



TSADRA

# THE BUDDHA FROM DÖLPO



A STUDY OF THE LIFE AND  
THOUGHT OF THE TIBETAN MASTER  
DÖLPOPA SHERAB GYALTSEN

CYRUS STEARNS



## THE BUDDHA FROM DÖLPO

## THE TSADRA FOUNDATION SERIES

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# The Buddha from Dölpo

*A Study of the Life and Thought of the Tibetan Master*

*Dölpopa Sherab Gyaltsen*

REVISED AND ENLARGED EDITION

Cyrus Stearns



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## Preface to the Revised Edition

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WHEN THE FIRST edition of this book was published in 1999 very little had been written in European languages about Dölpopa, the *shentong* view, and the Jonang tradition of Tibetan Buddhism. Tibetan texts concerning these topics were also quite rare. None of Dölpopa's major works had ever been translated. This situation has greatly improved during the last decade. Several important books and articles have been published that further contribute to our knowledge of Dölpopa and his tradition. Many significant Tibetan texts have been published or have come to light in manuscript form. And it is now clear that the Jonang tradition itself is still thriving in the Amdo region of eastern Tibet.

Many corrections, revisions, and additions have been made for this new enlarged edition. The most important addition is a translation of Dölpopa's *Autocommentary to the "Fourth Council,"* which was not in the first book. All the translated texts and passages that were in the first edition have been carefully revised. Numerous other additions and changes have also been made. Several newly available Tibetan texts have been used to enhance my previous research, and recent works in English have been mentioned in the notes and listed in the bibliography. To do much more would require a totally new project.

This book is the product of a lingering fascination with several topics that still remain largely unexplored by Western students of Tibetan religion and history. When I first began to study Tibetan literature in the early 1970s, I occasionally came across brief references to an intriguing fourteenth-century figure known as Dölpopa, or the Buddha from Dölpo, and usually hostile descriptions of his unique vision of the nature of reality. The fact that his tradition had been effectively censured by the Tibetan government in the seventeenth century only served to pique my curiosity. My teacher,

Dezhung Tulku Rinpoché, was at first somewhat reticent to speak about Dölpopa's theories, no doubt in large part due to my obvious lack of the necessary skills to engage in such a discussion. Rinpoché was a peerless example of the nonsectarian approach to realization. As the years passed, I was fortunate to learn from him an appreciation of the wide range of views contained in all the ancient traditions of Tibet, including that of Dölpopa's *shentong* lineage. I am deeply grateful for Dezhung Rinpoché's inspiring example.

While living in Nepal in the 1980s, I purchased a large volume of Dölpopa's miscellaneous writings at the monastery of my teacher Dilgo Khyentsé Rinpoché, who had recently published it in Bhutan. This collection contained all the texts that are now translated in the present work. I am particularly thankful to Khyentsé Rinpoché for personally encouraging me to read Dölpopa's writings.

During the following years in Nepal I continued to be nagged with curiosity about Dölpopa and his ideas and returned periodically to the volume of his works. Then in 1988 my teacher Chogyé Trichen Rinpoché began teaching the Kālacakra Six-branch Yoga of Dölpopa's tradition according to the manual of guiding instructions written by Jonang Tāranātha. During the next two years Rinpoché taught the Six-branch Yoga in Nepal, Borneo, and the United States, and as his interpreter I had the unique opportunity to study these teachings and have many conversations with him about their practice. I then began to delve more deeply into Tāranātha's other writings, which led me back to Dölpopa, his great predecessor. I am extremely indebted to Chogyé Rinpoché for his exceptional kindness, and for sharing his profound insight into the practice of Buddhist tantra.

After my return to the United States in 1991 I gradually began to concentrate on the study of Dölpopa's life and teachings. This became much more feasible when Dölpopa's voluminous Collected Works were recovered from eastern Tibet by Matthew Kapstein and published in 1992. In addition, Leonard van der Kuijp graciously made photocopies of some important rare manuscripts available to me and carefully read through an earlier version of this book. Without access to the works recovered by Kapstein and van der Kuijp, a study of this type would have been impossible at that time. I would also like to thank Jeffrey Schoening for his thoughtful reading of an earlier form of this work, and for his many helpful comments and suggestions. The insightful comments and references from Hubert Decleer were also very appreciated. I am grateful to Collett Cox, Richard Salomon, and Dan Martin for their helpful readings of an earlier manuscript. John Newman, David Germano, and Franz-Karl Ehrhard were very generous

with their comments and references. I would also like to thank Khenpo Appey Rinpoché, Guru Lama, Kurtis Schaeffer, Marilyn Kennell, Jérôme Edou, and Jan-Ulrich Sobisch for providing copies of rare texts, directing me to references, or making editorial suggestions. I benefited greatly from the questions of Sylvie Carteron, who brought to my attention an embarrassing number of mistakes in the first edition of this book and caused me to rethink some important points that arose as she was translating it into French. I would like to offer a special thanks to Michael Sheehy, who has sent me many rare Jonang texts during the last few years and whose inspiring photographs enrich this book. I am also grateful to Michael Henss, Andy Quintman, Ulrich von Schroeder, Franco Ricca, and my daughter Sofia Stearns for their photographs, and to David Jackson for locating some of these pictures. I thank E. Gene Smith for kindly giving me an account at the Tibetan Buddhist Resource Center so that I could download texts and search for quotations found in Dölpopa's work. The skillful and meticulous editorial work of Steven Rhodes has saved me from countless mistakes more serious than spelling and grammar. Gopa & Tedz's elegant design of the interior of this book is much appreciated. I also thank L. S. Summer for creating a detailed index for the book. Finally, I am happy to say that the publication of this new edition is due to the true generosity of Eric Colombel and the Tsadra Foundation, without whose support I might today be bagging groceries at the Bluebird in Kathmandu.

Since I acknowledged the influence of the divine music of Franz Liszt, Frank Zappa, Ludwig van Beethoven, Miles Davis, and Johann Sebastian Bach while I was writing the first edition of this book in Seattle, I should now mention that this new work was completed in the forest of Whidbey Island with Ustad Ali Akbar Khan, Morton Feldman, Nikhil Banerjee, the Kronos Quartet, and Brian Eno seldom absent.

In the main section of the book all Tibetan names have been phonetized for the convenience of the general reader. The correct Tibetan spellings have been included in the annotations, the bibliography, and the index. The phonetic rendering of Tibetan words is a problematic area, since the pronunciation of the same word varies widely in different regions of Tibet. I have simply tried to be consistent and provide a form that presents the least difficulty for the reader. The titles of all Tibetan works have been translated into English or at least given a short descriptive English title.

References in the notes to texts that are in the Tibetan language are cited by author and descriptive English title. If the cited work is in a European language, it is referred to by author and date of publication. I have not tried

to “correct” the spellings found in the original Tibetan texts. All Sanskrit terms are transliterated in the standard fashion. In the bibliography and endnotes the various references from classical Indian works translated in the Tibetan Kangyur and Tengyur are identified according to the numbers in the Tohoku catalogue of the Dergé edition of these collections: *A Complete Catalogue of the Tibetan Buddhist Canons (Bkaḥ-hgyur and Bstan-hgyur)*, edited by Hakuju Ui, Munetada Suzuki, Yensho Kanakura, and Tokan Tada (Sendai: Tohoku Imperial University, 1934).

I hope some of the charismatic force of Dölpopa’s character can be glimpsed in the description of his life and ideas, and that this attempt to present a small portion of his controversial and inspiring insights will prompt future investigations. Dölpopa writes in a uniquely compelling style, making use of both the language of experience born from meditation and the erudite terminology of the great scriptures and treatises of India and Tibet. When discussing and translating his work, English technical terminology is thus required, but I have done my best to eliminate what James Joyce called “the true scholastic stink” that permeates so much academic writing and translation. Dölpopa’s own Dharma heirs are said to have experienced difficulties in comprehending the depth of their master’s genius, so I am certain that even this revised work is far from perfect. But at least in the eyes of interested students of Buddhism, Dölpopa and his profound legacy are now emerging more fully from the long shadow of official Tibetan history.



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1. Dölpopa Sherab Gyaltzen (1292–1361).

## Introduction

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ONE OF THE major sources of tension in the interpretation of late Indian Buddhism as received in Tibet was the apparently contradictory descriptions of emptiness (*śūnyatā*, *stong pa nyid*) found in scriptures and commentaries identified with different phases of the tradition.<sup>1</sup> The notion of an enlightened eternal essence, or buddha nature, present in every living being was in marked contrast to the earlier traditional Buddhist emphasis on the lack of any enduring essence.<sup>2</sup> For followers of Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna Buddhism in Tibet, the reconciliation of these two themes in the doctrinal materials they had inherited from India and elsewhere was of crucial importance.

In fourteenth-century Tibet the concern with these issues seems to have finally reached a critical point. There was a burst of scholarly works dealing in particular with the question of the buddha nature and the attendant implications for Buddhist traditions of practice and explication. The forces primarily responsible for the intense interest surrounding these issues at this specific point in Tibetan history are not yet clearly understood. But it is clear that many of the prominent masters of this period who produced the most influential works on these topics were dedicated practitioners of the teachings of the *Kālacakra Tantra*, and either personally knew each other or had many of the same teachers and disciples. Some of the most important masters were Karmapa Rangjung Dorjé (1284–1339), Butön Rinchen Drup (1290–1364), Dölpopa Sherab Gyaltsen (1292–1361), Longchen Rabjampa (1308–64), Lama Dampa Sönam Gyaltsen (1312–75), and Barawa Gyaltsen Palsang (1310–91).<sup>3</sup>

Without question, the writings of Dölpopa, who was also known as “The Buddha from Dölpo” (*Dol po Sangs rgyas*) and “The Omniscient One from Dölpo Who Embodies the Buddhas of the Three Times” (*Dus gsum sangs*

rgyas Kun mkhyen Dol po pa), contain the most controversial and stunning ideas ever presented by a great Tibetan Buddhist master. The controversies that stemmed from his teachings are still very much alive today, 650 years after Dölpopa's death.

When attempting to grasp the nature and significance of Dölpopa's ideas and their impact on Tibetan religious history, it is important to recognize that he was a towering figure. He was not a minor teacher whose strange notions influenced only his own Jonang tradition, and whose maverick line of hermeneutic thought died out when that tradition was suppressed by the central Tibetan government in the middle of the seventeenth century. This is perhaps the orthodox version of events, but there is abundant evidence that Dölpopa's legacy spread widely and had a profound impact on the development of Tibetan Buddhism from the fourteenth century to the present day.

Whenever Dölpopa's name comes up, whether in ancient polemic tracts or in conversation with modern Tibetan teachers, it is obvious that he is remembered first and foremost for the development of what is known as the *shentong* (*gzhan stong*) view. Until quite recently, this view was familiar to modern scholars largely via the intensely critical writings of later doctrinal opponents of Dölpopa and the Jonang tradition.<sup>4</sup> In the absence of the original voice for this view, that is, Dölpopa's extensive writings that have only been widely available since 1992, even Dölpopa's name and the words "Jonang" and "*shentong*" often evoked merely the image of an aberrant and heretical doctrine that thankfully was purged from the Tibetan Buddhist scene centuries ago.<sup>5</sup> In this way a very significant segment of Tibetan religious history has been swept under the rug. One of the main aims of the present work is to allow Dölpopa's life and ideas to speak for themselves.

Dölpopa uses the Tibetan term *shentong* (*gzhan stong*), "empty of other," to describe absolute reality as empty only of other relative phenomena. This view is his primary legacy and usually elicits a strong reaction, whether positive or negative. Others before Dölpopa held much the same opinions, in both India and Tibet, but he was the first to come out and directly say what he thought in writing, using terminology that was new and shocking for many of his contemporaries. His new "Dharma language" (*chos skad*), which included the use of previously unknown terms such as *shentong*, will be discussed in chapter 2.

According to Dölpopa, the absolute and the relative are both empty, as Buddhism has always taught, but they *must* be empty in different ways. Phenomena at the relative level are empty of self-nature (*rang stong*) and are no

more real than the fictitious horn of a rabbit or the child of a barren woman. In contrast, the reality of absolute truth is empty only of other (*gzhan stong*) relative phenomena. With the recent availability of a large number of writings by Dölpopa, it is now clear that he was not simply setting up the viewpoints of an emptiness of self-nature and an emptiness of other as opposed theories located on the same level.<sup>6</sup> He obviously viewed the pair as complementary, while making the careful distinction that the view of an “emptiness of other” applied only to the absolute and an “emptiness of self-nature” only to the relative. Both approaches were essential for a correct understanding of the nature of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa. Dölpopa disagreed with people who viewed *both* the absolute and the relative as empty of self-nature, and who refused to recognize the existence of anything that was not empty of self-nature. From their point of view, the notion of an emptiness of other relative phenomena did not fit the definition of emptiness.

Dölpopa further identified the absolute with the buddha nature, or sugata essence, which was thus seen to be eternal and not empty of self-nature, but only empty of other. The buddha nature is perfect and complete from the beginning, with all the characteristics of a buddha eternally present in every living being. It is only the impermanent and temporary afflictions veiling the buddha nature that are empty of self-nature and must be removed through the practice of the path to allow the ever-present buddha nature to manifest in its full splendor.

This view agreed with many Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna scriptures, but most of the scholars in Tibet during Dölpopa’s life disagreed with him. They viewed such scriptural statements to be provisional in meaning and in need of interpretation for the true intent to be correctly comprehended. This was the opinion of the mainstream Sakya tradition to which Dölpopa belonged before he moved to Jonang. For some time Dölpopa tried to keep his teachings secret, realizing they would be misunderstood and cause great turmoil and uncertainty for people who had closed minds and were accustomed to styles of interpretation that differed greatly from his own. He often remarked that the majority of buddhas and bodhisattvas agreed with him on these issues, but the majority of scholars in Tibet opposed him. For example, the general position of the Sakya tradition is that the buddha nature, or sugata essence, is present in living beings as a potential or seed. This seed can be caused to ripen through the various practices of the path and come to final fruition as perfect buddhahood. If a seed is left in a box without any water, light, warmth, soil, and so forth, it will never bear fruit. But if it is planted in the proper soil, receives the right amount of sunlight,

water, and so on, it will grow into a healthy plant and finally bear its fruit. From this viewpoint, the buddha nature in every living being is a fertile seed that has the potential to expand and manifest as a result of practice, but is not complete and perfect already as Dölpopa accepted.<sup>7</sup>

In regard to the two truths, the absolute and the relative, Dölpopa saw no difference between speaking of the absolute as totally unestablished and saying that an absolute does not exist. He asked whether a relative is possible without an absolute, the incidental possible without the primordial, and phenomena possible without a true nature. If, he asked, their existence is possible without an absolute, then would these relative, incidental phenomena themselves not constitute an omnipresent reality or true nature? There would be, in such a situation, nothing else. This is an unacceptable conclusion. Dölpopa's doctrinal opponents might respond by saying that everything is not the relative, for there is, of course, an absolute truth. Dölpopa might then reply that if it is impossible for there to be no absolute, does that not contradict the notion of an absolute that is totally unestablished?<sup>8</sup> Everything cannot be simply empty of self-nature, for then there would be no difference between the absolute and the relative. As Dölpopa says in his *Autocommentary to the "Fourth Council"*:

Why is understanding all  
as empty of self-nature  
not equal to not understanding?

Why is explaining all  
as empty of self-nature  
not equal to not explaining?

Why is writing that all  
is empty of self-nature  
not equal to not writing?<sup>9</sup>

Dölpopa saw the only solution to these sorts of problems to be the acceptance of the absolute as a true, eternal, and veridically established reality, empty merely of other relative phenomena.

Such descriptions of reality or the buddha nature are common in a number of scriptures that the Tibetan tradition places in the third turning of the Dharma wheel and in the Buddhist tantras. Nevertheless, no one in Tibet before Dölpopa had simply said that absolute reality was not empty of self-



nature. This was what caused all the trouble. In answer to the objections of his opponents, Dölpopa noted that his teachings and the Dharma language he was using were indeed new, but only in the sense that they were not well-known in Tibet. This was because they had come from the realm of Shambhala to the north, where they had been widespread from an early date.<sup>10</sup> He explicitly linked his ideas to the *Kālacakra Tantra* and its great commentary, the *Stainless Light*, which was composed by the Shambhala emperor Kalki Puṇḍarīka. These works were not translated into Tibetan until the early eleventh century. Dölpopa clearly felt that previous interpreters of the *Kālacakra* literature had not fully comprehended its profound meaning. As will be discussed in chapter 1, he even ordered a new revised translation of the *Kālacakra Tantra* and the *Stainless Light* to make the definitive meaning more accessible to Tibetan scholars and practitioners. In this respect he was attempting to remove the results of accumulated mistaken presuppositions that had informed the earlier translations in Tibet and provided the basis for many erroneous opinions concerning the true meaning of the *Kālacakra Tantra*.<sup>11</sup>

This book is divided into two parts. Part 1 deals with Dölpopa's life and teachings. In chapter 1 Dölpopa's life is discussed in some detail. This has been made possible by the publication of one full-length Tibetan biography of Dölpopa and the recovery of another unpublished manuscript biography, both by direct disciples who witnessed much of what they describe. Many other Tibetan sources have also been used for this discussion. The story of Dölpopa's life provides essential background for an appreciation of his character, spiritual and intellectual development, and tremendous influence in fourteenth-century Tibet.

Chapter 2 summarizes the historical development of the *shentong* tradition in Tibet. Some of the earlier Tibetan precedents for the view of ultimate reality as an emptiness only of other relative phenomena are briefly discussed. Dölpopa's unique use of language and the major influences on his development of the *shentong* theory are presented in some detail. The fate of the Jonang tradition after Dölpopa is described, as well as the significance of several of the most important adherents to the *shentong* view from the fourteenth through the twentieth centuries.

Chapter 3 is a discussion of Dölpopa's view of the nature of absolute reality as empty only of phenomena other than itself, and of the relative as empty of self-nature. In connection with these ideas, Dölpopa's attempt to redefine the views of Cittamātra and Madhyamaka in Tibet is described, and his own definition of what constitutes the tradition of Great Madhyamaka

(*dbu ma chen po*) is summarized. Finally, there is a brief presentation of two opposing views of what actually brings about enlightenment. Dölpopa felt that enlightenment occurs only when the vital winds (*vāyu, rlung*) normally circulating through many subtle channels in the body are drawn into the central channel (*avadhūti*) through the practice of tantric yoga. He strongly objected to the view that enlightenment could be achieved merely by recognizing the nature of mind, without any need for the accumulation of the assemblies of merit and primordial awareness through the practice of the path. These topics are discussed to provide basic information for understanding the following translations.

Part 2 contains translations of major works by Dölpopa, two of which were composed in verse. The first is the *General Commentary on the Doctrine* (*Bstan pa spyi 'grel*), one of the earliest texts Dölpopa composed to present his view of the entire structure of the Buddhist tradition.<sup>12</sup> The introduction to the translation describes the circumstances of its composition and the significance of the work. The translation of the *General Commentary on the Doctrine* is annotated from the detailed commentary by Nya Ön Kunga Pal, who was one of Dölpopa's most important disciples.<sup>13</sup> This first short work is followed by translations of the *Fourth Council* (*Bka' bsdu bzhi pa*) and the *Autocommentary to the "Fourth Council"* (*Bka' bsdu bzhi pa'i rang 'grel*).<sup>14</sup> The circumstances surrounding the composition of these texts at the request of the Sakya hierarch Lama Dampa Sönam Gyaltzen are discussed in the introduction to the translations. The *Fourth Council* and the *Autocommentary* were written in the last years of Dölpopa's life and serve as a final summation of the ideas that he considered most important. Virtually the entire text of his own summarizing commentary (*bsdus don 'grel pa*) to the works is also included in the translation of the *Fourth Council*.

## PART ONE

### The Life and Teachings of the Omniscient Dölpopa





## CHAPTER ONE

# The Life of the Buddha from Dölpo

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The Buddhist tradition is steeped in the marvelous. Belittled by some schools and exaggerated by others, the marvelous is ubiquitous. We have accepted it as such without attempting to eliminate it in the name of Western rationalism. To disregard it would be to offer the reader a caricature of Buddhism and still not attain historical truth. It is not enough to discard the legend in order to discern the reality of the facts. By leaving the marvelous the place it has always occupied in the sources, we believe we have given a more faithful image of the mentality of the Buddha's disciples. And it is this mentality which is the true object of our research and not a fleeting and elusive historical certainty.

E. LAMOTTE, *HISTORY OF INDIAN BUDDHISM* <sup>15</sup>

**I**N THE YEAR 1309 a seventeen-year old novice monk ran away from home in the Dölpo area of present-day Nepal and endured a harrowing journey east to the region of Mustang (Glo) in quest of guidance from a great Buddhist master. No one could have imagined that in less than twenty years he would be enthroned on the monastic seat of the great hermitage of Jonang in the Tiberan province of Tsang, where he would soon construct the largest stūpa temple ever seen in Tibet and proclaim his vision of the nature of reality in a series of treatises that would rock the Tibetan Buddhist world. To understand Dölpopa's ideas and influence we must have a clear picture of his life and the cultural environment in which he lived.<sup>16</sup> Fortunately, two primary sources provide us with crucial information. These are the biographies of Dölpopa composed by two of his main disciples, Gharungwa Lhai Gyaltzen (1319–1401) and Kunpang Chödrak Palsang (1283–1363?), both

of whom witnessed many of the events they describe and also record Dölpopa's own statements about his life and experiences. Later sketches of Dölpopa's life in historical works by Jetsun Tāranātha (1575–1635) and the Sakya master Mangtö Ludrup Gyatso (1523–96) also supply interesting material, although they are sometimes at odds with the earlier sources.<sup>17</sup>

### *1. Childhood and Early Education*

In 1292 Dölpopa was born into a clan that practiced the tantric tradition of the Nyingma, especially the cycles connected with the deity Vajrakīla, of which he became an expert as a boy.<sup>18</sup> As early as 1297, when he was only five years old, he received the initiation of Red Mañjuśrī and was graced by a vision of the deity, from whom he is said to have gained great powers of discriminating awareness.<sup>19</sup> After receiving ordination as a novice monk in 1304, when he was twelve years old, he had the strong desire to study the vehicle of the perfections and the treatises on epistemology, but no institute



2. Kytön Jamyang Drakpa Gyaltsen.

for their study existed in his home region. These subjects were the specialty of the Sakya tradition of Tibetan Buddhism. Dölpopa had already received teachings and tantric initiations such as the Garland Trilogy of the Indian master Abhayākara-gupta from Kyitön Jamyang Drakpa Gyaltsen, a Sakya teacher who would become one of his two most important masters. Dölpopa had deep faith in Kyitön and wished to follow him to Mustang, but was prevented by his parents, who insisted that he study the tantras of the Nyingma tradition.

In 1309, when Dölpopa was seventeen, he fled from home without the permission of his parents, and, after enduring great hardships, arrived in Kyitön's presence in upper Mustang. There he received many teachings on topics such as the vehicle of the perfections, epistemology, and cosmology and psychology. After only a month of intense study Dölpopa quickly mastered the specific Dharma language associated with each of these genres of Buddhist learning and was able to enter into informed discussions, thereby attracting attention for the first time.<sup>20</sup> The master Kyitön then received an urgent message from his uncle Shākya Bum, insisting he come to the great monastery of Sakya, in the Tibetan province of Tsang, where he was teaching.<sup>21</sup> Kyitön assured his sponsors and students in Mustang that he would soon return, and left for Sakya, which was the most prestigious center of learning in Tibet.<sup>22</sup> In the meantime Dölpopa continued his studies in Mustang under two other learned masters.

## 2. *Studies at the Great Monastery of Sakya*

When Kyitön prepared to return to Mustang after about two years, his uncle, Shākya Bum, and other teachers in Sakya would not allow him to do so. Kyitön sent an explanation to Mustang and a message to Dölpopa telling him to come to Sakya. Dölpopa arrived in Sakya in 1312, when he was twenty years old, and resumed his studies with his former master. By this point Dölpopa had clearly been recognized as a most precocious student. He continued to concentrate on the simultaneous study of the vehicle of the perfections, epistemology, and cosmology and psychology. His friends tried to dissuade him from this approach, advising that he focus on one area at a time in order to master it, but he ignored their advice and even added on the study of the *Way of the Bodhisattva* (*Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra*) and several tantric texts such as the *Vajrāvalī Tantra* and the *Buddhakapāla Tantra*. In only a year and a half he would master the above four Mahāyāna subjects and their commentaries.<sup>23</sup>

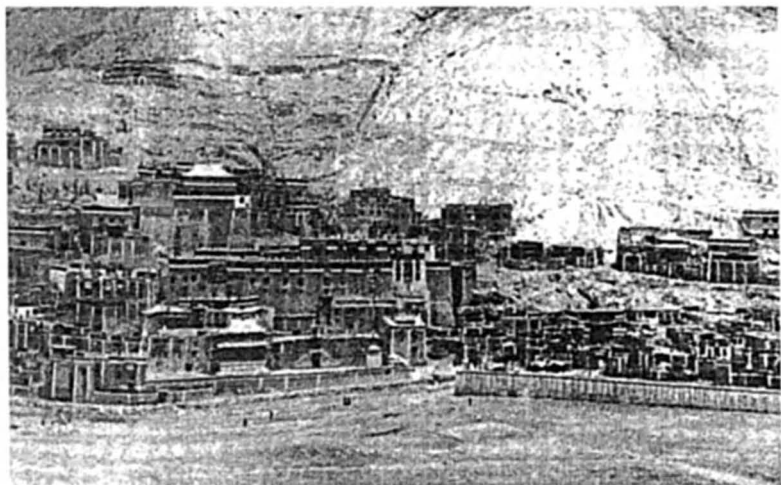
During this period of intense study Dölpopa continued to receive many special teachings from his main preceptor, Kyitön Jamyang Drakpa. Little is known of this teacher who was so instrumental in Dölpopa's early development. According to Jetsun Tāranātha, Kyitön was a disciple of the Kadampa master Chomden Rikpai Raltri (1227–1305), and both of them are included in a lineage of the *shentong* teachings.<sup>24</sup> Jonang Kunga Drölchok (1507–66) says Kyitön was a prominent scholar at the great Kadam monastery of Nartang, but left there soon after the death of Rikpai Raltri in 1305 because of a dispute with another teacher about the succession to the monastic seat of Nartang. Kyitön and his students moved to Sakya, where he was welcomed as a great master, given a residence and a place to teach, and attracted vast numbers of serious disciples.<sup>25</sup> Kyitön had also studied the *Kālacakra Tantra* under Rongpa Sherab Sengé (1251–1315) and Lotsāwa Chokden, and it was the tradition of this tantra that he apparently emphasized.<sup>26</sup> Dölpopa received countless teachings from him at Sakya, the most important of which seem to have been the *Kālacakra Tantra*, the Bodhisattva Trilogy,<sup>27</sup> the Ten Sūtras on the Essence,<sup>28</sup> the Five Sūtras of Definitive Meaning,<sup>29</sup> and the Five Treatises of Maitreya.<sup>30</sup> These are the main scriptures and treatises that Dölpopa would constantly teach during the last half of his life and cite as scriptural sources for his controversial theories.

Kyitön was a consummate expert of sūtra, tantra, and the related esoteric instructions for meditation, and he would praise without bias any authentic teaching system. In particular, he highly praised the *Kālacakra* and the practice of meditation. Specifically, he had the greatest faith in the Six-branch Yoga (*ṣaḍaṅgayoga*).<sup>31</sup> This caused many academically oriented monks to actually engage in the practice of tantric meditation.<sup>32</sup> The influence of his teacher's high regard for this particular system must have been great on the young Dölpopa. Having received from Kyitön all the *Kālacakra* initiations, textual explanations, and esoteric instructions, Dölpopa became an expert in this tradition, and also served as Kyitön's teaching assistant for several years.<sup>33</sup>

During this period Dölpopa also received many teachings and tantric initiations from other great masters, such as the Sakya throne-holder Daknyi Chenpo Sangpo Pal (1262–1323) and Kyitön's uncle, Shākya Bum. From Kunpang Drakpa Gyaltsen (1263?–1347?) he again received teachings on the vehicle of the perfections, epistemology, cosmology and psychology, and, most significantly, the transmission of the *Stainless Light* commentary on the *Kālacakra Tantra* by Kalkī Puṇḍarīka, which he had already studied under Kyitön.<sup>34</sup> Two masters of the Sharpa family of Sakya were also



important teachers for Dölpopa. These were the brothers Sengé Pal, with whom he studied epistemology, and Kunga Sönam (1285–1346), from whom he received the extensive teachings of the Path with the Result (Lam 'bras), the most important Sakya system of tantric practice, as well as the textual transmission of many tantras of the Hevajra cycle.<sup>35</sup> Dölpopa thus pursued intensive study of both the Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna traditions taught at Sakya and became a great expert in these fields, but especially in the vehicle of the perfections, epistemology, and cosmology and psychology.



3. The northern temples of Sakya Monastery.

In 1313, when Dölpopa was twenty-one years old, he received a generous offering from his parents (who had now forgiven him for running away from home) for the purpose of holding his first public teaching. Jetsun Tāranātha says that during the preparations for his teaching debut Dölpopa went to the monastery of Tanak. For about three months he studied the Five Treatises of Maitreya and various techniques for the practice of austerities with the master Rinchen Yeshé. This is very interesting, because Tāranātha's predecessor, Jetsun Kunga Drölchok, had earlier remarked that Butön Rinchen Drup (1290–1364) felt that Dölpopa had enhanced a previous Tibetan philosophical tenet held by Rinchen Yeshé of Tanak.<sup>36</sup> The question of such possible influences on Dölpopa's later formulation of the *shentong* theory will be detailed in chapter 2.

On his return to Sakya, and at the invitation of one of his teachers, Sharpa Sengé Pal, Dölpopa gave an extensive exposition to a large audience on the four major topics of the vehicle of the perfections, epistemology, cosmology and psychology, and monastic discipline. In the mornings he taught cosmology and psychology, as well as the vehicle of the perfections, and after midday tea he taught both epistemology and monastic discipline. His teachings were received with unprecedented acclaim, although some criticized him for teaching too many texts at once.<sup>37</sup> By this time Dölpopa had obviously become a very promising young scholar of the Sakya tradition, and there would have been great expectations about his future career as a Sakya teacher.

In 1314, when Dölpopa was twenty-two years old, he embarked on a tour of the teaching institutes of Tsang and Central Tibet to further his education, undergo scholastic examinations, and meet the best teachers in other regions.<sup>38</sup> He had discussions and interviews with many masters, all of whom were impressed with his intelligence and learning, and he received many predictions of future greatness. During this period he began to become famous and first received the epithet "omniscient" (*kun mkhyen*) because of his mastery of scriptures such as the *Sūtra on the Perfection of Wisdom in One Hundred Thousand Lines*. He continued to be known by this title for the rest of his life.<sup>39</sup> During this trip he received full monastic ordination from the great abbot Sönam Drakpa (1273–1352) of Chölung Monastery, who had earlier participated in the ordination of Butön Rinchen Drup and would later ordain the Sakya master Lama Dampa Sönam Gyaltzen and his elder brother, Dönyö Gyaltzen (1310–44).<sup>40</sup> Dölpopa made the vow at that time to never eat slaughtered meat for the rest of his life.

Dölpopa received many teachings of the Kagyü and Nyingma traditions during this journey, and also instructions of Severance (Gcod) and the Pacification of Suffering (Zhi byed).<sup>41</sup> While practicing these, he continued to visit many temples and shrines in Central Tibet and Tsang. In particular, he went to Lhasa and made prayers in the most holy temple of Tibet, the Jokhang. There he composed a text for the ritual awakening of the enlightenment mind, and a versified eulogy to the Jowo image. He also made various special offerings in the Jokhang, some of which apparently became customary thereafter.<sup>42</sup> Perhaps it was on the return route through Tsang that Dölpopa visited the monastery of Tropu and made offerings and prayers at the great Maitreya image and the large stūpa there, both constructed by the famous Sanskrit scholar and translator Tropu Lotsāwa

Jampa Pal (1172–1236). In front of the great stūpa Dölpopa prayed that he would someday be able to build one like it or even larger.<sup>43</sup>

According to Tāranātha, sometime at the end of this journey Dölpopa went back home to Dölpo and visited his family for about one year. Then he returned to Sakya, where he gave many initiations and instructions. He also performed the Hevajra retreat, which resulted in a vision of Hevajra and the eight goddesses. Up to this point he had studied with more than thirty teachers, the most important of whom, Kyitön Jamyang Drakpa Gyaltsen, had given him about seventy initiations and teachings.<sup>44</sup> Then, at the age of only twenty-eight, he ascended to the monastic seat of Sakya (*sa skya'i gdan sa mdzad*). Thus he became the head of the monastic community at Sakya Monastery and was formally recognized as one of the foremost teachers of the Sakya tradition.<sup>45</sup>

### 3. *The Move to Jonang*

In the year 1321, when he was twenty-nine years old, Dölpopa visited the great hermitage of Jonang for the first time.<sup>46</sup> The Jonang area had been a special site for meditation practice since at least the time of Guru Padma-sambhava in the eighth century. After the arrival of Kunpang Tukjé Tsöndrū (1243–1313) in about 1292, the practice of the Six-branch Yoga and the teachings of the *Kālacakra Tantra* and other scriptures and treatises that emphasized the definitive meaning had become the specialty of the masters who lived there. In later years Dölpopa often told his disciple and biographer Lhai Gyaltsen about his initial experience at Jonang:

However many scholars might gather, I never became humbled, and my confidence just grew greater and greater. But when I went to Jonang, and every dedicated male and female meditator had realized the nature of reality through meditation, I was extremely humbled. Toward them, uncontrolled faith and pure vision arose.<sup>47</sup>

According to Jetsun Tāranātha, Dölpopa then traveled to Central Tibet. At the monastery of Tsurpu he met the third Karmapa, Rangjung Dorjé (1284–1339), and had extensive discussions about Buddhist doctrine. Dölpopa's earlier experience at Jonang apparently acted as a catalyst. In 1322, when he was thirty years old, he left Sakya and returned to Jonang to meet the master Yönten Gyatso (1260–1327). He requested the full transmission

of the *Kālacakra Tantra* and the many lineages of its completion-stage practices, the Six-branch Yoga.<sup>48</sup> Dölpopa was now a widely recognized master, and he was accompanied by an entourage of eight monks when he traveled to Jonang. In Sakya, the night before Dölpopa arrived at Jonang, his teacher Kunpang Drakpa Gyaltsen dreamed of the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara surrounded by many monks traveling to Jonang enveloped by light rays of the Dharma. And that same night, in Jonang itself, the master Yönten Gyatso dreamed of the Shambhala emperor Kalkī Puṇḍarīka (who was an emanation of Avalokiteśvara) raising the victory banner of the Buddhist teachings at Jonang. This auspicious dream caused Yönten Gyatso to give Dölpopa the complete *Kālacakra* initiation, the transmission of the Bodhisattva Trilogy, and the profound instructions of the Six-branch Yoga.<sup>49</sup> He then offered the use of the hermitage of Khachö Deden to Dölpopa, who immediately began a meditation retreat.

