[Having] the nature
Of emanating everywhere. //3//

Buddha becomes
The *Avadhūtī*,
Reality is expressed
As the *Lalanā*,
The sangha is expressed
As the *Rasanā* --
The characteristics
Of these three. //4//

The formless realm
Becomes Buddha,
The form realm Reality,
And, similarly,
The desire realm the Sangha.
Thus are the supreme characteristics
Of the three realms. //5//

None other than
Your own life
Becomes the essence
In the three realms.
Illusory are the
Three realms of wind.
You see [them]
Like dreaming a dream. //6//

Alone you will quickly see
That the nature
Of the three realms
Is like that.
Having been blessed
Just like that,
You will quickly
Achieve attainments. //7//

Buddha is the
Complete Enjoyment Body,
The Holy Reality
Is the Truth Body,

The Sangha becomes
As the Emanation Body. //8//

Luminance is the form of Buddha,
The Dharma is imminence,
The Sangha becomes radiance.
Those are the characteristics
Of the three luminances. //9//

Well-versed in the peaceful
And so forth activities,
Knowing the components
Of mantra and yoga,
Learned in the actions
Of the twenty rituals,
That is the guru.[2403] //10//

Purely ethical and generous,
Having supreme patience
And diligence,
Absorbed in meditation
Day and night,
Skilled in wisdom
And crafts,
In general the guru
[With this] host of good qualities
Is called "Glorious Master." //11//

Internally, he delights
In the Secret Community,
Externally, he behaves
Like a *śrāvaka*.
He teaches disciples
Such personal instructions
Step by step --
That one is called a teacher. //12//

Speaking those words
And doing such things,
One who teaches
And causes the teaching of others
In a multitude of ideas
And mandalas,

[2403] For variant reading of this verse, *see* Alaṃka 31A.

Activities with holy meaning,
And further, the three luminosities
And the conduct
Of supreme yoga --
That one is called "Master."[2404] //13//

He knows the ten realities,
He knows the activities
Of the mandala
And so forth,
Able to gather disciples
And bestow
The secret empowerment,
Endowed with perfect
Wisdom and compassion,
Not fearing
The personal instructions
Of tantra, //14//

Perfectly endowed
With the profound
And the vast,
He is a supreme
Second Vajrasattva.
Skilled in refuting
And benefitting,
He is explained
As Vajradhara.[2405] //15//

Faithful and also respectful
To the guru,
He always is found
In virtuous activities.
He is non-dual
And also guileless,
And has abandoned
Those with bad conceptions. //16//

He has studied many scriptures[2406]
And abandoned killing
And violence.
With a mind [set]

[2404] For variant reading of this and prior verse, *see* Alaṃka 31A.
[2405] This verse is identical with Alaṃka. 31A.
[2406] For variant reading of the five lines ending here, *see* Alaṃka 31B.

On delivering sentient beings,
He is perfectly endowed
With constant effort.
He has [all of] these [things]
And so forth. //17//

You should certainly
Know him as
A good disciple
Of great faith[2407]
In whom there is
Emptiness compassion inseparable. //18//

He meditates on
Unexcelled supreme activity,
The stages and so forth
Of mantra and yoga,
The purity of the five wisdoms,
The nature of the five Buddhas,
[And], by the five
Manifest enlightenments,
On the characteristics
Of the three luminosities
And the three bodies:
Truth, enjoyment
And emanation, and //19//

The characteristics
Of the good qualities
Of great bliss,
And the division
Of the ecstasies
And so forth, and,
Similarly, the delights[2408]
Of the charming one
And so forth. //20//

He engages and remains in
And rises from[2409]
Yoga, Anuyoga,
Atiyoga and Mahāyoga,

[2407] I am tempted to translate this as "A good disciple with great faith should certainly know...." but there is no agentive subject for *shes pa*.
[2408] *Nyams, rasa.*
[2409] Would be happier with a *las* here, but can't make any other sense of *ldang*.

First by gathering short practice,
Then the Supreme Mandala King,
The Supreme King of Actions. //21//

The tantra in which
Completion stage yoga,
The two blisses
And the two exhalations
And so forth
Are extensively explained
Is called a *Mahāyoga* Tantra.[2410] //22//

A tantra of such good qualities,
Is called the "support and vessel"
Of the supreme good qualities
Of listening and so forth.
It is adorned
With all the signs, and, //23//

Just as you shouldn't place
The milk of a lion
In an earthen vessel,
Similarly, you shouldn't give
A *Mahāyoga* tantra
To [those] who
Are not [proper] vessels. //24//

If he explains
The personal instructions
To one not a [proper] vessel,
The student will instantly die,
This and [his] future lives
Will be lost
And the Master
Will lose [his] attainments. //25//

From the realization of the Mahāyoga Tantra Glorious Vajra Rosary, the sixty-fifth chapter on developing the words of the Buddha, holy Dharma, Sangha and so forth.

[2410] For variant reading of this and preceding line, *see* Alaṃka 31B.

Chapter Sixty-Six

Teaching the Results of the Actions of Peace and So Forth

The spoke the Vajra Lord:
As for engaging
In the activities of a disciple,
Also [for] the peaceful
And so forth activities,
You [do] mantra
And yoga gradually. //1//

Using shoes, umbrellas,
Crowns and betel nuts,
Spitting out lumps of mucus
And saliva and so forth,
Spreading legs apart,[2411] //2//

Looking at others, speaking boldly,
Pride of wealth, egotism,
Watching gambling and so forth,
Speaking carelessly,
Stepping over the guru's shadow,
The multitude of those
And similar faults--
You should abandon
In the presence of the guru.[2412] //3//

Fearfully, with clasped palms,
Receiving instruction
With hands on crown,
Promising to give
All [his] possessions,
Shy and looking down,
The disciple should remain
Before the guru. //4//

If they wish supreme attainment,
The disciples in front of the guru
Should "conduct" [themselves]
Like that and so forth.

[2411] For variant readings in this and prior verse, *see* Alaṃka 31B.
[2412] This and the prior line are identical in Alaṃka. 31B.

The commitment [and] vows
Have been explained above. //5//

These are the behaviors
Of the disciples.
The peaceful and so forth
Activities for them
Are suitable to be taught
By the guru.
I will briefly explain this.[2413] //6//

The elements
Of ordinary ritual,
Peaceful and extensive,
You should do
On the waxing moon.
The activities of power
And fierce activities,
You should undertake
On the waning moon. //7//

For peaceful [activities]
You face north,
Similarly, for extensive [activities]
You look east.
Fierce activities
On the south side,
For activities of power,
Look to the west. //8//

For killing, the direction
Of fire,[2414]
For activities of anger,
From the place
In the free from truth
Direction,[2415]
For punishing,
Of expelling wind,[2416]
For hypnotizing,
The direction of power.[2417] //9//

[2413] For variant reading of this verse, *see* Alaṃka 31B.
[2414] The southeast.
[2415] The southwest.
[2416] The northwest.
[2417] The northeast.

White is the complexion
Of peace;
For extensive,
You should make yellow;
For power and summoning,
Red;
The black complexion
Is for killing. //10//

For peaceful [activities],
A loving mind,
For extensive, an ecstatic mind,
For power, a desirous mind,
For killing, an angry mind. //11//

For peaceful [activities],
Usually you should act at dawn,
Similarly, for extensive
You should act in the morning.
For power and fierce activities,
At noon and midnight. //12//

Thus I have suitably explained.
By the characteristics
Spoken in the tantra of mantra,
The intelligent one
Should perform according to ritual
The eight attainments
Of peace and so forth. //13//

From the realization of the Mahāyoga Tantra Glorious Vajra Rosary, the sixty-sixth chapter on the teaching of the result of the peaceful activities and so forth.

Chapter Sixty-Seven

The Eight Attainments
Of Fierce Recitation and Peaceful and So Forth

Then listen further
And I will explain.[2418]
The characteristic
Of reciting fierce [mantras]
Explains the attainments of yoga.
This you will doubtless achieve. //1//

Reciting with a wrathful mind
The so-called "fierce repetition,"[2419]
Or by applying
The mantra recitation
Of the fierce kings.
You should know
That fierce recitation.
It bestows the fruit
Of the eight attainments. //2//

In a fearsome charnel ground,
A terrifying, terrifying place,
Smeared with the blood
Of a human skull,
You take the character
Of the unwounded one. //3/

Mixing human semen
And menstrual blood
The form to be practiced there
Is to be drawn
And [it should be] clear
And fearsome and scary. //4//

As for the one stomping
With an extended left leg,
In the three times [of day]
Up to seven days,

[2418] Alaṃka agrees with Stok on *bshad kyis*.
[2419] For variant reading up to here and of the prior verse, *see* Alaṃka 32A.

You should recite
This mantra of Yamāntaka
As the cause of attainment: //5//

NA MAḤ SA MANTA
KĀ YA WAK TSITTA
BADZRA NĀṂ
OṂ KHA KHA KHĀHI KHĀHI
SARBA DUSHTA
SA TVA DAMAKA
A SI MU SA LA PAR SHU
PĀ SHA HASTA[2420] //6//

KHADGA BĀ MA TA
RA TSA NI HASHTHA
TSA TUR MU KHA
TSA TUR BHU DZA
SHA TA TSA RA NA
Ā GATSTSHA Ā GATSTSHA
SARBA DUSHTA
PRA NĀ A PA HĀ RI NE[2421] //7//

MA HĀ BI GHNĀM GHĀ TA KA
BI KRI TE ĀNĀṂ
SARBBA BHŪTA
BHA YAṂ KA RA
ATTA ATTA HĀ SA NĀ DI NE
BYĀ GHRA TSARMMA NI
PĀ SA NA KU RU KU RU
SARBBA KRMMĀ NI[2422] //8//

TSTSHINDA TSTSHINDA
SARBBA MANTRĀM
BHINDA BHINDA
PA RA MU DRĀ NA
Ā KARSHA YA Ā KARSHA YA
SARBBA BHŪ TĀṂ
MA THA MA THA
NI RMA THA NI RMA THA
SARBA DUSHTĀ NA [2423] //9//

[2420] I bow down to all [*samanta*?] of the body speech and mind of the vajra ones. Eat! Eat! Tamer of all wicked beings! In [his] hand a sword, club, axe and lasso, a chopper [in his] left hand,

[2421] [With] the index finger [in the warning mudra], four faces, four arms, six legs, take away the life of all the evil ones!

[2422] Deformed face one! [*I.e.* buffalo-faced Yamāntaka]. Terrifying all ghosts! Making a laughing sound of "atta, atta," [should be AHA, AHA?], wearing a tiger skin [*carma*], Do! Do! All actions!

PRA BE SHA YA
PRA BE SHA YA
MANDALA MADHYE
BAI BA SHĀ TA
DZĪ BI TA ANTA KA RA
KU RU KU RU HA NA HA NA
DA HA DA HA PATSA PATSA
MĀ BI LAMPA MĀ BI LAMPA[2424] //10//

SA MA YA MA NU SMA RA
HŪṂ HŪṂ TARDZA YA
BHA GA NAṂ[2425] PHAT PHAT
SPHO TA YA SPHO TA YA
KĀ RA KĀ RA SARBBA
Ā NA NA BA RI BĪ RA
PŪ RŪ[2426] YA
HE HE[2427] BHA GA BĀM
KINTSI RĀ YA SI NA
NAMAḤ SARBBA
THA SĀ DHA YA
HŪṂ PHAT SVĀ HĀ. [2428] //11//

First, this fierce recitation
Is excellent for controlling
And summoning.
I will explain expelling. //12//

Reciting the second fierce one
[While] mixing with
The index finger
Seeds, salt, mustard,
Poison, datura juice
And blood, //13//

[2423] Cut! Cut! [With] all mantras, split! Split! [Usually in Yamāntaka, it's *sarva śatrum* (enemies). Personal Communication with Lozang Jamspal. Seal! Summon! Summon! All ghosts! Kill! Kill! Pulverize! Pulverize! All evil ones.

[2424] Enter! Enter! The middle of the mandala. [VAIBASHĀTA?]. Terminate the living one! Do! Do! Kill! Kill! Burn! Burn! Roast! Roast! Don't be late!

[2425] Stok Palace has *bhe ga anaṃ*.

[2426] Stok Palace has RĀ.

[2427] Stok Palace has HI HI.

[2428] Remember the pledge! HŪṂ HŪṂ! Warning! Hurry! PHAT PHAT! Shatter! Shatter! Do! Do! Hero, fill up all faces! (Per Lozang Jamspal something is wrong here. Personal Communication 12-19-06.) Stok Palace has *parivīrapuraya*. The rest of this phrase is unclear to me, maybe something like HE HE BHAGAVAN, KIMCIT....what is RĀYASINA?] … I bow down. Make all goals! HŪṂ PHAT SVĀHĀ.

You should draw
A wind mandala,
[On] so-called cemetery cloth,
Supreme like a half-moon.
You should mark
The two sides
With a vajra. //14//

In the center of that
Draw the name
Of what you will accomplish.
Standing, spreading
[Your] left leg,
You should recite
This mantra. //15//

Having summoned like before
The name of what
You will accomplish,
In the middle of the night
You should practice constantly
For seven days. //16//

NAMAḤ SA MANTA
KĀ YA WAKA TSITTA
BADZRA NĀM
NA MO BADZRA KHRO DHĀ YA
MA HĀ DAṂ SHTOTA KA T̲A
BHAI RA WĀ YA
A SI MU SA LA PA RA SHU PĀ
SHA HASTĀ YA //17//

OṂ A MRI TU KUNDA LI
KHA KHA KHĀ HI KHĀ HI
TISHTHA THSHTHA
BANDHA BANDHA
HA NA HA NA DA HA DA HA
GRDZDZA GRDZDZA
SPHOTA SPHOTA
BI SPHO TA YA BI SPHO TA YA
SARBBA BI GHNĀṂ
BI NĀ YA KĀ NA
MA HĀ GA NA PA TI
DZĪ BI TA ANTA KA RA YA
HŪṂ PHAT SVĀ HĀ //18//

This mantra is
The "peaceful action"
That is done in order to
Banish evil sentient beings. //19//

As for Aparājita,
Having recited the
Three fierce ones,
Pacifying fire and snakes,
You should visualize
Two HŪṂ's on
Two sun [disks]
On [your] two hands. //20//

With two hands
On the head
Of the one to be cured,
Scratching and
Entering into him,[2429]
You should visualize
Those two [suns]
In the heart
Of the one to be cured
As burning up the ghost. //21//

I should explain the mantra
That terrifies fires and ghosts:

NAMAḤ SA MANTA
KĀ YA WĀ KA TSITTA
BADZRA NĪ
OṂ A PA RĀ DZĪ TI RĪ TSI[2430]
HŪṂ PHAT:
PLEASE RELEASE
SUCH AND SUCH A PERSON
FROM THE INFLUENCE
OF THE GHOST! //22//

Listen and I will explain
That fourth one
DHRIḤ,

[2429] Per Lozang Jamspal, this may mean you scratch HŪṂ on his head. Personal Communication 12-19-06.
[2430] Stok: APARĀJĪ RĪRITI.

The mantra
That dispels poison.
By the recitation
Of fierce Hayagrīva,
Perfect, unexcelled excellence,
You visualize
The person to be cured
As a triple-stacked mind hero.
The wisdom being
Is on a moon [disk].
At the heart. //23//

Supremely visualize
Light rays of that one
Filling up the body
Of the one to be cured.
By that blazing,
The poison [is expelled].
Then visualize [your] right hand
As a moon
Adorned by HAM, //24//

White in color,
Placed on [your] finger.
In that way,
Perform for the patient.
Place HŪṂ DHRI DZI
KSHĪṂ SĀ DHA,
Causing the accomplishing
Of all actions. //25//

Meditate that
Starting from the head
Of the one to be cured
Up to the end of the foot,
An unbroken stream of water
Sends the poison
Down in stages.
Here, you should recite
This mantra called Hayagrīva: //26//

NAMAḤ SA MANTA
KĀ YA WAKA TSITTA
BADZRĀ NĀM
OṂ HŪṂ HŪṂ HŪṂ
TA RU LA BI RU LA

SARBBA BI SHA GHĀ
TA KA TA KA
DZWA LI TI BI SPHU LINGA //27//

ATTĀ ATTA HĀ SA
NĀ DA SAHITĀ
KA SA RI SA HO PA TAṂ AD DE
BADZRA KHU RA GHA TA NA
TSA TA PA SU DHA TA
LA NI SHVĀ
SA MA RU TA UT KSHIPTA
DHA RA NI DHARA //28//

BI SHA NA ATTA HĀ SA
A PA RI MI TA
WA LA PA RĀ KRA MA
ĀRYA GA NA BHITA
BUDDHA BUDDHA
HA YA GRĪ BA KHA KHA
TSTSHINDA TSTSHINDA
Ā BE SHA YA SARBBA
GRA HE SHWA
A PRA TI HA TO BHA WA //29//

BADZRA DAṂ SHTI
KINYTSI RĀ YA SI ID AM
DUSHTA GRA HAṂ DAṂ SHTA
SARBBAM PĀ DHU NA DHU NA
MA THA MA THA
MARDA MARDA
BIDDHA DHARMMA RA DHA
BIDDHA DHARMMA SAṂ GHA
A NU DZNYĀ NA KĀṂ KU RU SVĀ HĀ //30//

PLEASE DISPEL THE POISON
AND SO FORTH FROM SO AND SO HŪṂ,
And intertwine the mantra.
Having followed the root tantra,
You should know the rest
In detail.[2431] //31//

From the realization of the Mahāyoga Tantra Glorious Vajra Rosary, the sixty-seventh chapter on the eight attainments of fierce recitation and peaceful and so forth.

[2431] *See Secret Community Root Tantra*, chs. 14, 15.

Chapter Sixty-Eight

The Epitome of All Attainments

Now furthermore I will explain.
The epitome of all attainments,
Is the supreme wisdom
Of all Buddhas,
The quality of attainment
And so forth. //1//

Kṣitigharba, Vajrapāṇi,
Mañjuśrī, Viṣkambhini
And Meitreya--
These five are intertwined
With the three syllables.
They consecrate
The channel chakras
As eye and ear,
Mind and body. //2//

The three signs
Are like the day,
Causing the attainment
Of the five clairvoyances.[2432]
Through the fourth empowerment,
The intelligent one
Perceives reality.[2433] //3//

Luminance serves as part
Of the night;
The day is radiance.
Dawn is imminence.
Thus, the characteristics
Of luminance and so forth
Are not night,
And are not
Dawn or day,
[But] cause the abandoning
Of the conceptual energy-winds.[2434] //4//

[2432] For variant readings up to here in this chapter, *see* Alaṃka 32A.
[2433] These two lines are identical in Alaṃka. 32A.
[2434] This verse and the first two lines of the next verse are parallel to *PK* ch. 4, vv. 17-18.

It is instant enlightenment,
[Its] character is called momentary.[2435]
Whether arising at the end
Or at the beginning,
Whether arising not in the center
Or in the center, //5//

Whether arising not at the end
Or at the end,
All of these are spoken of
As one instant of emptiness,
Not going or coming anywhere,
Inexhaustible, not increasing
Not nothing, //6//

It has a modest form,
And is immodest,[2436]
Not stationary,
And not going quickly,
Free from all conventions
Of existence and non-existence,
Neither the form of merit
Nor the form of demerit, //7//

Not being the lord
Of merit or demerit,
It becomes supreme.[2437]
All these are stated
As one instant
Of emptiness,
Manifest enlightenment
In an instant.
This characteristic
Is the supreme instant. //8//

Holding the enlightenment spirit
At the tip of the vajra
Is stability of body.
By that [stability],
That very enlightenment spirit

[2435] These two lines are identical in Alaṃka. 32B.
[2436] *I.e.* conventional and ultimate. Personal Communication with Lozang Jamspal.
[2437] Per Nāgārjuna, nihilists go to hell, meritorious go to heaven, and he who gives up both, to Nirvana. Personal communication with Lozang Jamspal.

Is applied to the
Reality of energy-wind. //9//

Therefore the suitable one
Makes [it go] above,
Not aging without a doubt.[2438]
Knowing HŪṂ and HO
Respectively,
Holding increases [it] above. //10//

The five nectars
Explained above
Are called
Elixirs.[2439]
By this,
You will accomplish
Turning iron
Into gold.[2440] //11//

The Vajra Seal
Is the great attainment, [2441]
Accomplished
Through integration.[2442]
The practice
Of the creation stage
And the completion stage--
Wherever those two
Become one,
That is called integration. //12//

By always rejecting
Samsara and Nirvana
As two,
Whenever they become
One thing,
That is explained
As "integration." //13//

Conventional and ultimate

[2438] Variant readings for these two lines and the preceding paragraph found at Alaṃka 32B.
[2439] These two lines are identical to Alaṃka. 32B.
[2440] For variant reading of these two lines, *see* Alaṃka 32B.
[2441] Per Lozang Jamspal, when you can transform iron into gold, then you can engage in consort practice. Personal Communication.
[2442] These two lines are identical to Alaṃka. 32B.

Are always free from duality,
Whenever they are mixed,
That is explained
As "integration." //14//

By practicing vajra repetition,
Knowing the characteristics
Of energy-wind,
You cut the winds
Of conceptuality,
You will attain
Perception of mind. //15//

By the stage
Of self-consecration,
The eight attainments
Will be accomplished.
Knowing the division
Of the light
And so forth,
You will attain the stage
Of manifest enlightenment. //16//

Abiding in the state of integration,
You gather all attainments.
By means of yoga,
You will accomplish
In this very life,
Without any doubt! //17//

Entering into non-conceptuality,
By the concentration of integration
In the great accomplishment
Of the Great Seal,
There is no doubt
In this attainment. //18//

The body transforms
Into a measureless mansion
Supported by all the Buddhas,[2443]
Divided into four sides,
Front and back,
Right and left. //19//

[2443] For variant reading of these two lines, *see* Alaṃka 32B.

Divided into upper
And lower,
It is explained
As "four doors."
The shape of
The four nose tips
Should be expressed
As four arches. //20//

The decorations are explained
As the intestines,
The half nets become
The sinews,
The part [of the enlightenment spirit],
The half moon,
The vase is known
As the belly. //21//

The shins, thighs,
Biceps and forearms
Are explained
As the eight pillars,
Eye consciousness
As the mirrors
And so forth,
Auditory consciousness
As cymbals, //22//

Olfactory consciousness
As garlands of flowers,
The [rim of] jeweled bricks
As the gustatory consciousness,
The tactile consciousness
As the cloth banners,
And the mental consciousness
As the deer. //23//

The eyes
As chakra symbols,
The ears
As crossed vajras,
The nose
As a silk banner,
The tongue
Is stated as a bell. //24//

Pure yak tail fans
Are explained
As the body's totality,
The mind is stated
As the central lotus,
The conceptual wind
As the perfect support. //25//

The five pure wisdoms
Are expressed as five drawings,
The five pure aggregates
Are divided into
Five pure colors.
You cultivate these
As a measureless mansion. //26//

First, you should know
[How] to practice.
The five manifest enlightenments
Are your own essence,
Divided into clans,
Expressed as an outer place,
The pure mandala. //27//

The nature of the four elements
Is your own self,
In short, the Form Aggregate.
The Form Aggregates
And visual consciousness
Are explained as Kṣitigharba,
The outer [form sense objects]
As Rūpavajrā. //28//

Meitreya sits in the center
Of the sinews,
Similarly, the two
Fierce Kings
In the east and south[2444]
Are explained
As the mirror wisdom,
Pure Vairocana. //29//

Happiness, suffering,

[2444] Presumably Yamāntaka and Acala, although Acala is technically in the southeast (and Yamāntaka at the eastern gate) in the standard Arya Guhyasamāja mandala. *See* Wayman 1977, 123.

Fear and disgust
Are asserted as the character
Of feeling.
Feeling is the water element,
The outer [auditory sense objects]
Are explained as Śabdavajrā,
And the ear as Vajrapāṇi. //30//

The two clans mix.
Gandhavajrā becomes
The outer [olfactory sense objects];
The olfactory consciousness
Ākāśagarbha.
The two fierce ones[2445]
Are consciousness. //31//

Equality is Ratnasambhava,
And the discrimination
Of things and nothings
Has the character
Of subsequent memory
Of the previous one.
The discrimination aggregate
Is the fire element,
And the outer [olfactory sense objects]
Are Gandhavajrā, //32//

And the gustatory consciousness
Is Protector Lokeśvara.
The two Fierce Kings
Are of discriminating wisdom,
Arising from the clan
Of Amitābha. //33//

Through virtuous
And non-virtuous actions,
The instincts have the character
Of discrimination.[2446]
Discrimination
Is the element of wind.

[2445] Hayagrīva and Nīladaṇḍa?

[2446] While one might expect *'du* byed, "volition" or "compositional factors" or "emotion" here, Lhasa, Sde dge, Snar thang and Stok Palace all have *'du shes* here rather than *'du byed*. If this is a scribal error, it would be evidence that these four versions come from a common source, and that the error occurred in the transmission of the Tibetan, rather than the Sanskrit, text. There is no mention of *'du byed* (*saṃskāra*) in the *Vajra Rosary*.

The outer [gustatory sense objects]
Are Rasavajrā,
And the tactile consciousness
Is Viṣkambhini.[2447] //34//

Samantabhadra sits in the middle
Of the gaps of the joints.
Similarly, the two Fierce Kings
The intensive-activity-
Accomplishing wisdom,
Arise from the clan
Of Amoghasiddhi. //35//

The nature of all things
Expresses the consciousness
Characterized by wisdom.
Consciousness is
The element of space,
Mental consciousness
Is Mañjuvajra.
Similarly, the two Fierce Kings
Are the extremely pure
Reality Sphere.
They arise from the clan
Of Akṣobhya. //36//

The five types
Of manifest enlightenment
Dwell in the measureless mansion.
I will explain them respectively,
By analyzing [their] elements. //37//

The essence of
Hair, bone, shit and spit
Are of the nature
Of earth, Vairocana.
The essence of
Body hair, place and near [2448] [2449]
You know as the element

[2447] This differs somewhat the standard Ārya viewpoint: Lokeśvara and Rasavajrā are taste and wind; Viṣkambhini and Sparśavajrā are touch and also wind. Chapter 22 also is missing a reference to Sparśavajrā where you would think there would be one, which would seem to indicate unity of text. On the other hand, chapter 45 refers to Sparśavajrā.

[2448] Or secret place?

[2449] Or places close to the heart? In Ārya system, Amoghasiddhi usually sits at the secret place, of the wind element.