Soon after this retreat Dölpopa's future disciple and biographer, Kunpang Chödrak Palsang, met him for the first time at the monastery of Dzum Chölung, where Dölpopa was receiving teachings on the Great Perfection and the Six Dharmas of Nāropa. Kunpang recognized that Dölpopa was very special and, on his return to Jonang, invited him to the hermitage of Kyipuk and requested many teachings from him, especially the great commentary on the *Kālacakra Tantra*. He also stayed with Dölpopa constantly for the next year, serving as his personal attendant. That spring the master Yönten Gyatso convinced Dölpopa to teach in the assembly at Jonang, and also transmitted to him many more systems of esoteric knowledge, such as the Path with the Result, the *Five Stages* of the *Guhyasamāja Tantra* and of the *Cakrasamvara Tantra*, the Pacification of Suffering, and the Severance Cycle. Then Dölpopa was invited to Sakya by Tishri Kunga Gyaltsen (1310–58) of the Khön family, and gave him the *Kālacakra* initiation.<sup>50</sup>

On returning to Jonang, Dölpopa began another strict retreat at Khachö Deden, meditating on the Six-branch Yoga of *Kālacakra* for one year.<sup>51</sup> During this period of intense meditation he experienced realization of the first four of the six branches. Kunpang describes the results of this retreat:

On the basis of both *individual withdrawal* and *mental stability* he beheld infinite figures of the buddhas and pure lands. On the basis of *breath control* and *retention*, exceptional experience and realization arose because of the blazing of a blissful warmth.<sup>52</sup>



4. Yönten Gyatso (1260–1327).

The realization of the *shentong* view first arose in Dölpopa's mind at this time. However, according to Jetsun Tāranātha's guidebook to the Khachö Deden hermitage, Dölpopa stayed there for two to three years and perfected the first three branches of the Six-branch Yoga. For the meditation practice that requires total darkness for the detachment of the sense faculties from their objects, he no doubt used the dark room (*mun khang*) that was there.<sup>53</sup> In another of his writings, Tāranātha mentions these events:

Dölpopa made the instructions on the Six-branch Yoga into experience. Except for when asking about specific points, he stayed at Khachö Deden without meeting anyone. When he perfected the

experience and realization of *individual withdrawal* and *mental stability*, the master [Yönten Gyatso] remarked, "I should give the instructions quickly." But he asked to be guided carefully, and, when he meditated, gained the signs of perfection of *breath control* as explained in the *Tantra*.<sup>54</sup>

Later in the same text Tāranātha makes this very significant statement:

The exceptional *shentong* view and meditation arose in his mind while staying at Khachö Deden, but he did not speak of it to others for several years.<sup>55</sup>

This retreat was the pivotal event in Dölpopa's spiritual development. But he would not communicate the *shentong* view to others until at least five more years had passed.<sup>56</sup>

Sometime in 1325, after this retreat was over, the master Yönten Gyatso urged Dölpopa to become his Dharma heir and accept the monastic seat of Jonang. This was completely at odds with Dölpopa's desire to practice intensive meditation in isolated sites without the responsibilities and restrictions that such a position would entail.<sup>57</sup> Before making a decision, he decided to travel to Lhasa in the spring of 1326, where he would offer prayers in the Jokhang cathedral, requesting guidance from the holy image of Avalokiteśvara about whether he could be of more benefit to the Buddhist tradition if he went into extended meditation retreat or accepted the monastic seat of Jonang. Miraculously, light rays in the form of a garland of lotus flowers are said to have shone from the heart of the image, which also spoke verses urging him to become the leader of Jonang in order to benefit the doctrine.

Dölpopa returned to Jonang in the fall of 1326 and was formally installed as Yönten Gyatso's successor.<sup>58</sup> From that point he followed the example of his predecessors at Jonang, remaining only in meditation retreat through the summer and winter, and bestowing extensive teachings during the autumn and spring. He especially taught the *Kālacakra Tantra*, the Bodhisattva Trilogy, the Ten Sūtras on the Essence, the Five Sūtras of Definitive Meaning, the Five Treatises of Maitreya, certain works of Nāgārjuna, and many esoteric instructions.<sup>59</sup> He is said to have taught all these texts in accordance with the *Stainless Light*, Kalkī Puṇḍarīka's great commentary to the *Kālacakra Tantra*.<sup>60</sup>

#### 4. *Raising Mount Meru and Revealing the Shentong View*

Some years earlier, Kunpang Tukjé Tsöndrū, the first holder of the monastic seat at Jonang, had told his disciple Yönten Gyatso:

To this hermitage of mine will come a grandson better than the son, and a great-grandson even better than the grandson. In the future he will teach Dharma at upper Sangden and build a great stūpa at lower Sangden.<sup>61</sup>

When his master Yönten Gyatso passed away in 1327, Dölpopa decided to build a monumental stūpa to fulfill the prayer he had previously made at the great stūpa of Tropu. In particular, he would do this to repay his master's kindness. He also felt that the stūpa would become an object of worship for people who were not fortunate enough to engage in study, reflection, and meditation, and thus give them an opportunity to accumulate merit.<sup>62</sup>

Dölpopa first quickly began construction of a large stūpa at upper Sangden in the spring of 1329, but it collapsed.<sup>63</sup> In the spring of 1330 the dimensions of the foundation for a gigantic stūpa were marked off at the new site of lower Sangden. Everyone around Dölpopa exclaimed that the dimensions were much too large and it would be impossible to ever finish such an overambitious project. These people were afraid it would end up being a ruin of earth and stone and just become an object of ridicule by others.<sup>64</sup> Here is part of Dölpopa's reply:

When I first went for scholastic examinations, I saw Tropu Lotsāwa's stūpa and made many prayers with the force of intense faith. I saw many quotations in many sūtras and tantras about perfecting the assemblies [of merit and primordial awareness] if one constructs properly proportioned images and stūpas. This is an exceptional basis of virtue for accomplishing meditative concentration on the nature of reality. There are few such individuals. If I think about the actual condition of sentient beings in general, immeasurable compassion arises. There is no doubt that anyone who even sees, hears, or touches this stūpa will be freed, that the seed of liberation will be planted, and that vast benefit for others will occur. Those who oppose it will later be regretful.<sup>65</sup>

The stūpa was built in an atmosphere of incredible activity. Many types of skilled artisans and laborers gathered from different parts of Tibet to contribute to the great work. Building materials and foodstuffs were brought from all directions.<sup>66</sup> Kitchens and refreshment areas were set up for the many hundreds of workers who labored while chanting maṇis and praying to the masters of the lineage. Dölpopa himself sometimes carried earth and stones and sometimes worked on the building of the walls. He had a ramp built from the west side of the stūpa so donkeys could carry earth and stone up onto the main body of the structure, and long ramps made on the south and north sides so that those carrying loads could come up one side and then go down without their loads on the other. The artisans continually circled the structure, and if the work was even a little out of alignment it was completely torn down and rebuilt. As word of Dölpopa's project spread, great offerings of gold, silver, copper, iron, silk, tea, cloth, medicines, and so on began to flow in to Jonang from all over the Tibetan world.<sup>67</sup>

By this time Dölpopa had gathered an exceptional group of yogins, scholars, and translators around him, such as Kunpang Chödrak Palsang, Mati Panchen Lodrö Gyaltzen (1294–1376), Lotsāwa Lodrö Pal (1299–1354), and Choglé Namgyal (1306–86), all of whom participated in the construction of the stūpa.<sup>68</sup> The intense physical labor of the external construction of the stūpa was accompanied by many extraordinary discourses by Dölpopa on the ultimate significance of the Buddha's doctrinal message. According to Kunpang, who witnessed the events, prior to the winter of 1330 the long central poles were placed in the stūpa and Dölpopa taught the Bodhisattva Trilogy to a huge assembly. On this occasion he took great pleasure in drawing for the first time the clear distinction between the relative as empty of self-nature (*rang stong*) and the absolute as empty of other relative phenomena (*gzhan stong*). Tāranātha, however, says that after laying the foundation for the stūpa and ascending the teaching throne of upper Sangden, Dölpopa first spoke of the *shentong* theory when giving a detailed explication of the Ten Sūtras on the Essence to an audience of about ten persons.<sup>69</sup> In either case, it is clear that it was during the building of the stūpa, which Dölpopa himself linked to his realization, that he first openly taught the *shentong* and related topics.

The construction of the stūpa at Jonang was carefully based on descriptions in the *Stainless Light*, so that it would fulfill all the criteria necessary to be considered the same as the Glorious Stūpa of the Planets, in which the Buddha had first taught the *Kālacakra Tantra*.<sup>70</sup> Dölpopa says his realization of "the absolute as empty of other, which was previously unknown in





5. The great stūpa of Jonang.

Tibet,"<sup>71</sup> arose by the kindness of his teachers and the Three Jewels, whose blessings he had received because of his devotion to them and their representations, and because he had done what was to be done for the benefit of the Buddhist teachings. His biographer Lhai Gyaltzen is more specific, saying Dölpopa's precise realization of the nature of absolute reality was due to "the blessings of his construction of inconceivably marvelous threefold representations, such as those of the masters, buddhas, bodhisattvas, and the great stūpa temple."<sup>72</sup> The connection between his realization of *shentong*, the teachings of the *Kālacakra Tantra*, and the stūpa of Jonang are made explicit by Dölpopa in a short series of verses speaking of his discovery:

Alas, my share of good fortune  
may be so inferior,

but I think a discovery such as this  
is good fortune.

Is this discovery by a lazy fool  
due to the blessing of the Kalkī emperor?

Although I have not physically  
arrived at Kalāpa,<sup>73</sup>  
has the Kalkī entered my faithful mind?

My intelligence has not been  
refined in threefold wisdom,  
but I think raising Mount Meru  
caused the Ocean to gush forth.<sup>74</sup>

I prostrate, bowing to all masters,  
buddhas, and kalkīs, by whose kindness  
the key points that are difficult  
for even the exalted ones to realize  
are precisely realized, and to their great stūpa.<sup>75</sup>

The raising of Mount Meru refers to Dölpopa's construction of the massive stūpa, and the Ocean that flowed forth from the blessings and energy awakened during that endeavor was his most famous work, *Mountain Dharma: An Ocean of Definitive Meaning* (*Ri chos nges don rgya mtsho*).<sup>76</sup> The external construction of the great monument was thus for Dölpopa a reflection of the simultaneous internal process that produced a number of his most significant literary works.

### 5. *The Initial Reception of the Shentong Teachings*

Following his first proclamation of the *shentong* view, Dölpopa wrote a number of minor works to explain it. According to Tāranātha, when these texts were first circulated they were incomprehensible to most scholars because of the unusual Dharma language (*chos skad*) Dölpopa was introducing. The scholars no doubt experienced a degree of hermeneutical shock when confronted with writings they could not easily fit into any familiar category.<sup>77</sup> However, in another text Tāranātha says that when Dölpopa proclaimed the *shentong* doctrine, all who were fortunate and courageous were delighted by

it. It was not until much later that adherents of the Sakya, Geluk, Kadam, Shalu, Bodong, and some followers of the Nyingma tradition experienced heart seizure (*snying gas*) and scrambled brains (*klad pa 'gems pa*) on hearing about the *shentong* philosophical tenets.<sup>78</sup>

Writing some three hundred years after these events, the Sakya master Jamgön Ameshap (1597–1659) attributed the negative reaction to outrage on the part of Sakya scholars who felt betrayed when Dölpopa began to teach the unprecedented *shentong* view that they felt contradicted the teachings of the founding fathers of Sakya. According to some Sakya authors, Jonang was considered an affiliate monastery of the Sakya tradition until the time of Dölpopa.<sup>79</sup> Dölpopa had been educated as a Sakya monk, had ascended to the monastic seat of Sakya Monastery, and had upheld the ancient teachings of that tradition. Thus many in the Sakya tradition now saw him as a great apostate:

When the omniscient Dölpopa established  
the unprecedented system of the *shentong* view,  
the best experts unanimously proclaimed  
many refutations to this, saying,  
“While admitting that you follow the Sakya  
philosophical tenets, your acceptance  
of this view that contradicts the teachings  
of the venerable founders is not right.”

However, after that omniscient master  
had composed many treatises presenting  
the *shentong* view, when he came to Sakya  
and visited a holy robe of Dharma Lord Sakya Paṇḍita,  
he sucked upon that robe with great faith and devotion,  
offered many supplications, and his attachment  
to the *shentong* view changed.

Thereafter, he maintained and was devoted to  
the *rangtong* view according to the teachings  
of the founders. Thus my master taught.<sup>80</sup>

Jamgön Ameshap's claim that all Sakya scholars totally rejected Dölpopa's theories is certainly an exaggeration, since his own ancestors, Tishri Kunga Gyaltzen and his two sons Ta En Chökyi Gyaltzen (1332–59) and Ta En

Lodrö Gyaltzen (1332–64), as well as Dönyö Gyaltzen and his brother Lama Dampa Sönam Gyaltzen, all requested teachings from Dölpopa.<sup>81</sup> The Sakya master's declaration that Dölpopa repented of the *shentong* view when he touched a robe of Sakya Paṇḍita (1182–1251) to his lips and then upheld the *rangtong* view of an emptiness of self-nature for the rest of his life is obviously wishful thinking. Eyewitness accounts describe how Dölpopa taught his greatest treatise on the *shentong* view, the *Mountain Dharma*, during the last three days of his life.<sup>82</sup> A similar absurd claim that Panchen Shākya Chokden (1428–1507) repented of the *shentong* view at the time of his death and suffered greatly in his future lives because of the vile views he had held would later be made by the Geluk scholar Tuken Losang Chökyi Nyima (1737–1802).<sup>83</sup>

Jetsun Tāranātha, the seventeen-century leader of the Jonang tradition, remarks that all those who came to Jonang to discuss the issues with Dölpopa gained confidence in his theories and faith in him. Others who sent written objections and refutations were said to have gained understanding upon receiving his well-reasoned replies.<sup>84</sup> A clear example of this is related by Barawa Gyaltzen Palsang (1310–91), who studied with both Dölpopa and Butön Rinchen Drup. Barawa had doubts about some points concerning Dölpopa's distinction between the universal-ground primordial awareness (*kun gzhi ye shes*) and the universal-ground consciousness (*kun gzhi rnam shes*) and sent written questions to Dölpopa and some of his main disciples. He received answers from the disciples, but his doubts were not resolved. Later he received a response from Dölpopa that was much more satisfying, but different from what the major disciples had written. Finally, he was able to meet with Dölpopa at the hermitage of Sakya Chusang to discuss the points in question.<sup>85</sup> Dölpopa's explanations were consistent with his previous letter, and Barawa realized the true import of his teachings.<sup>86</sup> In this way, after establishing his viewpoint through discussion with many different scholars, Dölpopa composed his major works, such as *Mountain Dharma*.<sup>87</sup>

## 6. *The New Jonang Translation of the Kālacakra Tantra and the Stainless Light*

In 1334, while staying in the Jonang hermitage of Dewachen, Dölpopa ordered his disciples Lotsāwa Lodrö Pal and Mati Panchen Lodrö Gyaltzen to prepare a revised translation of the *Kālacakra Tantra* and its great commentary, the *Stainless Light*.<sup>88</sup> At the request of his disciple and biographer

Kunpang Chödrak Palsang and others, Dölpopa then composed a topical outline or summary and annotations to the *Stainless Light*.<sup>89</sup> The annotations and summary were not included in Dölpopa's collected writings, but the summary has now been published separately.<sup>90</sup> His fabled annotations remain elusive.<sup>91</sup> Further important information about the circumstances of the new Jonang translation (*jo nang gsar 'gyur*) is found in the colophon to the Jonang revision of Shongtön Dorjé Gyaltzen's earlier translation:<sup>92</sup>

Later the glorious and excellent master, the Omniscient Dharma Lord, and Dharmakīrtiśrībhadrā, a great adept of glorious Kālacakra, carefully pondered the meaning of this [scripture]. Compelled by their orders and according to their teachings, Lodrö Gyaltzen and Lodrö Palsangpo, Buddhist monk translators who know how to correctly translate due to the kindness of the great expert Sthiramati,<sup>93</sup> consulted many Indian manuscripts of the tantra and commentary, and translated, checked, and established it in accordance with those that were correct.<sup>94</sup>

Some years after this new revised translation was completed, a translator by the name of Sherab Rinchen asked Dölpopa some questions about the Kālacakra tradition in Tibet. Dölpopa made this comment about the Jonang translation:

The pair of translators named Lodrö also revised the translation, once again discovering many excellent points in addition to the previous excellent ones. And from establishing it over and over through much explanation, study, and meditation practice, many discoveries of the profound intent of the tantra commentary and the esoteric instructions occurred. And from the construction and supplication of the stūpa of all the masters, conquerors, and spiritual sons, the natural language of the profound ultimate emerged precisely and the secret words of the profound tantras emerged precisely.<sup>95</sup>

The most revealing discussion of the Jonang translation of the *Kālacakra Tantra* and its commentary is provided by Kunga Drölchok, one of Dölpopa's great successors on the monastic seat of Jonang. In his biography of Rikden Namgyal Draksang (1395–1475), the master physician, Kālacakra adept, and ruler of the northern province of Jang, Kunga Drölchok records

some statements by Jamling Panchen Sönam Namgyal (1400–1475) concerning the history of the translation of the *Kālacakra* scriptures into Tibetan and the revision ordered by Dölpopa.<sup>96</sup> When the master Tsetangpa Sangyé Lhundrup<sup>97</sup> had finished studying all the *Kālacakra* scriptures under the guidance of Rikden Namgyal Draksang at Jang Ngamring, he returned to Central Tibet and stayed at Jamling for some brief teachings from Jamling Panchen. During a casual discussion of the Dharma language of the *Kālacakra Tantra* and the *Stainless Light*, Jamling Panchen made the following comments.

Precisely this *Glorious Kālacakra Tantra* resides above absolutely all sets of tantra and releases the meaning of the key points of absolutely all the tantras that are tied in knots of vajra words. None of the definitive points of any philosophical tenet included outside or inside [Buddhism] are absent here, so it is precisely the one thing knowledge of which will resolve everything. But all people with biased sight, pretentious in learning and unable to accurately plumb its depths, become lost, and with the overwhelming mistaken understanding that holds it not to be Dharma, naturally enter the little hole of the unfortunate.

Even the translators possessing the eyes of Dharma did not gain the courage of certainty to skillfully relate the words to the true meaning, but only the general meaning. Thus, from Gyijo's multiple translation<sup>98</sup> up until the translation by Shong, there was just a dominance of different formulations. Pakpa, the protector of living beings, also bestowed approval on Shong.<sup>99</sup> The fame of the endorsement he bestowed cleared away all previous obscurity by the darkness of a lack of understanding, misunderstanding, and doubt, and everyone on the surface of the earth accepted it in confidence. The all-knowing Butön also took the Shong translation as the fundamental text for explication, but declared, "About thirty points here are unsuitable to leave uncorrected."<sup>100</sup>

Thus the great omniscient Buddha from Dölpo gave the order to the two translators, and, when they were making the new translation, all the revisions that had been made in the earlier annotations by Butön were left alone.<sup>101</sup> Otherwise, they perfected the natural language for the definitive ultimate points through reliance on the meaning.<sup>102</sup> After nailing [the translation] down

with the *Dölpopa Annotations* themselves, Dölpopa clarified it with extensive commentaries on the key meaning, such as the *Ocean of Definitive Meaning*, the *General Commentary on the Doctrine*, and the *Fourth Council*.<sup>103</sup> I am certainly confident that no commentaries have been made to the *Glorious [Kālacakra] Tantra* that are better than this system of clarification he established, even to the north in Shambhala. The weight of explication and composition about all general fields of the doctrine was somewhat greater for Butön, but in the context of teaching the definitive secrets of the *Kālacakra Tantra* alone, he certainly did not match the rain of Dölpopa.

Nevertheless, the profound aspects of the wisdom of the great omniscient master himself that were difficult to fathom were probably not exactly realized even by all those known as his principal disciples.<sup>104</sup> Dharma lord Chogpa made annotations to the pair's translation that deviated from the *Dölpopa Annotations*, but after Sasang Mati identified faults of internal contradiction between the treatise and the annotations, he again made annotations to the Shong translation.<sup>105</sup> This was enthusiastically praised by Sharpa Yeshé Gyaltzen and others, whose arguments were easily accepted by all the Yarpa.<sup>106</sup> However, according to the words of Mati, for this too there existed the fault of incompatibility between the treatise and the annotations, because if that were not the case, he would not have had any intention to later initiate a new translation other than the Shong translation.<sup>107</sup>

The new Jonang translation was certainly an important part of Dölpopa's attempt to establish and spread his *shentong* theory and related interpretations of doctrine and practice.<sup>108</sup> The *Kālacakra Tantra* and the *Stainless Light* were the ultimate scriptural basis for Dölpopa's innovative teachings. From discussion with his bilingual disciples he had probably concluded that the earlier Tibetan translation of Dro Lotsāwa Sherab Drak as revised by Shongtön Dorjé Gyaltzen did not allow the true sense of the profound definitive meaning to emerge. Dölpopa had just finished the construction of the great stūpa at Jonang in 1333. The composition of his most influential work, *Mountain Dharma: An Ocean of Definitive Meaning*, had perhaps only recently been completed. Dölpopa, who was not ignorant of Sanskrit, was surrounded by capable translators (*lotsāwa*) such as Mati Panchen, Lotsāwa

Lodrö Pal, Kunpang Chödrak Palsang, and Drigung Lotsāwa Maṇikaśrī, all of whom were great practitioners of the Six-branch Yoga and scholars of the *Kālacakra Tantra*. Pang Lotsāwa Lodrö Tenpa (1276–1342), often regarded as the most influential master of Sanskrit grammatical studies in Tibet, had also expressed his high admiration for Dölpopa.<sup>109</sup>

It is striking that two of the greatest masters of the *Kālacakra* teachings in Tibetan history, Dölpopa and Butön, were exact contemporaries and lived in the same general area of Tsang, with many of the same teachers and disciples. Some time before the new Jonang translation in 1334, Butön had completed his own extensive annotations to Shongtön's translation of the *Kālacakra Tantra* and the *Stainless Light* and was teaching these texts and annotations every year.<sup>110</sup> Dölpopa decided to order a new revised translation in which the points he wished to illustrate would more clearly emerge, and then composed annotations. He once mentioned his motive for composing both the annotations and the summary of the *Stainless Light*:

All the key points of the profound definitive meaning were discovered in the great commentary to the *Kālacakra Tantra*, so it has been remarkably kind. To prevent confusion about the basic treatise I have also composed a summary and exceptional annotations, as well as many other texts.<sup>111</sup>

Dölpopa's annotations to the *Stainless Light* were substantial enough to be mentioned first among all his works in a list compiled by Lhai Gyaltsen, implying that they were the most important of his thirty-eight works concerning *Kālacakra*.<sup>112</sup> Dölpopa apparently felt that the annotations were an awesome accomplishment. The following quotation reveals more about Dölpopa himself than about the annotations.

Looking at the annotations to the great commentary on the *Tantra*, the Dharma lord himself exclaimed, "Ah la la! Whose work are all these? They're incredible!"

Joining his palms together again and again, he said, "When I look at this kind of an understanding of the profound definitive meaning, I wonder who I am."<sup>113</sup>

This is not simple arrogance. Dölpopa was a master adept of the Six-branch Yoga, the completion stage of the *Kālacakra*. He was inspired by the Kalki emperors of Shambhala and was generally viewed as an incarnation of Kalki



Puṇḍarīka, the author of the *Stainless Light*. It is also quite certain that Dölpopa believed himself to be Puṇḍarīka reborn.<sup>114</sup>

### 7. *Years of Retreat and Teaching*

In the years following the completion of the Jonang stūpa, Dölpopa traveled to many different areas, where he mostly stayed in meditation retreat. During this period he constructed a large number of shrines, closely examined the scriptures in the Tibetan canon, and wrote many significant treatises. He also experienced a number of visions, both of pure lands and specific tantric deities.<sup>115</sup> In particular, he directly beheld the pure land of Shambhala, the source of the Kālacakra teachings, and once claimed to have actually gone there by visionary means.<sup>116</sup> Kunpang says Dölpopa also composed many texts while staying in the hermitage of Kyipuk at Jonang.<sup>117</sup>

Dölpopa was now acknowledged as one of the supreme Buddhist masters in Tibet. Letters of praise had recently come from the master Dönyö Gyaltsen of the Sakya Khön family, and he had received offerings of gold from the Sakya Tishri Kunga Gyaltsen and a golden maṇḍala from Karmapa Rangjung Dorjé.<sup>118</sup>

In the fall of the Mouse Year (1336) Dölpopa was invited to return to Sakya Monastery. There he gave extensive teachings to several thousand people, at the end of which he engaged in much debate about philosophical viewpoints. Using the sūtras and tantras as witnesses, especially the set of sūtras on the perfection of wisdom, he distinguished between relative and absolute truth by means of the categories of an emptiness of self-nature and an emptiness of other.<sup>119</sup>

In the Earth Tiger Year (1338) Dölpopa retired from the monastic seat of Jonang and appointed Lotsāwa Lodrö Pal as his successor. Lodrö Pal would hold this position at the great hermitage for the next seventeen years.<sup>120</sup>

### 8. *Invitation to China by the Yüan Emperor Toghon Temür*

In the ninth month of the Monkey Year (1344), when Dölpopa was fifty years old and Lotsāwa Lodrö Pal had occupied the monastic seat of Jonang for seven years, the Mongolian imperial envoys Dzambhala Tushri and Bhaté Tshé En arrived in Tsang with imperial decrees from the Yüan emperor Toghon Temür, inviting both Dölpopa and Butön to China.<sup>121</sup> Neither Dölpopa nor Butön accepted the imperial invitations, and both retreated to isolated

hermitages for meditation. According to Lhai Gyaltsen, Toghon Temür was extremely displeased with the refusal and Dölpopa was very afraid that another summons would come.<sup>122</sup> To avoid such a possibility, he stayed in different isolated areas for the next four years.<sup>123</sup> At the end of that period a message came from the emperor allowing Dölpopa to remain in Tibet and telling him to work for the Buddhist doctrine in his own country.<sup>124</sup>

Lhai Gyaltsen's version of these events is quite straightforward, but Kunpang introduces an entirely different tone into his narrative. It is even difficult to determine whether the events he describes are to be understood as referring to the established invitation of 1344 or to a later and otherwise unknown invitation from the Chinese emperor.<sup>125</sup> According to this very extensive account, an eminent Chinese scholar named Dzala Kara heard about Dölpopa during a visit to Lhasa.<sup>126</sup> On his return to China he was summoned to the Keshamkara Palace by the emperor Jampai Khorlo and asked about who was the most famous scholar in Central Tibet and Tsang. Dzala Kara praised Dölpopa above all. The emperor sent a large party to Tibet, including Dzala Kara, Lopön Tsakura, fifty couriers led by Dzakara, four strongmen such as Langchen Pema, and great offerings. When the Chinese arrived in Jonang, Dölpopa conversed with Dzala Kara in Chinese, and finally accepted the emperor's invitation to China. He told them to meet him in Lhasa after three months, and the Chinese traveled there without anyone's knowledge.

According to this version, in a Monkey Year (that could be 1344) Dölpopa is said to have told his major disciples Kunpang Chödrak Pal, Sasang Mati Panchen, Jangtsé Lotsāwa, and Maṇikaśrī to accompany him on a visit to Lhasa to pray before the famous images of the Jowo and the Shākyamuni.<sup>127</sup> He told Lotsāwa Lodrö Pal to occupy the monastic seat of Jonang until his return, and set off for Lhasa in a sandalwood chariot.<sup>128</sup> Prayers were offered to the sacred images in Lhasa and the replies indicated that it would be disastrous for Dölpopa to travel to China. However, feeling compassion for the Chinese, he agreed to go. During this time his major disciple Rintsulwa (1297–1368) created an exceptional image of Dölpopa, which the master himself agreed to consecrate.<sup>129</sup> The story then continues with a lengthy description of events that culminate when the ruler of the two citadels<sup>130</sup> and the king of Jang mobilize the armies of Central Tibet and Tsang to prevent the Chinese from taking Dölpopa away to China. Finally, Dölpopa gives a long and interesting versified teaching on the specific philosophical views of the non-Buddhists and the Buddhists, to be taken back to China for the edification of the emperor, whom he calls Mandzu Gyalpo Chenpo,

the Great Mañjuśrī King.<sup>131</sup> Later Dölpopa is said to have taken pity on the distraught Chinese and traveled by magical means to the imperial court, where he pleased the emperor.

There are many problems with this story that cannot be detailed here. It would seem that the actual events of the invitation of 1344 and a later trip by Dölpopa to Central Tibet in the years 1358–1360 have been conflated, and then a good deal of extra material added from unknown sources. For example, the final account of Dölpopa's chariot being stuck in the mud and the Chinese strongmen being unable to move it is suspiciously similar to a mythic story found in the *Compendium of Mañis*, where the chariot of the Chinese princess that is carrying the Jowo image is stuck in the sand outside of Lhasa and cannot be budged by Chinese strongmen.<sup>132</sup>

### *9. Changes in the Jonang Leadership and the Beginning of the Journey to Lhasa*

In the Wood Horse Year (1354) Lotsāwa Lodrö Pal passed away after having occupied the monastic seat of Jonang for seventeen years. Dölpopa returned to Jonang, led the funeral services, and then appointed his disciple Choglé Namgyal (1306–86) to the monastic seat, a position he would hold for the next four to six years.<sup>133</sup> Choglé Namgyal was already the Dharma master at the Ngamring Institute that Dölpopa had founded (or perhaps just expanded) earlier the same year with the support of the Jang ruler Tai En Namkha Tenpa (b. 1316). Namkha Tenpa insisted that Choglé Namgyal also occupy the monastic seat of the Ngamring institute for as long as he held the same position at Jonang.<sup>134</sup>

During the preceding years Dölpopa had given religious teachings to many of the great luminaries of the Tibetan intellectual and political world. Some of these were the Sakya master of the Zhitok line,<sup>135</sup> Kunpangpa (d. 1357),<sup>136</sup> the Grand Governor Gyalsang (d. 1357), Jangpa Siddhi, and Yakdé Panchen (1299–1378).<sup>137</sup> During the tenure of Choglé Namgyal on the Jonang monastic seat, Dölpopa mostly stayed in the Jonang area.<sup>138</sup> On one occasion he sent out word that he was growing old and people who wished to receive his last teachings should gather at Jonang. Many hundreds gathered, including Kunpang Chödrak Palsang, Sharpa Rinchen Gyaltsen (1306?–1355?),<sup>139</sup> Mati Panchen Lodrö Gyaltsen, the great abbot Choglé Namgyal, the abbot of Nedruk, the master Gyaltsen Jungné, and the Kālacakra master Dorjé Nyingpo.<sup>140</sup>

Soon afterward Dölpopa was invited by the abbot Chimtön Losang

Drakpa (1299–1375) to teach at the ancient Kadam monastery of Nartang.<sup>141</sup> To the dialecticians there he gave an extensive explanation of the distinction between the two truths, emphasizing that true experts do not cling to the nonexistent relative as existing, nor to the existing absolute as nonexistent, but abide in the middle beyond extremes.<sup>142</sup>

By the end of 1358 the burden of occupying the monastic seats of both Jonang and Ngamring was too much for Choglé Namgyal. With the permission of Dölpopa, he retired from both positions at the same time. Another of Dölpopa's disciples, Könchok Gyaltsen, was then enthroned as Choglé Namgyal's successor at Jonang in the first month of the Pig Year (1359).<sup>143</sup>

Dölpopa had become increasingly disturbed by the extensive damage to Buddhist communities, temples, and shrines in Tibet as great political turmoil swept the land during the power struggle between the Sakya rulers in Tsang and the newly arisen Pakmodru in Central Tibet. He decided that the only remedy was to travel to Lhasa and make prayers to the Jowo image there, which he felt to be the same as the Buddha himself.<sup>144</sup> Dölpopa was now sixty-six years old and had become extremely heavy (*sku sha lcis pa*) in his later years, so that it was very difficult for him to travel. His body was about twice the size of an average person (*phal pa nyis 'gyur tsam gyis sku che*) and his physical presence dominated any gathering, even when there were hundreds of people. Important and charismatic figures became like children when they arrived before him. When Dölpopa departed from Jonang on the sixteenth day of the fifth month of the Earth Dog Year (1358), he traveled by boat down the Tsangpo River, stopping at different places along the banks to give extensive teachings. He stayed for one year at the monasteries of Nesar and Chölung, where he also taught frequently.<sup>145</sup> Lama Dampa Sönam Gyaltsen, who was the fifteenth patriarch of Sakya, came to meet Dölpopa at Chölung, received various transmissions, and asked him to compose the *Fourth Council* and its *Autocommentary*.<sup>146</sup>

When further invitations to Central Tibet arrived from the Tsarpa ruler and Dölpopa's major disciples, such as the masters Tangpoché and Bumchenpa, he set off by palanquin in the fourth month of the Earth Pig Year (1359).<sup>147</sup> He proceeded slowly through Tsang and into Central Tibet, receiving lavish welcome from all the people and the clergy, who lined the roads to greet him and escort him into the different monasteries. The crowds were often so large that people at the edges could not hear him teach, so his words had to be relayed through an interpreter (*lo tsā ba cug gin gsungs*). When Dölpopa taught at Tölung Namgyal Monastery in Central Tibet, where his disciple Rintsulwa had been abbot since 1354, the Duensha Shönu Gyaltsen

and his entourage received teachings at the head of a crowd of many hundreds of people.<sup>148</sup>

### *10. Teachings in Central Tibet and the Return to Tsang*

At the end of the sixth month of 1359 Dölpopa finally arrived in Lhasa. He offered gold for the gilding of the images of the Jowo and the Shākyamuni and used three hundred loads of butter to offer butter lamps in the shrines. He stayed for about six months at Marpori, Traklha Lupuk, and the Ramoché.<sup>149</sup> In particular, he gave the instructions of the profound path of the Six-branch Yoga many times to countless teachers who came from all different monasteries. It was obviously an incredible scene. So many people came to request Dharma teachings that they could not fit into the buildings. When some persons who had never received instructions were unable to hear, the newcomers were allowed to come in first. As many other people as could fit into the building were then allowed to enter. Since too many people were requesting teachings and having strange physical experiences (*lus nyams*), Dölpopa had to come out from the Ramoché Khangsar and stay at Shöl. The audiences were so large that doors were broken and stairways collapsed. Even the extreme measure of tying dogs at the head of the stairways to prevent too many people from entering was ineffective in controlling the crowds.<sup>150</sup>

On one occasion Dölpopa was invited with great ceremony to the nearby monastery of Tsal Gungtang. There he gave the great initiation of Kālacakra and many other teachings to the political leader Delek. Then he taught outside of the monastery, again utilizing an interpreter to relay the teachings to the outskirts of the huge crowd. At another time, when Dölpopa was sitting before the precious Jowo image in the cathedral of Lhasa, the ruler Gewai Lodrö (1309–64) came and requested initiation. But when the governor Lhundrubpa invited Dölpopa to Lagong, the crowds were so great in the daytime that he had to go in secret at night and bestow the Hayagrīva initiation to a group led by the ruler Gewai Lodrö. He also had to go request blessings from the Jowo image at night because more people than could fit into the marketplace crowded around the temple during the day.<sup>151</sup>

At the end of the first month of the Mouse Year (1360) a party arrived to invite Dölpopa back to Jonang. The people of Lhasa were distraught at his departure. When he reached Garchung Gyedé, the plain of Gyang was filled with a crowd of people and horses. His palanquin could not get through, so many members of the Saṅgha had to join hands in a circle around it.

The crowd of people requesting blessings were then made to join hands and go single-file under his palanquin. This was the situation until he reached Chukha. The members of the Saṅgha were reciting supplications, such as Dölpopa's *General Commentary on the Doctrine*, while the entire mass of people were hysterically wailing. Most of the crowd had lost their senses and many could not even walk. The sun was warm and the sky was clear, but the atmosphere was filled with rainbows. When Dölpopa got into a boat to cross the river, many people jumped into the water after him and had to be saved by others.

After passing through the lower Sang Valley, where he was hosted by the leaders and Saṅgha of the upper and lower colleges of Sangpu Monastery, Dölpopa crossed the river at the ferry landing of Nyen Kharnak. At the order of the great Sakya master Lama Dampa Sönam Gyaltzen, he was then escorted with music and a procession of monks to Nyetang. There again the crowds were so large that when Dölpopa visited the stūpa of Atiśa, the gate to the courtyard was blocked with people, and his palanquin was lifted up and the crowd scrambled under it to receive his blessings. Then he crossed the Kyichu River and worshipped at the obelisk of Üshang Do. At Chushul Drugu Gang he was welcomed by Lama Bado, and many of the shrine objects of Sinpori were brought down to Chushul for him to see and receive blessings.<sup>152</sup>

Then Dölpopa was invited to Rabtsun by a procession of monks. In accordance with the advice of Lopön Situpa (1302–64), Lopön Palrin and his attendants came and received Dharma teachings.<sup>153</sup> From there Lopön Lochenpa escorted Dölpopa to Yamdrok Nakartsé, where he stayed for about one month giving teachings and initiations. The people of Yamdrok bore his palanquin and escorted him through the Kharo Pass and as far as the Plain of Om. There he was welcomed by the ruler Pakpa Palsang (1318–70) and escorted by the monks to the Kagyü monastery of Ralung, where he gave many teachings. He spent several days at the medicinal springs of Nyingro, and then stopped to teach at Nenying and other monasteries along the way.

According to Tāranātha's history of the Nyang region, the ruler Pakpa Palsang and his younger brother, Pakpa Rinchen (1320–76), had for some time wished to request Dharma teachings from Dölpopa, and now invited him to Jangra. Because of his weight (*sku sha 'byor pa*), it was too difficult for Dölpopa to climb the long stairs up to Jangra, so he stayed for a long time below on the battlefield of Dzingka. There he spread out a huge silk maṇḍala of Kālacakra, performed the preliminary offering rites, and then bestowed a

very extensive Kālacakra initiation. At this time Dölpopa also had a vision of the nearby mountain slope of Tsechen as the palace of Shambhala, and prophesied a future monastery there in which only the Six-branch Yoga would be practiced. When Dölpopa left Jangra, he was escorted to Nesar by Pakpa Palsang, during which time he instructed the ruler, "Honor the Buddha as permanent, the Dharma as true, and the Saṅgha as infallible! This will be always be beneficial, now and in the future, and your realm will also be stable."<sup>154</sup>

### *II. The Aborted Meeting with Butön Rinchen Drup*

Dölpopa was next invited to Shalu and Tsokdü, where he taught a massive gathering, utilizing an interpreter to relay the teachings as before in Central Tibet.<sup>155</sup> Several Tibetan sources mention that when Dölpopa arrived at Shalu, the master Butön was unable to debate with him. For example, in his history of Buddhism written in 1581, the Kagyü master Drukchen Pema Karpo says:

There is the story that he came to debate when Butön was staying at Ripuk, but Butön was unable. He enunciated the opening exclamation for debate, which cracked the residence. This is not in other sources. I think it is from the experiences of Jonang meditators.<sup>156</sup>

Jetsun Tāranātha later refers to the same story, but places it in a less confrontational context, saying that it was known that Dölpopa wished to hold discussions with Butön, the "Second Omniscient One," but that the great Butön was unable to debate. Tāranātha then says this story is, in fact, true.<sup>157</sup>

Kunpang's biography of Dölpopa is certainly the original source for these accounts.<sup>158</sup> Kunpang writes that Dölpopa went to Shalu after receiving a letter from Butön. He was politely received there, and also made generous gifts in return. Then he sent a message to Butön, who was apparently at his nearby residence of Ripuk and not in Shalu itself, saying that he had received his previous letter, had arrived in Shalu, and now felt that the time had come to hold discussions for the benefit of the Buddhist doctrine and sentient beings. Those at Shalu, such as Jamyang Karpo, were frightened and spoke to Butön. Butön also felt apprehensive and told one of his attendants to pick a volume of scripture at random and open it to divine the

auspices of the situation. The volume was opened in the *Sūtra of the Great Drum* (*Mahābherī Sūtra*). When Butön asked for it to be read, it turned out to be the very passage that was considered to be the prophecy of Dölpopa's appearance in the world. This was considered to be a very inauspicious omen, and everyone was disturbed. After some discussion, three white conch shells, two gold images, and many other offerings were presented to Dölpopa, who was told that Butön was not in good health. Dölpopa knew what was really happening and enunciated the opening exclamation for debate, the force of which was said to have produced a crack in the wall of Butön's residence.

After leaving the Shalu area Dölpopa was again invited to Nartang, where he taught the *Small Lotus Commentary* to the abbot and others.<sup>159</sup> On that occasion the abbot rose and made an impassioned speech about his undivided faith in Dölpopa. Then the party from Jonang, led by the holder of the monastic seat, arrived to escort him back home.<sup>160</sup> Dölpopa continued to stop along the way and give teachings. In particular, he paused at the monastery of Tropu and offered butter lamps to the huge image of Maitreya and to the stūpa that had inspired him to build his own at Jonang. In front of the Maitreya image he asked for the biography of Tropu Lotsāwa to be read aloud, which caused him to weep for a long time. As the procession of about one hundred persons continued toward Jonang, Dölpopa taught in all the large and small monasteries. It was clearly a very emotional scene, with great crowds of people escorting him through the valleys, chanting the six-syllable mantra of Avalokiteśvara, offering prayers, and weeping from faith. Along the road people usually received Dölpopa's blessing by going under his palanquin, instead of being touched on the head by the hand of the master, as was customary.<sup>161</sup>

## 12. *The Last Months at Jonang*

On the sixteenth day of the fifth month of the Mouse Year (1360) Dölpopa arrived back at the great hermitage of Jonang in excellent health. The large offerings received in Central Tibet were used for decorating the stūpa and the various temples. Dölpopa stayed in meditation at his residence of Dewachen, after bestowing gifts and teachings on many people who came from all directions to see him, such as the great master Drung Zhitokpa, the glorious Panchenpa, the great abbot Namkha Yeshé, the great master abbot, and the great ruler.<sup>162</sup> Then Dölpopa went to Dzum Chölung and built a Victory Stūpa. He also experienced a vision of the Indian adept Śavaripa, who gave



him a direct transmission of the Six-branch Yoga.<sup>163</sup> He returned to Jonang in the sixth month.

In the autumn of the Iron Ox Year (1361), when Dölpopa was sixty-nine years old, the holder of the monastic seat of Jonang left for a visit to Sakya.<sup>164</sup> Dölpopa gave various instructions to his major disciples and made some comments about the cold weather in Tibet and how he would not be bothered by it in a warm place. One of his attendants asked him where he was going that was warm. He replied that he was going to Dewachen, where it was warm. Some of those in attendance understood this to mean that he was just going to his residence, which was called Dewachen, but some understood him to mean the pure land of Dewachen (Sukhāvātī), and their hairs stood on end.<sup>165</sup>

On the fourth day of the eleventh month Dölpopa began to teach his great work, *Mountain Dharma: An Ocean of Definitive Meaning*. He also began to give instructions on the preliminary practices to a group of newcomers. On the sixth day he had finished about half the *Mountain Dharma*. When the teaching session was over he told the students that this was all he would teach, and instructed them to take good care of the text. To the newcomers, he taught all four of the preliminary practices that day, in great detail. He seemed more radiant and healthy than ever before. He gave them extensive advice, and everyone wept with faith. After dispersing, they asked each other, "Why was the master gazing up into space and why was he so energized?"<sup>166</sup>

Then Dölpopa said he was going to the stūpa. His attendants told him that snow had fallen and the path was not safe. He replied that they did not understand, it was necessary for him to go.<sup>167</sup> But the attendants still insisted it was unsafe and helped him into his residence. Tea was served and his attendant was sent to summon the elder disciples for some private conversation. They gathered before their master, and he gave a detailed explanation of the "powerful tenfold anagram."<sup>168</sup> That evening he was pleased with everyone, and there was much joking and laughter. Then he went to sleep. After one period of the night had passed Dölpopa asked his attendant, the monk Ngödrup, "Is it dawn yet?"

Ngödrup told him the night was not even half over.

"It should be dawn soon," Dölpopa said, and went back to sleep.

When Ngödrup got up, he said, "Now it is dawn."

"Yes," Dölpopa replied. "Help with my robes."

Ngödrup served him, and after a short while asked, "Will you stand up now?"



6. The great stūpa at Jonang.

Dölpopa did not reply. Ngödrup thought the great master was in meditation and did not ask again. But when the sun came up, he pulled at Dölpopa's hand and asked, "Will you stand up now?"

Dölpopa sat staring straight ahead, appearing to be in deep meditation, and did not say anything. When this happened the attendant called for some of the elder and more experienced disciples. They thought maybe Dölpopa was affected by the intense cold and took him out into the sun and massaged him. After about midday his eyes closed and, without any sign of illness, he passed into deep meditation. He was then taken back into his quarters and attended to in every way. After a few minutes he adjusted his position into that of Vajrasattva and passed away into bliss.

When the great abbot Choglé Namgyal heard the news, he sent word that he was coming to see Dölpopa. The master's body was kept on his bed for several days, and some major disciples such as Drung Zhitokpa visited and made offerings. Offerings, prostrations, and circumambulations were made throughout the day and night. After Choglé Namgyal arrived, Dölpopa's body was put into a wooden casket anointed with perfume and adorned with silk and precious ornaments, and placed inside the crematorium. The body was extremely flexible, like a piece of cotton wool.<sup>169</sup> From the twenty-first day until the full moon, services were conducted by more

than one hundred masters, led by Lama Panchenpa, the great master abbot, the holder of the monastic seat, and others.<sup>170</sup>

On the evening of the sixth day of the first month of the Tiger Year (1362), the cremation ceremony was performed. When Dölpopa's body was offered into the fire, the smoke rose up only about the length of a spear, then went to the stūpa like a streaking arrow, circled it many times, and finally disappeared to the west. Huge offerings of incense, butter lamps, music, and so forth were made. In particular, the men and women practitioners offered butter lamps on the roofs of their individual meditation huts, so that the entire valley sparkled. Until the smoke had faded away, each of them made prayers with tears flowing down their faces.

The next morning the crematorium was sealed. When it was later opened on the tenth day, some remains were distributed to the disciples who had received the transmission of the *Stainless Light* from Dölpopa. Among the ashes were many relics that were clear like crystal. Countless others appeared later. Many molded-clay images (*tsha tsha*) covered with gold leaf were made from the remains.

Many of the clay images and relics were taken to Sakya, where most of the teachers and members of the Saṅgha were disciples of Dölpopa. The images and relics were welcomed with music and a great yellow procession of the Saṅgha led by the master of the Sharpa family of Sakya. Offerings were made to the relics by all of Dölpopa's disciples and patrons in the Ganden Temple, and a fine memorial ceremony was held in the main Sakya assembly. Similar ceremonies were held in many monasteries throughout Central Tibet and Tsang, such as Nartang, Chölung, Nesar, and Tsal Gungtang.<sup>171</sup> At Jonang, ashes from the cremation were gathered and put with other relics into an image of Dölpopa that was placed in the great stūpa he had built.<sup>172</sup>

By the end of his life Dölpopa's influence was immense. His teachings were extremely controversial, but he had taught them to others with an attitude of great love and compassion. Eyewitness accounts mention that even when he was criticizing philosophical opinions that he felt were incorrect, he never did so in an angry manner, and in Dharma discussions that entailed the identification of opponents, wrong positions, and so forth, he never used harsh words or made physically aggressive gestures.<sup>173</sup> He lived during a time of great political turmoil in Tibet, but he had never taken sides, except to take a strong stand against all prejudice and bias. He had once commented, "Here at Jonang we do not take any sides. Buddhahood is not reached through prejudicial Dharma. And thus we do not take part in worthless evil. Like the clouds in the sky, we do not take any sides."<sup>174</sup>

This sentiment is further indicated in many of Dölpopa's works, which often end with the phrase "composed by the impartial and unbiased Possessor of the Four Reliances."<sup>175</sup> Due to this attitude he is said to have become an object of worship for everyone. In short, he was a great Buddhist saint whose main goal in life was to revive the definitive meaning of the Buddha's message, which he felt was in great danger of being lost. Fully conscious of the risks involved in such an attempt to redirect the dominant trends in the Buddhism of his time, he tried to accomplish his aim with love and compassion, while emphasizing a lack of sectarian bias. Nevertheless, his tradition would suffer greatly in the future from some of the very forces he sought to counter during his lifetime.

## CHAPTER TWO

# A Historical Survey of the *Shentong* Tradition in Tibet

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This advice by the omniscient Dölpopa should be kept as the key point in our hearts: “If buddhahood will be reached merely as a result of having heard the term ‘sugata essence,’ what need to mention what will happen from actualizing that by means of faith and devotion, and meditating on it? Thus compassionate experts should teach it even if they might lose their lives and so forth, and those who strive for liberation should seek it out and listen even if they must cross a great pit of fire.”

JAMGÖN KONGTRUL<sup>176</sup>

LITTLE IS KNOWN about the early Tibetan proponents of philosophical points of view that would later come to be known as *shentong*. According to Lhai Gyaltsen, many persons with partial realization of the teachings of definitive meaning had appeared in Tibet before the fourteenth century, most of them dedicated practitioners. But no one until Dölpopa had mastered all the teachings of definitive meaning in the various scriptures, treatises, and esoteric instructions, and then formulated that realization into a coherent philosophical tenet.<sup>177</sup> Tāranātha traces one lineage for what he calls “instructions on the view of the Madhyamaka emptiness of other,” and a second lineage for the Kālacakra teachings passed down in the Jonang tradition.<sup>178</sup> The first of these concerns the practical instructions that epitomize the intentions of all the sūtras and commentaries of the third turning of the Dharma wheel. This lineage is primarily traced through Maitreya and the Indian brothers Asaṅga and Vasubandhu, who are considered the founders of the doctrine, but a transmission is also traced from Nāgārjuna.<sup>179</sup> This

first text is a record of the names of teachers who taught the *shentong* view based on the teachings of the Mahāyāna scriptures and commentaries. Jetsun Tāranātha's second text, concerned with the lineage of the Kālacakra teachings transmitted in the Jonang tradition, records the names of teachers who taught the *shentong* view based on the tantras, specifically as articulated in the *Kālacakra Tantra* and related literature. Examples of the writings of very few of the Tibetan masters in each of these lineages before the time of Dölpopa seem to have survived.

### 1. *The Shentong Tradition in Tibet before Dölpopa*

According to Tāranātha, one of the earliest Tibetan masters in the *shentong* lineages based on Mahāyāna teachings was Drimé Sherab, better known as Tsen Khawoché (b. 1021), who was most intimately connected with the transmission of the *Highest Continuum (Uttaratantra)*.<sup>180</sup> In his important collection of one hundred guiding instructions from various lineages, Kunga Drölchok preserved some instructions of this teacher, which are the earliest extant materials about the *shentong* view in Tibet.<sup>181</sup> Kunga Drölchok first provides some historical context.

As for the guiding instructions on the view of an emptiness of other, Tsen Khawoché said, "Sañjana, the paṇḍita of Kaśmīr, made this very significant statement: 'The Conqueror turned the Dharma wheel three times. The first wheel taught the four truths, the middle one taught the lack of defining characteristics, and the final one made carefully thorough distinctions. Of these, the first two did not distinguish between the real and the imaginary. The final one, at the point of certainty concerning the absolute, taught by distinguishing between the middle and the extremes, and distinguishing between phenomena and true nature. Only the original manuscripts of *Distinguishing Phenomena and True Nature* and the *Highest Continuum* were rediscovered. If these two texts had been lost, it would have indicated Maitreya's passing away into bliss.'"

Appearing in an old notebook of Tsen Khawoché himself bearing the title *Lotus Hook*, this is persuasive against the later claim that the distinction of an "emptiness of other" was totally unknown in India and only appeared later in Tibet with the omniscient Dölpopa. Please also closely examine the statement

appearing in one of the all-knowing Butön's replies to questions, where he mentions the earlier existence of the philosophical tenet of Tanakpa Rinchen Yeshé that seems to have been later enhanced and maintained by Dölpopa.<sup>182</sup>

Kunga Drölchok considers this statement by Tsen Khawoché to be a very important example of an early precedent for the philosophical distinctions later formulated by Dölpopa. Here Tsen Khawoché refers to his teacher Sañjana's opinion that only the third turning of the Dharma wheel, where clear distinctions are made between phenomena and true nature, represents the definitive meaning of the Buddha's teachings. Kunga Drölchok feels that this refutes Tibetan critics who claimed the *shentong* view was completely unknown in India and Tibet until the time of Dölpopa. He further remarks that even the great Butön commented that Dölpopa had enhanced an earlier Tibetan philosophical tenet held by one Tanakpa Rinchen Yeshé, and directs the reader to one of Butön's written replies to questions. Unfortunately, there is no mention of Dölpopa in the replies of Butön that have been preserved.<sup>183</sup> However, Dölpopa did indeed study with the Tanak master Rinchen Yeshé. When still quite young, just before his teaching debut at Sakya in 1313, Dölpopa spent about three months at Tanak, where he studied with Rinchen Yeshé and received an explanation of the Five Treatises of Maitreya, two of which are the *Highest Continuum* and *Distinguishing Phenomena and True Nature*.<sup>184</sup> The question of such important influences on Dölpopa's formulation of the *shentong* view will be discussed below.

The lineage of the Kālacakra teachings transmitted in the Jonang tradition emphasized the definitive aspect of the doctrine long before the time of Dölpopa. This is most obvious in a group of short works entitled *Set of Four Bright Lamps* (*Gsal sgron skor bzhi*), composed by the eleventh-century Kālacakra master Yumowa Mikyö Dorjé. Yumowa is clearly dealing with some of the same themes that Dölpopa later elaborated. Tāranātha even identifies Yumowa as having "initiated the tradition of the philosophical tenets of tantric *shentong*."<sup>185</sup> But it is very significant that none of the key terms associated with Dölpopa's theories, such as *gzhan stong* (emptiness of other) or *kun gzhi ye shes* (universal-ground primordial awareness) appear in the extant writings of Yumowa, nor does he use the terminology that Dölpopa apparently borrowed from certain Mahāyāna sūtras and treatises.

Nevertheless, seven hundred years after Yumowa, the Geluk master Tuken Losang Chökyi Nyima (1737–1802), who despised the *shentong* view, says



7. The great adept Yumowa.

in his *Crystal Mirror of Philosophical Tenets* that Yumowa was the founder of the *shentong* teachings, which he so named, and that they were passed down orally until the time of Dölpopa as a hidden doctrine without any written texts.<sup>186</sup> The earlier comments of the Kagyü master Gö Lotsāwa Shönu Pal (1392–1481) in a letter to the Jang ruler Rikden Namgyal Draksang simply focus on the teachings of the sugata essence and definitive meaning:

I have a slight understanding that this Dharma language of the sugata essence is the excellent heart of the ultimate doctrine of definitive meaning. In ancient times, most spiritual friends in Central Tibet and Tsang turned away from discussion of discriminating self-awareness. The doctrine started from the great adept Yumowa's composition of the treatises of the *Four Bright*



*Lamps*. At a later time, the great omniscient Dharma lord [Dölpopa] spread and increased it.<sup>187</sup>

Dölpopa actively taught Yumowa's *Four Bright Lamps*, yet he neither mentions Yumowa in his own writings nor quotes directly from his texts.<sup>188</sup> But the early Jonang master Kunpang Tukjé Tsöndrú does specifically identify the *Four Lamps* as the crucial source of direct introduction to the essence of the Six-branch Yoga of Kālacakra.<sup>189</sup>

Yumowa's four brief treatises are ultimately concerned with the correct practice of the Six-branch Yoga, the completion-stage meditation system grounded in the *Kālacakra Tantra*. The four texts focus on unity (*zung jug*), the Great Seal (*phyag rgya chen po*), luminosity (*'od gsal*), and emptiness (*stong nyid*). A prayer to the masters in the transmission line of the Kālacakra teachings according to the Jonang lineage is appended to the first of the four texts, indicating that the extant manuscript was passed down in the Jonang tradition.<sup>190</sup>

Yumowa discusses many tantric topics in his writings that are beyond the scope of this book. But one of his recurrent concerns is to emphasize that he does not accept the opinion of most scholars that the *path* consists of realizing the true mode of the existence of phenomena, or the true nature of all phenomena, to be an emptiness not established by any intrinsic nature, free from the extremes of existence, nonexistence, both, and neither. He identifies this as the meaning of the *view*, the philosophical tenet that establishes the true mode of existence of all entities. This is not what is to be cultivated as the path according to the stages of esoteric instruction. In short, Yumowa teaches that emptiness in the context of the path of meditation absolutely must be experiential. An emptiness of any nature whatsoever cannot be directly experienced. For Yumowa, emptiness that is the valid path is experienced during the practice of the Six-branch Yoga, when "images of emptiness" are actually beheld. This is the direct experience of emptiness as the path according to the teachings of the *Kālacakra Tantra*. Yumowa says that emptiness arrived at through reasoned analysis and emptiness without mental activity are not the path; it is the emptiness seen with the eyes during meditative concentration that is the subject of his work.<sup>191</sup> Concerning these images of emptiness, the Jonang master Kunpang Tukjé Tsöndrú writes, "Precisely that is beholding the face of the divine chosen deity of the absolute true nature."<sup>192</sup> Echoes of this point of view will be found in the works of Dölpopa.

The texts translated in part 2 of this book will show that the teachings

of Dölpopa were solidly grounded in the doctrine of the tantras, especially the *Kālacakra Tantra*, and that his treatises do not simply follow established philosophical tenets, but represent a synthesis of the view and practice of Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna Buddhism.

## 2. *Dölpopa and the Shentong View*

Early Tibetan masters such as Tsen Khawoché and Yumowa, who taught what was later referred to as the *shentong* view, did so only to small groups in the context of private instruction. Very few texts written by any of the later members of their lineages, from the eleventh century until the late thirteenth century, have survived. It was not until Dölpopa proclaimed his realization and gave his doctrine the name “*shentong*” that this term and the teachings now associated with it became widely known in Tibet. The circumstances surrounding Dölpopa’s initial proclamation of the *shentong* were described in chapter 1, and the nature of his ideas will become clear in chapter 3 and in part 2. Here some of the influences behind his theories, his innovative use of language, his motivation, and the method by which he approached the Buddhist scriptures will be discussed.

Dölpopa’s statements show that the most important scriptural sources for his controversial theories were the set of texts known as the Bodhisattva Trilogy, which are the definitive Indian commentaries on the *Kālacakra Tantra*, the *Hevajra Tantra*, and the *Cakrasamvara Tantra*. For example, in a text that he sent to the ruler of the region of Jang, Dölpopa specifies these works as the key influences in his conversion from the view of absolute reality as an emptiness of self-nature.<sup>193</sup> Of these, the *Stainless Light* of Kalki Puṇḍarīka held special significance for him. Dölpopa once remarked, “All the key points of the profound definitive meaning were discovered in the great commentary to the *Kālacakra Tantra*, so it has been remarkably kind.”<sup>194</sup>

Dölpopa was a consummate practitioner of the Six-branch Yoga, the completion-stage practices of *Kālacakra*. He based his doctrinal discussions on scripture, particularly the cycles related to the *Kālacakra Tantra*, but his own experience in meditation was crucial to the formation of his theories. As George Tanabe has emphasized in his study of the Japanese master Myōe, “Buddhists have long insisted that the primary experience—and experience is primary—is that of meditation and practice.”<sup>195</sup> Dölpopa obviously felt that he had experienced the definitive meaning of the Buddha’s message that was known in the mystical land of Shambhala, but not understood in Tibet.



8. The legendary land of Shambhala.

He once claimed to have actually gone to Shambhala during an evening meditation session. The next morning he gave an extensive teaching about the layout of Shambhala, its relation to the rest of the universe, and the esoteric instructions of the *Kālacakra Tantra*. After directly beholding Shambhala, he composed eulogies to it, declaring in one that he had discovered precisely how Shambhala and Kailash exist, which was previously unknown to Indian and Tibetan scholars.<sup>196</sup>

When giving personal meditation advice to his students, Dölpopa most often speaks of the special knowledge he had discovered. He emphasizes that many in Shambhala understand the experiences that arise from meditation on the Six-branch Yoga, but no one understands in Tibet except for him. His own awareness is due solely to the kindness of the Kalkī emperors. For example, he writes the following verses in an instruction to one of his disciples:

Generally, if I speak frankly,  
other people don't like it.

If I speak what other people say,  
it would deceive my students.

It is difficult to be a teacher nowadays.

Nevertheless, I will speak frankly to you.

The Kalkī lives in Shambhala to the north.

In the Dharma palace of Kalāpa  
live many who understand these  
types of experiences.

In the snowy land of Tibet,  
just I understand  
these types of experiences.<sup>197</sup>

And to another disciple he writes:

These days this procedure  
is not known by most  
who are famed as scholars,  
who claim good meditation  
and high realization,  
and who are conceited great adepts,  
but I have discovered it  
by the kindness of the Kalkī.<sup>198</sup>

The combination of Dölpopa's experience in meditation on the Six-branch Yoga, his visionary contact with the land of Shambhala and its Kalkī emperors, and their special blessings, certainly provided the primary inspiration for his views. But many of the themes of interpretation that came to fruition in his teaching had been present in the Buddhist traditions of Tibet for centuries. The teachings of Tsen Khawoché and Yumowa mentioned in the previous section are just two examples of earlier Tibetan teachers whose views certainly provided a precedent for some of Dölpopa's theories.<sup>199</sup>

In this context, it is very interesting that some Tibetan sources also speak of the Third Karmapa, Rangjung Dorjé, as a possible direct influence on Dölpopa, or even as the first adherent to the *shentong*.<sup>200</sup> The earliest available account of the meeting between these two teachers is by the sixteenth-century Sakya master Mangtö Ludrup Gyatso:

Moreover, this lord [Dölpopa] met with Karma Rangjung Dorjé and, it is said, when [Dölpopa] upheld the philosophical tenet of the emptiness of self-nature, the Karmapa prophesied that he would later become an adherent of the emptiness of other. In general, I think the tradition of the emptiness of other was first upheld by Karma Rangjung Dorjé. Those at Jonang became adherents to the emptiness of other after the great omniscient [Dölpopa].<sup>201</sup>

According to Tāranātha this meeting seems to have taken place when Dölpopa was twenty-nine or thirty years old, just prior to his trip to Jonang to meet Yönten Gyatso in 1322:

Then [Dölpopa] traveled to Lhasa, Tsurpu, and so forth. He had many discussions about Dharma with Dharma lord Rangjung. Rangjung could not match the scriptural reasoning of this lord, but he had fine clairvoyance and prophesied, "You will soon have a view, practice, and Dharma language much better than this that you have now."<sup>202</sup>

Tāranātha apparently quotes from the Karmapa's prophecy, but makes no mention of him as a possible source for Dölpopa's development of the *shentong* view. Unfortunately, no record of this meeting is found in the early biographies of either teacher.<sup>203</sup> However, a later history of the Karma Kamtsang tradition written by Situ Panchen Chökyi Jungné (1700–1774) specifies that Dölpopa still adhered to the view of an emptiness of self-nature at the time of the meeting. According to the chronology of this work the meeting between the two masters occurred between 1320 and 1324.<sup>204</sup>

One of the most innovative aspects of Dölpopa's philosophical approach was his development of a new Dharma language (*chos skad*) to express a wide range of themes found in Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna scripture. Tāranātha mentions that when Dölpopa first taught the *shentong* he wrote a number of

texts containing a certain Dharma language that was incomprehensible to many scholars, who upon reading them experienced a state of what might be called “hermeneutical shock.”<sup>205</sup> As just mentioned, Karmapa Rangjung Dorjé also prophesied that Dölpopa would soon develop a new and superior terminology.

Dölpopa did two things with language that were largely unprecedented in Tibet. Much research remains to be done, but it is probable that he first developed a special terminology or Dharma language that involved the appropriation of key terms from Mahāyāna sūtras and treatises, terms that were acceptable in their original context within scripture, but were almost never used in ordinary scholarly discourse. Then he created, or at least made first extensive use of, several Tibetan terms such as *gzhan stong* (*shentong*, “emptiness of other”) and *kun gzhi ye shes* (“universal-ground primordial awareness”) to express scriptural themes he wished to emphasize. He also drew into his vocabulary some key terms such as *dbu ma chen po* (“Great Madhyamaka”) that had been in use in Tibet for centuries, but are not found in any Indian scriptures or commentaries. In this second phase he employed what may be referred to as source-alien terminology, utilizing previously unknown terms to explicate ideas and themes already present in many Buddhist scriptures.<sup>206</sup>

In his unique use of language Dölpopa first borrowed loaded terminology from Mahāyāna sūtras and treatises and incorporated it into his own compositions. A few examples will illustrate this unusual facet of his work. One of the controversial points in his teaching is the assertion that ultimate truth, referred to by terms such as *sugatagarbha* (“sugata essence”), *dharmadhātu* (“basic space of phenomena”), and *dharmakāya* (“dharma body”), is permanent or eternal. Statements to this effect are certainly not unusual in many Mahāyāna sūtras and treatises, but for most scholars in Tibet the hermeneutical approach was to view those statements as provisional (*neyārtha*, *drang don*) and in need of interpretation.<sup>207</sup> For Dölpopa, such statements in the scriptures and commentaries were of definitive meaning (*nītārtha*, *nges don*) and to be understood literally. He began to freely use the terminology of these scriptures in a way suggesting that no interpretation was required, and this was no doubt shocking. For instance, the Tibetan terms *bdag* (*ātman*), *rtag pa* (*nitya*), and *brtan pa* (*dhruva*), as well as *ther zug*, *gyung drung*, and *mi jig pa* (all used to translate Sanskrit *śāśvata*), are found in the Tibetan translations of treatises such as the *Highest Continuum* and sūtras such as the *Laṅkāvatāra*, *Ghanavyūha*, *Aṅgulimālīya*, *Śrīmālā*, and *Mahāparinirvāṇa*, where they are used to describe the dharmakāya, the Tathāgata, and the

buddha nature, or sugata essence.<sup>208</sup> These terms, which can be translated as “self,” “permanent,” “stable,” “everlasting,” “eternal,” and “indestructible,” are used by Dölpopa throughout his writings, not just when discussing the meaning of a passage in scripture. Butön Rinchen Drup’s refutations of the Jonang interpretation of these very terms as used in scripture clearly shows that this was one of the areas where Dölpopa’s contemporaries reacted strongly.<sup>209</sup>

In one of Dölpopa’s early and brief compositions, *General Commentary on the Doctrine*, which is considered a major work, most of these terms from the sūtras and Indian treatises are already in use. In another early and important text, *Exceptional Esoteric Instructions on Madhyamaka*, which he wrote at the request of his teacher Sönam Drakpa, several of these terms are also found and some of the themes he would later develop are present in embryonic form. The crucial terms continue to be found in all of his later writings. In his last major works, the *Fourth Council* and its *Autocommentary*, Dölpopa frequently uses all the terms listed above, as well as other unusual compounds such as “eternal kāya” (*gyung drung sku, ther zug sku*).<sup>210</sup>

Dölpopa never dated his major works, but it may be possible in the future to establish an approximate chronology of his writings through analysis of the terminology used in the different texts. For example, *General Commentary on the Doctrine* and *Exceptional Esoteric Instructions on the Madhyamaka* do not contain the terms *gzhan stong* or *kun gzhi ye shes*. This gives the impression that they are very early works and that the borrowing of vocabulary from scriptural sources, which is present in these works, was the first step in the evolution of his use of terminology, later to be followed by the creation of his own Dharma language.

The term *gzhan stong* (*shentong*) is most often associated with Dölpopa, who is usually thought to have coined it.<sup>211</sup> However, there is some evidence of at least a few isolated occurrences of the term before his time. Dölpopa himself quotes a master called Lord Poripa, who makes a statement that could have come from Dölpopa:

Relative truth is empty of self-nature  
and absolute truth is empty of other.

If the mode of emptiness  
of the two truths is not understood  
in this way, there is danger  
of denying complete buddhahood.<sup>212</sup>

This is certainly the most significant occurrence of the term by a writer who may predate Dölpopa, but very little is known about any earlier master called Poripa. The single possible identification is with the obscure early Kagyü teacher Poriwa Könchok Gyaltzen.<sup>213</sup>

Another example of the use of the term *gzhan stong* is found in the biography of Ra Lotsāwa Dorjé Drak (eleventh–twelfth centuries), who contrasts it to the term *rang stong* in a mystical song. But there are strong reasons to conclude that this biography was extensively reworked in the seventeenth century, and so the occurrence of the term is probably not significant.<sup>214</sup>

Dölpopa's contemporary, the famous Nyingma master Longchen Rabjampa, also mentions the term when discussing the three-nature (*trisvabhāva*) theory of the Yogācāra tradition. He contrasts the three categories of "empty of self-nature" (*rang gis stong pa*), "empty of other" (*gzhan gyis stong pa*), and "empty of both" (*gnyis kas stong pa*), but with none of the connotations inherent in Dölpopa's usage. During a discussion of the buddha nature, the expression *gzhan stong* is also used once in a text attributed to Padmasambhava in the *Heartdrop of the Dakinis* (*Mkha' 'gro snying thig*), which was revealed in the thirteenth century by Pema Lendrel Tsel.<sup>215</sup> Once again, the usage of the term is not similar to that found in Dölpopa's works.

This evidence shows that the term *gzhan stong* had been used in Tibet before the time of Dölpopa, albeit only in isolated instances. The tradition itself certainly considers him as the one who coined the term, but it is perhaps more accurate to say Dölpopa made use of an obscure term that had very limited use before him, and gave it a place of fundamental importance in the expression of his philosophy.

Another central theme of Dölpopa's thought is the contrasting of universal-ground consciousness (*kun gzhi rnam shes*) and universal-ground primordial awareness (*kun gzhi ye shes*). The term *kun gzhi ye shes* is not found in the writings of any earlier Tibetan authors, and Dölpopa includes it in a list of topics previously unknown in Tibet that he had realized and explicated.<sup>216</sup> The phrase "mirrorlike universal-ground primordial awareness" (*kun gzhi me long lta bu'i ye shes*) is found in one of the works of Longchen Rabjampa, where he uses it to characterize the dharmakāya and contrast it with the universal-ground consciousness as one of the eight modes of consciousness. In this one instance there are some similarities with Dölpopa's ideas, but Longchenpa's usual position is to identify the universal ground (*kun gzhi*) only with impure states of mind.<sup>217</sup>

Until 1322, when he was thirty years old, Dölpopa had primarily studied Buddhist literature, philosophy, and practice according to the Sakya



tradition. For most of the previous decade he had studied and taught at Sakya Monastery itself. He would certainly have been very familiar with the works of Sakya Paṇḍita Kunga Gyaltsen (1182–1251), such as *Distinguishing the Three Vows*, which are fundamental to the education of a Sakya scholar and practitioner. The similarities between Sakya Paṇḍita's statements about his motives for composing his controversial works, and Dölpopa's statements about his own motives are as striking as the fact that the two masters were at opposite ends of the spectrum of doctrinal interpretation.