Of water.
You should know [them]
As supported by the clan
Of the nature
Of Ratnasambhava. //38//

The essence of
Teeth, skin and flesh
Are expressed
As the "fire element."
You should know [these]
As distinguished by the clan
Of Amitābha. //39//

The essence of
The flesh of sinews
And the ribs
Is wind, Amoghasiddhi.
The essence of
Shit, sinew and bile
Are known as the element
Of space. //40//

The nature and essence
Of Akṣobhya
Are the "five consciousnesses."
You know the emanation
Of five types
For each one
And individually. //41//

Dividing the substances
Of an internal nature,
The five aggregates
Of the Tathāgatas,
Expressed as
"Flesh, artery, sinew
Flesh morsel [?],
Brain and cerebrum, //42//

Bone marrow, intestine,
Kidney, heart, abdomen
Lung, spleen, bladder,
Anus, stomach, intestines, //43//

Body fat, lymph fluid, pus,

Blood, bile, phlegm,
Mucus, hair, beard,
Nails, body hair, skin,
Arm, ankle, limbs
And so forth,
Fontanel and shoulder.
You should know
[them] in succession. //44//

Having summarized,
I will explain
The division of the places
Of the pure measureless mansion.
Pulīra is known as the head.[2450] //45//

The crown
As Jalandhara,[2451]
The right ear
As Udyana,[2452]
The back of the crown
As Arbuda,
The left ear as Godābari,[2453] //46//

The center of the brows
As Rāmeśvari,
The two eyes
As Debokoti,
The shoulder channels
As Mālawa,
The two armpits
As Kāmarūba,[2454]
The breasts are known
As Ode, //47//

You know Kosala
As the belly button,
Under the ears
As Tresaku,
The mouth lotus
As Kalingka,

[2450] For variant reading of these three lines, starting with *de la*, *see* Alaṃka 33A.
[2451] Jalandhar, Punjab.
[2452] Oddiyana, Kashmir.
[2453] In west central India.
[2454] In Assam.

The throat is expressed
As Lambakar,
You should know the heart
As Kānchir. //48//

You know the Himalaya
As the crotch,
The sign[2455]
As Grihadeva,
The rectum
As Pretapuri,
The two thighs
As Indonesia. //49//

The two shins
As Saurastra,[2456]
The top of the foot
As Sindh country,
The fingers
As Nagara,
The two thumbs
As Marur,[2457]
And the sole
As the Kulu Valley. //50//

In that way,
You should know
One who has
The purity of the places
And the extreme purity
Of the ten stages
As the lord
Of dissolving and enjoying.[2458]
By the particular stages
Of engaging and so forth,
[You become] Vajrasattva. //51//

Now, further, I will explain
The supreme characteristics
Of the energy-winds.
The Life-energy energy-wind

[2455] *I.e.* as male or female.
[2456] Near Mumbai.
[2457] In Rajasthan.
[2458] These two lines are identical in Alaṃka.

Abides in the heart,
Born from the particular clan
Of Akṣobhya.[2459] //52//

The Evacuative energy-wind
That abides in the crotch
Is born from the aspect
Of Ratnasambhava.
The Ascending energy-wind
Abides at the end
Of the throat,
The nature of Amitābha. //53//

The Fire and Equalizing
Abide at the navel,
The nature
Of Amoghasiddhi.
The Pervading
Abides in all the limbs,
Blessed by Vairocana. //54//

This continuity
Of life-energy and effort
From the continuity
Of the sense doors
Moves at all times,
Explained as "life-energy." //55//

Life-energy, wind, excrement
And, similarly,
Semen and so forth--
The yogi should always know
These downward carrying ones
As the evacuative wind. //56//

Laughing, eating, licking,
Drinking everything, sucking
And whatever
Is always equalized
Is expressed
As "equalizing." //57//

Going upwards and gathering,

[2459] Variant reading of this verse found in Alaṃka 33A.

Eating and tasting and so forth,
Joined together with wisdom,
You should know as
Upward moving actions. //58//

Pervading and holding
And, similarly, going
And returning and so forth,
Because of pervading
All the joints,
It is explained as "pervading." //59//

I explained the characteristics
Of energy-wind.
Now I will express
Their destruction.[2460]
As before, the Emitting
And Retracting [energy-winds]
And so forth
Cause harm to each other,[2461]
One is harming the other.
Naturally attaining strength,
One dissolves into another. //60//

Just as the moon
Is caught by a planet,
The winds gradually decrease.
Like before, higher and higher,
They dissolve into themselves,
Emitting and retracting,
They rise again.
Just as [something]
Burned by fire
Is a no-thing,
[The energy-winds]
Not moving, dissolve. //61//

The Life-energy energy-wind
Rises again,
The various active energy-winds,
Together with consciousness
Again abide

[2460] Presumably should be *'jig*, although both Lhasa and Stok have *'jigs*.
[2461] For variant reading of these four lines, *see* Alaṃka 33A.

In the three worlds.
From that, *karma*,
And from that, birth.
From that, clinging
And so forth, the instincts. //62//

And from that,
Again death and birth.
Thus like a chakra turning,
As before, vajra recitation
And so forth
Gradually divides that. //63//

Then all the great beings,
With a spoonful
Of eye ointment,
Dispel the blindness
Of the mistakes of all.
They see perfect reality. //64//

Then, having prostrated
Again and again,
With eyes full of tears,
Having circled the Lord
Three times,
They praised Vajradhara: //65//

E MA'O
Omnipresent Lord of all,
Attaining equality with space!
E MA'O
Commitment of the three realities,
Teaching very wonderfully! //66//

Liberating from
The three realms,
The actuality of
The Reality Sphere,
Unsullied by desire,
To you, unbounded one,
We bow down! //67//

Not relying on aggregates,
Realms or sense media,
Liberated from [both]
Cyclic existence and Nirvana,

To you, unbounded one,
We bow down, offering praise! //68//

Thus to you, placeless space,
Unelaborated and unsullied,
With a mind equal to space,
Unbounded one,
We bow down, offering praise. //69//

Then the person
Of the Lord
Became victor over
The three worlds,
And moved
These three worlds,
Having triumphed over
The devils. //70//

Reigning over the heavens
Of the three worlds,
All of the ten Terrifics,
The main one,
Conqueror of the three worlds,
Issues commands like this: //71//

In whatever part of the earth,
This, the Tantric commitment
Of Mahāyoga,
Expressed as the Vajra Rosary,
Should be practiced
At all times,
And, you yourself
[Should do] that one
Continuously. //72//

As for the activities
Of the ten Terrifics,
In that kingdom,
In order to protect against
All interferences
With the ritual dagger,
You should offer
A ritual cake to them
With a rosary of mantras
To each one. //73//

In order to care
For sentient beings,
Having taught various emanations,
Vajrasattva will remain
At all times,
Day and night. //74//

From the realization of the Mahāyoga Tantra Glorious Vajra Rosary, the sixty eighth chapter on gathering all the attainments.

The Opening of the Secret Essence of All Tantras, from the Manifest Realization of the Mahāyoga Tantra, the Glorious Vajra Rosary, is complete.

Colophon

Translated, edited and finalized by the Indian Abbot Sujana Śrī Jñāna and great text translator, monk Zhi ba 'od, the King of Tibet, in the temple of
Tho-ling, *dpal med lhun gyis grub pa,* the sanctuary [of Ye shes ‘od], the center of the earth.[2462]

[2462] Samten Karmay has an extensive analysis of the colophons to Zhi ba ‘od’s translations, including this one at Karmay 1998, 19-26. *Thugs dam sa’i snying po* could also refer to a temple of “the yidam Kṣitigharba,” although there is no reference to such a temple in Tucci 1989 or Vitali 1999. The Nyingma Catalogue translates the colophon to the *Śriparamādiṭīkā*, Toh. 488, also translated at Tho ling by Zhi ba ‘od and Mantrakalaśa, presumably identical to that of the *Vajra Rosary*, as “Tr. at the *vihāra* of dpal dpe-med lhun-gyis grub-pa at Tho-ling in the province of Gu-ge.”

Selections from Alaṃkakalaśa's *Commentary*

Chapter 23

Determining the Commitment of the Three Realities[2463]

[153A] Thus having taught the answer to the question about the subject of the three letters, the twenty-second chapter, now, in order to discuss the answer to the question about the subject of the three realities, to teach the twenty-third chapter, and at the outset discussing the beginning of that, he says "**Then**" and so forth, [meaning] after the explanation of the twenty-second chapter. "**Furthermore**" [means] relying on what came before. "**Listen**" is directing the questioner to listen, exhorting the questioner to listen, connected to "**I will teach the word of the three realities**." ["]The three realities["][2464] with the nature signifying the characteristics of the thatness of self, mantra and wisdom. "I will teach" [means] "I will teach the ascertaining of the meaning to be expressed." If someone asks how, in response to that he says "**Divided into self and so forth**," the words ["] and so forth["] should be known as [meaning] collected by the thatness of mantra and wisdom. "**Exactly**" [means] with the nature of the unerring view. "**Stages**" means by the stage of the thatness of self and so forth.

Thus having taught the beginning, in order to discuss the direct explanation, summarizing the thatness of the self as a branch of that, "**The reality of self**" [means] the actuality of the lords, Vairocana and so forth, who abide precisely as the reality of the

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[2463] Chapter headings do not appear in Alaṃka's *Commentary*. The chapter headings here are those of the chapter of the *Vajra Rosary* on which Alaṃka is commenting.

[2464] I have been translating *de nyid* as "reality" and *de kho na nyid* as "thatness," but there is nothing fixed about those terms, and here they are clearly used as equivalents.

completely imaginary five aggregates, called "the thatness of self." "**Supreme yoga**" because it is free from the characteristics of ordinary people, the actuality of supreme contemplation. "**Is the cause of Vajrasattva**" [means] that by really knowing that the actuality of the five lords is in the five aggregates you achieve the supreme state. "**The self nature of all Buddhas**" [means] having the nature of the actuality of the body, speech and mind of the five lords. "**The sole body of all Buddhas**" is that which is wherever there is one body of all Buddhas: the sole body of all Buddhas, synonymous with the form of great Vajradhara. "**The state** [153B] **of omniscience**" because you know through the actuality of the five Buddhas in the three realms. "**Is indistinct**" because it is free from the nature of having materiality. "**It is made distinct through the divisions of the clans**" [means] that through the means of purifying the root addictions, you make clear the divisions of the clans of ignorance and so forth. "**Whatever form of the five clans**" [means] with the nature of Vairocana and so forth. "**Those are the characteristics of the five aggregates**" [means] the nature of the five aggregates.

Thus having discussed in summary the thatness of the self, in order to teach the detailed explanation of it, with respect to the purity of the material aggregate, he says "**By the divisions of subtle [and] gross and so forth**" and so forth, [meaning that] as for that, the ["]coarse["] is the material aggregate, because, by its nature, it appears as outer. ["]Subtle["] [refers to] sensations and so forth that are different than that, because, being non-material, they lack coarse appearance. "**Having the characteristic of obstructive [or] non-obstructive**" [means] as for the material [aggregate], it is obstructive, because it stops the production of other [things] in its own sphere; as for [the aggregates of] sensation and so forth, they are non-obstructive, because they are the opposite of that.

[“]Obstructive and non-obstructive[“] [means] things that are obstructive and non-obstructive, [meaning] those things that exist wherever there are the signs of those very things, [*i.e.*] obstructive and non-obstructive things.[2465] “**The substance of the four great elements**” [means] the nature of the great elements of earth and so forth, because it is made by those. “**As the material aggregate**” [means] having the character of matter. “**Here**” [means] in the teaching of Buddha. “**It is stated**” [means] it is expressed. “**The actuality of Vairocana**” [means that] the nature of the material aggregate is the actuality of Vairocana, because one’s self and and others appear through the nature of the mirror-like wisdom. [In] “**The cause of taking delight in all of them**,” [“]all[“] because of taking delight in the orgasmic consort and servant consort and so forth that are connected to his own clan, [thus] the cause of taking delight in all of them.[2466]

Thus [154A] having taught the purity of the material aggregate, in order to discuss the purity of the sensation aggregate, he says “**Happiness and suffering**,” [meaning] happiness and suffering.[2467] “**As supreme**” [means] supreme. “**Pacify**” [means] a type of equanimity that is not supreme.[2468] “**Cold and heat**” has the form of contact with those. “**Supreme of supreme**” [means] the actuality of subtle and coarse. “**Know**” [means] experience. “**By that**” [means] by knowledge of a kind of exact discrimination. “**That**” is the actuality of experience like that. “**Mostly**” [means] by most people. “**The characteristic of the sensation aggregate**” is “**The characteristic of Ratnasambhava**,”

[2465] This is a completely Sanskrit construction, a traditional way of glossing: once as in the verse, as a *dvandva*; once with *ca*; and once using the plural. Something like *sa pratigha pratigha hi sapratighāpratiga ca*.

[2466] In other words, Vairocana in his full form, with consort(s). *See* next verse concerning Ratnasambhava.

[2467] Presumably, all of these are glosses of Sanskrit *dvandva*s.

[2468] C.f. the third seal: only Nirvana is peace. Only after stabilization of the jumpy character of the aggregates, do they arise as the Tathāgatas. Only after cold and hot supremely, supremely pacified, only then do sensations arise as Ratnasambhava.

because of the realization of the equality of the actuality of the emptiness of the sensations with the characteristic that has the aspects of pleasure [and] pain and so forth. "**The nature of the pleasure of the Tathāgata**" with the nature of the orgasmic consort and servant consort of his own clan.[2469]

Thus having taught the purity of the sensation aggregate, in order to teach the purity of the discrimination aggregate, he says "**Elephant**" and so forth, "elephant" [meaning] great elephant. "**Donkey**" [means] donkey. "***Gomayu***"[2470] [means] jackal. "**Tiger**" [means] *śartula*.[2471] "**Deer**" [means] *eṇa*[2472] and so forth. "**Pig**" [means] pig and so forth. "**Father**" [means] progenitor. "**Mother**" [means] one who gives birth. "**Father's brothers and so forth**" [means] his siblings and so forth. "**Friend**" is one who you like. "**Maternal relatives**" are relatives and so forth. "**Perfectly knowing these**" [means] by knowledge of the form that holds the sign that is suitable for themselves.