A example of Dölpopa's familiarity with Sakya Paṇḍita's work and his sympathy for the Sakya master's sentiments is found at the end of the *Autocommentary to the "Fourth Council."* Dölpopa takes a couplet directly from *Distinguishing the Three Vows* and then extends Sakya Paṇḍita's metaphor by repeating it in a series of verses.<sup>218</sup> The gist of Sakya Paṇḍita's verse is that no matter how many traditions of Dharma there may be, if they are not linked to an authentic source, they are lifeless, like gaming pieces that are off the board and irrelevant. Dölpopa uses the first couplet of Sakya Paṇḍita's verse as a point of departure and, through its repetition, addresses a number of related issues. For example, he says there may be numerous teachings of the degenerate Tretāyuga, but if they are not linked to the perfect Kṛtayuga they are lifeless, like dead bodies.<sup>219</sup> He continues in this vein, contrasting the fully established nature with the imagined nature, the absolute with the relative, emptiness of self-nature with emptiness of other, and so forth.<sup>220</sup> This borrowing was certainly deliberate and would have called to mind the themes and tone of Sakya Paṇḍita's treatise, especially since it was one of his descendants, Lama Dampa Sönam Gyaltsen, who had requested Dölpopa to compose the *Fourth Council* and its *Autocommentary*.

Some of Dölpopa's clearest comments about his motives and sentiments are found at the end of his *Brief Analysis*, which he sent to the ruler of the principality of Jang to explain his doctrinal views.<sup>221</sup> It is a significant spiritual and autobiographical testament:

These [investigations] lay a plumb line straight upon reality's true mode of being, just as it is. They are not contaminated with impurities such as prejudice, partiality, and the notion that a claim is stronger just because it was made earlier. I have taken as witnesses the opinions of the omniscient Buddha, the Blessed One; the excellent lords on the tenth level, such as the Lords of the Three Families,<sup>222</sup> Vajragarbha, and Maitreyañātha; the great founders and excellent realized experts such as noble Asaṅga,

the great brahmin Saraha, and the great paṇḍita Nāropa. I have avoided exaggeration and denial and have written after fully comprehending their intentions exactly as they are.

You might think, "You are arrogant about having realized their intentions exactly as they are, but do your ideas actually disagree with those of other Tibetan teachers because you have not realized them?"

That is not the case. The causes for not understanding are certainly inferior intelligence, lacking the oral instructions of an excellent master, little study, no experience and realization in meditation, being filled with pride and arrogance, defining true and false on the basis of the notion that a claim is stronger just because it was made earlier, popularity, and so forth. But I first engaged in much study of the great scriptural traditions, then I engaged in the practice of the oral instructions of India and Tibet that are known to be profound, and then the precise experience and realization of each of them actually arose.

Then, based on the infusion of a little of the blessing of having encountered the definitive meaning of the great root tantras, the oral instructions of glorious Kalāpa, the profound uncommon heartfelt advice of the Kalkīs on the tenth level, I discovered many profound key points that have not been discovered, have not been realized, and have not been fully comprehended by self-clinging paṇḍitas, most dedicated meditators endowed with experience and realization, and most who are arrogant about being great upholders of secret mantra. A fine realization burst forth from within. Therefore, not only most dedicated meditators endowed with experience and realization, and those who are arrogant about being great upholders of secret mantra, but even the Buddha definitely could not turn me back from this truth, because I have an exceptional certainty with no doubts to ask about.

You might also think, "All that certainty is from blurred and dim meditation or from misunderstanding; you have no perfect scriptural quotations for proof."

That is not lacking, because there are very many clear quotations, together with reasoning and with esoteric instructions, from those on the twelfth level, those on the tenth level, and excellent realized experts such as Nāgārjuna and his spiritual

sons, and the great paṇḍita Nāropa. Nevertheless, I have not written them here from fear of being verbose. But if you wish and are so interested, I will write and offer them later.<sup>223</sup>

Of these points, several exceptional ones certainly disagree with some that have been known in Tibet before. But you have been accustomed to an earlier philosophical tenet for a long time, so the propensity for it has become firm, and many in Tibet adhere to that tradition. So there is certainly a difference of firm and unstable propensities for these previous and later philosophical tenets, and a difference in the number of adherents. However, without giving in to the influence of those differences, please take as witnesses the scriptures of the Buddha and the bodhisattvas, and examine them with an attitude of unbiased honesty as to which [system] is true.<sup>224</sup>

As this and many other passages make clear, considerable opposition to Dölpopa's theories certainly arose. Specifically, he felt that most people had already closed their minds to the teachings of definitive meaning. The mistaken notion that a claim is stronger just because it was made earlier, and the prejudice inherent in the established traditions of his time were some of the greatest factors inhibiting the widespread acceptance of his ideas. He was presenting his case to a prejudiced jury. It is therefore curious that not a single contemporary text has survived in which hostile testimony against Dölpopa is preserved. Perhaps full reaction to his doctrine did not develop and gain open expression until after his death.

### 3. *The Shentong Tradition after Dölpopa*

Dölpopa was surrounded by a group of experts as formidable as any in fourteenth-century Tibet. His most influential successors in the Jonang tradition were probably Choglé Namgyal, Nya Ön Kunga Pal, and Mati Panchen Lodrö Gyaltzen. Important works by all these masters are extant and demonstrate the extent to which they followed Dölpopa's example concerning crucial doctrinal issues. In particular, it was apparently the teachings of Choglé Namgyal and Nya Ön that provoked polemic responses and negative reactions.<sup>225</sup>

The most famous and influential early opponent of the Jonang tradition was the Sakya master Rendawa Shönu Lodrö (1348–1413), who was also one of the most important teachers of the great Tsongkapa Losang Drakpa

(1357–1419). Rendawa is generally credited with establishing the Prāsaṅgika form of Madhyamaka philosophy in Tibet,<sup>226</sup> but he came to be viewed by the Jonang tradition as a vicious opponent of the teachings of definitive meaning so successfully spread by Dölpopa. For example, a pseudo-prophecy said to be Dölpopa's last testament, but surely composed much later by a Jonang follower and added to his biography, describes Rendawa as an evil demon who would spread the view of nihilism. Moreover, he would refute the doctrine of the buddha nature, or sugata essence, as the ultimate ground, deny the Six-branch Yoga as the ultimate path, and deny the existence of the ultimate result as a separation from all taints. He would also criticize the *Kālacakra Root Tantra* because it did not begin with the words "Thus have I heard," as do other sūtras and tantras, and would make various criticisms of the *Condensed Kālacakra Tantra*. Finally, he would gather copies of the *Stainless Light* and have them thrown into rivers.<sup>227</sup>

These are serious allegations, but are also tainted with a considerable degree of hysteria. Rendawa's biography specifically points out that he was famous in Tibet for having said that the *Kālacakra Tantra* was not Dharma, but that this was incorrect. While he did see internal contradictions in a literal reading of the *Kālacakra*, he did not dismiss it as a non-Buddhist teaching (*chos min*). Rendawa makes this clear at the end of the *Jewel Garland*, the text where he voiced his objections to specific points in the *Kālacakra Tantra*:

Nevertheless, while it  
may or may not have been  
composed by a Noble One,  
seeing that it also has many fine explanations,  
I have not denied this totally  
by saying, "It is not an entryway  
for those who wish liberation."<sup>228</sup>

Rendawa's main quarrel was not actually with the content of the *Kālacakra Tantra* itself, but with the prevalent practice of understanding its words literally. This is specified in his *Reply to Questions*, a text in which he specifically defends the *Kālacakra Tantra* against some of his own earlier objections:

Nowadays arrogant scholars  
in the land of glacial mountain ranges  
have become conceptually attached

to the literal meaning of the words  
in the *Kālacakra Tantra* and its commentary,  
which present the profound  
by means of implicit language.

After seeing the spread of many  
wrong distinctions that contradict  
the collection of pure sūtras and tantras,  
I have written this by means of objection and analysis,  
as though straightening a crooked stick.<sup>229</sup>

Rendawa is indeed the most famous (or infamous) critic of the *Kālacakra* tradition in Tibet. But he had first studied with some of Dölpopa's major disciples, such as Nya Ōn Kunga Pal and Mati Panchen, and been extremely impressed with the Jonang philosophical tenets. He then decided to fully investigate the fundamental Indian texts emphasized by his Jonang teachers, such as the *Kālacakra Tantra*, the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*, Maitreya's *Highest Continuum*, Nāgārjuna's *Eulogy to the Basic Space of Phenomena*, and so on. He analyzed these works three times. After the first reading he was certain that the Jonang position was correct. On the second reading he became uncertain as to whether it was correct or incorrect. After the third reading he was sure that the Jonang interpretations were incorrect.<sup>230</sup> Rendawa then went to Sakya and reported to another of his teachers, the great abbot Sangyé Pel, that he had decided the Jonang doctrine was wrong, and his conclusion was encouraged. He then apparently embarked on a crusade to discredit the Jonang tradition and call into question the internal contradictions he perceived in a literal reading of the *Kālacakra Tantra*. First he sent a message to his teacher Nya Ōn telling him what he had decided. Nya Ōn was very displeased at this reversal in Rendawa's view. Nevertheless, Rendawa felt that because of Nya Ōn's great intellectual powers, and specifically his consummate knowledge of epistemology, he could be convinced that the Jonang view was wrong if Rendawa could demonstrate this through reasoning and scriptural quotations. He was sure that once Nya Ōn was converted, all the other members of the Jonang tradition would change their views.<sup>231</sup> Nya Ōn is certainly portrayed here as one of the leading proponents of Dölpopa's teachings.

However, when Rendawa went to Tsechen Monastery to speak to Nya Ōn, his old teacher indicated his displeasure in many ways, and Rendawa recognized there was no point in broaching the subject. Instead, he returned



9. Nya Ön Kunga Pal.

to Sakya and composed the *Jewel Garland*, his famous critique of the *Kālacakra Tantra*.<sup>232</sup> In front of a huge assembly presided over by Drung Zhitokpa (1339–99) at Sakya, Rendawa debated against the Kagyü scholar Karma Könshön (b. 1333) on the question of internal contradictions in the *Kālacakra Tantra*. Then he was invited to Jonang itself, where he debated on the status of the buddha nature. According to Rendawa's biography, he was successful in converting many Jonang monks, caused others to doubt their views, and prevented still others from joining the Jonang tradition.<sup>233</sup> In short, he seems to have led a strong reactionary movement against the Jonang philosophical tenets less than thirty years after the death of Dölpopa.

Rendawa's *Jewel Garland* provoked a series of written refutations, beginning with a harsh rebuttal by the master Jangchup Sengé, who succeeded Choglé Namgyal on the monastic seat of Jonang in 1381. In the fifteenth century, Rikden Namgyal Draksang, the Sakya teacher Taktsang Lotsāwa Sherab Rinchen, and the Kagyü master Gö Lotsāwa Shönu Pal all wrote further refutations of Rendawa's work.<sup>234</sup>

Nevertheless, it is now clear that Rendawa's attitude was considerably more ambivalent than the account in Tibetan historical sources. In the latter part of his life he lived in semi-seclusion at a hermitage in the region of Gangbulé. During this time he composed his most substantial work on the *Kālacakra Tantra*, entitled *Jewel Lamp Illuminating the Definitive Meaning of the Glorious Kālacakra*.<sup>235</sup> Unlike his two earlier polemic works, the first of which was certainly written while Rendawa was not yet thirty years of age, this fascinating treatise is a thorough and positive analysis of the *Kālacakra* meditation practices. The text is obviously an attempt to extract the profound essence of these teachings while correcting some errors of interpretation made by others. In light of Rendawa's reputation as an opponent of the Jonang tradition and a critic of the *Kālacakra Tantra*, it is shocking to find the following passage in this final work:

According to the tradition of this tantra, the classification of the two truths is like this: all the phenomena of the incidental stains that arise from the confusing circumstances of ignorance are relative truth, because they obscure the perception of thatness and are reference points for total affliction. Because that is also not established as the object of a perfect primordial awareness, it is empty of self-nature, a nihilistic emptiness, and an inanimate emptiness. All the phenomena of luminosity, the nature of original mind, are absolute truth. And not because it has been proven able to withstand reasoned analysis . . . It is the absolute because it is a nonconceptual field of experience. Because the incidental stains are absent, it is empty of other, and because it is experienced through a discriminating self-awareness, it is not a nihilistic emptiness and an inanimate emptiness . . .

Because the emptiness of self-nature falls into the extreme of nihilism, its realization is not the perfect path of liberation; only the emptiness of other, the true nature of mind, luminosity, an immutable inner pure awareness experienced through the force of meditation and through a discriminating self-awareness, is accepted as the perfect path.<sup>236</sup>

Could Rendawa have actually come to accept that the definitive meaning of the *Kālacakra Tantra* was compatible with the *shentong* view held by the Jonang tradition? Nevertheless, at other points in this important text he continues to strongly condemn the notion of a permanent and eternal

absolute reality, which he equates with the teachings of the Vedic scriptures.<sup>237</sup> Without a more careful study of Rendawa's works it is difficult to know how he was able to admit the validity of the *shentong* in the context of the definitive view of the *Kālacakra Tantra*, but reject the various other aspects of the theory, such as the permanent and eternal status of the buddha nature. In any case, it is certain that later generations in Tibet continued to view Rendawa as a determined enemy of both the Jonang tradition and the teachings of the *Kālacakra Tantra*, despite the evidence to the contrary in his final work on the subject.<sup>238</sup>

Even with such doctrinal backlash against the Jonang tradition in the late fourteenth century, Dölpopa's legacy remained powerful for many decades in the province of Tsang before other influences gained the upper hand. Tāranātha later remarked that the prophecy about Dölpopa found in the *Sūtra of the Great Drum*<sup>239</sup> was correct, since the practice of the Six-branch Yoga that he spread throughout Tibet, and the teaching of the Sūtras on the Essence, the *Highest Continuum*, and other key texts of the third turning of the Dharma wheel that proclaimed the buddha nature remained strong in all teaching institutes for more than eighty years. After that point, Tāranātha said, the teaching of those scriptures was not as influential as before, because many people became obsessed with the provisional meaning and having the highest view, as well as gaining reputation, power, and large entourages.<sup>240</sup> This is clearly a negative reference to the rise of the Geluk tradition founded by lord Tsongkapa, whose main disciples, Khedrup Gelek Palsang (1385–1438) and Gyaltsap Darma Rinchen (1364–1431), led the attack against the Jonang tradition in the fifteenth century. Nevertheless, Tāranātha continued, even around the beginning of the seventeenth century the practice of the Six-branch Yoga and the teachings on the buddha nature had still managed to survive.<sup>241</sup>

From the period after Dölpopa's immediate disciples up until the time of Kunga Drölchok (1507–66), very few texts are available that were written by Jonang masters concerned with the *shentong* view and other issues raised by Dölpopa. And Kunga Drölchok just mentions the *shentong* in a few of his texts. This situation would change only with the writings of Tāranātha, who began to revive the tradition around the beginning of the seventeenth century.

For this period of almost two hundred years (from the beginning of the fifteenth century until the beginning of the seventeenth century) most available information about the Jonang tradition and the *shentong* teachings is thus found in polemic writings from other traditions, nearly all hostile,



with the notable exception of the Sakya master Serdok Panchen Shākya Chokden (1428–1507).<sup>242</sup> Presently available sources portray Shākya Chokden as one of the most influential advocates of the *shentong* in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. This impression is strengthened by Tāranātha, who composed a fascinating text about twenty-one differences in the views of Dölpopa and Shākya Chokden concerning profound points of Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna doctrine.<sup>243</sup> In the late eighteenth century the Geluk critic Tuken Losang Chökyi Nyima does not mention any *shentong* masters after Dölpopa's direct disciples until he singles out Shākya Chokden with particular venom. This role as an important upholder of the *shentong* view (although somewhat different than that of the Jonang tradition) is all the more remarkable because Shākya Chokden was, with the possible exception of Goram Sönam Sengé (1429–89), the greatest Sakya scholar of his time.<sup>244</sup>

Where did Shākya Chokden come in contact with the *shentong* teachings and how did he remain a staunch Sakya master while upholding this view? There is not total agreement about the source of the *shentong* received by Shākya Chokden. One of his main teachers was the Sakya master Rongtön Sheja Kunrik (1367–1449). The modern Tibetan scholar Dhongthog Rinpoché says Shākya Chokden followed the example of his teacher Rongtön in professing the *shentong* in secret and refuting the exegetical tradition of lord Tsongkapa through logical reasoning.<sup>245</sup> While Rongtön's views cannot be examined in detail here, there is probably some truth to Dhongthog Rinpoché's statement. For example, a eulogy to Dölpopa composed by Rongtön has survived, which at least indicates that this prominent Sakya teacher had great respect for Dölpopa and his views.<sup>246</sup>

In the Kagyü tradition, the Seventh Karmapa, Chödrak Gyatso (1454–1506), is said to have inspired Shākya Chokden to accept the *shentong* point of view. As previously mentioned, the Third Karmapa, Rangjung Dorjé, is sometimes named as an influence on Dölpopa's initial development of the *shentong* teachings. At the present stage of research the dynamics of how the *shentong* came to be accepted by many members of the Kagyü tradition, especially in the Karma Kamtsang branch, is not well understood, but it was certainly a powerful force within this lineage, perhaps from the time of the Third Karmapa.<sup>247</sup>

The earliest available source on the life of Shākya Chokden, written by Jonang Kunga Drölchok, says he met Karmapa Chödrak Gyatso on two occasions, but contains no mention of the *shentong* or similar topics. These meetings can be dated to the year 1502. The most significant event was the

second meeting, at the Rinpung court of Dönyö Dorjé, who was the most powerful ruler in Tibet. According to the Kagyü historian Pawo Tsuklak Trengwa (1504–66), who was writing between the years 1545 and 1564, about twenty to thirty thousand people are said to have gathered from throughout the Tsang region to welcome the Karmapa on his arrival in Rinpung. Shākya Chokden stayed with the Karmapa for about one month. During this period he received many of the Kagyü hierarch's uncommon profound instructions, which greatly enhanced his experience of renunciation and realization in meditation, and caused him to accept the Karmapa as his main master.<sup>248</sup>

An eighteenth-century history of the Karma Kagyü tradition elaborates further, saying that the Karmapa accorded Shākya Chokden the incredible honor of sitting on a throne of equal height in the midst of the assembly, and that they spent the month in discussion of the most profound topics. On this occasion the Karmapa said his mind and Shākya Chokden's mind had blended into a single mindstream (*thugs rgyud gcig pa*). A passage later in the same work finally mentions that in his writings Shākya Chokden accepted, as did the Karmapa, that the ultimate view of the two great traditions of the Mahāyāna was the *shentong* view of the absolute as only empty of other relative phenomena.<sup>249</sup> Shākya Chokden was already seventy-three or seventy-four years old, but this event is often considered to have been the deciding factor in his acceptance of the *shentong*.<sup>250</sup> However, it now seems more likely that Shākya Chokden had upheld the *shentong* view for many years, and that this lengthy discussion with the Karmapa was more of a further validation and enrichment of his realization than a change of view. If this were not the case, it would have to be accepted that all his works dealing with an emptiness of self-nature and an emptiness of other were composed in the last five years of his life.

In addition to Shākya Chokden's biography, Kunga Drölchok also wrote a biography of Rikden Namgyal Draksang (1395–1475), the great ruler of the region of Jang, who was a master physician and scholar. Namgyal Draksang studied with many teachers of different traditions, but described himself as a follower of the Jonang teachings, especially those of the Kālacakra and the Six-branch Yoga, and considered Dölpopa to be the ultimate authority on these topics. Like Dölpopa before him, Namgyal Draksang was believed to be an emanation of the Shambhala emperor Kalki Puṇḍarīka and wrote many important works, but very few seem to have survived. Shākya Chokden and Namgyal Draksang corresponded by letter and met on several occasions. Their last meeting was in 1475 at the elderly ruler's residence



10. Rikden Namgyal Draksang (1395–1475).

near Ngamring, which Shākya Chokden visited on his return trip from a lengthy stay in Mustang, in present-day Nepal. During this visit, the sovereign master (who passed away soon after) resolved all Shākya Chokden's remaining doubts and questions about the *Stainless Light*, the great commentary on the *Kālacakra Tantra*. Shākya Chokden also received initiation in the maṇḍala of the Mahāsamvara form of Kālacakra from Namgyal Draksang and accepted him as his sublime vajra master (*mchog gi rdo rje slob dpon chen po*).<sup>251</sup>

In this specific context Kunga Drölchok quotes Shākya Chokden at length concerning his early interest in the Great Madhyamaka and the teachings of definitive meaning. When he was a child, Shākya Chokden once accompanied his teacher Dönyö Palwa on a visit to the great scholar Khenchen Pema Sangpo.<sup>252</sup> This teacher stressed that the Five Treatises of Maitreya were all

Great Madhyamaka, which was different that what Dönyö Palwa accepted. In Shākya Chokden's own words:

[Pema Sangpo] looked at me and said, "Wise young nephew, closely investigate topics such as this!" and also gave me a gift of tea.

After that time I closely investigated the definitive meaning, but did not really record it in great detail in treatises strictly devoted to the works of the philosophical tenets. I just spoke of it a little bit in conversation. Later, because I received the command of the great Rikden [Namgyal Draksang], I have specially emphasized it.<sup>253</sup>

Kunga Drölchok further notes that Shākya Chokden spoke of this often in the monastic assembly, and that if his works written before the trip to Mustang, in Ngari, and the works he wrote after that time are carefully examined with the "eye of wisdom," certainty about this distinction will arise.<sup>254</sup>

Kunga Drölchok was the greatest upholder of Shākya Chokden's transmission of the Sakya teachings, and these quotations and comments clearly point to the Jonang master Namgyal Draksang as the key influence in Shākya Chokden's decision to openly write about the *shentong* or teachings of definitive meaning during the last thirty-two years of his life. It seems significant that Kunga Drölchok does not refer to any Sakya or Kagyü influences on Shākya Chokden's views.

The works of Shākya Chokden were later banned in Tibet during the middle of the seventeenth century. Bigoted supporters of the Geluk tradition, who held political power, sealed the printery where the blocks for his writings were kept and ordered copies of his works to be confiscated.<sup>255</sup> But a unique manuscript of his collected writings survived in Bhutan and was finally published more than three hundred years later. The banning of Shākya Chokden writings in Tibet no doubt had a lasting effect on the later doctrinal development of the Sakya tradition.

Shākya Chokden's works often focus on a theme of reconciliation and synthesis between traditions that have become polarized over doctrinal issues. His brand of *shentong* differs in many respects from that of Dölpopa, although they agree about the ultimate import of the view.<sup>256</sup> In one brief work Shākya Chokden compares the views of Dölpopa and Butön (both of whom he considers to be Sakya) and comes to the startling conclusion that in the ultimate sense there is no basis for disagreement between the Jonang

and Shalu traditions concerning emptiness of self-nature and emptiness of other, because in the context of the definitive meaning of the tantras Butön's tradition also accepted the view of the emptiness of other.<sup>257</sup>

The theme of synthesis, or at least accepting an absence of contradiction between these two points of view, was also the approach of the Seventh Karmapa, Chödrak Gyatso, as recorded by his disciple Karma Trinlepa (1456–1539). The text that best exemplifies this is Karma Trinlepa's brief versified response to some written questions he had received. This work, which must surely be the one mentioned two hundred years later by Belo Tsewang Kunkhyap as "the brief treatise that shows there is no contradiction between an emptiness of self-nature and an emptiness of other," specifically summarizes the view of the Seventh Karmapa on this topic. As several modern writers have already noted, the Eighth Karmapa, Mikyö Dorjé (1507–1554), also wrote a text on the *shentong* view, although later in his life he changed his mind and wrote refutations of Dölpopa and Shākya Chokden.<sup>258</sup>

The yogin Shongchen Tenpai Gyaltsen, who lived in the sixteenth or seventeenth century, also wrote an interesting short text attempting to bring the views of an emptiness of self-nature and an emptiness of other into harmony. Shongchen was responsible for codifying the teachings on Severance (Gcod) that had been passed down in an oral transmission from the great adept Tangtong Gyalpo (1361?–1485), who claimed to be the rebirth of Dölpopa. Shongchen's work is a versified presentation of the key points involved in the philosophical tenets of Great Madhyamaka.<sup>259</sup>

From the late fifteenth century through the late sixteenth century the Sakya position concerning the Jonang teachings of the *shentong* and related topics is extremely complex. With the exception of Shākya Chokden and Gorampa, only a handful of writings by Sakya masters of the period are available that specifically discuss these issues. However, a number of brief passages in biographies and some minor texts give indications of the situation. Important information is found in the biographies of Gorampa Kunga Lekpa (1477–1544), who held the monastic seat of Jonang for many years while he was also a leading exponent of the Sakya teachings of the Path with the Result (Lam 'bras); the great Tsarchen Losel Gyatso (1502–66), who was the most highly regarded master of the Path with the Result in the sixteenth century and who received many teachings from Gorampa; Jonang Kunga Drölchok, who was the main holder of Panchen Shākya Chokden's lineage of Sakya explication and practice; and Jamyang Khyentsé Wangchuk (1524–68), who studied with all three of these masters.

The biography of Gorampa is a major source regarding the situation at

the great hermitage of Jonang from the late fifteenth century to the middle of the sixteenth century. The Jonang tradition was still obviously strong in the Tsang region and Dölpopa's major treatises such as the *Mountain Dharma*, the *Fourth Council* and its *Autocommentary*, and the *General Commentary on the Doctrine* were being transmitted and studied at Jonang. In 1516 Gorumpa ascended the throne at Jonang and held the monastic seat there until 1527. During this time, and during the tenure of his hand-picked successor, Namkha Palsang, who held the position from 1527 to 1543, Dölpopa's teachings of definitive meaning were preserved without any corruption.<sup>260</sup> Gorumpa taught not only the Jonang specialties, but many tantric instructions of the Sakya tradition, such as the Path with the Result. During these years he was clearly a prominent example of what must have not been an uncommon situation—the practice and study of both Jonang and Sakya teachings without any serious obstacles to such an approach. Gorumpa seems to now be remembered only in the Sakya tradition.

Kunga Drölchok is one of the most famous masters of the Jonang tradition. Like Dölpopa more than two hundred years earlier, he was born in a region (Mustang) that is now inside the borders of Nepal, was raised and educated in the Sakya tradition, and then traveled to Tibet for advanced studies. He first received teachings in Tibet from major disciples of Panchen Shākya Chokden at the Sakya monastery of Serdokchen, and later visited other regions and received a vast number of teachings from masters of every lineage. Kunga Drölchok was particularly attracted to the teachings of the Six Dharmas of Niguma in the Shangpa tradition, which he practiced and taught very widely. He received the Jonang transmissions of the *Kālacakra Tantra* and the Six-branch Yoga from the master Lochen Ratnabhadra (1489–1563), who became one of his most important teachers.

Kunga Drölchok was invited to take the monastic seat of Jonang in the middle of the sixteenth century and become the leader of the tradition. Before making a decision, he traveled to Jonang to offer prayers in front of the image of the omniscient Dölpopa. Just as Kunga Drölchok's name was read out three times by one of the masters in attendance, an earthquake occurred, which caused all the bells on the great stūpa of Jonang to jingle. Kunga Drölchok felt that this was a perfect omen, indicating the spread of the teachings of definitive meaning, and immediately wrote out his letter of acceptance.<sup>261</sup> In one of his autobiographical writings he says he was now able to partially benefit the Jonang tradition because, in a previous lifetime, he had been a fellow student along with Dölpopa at Sakya Monastery. Receiving many tantric teachings together from the master



11. Jetsun Kunga Drölchok (1507–66).

Kyitön Jamyang Drakpa, they became vajra brothers bound by the sacred commitments.<sup>262</sup>

Kunga Drölchok's extensive autobiographies, his *One Hundred Guiding Instructions of Jonang*, and his other miscellaneous works show that he was authentically unbiased and truly represented many lineages. The three main systems of tantric practice most important to him were the esoteric instructions of the Shangpa Kagyü,<sup>263</sup> the Jonang tradition of the Six-branch Yoga, and the Sakya practices of the Path with the Result. He constantly bestowed these teachings throughout his life. In the present context, what is striking is the apparent lack of any strong attempt to spread the *shentong* view of Dölpopa. Kunga Drölchok seems to have been more interested in creating an atmosphere of tolerance for all lineages of explication and practice than furthering that of only one. This is also perhaps indicative of the situation in which the Jonang tradition now found itself.

Since the time of Dölpopa, the great majority of Sakya teachers had increasingly distanced themselves from the Jonang view and doctrinal

position. But there was not such a rift between the two traditions concerning practice, as illustrated by the presence of four great Jonang masters in the lineage of the Sakya teachings of the Path with the Result.<sup>264</sup> The writings of both Shākya Chokden and Kunga Drölchok show that many members of the Sakya tradition during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries were influenced by the unique views of lord Tsongkapa, whose supporters had continued to increase in number. Quite a few Sakya scholars after Rendawa had rejected the theories of Dölpopa and apparently adopted views more compatible with the new Geluk tradition of Rendawa's disciple, lord Tsongkapa, even though Tsongkapa's theories were very questionable in light of the ancient teachings of the original Sakya masters.<sup>265</sup> Shākya Chokden and Kunga Drölchok refer to this trend among some Sakya followers as the "lately arisen Sakya tradition" (*phyis byung sa skya pa*), and discuss a tension between the "new and old Sakya traditions" (*sa skya pa gsar rnying*), especially in regard to the teachings of the Path with the Result.<sup>266</sup> They saw this new development as a serious corruption of the teachings of the original Sakya founders, whose ultimate intentions they felt were closer to those of the Jonang tradition than those of the Geluk. Kunga Drölchok saw these adherents to a "new Sakya" movement as wolves in sheep clothing who were destroying the true Sakya teachings. In short, they were Geluk followers masquerading as members of the Sakya tradition.<sup>267</sup> On the other hand, some Sakya followers may also have been attracted to the *shentong* orientation precisely in order to counteract the dominant Geluk influence in Tibetan politics and religion.

One of Kunga Drölchok's great strengths is an exceptional ability to focus on the specific teachings of a given lineage without being influenced by those of other lineages, even the Jonang tradition he represented.<sup>268</sup> If he is writing about the Sakya teachings of the Path with the Result, he carefully distinguishes its view from that of traditions that have different approaches, and when discussing the Jonang teachings of the Six-branch Yoga, he keeps precisely to Dölpopa's interpretation as the ultimate authority. In the latter context he once referred to himself as Dölpopa, the embodiment of the buddhas of the past, present, and future, once again returned to sit on his teaching throne and preserve his tradition:

As the physical embodiment  
of the three regal masters,  
and the single protector of mother  
living beings in the three realms,



wasn't Sherab Gyaltsen the name  
of the glorious Dölpopa, Embodiment  
of the Buddhas of the Three Times?

Sitting on that lord's Dharma throne,  
and maintaining that lord's tradition,  
am I not the yogin Rangdröl,  
the lord Buddha from Dölpo returned again?<sup>269</sup>

When teaching instructions in a lineage that came from Dölpopa, Kunga Drölchok did not hesitate to use terminology reminiscent of his great predecessor, speaking of "the great kingdom of natural luminosity, the permanent and stable stone mountain of the basic space of phenomena," and "the immutable and permanent *kāya* of primordial awareness."<sup>270</sup>

Jonang was flourishing during this period. Tsarchen Losel Gyatso, considered the greatest Sakya master of tantra in the sixteenth century, received the Jonang instructions of the Six-branch Yoga from Gorumpa, as well as many Sakya teachings of the Path with the Result. In 1539 Tsarchen visited Jonang and, reminiscent of Dölpopa's initial experience there, looked up at the stone meditation huts on the mountainside and was filled with awe at the tradition of continuous meditation retreat that had been maintained there:

The next morning we visited the great Stūpa That Liberates on Sight, the temple of the lineage of the Six-branch Yoga, and so forth. When I gazed from afar at the hermitages, my mind went out to them and I was enthralled. A distinctly vivid pure vision dawned in the center of my heart and I thought, "The early excellent masters established a continuous meditation center in a site such as this. Placing many people on the path of liberation, their way of life was so amazing and so incredible. When will we also practice for enlightenment in an isolated site such as this?"<sup>271</sup>

Tsarchen revisited Jonang two years later, when a model of the great stūpa of Svayambhunāth in the Kathmandu Valley of Nepal was being erected in the center of the Jonang teaching arena, and was warmly greeted by his younger friend and teacher, Kunga Drölchok.<sup>272</sup> Generally speaking, there were clearly very cordial relations between Sakya and Jonang masters at this time.

Jamyang Khyentsé Wangchuk, whose instruction manuals for major tantric practices in the Sakya tradition are authoritative to the present day, studied with Gorumpa as a youth and later with Tsarchen. He also received various teachings from Kunga Drölchok. In particular, from Gorumpa he received the full transmission of the Jonang teachings of Dölpopa, the Sakya teachings of the Path with the Result, and other esoteric instructions. Then he received all the Sakya esoteric transmissions (and many Shangpa and Nyingma teachings) from Tsarchen and became his principal Dharma heir. Khyentsé's autobiography shows that he was deeply committed to meditation practice, of both the Jonang and Sakya traditions, in contrast to scholastic studies. On one occasion he expressed his deep wish to go into isolated retreat far from everyone and practice (the Sakya) Naro Khachöma for the creation-stage meditation and (the Jonang) Six-branch Yoga of Kālacakra for the completion stage.<sup>273</sup> This is indeed remarkable for a master who would later ascend Butön's teaching throne at Shalu Monastery.

One revealing episode occurred when Khyentsé Wangchuk visited the Kagyü monastery of Ralung in 1550. He listened quietly one day as a group of scholars discussed points of doctrine and practice and heard one of them declare that Dölpopa had maintained that a permanent entity existed (*rtag pa'i dngos po yod*), which was the buddha nature. No one disputed this. Khyentsé Wangchuk thought to himself that Dölpopa certainly did accept that the buddha nature was permanent, but he did not accept that it was an entity.<sup>274</sup> In all his writings Dölpopa had said that the ground of emptiness was unconditioned natural luminosity (*stong gzhi rang bzhin 'od gsal 'dus ma byas*), and while you could object to this, it was not something that could be proven or refuted through vain argumentation. In any case, Khyentsé Wangchuk commented, Butön had said the same thing!<sup>275</sup> Once again the impression is that there was really no serious disagreement between the ultimate intent of the greatest masters, only between later interpreters who did not fully comprehend their teachings.

Unlike the works of Kunga Drölchok, in which evidence of Dölpopa's theories is scarce, the writings of Kunga Drölchok's reincarnation, Jetsun Tāranātha, are filled with the teachings of the *shentong* and related themes. In the history of the Jonang tradition Tāranātha is second in importance only to Dölpopa himself. He was responsible for the short-lived Jonang renaissance in Tsang and Central Tibet during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, and the widespread revitalization of the *shentong* theory in particular. Like Kunga Drölchok, Tāranātha also practiced and taught a wide variety of tantric teachings from different lineages and was

very nonsectarian in his approach to realization. He was also one of the last great Tibetan translators of Sanskrit tantric texts.<sup>276</sup> Tāranātha was respectful of all forms of authentic Buddhism, including the tradition of Butön and that of the Geluk, which were both antagonistic toward the Jonang.<sup>277</sup> He also emphasized the practice of the Sakya teachings of the Path with the Result and the esoteric instructions of the Shangpa Kagyü, as had Kunga Drölchok, but focused on the explication of the Kālacakra and the practice of the Six-branch Yoga as the most profound of all the teachings given by the Buddha. It is especially clear in his writings that Tāranātha considered Dölpopa to be the ultimate authority in matters of doctrine and practice.

Tāranātha's autobiography gives exceptional access to the condition of the Jonang tradition from the viewpoint of its leader. He took upon himself the responsibility of causing Dölpopa's insights to once again reach a wide audience and was determined to revive what he saw as a priceless transmission lineage in danger of being lost. For example, in the early 1590s Tāranātha wrote that it had been many years since the complete instructions of the Six-branch Yoga had been given in the Jonang assembly. The instruction manual of Dölpopa's Dharma heir, Choglé Namgyal, was still being used at Jonang to teach the Six-branch Yoga transmitted from Dölpopa, but very few people understood the philosophical tenets of Dölpopa and his disciples. It was even more worrisome that some of the previous holders of the monastic seat of Jonang, such as lord Orgyan Dzongpa,<sup>278</sup> had given initiations and instructions according to the Jonang tradition, but had also criticized and refuted Dölpopa's vajra proclamations of the ultimate view of *shentong*, which Tāranātha felt was the secret teaching of all the buddhas and bodhisattvas. As a result, many unfortunate things had occurred. Even though Tāranātha personally disavowed any ability to refute another system, on this occasion he felt the need to defend the original views of Dölpopa through refutation of erroneous opinions, and to establish the correct interpretations according to his lineage.<sup>279</sup>

In 1604, after a decade of great efforts to revive the original Jonang teachings, all of Tāranātha's work was threatened by serious political conflict between the regions of Jang and Tsang. Jonang itself was in immediate danger of being attacked by hostile armies. While meditating at Dölpopa's great stūpa, Tāranātha became very despondent and, seeing all his efforts about to be wiped out and the tradition itself perhaps destroyed, felt only like going into retreat to practice far away from all the troubles created by deluded and impassioned people. Then, one morning at dawn, the image of Dölpopa at the stūpa clearly transformed into Dölpopa himself and spoke to

Tāranātha, encouraging him to continue as before, and assuring him that his efforts would not be in vain. The next night Tāranātha prayed to Dölpopa, who manifested in the divine form of the bodhisattva Dharmodgata and spoke four lines of verse that expressed the essence of his doctrine. At that very moment Tāranātha arrived at the deepest level of Dölpopa's *shentong* teachings, and all his uncertainties and doubts were completely removed. He felt that a great key had been placed in his hands with which to open all the doors of the Buddha's doctrine.<sup>280</sup> As an expression of his realization he then composed the versified text entitled *Ornament for the Madhyamaka Emptiness of Other*, which is one of his most important works devoted solely to the explication of the *shentong* view, and a companion text of quotations from scripture in support of the ideas therein.<sup>281</sup> Describing the same vision of Dölpopa in another of his autobiographical writings, Tāranātha mentions that he received several prophecies from him, and from that time on met him many times, both actually and in dreams. He comments, "That is the reason I am now an expert in the great omniscient Dölpopa's view and preserve his true intentions."<sup>282</sup>

Throughout Tāranātha's life he often encountered resistance and opposition to the Jonang doctrine of the *shentong*. For example, he once spent considerable energy trying to explain the *shentong* view to the ruler of Jang, the abbot of Ngamring Monastery, and a group of scholars who had gathered at Trompa Lhatsé. His audience was interested, but gained absolutely no comprehension of the actual nature and significance of the teachings he gave. The main cause for the inability to understand was that these learned people identified the *shentong* doctrine with the tradition of the Cittamātra that did not accept the validity of a cognitive image (*sems tsam rnam rdzun pa*). The scholars were completely unable to comprehend the great differences between *shentong* and Cittamātra.<sup>283</sup> Even masters such as the sixth Shamarpa hierarch of the Kagyü tradition, Chökyi Wangchuk (1584–1635), with whom Tāranātha exchanged letters in about 1620, had mistaken assumptions about the Jonang view. The Shamarpa was under the impression that the Jonang philosophical tenet of a permanent, stable, and eternal absolute entailed the acceptance that the first turning of the Dharma wheel taught the existence of a veridically established absolute, the second taught the nonexistence, and the third taught the existence. Tāranātha wrote that the Jonang accepted that all three turnings had a single intention, not that the later ones found fault in the earlier ones.<sup>284</sup>

Shortly before his death, Tāranātha appointed his disciple Sangyé Gyatso (d. 1635) as his successor on the monastic seat of Takten Damchö Ling.

However, Sangyé Gyatso passed away not long after Tāranātha himself. Thus another of Tāranātha's disciples, Kunga Rinchen Gyatso, was appointed to the monastic seat and led the Jonang tradition for the next fifteen years.<sup>285</sup> A series of events then occurred that were crucial for the future of the Jonang tradition, but that have not been clearly explained. It has generally been said in Western works on Tibetan history that the suppression of Jonang and the conversion of its monasteries to the Geluk tradition occurred in 1658.<sup>286</sup> This is only partially correct. The political situation of the seventeenth century was extremely complex, and to the future misfortune of the Jonang tradition Tāranātha was one of the main religious advisors to the rulers of Tsang during their struggle against the Geluk powers of Central Tibet for political supremacy. Some modern authors have even blamed Tāranātha's role for the eventual Jonang downfall.<sup>287</sup> Although the details are still quite sketchy, a somewhat more complete picture of the situation can now be drawn.

In 1642, seven years after the death of Tāranātha, an alliance of Mongol armies led by Gushri Khan finally defeated the Tsang rulers and enthroned the Fifth Dalai Lama, Ngawang Losang Gyatso (1617–82), as the supreme political ruler of all Tibet. In his autobiography the Dalai Lama briefly touches on the fate of the Jonang tradition. At the instigation of a certain Jamyang Trulku, a Geluk teaching institute was established at Takten Damchö Ling, the monastery built by Tāranātha not far from the original site of Jonang.<sup>288</sup> The philosophical tenet of the monastery was thus converted from Jonang to Geluk in the Iron Tiger Year (*lcags stag*, 1650).<sup>289</sup> This was when the *shentong* doctrine was banned at Takten by order of the victorious Geluk authorities. The year 1650 also matches the end of the tenure of Kunga Rinchen Gyatso, who went to live for the latter part of his life at the monastery of Sangak Riwo Dechen.<sup>290</sup>

It was originally the prompting of the Jamyang Trulku that provided the pretext for the Dalai Lama to intervene at the Jonang monastery of Takten Damchö Ling. But who was this figure? Fortunately, much earlier in his autobiography the Dalai Lama identifies Jamyang Trulku as the son of the Khalkha Tushiyetu king.<sup>291</sup> Now the situation becomes even more interesting. Jamyang Trulku was the son of the Khalkha Mongol Tushiyetu Khan Gönpo Dorjé, and the grandson of Erke Mergen Khan. Better known by the names Yeshé Dorjé and Losang Tenpai Gyaltsen (1635–1723), Jamyang Trulku had actually been recognized by the Fifth Dalai Lama, the First Panchen Lama, Losang Chökyi Gyaltsen (1567–1662), and the Tibetan State Oracle as the rebirth of Tāranātha and as the first of the series of

Mongol incarnations known as the Khalkha Jetsun Dampa.<sup>292</sup> He was generally referred to as Jamyang Trulku, “emanation of Jamyang,” because he was believed to also be the rebirth (*sku skye*) of Jamyang Chöjé (1357–1419), the founder of the great Geluk monastery of Drepung, after which he was said to have appeared as Tāranātha’s reincarnation (*yang srid*).<sup>293</sup> The earlier lifetime as Jamyang Chöjé was understandably emphasized by the Geluk authorities to establish a profound prior connection with the Geluk tradition and lord Tsongkapa himself. However, the gap of 156 years between the death of Jamyang Chöjé and the birth of Tāranātha was not explained, and Kunga Drölchok, Tāranātha’s predecessor, is not mentioned in the incarnation line of Jamyang Trulku, the Khalkha Jetsun Dampa. The Jonang tradition seems to have played no part in the recognition of its great master’s reappearance as a Geluk teacher who now demanded the conversion of Takten Damchö Ling into a Geluk establishment.

The biography of the Khalkha Jetsun Dampa contains some interesting material about his recognition as Tāranātha’s reincarnation. According to an earlier source quoted in the biography, just before Tāranātha passed away his Jonang disciples and patrons prayed for him to reincarnate for the purpose of spreading the Jonang doctrine. In this source he is quoted as having given the following reply:

Be satisfied with just this much expansion of our Jonang doctrine. Through the force of supplications by the Ganden protectors and the force of previous prayers, I will now spread the doctrine of lord Tsongkapa in a barbarian borderland.<sup>294</sup>

Tāranātha’s own extensive autobiographical writings and religious works are filled with evidence of his devotion to Dölpopa and the teachings of definitive meaning that characterize the Jonang tradition. It seems highly unlikely that he would have made such a statement or chosen to be reborn in the very tradition that became the instrument for the destruction of Dölpopa’s Jonang tradition as a viable independent school in Tsang and Central Tibet. This statement is also not recorded in modern Jonang accounts of Tāranātha’s last days.<sup>295</sup> And yet, the most unlikely of scenarios appears to have actually occurred.

One of Tāranātha’s major disciples was a woman known as Jetsun Trinlé Wangmo, or Ratna Badzriṇi (1585?–c.1668?), who became a great teacher and lineage holder of the Jonang tradition. She was also Tāranātha’s primary consort. Trinlé Wangmo’s autobiography, with her eyewitness account of

Tāranātha's last days, has recently come to light, containing many of her private conversations with the great master. Her description is the original source of all later (and less complete) versions of these events:

Also, when [the venerable lord Tāranātha] came here [to Jonang] once from Takten, he commented, "The other day a certain Drepung monk came. Their Dharma protector also arrived behind him and said I must come to benefit the Genden doctrine. With fervent devotion in my heart, I immediately accepted. In particular, a day or two after that a letter of discussion among the officials of Takten was given to me by way of the nephew.<sup>296</sup> The gist of it was insistent: 'Except for as long as the present precious rebirth<sup>297</sup> himself is here, after him the master of the monastic seat must come from the progeny of our nephew.' According to these two earlier and later omens, for me to not take birth in order to maintain the religious and secular traditions is completely natural. Thus I definitely must take birth in a place that will benefit the Drepungpa doctrine."

At that point I exclaimed, "You must regard us with compassion and remain firmly in this life, consider all sentient beings in general and, in particular, what is crucial for just this monastery. Consider the doctrine of definitive meaning and once again also benefit the doctrine of this very [tradition] with your rebirth!"

But he replied, "Setting aside everything else, even in just all of this upper and lower valley itself there are many different opinions. You alone have a pure mind. Even so, a single-minded supplication from everyone in unison is necessary. That would be best. Nothing certain will come from just mouthing the words. Now I will fall under the control of what omens come into alignment and what is most intense. If the way to transform omens is understood, it is still possible that I may also benefit the doctrine of this [tradition].<sup>298</sup>

Contrary to expectations, it is now clear that Tāranātha actually did say he would appear in his next lifetime in a place where he could benefit the Ganden, Genden, or Drepungpa (all synonyms for Geluk) doctrine. Years later, when Trīnlé Wangmo finally heard that Tāranātha's reincarnation had appeared in Mongolia, she rejoiced at the news and prayed for him to benefit Tibet.<sup>299</sup>

When the fifteen-year-old Khalkha Jetsun (Tāranātha's reincarnation), who had received a strict Geluk education in Mongolia from disciples of the Dalai Lama, asked the Dalai Lama to establish the institute at Takten, Tāranātha's monastery was converted into a Geluk center. Later in 1650 the young man traveled to Tashi Lhunpo Monastery and received novice vows and various teachings from the First Panchen Lama.<sup>300</sup> Then the Panchen Lama was urgently asked to go to Takten, undoubtedly for the purpose of accomplishing the conversion into a Geluk monastery. There he gave a number of initiations for the major tantric lineages followed by the Geluk tradition, and textual transmissions for many of the texts required for the liturgical practices of that tradition. He also gave teachings to the nuns at nearby Jonang during the same visit.<sup>301</sup> Curiously, the Khalkha Jetsun himself does not seem to have visited Jonang or Takten at the same time.

Trinlé Wangmo specifically says in her autobiography that the Jonang philosophical tenet at Tāranātha's monastery of Takten Damchö Ling was changed by order of the government in the eighth month of the Tiger Year (1650).<sup>302</sup> The Dalai Lama notes in his autobiography that the monks who had remained there from before did not actually change their views and practices, and even newly arrived ones were predisposed toward the original Jonang teachings. The Dalai Lama uses the example of brass coated with gold to refer to them as Jonang with only a Geluk veneer. To remedy the situation, the Geluk authorities expelled the monks to other monasteries, made harsher regulations concerning the Geluk conversion, and gave the monastery the new name Ganden Puntsok Ling. These actions were all taken in 1658.<sup>303</sup>

From this point the Jonang tradition ceased to exist as an independent entity in Tsang and Central Tibet. The Jonang teachings of the *shentong* and the Kālacakra continued to be transmitted even in those regions, but the tradition's monasteries and hermitages in the far eastern area of Amdo now became the only remaining institutions that were openly Jonang.<sup>304</sup> The connection between Jonang in Tsang and the eastern regions of Tibet had been established more than three hundred years before, when Jampa Khawoché had studied with Dölpopa himself for six years and then returned home to found a hermitage in Kham.<sup>305</sup> The master Ratnashrī (1350–1435) later traveled from the east to Central Tibet and Tsang and received a vast number of teachings from several of Dölpopa's great Dharma heirs, such as Choglé Namgyal, Mari Panchen, and Nya Ön Kunga Pal. After returning home, in 1425 Ratnashrī founded the monastery now known as Chöjé Gön





12. Dzamtang Monastery.

in Dzamtang, which became the main monastery of the Jonang tradition in Amdo.<sup>306</sup>

In the seventeenth century, Lodrö Namgyal (1618–83) received the Jonang transmissions in Tsang from Tāranātha and Kunga Rinchen Gyatso, and later lived and taught at Tsangwa Göñ in Dzamtang for many years.<sup>307</sup> Soon after the death of Tāranātha in 1635, the master Kunga Palsang traveled to Tsang and received the Jonang teachings at Takten and Jonang from several of Tāranātha's major disciples, such as Kunga Rinchen Gyatso, Lodrö Namgyal, and especially Jetsun Trinlé Wangmo, and later established the monastery of Drogé Göñ in the Ngawa region.<sup>308</sup> The Jonang tradition has continued to thrive in eastern Tibet, with a strong presence today in the areas of Dzamtang, Gyalrong, Ngawa, and elsewhere.

The *shentong* view and the Kālacakra practices are thus fully maintained in the Jonang tradition in Amdo at the beginning of the twenty-first century. However, these teachings have been passed down in the mainstream of Tibetan Buddhism primarily due to the efforts of several great Nyingma and Kagyü masters from the area of Kham in eastern Tibet. The Jonang tradition itself has flourished in the relative isolation of Amdo, but it does not seem to have had widespread influence outside of that region.

The Nyingma master Katok Rikzin Tsewang Norbu (1698–1755) began a general renaissance of the Jonang teachings of the *shentong* and the Kālacakra by introducing them to some of the leading Kagyü teachers of

his time. In one of his versified autobiographical accounts, Tsewang Norbu notes that even as a child he felt great faith whenever he heard the names of Dölpopa and his immediate disciples.<sup>309</sup> His natural affinity for the *shentong* view and the Kālacakra teachings became understandable later when the master from whom he received the transmission of the Jonang teachings recognized him as the rebirth of Dölpopa's disciple Mati Panchen Lodrö Gyaltzen, one of the pair of translators responsible for the Jonang translation of the *Kālacakra Tantra* and the *Stainless Light*.<sup>310</sup>

In 1726, as Tsewang Norbu was passing through the Tsang region in route to the Kathmandu Valley of Nepal, he first tried to obtain the Jonang teachings from the great yogin Kunsang Wangpo, who was in strict retreat at the hermitage of Rulag Drepung, which had been renamed Ganden Khachö when converted into a Geluk establishment. Tsewang Norbu was not even able to see Kunsang Wangpo, although he spent three days trying. He was very impressed with this master's dedicated meditation practice and became even more determined to receive the Jonang transmissions from him.<sup>311</sup>

On his return to Tibet toward the end of 1728, Tsewang Norbu again approached Kunsang Wangpo, and this time succeeded in receiving the entire transmission of the Jonang teachings. Kunsang Wangpo bestowed the guiding instructions of the view of *shentong*, or Great Madhyamaka, the full Kālacakra initiations, the complete instructions of the Six-branch Yoga, and many nonsectarian teachings. Tsewang Norbu also received Kunga Drölchok's *One Hundred Guiding Instructions of Jonang* and the reading transmission of the collected works of both Dölpopa and Tāranātha. Although the Jonang monasteries in Tsang and Central Tibet had been converted to the Geluk tradition, this shows that the original teachings of Dölpopa and his great successors were still taught and practiced in those same centers even in the middle of the eighteenth century. The Fifth Dalai Lama's earlier attempts to stamp out the Jonang teachings had been successful only on the surface, as was the case in the initial phases of the conversion operation discussed above. Contrary to the general impression, the teaching transmissions had survived not only in the far eastern region of Amdo, but in the original Tsang areas near Jonang. This is further clarified by the fact that Tsewang Norbu traveled again to Jonang in 1734, ascended the teaching throne previously occupied by Dölpopa and Tāranātha, and gave many initiations, textual transmissions, and esoteric instructions of the original Jonang teachings to a large gathering.<sup>312</sup> During this period at least, the Geluk authorities were obviously not exerting great efforts to prevent the teachings of the Jonang tradition from being spread or revived even in Tsang.



13. Rikzin Tsewang Norbu (1698–1755).

Tsewang Norbu later gave the Jonang teachings in Central Tibet, where he passed a number of transmissions to the Thirteenth Karmapa, Dūdül Dorjé (1733–97), and the Tenth Shamarpa, Chödrup Gyatso (1742–92).<sup>313</sup> However, Tsewang Norbu's most significant role in terms of the continuation of the Jonang lineages was as a teacher of the great Situ Panchen Chökyi Jungné (1700–1774). Situ Panchen had already been to Takten and Jonang in 1723, several years before Tsewang Norbu's first visit. From the description in Situ's autobiography, it was an important event. His account mentions that Tāranātha's silver stūpa reliquary at Takten had been destroyed long before, when the Geluk conversion was ordered by the Fifth Dalai Lama at the instigation of his teacher Mōndropa. Situ notes that Takten was now a Geluk institute, but some old monks had not given up the original Jonang tradition.<sup>314</sup> He tried to obtain copies of Jonang writings, but they had been placed under seal by order of the Tibetan central government.<sup>315</sup> Situ felt great sadness at the misfortune that had so quickly overtaken Tāranātha's

monastery, and lamented the degenerate times. Going to Jonang the next day, he found about seven hundred nuns who had not changed their tradition from Jonang to Geluk.<sup>316</sup>

Twenty-five years later, in 1748, Tsewang Norbu and Situ Panchen spent time together in the Kathmandu Valley of Nepal. Situ had clearly been very interested in the Jonang tradition for many years, but it was his teacher Tsewang Norbu who now insisted that he accept the *shentong* view, which he taught him in great detail, apparently at the stūpa of Bodhnāth.<sup>317</sup> Situ says Tsewang Norbu ordered him to uphold the profound view of the *shentong* and told him acceptance of this view would create an auspicious pattern of events that would lead to Situ's longevity and the vast spread of his activities.<sup>318</sup> Situ also mentions several different types of *shentong*, among which he adhered most closely to that of the Seventh Lord and Silungpa, which was somewhat different than that of Dölpopa.<sup>319</sup> In the end it would be Situ, more than anyone, who would create the environment for the widespread acceptance of the *shentong* teachings in Tibet during the next century. As Gene Smith first mentioned in 1970, "It was Si-tu who had blended the seemingly irreconcilable *gzhan stong* and Mahāmudrā positions and spread them throughout the Dkar-brgyud-pa traditions of Kham."<sup>320</sup>

The eventual result of this revival (outside the Jonang areas in Amdo) by Tsewang Norbu and Situ Panchen was the crucial role of the *shentong* and other Jonang teachings in the phenomenal nonsectarian (*ris med*) movement of nineteenth-century Kham, spread by such great masters as Dza Paltrul (1808–87), Jamgön Kongtrul (1813–1900), Jamyang Khyentsé Wangpo (1820–92), and later Mipam Gyatso (1846–1912).<sup>321</sup> Jamgön Kongtrul was the most assertive of these teachers in his advocacy of the *shentong*, which he fully incorporated into his own immensely influential works.<sup>322</sup> Kongtrul was also devoted to the Six-branch Yoga of the Kālacakra, for which he carefully followed the tradition of Dölpopa and Tāranātha.<sup>323</sup>

The *shentong* and the Jonang practices of the Six-branch Yoga have reached a widespread audience through the lineages of Kongtrul, Khyentsé, and Mipam, but the Jonang tradition in Amdo has continued to produce many great masters of their special teachings. The prolific author Bamda Gelek Gyatso (1844–1904) was probably the tradition's most influential teacher in the late nineteenth century, and his disciple Tsoknyi Gyatso (1880–1940) was very highly regarded. The Jonang tradition in Amdo has been graced by a series of remarkable masters into the twentieth-first century. Tsoknyi Gyatso's disciple, Ngawang Lodrö Drakpa (1920–75), was the author of a large treatise on the *shentong* and an extensive history of



14. Situ Panchen (1700–1774).

the Jonang tradition. Khenpo Lodrak, as he is often called, was perhaps the most famous Jonang master of the twentieth century. Kunga Tukjé Palsang (1925–2000) and Ngawang Yönten Sangpo (1928–2002) were also great recent teachers.

Masters in the lineages of Kongtrul, Khyentsé, and Mipam have continued to have a great impact in Tibet, India, and beyond. Dzongsar Khyentsé Rinpoché, Jamyang Chökyi Lodrö (1896–1959), the great heir to the nonsectarian movement, greatly appreciated the *shentong*. In his secret autobiography he writes of a marvelous dream-vision of Tāranātha, who bestowed upon him the Kālacakra initiation. This experience in 1943 caused him to have the greatest faith in Tāranātha.<sup>324</sup> More recently, the eminent masters Dilgo Khyentsé Rinpoché (1910–91), Kalu Rinpoché (1905–89),



15. Ngawang Lodrö Drakpa (1920–75).

and Dudjom Rinpoché (1904–87) all accepted the *shentong* view.<sup>325</sup> Most Kāgyü and Nyingma teachers follow the lines of explication and practice passed down by these last three masters, and the *shentong* interpretations of Kongtrul and Mipam in particular are now prevalent.<sup>326</sup>

All the special teachings of the Jonang lineage and the vital transmission of the collected writings of Dölpopa and Tāranātha have been maintained by the Jonang tradition in Amdo. But even the reading transmission of any of Dölpopa's writings seems scarce among leading *shentong* adherents of the Kāgyü and Nyingma traditions.<sup>327</sup> When the *shentong* is taught by these teachers, the different works of Kongtrul and Mipam, which vary a great deal from the original teachings of Dölpopa, are usually the treatises of choice.<sup>328</sup> What is now taught as the *shentong* view in the Kāgyü and Nyingma traditions represents a synthesis that has developed over time, primarily in order to enable Dölpopa's most profound insights to be incorporated into the established doctrines of the Great Seal and the Great Perfection. Thus the *shentong* view and Six-branch Yoga taught by the living masters of the Jonang tradition in Amdo, based on the oral transmission

and literary legacy of the ancient masters of Jonang, is certainly closer to what was transmitted centuries ago by Dölpopa and Tāranātha. In the following chapter some of the most essential aspects of Dölpopa's own doctrine will be presented as a preface to the translations of his works in part 2.





### CHAPTER THREE

## The Doctrine of the Buddha from Dölpo

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Existence and nirvāṇa are not identical,  
but like a shadow and the sun.

BHAGAVĀN AVALOKITEŚVARA<sup>329</sup>

THE TITLE ALONE of Dölpopa's *Great Calculation of the Doctrine That Has the Significance of a Fourth Council* (*Bka' bsdu bzhi pa'i don bstan rtsis chen po*) would have been enough to rankle those who were opposed to his interpretations of Buddhist doctrine.<sup>330</sup> It was universally accepted in Tibet that there had been three great councils in ancient India for the purpose of gathering and accurately preserving the teachings of the Buddha after his final nirvāṇa.<sup>331</sup> Dölpopa's audacious claim that his text served as a fourth such council would obviously have provoked incredulous reactions among many of his contemporaries. That he anticipated certain objections is clear from his comments at the end of the *Autocommentary to the "Fourth Council"*:

By means of this, it is understood that the Buddha's doctrine survives in superior, middling, and inferior forms. The superior is the Kṛtayuga Dharma, which is the witness and authority. The middling is the Tretāyuga Dharma and the inferior is the Dvāparayuga Dharma. It is crucial that the experts who stand guard over the doctrine realize that those two are not witnesses.

To remove the flaws that the flawed minds of individuals have mixed into the flawless doctrine, and the corruptions that they have imposed, and then establish us on the path of perfect view, meditation, and conduct is also the significance of a council.

There were three councils in the past, and this is the fourth. It is also a great calculation of the doctrine. It is called impartial and unbiased because all the faithful respect, pure vision, offerings of unyielding advice, appeals, love, compassion, and so forth remain impartial and unbiased, without falling into any partiality.

You might ask, "While it is known that many arhats gathered for the councils in the past, how many arhats are gathered here?"

The sublime Kṛtayuga Dharma teachings contain many thousands of profound quotes by the Great Arhat, the Buddha, the Blessed One, which teach the meaning of this with extreme clarity. Those are the same as the Great Arhat, so they have been gathered according to his tradition.

Future compilers, please also do likewise, and if there is disagreement about the interpretation of the quotes, please use the autocomentaries of the Buddha himself as witnesses.<sup>332</sup>

In addition to clarifying the meaning of the title of Dölpopa's text, these remarks also touch on the first major point in the *Fourth Council* itself. In this work and many of his earlier compositions Dölpopa speaks of a four-fold division of the Buddhist teachings according to four eons (*yuga*). Based on the teachings of the *Stainless Light*, Dölpopa mentions two sets of four eons. The first set is the greater, referring to the quality of the eons that make up a cosmic age (*kalpa*), while the lesser set refers to the quality of the different periods of the Buddhist teachings.<sup>333</sup> In the *Autocommentary to the "Fourth Council"* he mentions his criteria for this classification and makes it obvious that he is speaking of a doxographical scheme concerning the eons of the doctrine. As Matthew Kapstein has noted, Dölpopa was "allocating philosophical doctrines to 'eons' according to purely dogmatic criteria."<sup>334</sup> For Dölpopa, the teachings of the perfect Kṛtayuga are those that apply directly to the truth just as it is, while the teachings that belong to the Tretāyuga, Dvāparayuga, and Kaliyuga are progressively contaminated and filled with flaws because of the nature of the individuals who have composed them. Thus only the Kṛtayuga teachings should be regarded as valid testimonies to the enlightened intent of the Buddha.<sup>335</sup>

This classification of the historical degeneration of the Buddhist teachings is indeed found in the *Stainless Light*, primarily in the section of commentary on verses 22–23 of the *Chapter on the Worldly Realm (Lokadhātupāṭala)* of the *Kālacakra Tantra*.<sup>336</sup> But it is less clear what the *Stainless Light* and

Dölpopa both accept as the teachings of the Kṛtayuga. As indicated by quotations throughout his writings, Dölpopa certainly considers the Kṛtayuga Dharma to include the highest tantras, the Trilogy of Bodhisattva Commentaries, the Ten Sūtras on the Essence, the Ten Sūtras of Definitive Meaning,<sup>337</sup> and the works of Maitreya, Nāgārjuna, Vasubandhu, Asaṅga, Nāropa, and Saraha. He seems to consider Ārya Vimuktisena, Haribhadra, Yaśomitra, and other late Indian masters to represent the Tretāyuga.<sup>338</sup>

In the translations of the *Fourth Council* and the *Autocommentary* in part 2 it will be obvious that Dölpopa identifies his own tradition with the teachings of those scriptures and writers he views as truly portraying the Kṛtayuga tradition. The restoration of the Kṛtayuga teachings is thus a prime motive behind his wish to redefine what had until his time been accepted as orthodox lines of scriptural interpretation in Tibet.

### 1. *Emptiness of Self-nature and Emptiness of Other*

The key in Dölpopa's approach is to link his view of the absolute as empty only of other relative phenomena (*gzhan stong*) to the teachings of the Kṛtayuga, as opposed to the teachings of the Tretāyuga and later eons that emphasize even absolute reality is empty of self-nature (*rang stong*). This he makes clear early in the *Fourth Council*:

Fully understanding each  
of those divisions,  
I wish to purge the doctrine,  
and wishing for myself and others  
to enter the fine path,  
I honor the sublime Kṛtayuga Dharma  
as the witness.

The Tretāyuga and later eons  
are flawed, and their treatises  
that have been diluted like milk  
in the market are in every case  
unfit to act as witnesses.

The higher refute the lower,  
as the higher philosophical tenets  
refute the lower.

The Kṛtayuga Dharma is the stainless  
words of the Conqueror,  
and what is carefully taught  
by the lords on the tenth level  
and by the great system founders,  
flawless and endowed with sublime qualities.

In that tradition all is not  
empty of self-nature.

Carefully distinguishing  
empty of self-nature and empty of other,  
what is relative is all taught  
to be empty of self-nature,  
and what is absolute is taught  
to be precisely empty of other.<sup>339</sup>

Dölpopa speaks of two modes of emptiness that correspond to the two truths and to phenomena and the true nature of reality. He emphasizes that absolute truth is not empty of itself, but is the basis or ground empty of all other relative phenomena, described as the profound emptiness of other. This is the mode of emptiness for the true nature of reality. Absolute truth is uncreated and indestructible, unconditioned and beyond the chain of dependent origination. Relative truth and ordinary phenomena are empty of self-nature and completely unestablished. The relative is the created and destructible phenomena that are conditioned and dependent on causes and circumstances.

One of the central themes of Dölpopa's work is to correctly distinguish the meaning of the term *emptiness* when referring to the incidental stains that veil the buddha nature, or sugata essence, and when referring to the buddha nature itself. Both *are* empty, but not in the same way. Dölpopa clarifies this point in a text addressed to one of the rulers of Jang:

Because all that is present as the two modes of emptiness are equal in being emptiness, there are statements with the single phrase, "All is emptiness," but there are also statements that distinguish between empty of self-nature and empty of other. So their intent should also be precisely presented.

Concerning that, because relative and incidental entities are

completely nonexistent in their true mode of existence, they are empty of own-essence. That is being empty of self-nature.

Because the original absolute that is empty of those relative phenomena is never nonexistent, it is empty of other.<sup>340</sup>

Dölpopa considers the buddha nature, or sugata essence, to be natural luminosity (which is synonymous with the dharmakāya) and a primordial, indestructible, eternal great bliss inherently present in every living being. On the other hand, the incidental stains or impurities that veil the buddha nature are the various states of mind associated with the infinite experiences of mundane existence. While the veils of temporary affliction are empty of self-nature, the buddha nature is empty only of phenomena other than itself.

When discussing these topics, Dölpopa often employs the threefold paradigm of the basis or ground, the path, and the result or fruit of enlightenment. Using this approach, he would first say the buddha nature is a primordial awareness that is the universal ground or basis (*kun gzhi ye shes*) for all phenomena experienced in saṃsāra and nirvāṇa. He is careful to emphasize that this luminous enlightened space inherent in the mindstream of each living being is not the cause of saṃsāra, but that even saṃsāra would be impossible without it, and from this point of view only is it referred to as the ground of saṃsāra.<sup>341</sup> It is the basis from which all imperfections and faults are cleansed, and the ground in which all qualities are actualized.

Second, the path is the process of erasing all imperfections or faults from that ground or basis, and thus allowing the qualities to actualize or become evident. This path is composed of two aspects. The first is the accumulation of primordial awareness, which burns away all the veils obscuring the qualities of the dharmakāya that is eternally, spontaneously present in each living being. The second aspect of the path is the accumulation of merit, which gradually creates the previously absent qualities of the form kāyas.

Third, the result of this process is buddhahood, the optimum condition in which the greatest good can be achieved for both yourself and others. This is accomplished by the attainment of the "separated result" (*bral 'bras*) of the dharmakāya, the absolute state of authentic being from which the obscurations of the afflictions and of knowledge have been separated. This is also accomplished by the attainment of the form kāyas, the "produced result" (*b skyed 'bras*), which is the relative symbolic manifestations of a buddha.

Most Buddhist teachers in Tibet did not agree with Dölpopa's ideas, and

almost nothing is known of his earlier views before coming to Jonang. The following excerpt from his writings focuses on both the opinions of others and what Dölpopa himself had accepted earlier while still living at Sakya:

According to the opinions of some scholars in India who were not noble individuals, and also some spiritual friends in Tibet, other than the emptiness of a pillar or a pot and so forth, an emptiness of other does not fit the definition of emptiness. Therefore, only an emptiness of self-nature, in which all phenomena are each empty of own-essence, fits the definition of emptiness; there is absolutely no definition of emptiness beyond that. That being the case, as with the emptiness of the relative, the absolute is also empty of the absolute. As phenomena are empty of phenomena, the true nature is also empty of true nature. As saṃsāra is empty of saṃsāra, great nirvāṇa is also empty of great nirvāṇa. As the form kāyas are empty of the form kāyas, the dharmakāya is also empty of the dharmakāya, and so forth. In brief, there are many opinions in which everything is accepted as empty of self-nature, but in which it is impossible for anything whatsoever not to be empty of self-nature.

My mind was also accustomed for a long time to the habitual propensity for such a famous [view]. I did understand a tiny amount of Dharma, but as long as I had not beheld the great kingdom of the exceptional, profound, uncommon, and sublime Dharma, I also merely relied on the verbal regurgitation of others and said, “Only an emptiness of self-nature fits the definition of emptiness; there is no definition of emptiness beyond that,” and so forth, as mentioned above. So it is not the case that I do not also understand that tradition.

At a later time, due to the kindness of having come into contact with the Trilogy of Bodhisattva Commentaries, . . . [I understood] many profound and crucial points of Dharma that I had not understood well before. Now, if I think about the understanding I had at that time and the corresponding statements I made, I am simply mortified.<sup>342</sup>

According to Dölpopa the process of enlightenment can be illuminated by some traditional examples. First, he accepts two types of “universal ground” (*ālaya*, *kun gzhi*). Of these, he considers the buddha nature, or sugata

essence, to be the “universal-ground primordial awareness” (*kun gzhi ye shes*). While still veiled by the temporary obscurations of the afflictions and of knowledge, this is like the sky filled with clouds or a jewel covered with mud. In contrast, the “universal-ground consciousness” (*ālayavijñāna, kun gzhi rnam shes*) is the impurities or incidental stains that are to be removed, and the deeply imprinted habitual propensities associated with it. These are like the clouds in the sky or the mud covering the jewel. Second, the path is composed of the various techniques of practice that remove the impurities. This path can be likened to the wind that scatters the clouds or the stream of water that washes the mud from the jewel. Finally, the result is described as an attainment, but is really unified bliss and emptiness, a self-arisen primordial awareness that is eternally present, but now manifests or actualizes. This is like the appearance of the clear cloudless sky or the jewel separated from the mud. Dölpopa says the incidental stains must be understood as empty of self-nature and suitable to be removed through meditation practice, while the buddha nature itself is empty only of other extrinsic factors such as the incidental stains that veil its eternal and indestructible nature.<sup>343</sup>

## 2. *A Redefinition of Cittamātra and Madhyamaka*

Dölpopa often signs his works with the pseudonym Possessor of the Four Reliances (Rton pa bzhi ldan). This clearly indicates his hermeneutical approach, referring to the four guidelines or points to be relied on (*catuḥpratisaraṇa, rton pa bzhi*) that the Buddha prescribed in several Mahāyāna scriptures, such as the *Sūtra on the Four Reliances* (*Catuḥpratisaraṇa Sūtra*) and the *Sūtra of Definitive Commentary on the Intention* (*Samdhinirmocana Sūtra*). These four key points are:

Rely on the teaching, not the teacher.