"**That**" is the form that holds the sign. "**Perfectly**" [means] through the unerring view. "**Is the characteristic of the perception aggregate**" [meaning] that which enters uncommon thatness. "**Tathāgata**" is concerning he who has gone into that very thatness. "**Amitābha**" is in the form of limitless light. [154B] "**It is truly**" [means that,] through the nature of the unerring view you should know [it] as an elaboration. "**In all ways**" [means] completely. "**Illuminating**" because of radiating those of the clan of Amitābha. "**The distinctions in beings**" because in apprehending signs in the three realms as lacking intrinsic existence, you individually discriminate. "**Great miracle**" [means] with

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[2469] Presumably *sahajacarani* and *anucarani*: the main and subordinate consorts.
[2470] Skt. for "jackal."
[2471] Skt. for "tiger."
[2472] Skt. for "a species of deer or antelope (described as being of a black color with beautiful eyes and short legs). MW.

amazement through eliminating the conceptions of perception by the power of analysis.

Thus having taught the purity of the perception aggregate, in order to discuss the purity of the creation aggregate, he says "**The fruit of virtuous and non-virtuous action**," [meaning] the result of virtuous and non-virtuous karma. "Action" is of the nature of virtue and non-virtue. "**Further, denominated as neutral**" [means] with a neutral nature, because it produces matter and non-matter. "**It is explained as the creation [aggregate]**," [meaning] that there are differences by dividing into those having similarities and those not having similarities. "**Explained**" [means] expressed. "**With the nature of delighting in Amoghasiddhi**," [means] having the nature of the action-accomplishing wisdom, having reversed from virtuous and non-virtuous actions [caused] by the power of the addictions, because of only accomplishing the activities of [benefit to] sentient beings. Because of that very thing, you have the nature of taking delight in those with the retinue of Amoghasiddhi.

Thus having taught the purity of the creation aggregate, in order to teach the purity of the consciousness aggregate, he says "**Thing and no-thing and so forth**," ["]thing["] having the nature of being able to perform a function, [and] ["]non-thing["] being the opposite of that, [thus] things and non-things. The division of those is the division of thing and no-thing. As for that and so forth, it is similar to that. The nature of that is "**Thought construction**," conceptuality. "**Having the nature of arising as that**" [means] causing the birth of conceptuality like that. "**Consciousness**" has the character of isolation. "Consciousness" should be known. "**Having the nature of delighting in Akśobhya**" [155A] [means] you cannot be robbed by the conceptual addictions because you are of the nature of the wisdom of the exceedingly pure sphere of reality. He says "**If**

you know the aggregates in that way," [meaning] by the logic stated previously, you completely understand that in the five aggregates [means] in those very five Buddhas. "If you understand" [means] should be understood. "**Knowledge of the teachings and lineage is born**," the ["]lineage ["] being well known as the mantric vehicle; the ["]teachings["] being known as the Vaibaśika system. ["]Arising["] through these has the meaning of being "expressed" [in them].

Thus having fully taught the purity of the five kinds of aggregates, in order to discuss the mantras of emanation, "**JINAJIK**," [meaning] having the state of victory, [thus] conquering devils, because he conquers them with a twelve-spoked dharma wheel, [thus] JINAJIK. [This is] the interpretive meaning because he overcomes the four devils with a vajra-like concentration, JINAJIK. [This is] the definitive meaning. "**RATNADRIK**" because he holds the great jewel that completely fulfills all hopes, [thus] RATNADRIK. This is the interpretive meaning. Because he holds the great jewel, the limit of reality, RATNADRIK. [This is] the definitive meaning. [In] "**ĀROLIK**," ["]Ā["] [means] everything; ["]RO["] [means] from cyclic existence; [and] "LIK" [means] going, thus ĀROLIK. [This is] the interpretive meaning. "A RA O" going into clear light by means of the three wisdoms, thus ĀROLIK. [This is] the definitive meaning.

"**PRAJÑĀDRIK**" [means] holding the wisdom that has the character of individual discrimination, thus PRAJÑĀDRIK. [This is] the interpretive meaning. The wisdom is moonlight and so forth. Because of holding that, PRAJÑĀDRIK. [This is] the definitive meaning. "**VAJRADRIK**" [means] the five aspects illustrating manifest enlightenment, thus VAJRADRIK. [This is] the interpretive meaning. Because of

causing the holding of the vajra with the nature of the two truths, VAJRADRIK. [This is] the definitive meaning. "**In that way mantras**" [means] of all five, Vairocana and so forth, [155B] the nature of the mantras that are emanated for the purpose of protecting[2473] the mind. "**Respective**" [means] by the stages of purifying the material aggregate and so forth. "**Know**" [means] should be known. "**Suitable**" means through being suitable: suitable for emanating during the time of the Supreme King of Mandala; and suitably compatible with yourself during the time of doing the two kinds of repetition.[2474]

Thus having taught the division of the aggregates through seven types of meaning, in order to teach the division of the elements, summarizing the branch of that, "**The four of Locanā and so forth**," [meaning] the nature of the four consorts. "**Are considered as the three realms**" [means] conceptualized through the nature of the four elements of earth and so forth.

Thus having explained the summary, in order to discuss the detailed explanation, in order to teach the purity of the earth element as a branch of that, he says "**By differentiating as the four of hardness and so forth**," [meaning] relying on the characteristic of the actuality of hardness. "**Considered as the earth element**" [means] considering the bones and so forth that are located in your own body. ["]Differentiated as four["] because each has the nature of the four elements. Having thought that "**Ignorance is expressed as purity,**"[2475] whoever has ecstasy for Vairocana, the purity of

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[2473] Following P. and Snar. Or, following Derge, "the natures of mantras that are of genuine delight for weary minds."

[2474] *I.e.* you rotate clans/mantras at different times, as described above in the discussion of mantra repetition. Jamspal suggests this could be read with *rig pa* instead of *rigs pa*, but we should note that, at least in the Derge, P. and Snar. Alaṃka and the Lhasa *Vajra Rosary* there is no variation from *rigs pa.*

[2475] The Lhasa *Vajra Rosary* has *gti mug dga' bas*, "by the ecstasy of delusion," 42B, and Alaṃka has *dga'* in his gloss.

delusion, "**Is Locanā**[2476]" because she appears as the lack of intrinsic nature in [even] a part of the earth element. "**Known**" [means] well known.

Thus having taught the purity of the earth element, in order to discuss the purity of the water element, he says "**Peaceful**" and so forth, because of its smooth nature. "**Urine, tears, semen and so forth**" [mean] piss, eye tears and the seed of the main one and so forth. "**Using whatever particular substance**" [means] differentiated by division into blood and so forth. "**Known as the water element**" following the worldly ones. Because of terminating completely the conceptual reality of a self in the water element, ["]**Māmakī**["], meaning her form, [156A] the ["]**nature**["] of her emanation.

Thus having taught the purity of the water element, in order to discuss the purity of the fire element, he says "**Heat**" and so forth, [meaning] a kind of heat in your own body. "**The digestion of food and drink**" [means] the digestion of ordinary substances and food inside [the body]and so forth. "**Having the characteristic of fire, appropriating**[2477] **radiance**" [means] the characteristic of fire that appropriates radiance, heats. "**You should know as the fire element**" [means] known in the world as the "heat element." "**Having the nature of delighting in Paṇḍaravāsinī**" because of causing the disappearance of conceptions in the element of fire, [thus] Paṇḍaravāsinī. [2478] "Having the nature of delighting" [means] the actuality of such purity.

Thus having taught the purity of the fire element, in order to discuss the purity of the wind element, he says "**Increasing exhaling and inhaling**," [meaning] the entering into your own body of the life energy and evacuative [wind-energies]. "**The supreme**

[2476] *Locana* is Skt. for "eye." She is *mig ma* in Tibetan.
[2477] Lhasa *Vajra Rosary* has *'phro ba*, "spreading," which seems to make more sense here.
[2478] Skt. Pāṇḍara-vāsas, "white dress."

commitment of the wind-energies" [means] the nature of the ten wind-energies of the aggregates and the sense powers. "Commitment" [means] suitable for one's self. "Supreme" because of having the nature of holding the aggregates and so forth, [thus] supreme. Having the nature of ["]**extending and retracting**["], "**Functioning up and down**" [means] exhaling and inhaling up and down. "**That is known as the wind element**," [meaning] known by the that name. "**Having the nature of delighting in Tārā**" because of liberating from the conceptuality of the wind element,[2479] Tārā.

Thus having taught the purity of the wind element, in order to summarize the four elements he says "**Thus the four elements are also**," ["]thus["] meaning by the logic stated earlier. "The four elements are also" [refers to] the four great elements. "**Known**" [means] known. "**Yoga**" [means] by the yoga of the four goddesses, Locanā and so forth. "**Supreme**" is the supreme nature of the goddess.

Thus [156B] having taught the summary of the four elements, in order to explain the expression of the mantras of delight[2480] he says "**MOHARATI**" and so forth, ["]MOHA["][2481] [2482]being Vairocana, being what you call that which exists wherever there is ecstasy for him. [This is] the interpretive meaning. By purifying delusion, what exists wherever there is ecstasy in clear light is MOHARATI.[2483] [This is] the definitive meaning. [In] "**DVEṢARATI**," ["]DVEṢA["][2484] is Akśobhya, [meaning] that which

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[2479] Skt. Tārā: "carrying across, savior."
[2480] As noted above, *spro ba* could also be translated as "emanation" here, yielding "emanation mantras," which does in fact correspond to what is happening in the Mandala Triumph and Evolutionary Triumph parts of the long Guhysamāja sadhana. The point is that these mantras promote both emanation *and* ecstasy; emanation without ecstasy is not the practice. Again, it would be interesting to see whether the *Vajra Rosary* and Alaṃka use *rati* or *prapañca* here.
[2481] Following P. and Snar.
[2482] *Moha*, Skt. "delusion."
[2483] The Derge and other recensions all have RĀGARATI, which should be MOHARATI in light of the context.
[2484] *Dveṣa*, Skt. "hatred."

exists wherever there is ecstasy for him, DVEṢARATI. [This is] the interpretive meaning. The purification of hatred, existing wherever there is the ecstasy of clear light, is DVEṢARATI. [This is] the definitive meaning. [In] "**RĀGARATI**," ["]RĀGA["] is Amitābha. That which is wherever there is ecstasy for him is RĀGARATI. [This is] the interpretive meaning. ["]RĀGA["][2485] [means] the purification of desire, existing wherever there is ecstasy in clear light, [thus] RĀGARATI, the definitive meaning. [In] "**VAJRARATI**," ["]VAJRA["] is Amoghasiddhi, that which exists wherever there is ecstasy for him, VAJRARATI. [this is] the interpretive meaning. ["]VAJRA["][2486] is that which exists wherever there is ecstasy for one who has the characteristics shown to be like that and so forth, thus VAJRARATI. [This is] the definitive meaning. "**Those respective**" [means] by in the sequence of the four elements of earth and so forth. "**Mantras**" [means] the emanation mantras. "**Attainment**"[2487] is known in the Mahāyoga Tantras. "**Those**" [means] of those elemental goddesses. "**Of the ritual**" means following the emanation and two repetitions of the syllables with nature of the bodhisattvas during the time of the Supreme Mandala Triumph as before.

Thus having already explained the detailed teaching through six modes of meaning, by just this much, having taught the division of the elements along with the analysis, in order to discuss the division of the [sense] objects, teaching a summary of the that branch, he says "**The mass of objects of form and so forth**" and so forth, [meaning] the five types that serve as the objects of the inner eye and so forth. "**As the character of the form of the goddess**" by the reasoning to be explained, because it is the actuality of

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[2485] The text has *chags*, Tib. for the Skt. *rāga*, "desire."
[2486] The text has *rdo rje*, Tib. For the Skt. *vajra*, "thunderbolt," "adamantine," "penis."
[2487] Lhasa *Vajra Rosary* has *mngon sum*, "directly perceived," 43A, instead of *dngos grub*, "attained."

Rūpavajrā and so forth. "**Know**" [means] know. "**Of supreme yoga**" because of the actuality [157A] of the [sense] powers being of the nature of bodhisattvas and the [sense] objects having the characteristics of Rūpavajrā and so forth, together with the realization that [they] are of one taste. "**With only emptiness as the sole cause**" [means that] the cause is in clear light, meaning it "serves as the cause." By meditatively equalizing both, you actualize the state of universal emptiness.

Thus having explained the teaching in brief, in order to discuss the detailed explanation, the component of it that is purification of form, he says "**Analyzing as blue, yellow and so forth**," [meaning] by analyzing into blue, yellow, red and white and so forth. "**With the form of long and short**" [means] with the actuality of the shapes of high and low, long and short, round, even and uneven. "**You should know form as**" [means] "You should know form as" should be added. "**That goddess is Rūpavajrā**" because in conceptualizing a visual object you fall into emptiness.[2488] [In] "**Having the nature of object and subject**," ["]object["] [means] the actuality of grasping at form, as just explained, because of grasping at an aspect of emptiness.