Rely on the meaning, not the text.

Rely on the definitive meaning, not the provisional meaning.

Rely on primordial awareness, not consciousness.

Dölpopa strongly felt that the Buddhist tradition as it had developed in Tibet emphasized the teachings of provisional meaning at the expense of those of definitive meaning. For centuries scholars had been concerned with resolving apparently conflicting notions about the meaning of emptiness and, in particular, its relation to or identity with the buddha nature. Many Tibetan experts believed the teachings of emptiness in the second turning

of the Dharma wheel, such as the sūtras on the perfection of wisdom, to be definitive in meaning, while the teachings of the buddha nature in the third turning of the Dharma wheel, including a large number of Mahāyāna sūtras and treatises such as Maitreya's *Highest Continuum*, were provisional in meaning. However, other traditions maintained just the opposite, that the teachings of the buddha nature were definitive and only by means of these could the true meaning of emptiness be understood.

Mati Panchen, who was one of Dölpopa's chief disciples and Dharma heirs, gives a succinct definition of the Jonang position:

The meaning of the middle wheel  
is the way in which the relative is empty.

The meaning of the final wheel  
is the way in which the absolute is empty.

Since these teach the nonexistence  
of what does not exist,  
and the existence of what does exist,  
the ultimate intent of both are identical.<sup>344</sup>

According to Dölpopa, the first two turnings of the Dharma wheel that present the four noble truths and the nature of emptiness as a lack of all defining characteristics do not emphasize the definitive teachings on ultimate truth. Specifically, the second turning primarily teaches that relative phenomena are empty of self-nature and do not transcend the chain of dependent origination. In contrast, the third turning of the Dharma wheel presents the teachings on the buddha nature, or sugata essence, which are the final definitive statements on the nature of ultimate reality, the primordial ground, or basis, beyond the chain of dependent origination, which is only empty of other relative phenomena.

However, Dölpopa is also very careful to show that the nature of absolute reality taught in the sūtras on the perfection of wisdom, which are included in the second turning of the Dharma wheel, and the teachings of the buddha nature in the scriptures of the third turning are fundamentally in agreement, as are the traditions of Nāgārjuna, Asaṅga, and Vasubandhu.<sup>345</sup> Dölpopa emphasizes that the absolute emptiness taught in the second turning of the Dharma wheel, in the third turning, and in all the highest teachings of the



tantras is the profound emptiness of other, not that of a mere emptiness of self-nature.<sup>346</sup> An integral part of his approach is to show that the different terminology found in a wide variety of Buddhist scriptures is often being used to make the same point. For example, in a text devoted primarily to clarifying the nine fully established natures in the context of the three-nature (*trisvabhāva*) theory, Dölpopa alternately refers to these as the nine fully established natures (*pariniṣpanna*), the nine perfections of wisdom (*prajñāpāramitā*), and the nine sugata essences (*sugatagarbha*). Elsewhere he further illustrates his point that such Dharma language is interchangeable by speaking of the nine Great Seals (*mahāmudrā*), the nine Great Madhyamakas, and the nine absolutes that are empty of other, all of which describe the same profound ground of emptiness or profound true mode of reality.<sup>347</sup>

In opposition to the dominant tradition of interpretation in Tibet, Dölpopa maintains that Indian masters such as Asaṅga, Vasubandhu, Dignāga, and Nāgārjuna are all representative of the tradition that he labels Great Madhyamaka (*dbu ma chen po*). Dölpopa considers one of the essential characteristics of this Great Madhyamaka to be the three-nature theory (*trisvabhāva*) that is almost always identified as a characteristic of the Yogācāra or Cittamātra tradition.<sup>348</sup> A significant Tibetan precedent for Dölpopa's point of view is brought to light by one of his successors, Kunga Drölchok, who records some of the teachings of the eleventh-century master Tsen Khawoché, often thought to be the first Tibetan to have taught what later came to be known as the *shentong* view.<sup>349</sup> Kunga Drölchok preserves these teachings under the title *Guiding Instructions on the View of the Emptiness of Other* (*Gzhan stong gi lta khrid*), which he says have been condensed from the instruction manual of Tsen Khawoché himself. This short (but very difficult) passage is a fascinating glimpse into an early source for the *shentong* view in Tibet. Themes found here can definitely be identified in the later work of Dölpopa, but his characteristic terminology, such as "empty of other" (*gzhan stong*), is absent:

Attachment to confusing [phenomena] as true is the imagined. Attachment to incorrect conceptualization itself as actual objects and subjects is like [mistaking] a rope for a snake. As many [phenomena] as there are from form to omniscience,<sup>350</sup> there are also that many imagined [phenomena] apprehended as this and that.

If based on causes and conditions, these are the dependent, appearing in various [forms], but are merely incorrect conceptualization, [like] the rope as the basis confused for a snake. Due to karma and the afflictions, [there are such] conceptualizations, from form to omniscience.

The self-arisen true nature, pervading the dependent from the beginning like the space pervading the rope, is the unmistakably fully established, the immutable fully established, the two form *kāyas*, the components of enlightenment, the truth of the path, and [the phenomena] from the form of true nature to omniscience. In the conventional sense these are empty of the imagined characteristics.

Though classified as three [natures] without essence, if examined, only the dependent phenomena and the fully established true nature have a single taintless and spontaneous true nature, because there are no objects and subjects other than mind. Therefore, the imagined is an emptiness of own-essence, like the horn of a rabbit. The dependent is like an illusion, because it is empty of the imagined. The fully established is like the sky, because it is empty of both the imagined and the dependent. The distinctions of an imagined and a dependent exist in the relative, but do not exist in the absolute. The fully established true nature exists in the absolute, but is Great Madhyamaka free from all extremes, without any essence that is identical to or different than relative phenomena.<sup>351</sup>

The first important point to notice is that this teaching is structured according to the three-nature doctrine usually associated with the Cittamātra or Yogācāra tradition of the Mahāyāna, and not with the Madhyamaka. In particular, Tsen Khawoché says that the fully established nature is empty of both the imagined and the dependent natures. In this he is certainly following the description found in the *Vast Explication* (*Bṛhaṭṭikā*), a large commentary to the three Mother Sūtras or sūtras on the perfection of wisdom, and not the orthodox Yogācāra position as found in the works of Vasubandhu. Dölpopa would later do the same and specifically point to the *Vast Explication* as the source for his position. The teachings of this commentary and their relation to Dölpopa's theories will be investigated more below.

Like Tsen Khawoché, Dölpopa also refers to his teaching as Great Madhyamaka.<sup>352</sup> He makes his case for this in the *Fourth Council*:

In the flawed traditions of the Tretāyuga  
and later eons, it is claimed that the immutable,  
fully established nature is only Cittamātra.

They allege that all three natures  
are also only Cittamātra.

Because the three natures  
are repeatedly taught in the treatises  
of flawless Kṛtayuga Madhyamaka,  
because that language does not  
occur in Cittamātra treatises,  
and because there are many refutations  
of that, it emerges from the Kṛtayuga tradition  
that the three natures are the Dharma  
tradition of the Madhyamaka alone.

Therefore, by not understanding  
and mixing up that type of classification,  
the dregs of the view have arisen.

Those Madhyamaka [treatises]  
that present the three natures  
of the fully established and so forth  
have also been demoted to Cittamātra treatises.<sup>353</sup>

The great experts of Great Madhyamaka  
who taught those have also  
been demoted to Cittamātra adherents.<sup>354</sup>

The *Autocommentary to the "Fourth Council"* explains this section in considerable detail.<sup>355</sup> There Dölpopa notes that the three-nature theory occurs in many of the sūtras that he considers Kṛtayuga Madhyamaka, such as the *Sūtra on the Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines*, the *Sūtra on the Perfection of Wisdom in Twenty-five Thousand Lines*, the *Sūtra on the Perfection of Wisdom in Five Hundred Lines*, the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*, the *Sūtra of Definitive Commentary on the Intention (Saṃdhinirmocana Sūtra)*, and the *Sūtra of Excellent Golden Light (Suvarṇaprabhāṣa Sūtra)*. Furthermore, he maintains that texts where the term "three natures" occurs cannot

be considered Cittamātra treatises because the immutable, fully established nature (*pariniṣpanna*) and the philosophical tenets of the Cittamātra are in conflict. While the Cittamātra assert that momentary consciousness is truth in the absolute, Dölpopa contends that the immutable, fully established nature is absolute unconditioned space and pure awareness indivisible, which transcends momentary consciousness. Momentary consciousness is a conditioned, impermanent, fabricated, and incidental limited phenomenon, while the immutable, fully established nature is an unconditioned, permanent, natural, and primordial middle ground free from extremes. Thus momentary consciousness cannot be equated to the immutable, fully established nature.

As long as the phenomena of momentary consciousness are not transcended, there can be no nondual primordial awareness, Great Madhyamaka, or immutable, fully established nature. When the phenomena of momentary consciousness have been transcended, the immutable, fully established nature is attained. But at this point the doctrine of Cittamātra has also been transcended. The immutable, fully established nature is thus Madhyamaka, not Cittamātra. Here Dölpopa mentions that it is also necessary to understand the division of the Cittamātra according to the two truths. He maintains the existence of an absolute Cittamātra that can be considered identical to the Madhyamaka, because both say that in reality there are no phenomena other than absolute mind, and that absolute mind always exists as omnipresent, indestructible thusness. To say there are no phenomena other than the basic space of phenomena (*dharmadhātu*) is equivalent to saying that there are no phenomena other than nondual primordial awareness. Dölpopa identifies the relative Cittamātra with what was usually referred to as Cittamātra in Tibet during his time, and says this position should properly be termed Vijñānavada.

The three-nature theory is one of the fundamental paradigms associated with the Yogācāra or Cittamātra tradition of Indian Buddhism. It derives its authority from a number of scriptures, perhaps the most important of which are the *Sūtra of Definitive Commentary on the Intention* and the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*. The theory was especially elaborated by Asaṅga in works such as the *Bodhisattva Levels* (*Bodhisattvabhūmi*), the *Compendium of the Mahāyāna* (*Mahāyānasamgraha*), and *Distinguishing the Middle and the Extremes* (*Madhyāntavibhāga*). It is also taught by his brother Vasubandhu in the *Presentation of the Three Natures* (*Trisvabhāvanirdeśa*) and the *Thirty Verses* (*Triṃśikā*). The three-nature theory is considered an integral part of the Yogācāra system, but Dölpopa points out that it is also found in some

of the sūtras on the perfection of wisdom. In Tibet, this fact had important hermeneutical implications for understanding the development of Indian Buddhist doctrine. In particular, the prevalent Tibetan view of the three turnings of the Dharma wheel was challenged by the presence of this theory in these specific sūtras. It was generally accepted in Tibet that the scriptures and treatises of the Yogācāra or Cittamātra tradition belonged to what was known as the third turning of the Dharma wheel, while those of the second turning of the Dharma wheel, such as the sūtras on the perfection of wisdom, were associated with the Madhyamaka tradition. Here it is of particular significance that the *Vast Explanation* (*Brhaṭṭikā*), which is a commentary on the specific sūtras on the perfection of wisdom where the three-nature theory are presented, has survived in Tibetan translation, and that Tibetan teachers have often attributed this commentary to Vasubandhu. The intense interest in the presence of the three natures in the sūtras on the perfection of wisdom and in the interpretations found in the *Vast Explanation* seems to have only arisen in Tibet.

The presentation of the three-nature theory is found in the twenty-five-thousand-line and the eighteen-thousand-line versions of the sūtras on the perfection of wisdom. In each of these scriptures the three natures are taught by the Buddha in response to questions from the bodhisattva Maitreya. This occurs in the seventy-second chapter of the twenty-five-thousand-line version and the eighty-third chapter of the eighteen-thousand-line version.<sup>356</sup> It is surprising that no modern scholars have examined the section in the Tibetan translation of the *Vast Explanation*, where the "Maitreya Chapter" in the twenty-five-thousand-line sūtra is specifically explained.<sup>357</sup> This work, which is the only extant text of Indian origin that comments on the controversial chapter, and which has often been attributed to Vasubandhu, is the obvious place to look for clarification of the three-nature theory found in the sūtras on the perfection of wisdom. The *Vast Explanation* is best known in Tibet by the short title *Destruction of Objections to the Three Mother Sūtras* (*Yum gsum gnod 'joms*). It is a commentary on the versions of the sūtras on the perfection of wisdom in eighteen thousand, twenty-five thousand, and one hundred thousand lines. Dölpopa emphasized that the *Vast Explanation* is the work of Vasubandhu and gives it a place of central importance in his interpretation of these sūtras.<sup>358</sup>

In the Nartang edition of the Tibetan canon, which was edited by Butön Rinchen Drup, the title page of the *Vast Explanation* specifically says "composed by the master Vasubandhu." Butön rejected the opinion of some experts that it was the work of the Kāśmīri master Daṃṣṭrāsena,

but Tsongkapa would later say it had been composed by this scholar.<sup>359</sup> Ngorchon Kunga Sangpo (1382–1456), representing the opinion of the Sakya tradition in Tibet, accepted the commentary as a work by Vasubandhu. Scholars of the ancient tradition of the Nyingma also accept it as an authentic work by Vasubandhu.<sup>360</sup> In short, the only Tibetan scholars who did *not* accept it as a composition of Vasubandhu seem to have been followers of the Geluk tradition.<sup>361</sup> The lineage of sūtra interpretation maintained by Dölpopa's tradition in Tibet was eventually eclipsed by that of the Geluk in the early fifteenth century. Although not generally acknowledged, it is clear that much of Tsongkapa's philosophical doctrine was formulated in direct reaction to the teachings of Dölpopa, which he had learned about during his studies of Mahāyāna treatises under the direction of some of Dölpopa's main disciples. Perhaps Tsongkapa's unique attribution of the *Vast Explication* to Daṃṣṭrāsena, instead of to Vasubandhu as accepted by both Dölpopa and Butön, was part of his broader refutation of Dölpopa's teachings that had been so influential in the preceding generation.

The "Maitreya Chapter" is the primary location for the three-nature teaching in the twenty-five-thousand-line and the eighteen-thousand-line sūtras on the perfection of wisdom. But the three natures are mentioned throughout the *Vast Explication*, not just in the final section that specifically comments on this chapter in the twenty-five-thousand-line sūtra. A good example is found in a section of the text concerned with proving the nature of emptiness to be free from the two extremes.<sup>362</sup> In explaining the intention of the Buddha in teaching that form is emptiness and emptiness is also form the commentary says:

Concerning this statement, "Form is empty of form," there are also three aspects of form—imagined form, imputed form, and the form of the true nature.

That which is the form of entities apprehended by childish ordinary persons as characteristics suitable to be form and so forth is known as "imagined form."

Precisely that, in whatever aspect it becomes an object of consciousness appearing as an external entity, is known as "imputed form."

That which is free from the aspects of both the imagined and the imputed, and is solely the fully established thusness, is known as "the form of the true nature."

That which is the fully established, the form of the true nature, is empty of the characteristics of existence as imagined form and so forth, and also empty of form that appears in the aspect of an object imputed as form, so it is known as "empty."

Thus it is explained. But you may have doubts, wondering, "Does that which is the form of the true nature, empty of imagined and imputed form, have some other characteristic of form? Why is it even known as 'form'?"

Therefore it is explained, "That which is the emptiness of form is also not form." Precisely that which is empty of imagined and imputed form is the characteristic of the fully established. That form of the true nature is not the quintessence of form, because it is in all aspects isolated from the aspect of form.<sup>363</sup>

This section of the *Vast Explication* clearly says that the true nature or fully established nature is "empty" because it is free of *both* the imagined and imputed natures. Here are definite grounds for Dölpopa's declaration of absolute reality as empty only of other relative phenomena. In a manner very similar to this passage from the *Vast Explication* where the fully established (*pariniṣpanna*) nature is presented as empty of both the imagined (*parikalpita*) and the imputed (*vikalpita*) natures, Dölpopa says ultimate reality is empty of other relative phenomena, but not itself empty. For example, he claims that, "If there were no fully established true nature, the imagined and the dependent would be impossible."<sup>364</sup> One of Dölpopa's earliest major works, *General Commentary on the Doctrine (Bstan pa spyi 'grel)*, contains the following verse:

I bow at the feet of the masters  
who carefully distinguish, "All imagined  
and dependent phenomena are nonexistent,  
but the fully established true nature  
is never nonexistent,"  
teaching what transcends existence  
and nonexistence, and eternalism and nihilism.<sup>365</sup>

In his explanation of *General Commentary on the Doctrine*, Nya Ön Kunga Pal specifically refers to Dölpopa's opinions several times when clarifying this verse.<sup>366</sup> According to Dölpopa, the phenomena of the imagined nature are simply nonexistent. The elements and so forth that appear to

be external have no existence outside of the consciousness of the beholder, and are thus totally fictitious, like the horn of a rabbit. This is termed the “authentic imagined nature” (*kun brtags mtshan nyid pa*). The concepts that arise in the mind in the wake of the appearance of apparent phenomena, and thus identify those phenomena as external, are termed “the imagined nature existing in just the conventional sense” (*tha snyad tsam du yod pa'i kun brtags*). The dependent nature is also twofold. The “impure dependent nature” (*ma dag pa'i gzhan dbang*) is all the ordinary worldly thoughts and mental states. The “pure dependent nature” (*dag pa'i gzhan dbang*) is the conditioned primordial awareness that directly realizes selflessness, and the worldly primordial awareness experienced outside of meditation sessions. These are dependent in nature because they arise from causes and conditions. The fully established nature is the ultimate reality that can withstand rigorous and reasoned examination from the perspective of the absolute, and is empty of both the imagined and the dependent natures. In this way, all imagined and dependent phenomena are nonexistent in reality, while the fully established nature is fully established in reality, is never nonexistent as the true nature of phenomena, and always exists in truth. To say the first two natures exist in the absolute is the extreme view of eternalism and to say the third nature does not exist in the absolute is the extreme view of nihilism. This fully established nature or absolute reality is the ultimate Madhyamaka or middle beyond those two extremes.

Dölpopa consistently maintains that the three-nature theory belongs to the Madhyamaka tradition, not the Cittamātra. He was able to hold this position largely by claiming that Vasubandhu and Asaṅga were upholders of what was known as the Great Madhyamaka tradition, one of the key themes of which was a combination of the three-nature theory with standard Madhyamaka doctrine.<sup>367</sup> Dölpopa's collected writings contain more than two thousand pages of annotations and explanations concerning the different sūtras on the perfection of wisdom. It is particularly interesting that large portions of his annotations to the twenty-five-thousand-line and eighteen-thousand-line sūtras are copied directly from the *Vast Explication*, although this text is not acknowledged as the source. At the end of such glosses Dölpopa repeatedly adds “thus the Madhyamaka teaches.”<sup>368</sup> His interpretations of the three natures clearly follow the special teaching of the *Vast Explication*.

Dölpopa also mentions the occurrence of the three-nature theory in still other versions of the sūtras on the perfection of wisdom. He specifically refers to the sūtras in five hundred, eight thousand, eighteen thousand, and



twenty-five thousand lines as teaching the three natures. The “Maitreya Chapter” is found only in the eighteen-thousand-line and twenty-five-thousand-line sūtras. In citing the other versions Dölpopa is referring to statements in the sūtras that present the three-nature theory without actually using the three specific terms. For example, in the *Autocommentary to the “Fourth Council”* he makes the following statement:

Also, in the *Sūtra on the Perfection of Wisdom in Five Hundred Lines*, form and so forth that are nonexistent are to be understood because they are imagined; form and so forth that have an inferior existence are to be rejected because they are dependent; and, because form and so forth that are existent in reality are fully established, they are precisely what are to be attained after removing the stains. In that way, those abiding in three categories are taught to be understood, rejected, and actualized after removing the stains. It is taught that if even the enlightenment of the śrāvaka and the pratyekabuddha are not attained if you have not practiced in that way, what need is there to mention the enlightenment of the Mahāyāna?<sup>369</sup>

This reference clearly illustrates how Dölpopa interprets a passage of scripture in order to highlight its significance in the context of his own philosophical agenda. Compare his interpretation to what is actually found at the very beginning of the Tibetan translation of the *Sūtra on the Perfection of Wisdom in Five Hundred Lines*, which is the version he was using. The first words of the Buddha are:

“Subhūti, form is nonexistent, it has an inferior existence, and it is existent.”<sup>370</sup>

After saying the same threefold classification applies to the remaining aggregates, sensory bases, and so forth, the Buddha continues:

In that way, childish, ordinary persons do not perfectly and precisely comprehend form in the three categories, so they are conceptually attached to form, cultivate it, and obscure it. If certain renunciation will not occur by means of the vehicle of the śrāvakas or the vehicle of the pratyekabuddhas for those who are thus conceptually attached to form, cultivate it, and obscure it,

what need is there to mention [that it will not occur] by means of the great vehicle of the Mahāyāna?<sup>371</sup>

Now the extent of Dölpopa's interpretation is obvious. The original sūtra passage barely mentions the three categories, although they are clearly of fundamental importance in understanding the intent of the scripture. Dölpopa elaborates and sees them corresponding to the three aspects of the three-nature theory. Without examination of the numerous commentaries to the sūtras on the perfection of wisdom in the Tibetan canon, it is uncertain whether he bases his interpretations on earlier Indian or Tibetan precedents, or whether this is another facet of his still largely unexplored and perhaps original hermeneutical work. Tāranātha, certainly Dölpopa's most influential heir, also emphasizes the presence of the three natures in the sūtras on the perfection of wisdom, and quotes a large portion of the "Maitreya Chapter" when later seeking to establish the canonical sources for the Madhyamaka "the emptiness of other" in his tradition.<sup>372</sup>

Dölpopa not only tries to show the compatibility of different Mahāyāna scriptures and treatises, but also wishes to illustrate how the same points of doctrine are expressed in the Vajrayāna scriptures. In particular, he often explains the *Kālacakra Tantra* according to the sūtras on the perfection of wisdom, and vice versa.<sup>373</sup> He points out that Nāgārjuna presents the infallible teachings of the Madhyamaka by means of refuting the extreme of the nihilistic view of nonexistence in his *Collection of Eulogies* and refuting the eternalistic view of existence in his *Collection of Reasoning*. Likewise, Asaṅga and Vasubandhu establish the meaning of the sūtras on the perfection of wisdom as Madhyamaka by refuting the extreme view of existence through denying the reality of both the imagined and dependent natures, and refuting the extreme view of nonexistence through affirming the reality of the profound and fully established nature. In this way, Dölpopa feels, there is no contradiction between the teachings of Nāgārjuna, Asaṅga, and Vasubandhu, nor are any of the flaws of the inferior Cittamātra doctrine present. Moreover, all the categories of pristine form and so on that are taught in the sūtras on the perfection of wisdom are actually to be understood as indicating the divine assemblies described in the tantras.<sup>374</sup>

Dölpopa's consistent treatment of doctrinal topics of both sūtra and tantra in the same works, and his insistence that these two traditions of explication and practice are actually saying the same thing, albeit with different terminology and style, is another area in which he departed from what was the norm in Tibetan scholarly discourse. Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna

theory and practice were more often the subjects of separate works, and not discussed side by side. But Dölpopa felt the entire Buddhist tradition as it had been received in Tibet should be utilized when seeking to understand the true intent of the Buddha and his great successors. As he says in the *Autocommentary to the "Fourth Council"*:

Tantras should be understood  
by means of other tantras.

Sūtras should be understood  
by means of other sūtras.

Sūtras should also be understood  
by means of tantras.

Tantras should also be understood  
by means of sūtras.

Both should be understood  
by means of both.

And, furthermore, by means  
of pristine learning, reflection,  
meditation, explication, and practice.

Multiple, profound grounds,  
paths, and results of multiple  
profound teachings are thereby realized.

All the grounds and results  
of definitive meaning are one  
as the sugata essence itself.  
The path is its yoga.<sup>375</sup>

### 3. *Two Approaches to Enlightenment*

When it comes to the question of how enlightenment actually occurs, Dölpopa, like almost all Tibetan masters, teaches that the path described in the Buddhist tantras is the superior way. However, it can be said that there are

two basic views of how enlightenment comes about. The first view is that enlightenment occurs only when the vital winds (*vāyu*, *rlung*) that normally circulate in the right and left subtle channels within the human body are drawn into the central channel (*avadhūtī*) through the practice of yoga. The second view is that enlightenment is attained by simply recognizing the nature of your own mind, which is also often expressed as recognizing the essence of thoughts to be the dharmakāya.

Here Dölpopa does not depart from the position of the founders of Sakya, the first of whom, Sachen Kunga Nyingpo (1092–1158), told his disciple Pakmodrupa Dorjé Gyalpo (1110–70) that birth in saṃsāra occurs because the vital winds have not been drawn into the central channel of the subtle body.<sup>376</sup> Dölpopa says absolute truth is accessible only to nonconceptual primordial awareness, not to relative consciousness. Moreover, absolute truth is not within reach while the vital winds have not ceased or entered the central channel, and only the relative is apparent while the breath still circulates.<sup>377</sup> These comments explain why it is necessary to practice tantric yoga, especially the Six-branch Yoga, to realize the true nature of reality.

For Dölpopa, the Six-branch Yoga that is the completion-stage practice of the *Kālacakra Tantra* is the most effective method for rapid attainment of enlightenment according to the tradition of Buddhist tantra. The first of the six branches is *individual withdrawal* (*pratyāhāra*, *so sor sdud pa/gcod pa*), which is practiced to sever the connection between the ordinary five sense organs and their five objects, thus withdrawing the projected consciousness from those objects. When this is accomplished, certain signs or “images of emptiness” (*śūnyatābimba*, *stong pa nyid kyi gzugs brnyan*) appear. According to Dölpopa these are actual manifestations of the buddha nature, or sugata essence. The second branch is *mental stability* (*dhyāna*, *bsam gtan*), during which the mind becomes stable and firmly fixed upon new points of reference, the images of emptiness. The third branch is *breath control* (*prāṇāyāma*, *srog rtsol*). This branch is practiced to draw the vital winds into the central channel of the subtle body, thus gaining control of the energies of the body and quieting the movements of ordinary consciousness. The fourth branch is *retention* (*dhāraṇā*, *’dzin pa*). The main purpose here is to prevent any movement of the vital winds, and thereby perfect the retention of reproductive fluids. During the fifth branch, *subsequent mindfulness* (*anusmṛti*, *rjes dran*), various yogas are practiced together with an actual or visualized consort. The meditations of “fierce fire” (*caṇḍālī*, *gtum mo*) are also included in this branch. The blazing appearances of fierce fire are a basis

for the occurrence of the special images of emptiness that actually elicit the experience of immutable bliss and emptiness. The sixth and final branch is *meditative concentration* (*samādhi, ting nge 'dzin*). The practice during *meditative concentration* is not different than during *subsequent mindfulness*, but immutable bliss increases, a radical dematerialization of the physical body is actually accomplished, and the nondual kāya of primordial awareness is achieved.

According to tantric teachings, the ordinary vital action winds (*karmavāyu, las rlung*) are drawn into the central channel during the practice of yoga and transformed into the “vital wind of primordial awareness” (*jñānavāyu, ye shes rlung*). Until this is accomplished the practitioner remains under the power of ordinary consciousness, which is mounted on the vital action winds. When these winds are drawn into the central channel and transformed into the vital wind of primordial awareness, this serves as the support for nonconceptual primordial awareness. Dölpopa clearly summarizes the key points of this approach to enlightenment:

Therefore, as long as confusion has not ceased,  
it is impossible for confusing appearances,  
the cycle of birth and death, to cease.

As long as this circulation of the breath  
has not stopped, it is impossible  
for this stream of consciousness to stop.

While this stream of mind  
and mental events has not stopped,  
it is also impossible for  
this confusing appearance,  
the three realms, to stop.

Therefore, with the wish to transcend  
the three realms, whose nature is suffering,  
if you abandon all distractions  
and meditate on the profound Vajrayoga,  
the sublime nectar from the mouth  
of the excellent master, this circulation  
of vital winds and mind together will stop.<sup>378</sup>

Dölpopa strongly objects to the view that mere recognition of the nature of mind, or recognition of thoughts as the dharmakāya, brings about enlightenment. As he says in the *Fourth Council*:

I cannot yield to those who  
accept, "Since buddhahood is reached  
by recognizing your very essence,  
you do not need to accumulate the two  
assemblies and purify the two obscurations,  
because recognizing the very essence  
naturally purifies them, without rejection."

So joining my palms together,  
I offer advice and make an appeal.

A sentient being without self-awareness  
is impossible, and if you have self-awareness,  
you have recognition of your very essence.

If you were totally unaware  
of self and others,  
it would contradict being aware,  
like the gross elements.<sup>379</sup>

Therefore, all sentient beings  
have minds, and all who  
have minds have self-awareness,  
so they have recognition of their  
very essence as soon as they are born.

This approach is known to those  
who understand scripture and reasoning.

Arrogant fools with little learning,  
who are usurpers, pretenders, and  
fabricators of Dharma, are numerous,  
but have never understood this approach,  
or even heard about or seen it.

Therefore, such a wrong view,  
in which recognizing your

very essence is sufficient,  
is the secret words of Māra.

Reject such an evil view,  
the work of Māra, which says,  
“You enter the perfect path  
or the wrong path through such  
realization or lack of realization.  
Therefore, you are liberated  
by recognizing your very essence.”

You might say, “The meaning  
of recognizing your very essence  
refers to precisely the realization  
that this consciousness  
of your own mind is the dharmakāya.”

Because this consciousness  
is the opposite of the dharmakāya,  
it is never the dharmakāya.<sup>380</sup>

The Tibetan controversies about instantaneous enlightenment through recognition of the nature of the mind have been studied by David Jackson.<sup>381</sup> As he shows, it is mainly members of the Kagyü traditions in Tibet who have maintained this doctrine, although it is certainly common in Chinese Ch'an Buddhism and in the teachings of the Great Perfection in Tibet. Dölpopa quotes the position that is the object of his refutation: “Recognizing the very essence naturally purifies them, without rejection.” This expresses the view that through recognition of the essence of the thoughts as the dharmakāya they are purified or dissolved into the dharmakāya, and also the idea that any affliction that arises is actually a manifestation or self-presencing of primordial awareness itself. Thus there is no need to reject thoughts or afflictions, which are naturally purified by means of the recognition. This type of viewpoint is widespread in Tibetan Buddhism.<sup>382</sup>

In contrast to these views, Dölpopa claims that the definition of an ordinary sentient being or a buddha, and of saṃsāra or nirvāṇa, is determined by the presence or absence of the incidental and temporary obscurations that veil the true nature of reality.<sup>383</sup> It is not determined solely by recognition of the nature of the mind or the thoughts. In a text of advice composed for

the physician Tsultrim Ö, Dölpopa writes at length about these problematic issues:

Even if confusing appearances are realized to be just confusing appearances, as long as this circulation of the vital winds and mind has not ceased, this appearance of confusion will not cease. In a similar way, as long as the jaundice is not cured, the appearance of the conch shell as yellow will not cease. To stop the circulation of the vital winds and mind, the exceptional Dharma of Shambhala to the north, the heartfelt advice of the Kalkis on the tenth level, the uncommon oral instruction of the sugata essence as Kālacakra, is required; other minor instructions cannot stop it.

When this circulation of the vital winds and mind has stopped, there is not merely an inanimate state or absolutely nothing. Just by abandoning all pervasive thoughts, a spontaneous, nonconceptual, primordial awareness beyond the phenomena of consciousness transforms into the mode of great nondual primordial awareness. Just by curing jaundice, the white conch shell is seen as it is, or just by breaking a vase, the lamp flame present inside it is seen, or just by the clouds clearing in the sky, the planets and stars are seen. It is similar to that, but if such an understanding is rare even among Dharma practitioners, and rare even among dedicated meditators, what need is there to even mention what it is among other people?

The inconceivable luminous Great Seal, the four kāyas, and the five types of primordial awareness are taught in authentic sūtras and tantras to be always present in the hearts of all sentient beings. This corresponds to the truth, but those who have not penetrated the core of those [scriptures] exaggerate by saying, "All apparent existence is the Great Seal, the four kāyas, and the five types of primordial awareness."<sup>384</sup>

He again picks up the same topic later in the text:

While the ground buddhahood of the dharmakāya and the resultant buddhahood of the dharmakāya have not the slightest difference in essence, they are distinguished as ground and result by means of the presence or absence of incidental stains. This is



like referring to the space of the sky in situations when it is free or is not free of clouds and so forth.