Thus having taught the purity of matter, in order to teach the purity of sound, "**Similarly**" [means] produced from a lute and so forth. "**Kettle drum [and] cymbals**" [means] arising from instruments other than that. "**Praise and blame and so forth**" [means] the sounds of praise and blame and so forth. "**Śabdavajrā**" [means] you should know [them] as the nature of Shabdavajra. "**Is the nature that is grasped**" because the purity of the ear sense faculty should be grasped as Vajrapāṇi. "**Supreme**" because of abandoning ordinary conceptuality. "**Awareness**" in having the nature of reversing sense

[2488] Perhaps with the sense of *vajrapāta*, "falling like a thunderbolt." So cognizing matter [*rūpa*], you fall into emptiness [*vajra*].

object and faculty conceptuality. "**Awakening**" by realizing the nature of clear light. [157B]

Thus having taught the purity of sound, in order to discuss the purity of scent, he says "**Scent**," serving as the object of the olfactory sense faculty. "**Bad**" [means] of the nature of a bad scent, because it is unpleasant. A "**good**[2489] **scent**" is a fragrant scent, because it eliminates the former one. "**Combined**" [means] various, arising from being mixed together. "**Other ones**"[2490] [means] others. "**Ghandavajrā**" makes the conceptions of scent into emptiness. "**Is the form that is grasped**"[2491] because the olfactory sense power serves as the object for the purity of Ākāśagarbha. "**Blazing greatly**" because it bestows particularly noble bliss by being the very antidote of ordinary conceptuality.

Thus having taught the purity of scent, in order to discuss the purity of taste, he says "**The six tastes**," divided into astringent and bitter and so forth. "**Supreme**" because it satisfies the gustatory sense faculty. "**Endowed with**" [means] with the nature of meditating on the actuality of the form of the deity. "**By dividing into salty and bitter and so forth**" [means] from dividing into sour, bitter, salty and astringent. "**Rasavajrā**" because she makes the conceptuality of taste into emptiness. "**Is the form that is grasped**" [refers to] the purification of Lokeśvara, who is the gustatory sense faculty,[2492] because she serves as the form object. "**Completely**" [means] the aspect of form and so forth, because here each sense faculty perceives [their own] various sense objects.

[2489] Following P. and Snar. and Lhasa *Vajra Rosary*.
[2490] *Mchog* here is translating Skt. *para*, which means "other" as well as "supreme" or "excellent."
[2491] The Lhasa *Vajra Rosary* has *gzung ba'i rnam shes*, "consciousness of the object."
[2492] This would be why, according to Alaṃka, in the dissolution of the body mandala, the sense bodhisattvas first dissolve into the sense goddesses before the sense goddesses themselves (or the union of the two) dissolve. The bodhisattvas are purified into emptiness by their grasping at the sense goddesses.

Thus having taught the purity of taste, in order to discuss the purity of touch, "**By division of smooth and rough**," [meaning] by the division of smooth and rough and so forth. "**You should know touch**" [means] you should know touch. If someone asks how, in response to that [he says] "by dividing." As it is said "In the nature of the eleven touches." "**That very thing**" is touch because of making the conceptuality of touch into emptiness. "**The form that is grasped**" is the corporeal sense power, because it serves as the object that purifies Sarvanivaraṇaviśkambini. "**For the main one**" means that she herself is the form that is grasping Akśobhya, [158A] the form of the main one in the center, in order to embrace him.[2493] As it is said in the *Sekoddeśa*:[2494] "Embracing Vajrasattva, she abides as Sparśavajrā."

Thus having expressed the division of the object including the division of the two types, in order that the division of the sense media of an inner nature be expressed, teaching an abbreviated branch of that, he says "**The eight collections of consciousness**," and so forth, [meaning] dividing them into the six collections of consciousness, the consciousness of the addicted mind and the foundational consciousness. "**Which depend**" [means] the support of the eight [such as] as the eye and so forth as will be explained, having the meaning of "support." Because of that very thing, "**On the eye and so forth sense powers**" [means] relying on the eight. Relying on those, the entity of the eight collections of consciousness are produced. "**As producing the bodhisattvas**" [means] having first produced Kṣitigarbha, you should know the actualities of the sons of

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[2493] Reading *'khyud pa* in place of *'khyad pa*, which does not appear in the dictionaries, but which does appear in the *śrīhevajrasādhana*, *dpal dgyes pa rdo rje'i sgrub thabs*, Toh. 1218, 2A, "*rang gi rig ma la 'khyad pa spyan gsum pa dbu skra kham pa gyen du 'greng ba,"* "embracing his consort, three-eyed, brown hair standing up on end…" So *'khyad pa* does seem to be a variant of *'khyud pa*, here used in a nominalized form. Skt. v*ajrasattvālingita.*

[2494] Toh 361.

the Conqueror up to Samantabhadra. Having relied on their purity, "**the process**" of the unerring thing[2495] has the meaning of the "process of the visual [sense power] and so forth.

Thus having taught the summary, in order that the detailed expression be expressed, as a branch of that, the purity of the visual sense faculty, he says "**The two eyes are explained as Kṣitigarbha**," [meaning that] the two eyes are of the nature of the Bodhisattva Kṣitigarbha. Their object is caused to arise as the great elements of earth and so forth because it is understood as a conceptual characteristic. [In] "**Bodhisattva**,"[2496] ["]enlightenment["] [means] with the nature of the three bodies, [and] in that, ["]hero["] is so-called because he exists in these [three bodies]. "**Wonderful**" because he benefits others by various means. "**In all kinds of forms and so forth**" [means] also in all appropriate [forms] of the five sense objects of form and so forth. Furthermore, "**Delighting in his own nature**" [means] delighting in the unborn form of the actuality of his very own self.

Thus having taught the purity of the visual sense power, in order that the aural sense power [158B] be purified, he says "**The form of sound**" and so forth, [meaning] the form that is grasped as ordinary conceptuality, by dividing into the form of sound of a lute and so forth, by distinguishing all the different forms of sound. You analyze that very thing as different, especially because it is the antidote to the conceptuality of this and that. By meditating on that, you investigate it. "**As Vajrapāṇi**" because you understand [it] as emptiness through very embodiment of Vajrapāṇi in the conception of sound. "**Is perfectly explained**" [means] expressed. "**The characteristic of the**

[2495] *I.e.* the particular bodhisattvas.
[2496] Lit. Skt. *bodhi* "enlightenment," *sattva* "hero."

auditory consciousness" [means], because of knowing sound as primordially birthless, having the characteristic of that.

Thus having taught the purity of the auditory sense power, in order to teach purity of the olfactory sense power, he says "**The conceptuality of a particular scent**," [meaning that] whoever analyzes the nature of the conceptualities of the conceptions of the four kinds of scent, however you analyze the nature of the conception, as for that, you meditate [it] with the nature of being completely empty.[2497] "**Ākāśagarbha**" because he grasps the conceptuality of scent with emptiness. "**Knows**" [means] is known. "**The characteristic of the olfactory consciousness**" [means] by knowing that that the nose the causes the grasping of scent is primordially birthless, the characteristic of the wisdom of that.

Thus having taught the purity of the olfactory sense power, in order to express the purity of the gustatory sense power, he says "**The conception of particular tastes**," [means] the conceptual nature of the six particular kinds of tastes. As for differentiating them, "**The aspect of differentiating**" [means] you intensely meditate through the aspect of emptiness. "**As Lokeśvara**" from realizing emptiness in the analysis of the tastes that abide in the world because of attaining your own ecstasy, [thus] Lokeśvara. "**Know**" [means] is known. "**The character of the gustatory consciousness**" [means that] knowing what is included in the gustatory sense objects as emptiness is the characteristic of that consciousness.

Thus having taught the purity of the gustatory sense power, in order to express the purity of the tactile sense power, he says "**Enjoying particular touches**," [meaning] the

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[2497] Reading *bsgom pa'o*.

differentiation into the nature of eleven types, cultivating intense meditation on them in the aspect of emptiness. "**Sarvaṇivaraṇaviṣkambhini**" [means that] the addictions of desire and attachment, all the obscurations arising by the force of touch, are removed. Because of reciting for just that long, he removes all obscurations. "**The character of tactile consciousness**" [means] the primordially unborn consciousness of touch, wherever that characteristic exists, it is called that.

Thus having taught the purity of the tactile sense faculty, in order to discuss the purity of the mental sense faculty, he says "**Enjoying particular mental experiences**," [meaning] having relied on a particular mental experience, the characteristic of the sense medium of [mental] phenomena,[2498] the nature of the seven substances, and, having relied on the object possessor,[2499] that which is the conception of the characteristic of various conceptualities is the nature of conceptuality. ["]**Differentiating that**["] [means] as distinct. As for that, "**completely**" [means] entirely, by meditating on the form of emptiness, he is the meditator. As for "**Is stated as the "mental consciousness**," if someone asks [why] it is known to the worldly as "**Mañjuśrī**," it is because you know the intrinsic naturelessness of that.

Thus having taught the purity of the mental sense faculty, in order to discuss the purity of the sinews, which were left out of the tactile sense faculty, he says "**Definitively joining all the sinews**," [meaning] the particular quality of definitively uniting all of the sinews included in the body, for the special quality of perfectly uniting. "**Totally**" [means] completely. "**The meditator**" is the meditator on intrinsic naturelessness.

[2498] Skt. *dharmāyatana*, *āyatana* being translated here as "medium." As Thurman notes: The word *āyatana* is usually translated as "base," but the Skt., Tib. and Ch. all indicate 'something through which the senses function' rather than a basis from which the function; hence 'medium' is suggested. Thurman 1995, 155.

[2499] *I.e.* the subject, here the mind.

"**Totally knows [them] as Meitreya**" because by totally knowing that in all of the sinews there is a lack of intrinsic existence he generates extraordinary ecstasy. "**Having the nature of the conception of the instincts**" [means] because of purifying the addicted mental consciousness.

Thus having taught the purity of the definitive uniting of all the sinews left out of the tangible sense faculty, in order to teach the purity in all of the joints of the body, he says "**Having the nature of the individual channels**," [159B] [means] the nature which is divided among all the channels included in your own body, having an extraordinary nature. "**The basis of all bliss**" [means that], having eliminated the root conceptualities, you rely on all of the bliss that is transmundane. "**Supreme**" because isolated from having the shape of a face and so forth. "**Having the nature of all things**" is what you call wherever there exists the actuality of all things, because it is know as Samantabhadra, having the nature of the purity of consciousness, the basis of all forms of thatness. [In] "**Samantabhadra**," ["]completely["][2500] because of being different through being isolated from the very notion of channels; ["]good["] is defined as whatever virtues there are. "**This**" because it is called by this very form.

Thus having taught the detail explanation through eight modes of meaning, he says in order to summarize, "**Thus the eight groups of consciousness**" [means] the actuality of purifying the eight groups of consciousness of the eye and so forth. "**Perfect reality**" because of actuality of purifying the internal sense media. "**Unexcelled**" because of serving as the cause of the thatness that has the characteristic unexcelled body isolation. "**The consciousnesses of the visual and so forth sense faculties**" [means] the

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[2500] Skt. *samanta*, Tib. *kun tu*.

six visual and so forth sense faculties serving as the different sense faculties of the body, [and] the two, counting the actualities of the two having the characteristics of the addicted consciousness and the foundational consciousness, which become the eight groups of consciousness. "**[With] the characteristics of seeing form and so forth**," [meaning] the particular objects of the body's sense faculties, having the characteristics of the six of form and so forth, all the sinews and all the joints of the limbs. "**Having the characteristic of seeing**" has the meaning of the characteristics of seeing and so forth.

Thus having taught the differentiation of three types of the internal by three modes of meaning, in order to discuss the differentiation of [those] very branches, teaching a summary of the branches, [160A] he says "**Shins and shoulders**" and so forth, [meaning] the left and right knees respectively [being] the places of the Nilaṇḍanda and Mahābala. As for "shoulders," the left and right shoulder are the places of Yamāntakṛt and Prajñantakṛt.[2501] As for "shoulders," the right and left shoulders are the places of Acala and Ḍakarāja. As for "**upper and lower**," the head and soles of the two feet are the places of Uṣṇiṣacakravartin and Sumbharāja. The "**Openings of the hole**s," includes the mouth and the vajra path. These are also the two places of Padmantakṛt and Vighnantakṛt.

As it is said in the *Sekoddeśa*:[2502]

You should visualize Yamāntaka
On the right hand,
Aparājita on the left,
And Hayagrīva on the mouth.
On the vajra, Amṛtakundali,
On the right shoulder Acala,
On the left Ḍakirāja.

[2501] In the Guhyasamāja sadhana, Yamāntaka is on the right hand, Acāla is on the right shoulder; Aparajita on the left hand; and Takkirāja on the left shoulder.
[2502] Toh 361.

Think of the right knee blazing
As great Nilaṇḍaṇḍa,
Mahābala on the left knee,
On the head Uṣṇiṣacakravartin,
On the soles of the two feet
You should think Sumbharaja,

And so forth. "**All of them in the places**" that are like that [means] pervading in the entire body, because of having fierce natures. "**The characteristics of the ten knowledges**" are the knowledge of suffering, the knowledge of origin, the knowledge of cessation, the knowledge of the path, the knowledge of extinguishing, the knowledge of non-arising,[2503] the knowledge of things, the subsequent knowledge, and the knowledge of complete victory. As for those, knowledge of the lack of the arising of suffering is the first. Knowledge of the origin to be abandoned is the second. Knowledge of the cessation of suffering is the third. Knowledge of the way to the path is the fourth. The knowledge of the exhaustion of delusion is the fifth. Knowledge of beings not arising in cyclic existence is the sixth. Knowledge of separating things into the five aggregates [160B] is the seventh. Knowledge of "**Impermanent**" and so forth is the eighth.[2504] Knowledge of the thoughts in the minds of non-Buddhist sentient beings and other persons is ninth. Knowledge of accomplishment and extinguishing are tenth. "**Well known**" has the meaning of through thoroughly analyzing those things with a conceptual nature, as stated previously.

Thus having explained the teaching in brief, in order to explain in detail from the point of view of the wrathful mantras, he says "**Yamantakṛt**" [meaning] the Terminator of Yama. ["]Yama["] is a hell being. He is called that because he is the terminator of

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[2503] Of suffering.
[2504] It is hard to understand why this eighth knowledge is presented as a quote, possibly form the *Vajra Rosary*, when the others are not.

concentration through great anger. [This is] the interpretive meaning. [“]Yama[“] is ignorance. He is called that because he perfects[2505] through the actuality of clear light. [This is] the definitive meaning. “**Prajñantakṛt**” [means] Knowledge Terminator. [“]Prajña[“] is called that because by eliminating knowledge he terminates addiction. [This is] the interpretive meaning. Because of its nature of completely transforming the active consciousnesses,[2506] it is [“]knowledge,[“] [and] because it [“]perfects[“]by entering clear light, it is the Knowledge Terminator.[2507] [This is] the definitive meaning. “**Padmantakṛt**” is the Lotus Terminator. By being untainted by the addictions like a lotus is untainted by [muddy] water, because of terminating them, he is called that. [This is] the interpretive meaning. [“]*Padma*[“] is the place of birth. [“]*Anta*[“] is the middle.[2508] Because of making [*kṛt*] bliss for him, *Padmantakṛt*.

After that, “**Vighnāntakṛt**," [meaning] Obstacle Terminator. Because he overcomes all obstructions, Vighnāntakṛt. [This is] the interpretive meaning. The obstacles are the elements. Because of terminating through holding the wisdom of means with respect to them, [???] he is called that. [This is] the definitive meaning. [As for] “**Ḍākarāja**,”[2509] [“]*ḍāka*[“] [desire] because of binding the poisons in the union of the elements, the actor [???] in binding the poisons; [“]*rāja*[“] [king] because of illuminating, [thus] *Ḍākarāja*. J: binding the wicked ones by making himself visible. Similarly, “**Acala**”[2510] because he is unmoved by obstacles. “**Mahābala**”[2511] because he

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[2505] *Anta* has two meanings: ending or terminating *and* perfecting; *mthar* also has these two meanings.
[2506] *I.e.* the six of visual etc.
[2507] So this could be a play on “terminating knowledge” and “terminating through knowledge.” The interpretive meaning is the former, and the definitive the latter, giving this a slightly *gzhan stong* feel. Here also it might be revealing to have the Sanskrit.
[2508] Skt. *anta* can mean “inside” or “inner part” as well as “end” or “limit.” MW.
[2509] Wayman has “*Ṭakkirāja*.” Wayman 1977, 128. Lokesh Chandra has *Ḍākarāja*. 1267. Could also be *ragarāja*, which accords best with the Tib. Literal meaning. *Ḍakkaraḥ* per Apte is an epithet of Śiva. 460.
[2510] Skt. “not moving,” “undisturbed.”

has great force in eliminating the obstacles. [161A] "**Nilaṇḍaṇḍa**" is he who terrifies wicked sentient beings with his blue staff, he is called that. "**Śumbha**"[2512] [means] definitively overcoming all obstacles, thus *Śumbha*. Because of being brilliant with the actuality of that, *Śumbharāja*. As for "**Uṣṇiṣacakravartin**," ["]*uṣṇiṣa*["][2513] [means] made on the head, preceded by the elimination of all obstacles moving in the sky; ["]*chakra*["] [refers to] wherever there is the state of turning the upper part of the wheel of the mandala, [thus] *Uṣṇiṣacakravartin*.[2514]

"**In that way, those**" [refers to] the ten Terrifics. "**Differentiating the places**" [means], as explained just above, differentiating the shoulders and the forearms and so forth. "**Completely illuminated by the three wisdoms**" [means] a person completely illuminated from Akśobhya or great Vajradhara, the essence of the three secrets. You yourself ["]completely illuminate["] by differentiating the body and so forth of the three vajras, synonymous with the "essence" of that. "**Having become as one essence**" [means] attaining oneness in your own body. "**Perfect**" [means] with the unerring view. "**Support of thatness**" [means] the characteristic of body isolation, the support of one side of thatness.[2515]

Thus having taught the detailed explanation by the thatness of the self, in order to express the summary, he says "**The reality of self**," [meaning] the thatness of difference, the differentiation of the aggregates and elements in one's own body, by the reasoning stated above, known in the form of the mandala chakras. "**According to ritual**" [means]

[2511] Skt. "great force."
[2512] Skt. *śumbha*, " "of an Asura or demon slain by Durga." MW. The Tibetan translation, *gnod mdzes* literally means "powerful" or "beautiful" "harm."
[2513] Skt. "crown protrusion."
[2514] Lit. "Crown protrusion wheel turner" in both the Sanskrit and the Tibetan.
[2515] So, the "thatness of self" is equivalent to the stage of body isolation in the parlance of the *Vajra Rosary*.

by the stages of the vast lineage.[2516] "**You should know**" [means] should be known. "**From the speech of the guru**" means "from the speech of the vajra master" at a future time.

Thus having expressed the thatness of the self by three types of meaning together with analysis, in order to teach the thatness of mantra, explaining the actuality of that branch, he says "**Reality of mantra**," ["]mantra["] [meaning] those of snake and so forth, in the form of the A letter. [161B] "**Supreme yoga**" [means] the supreme form of concentration because it is from elaboration. "**Great wisdom**" because it completely knows clear light. "**Increases well**" because it permeates. "**Birthless**" because it lacks birth. "**Inexhaustible**" because it lacks destruction. "**Indistinct**" because it pervades everything, and is thus also invisible. "**Unchanging**" because it does not change through conceptualities. "**Unobscured**" because it has abandoned the obscurations of the addictions. "**Non-dual**" because it does not exist as two. "**Fearless**" by being unafraid of desire and so forth. "**Peaceful**" because from the very first, it pacifies. "**State of great bliss**" by reversing all suffering. "**Supreme**" because it is transmundane.

Thus having taught the essence of the thatness of mantra, in order to discuss the analysis, he says "**Snake and compressed**" and so forth, ["]snake["] in being similar to a snake, because of having a head and a tail; ["]compressed["] because it also lacks both. "**End-less**" because it has a head but not a tail. "**Headless**" because it has a tail but not a head. In order to teach the characteristics, he says "**OM**" and so forth, [meaning] having the first syllable as OM. "**HŪM and SVĀ HĀ at the end**" [means] "**By being complete, it is a snake**." "**It is expressed as**" [means] being like that, it is consistent

[2516] Reading *brgyud*, "lineage," for *gyud*, "tantra." The Lhasa *Vajra Rosary* has *brgyud.* 44A.

with having a head and a tail to have the syllable OM and the word SVĀ HĀ. As for "**Your own name is expressed as the essence**," ["]your own["] [means] the form of the name expressed that is connected with one's self, the character of that.[2517]

"**With a name with the character of compressing**" because of being without a head and a tail, like TAKKI HŪM JAH. "**The first, OM**" because OM is the very first syllable. "**Whatever mantra**" [means] whatever is like that. [162A] "**Abandoning the syllables of SVĀ HĀ**" because of lacking that which is like a tail. "**Has the name 'end-less'**" because it doesn't have and end. "**Arising from the process of the speech of the guru**" has the meaning of arising from the lineage of the speech of the master. "**Having the ending of SVĀ HĀ**" because it has the syllables SVĀ HĀ, similar to a tail. "**Without OM**" [means] free from the syllable OM. "**Head-less**" because it cuts off the head like that. "**Is explained**" [means] is expressed.

Thus having explained the analysis, in order to express the summary, he says "**Thus**," [meaning] by the reasoning previously stated. "**The characteristic**" [means] by the actuality of causing entry into the uncommon essence. "**Having known**" [means] you should know. "**The reality of mantra**" [refers to] the statements just above. "**Unexcelled**" because it is realized through the syllable A. "**Vast meaning**" [means] having the nature of elaborating on what is expressed and so forth. "**You should know**" [means] you should know. " **Following the *Root Tantra***" means by the reasoning stated in the first chapter of the Guhyasamāja.

Thus having explained the thatness of mantra in three modes of meaning, in order to discuss the thatness of wisdom, as a component of that, teaching the general nature, he

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[2517] Per Jamspal, like D OM V AH D HUM = DAVID. Personal Communication.

says "**The reality of wisdom**," [meaning] the form of integration that becomes the result, because the conventional and the ultimate become as one taste. "**Supreme yoga**" because it is the ultimate. "**Abandoning all duality**" because it has the nature of reversing all conceptualities of difference. "**Equalizing all of the sense powers**" because of the characteristic of collecting each one. As it is said: "You collect each one/ Of the forms of the ten sense powers/ From all of their own sources." All of the sense powers [constituting] five [in number] [162B] is connected with the equalizing of them with [their respective] sense objects. "**All things are one body**" [means that] there is oneness in all things. That which exists where there is a body of one taste is called that. By that he teaches the very actuality of concentration in order to know the form of the three Tathāgatas in the three kinds of object as primordially birthless. "**Abandoning all conceptualities of speech**" [means] the actuality of *prāṇāyāma*, having reflected on transcending all the conceptions of speech. "**The very nature of all the luminances**" [means] having the form of clear light mind through the stage of the three wisdoms of luminance and so forth.[2518] By this is meant the holding of the actuality of clear light mind. "**Having the nature of self-consecration**" because of having the nature of illusion-like concentration. By this is meant the branch of recollection.[2519] "**Pervading all**" [means] pervading all things having the nature of the three emptinesses. By this is

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[2518] *I.e. snang ba*, *ched pa* and *nyer thob*, "luminance," "radiance" and "immanence."

[2519] Skt. *anusmṛti*. As noted by Wayman, Tsongkhapa's commentary on the *PK* states:

> */sgron ma rab gsal las sor bsam gñis sems dben daṅ/*
> *srog rtsol rdor bzlas daṅ/ ḥdzin pa ḥod gsal daṅ/*
> *rjes dran daṅ ting nge ḥdzin zung ḥjug tu ḥdus par bśad de/*
> According to the *Pradīpoddyotana*, (among the six members) *pratyāhāra* and *dhyāna* are incorporated in secret state of mind (*citta-viveka*); *prāṇāyāma* in diamond muttering [vajra recitation] (*vajrajāpa*) (i.e. secret state of speech, *vāg-viveka*); *dhāraṇā* in clear light; *anusmṛti* and *samādhi* in pair-united (*yuga-naddha*).

Wayman 1977, 167.

meant natural clear light, the nature of the two subjects.[2520] "**Miraculous**" because of effortlessly accomplishing the benefit of sentient beings. "**Of self-awaring**"[2521] [means] the form of integration that is self-known, not falling to the two extremes. By this he teaches the summary of concentration. "**Supreme yoga**" because it is unexcelled. "**Having the character of the four moments**"[means] the nature of the genuine innate. "**Partless**" because it is free from all parts. Further, you should know it as being free from conventional enlightenment spirit.[2522] "**Omnipresent**" because it pervades the three ecstasies and so forth. "**Subtle**" in being realized by subtle yogis. "**Not in the scope**" [means] not in the range. "**Of childish yogis**" by beginner meditators on the creation stage. "**Completely unknown[2523] conventionally**" because it is not to be expressed by words and concepts. "**Its own ultimate nature**" [163A] because it is touched by yogis who have perfected in only [the ultimate].[2524]

Thus having taught its own nature in general, in order to discuss its own nature in particular from the perspective of dissolving within, "**The divisions of the perfection stage and**" [meaning] the two types of the perfection stage, and "**The reality of mantra**," as stated just above, "**Engaging in [them] is very clear**"[2525] he says. "**OM**" is the syllable OM. "**Dissolving within the drop of that very one**" [means] being gathered within the drop of the syllable OM. "**Perfectly**" [means] relying on the very nature that lacks elaboration. "**Thoroughly meditate**" [means] meditate. "**The drop**" is that which

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[2520] Mother and son clear light?

[2521] Tib. *rang rig pa,* Skt. *svasaṃvendana*. According to Lozang Jamspal, this is when the mind recognizes itself as empty, feeling its own true nature, like space. There is no subject and object. Personal Communication.

[2522] Per Lozang Jamspal, in other words, there is no conventional *bodhicitta*, only ultimate *bodhicitta*, *i.e.* emptiness. Personal Communication.

[2523] Alaṃka here has "completely known conventionally. The Lhasa *Vajra Rosary* has *mi shes pa*, "not known conventionally," which makes more sense here.

[2524] *I.e.* the ultimate way.

[2525] The Lhasa *Vajra Rosary* has *rab tu gsal.* 44B.

is connected with the syllable OM. "**Into the syllable AḤ**" [means] into the seed [syllable] of speech. "**Dissolves**" [means] is gathered within, because, relying on the body, speech is born, and because in the body, it also dissolves into speech that has a coarse and subtle nature. "**The syllable A**" [means] by itself the seed [syllable] of the Lord of Speech. As for "**The syllable HA**," the nature of part of itself is in the nature of two dots. It relies on that because it lacks elaboration. "**The next syllable HA**" is of the nature of the part that is connected with the syllable A.[2526] "**Into the syllable HŪM**" [means] into the seed [syllable] of the Lord of Mind. "**HA also**" is a part of the seed [syllable] of the Lord of Mind. "**The syllable U**" is in a part of the syllable HŪM. "**Dissolves**" [means that], having been gathered within, it goes. "**The syllable HA also**" causes the gathering within of the syllable U.