Buddha is taught to be the *kāya* of primordial awareness and the incidental impurities are taught to be the groups of consciousness. In that way, primordial awareness and consciousness are taught to be extremely different, like light and dark or nectar and poison. Nevertheless, the differentiation of those two is very rare. These days the majority maintains that precisely this mind-nature is the *dharmakāya*, self-arisen primordial awareness, and the Great Seal, and many maintain that thoughts are the *dharmakāya*, the afflictions are primordial awareness, *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa* are indivisible, these appearances and sounds are the three *kāyas* or the four *kāyas*, and so forth.<sup>385</sup>

And he concludes with the following advice:

Seek out an uncommon esoteric instruction such as that, which separates natural luminosity and the incidental stains like separating clear water and sediment. Without it, this incidental mind and deceptive mental events will be taken to be the *kāyas*, primordial awareness, and so forth, which is like taking poison to be medicine or taking brass to be gold. It will be maintained, "If this deceptive, impure mind is recognized, it is buddha; but if it is not recognized, it is *saṃsāra*. If it is recognized, it is primordial awareness; but if it is not recognized, it is ignorance," and so forth, which does not agree with the words of the Buddha and also contradicts reasoning. For example, that is like maintaining, "If this fire is recognized, it is cool; but if it is not recognized, it is hot," or maintaining, "If this deadly poison is recognized, it is nectar; but if it is not recognized, it is poison," or maintaining, "If this great abyss is recognized, it is a pleasant plain; but if it is not recognized, it is a great abyss," or maintaining, "If this razor is recognized, it cannot cut the body; but if it is not recognized, it can cut," and so forth.<sup>386</sup>

For Dölpopa, appearances cannot be the manifestation or self-presencing of primordial awareness or the *dharmakāya* because ordinary appearances are imaginary and dependent phenomena, which are both actually nonexistent. The fully established true nature, nondual primordial awareness, the

dharmakāya, and so forth are real and existent. Ordinary sentient beings spend their lives occupied with nonexistent phenomena, asleep to the reality of the true nature within each of them.<sup>387</sup> Enlightenment is achieved only when the incidental obscurations are removed through the practice of the path and the eternally present ground of emptiness, the buddha nature, is allowed to shine forth as the awakened result.<sup>388</sup>

Dölpopa in these quotations mentions several times that ordinary consciousness is the opposite of the dharmakāya, or is extremely different than primordial awareness. This is because consciousness in all its varieties is only relative and empty of self-nature, while the dharmakāya and nondual primordial awareness are empty only of other relative phenomena. These are two great and separate kingdoms. And the objects of these two different states of perception are saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, which are indivisible only in the sense that the first, which is actually nonexistent, could not appear without the presence of the second, which is truly existent.<sup>389</sup> As Kalkī Puṇḍarīka says, "Existence and nirvāṇa are not identical, but like a shadow and the sun."<sup>390</sup>

PART TWO

Texts in Translation





16. Dölpopa Sherab Gyaltsen.

## Introduction to the *General Commentary on the Doctrine*

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WHEN DÖLPOPA first began to write about his reconfiguration of Buddhist doctrine he composed a number of small works to express his views. Although it is not actually dated, the short text entitled *General Commentary on the Doctrine* (*Bstan pa spyi 'grel*) was certainly among those early efforts and seems to have been the most significant.<sup>391</sup> There are several reasons for assigning an early date to this work. During the construction of the great stūpa at Jonang from 1330 to 1333, Dölpopa first spoken openly of the distinction between the relative as empty of self-nature and the absolute as empty of other. Several of the key technical terms he borrowed from certain Mahāyāna scriptures are found in *General Commentary on the Doctrine*, but not terms such as *gzhan stong* (“empty of other”) and *kun gzhi ye shes* (“universal-ground primordial awareness”), which seem to have been introduced only somewhat later. The full development of his radical innovations in Dharma language is not yet evident, but most of the themes he would emphasize for the rest of his life already dominate this early work.<sup>392</sup> The use of the contrasting terms *rangtong* (*rang stong*) and *shentong* (*gzhan stong*) is, of course, found in his *Mountain Dharma*, as well as in Nya Ōn’s explanation of the *General Commentary on the Doctrine*, but not in *General Commentary on the Doctrine* itself. Thus it seems clear that this brief work must be placed before the *Mountain Dharma* and among the earliest of Dölpopa’s compositions.

The significance of the text is underscored by the fact that it is mentioned in several sources as one of Dölpopa’s three most important works, along with the *Mountain Dharma*, which was perhaps also completed before the summer of 1333, and the *Fourth Council*, composed in the last years of his life.<sup>393</sup> *General Commentary on the Doctrine* was perhaps the first attempt by Dölpopa to present a systematic summary of how his revolutionary vision

encompassed the entire scope of the Buddhist tradition, from the earliest teachings of the first turning of the Dharma wheel up through those of the tantras. This would help to explain why it was singled out in the Jonang tradition as a significant work despite its brevity.

Nya Öñ Kunga Pal, the author of the marvelous commentary that has been used here to annotate the translation of *General Commentary on the Doctrine*, was born in the Nyang region of Tsang.<sup>394</sup> He is said to have been able to recite the *Expression of the Names of Mañjuśrī* from memory when he was three years old. At four years of age, his mother took him to the great hermitage of Jonang, where the master Yönten Gyatso stared at him, pointed a finger, and exclaimed with a laugh, "He is the rebirth of Jamyang Sarma!" Nya Öñ was then taken to Sakya Monastery, where he learned to read and write, and for five years studied the vehicle of the perfections, epistemology, abhidharma, and the monastic code. He was a brilliant youth, and after receiving the vows of a novice monk from the abbot Nyima Gyaltsen when he was twelve years old, Nya Öñ traveled around for further studies at many of the great Sakya, Kadam, and Kagyü centers of learning in Central Tibet and Tsang. At the age of nineteen he received full ordination from the abbot Tashi Sengé at Nyetang Monastery, and gained the reputation of being invincible in debate.

Nya Öñ first met the Dharma lord Dölpopa at Jagöshong Monastery, and when they spoke for a while Dölpopa became very pleased and gave him gifts. Nya Öñ felt undivided faith in the great master and served him during the journey back to Jonang. But when Nya Öñ was about twenty years old he was stricken with a serious illness and could not move his arms and legs. Some friends carried him to Sakya, where Dölpopa was teaching. He requested a blessing from Dölpopa, and when the master spit and breathed upon him, Nya Öñ is said to have been instantly cured of the paralysis. Jamgön Ameshaṃ adds enriching detail to this episode:

Nya Öñ was cured of the illness as soon as he requested a blessing in the presence of the great omniscient Dölpopa.

The great omniscient master said, "Practice all year long for three years and I guarantee that you will actually meet Avalokiteśvara and understand the entire meaning of the unmistakable intention of sūtra and tantra! Because I also supplicated the masters, Jewels, and Mahākaruṇika concerning all the words and meanings of sūtra and tantra that I didn't understand, I understood the unmistakable intention of the Conqueror.

Even if minor points arise that I don't understand, I can just ask Mahākaruṇika."

When Nya Ōn practiced as he was told, he beheld the face of the chosen deity and mastered an ocean of scripture and treatises such as the *Kālacakra Tantra*.<sup>395</sup>

Nya Ōn obtained from Dölpopa countless teachings, such as the initiation of Kālacakra, the Path with the Result (Lamdré) according to both the Sakya and Shama traditions, and many other guiding instructions such as the Six-branch Yoga of Kālacakra. From Dölpopa he received all the scriptures that had been translated into the Tibetan language, such as the Bodhisattva Trilogy, the Tantra Trilogy of Hevajra, and the Ten Sūtras of Definitive Meaning. He later obtained many teachings, such as the Kālacakra, from Dölpopa's major disciple, Choglé Namgyal. Nya Ōn was also an important disciple of Butön Rinchen Drup and the Sakya master Lama Dampa Sönam Gyaltzen and became a great master of the Sakya teachings of the Path with the Result. At some point he taught for a long period at Sakya Monastery.

Nya Ōn later founded the monastery of Tsechen in the upper Nyang Valley, where he had about six hundred disciples, many of whom were from other traditions, such as Rendawa Shönu Lodrö and the Dharma lord Tsongkapa Losang Drakpa. There he lived and constantly taught epistemology and the great *Stainless Light* commentary on the *Kālacakra Tantra*. Sometime after 1381 he became the tenth holder of the monastic seat of Jonang. Nya Ōn finally passed away at the age of ninety-four, after carefully arranging his robes, sitting with both feet in the full vajra position, and crossing his arms in the mudrā gesture of Vajradhara. He maintained this posture for eight days, resting in the luminous true nature of phenomena. His cremation was accompanied by miraculous events, and wonderful images and relics are said to have manifested in his bones.<sup>396</sup>

*General Commentary on the Doctrine* is the only one of Dölpopa's works to receive full treatment by one of his disciples in a separate commentary. That Nya Ōn chose to compose a detailed explanation of the text is indicative of its important role in the first spread of Dölpopa's teachings. Nya Ōn's commentary, entitled *Removing Mental Darkness to Illuminate the Intention* (*Dgongs pa rnam gsal yid kyi mun sel*), was composed at Jonang in 1393 and clearly follows Dölpopa's own explanation of his text. *General Commentary on the Doctrine* must have been widely distributed, since Nya Ōn's explanation of the work was requested from afar by a certain Tashi Dorjé, identified as the imperial chaplain of a Chinese emperor of the Ming dynasty.<sup>397</sup>

An indication of the impact of Dölpopa's text on another of his main disciples, Tangpoché Kunga Bum (1331–1402), is also recorded. When still a young boy, Kunga Bum saw a copy of *General Commentary on the Doctrine*, which caused him to feel great devotion to Dölpopa. He then traveled to Jonang and received extensive teachings and initiations from the master himself.<sup>398</sup>

*General Commentary on the Doctrine* is structured as a prayer and was clearly composed in a state of deep inspiration and faith. When Dölpopa himself recited this text, as well as several others specifically mentioned in his biography, he did so with great feeling:

At the end of intensely praying according to the exceptional supplications he had composed, such as *General Commentary on the Doctrine*, which is a supplication to the masters and chosen deities indivisible, tears flowed like rain from his eyes as he prayed with deep feeling, "You know! You know!"<sup>399</sup>

This work was memorized and recited by members of the Jonang tradition during Dölpopa's lifetime, both as a devotional text and as a summary of his teachings. For example, as Dölpopa departed from Central Tibet in 1360 and was being carried by palanquin to the northern shore of the Tsangpo River, the members of the Saṅgha were reciting *General Commentary on the Doctrine* as an incredible mass of hysterically wailing people surrounded him, distraught at his departure, many of them falling senseless to the ground.<sup>400</sup> Two hundred years later *General Commentary on the Doctrine* was one of the main works of Dölpopa that was still being transmitted and studied at Jonang.<sup>401</sup>

There are many types of commentaries for the purpose of unraveling the words and meaning of a given text. According to Nya Ōn, the present text by Dölpopa can be considered "a commentary on difficult points" (*dka' 'grel*) because it makes it possible to easily realize the meaning of the scriptures of the doctrine that are otherwise difficult to understand, or as "a summarizing commentary" (*bsdus don 'grel pa*) because it presents the principal meaning of the Buddha's message in a condensed fashion. It is called *General Commentary on the Doctrine* (*Bstan pa spyi 'grel*) because it comments on the essential meaning of all the sūtras and tantras, and not on the specific meaning of individual sūtras and tantras.<sup>402</sup>

In discussing Dölpopa's motives for composing *General Commentary on the Doctrine*, Nya Ōn notes that one purpose of the work was to provide a



reliable and easily understood guide to the principal meaning of the sūtras and tantras. This text was thus specifically intended for individuals who were intently focused on the practice of the profound path of meditation and not inclined toward the extensive study and contemplation of the vast scriptures and commentaries.<sup>403</sup> Nya Ōn further characterizes Dölpopa's work as a presentation of the complete definitive meaning of the sūtras and tantras that unravels the knots of their "vajra words" in a style that produces a lucid state of mind when it is heard. If the text is contemplated, the ultimate nature of relative and absolute truth will be realized, and if it is meditated on correctly, the sublime attainment will be achieved. Its phrasing is elegant, and although the words are brief, the meaning is vast.<sup>404</sup>

The translation of *General Commentary on the Doctrine* is based on the Bhutanese edition of the text made from tracings of the original Gyantsé Dzong blocks. The Dzamtang ('Dzam thang) edition has also been consulted and any important textual variants are discussed in the notes to the translation. The headings provided in a smaller bold font within brackets in the translation represent the topical outline found in Nya Ōn's explanation. The annotations to the translation are all close paraphrases or translations of Nya Ōn's comments, which perhaps represent Dölpopa's own explanations of the text, or at least its meaning as understood by one of his closest disciples and Dharma heirs. The translation of Dölpopa's text will become much more meaningful if read together with these notes. Page numbers from the Bhutanese edition of the Tibetan text have been placed in the translation within brackets.

One point in the following translation requires specific comment. In the Tibetan text there is frequent mention of the three well-known "turnings of the Dharma wheel." In the original Tibetan a "turning of the Dharma wheel" is always referred to by the abbreviated terms "Dharma wheel" (*chos 'khor*) or "wheel" (*'khor lo*). For example, instead of "first turning of the Dharma wheel" the text simply reads "first Dharma wheel." This convention has been followed in the translation, but the full phrases have been used when providing explanations in the notes.



# 1. Supplication Entitled

## *General Commentary on the Doctrine*

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[I. Opening expressions of homage and offering]

*Oṃ gurubuddhabodhisattvabhyonamonamah*<sup>405</sup>

I respectfully prostrate and take refuge at the stainless lotus-feet of the Dharma lords, the excellent masters, the nirmāṇakāya. Please grace me at all times with your great love.<sup>406</sup>

I bow at the feet of the permanent,  
stable, eternal, precious Dharma lords,  
masters possessing the four reliances,  
who spontaneously perform all-pervading  
enlightened actions and clarify the absolute,  
the unconfused definitive secret.<sup>407</sup>

[II. Main Section]

[A. Respectfully bowing to the masters because they correctly realize and teach the individual intent of the three Dharma wheels in sequence]

[I. Respectfully bowing to the masters because they correctly realize and teach the intent of the first Dharma wheel]

I bow at the feet of the masters  
who carefully teach that all  
conditioned entities are impermanent,  
unstable, changeable phenomena,

like a mountain waterfall, like a cloud,  
like lightning, and like dew on a blade of grass.<sup>408</sup> [687]

I bow at the feet of the masters  
who teach that the nature of suffering  
is the same for the entire three realms,  
like being caught in a pit of fire  
or a vicious viper's mouth,  
or like a bee circling inside a pot.<sup>409</sup>

I bow at the feet of the masters  
who teach that people who cling  
to the impure body as pure  
are the same as ignorant children  
who like and desire a vase of vomit  
beautified with ornaments.<sup>410</sup>

I bow at the feet of the masters  
who cause sentient beings who like  
saṃsāra to feel revulsion and sadness  
toward the impermanent and the impure,  
and teach them the four truths for entering  
the path of empty and peaceful selflessness.<sup>411</sup>

[2. Respectfully bowing to the masters because they correctly realize and teach the intent of the second Dharma wheel]

I bow at the feet of the masters  
who teach that all phenomena [688]  
merely arise from conditions,  
without any self, sentient beings,  
soul, or creator, and are like a dream,  
an illusion, a mirage, or an echo.<sup>412</sup>

I bow at the feet of the masters  
who clearly teach that objects appear  
to be external, but are merely  
the habitual propensities of mind,  
and that even mind, intellect,

and consciousness are mere names,  
mere designations, just emptiness like space.<sup>413</sup>

I bow at the feet of the masters  
who teach that the aggregates of form  
and so forth are like foam, water bubbles,  
a mirage, and so forth,  
and who teach that the sensory bases  
are the same as an empty town,  
the constituents the same as vicious vipers.<sup>414</sup>

I bow at the feet of the masters  
who teach that all the phenomena  
of existence and nirvāṇa are birthless and ceaseless,  
free from going, coming, and remaining,  
without extremes and middle,  
each empty of essence.<sup>415</sup>

[3. Respectfully bowing to the masters because they correctly realize and teach the intent of the third Dharma wheel]

I bow at the feet of the masters  
who teach that, like a butter lamp within a vase,  
the treasure of a pauper, and so forth,  
the sugata essence, luminosity,  
or the dharmakāya exists within the sheath  
of the relative, incidental aggregates.<sup>416</sup>

I bow at the feet of the masters  
who carefully distinguish, "All imagined  
and dependent phenomena are nonexistent,  
but the fully established true nature  
is never nonexistent,"  
teaching what transcends existence  
and nonexistence, and eternalism and nihilism.<sup>417</sup>

I bow at the feet of the masters  
who teach, "All relative phenomena  
are merely the dependent origination

of cause and result, but the self-arisen  
absolute transcends dependent origination," [689]  
teaching the difference between primordial  
awareness that arises from conditions,  
and what is self-arisen.<sup>418</sup>

[B. Respectfully bowing to the masters because they correctly realize and teach the  
meaning of tantra, and mainly what is expressed in the *Kālacakra Tantra*]

I bow at the feet of the masters  
who teach, "All outer and inner phenomena  
are merely the confusing sphere of ignorance,  
but the other is the true nature,  
self-arisen primordial awareness,"  
drawing the distinction between consciousness  
and primordial awareness,  
saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, and the two truths.<sup>419</sup>

I bow at the feet of the masters  
who distinguish and teach, "The relative  
three worlds are just an exaggerated,  
confusing appearance, while the absolute  
three worlds, the sugata essence,  
are an indestructible, unimagined,  
unconfusing appearance."<sup>420</sup>

[C. Respectfully bowing to the masters because they correctly realize and teach the  
intent of all three Dharma wheels]

I bow at the feet of the masters  
who teach the intent of the Dharma  
wheel of the four truths,  
the Dharma wheel of no characteristics,  
and the Dharma wheel of certainty in the absolute.<sup>421</sup>

I bow at the feet of the masters  
who, with the nectar stream of the three wheels  
in sequence, clean the three coarse, subtle,  
and extremely subtle stains,

so the sublime jewel of the dharmakāya  
separated from stain is obtained.<sup>422</sup>

I bow at the feet of the masters  
who teach people who accept  
external objects that everything is mind,  
who teach the Madhyamaka of no appearance  
to those who are attached to mind,  
and who teach the Madhyamaka  
of perfect appearance  
to those who accept no appearance.<sup>423</sup>

I bow at the feet of the masters  
who teach inferior [disciples]  
the Dharma of cause and result,  
who teach those who adhere  
to existence that everything is empty,  
and who teach the sugata essence of luminosity  
to those who accept nothing.<sup>424</sup>

[D. Respectfully bowing to the masters because they correctly realize and teach the  
intent of both sūtra and tantra]

I bow at the feet of the masters  
who teach the vehicle of the śrāvakas  
to people of inferior faculties,  
the vehicle of the pratyekabuddhas  
to those of middling faculties, [690]  
and the sūtra and mantra styles of cause and result  
in the sublime vehicle to the superior.<sup>425</sup>

I bow to you who care for disciples  
with the three wheels in sequence,  
and especially with secret mantra,  
just as parents care for infants, adolescents,  
and young adults according to their development.<sup>426</sup>

I bow to you who also teach  
the three wheels in sequence,

and especially the mantra way,  
 according to the character of disciples,  
 like assigning work to an inferior, middling,  
 or superior child, according to character.<sup>427</sup>

I bow to you who teach that  
 the three-storied mansion  
 of the Buddhist doctrine  
 of the three wheels in sequence,  
 and especially of secret mantra,  
 is to be climbed in sequence,  
 like climbing to the top  
 of a three-storied mansion.<sup>428</sup>

I bow to you who teach  
 the cleansing of the sugata essence  
 by the three wheels in sequence,  
 and especially by secret mantra,  
 just as three layers of stain on a jewel  
 are cleansed in sequence by a jeweler.<sup>429</sup>

[E. In particular, respectfully bowing to the masters because they correctly realize  
 and teach the intent of mantra]

[1. Praise by presenting the similes of ultimate bliss and emptiness]

I bow to you who teach that  
 the sugata essence  
 has another cause and result.  
 The other cause is the luminous  
 images of emptiness,  
 and the other result is immutable great bliss,  
 similar to the eight prognostic images.<sup>430</sup>

[2. Praise by presenting a number of the names of ultimate emptiness]

I bow to you who teach that  
 many various names,  
 such as Secret, Great Secret,



Element of Space, and Viśvamātā,  
 Source of Phenomena, Lotus, Bhaga,  
 Lion Throne, Nairātmyā, and Varāhī, [691]  
 have one meaning—emptiness.<sup>431</sup>

[3. Praise by presenting a number of the names of ultimate great bliss]

I bow to you who teach that  
 the many names of precisely that,  
 such as Vajra, Drop, Heruka, and Gathering,  
 Restraint, He, Great Compassion,  
 Primordial Buddha, and Enlightenment Mind,  
 have one meaning—great bliss.<sup>432</sup>

[4. Praise by presenting a number of names for the unity of bliss and emptiness]

I bow to you who teach that  
 many names, such as Vajrasattva,  
 Evaṃ, Kālacakra, and Cakrasamvara,  
 Hevajra, Māyājāla, and Guhyasamāja,  
 have one meaning—unity.<sup>433</sup>

[F. Respectfully bowing to the masters because they correctly realize and teach the intent of the ground, path, and result]

I bow to you who teach that  
 united, indivisible, equal-flavored,  
 indestructible, self-arisen primordial awareness,  
 the Primordial Buddha,  
 is present in all as thusness with stains,  
 is like the sky, and exists as the universal ground.<sup>434</sup>

I bow to you who teach  
 the Vajrayoga, the Perfection of Wisdom,  
 the Atiyoga, and the meditation  
 of the Great Seal with its branches  
 as the path, the method for freeing  
 precisely that from the sheath of the stains.<sup>435</sup>

I bow to yōu who teach that,  
 by the sublime method of the path,  
 what is present as the ground  
 is merely actualized as the result,  
 a stainless thusness with all stains  
 removed, like the sky free  
 of clouds, dust, and so forth.<sup>436</sup>

[G. Respectfully bowing to the masters because they correctly realize and teach the two kāyas, together with their enlightened activities, which are the result of the two assemblies]

I bow to you who teach that  
 the assembly of the nonconceptual  
 primordial awareness of immutable luminosity  
 destroys the sheath of stains  
 on self-arisen primordial awareness,  
 and that the absolute dharmakāya  
 accomplishes excellent benefit for oneself.<sup>437</sup>

I bow to you who teach that  
 a special feeling of great love  
 for those wandering without understanding  
 creates the assembly of merit [692]  
 that accomplishes benefit and happiness,  
 fully produces the excellent, relative form kāyas,  
 and accomplishes excellent benefit for others.<sup>438</sup>

I bow to you who teach that,  
 after fully perfecting a sea of prayers,  
 fully maturing a sea of sentient beings,  
 and fully purifying a sea of pure realms,  
 one dissolves into the culmination of perfection.<sup>439</sup>

I bow to you who teach that,  
 because of prior impetus,  
 benefit to others will spontaneously  
 occur in all directions and at all times,

even without effort and without thought,  
as with the fine vase, the sun, the jewel,  
the heavenly tree, and the divine drum.<sup>440</sup>

[H. Respectfully bowing to the masters because they correctly realize and teach the ultimate intent of everything, such as that of the three Dharma wheels in sequence]

I bow to you who teach that  
the ultimate Dharma wheel is the final wheel,  
the ultimate vehicle is the Mahāyāna,  
the ultimate Mahāyāna is the vehicle  
of the essence,  
and the ultimate essence is great bliss.<sup>441</sup>

I bow to you who teach that  
the ultimate doctrine is the Mahāyāna,  
the ultimate Mahāyāna is the Mantrayāna,  
the ultimate mantra teaching is Kālacakra,  
and the ultimate Kālacakra is bliss and emptiness.<sup>442</sup>

I bow to you who teach that  
the ultimate philosophical tenet  
is Great Madhyamaka,  
the ultimate Madhyamaka is birthless  
and free from extremes,  
the ultimate freedom from extremes  
is natural luminosity,  
and ultimate luminosity is great bliss.<sup>443</sup>

I bow to you who teach that  
the ultimate view is emptiness  
free from extremes,  
the ultimate emptiness is apprehensible emptiness, [693]  
the ultimate conduct is great compassion,  
and the ultimate compassion is nonapprehending.<sup>444</sup>

I bow to you who teach,  
for the benefit of ultimate disciples,

that the ultimate initiation  
 is the transcendent initiation,  
 the ultimate realization is the definitive  
 meaning of the completion stage,  
 and the ultimate attainment  
 is the great sublime attainment.<sup>445</sup>

I bow to you who teach that  
 the ultimate maṇḍala is sublime,  
 natural luminosity, the ultimate deity  
 is the kāya of the primordial awareness  
 of bliss and emptiness, the ultimate seal  
 is the Great Seal of luminosity,  
 and the ultimate mantra protects the mind.<sup>446</sup>

I bow to you who teach  
 the complete, ultimate Dharma  
 of the ultimate ground as thusness with stains,  
 the ultimate path as the Six-branch Yoga,  
 and the ultimate result as the thusness  
 of the separated result.<sup>447</sup>

### [III. Conclusion]

This supplication entitled *General Commentary on the Doctrine* was composed by Sherab Gyaltsen Palsangpo, a servant of the Dharma lords, the excellent masters.<sup>448</sup>

By this virtue, may I  
 and all sentient beings  
 actualize the separated result  
 of the absolute dharmakāya,  
 and, with the produced result  
 of the two relative form kāyas,  
 work for the benefit of others  
 for the duration of saṃsāra.<sup>449</sup>

For as long as that has not been achieved,  
 by means of the three wheels in sequence,  
 and especially secret mantra, [694]

may I always be energetic  
 in cleansing in sequence the stains  
 on the sugata essence in myself and others.<sup>450</sup>

*Maṅgalam bhavantu*<sup>451</sup>



## Introduction to the *Fourth Council* and the *Autocommentary to the “Fourth Council”*

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DÖLPOPA WROTE A large number of treatises dealing with what he considered to be the most crucial issues facing scholars and practitioners of the Buddhist teachings in fourteenth-century Tibet. Many of these topics continue to be of great interest to the present day. Of his compositions, three are most often singled out as major works. These are the brief *General Commentary on the Doctrine* (*Bstan pa spyi 'grel*) and the massive *Mountain Dharma: An Ocean of Definitive Meaning* (*Ri chos nges don rgya mtsho*), both probably completed by 1333, and the *Fourth Council* (*Bka' bsdu bzhi pa*) with its *Autocommentary* (*Rang 'grel*) and *Summary* (*Bsdus don*), composed in the last years of Dölpopa's life.<sup>452</sup> In many ways the *Fourth Council* is the culmination of Dölpopa's literary output. As his last great work, this text with its autocommentary and summary can be seen as a final summation of Dölpopa's views on the various topics that had concerned him throughout his life.

It is particularly interesting that Dölpopa composed the *Fourth Council* and the *Autocommentary* at the request of Lama Dampa Sönam Gyaltzen, one of the most respected masters in the history of the Sakya tradition. As stated in the colophon of the *Autocommentary*, Lama Dampa also told Dölpopa, "Compose many treatises like this!" Lama Dampa's request and statement are significant because he clearly had great respect for Dölpopa and was very interested in his controversial ideas, which were largely rejected by the Sakya tradition in the following centuries. On an earlier occasion, which can only be dated to between the years 1352 and 1355, Lama Dampa had also come to Jonang and engaged in extensive discussions of Dharma with Dölpopa.<sup>453</sup> The actual circumstances of his request to Dölpopa for the composition of works such as the *Fourth Council* are mentioned in several sources. In the summer of 1358 Dölpopa departed from Jonang at the start of

a trip to Central Tibet. Along the way he spent a year teaching at the monasteries of Nesar and Chölung. Lama Dampa met Dölpopa at Chölung, presented lavish offerings of horses and gold, and requested the composition of a number of texts, foremost of which were the *Fourth Council* and its *Autocommentary*.<sup>454</sup> Almost all available evidence leads to the conclusion that these were composed in 1358.<sup>455</sup> Such texts would always be transmitted first to the person who made the original request. Since it is certain that Lama Dampa received the transmission of the works from Dölpopa sometime between the ninth month of the Dog Year (1358) and the first month of the Pig Year (1359), the actual composition must have occurred during or shortly before that period as well.<sup>456</sup>

The earliest mention of the *Fourth Council* by another author is probably the quotations from it in Lhai Gyaltsen's biography of Dölpopa. The only other known contemporary mention of the text is by Dölpopa's disciple Barawa Gyaltsen Palsang, who refers to it as "our perfect teaching of the *Fourth Council*" (*rang re'i bka' bsdu bzhi pa'i bka' yang dag pa*).<sup>457</sup> This work was undoubtedly one of Dölpopa's most important and influential compositions, but references to it by other Tibetan writers after his lifetime are very rare.<sup>458</sup> Dölpopa himself clearly considered it to be significant. When his disciple Jampa Khawoché, who was from the eastern region of Minyag, returned home after studying with Dölpopa at Jonang for six years, Dölpopa gave him a conch shell, a copy of the *Fourth Council*, and a prophecy of what would occur when he arrived in eastern Tibet. In the prophecy Dölpopa told Jampa Khawoché to teach the book he had given him. He predicted that he would meet a blue woman (an emanation of the guardian goddess Palden Lhamo) who would offer him a donkey, and that he should load the book onto the donkey's back and follow wherever it went. When the donkey lay down to sleep, he should blow the conch shell, pray to Dölpopa, and establish a monastery at that spot. Following his teacher's instructions, Jampa Khawoché returned home and, exactly according to the prophecy, founded a monastery in the region of Tsendo.<sup>459</sup>

The scarcity of references to the *Fourth Council* is certainly due to the severe repression of the Jonang tradition that was discussed in chapter 2, section 3. Dölpopa's writings, along with those of the Sakya *shentong* advocate Panchen Shākya Chokden and Jetsun Tāranātha, were banned by the Tibetan government of the Fifth Dalai Lama and copies were either destroyed or sealed. Until 1984, when Dilgo Khyentsé Rinpoché published the *Fourth Council* and the *Autocommentary* in Bhutan, these texts were not generally known to have survived. The Bhutanese edition is a tracing of



a print originally from the fortress of Gyantsé in Tibet. In 1990 Matthew Kapstein located a set of the Collected Works of Dölpopa that had been preserved at the Jonang monastery of Dzamtang in Eastern Tibet.<sup>460</sup> The Dzamtang edition contains the *Fourth Council* and the *Autocommentary*, as well as the otherwise unavailable *Summary*.

The translation of the *Fourth Council* follows the edition published in Bhutan, which is generally preferable to the Dzamtang edition. When a significant reading in the Dzamtang edition has been chosen over that of the Bhutanese edition it has been mentioned in a note. Page numbers from the Bhutanese edition have been placed within brackets in the translation. Dölpopa's *Summarizing Commentary to the "Fourth Council"* (*Bka' bsdu bzhi pa'i bsdus don 'grel pa*) has been almost completely translated and inserted into the basic text in a smaller bold font in brackets. Short portions of this summary that deal with the autocommentary have not been translated. Page and line numbers from the summary are included at the end of each entry. The inclusion of the information from the summary makes the structure of the basic text much clearer and provides further important explanation from Dölpopa himself on the issues at hand.

When translating the full title of the *Fourth Council* I have followed the spelling *bstan rtsis* (*calculation*), which is found in the colophon of the Bhutanese edition and in all other titles and colophons of the available editions of the text, its autocommentary, and its summary. The near-homophone *gtan tshigs* (*decree, reasoning*) is found only in the title of the Bhutanese edition. *Bstan rtsis* is also the spelling found in an independent reference to the text by Dölpopa and in his explanation of the meaning of the title in his autocommentary. In other works he also sometimes refers to himself as a Great Calculator of the Doctrine (*Bstan rtsis chen po*).<sup>461</sup>

In his *Autocommentary*, Dölpopa does not choose to explain every line of verse from the *Fourth Council*. He usually mentions the first few words of a line and then the last words of another line, often several pages apart, and then comments on the main points in the intervening section of the text. When this is the case, I have inserted the entire set of verses into the translation in bold font. At other points, Dölpopa will weave the words of verses from the root text into a prose explanation in his commentary. These words from the verses have also been highlighted in bold font in the translation, and their original position in the root text has been mentioned in a note.

The Bhutanese edition of the *Autocommentary to the "Fourth Council"* (*Bka' bsdu bzhi pa'i rang 'grel*) has also been used as the basis for the translation, and page numbers from this edition have been placed within brackets

in the translation. Unfortunately, the Dzamtang edition of the *Autocommentary* is in terrible shape, with an incredible number of incomprehensible spelling mistakes, missing words, missing lines, and even missing pages of text. It is thus simply not feasible to mention every variation between the Bhutanese and Dzamtang editions in the notes. When a word or phrase from the Dzamtang edition has seemed preferable to what is in the Bhutanese edition, this choice is mentioned in a note. Otherwise, the translation follows the Bhutanese edition. Only the worst instances of missing lines and pages in the Dzamtang edition are noted. For example, on the first line of page 308 in the Dzamtang edition the text resumes (in the middle of a compound!) after omitting eight-and-a-half lines (more than one page) that are only in the Bhutanese edition.

When translating the title of the *Autocommentary* I have followed the simple title in the Bhutanese edition: *Bka' bsdu bzhi pa'i rang 'grel* (*Autocommentary to the "Fourth Council"*). The title page of the Dzamtang edition reads *Bka' bsdus bzhi pa'i don bstan rtsis chen po phyogs med ris med ces bya ba'i 'grel pa* (*Commentary to the "Impartial and Unbiased Great Calculation of the Doctrine That Has the Significance of a Fourth Council"*), which is close, but not identical, to the title found in the colophon of both editions.

It is perhaps helpful to remember that almost no one understands everything in texts such as the *Fourth Council* and the *Autocommentary*. Later Tibetan authors mention that even Dölpopa's greatest disciples and Dharma heirs did not precisely grasp the full subtlety and depth of their master's genius. The *Fourth Council* and the *Autocommentary* were written at the request of one of Tibet's most exceptional luminaries, Lama Dampa Sönam Gyaltzen. Dölpopa takes the expertise of the reader for granted when making his points, and often does not identify the sources of quotations he cites that would be recognized by a knowledgeable person. Most of these sources have now been identified in the notes to the translation. While the earlier *General Commentary on the Doctrine* was specifically written for individuals who were not inclined toward extensive study and contemplation of Buddhist literature, the *Fourth Council* and its commentary touch on many themes and often combine terminology and lines of thought from several different areas of the Buddhist tradition simultaneously. These nuances would have been appreciated by the advanced audience for whom the text was originally intended, but some are unavoidably lost in the process of providing an understandable translation. Hopefully the previous chapters of this book and the endnotes to the translations will be useful in this regard.

## 2. *Great Calculation of the Doctrine That Has the Significance of a Fourth Council*

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[An expression of homage to the master and all the Jewels in general, 254.3]

*Om gurubuddhabodhisattvabhyonamonamah*<sup>462</sup>

[An expression of homage to the ultimate Buddha, the thusness of self-arisen primordial awareness, 254.4]

I respectfully prostrate to the absolute  
perfect Buddha, the Blessed One,  
who is thusness, ultimate purity,  
self,<sup>463</sup> great bliss, and permanence, . . .

[The pledge of composition, 254.5]

. . . and will fully explain the classification  
of the two sets of four eons.<sup>464</sup>

[A general presentation of the essence of the two sets of four eons, 254.5]

The great four eons concern  
the quality of the eons of a cosmic age,  
and the lesser four eons,  
the quality of the doctrine.<sup>465</sup>

[The number of years of the two sets of four eons, 254.6]

The years of the first set are 4,320,000,  
a quarter of which is taught to be a *foot*,<sup>466</sup>

and one foot, two, three, and four, in sequence,  
are taught to be the Kaliyuga, the Dvāparayuga,  
the Tretāyuga, and the Kṛtayuga. [365]

The lesser four eons,  
concerning the quality of the doctrine,  
last for 21,600 human years,  
a quarter of which is the measure  
of each of the four eons.<sup>467</sup>

[The specific identification of the lesser four eons, 254.6]

The flawless, with qualities complete,  
is the Kṛtayuga Dharma.

When a quarter then degenerates,  
it is the former Tretāyuga.  
If half has degenerated,  
it is the latter Tretāyuga.

The remainder when three-quarters  
has degenerated is the Dvāparayuga.

If there is not even one-quarter,  
it is the Kaliyuga,  
taught to be the wicked dharma  
of the demon barbarians.<sup>468</sup>

[The Kṛtayuga Dharma as the valid witness, 255.1]

Fully understanding each  
of those divisions,  
I wish to purge the doctrine, [366]  
and wishing for myself and others  
to enter the fine path,  
I honor the sublime Kṛtayuga Dharma  
as the witness.

[Flaws have entered the treatises of the Tretāyuga and later eons, so all explanations from them are of uncertain truth. 255.2]

The Tretāyuga and later eons  
are flawed, and their treatises  
that have been diluted like milk  
in the market are in every case  
unfit to act as witnesses.

The higher refute the lower,  
as the higher philosophical tenets  
refute the lower.

[Because the Kṛtayuga Dharma is flawless, pristine view, meditation, and conduct are taught there. 255.3]

The Kṛtayuga Dharma is the stainless  
words of the Conqueror,  
and what is carefully taught  
by the lords on the tenth level  
and by the great system founders,  
flawless and endowed with sublime qualities.<sup>469</sup>

In that tradition all is not  
empty of self-nature.