"**The letter M also**" into the drop of the syllable HŪM. "The letter M also" has the nature of the drop. "**Mere drop**" [means] in the nature of the drop of HŪM that is not to be expressed. "**Also the drop dissolves into sound**" [means] into sound that is like an echo. "**Perfectly dissolves**" [means] dissolves within. "**Sound also**" [163B] [means] the sound whose nature is an echo. "**Into mere sound**" [means] empty of the nature of complete sound. "**Into the space of supreme mere sound**" [means] into supreme space. "**That also**" [refers to] supreme space. "**Goes**" [means] goes. "**Clear light**" [means] into natural clear light. "**The state of clear light**" is the state that exists[2527] the form of natural clear light. "**In the clear**" [means] naturally pure. "**Exceedingly pure**" [means] having the purity that is stainless. "**The sphere of reality**" is the actuality of the nature of all things. "**Non-dual**" because it lacks the conceptuality

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[2526] Following P. and Snar. Derge has "**The syllable HA**" is of the nature of the part that is connected with the syllable *A*."

[2527] Should be *rnam par 'dug pa*?

of difference. "**Supreme wisdom**" because of its very nature in lacking wisdom. "**Awakens and**" because it is purified by the force of the path. "**Always arises**" because it is naturally realized.

"**Free from the activities of speech**" by not being in the sphere of words and concepts. "**Abandoning all duality**" because of lacking the conception of difference. "**The sole basis of the five aggregates**" [means] you rely on it because of [its] nature as being the five Tathāgatas. "**The perfect support of the five elements**" because it is of the very nature of the elements of earth and so forth. "**It becomes as the nature of the eight consciousnesses**" [means] that it is its nature, as [stated] before. "**Gathering the six outer objects**" because of being the very objects of form and so forth. "**Known as the ten wind-energies**" because [it is] of the nature of the ten wind-energies. "**The characteristic of knowledge**" [means] the characteristic of the three knowledges. "**Gathering all**" [means] the actuality of gathering all of the stages.

Thus having taught the essence of the thatness of mantra in particular from the perspective of dissolving within, in order to discuss the good qualities of the realizer of that, he says "**By the yoga that delights in everything**," [meaning] the ultimate of the perfection stage, by the yoga that delights in everything, with the character of benefitting one's self and others. "**Whoever**" [refers to] the yogi who is the meditator on the thatness of mantra. "**The three existences**" [164A] are the three realms. "**Lives**" [means] practices. "**Making all the attainments**" [refers to] making mundane and transmundane attainments. "**Glorious**" because he completes the two collections. [In] "**Increasing all fortune and goodness**," ["]fortune and goodness["] because of causing the increase in those with the characteristic of not being dependent on those who are

addicted, increasing all [those], because of reciting everywhere. "**That vajrin**" is this very one, the actuality of Vajradhara, because he manifests the thatness of emptiness. "**Is Vajrasattva**," relying on the Yoga Tantras.

"**Vajrabhairava**" because by realizing like a vajra, he is fearless of thought construction. [2528] "**Lord**" because he attains self-ecstasy everywhere. "**Heruka**" because, relying on the Yoginī Tantras, he is the very actuality of the three doors of liberation. As it is said, "[']HE[']abandons cause and so forth" and so forth. As for "**Kalachakra**," "The cause of the syllable KA is peace/ The syllable LA is the energy for it/ The syllable CHA is the movement of mind/ The syllable KRA is arranging in stages."[2529] "**The primordial Buddha**" because of being the Buddha, naturally pure from the beginning. "**The great sage**" because of having the capability[2530] of body and so forth, sage; because of being free from the characteristics of the disciples and so forth, great. "**Samantabhadra**" because of arising from this complete good, [thus] Samantabhadra, [and] further, because of having the two purities and because of having the two perfections. [In] "**Mañjuśrī**," ["]*mañj*["] being pleasant, ["]*śrī*["] [meaning perfection. Putting these together in this, having had the thought of by existing in this perfection. If someone asks how, in response to that he says "**Having the nature of delighting in a variety of things**," [meaning] following the thought of these and those people, because of having the nature of delighting in the forms of those types. "**Liberating various beings**" because of lacking form because things have no form.

[2528] Following P.

[2529] These verses are also found in the *Padmin-nāma-pañjīka, padma can zhes bya ba'i dka' 'grel*, Toh. 1350, 104A.

[2530] Skt. *mauna*, "silence," translated as Tib. *thub*, "ability." So Skt. would be "silent in body and so forth," meaning body, speech and mind. Ch. 9, v.1 *Bodhicaryāvatāra* Commentary, *samaropāpavādaāntadvayamaunāt aśaikṣakāyavāngmanaḥkarmalakṣaṇamaunatrayayogādva*. From the silence of two extremes of reification and repudiation. P. 168, Ed. P.L. Vaidya, Darbhanga: Mithila Inst. 1960.

"**The various ones are the basis of a host of good qualities**" [means] perfectly endowed with the good qualities of a buddha, power and fearlessness and so forth. "**The yoga of delighting in everything**" [means] by the yoga of delighting in the form body in all of its forms. "**Great yoga**" because of not wavering your own nature. "**Stainless**" because of benefitting others.

Thus having taught the good qualities of the realizer of that, in order to discuss the summary, he says "**That very wisdom**" and so forth, [with] the explanations just above. "**Clear**" because it is in the sphere of yogic direct perception. "**Not knowable**" because it is unable to be know by ordinary people. "**Non-local**" because it is isolated from support. "**Going to the sphere of reality**" because of wisdom like that through the force of that. "**The characteristics of the creation and perfection [stages]**" because of the distinction between the two stages. "**Like 8000 hair tips**" [means] by also being extremely subtle. "**Very clear**" by also being very clear. "**Luminous**" because it is the perfection of purity. "**From the speech of the guru**" [means] from the speech of the master. "**You should know**" [means] should be totally known. "**By analyzing scripture and lineage**" [means] by the mantra vehicle and concordant lineage, and, as for ["]scripture,["] with the nature of the five classes of Tantra and so forth. "**Know by analyzing**" has the meaning of thoroughly analyzing that. Thus he states the thatness of wisdom in four modes of meaning.

Thus having taught the three realities, in order to discuss a summary of that, he says "**Thus is the commitment of the three realities**," [meaning] the nature of the thatness of self and so forth. [165A] "**Supreme wisdom**" because of consisting of the five stages after the creation stage. "**Secret**" because of being hidden from those who are

not vessels. "**Characteristic of the fourth wisdom**" because of being a type of innate [ecstasy], and because it is of the nature of the moment free from signs.

Chapter Twenty-Four

Determining the Nose Tips

Thus having taught the answer to the question on the subject of the three realities in the twenty-third chapter, now, in order to discuss the answer to the question of the subject of the three nose tips, teaching the twenty-fourth chapter, starting at the beginning, he says "**Then**" and so forth, [meaning] after the explanation of the twenty-third chapter. "**Further**"[2531] [means] relying on what was previous in order to differentiate. "**Listen**" is exhorting Vajrapāṇi to listen. "**To the characteristics of the three nose tips**" [meaning] to the characteristics of the differences through the analysis of the secret, heart and face nose tips, establishing uncommon thatness. "**To the explanation**" [means] to what will be expressed.

Thus having taught the beginning of it, to discuss the direct teaching, as a component of it, the three nose tips, he states the teaching, "**The names of the tips are secret, heart and face**," [meaning] is they are to be called by those. "**The three from the Tantra**" [means] from the *Secret Community Root Tantra*. "**Appearing**" [means] taught by the Lord. "**By differentiation of the three chakras**" [means] by differentiation of the three chakras that are located in the Emanation, Reality and

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[2531] The Lhasa *Vajra Rosary* has *yang dag*, 45B. I believe that this should be *gzhan yang*, consistent with prior chapters and making sense of Alaṃka's explanation.

Complete Enjoyment [Chakras]. "**By the yogi**" [means] by the meditator on the thatness of energy-wind. "**The process of meditation**" [means] the process of meditating on the thatness of energy-wind.

Thus having taught the summary [regarding] the question on the subject of the three nose tips, [165B] in order to teach the detailed explanation of that, the branch of discussing the secret nose tip, meditating on the substance drop, he says "**Of those of intense lust**" and so forth, ["]intense lust["] [meaning] intense lust, great lust. One who is completely dominated by that is called that, of those. "**Bestowing bliss**" [means] causing the bestowal of bliss, connected with "great bliss is produced everywhere." If someone asks how, he says "**By the application of the reality of energy-wind**," [meaning] by the energy-wind yogas of *prāṇayāma*. As for "**Awakening the channel chakras**," ["]the channel chakras["] are those located on one's own body; ["]awaken["] [means] through the cause of complete knowledge.

"**Produced everywhere**" [means] produced everywhere through the force of the joining of means and wisdom. "**Great bliss**" [means] the actuality of enlightenment spirit. If someone asks how, he says "**The elements become of one taste**," [meaning] by equalizing the taste of the thirty-two realms. "**Summon**" [means] holding by the force of the reality of energy-wind. "**Apply**" [means] apply. "**You should do according to ritual**" [means] by the ritual of the reality of energy-wind. "**Hold**" [means] you should hold. "**At the tip of the vajra**" [means] at the tip of the vajra. "**Enlightenment spirit**" [means] the conventional type. "**Great bliss**" because it is the concordant cause of great bliss. "**The characteristic of the innate moment**" [means] having the character of customary orgasm. "**The nature of the five wisdoms**" [means that] the form like a pure

moon and a white kunda flower in the karmic drop is the mirror-like wisdom; the thirty-two elements having an equal taste is the equalizing wisdom; the actuality of experiencing bliss in that very one is the discriminating wisdom; from that, completing the actions of emitting and withdrawing is the activity accomplishing wisdom; the reality sphere wisdom is naturally purified by emptiness. "**Bliss**" [166A] because of the reality of experience.

"**Abandoning all conceptuality**" because of being free from discordant factors. "**Substance drop**" because of being the actuality of the drop of enlightenment spirit. "**At the tip of the secret nose**" [means] at the tip of the vajra; the tip of the nose of the lotus is also suitable. "**At the end of that**" [means] at the end of that. "**Having the nature of perfect holding**" [means] the actuality of holding. "Supreme yoga" because of serving as the cause of supreme yoga. "**Only one with a greatly lustful mind**" has the meaning "of the great ones who know extreme passion." Whoever is single-minded on the object of great passion is called that.

Thus, having taught the meditation on the substance drop, in order to explain the actuality of the secret nose tip, he says "**In sixty-four lotus petals**," because of the shape of those channels. "**Lotus**" because of its very form. "**Channel chakra**" because of the characteristics of perfect force and so forth. "**The so-called channel chakra arises**" is taught as stated in chapter seventeen. "**Explained as the nose tip at the navel of that**" [means] the navel in the center of the Emanation Chakra and that, which is located in the secret chakra, the hub of the vajra and lotus channels. "**Explained as the nose tip**" [means] expressed as the tip of the secret nose. For that very reason, he says "**secret**" [because] it has the name of secret. It bestows all bliss.

Thus having explained the secret nose tip in two forms, explaining the actuality at the nose tip of the heart, he says "**At the nose tip of the heart**" and so forth. The "**Reality Chakra**" has the nature of causing the holding of its own characteristic.[2532] "**Of the heart**" [means] at the place of the heart. "**Eight lotus petals**" [means] in the form of eight lotus petals. "**Hub**" [means] in the middle, together with the stamen. "**The nose tip heart**" [means] at the tip of the nose of the heart. If someone asks what it is with respect to which he says "**Mind of hatred**," it is of those having the lineage of hatred. "**In it**" [means] [166B] in that heart nose tip. "**Mantra**" is in the nature of thunder. "**Vajradhara**" is great Vajradhara. "**The cause of perfectly emanating**" [means] the cause of producing. "**Abandoning all the conceptualities of speech**" because of transcending the sphere of all verbal elaborations.

"**Supreme wisdom**" because is serves is serves as the cause of clear light speech, the wisdom that is supreme. "**Wonderful**" because from reality it engages all the elaborations of speech. "**Subtle**" because it is the object of the subtle yoga. "**Always arises**" because with the nature of reality, it exists eternally. "***Nāda* [sound]**" is the aspect of the letter A. "**Non-conceptual**" because it lacks the conception of the nature of the five parts. "**Great bliss**" because, by holding the mind there, you eliminate the discomfort that is in the nature of distraction. "**Meditating**" [means] causing one to be familiar with the mantric drop discussed immediately above, and "**excellent yoga**" [means] the creation stage, relying on the meditator, because it is excellent. "**Through the correct**" [means] with the nature of the instructions on exhalation and inhalation. "**Achieving the personal instructions**" [means] understanding the personal instructions.

[2532] *Svalakṣana.*

"**Happily**" [means] having made happy. "**The King of Hatred**" [means] the addiction of hatred, having the opportunity to move everywhere. "**When you control**" [means] having controlled [hatred] itself, through the actuality of purifying hatred. "**Quickly**" [means] quickly. If someone asks what the drop is like, in response to that he says "**The one cause of the reality of peace**," [means] that very single cause in the aspect of clear light, the thatness unmixed with the natures of the peaceful conceptual energy-winds "because it approaches that through the power of the drop."

Thus having taught the meditation on the mantric drop in two aspects, now, in order to teach the expression of the conventional nose tip, the actuality of its own branch, he says "**The trio of sun, moon and fire**," [meaning] the actuality of the *lalanā*, *rasanā* and *avadhūtī*, [167A] because they cause all three elements to flow. "**Pervading from the middle three times**"[2533] [means] entering into the middle of the three channels. "**The face nose**"" is expressed as the "conventional nose tip." "**The characteristics of the place of the energy-winds**" [means that] whatever has the characteristics of the place of the five or the ten winds should be called that.

Thus having taught the actuality of [the drop] itself, in order to briefly explain the meditation on the drop of clear light in that very one, he says "**Located there**," "in that" [meaning] in that conventional nose tip. As for the great wisdom in "**Great wisdom**," because of the very accomplishment of vajra repetition. "**Great drop**" [means] the drop of clear light. "**Mind suppressed by delusion**" [refers to] the yogi who has a mental continuum agitated by ignorance. "**Concentration**"[means] meditation. "**Conquers supreme delusion**" [means] penetrates ignorance. "**Supreme**" refers to delusion,

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[2533] The Lhasa *Vajra Rosary* has *lam gsum*, "three paths."

because it serves as the cause of producing all addictions. As it is said: "It is called delusion because of being the very cause of the faults. Otherwise, you abandon by abandoning the view of worldly things [as intrinsically existent]. Further, if someone asks how, in response to that he says "**Blaming all things**," ["]all things["] [meaning] particularly placing the blame on external and internal things because, through the force of that [view], you don't know the nature of all things.

Thus having taught regarding that the summary of the meditation on the drop of clear light, in order to discuss the detailed explanation of that, he says "**Manifesting the nature of the five wisdoms**," [meaning] the clear light drop having the nature of those, because all five energy-winds have the nature of the five Tathāgatas. "**Relying on the five Buddhas**" [means that] as for that, the life energy-wind is of the nature of Akśobhya, the evacuative [energy-wind] is of the nature of Ratnasambhava, the equalizing [energy-wind] is of the nature of Amitābha, [167B] the ascending energy-wind is of the nature of Amoghasiddhi, and the pervading energy-wind, because of its being located in the totality of the entire body, is of the nature of Vairocana. They are the support because of their nature. "**Supreme**" [because of] serving as the cause of clear light speech. "**That is the drop of clear light**" because of being called by the name of that. "**Perfectly relying on the nose tip of the face**" because of being located having relied on the tip of the conventional nose. "**You should meditate**" [means] holding at the tip of the nose. "**Supreme yoga**" because it serves as the very cause[2534] of vajra repetition. "**Traversing the ocean of delusion**" has the meaning of "causing the disappearance of the ocean of delusion."

[2534] Following P. and Snar.

Thus having taught the detailed explanation of that, in order to discuss the name of that very thing, he says "**Commitment Hero**" and so forth, "**That one**" [standing] for the drop of clear light. "Commitment hero" is the name. As for ["]perfectly or completely arrived,["] because the hero exists in the nature of beings in the five types of energy-winds, he is the commitment hero. "**As having the name**" [refers to] the name. "**Perfect**" by having the unerring view of the very nature of the perfection stage. If someone asks what the commitment hero is like, in response to that he says "**The commitment of all Buddhas**," [meaning] of all the Tathāgatas. "**Having the nature of the five wisdoms**" [means] having the nature of the five wisdoms of mirror-like and so forth, because in meaning it has the nature of the five types of energy-winds, you should think like that. "Suitable,"[2535] having the nature of the clear light drop.
"**Those skilled at yoga**" [refers to] those able to hold the clear light drop at the conventional nose tip. "**Overcoming the darkness of delusion**" [means] overcoming the dark forest of ignorance because you know the intrinsic naturelessness of speech illustrated by the energy-winds' own natures. "**Free from all conceptions everywhere**" because of the disappearance of all elaborations of speech. "**The characteristic of omniscient conceptual consciousness**" [refers to] [168A] the wisdom that knows everything; whoever has that characteristic is called that because it is known by the subtle yogas.

Thus having taught the expression of the name of that very thing, now, in order to express the point of view of entering the clear light drop, as a branch of that he teaches a summary, saying "**Arising from the nostril of the nose**," [meaning that] the energy-

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[2535] Not in Lhasa *Vajra Rosary*.

winds arise from the nostrils of the face nose. "**The five Buddha families abide**" [means] the five energy-winds, because of the form of the five lords. "**The five energy-winds perfectly move upwards**" because all five energy-winds move everywhere from the door of the upper nose. "**Active in the body**" [means] in the body. "**Always become**" [means] at all times, because the energy-winds depend on the body. "**They move at the conventional nose**" because of arising from the face nose. "**From that door**" [means] from the face nose's nostrils. "**That**" [means] energy-wind. "**Arises**" [means] is born.

Thus having taught the summary, in order to discuss the detailed explanation, he says "**Left, right and both**," [meaning] by the division of from the right, left, both, [and] slowly moving, those four movements of energy-wind, having the meaning of "relying on the first session and so forth." Thus also from the first session, the energy-wind of the fire mandala arises from the right nostril; in the second session the wind mandala arises from the left nostril; in the third session the earth mandala arises from both; in the fourth session the water mandala arises from both, falling slowly. At night it is also like that. Here also, from each mandala, from each nasal nostril counting each of the four mandalas, by dividing into the right and so forth, you will realize [them] as different. "**Arising from the right**" because it arises from the right nasal nostril. "**Element**" is energy-wind. "**It is the fire mandala**" [means] the mandala of fire. [168B] "**Red color**" because of having the nature of purity which is the Tathāgata Amitābha. "**This bright**" because it appears in yogic knowledge. "**Lotus Lord**" because of not being smeared by passion and so forth like a lotus, [thus] lotus. That very one because of being the lord of his own clan is the Lotus Protector. "**Movement**" is that very Amitābha, through a kind

of upward movement, [thus] movement.

"**From the left**" [means] from the left nasal nostril. "**That arises**" [means] that is produced. "**Element**" is a the kind of energy-wind that is equalizing. "**Relying on the wind mandala**" because of being produced from the wind mandala. "**Appearing as pure green-yellow**" [means] having the color green, Amoghasiddhi, "**of the Action Lord**." "**The movement**" is a synonym for a kind of energy-wind. "**From both**" [means] from both nasal nostrils. "**That arises**" [means] that is produced. "**Element**" is "a kind of equalizing energy-wind," yellow in color. "**The mandala of great power**" is the earth mandala. "**The Great Jewel Lord**" [means] Ratnasambhava, who completes all thoughts. "**Moving**" [means] "through the aspect of that." "**Slow and not moving**" because it arises from the water mandala. "**Slowly moving**" because water doesn't move up. "**The water mandala**" [means] that very water mandala. "**Appearing as pure crystal**" through its color, because it is stainless. "**Vajra Lord**" is Akśobhya, because he is stable[2536] in emptiness, like a vajra. He is also a Lord because he is the lord of his own clan. Because of that form he deserves that.

"**From all the elements**" [refers to] the nature of the four energy-winds. "**Arising perfectly**" [means] [169A] relying on. "**The apprehending of habitat and inhabitants**" because of apprehending the four [elements] in the environment. The ["]apprehending of habitat and inhabitants["] [refers to] the pervading energy-wind. "**The nature of Vairocana**" because of appearing through infusing forms. "**The end of death**" because of always lacking its activity at the time of death, it has the meaning of that arising.

[2536] Reading *brtan*.

Thus having taught the detailed explanation, now, in order to the internal repetition through the process of the four mandalas, he says "**As these four mandalas**" and so forth, [meaning] by the process of the four mandalas such as fire and so forth. "**You repeat the wheel of breath of the elements**" [means] you should scrutinize [them] preceded by the application of the three syllables. "**Constantly**" [means] the entire day and night. "**Having placed [one's self] in equipoise**" [means] by abiding in mirror-like concentration. "**Day and night**" [means] divided into eight sessions. "**Always repeat**" [means] that very wheel of energy-wind. "**Through mantra**" [means] through abiding on the perfection stage. "**By the count of repetitions**" [means] by the count of 21,600.

Thus having discussed internal repetition according to the process of the four mandalas, now, in order to discuss a host of activities from the perspective of gathering the drop of clear light, he says "**In that way, the energy-wind at the tip of the nose**," and so forth, [meaning] the aspect that gathers all five energy-winds, ["]at the tip of the nose["] [meaning] at the tip of the conventional nose. "**As five colors**" being the colors with the natures of the five clans. "**Meditate**" as the mere kernel of a mustard seed. "**By supreme non-dual yoga**" [means] through the non-dual yoga of mantra, energy-wind, mandala and deities, by realizing [that they] are not different [from each other]. "**[Of] the supreme light ray**" [means] the nature of the five energy-winds. "**The great blazing**" because it is also a very brilliant light. "**By this**" [means that] the light ray drop will accomplish a host of the peaceful and so forth activities. If someone asks how, [169B] in response to that he says "**The yogi**," [meaning] by the gradual practice of the mandala with the nature of being held for the period of half of each session break. As it is said, "In each mandala of fire, wind, great power and water, in the time of half of each

session, two actions in each."[2537] Thus he states four modes of meaning from the perspective of engaging in [meditation on] the light ray drop.

Thus having taught the detailed explanation from the perspective of dividing, now, in order to teach the subject of that very thing, the answer to the question on the subject of the meditator, as the branch of that which is requesting, he says "**Then**" and so forth, [meaning] after expressing the host of activities from the perspective of gathering. "**Vajrapāṇi**" is the requestor. "**Vajrasattva**" is an aspect of Vajradhara, the sixth teacher. ["]Speaking["] should be added to the meaning of holding [*dhara*]. "**Guru of beings**" because he becomes the vajra master of the three realms. If someone asks what he said, in response to that he says "**Of the three drops**," [meaning] the actualities of the substance, mantra and light ray drops. "**Complete knower**" [means], by the kindness of the Lord, he knew the three drops. "**Endowed with the three nose tips**" [means] the three nose tips of secret, heart and face, which become the support of these [drops]. "**A little about this**" [means] the meditation on the three drops and in the meditation on the three drops. "**Doubt**" [means] being of two minds. [In] "**O Terminator of Samsara, please clarify**"[2538] that [means] doubt, O Lord, please dispel. ["]Samsara["] is cyclic existence. The terminator of that is the enemy [of that],[2539] because he cuts off the root of cyclic existence. ["]Doubt["] is stated as his own state. As for "**Does the meditator-yogi meditate on the three drops together or individually?**" the yogi [does so] individually. [170A]

Thus having taught the request, now, in order to show the certainty of the three

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[2537] So eight all together.
[2538] Following Snar. and Coni.
[2539] This could be a reference to the alternative etymology of *arhat* as *ari* + *han*, "enemy killer. *See* Lopez 1996, 243.

meditators preceded by engaging in the speech of the Lord, he says "**Then**" and so forth, after putting the question. "**The Vajra Lord**" is great Vajradhara, connected with "**spoke**." If someone asks how, in response to that he says "**Cutting off all doubt**," all doubt [meaning] uncertainty. Cutting them off is overcoming, having the meaning of "reversing." "**The main one**" because he is the main one of the five Buddhas. If someone asks what was said, in response to that he says "**A long time**," [meaning] a very long time. "**Controlled by desire**" [means] having come into the power of very great desire. "**In the three worlds**" [means] in the three realms. "**Whoever**" [means] sentient beings. "**Is tired**" [means] is fatigued. "**For the benefit of those beings**" [means] for those sentient beings that have the lineage of passion, in order to liberate [them] by the means of conduct that is suitable for them, because of pacifying desire. "**As the substance drop**" means the actuality of the drop of enlightenment spirit. "**Is stated**" [means] is expressed.

"**Of great anger**" [means] extremely great anger. "**Under the control**" [means] dependent. If someone asks what the name of those beings is, in response to that he says "**Wild-bodied**,"[2540] [meaning that] whoever through the power of anger has a wild body is called that. "**Them**" concerns sentient beings with the behavior of anger. "**Quickly**" [means] quickly. "**In order to liberate**" because of showing the way from anger. "**The mantric drop**" is in the form of the syllable HŪM at the heart nose tip. "**Is stated**" [means] is described. "**By great delusion**" [means] through great ignorance. "**Those completely confounded**" [means] those with the wrong view. "**Fatigued**" [means] with an exhausted mind. "**Those**" [means] sentient beings. "**This ocean of Samsara**"

[2540] Skt. *nikṛtikāya* [?].

[means] [170B] from the ocean of cyclic existence. "**They**" are those with depressed mind streams. "**Quickly**" [means] with a quick result. "**Attainment**" is the actuality of vajra repetition. "**In order to achieve**" is in order to achieve the attainment that has the quick result. "**The characteristic of wisdom**" is the actuality of wisdom through the overcoming of ignorance. "**As the wind drop**" [means] as the light ray drop. "**Is stated**" [means] is expressed. If someone asks how, in response to that he says "**The elaboration of perfect reality**," meaning "the property of elaborating reality with the nature of the unerring view."

Thus having taught the definition of the three meditators preceded by engaging in the speech of the Lord, now, in order to express a summary of the three nose tips, describing their nature, in that way expressing a summary of the three drops, describing their nature, he says "**Thus, the three drops**," as described just above, "**perfectly**," [meaning] with the nature of the unerring view, "**You should practice exactly like this**," [meaning] the practice of the energy-winds. "**You should think like this**" [means] by depending on those with the lineage of passion and so forth. "**In this very life**" [means] in the reality that is seen [now]. "**In order to attain**" [means] in order to transcend into the thatness of the energy-winds. In "**In order to purify all obscurations**," "he said" should be added. It has the meaning of "in order to pacify" ["]all obscurations,["] [meaning] the discordances present in isolated body and speech.

Thus having taught the nature of one's own gathering, now, in order to define the place of meditation, he says "**With one-pointed mind**" [meaning] with an undistracted mind. "**A pleasant place**" [means] in a part of the land that is pleasant. "**Gathering wisdom**" [means] consistent with producing the five wisdoms, [171A] gathering all

attainments [and] is connected with "**You should accomplish with effort**." Further, if someone asks how, in response to that he says "**Adorned with water, fruit and flowers**," in order to be undistracted and pleasant. "**Isolated**" [means] without people. "**On a mountain peak**" [means] on the top of an earth-holder. "**You should accomplish**" [means] you should meditate. "**With effort**" [means] with striving. "**Gathering all attainments**" [means] all the attainments of peace and so forth. ["]Gathering["] is an aspect of collecting, having the meaning of "the three drops."