Carefully distinguishing  
empty of self-nature and empty of other,  
what is relative is all taught  
to be empty of self-nature,  
and what is absolute is taught  
to be precisely empty of other.

[An extensive presentation of how the two truths are in contradiction, 255.4]

Why? Because concerning the two truths,  
two modes of truth are taught,  
two modes of appearance,

and two modes of emptiness,  
 and because the many forms  
 of exaggeration and denial,  
 flawed and flawless paradox, and so forth,  
 phenomena and true nature,  
 and conditioned and unconditioned  
 are taught to be two great kingdoms.<sup>470</sup>

[The reason why the (two) truths cannot be said to have the same or another essence,  
 255.5]

It is impossible for the two truths  
 to have a single essence,  
 but they are also not different in essence,  
 nor are they without any difference,  
 for [367] there is the difference  
 of the exclusion of a single essence.

Concerning precisely this,  
 it is taught that the essence  
 is inexpressible as the same or another.

Precisely this process also applies  
 to phenomena and true nature,  
 and for saṃsāra and nirvāṇa,  
 extremes and middle,  
 incidental and primordial,  
 fabricated and natural,  
 and husk and kernel  
 the process is also precisely this.

[The opinions of those with bad views, 255.5]

Those of the Tretāyuga  
 and later eons say other than that.

Except for what are empty  
 of self-nature, what are empty of other  
 do not fit their definition of emptiness.

Therefore, what are taught to be  
 the ultimate, profound, true modes of reality,  
 such as the absolute basic space of phenomena,  
 thusness, natural luminosity,  
 natural innateness, and the immutable nature,  
 the ultimate dharmakāya,  
 the ultimate perfection of wisdom,  
 ultimate *Madhyamaka*,<sup>471</sup> ultimate *nirvāṇa*,  
 and ultimate great enlightenment,  
 the ultimate Buddha, ultimate Dharma,  
 ultimate Saṅgha, ultimate deities and mantras,  
 and ultimate tantras and maṇḍalas,  
 are all said to be precisely empty of self-nature.

They claim that what are  
 empty of self-nature are the ultimate,  
 profound, true modes of reality,  
 such as absolute truth,  
 the basic space of phenomena,  
 the true nature, and thusness.

Without dividing the two truths  
 into two kingdoms, [368]  
 they claim that what is apparent  
 is relative truth and what is empty  
 is absolute truth.

They say that since those two,  
 the apparent and the empty,  
 are in essence indivisible,  
 they have a single essence  
 but are different conceptual isolates.

Without dividing *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa*  
 into two kingdoms, they say,  
 “The apparent aspect is *saṃsāra*;  
 the empty aspect is *nirvāṇa*,”  
 and also claim that is the meaning  
 of the indivisibility of *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa*.<sup>472</sup>

“Flawed paradox  
 is relative truth and flawless  
 paradox is absolute truth,”  
 but without dividing them  
 into two kingdoms in that way,  
 they say what are apparent  
 and empty are the two truths.

“A dialectician’s field of  
 experience is saṃsāra and a yogin’s  
 field of experience is nirvāṇa,”  
 but without dividing them into  
 two kingdoms in that way,  
 they claim the pair of apparent and empty  
 to be the meaning of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa.

[Presenting the fault of absurd consequences that result from claiming that what are  
 apparent are relative truth and what are empty are absolute truth, 255.6]

If everything apparent were relative saṃsāra,  
 the appearance of the absolute  
 would also be relative saṃsāra.<sup>473</sup>

If everything empty were absolute nirvāṇa,  
 all that is empty of self-nature  
 would be absolute nirvāṇa.

If that is claimed, the absurd  
 consequence would be that  
 all sufferings and their origins  
 would also be absolute nirvāṇa.

If that too is claimed,  
 they would be taintless.

They would also be pure,  
 self, great bliss, and permanent.<sup>474</sup>

All the absolute qualities,  
 such as the powers<sup>475</sup>



as numerous as the sands  
of the Ganges River,  
would also be complete. [369]

Those [sufferings and their origins]  
would be the ultimate acquisitions.

They would be the ultimate  
protectors of living beings.

They would be the ultimate,  
omniscient primordial awareness.<sup>476</sup>

They would also be  
the imperishable vajrakāya.

They would also be the vajra  
deities, mantras, and tantras.

They would be the five  
immutable great emptinesses,  
the six immutable empty drops,<sup>477</sup> and so forth,  
and all naturally primordial phenomena  
such as the ultimate *evam*  
of the profound true mode of reality,  
the ultimate *aham*, the ultimate *haṃkṣa*,  
the vajra lotus, Vajrasattva, vajra *bhaga*,  
vajra summit, vajra space, the tetrahedron drop,  
and the vajra vowels such as *a*  
and consonant-syllables such as *ka*.<sup>478</sup>

It would be totally incorrect  
to reject them with the antidote.

The truth of the path would  
also actually be meaningless.

The attainment of Buddha  
would be totally impossible.

Dharma and Saṅgha  
would also be impossible.

This [view] also has infinite  
other faults and flaws.

[Mentioning the fault of absurd consequences that result from claiming that the two truths are identical in essence and that saṃsāra and nirvāṇa are identical in essence, 256.2]

If the two truths,  
and saṃsāra and nirvāṇa,  
are identical in essence,  
examine whether it is feasible  
or not to separate from the sugata  
essence and the incidental stains!

As it is feasible to destroy the incidental stains,  
is it also feasible to destroy the sugata essence?

As the incidental stains are conditioned,  
is the sugata essence also [370] conditioned?

As the incidental stains are relative,  
is the sugata essence also relative?

As the incidental stains are the imagined nature,  
is the sugata essence also the imagined nature?

As the incidental stains are the inner and outer,  
is the sugata essence also the inner and outer?<sup>479</sup>

As the sugata essence is absolute,  
are the incidental stains also absolute?

As the sugata essence is permanent,  
are the incidental stains also permanent?

As the sugata essence is the fully established nature,  
are the incidental stains also the fully established nature?

As the sugata essence is Buddha,  
are the incidental stains also Buddha?

As the sugata essence is self-arisen,  
are the incidental stains also self-arisen?

As the sugata essence is primordial awareness,  
are the incidental stains also primordial awareness?

As the sugata essence is omniscience,  
are the incidental stains also omniscience?

As the sugata essence is the basic space of phenomena,  
are the incidental stains also the basic space of phenomena?

As the sugata essence is great bliss,  
are the incidental stains also great bliss? [371]

As the sugata essence is nirvāṇa,  
are the incidental stains also nirvāṇa?

As the sugata essence is the perfection of wisdom,  
are the incidental stains also the perfection of wisdom?

As the sugata essence is Madhyamaka,  
are the incidental stains also Madhyamaka?

As the sugata essence is empty of other,  
are the incidental stains also empty of other?

As the sugata essence is the ground of emptiness,  
are the incidental stains also the ground of emptiness?

As the sugata essence is the sublime other,  
are the incidental stains also the sublime other?

As the sugata essence is the truth of cessation,  
are the incidental stains also the truth of cessation?

As the sugata essence is the ground of cessation,  
are the incidental stains also the ground of cessation?

As the sugata essence is the ground of separation,  
are the incidental stains also the ground of separation?

As the sugata essence is the ground of isolation,  
are the incidental stains also the ground of isolation?

As the sugata essence is the ground of purity,  
are the incidental stains also the ground of purity?

As the sugata essence is the ground of nonexistence, [372]  
are the incidental stains also the ground of nonexistence?

If you claim them to be so,  
there are infinite faults and flaws.

[Our own tradition is flawless. 256.2]

The Kṛtayuga tradition  
does not have those faults and flaws.

[The flawed opinion, 256.3]

To claim that everything knowable  
is included in [the categories of] entity  
and nonentity is the tradition  
of the Tretāyuga and later cons.

[Refuting that opinion through scripture and reasoning, 256.3]

The true nature, Madhyamaka,  
is the most sublime of knowables,  
and to accept it as a third category  
that is neither entity or nonentity  
is the Kṛtayuga tradition.

Therefore, everything is not included  
within entity and nonentity,  
because there is a third category.

[Establishing through the scriptures and reasoning of the Kṛtayuga that everything knowable is included in the two categories of the inanimate and the aware, 256.4]

“Everything is determined  
to be either inanimate or aware.  
So there is no third category concerning that.”  
This is the Kṛtayuga Dharma tradition.

[Proof that the basic space of phenomena is cognition, 256.5]

The Tretāyuga and later cons  
claim that the true nature, thusness,  
is a third category that is  
neither inanimate or aware.

If the basic space of phenomena  
is not pure awareness,  
what about the primordial awareness  
of indivisible space and pure awareness?

What about the primordial awareness  
of the basic space of phenomena?

What about absolute self-arisen  
primordial awareness?

“I bow to you,<sup>480</sup> absolute, immobile,  
discriminating self-awareness,  
absolute total awareness  
of self and awareness of others,  
with absolute, excellent cognition  
of all and awareness of all,  
absolute, omnipotent self of the five types  
of primordial awareness, absolute, self-arisen  
kāya of primordial awareness, [373]  
sea of absolute, omniscient primordial awareness,  
retainer of the treasury of absolute,  
omniscient primordial awareness,

absolute primordial awareness,  
 great source of primordial awareness,  
 endowed with absolute primordial awareness  
 and awareness of existence and nonexistence,  
 holder of each and every absolute  
 kāya of primordial awareness,  
 absolute Samantabhadra with fine intelligence,  
 great essence of all absolute buddhas,  
 great absolute offering that is vast passion,  
 great absolute offering that is vast hatred,  
 great absolute offering that is vast ignorance,  
 great absolute offering that is vast wrath,  
 and great absolute offering that is vast attachment,  
 vast bliss that is great absolute desire,  
 vast pleasure that is great absolute joy,  
 holder of the great magic of absolute expertise,  
 joy beyond joy of great absolute magic,  
 site of the meditative concentration  
 of absolute great mental stability,  
 holder of the kāya of great absolute wisdom,  
 sea of the primordial awareness of absolute prayer,  
 absolute great love, infinite in nature,  
 absolute great compassion with sublime intellect,  
 absolute great wisdom possessing great intellect,  
 absolute great expert with great method,  
 ten types of absolute primordial awareness  
 with pristine quintessence,<sup>481</sup>  
 holder of ten types of pristine,  
 absolute primordial awareness, [374]  
 absolute sole cognition, definitely bright,  
 holder of the realization of eight knowledges,<sup>482</sup>  
 great fire of absolute wisdom  
 and primordial awareness,  
 vivid appearance of absolute primordial awareness,  
 flame of absolute primordial awareness,  
 pellucid light, absolute Buddha,  
 unsurpassed enlightenment,  
 absolute Buddha, Mahāvairocana,  
 absolute perfect Buddha, guide for the world,

pure, pristine awareness of the three absolutes,  
 possessor of the six absolute clairvoyances  
 and the six subsequent mindfulnesses,<sup>483</sup>  
 absolute sublime perfection of wisdom,  
 absolute powerful Sage  
 omnipotent with the ten powers,<sup>484</sup>  
 absolute Mañjuśrī possessing  
 splendor sublime, and the absolute  
 kāya of primordial awareness itself.”

In many such forms the absolute  
 is presented as being cognition,  
 pure awareness, and primordial awareness.

[Showing that the basic space of phenomena is primordial awareness, which is not  
 impermanent, but is ultimate thatness, 256.6]

Therefore, the conquerors have taught,  
 “Primordial awareness transcending the momentary  
 is the ultimate thatness of all phenomena.”<sup>485</sup>

[Establishing the contradiction of absurd consequences that would occur if the basic  
 space of phenomena were not pure awareness, 256.7]

If the absolute were not pure awareness,  
 it would not be omniscient,  
 because the absolute dharmakāya  
 and svābhāvīkākāya  
 would not be pure awareness.

If it were not omniscient,  
 it would not be Buddha. [375]

If it were not Buddha,  
 it would not be the dharmakāya.

If you claim that, you contradict  
 even the existence of phenomena.<sup>486</sup>

[Proving that the basic space of phenomena, the sugata essence, is permanent and stable cognition, 257.1]

If the absolute is pure awareness,  
that entails unconditioned pure awareness.

It also entails permanent  
and stable pure awareness.

It also entails eternal  
and everlasting pure awareness.

It also entails the pure awareness  
of the sugata essence.

It also entails the pure awareness  
of the nine fully established natures.<sup>487</sup>

[A meteoric refutation of the opinion that the basic space of phenomena is not cognition, 257.1]

If the absolute were not cognition,  
that would contradict all profound sūtra and tantra,  
the Kṛtayuga Dharma that presents  
the profound true mode of reality.

[Making the accusation that, if it were cognition, it would be impermanent, 257.2]

You might say, “If the absolute were cognition,  
it would also be conditioned and impermanent.”

[The opinion that whatever is cognition is impermanent is a bad view held by those who have not comprehended the unconditioned cognition taught in the Kṛtayuga and have also not comprehended the profound, comprehensive, and exceptional points of the scriptures, 257.3]

Such is the tradition  
of the Tretāyuga and later eons,  
but in the exceptional tradition  
of sublime Kṛtayuga Dharma,



for cognition there is also  
conditioned and unconditioned.

For pure awareness there is also  
conditioned and unconditioned.

For primordial awareness there is also  
conditioned and unconditioned.

For all, even the Three Jewels and so forth,  
there is a stated division into two truths,  
and conditioned and unconditioned.

There is a stated division  
of impermanent and permanent.

There is a carefully stated division  
of empty of self-nature and empty of other. [376]

There is a carefully stated division  
of consciousness and primordial awareness.

There is a carefully stated division  
of other-arisen and self-arisen.<sup>488</sup>

There is a stated division  
of phenomena and true nature,  
and extremes and middle.

There is a carefully stated division  
of fabricated and natural.

There is a carefully stated division  
of incidental and primordial.

There is a carefully stated division  
of the imagined and the fully established.

There is a carefully stated division  
of postmeditation and meditative equipoise.

There is a carefully stated division  
of decisiveness and distinguishing.

There is a carefully stated division  
of divisible and indivisible.

There is a carefully stated division  
of a mode of confusion and a true mode of reality.<sup>489</sup>

There is a carefully stated division  
of a mode of assertion and a true mode of being.

There is a carefully stated division  
of the founding system and the obstructing system.<sup>490</sup>

There is a carefully stated division  
of the existence and nonexistence of a third category.<sup>491</sup>

There is a carefully stated division  
of the great and lesser four eons.<sup>492</sup>

And concerning the lesser,  
clearly dividing the sublime Kṛtayuga Dharma  
and that of the inferior Tretāyuga and later eons,  
there is a stated division of suitability  
and unsuitability as a witness.

There is a carefully stated division  
of the three natures.<sup>493</sup>

There is a carefully stated division  
of a classification of three selves.<sup>494</sup> [377]

There is a carefully stated division  
of a classification of three emptinesses.<sup>495</sup>

There is a carefully stated division  
of outer, inner, and sublime other.<sup>496</sup>

If you become accustomed  
to the sublime Kṛtayuga Dharma  
as taught in the Dharma wheels  
that carefully distinguish the four truths,  
the four factors, the five factors, and so forth,  
you will become a great, peerless expert.<sup>497</sup>

All the conquerors  
and their spiritual sons will be pleased.

The citadel of a conqueror  
will quickly be attained.

[Refutation through scripture and reasoning of the opinion that all maṇḍalas, deities, mantras, tantras, families, and Jewels are conditioned phenomena that were previously absent and arose later, 257.4]

All the classifications of the essential  
maṇḍalas, deities, mantras, tantras,  
and families taught in the exceptional,  
sublime Kṛtayuga Dharma  
are indivisible space and pure awareness,  
absolute, unconditioned, partless,  
omnipresent, and omnipotent,  
but [the treatises of] the flawed Tretāyuga  
and later eons allege that they are all conditioned.

In that case, they would be relative.

They would not be the ultimate  
and durable sublime refuge.

They would also be false  
and deceptive phenomena.

That is refuted by repeated statements  
in the Five Sūtras [on the Essence],  
the Ten Sūtras on the Essence, and so forth [378]

that the ultimate three sublime refuges  
are all also permanent, stable, eternal,  
everlasting, unconditioned absolute truth.

[There is no proof for, but there are refutations of, the opinion that the ultimate,  
permanent, and stable Buddha and so forth are provisional in meaning. 257.5]

You might say, "Those statements  
are provisional in meaning."

There is not any proof that they  
are provisional in meaning.

Very many pristine scriptures  
and reasons refute that.

Therefore, abandon  
such wrong explanation!

[The refutation of the opinion that everything exists in the relative, but nothing is  
established in the absolute is presented by showing the fault of absurd consequences,  
such as if the pervading property were negated, what is pervaded would be negated,  
and if there were no absolute, there would also be no relative. 257.6]

You might say, "Those are all relative.  
Absolute truth is never established,  
so it is also not the essential maṇḍalas and so forth."

If the pervading property were negated,  
what is pervaded would be negated,  
and if the support were negated,  
what is supported would also be negated.

Therefore, if the absolute were negated,  
the relative would be negated.

If the true nature were negated,  
phenomena would be negated.

If the middle were negated,  
the extremes would be negated.

If the fully established nature were negated,  
the imagined would be negated.

If the natural were negated,  
the fabricated would be negated.

If the primordial were negated,  
the incidental would be negated.

If empty of other were negated,  
empty of self-nature would be negated.

If the essence were negated,  
the stains would be negated.

If the pure were negated,  
the impure would be negated.

If the sublime self were negated,  
all phenomena would be negated.

If great bliss were negated,  
suffering would be negated. [379]

If the permanent were negated,  
the impermanent would be negated.

If there were no Buddha,  
there would be no sentient beings.

If there were no primordial awareness,  
there would be no consciousness.

If there were no self-arisen,  
there would be no other-arisen.

If there were no sublime other,  
there would be no outer and inner.

If there were no truth of cessation,  
there would be no truth.

If there were no ground of purification,  
there would be nothing such as  
an object of purification, a purifying agent,  
and a result of purification.

If there were no thusness,  
all other phenomena, such as names,  
would also not exist.

There are also very many  
others such as this.

[Wishing that the blessing of the profound and exceptional Dharma enter all sentient beings, 258.1]

Therefore, may the blessing  
of the profound, sublime  
Kṛtayuga Dharma enter all living beings!

[The exceptional Dharma traditions of the Kṛtayuga, such as the general division of merely what is knowable and the specific division of cognition and primordial awareness, 258.1]

To divide what is knowable  
into both conditioned and unconditioned,  
or inanimate and aware, is the Kṛtayuga tradition.

The Kṛtayuga tradition has  
the fine division of conditioned  
and unconditioned in regard to the inanimate,  
and also conditioned and unconditioned  
in regard to the aware,  
consciousness and primordial

awareness in regard to cognition,  
 and self-arisen and other-arisen  
 in regard to primordial awareness,  
 permanent and impermanent  
 primordial awareness,  
 and conditioned and unconditioned  
 primordial awareness. [380]

Therefore, that which is the primordial  
 awareness of the basic space  
 of phenomena is a permanent,  
 unconditioned primordial awareness,  
 an absolute primordial awareness  
 of indivisible space and pure awareness,  
 a primordial awareness of flawless paradox  
 beyond simile, a primordial awareness  
 of natural innateness,  
 a natural, immutable, fully established  
 primordial awareness,  
 and a primordial awareness  
 of natural great bliss.

[The intent of scriptural statements that the basic space of phenomena is the profound perfection of wisdom, 258.2]

In the exceptional, sublime Kṛtayuga Dharma,  
 those statements that the basic space  
 of phenomena, thusness,  
 is the profound, ultimate perfection of wisdom  
 mean that it is permanent, unconditioned  
 primordial awareness,  
 the five immutable great emptinesses,  
 the five permanent, unconditioned conquerors,<sup>498</sup>  
 the five permanent, stable, eternal,  
 and everlasting consorts,  
 the self of the five buddhas,  
 the five kāyas of a buddha,  
 the self of the five omnipotent types  
 of primordial awareness,

and the self of the ten types of pristine  
primordial awareness.<sup>499</sup>

[Mentioning the opinions of those with bad views, which are the dregs of the view  
and are to be discarded, 258.3]

Those of the Tretāyuga and later eons  
do not say such, for that which is wisdom  
is a conditioned entity.

Therefore, they also claim that even  
the profound, ultimate perfection of wisdom  
is conditioned, impermanent, and momentary.

That has also brought up  
the dregs of the view.

In regard to cause, not knowing  
to divide it into the two kingdoms [381]  
of productive and separating,  
they claim that all causes are only productive.

Also in regard to result, not knowing  
to divide it into the two kingdoms  
of produced and separated,  
they claim that whatever is a result  
is only a produced result.<sup>500</sup>

Therefore, to not accept  
a permanent cause and result,  
not accept an unconditioned cause and result,  
not accept that cause and result  
have a single essence,  
also not accept that ground  
and result have a single essence,  
and not accept a transcendent,  
sublime, other cause and result  
are the flawed and diluted tradition  
of the Tretāyuga and later eons.



[The fine classifications according to the Kṛtayuga tradition, 258.4]

The Kṛtayuga has an exceptional Dharma tradition that is the opposite of each of those.

In regard to the universal ground,  
the Kṛtayuga tradition has fine classifications,  
such as dividing consciousness and primordial awareness,  
relative and absolute, phenomena and true nature,  
and conditioned and unconditioned,  
dividing the object of purification  
and the ground of purification,  
dividing the incidental and the primordial,  
dividing the fabricated and the natural,  
the mode of confusion and the true mode of reality,  
and dividing the husk and kernel,  
the permanent and the impermanent,  
and the extremes and the middle.

[The flawed opinions, 258.5]

For the Tretāyuga and later eons  
that type of Dharma language has vanished. [382]

They claim that which is the universal ground  
is unobscured and neutral,  
precisely the appropriating consciousness.<sup>501</sup>

That has also brought up  
the dregs of the view.

[That universal-ground primordial awareness is the ultimate definitive meaning of all  
sūtras and tantras, 258.5]

The universal ground that is taught  
to be the sugata essence,  
the universal ground that is taught  
to be taintless virtue,  
the universal ground that is

the various levels,  
 and the universal ground that is  
 natural luminosity  
 refer to the immutable  
 fully established nature, Great Madhyamaka,  
 great nirvāṇa, the Great Seal,  
 great enlightenment, and the ultimate Evaṃ,<sup>502</sup>  
 all the deities, mantras, and tantras such as  
 ultimate Kālacakra and ultimate  
 Cakrasamvara, Hevajra, and Guhyasamāja,  
 all that is ultimate, such as the ultimate maṇḍalas,  
 and the basic space where the myriad drawn  
 together from everywhere has a single taste,  
 the culmination of the ultimate perfection of wisdom.

Precisely that is the impartial  
 Primordial Buddha,  
 the primordially free Tathāgata,  
 the truth of cessation that is pure,  
 self, bliss, and permanent,  
 the twelve aspects of truth,  
 the sixteen aspects of thatness,<sup>503</sup>  
 Vajrasattva, absolute enlightenment mind,  
 unconditioned emptiness and compassion,  
 permanent and stable method  
 and wisdom indivisible,  
 Buddha even before all the buddhas. [383]

[The fault of not realizing that to be so, 258.6]

For the Tretāyuga and later eons  
 that type of classification has vanished.

That has also brought up  
 the dregs of the view.

[The need to carefully divide the two universal grounds, because the universal-ground consciousness is not the causal continuum, natural luminosity, and so forth, but the universal-ground primordial awareness is the causal continuum, natural luminosity, and so forth, 258.6]

In the exceptional, sublime  
 Kṛtayuga Dharma, the statements  
 that the tantras are the “causal continuum”  
 refer to the sugata essence,  
 the universal-ground primordial awareness,  
 but never refer to  
 the universal-ground consciousness.

Why? Because what is profound tantra  
 is taught to be the basic space  
 of phenomena, absolute and unconditioned.

If it is the universal-ground  
 consciousness, it is not absolute.

It is also not naturally  
 primordial and unconditioned.

It is also not the sublime that is pure,  
 self, great bliss, and permanent.

It is also not the natural family<sup>504</sup>  
 and the svābhāvikakāya.

It is never the nine or twelve  
 fully established natures.<sup>505</sup>

If it is not those, it is never the deities,  
 mantras, tantras, and maṇḍalas  
 of the profound true mode of reality.

It is also not a continuum  
 with ground and result indivisible.

If it is not those,  
 it is not natural luminosity.

Because it is also not natural innate bliss,  
 the Primordial Buddha, and so forth,  
 it is also not the causal continuum  
 and the resultant continuum.

I cannot yield to those  
 who accept the universal-ground  
 consciousness as natural luminosity, [384]  
 so I join my palms together,  
 give advice, and offer an appeal.<sup>506</sup>

Because the universal-ground  
 consciousness is unestablished,<sup>507</sup>  
 neutral, and includes incidental stain,  
 because natural luminosity is virtuous<sup>508</sup>  
 and stain is purified from the very beginning,  
 and because the universal-ground consciousness  
 is conditioned and natural luminosity is unconditioned,  
 if it is consciousness, it is not natural luminosity.

If it is consciousness,  
 it is not self-arisen primordial awareness.

If it is consciousness,  
 it is not permanent, stable, and eternal.

If it is consciousness,  
 it is not the sugata essence.

If it is consciousness,  
 it is not Great Madhyamaka.

If it is consciousness,  
 it is not the Great Seal.

If it is consciousness,  
 it is not great nirvāṇa.

If it is consciousness,  
 it is not the innate kāya.

If it is consciousness,  
 it is not the profound perfection of wisdom.

If it is consciousness,  
it is not the profound emptiness of other.

If it is consciousness,  
it is not all that is fully established.

If it is not those,  
it is also not the causal continuum.

If it is natural luminosity,  
it is not consciousness.

If it is not consciousness,  
it is not the universal-ground consciousness.

Since primordial awareness and consciousness  
are just like light and darkness,  
and exist like nectar and poison,  
it is completely impossible  
for them to have a common ground,  
so do not mix them together as one! [385]

[The infinite great disadvantages of mixing the two together as one, 259.1]

If they are mixed together,  
the Buddha's doctrine is damaged,  
not clarified.

[The teachings of the ground of purification and so forth, together with their similes,  
259.2]

In the exceptional, sublime  
Kṛtayuga Dharma teachings,  
the ground of purification  
is the universal-ground primordial  
awareness that is like the sky,  
the object of purification is the incidental  
stains that are like clouds,

the purifying agent is the truth  
 of the path that is like a relentless wind,  
 and the result of purification  
 is the separated result that is like  
 the sky free of clouds.

[The flaw of extremely absurd consequences that would occur if the ground of purification and the object of purification were one, 259.2]

Thus it has been taught,  
 but many [adherents] of the flawed Tretāyuga  
 and later eons, who are not expert in that,  
 claim that the object of purification  
 and the ground of purification are one,  
 which is the same as claiming that  
 the clouds and the sky are one.

Here, the ground of purification,  
 thusness with stains, is the unconditioned  
 universal-ground primordial awareness,  
 but the object of purification is the conditioned stains,  
 so please consider whether or not those two are one.

The ground of purification is permanent  
 and the object of purification is impermanent.  
 Please consider whether or not those two are one.

The ground of purification is taintless  
 and the object of purification is the taints.  
 Please consider whether or not those two are one.

The ground of purification is utter purity  
 and the object of purification is total affliction.  
 Please consider whether or not those two are one.

There are also very many  
 others such as that. [386]

[The single identity of the immutable, fully established nature and Great Madhyamaka, 259.3]

That the fully established nature and Madhyamaka<sup>509</sup> are different merely in name, but not different in meaning, is the Kṛtayuga tradition.

[There is no proof for the opinion that the three natures are the Dharma language of Cittamātra alone, but there are refutations of that. 259.4]

In the flawed traditions of the Tretāyuga and later eons, it is claimed that the immutable fully established nature is only Cittamātra.

They allege that all three natures are also only Cittamātra.

Because the three natures are repeatedly taught in the treatises of flawless Kṛtayuga Madhyamaka, because that language does not occur in Cittamātra treatises, and because there are many refutations of that, it emerges from the Kṛtayuga tradition that the three natures are the Dharma tradition of the Madhyamaka alone.

[Because they have not understood exactly the classifications of philosophical tenets, they claim, “Everything that teaches the three natures is Cittamātra,” and, “Everyone who teaches that is a Cittamātra adherent,” and, “Nothing is established as absolute, so Madhyamaka is also completely unestablished,” and, “Everything that teaches in that way is Great Madhyamaka.” These are all bad views. 259.4]

Therefore, by not understanding and mixing up that type of classification, the dregs of the view have arisen.

Those Madhyamaka [treatises] that present the three natures of the fully established and so forth have also been demoted to Cittamātra treatises.<sup>510</sup>

The great experts of Great Madhyamaka  
who taught those have also  
been demoted to Cittamātra adherents.<sup>511</sup>

Those bad treatises<sup>512</sup> that teach,  
“The absolute, Madhyamaka,  
is totally unestablished,”  
thus falling into the extreme of denial,  
and falling into the nihilistic  
position of nonexistence,  
are complimented and praised with,  
“They are Madhyamaka.”

They are not that, yet the words of Māra  
that take them to be so have arisen  
in the Tretāyuga and later eons.

But for the Kṛtayuga, that type of bad view  
is the same as the horn of a rabbit.<sup>513</sup> [387]

[That has extremely absurd consequences, because if there were no support, there would be nothing that is supported, and so forth, and if there were no absolute, there would also be no relative. 259.7]

Those of the Tretāyuga and later eons say,  
“Absolute truth is totally unestablished,  
but relative action and result are infallible,  
so we are free from the extremes of exaggeration  
and denial concerning existence and nonexistence.”

Is a relative possible  
without an absolute?

Is what is pervaded possible  
without a pervading property?

Is what is supported possible  
without a supporting ground?



Is the incidental possible  
without a primordial?

Are phenomena possible  
without a true nature?<sup>514</sup>

If they were possible, would *they*  
not become an omnipresent true nature?

If it is impossible for there to be no absolute,  
does that not contradict a totally unestablished absolute?

[Refuting the opinion that both “independent inference” and “absurd consequence” are divisions of Madhyamaka, and then establishing by means of scripture and reasoning that all the absolute deities and mantras that are thusness and so forth are the divisions of Madhyamaka, 259.7]

The division of Madhyamaka  
according to “independent inference”  
and “absurd consequence”  
is an improper division of Madhyamaka,  
because it is an improper division of thusness.<sup>515</sup>

It is not taught in that way  
in the treatises of the Kṛtayuga,  
but occurs in the treatises  
of the flawed Tretāyuga and later eons.

That also has brought up  
the dregs of the view.

As for the division of Madhyamaka  
in the Kṛtayuga tradition,  
the divisions such as the nine  
fully established natures,<sup>516</sup>  
the divisions of the families  
taught in the tantras,  
and also the entire presentation  
by means of the divisions

of the names carefully stated  
 in the *Tantra of the Expression*  
*of the Absolute Names*<sup>517</sup>  
 are the divisions of Great  
 Madhyamaka beyond extremes. [388]

Likewise, all the stated divisions  
 of the profound, ultimate, true mode  
 of reality are also the divisions  
 of Great Madhyamaka beyond extremes.

Here there is no mixture with  
 even one conditioned phenomenon.

These are the divisions  
 of the unconditioned basic space of phenomena.

Here there is not the slightest  
 mixture with the impermanent.

These are the divisions  
 of permanent, stable, and eternal space.

Here there is no mixture with  
 even one relative phenomenon.

In the division of the absolute  
 fully established nature alone,  
 there is not the slightest division of essence.

There are very many  
 divisions of name and aspect.

Why? The meaning of the basic space  
 of phenomena where the myriad  
 has a single taste is that the names  
 are myriad, but the meaning has a single taste,  
 and the aspects are myriad,  
 but the essence has a single taste.

Therefore, these are the divisions  
of all that is profound and ultimate,  
such as the ultimate perfection of wisdom,  
great nirvāṇa, the Great Seal, the Atiyoga,  
the Vajrayoga,<sup>518</sup> union with innateness,  
Kālacakra, Cakrasamvara, and Hevajra.

If understood in that way,  
all is understood by understanding one point.

You will become a great expert  
without ignorance about all the  
profound, ultimate, true modes of reality.

[Showing by example and meaning that both “independent inference” and “absurd consequence” fall into the category of existence, so it is unreasonable for them to be separate divisions of Madhyamaka, 260.2]

Both independent inference  
and absurd consequence are conditioned. [389]

Therefore, they fall into the extreme  
of phenomena and fit into the category of existence,  
so they are not the middle.<sup>519</sup>

What is not Madhyamaka is never suitable  
as the ground for the divisions of Madhyamaka  
and as one of the divisions.

What is not authentic is never suitable  
as the ground for the divisions of the authentic  
and as one of the divisions.

What is not true is never suitable  
as the ground for the divisions of truth  
and as one of the divisions.

The Kṛtayuga tradition is like that.

[Mentioning the opinion of others, 260.3]

But those of the flawed Tretāyuga  
and later eons<sup>2</sup> allege, “Mere freedom  
from extremes is just labeled ‘Madhyamaka’;  
there is no Madhyamaka in reality,  
because even Madhyamaka is empty of Madhyamaka.”<sup>520</sup>

[The reasons why such an opinion is a great evil view, 260.3]

If that were the case,  
it would be a great evil view  
denying the absolute dharmakāya,  
the svābhāvikakāya, the innate kāya,  
and all the permanent, stable,  
eternal, everlasting, and omnipresent  
Buddha, Dharma, and Saṅgha.

Why? Because it is taught that  
these are the profound empty of other,  
which is not empty of self-nature.

[That ultimate profound emptiness is a ground empty of all extremes, but it is not  
a nonimplicative negation, an emptiness of self-nature merely free of extremes.  
260.4]

All the statements of profound emptiness  
in all the pristine, profound sūtras and tantras  
refer to a ground empty  
of both exaggeration and denial.

Likewise, they refer to a ground  
empty of both existence and nonexistence, [390]  
a ground empty of both entities and nonentities,  
and a ground empty of everything relative.

[That ground of emptiness, the profound basic space of phenomena, is never all these  
relative phenomena. It is the true mode of existence, the primordial awareness of

great bliss, the profound emptiness of other, and all the ultimate profound deities, tantras, and so forth. Thus all the scriptures and treatises that teach in that way are also texts of Great Madhyamaka. 260.5]

Precisely that ground of emptiness  
is the sugata essence, the natural family,  
the natural Buddha, natural Dharma,  
and natural Saṅgha, the natural spontaneous  
maṇḍalas, natural deities, natural tantras  
and mantras, natural nirvāṇa, natural luminosity,  
natural purity, primordially pristine,  
pristine form up through omniscience,  
the form of the fully established, immutable  
true nature up through the phenomena  
of a buddha and so forth,  
the ten unconditioned powers<sup>521</sup> and so forth,  
thusness with infinite qualities complete,  
and the Buddha of the ground, the Primordial Buddha.

It is the Tathāgata free  
from the very beginning,  
initially liberated enlightened mind  
with the nature of space,  
Buddha even before all the buddhas.

Therefore, the ultimate reality  
of all profound sūtras and tantras  
that carefully present thusness and so forth  
is emptiness of other,  
never emptiness of self-nature.

It is absolute, never relative. [391]

It is the true nature, never a phenomenon.<sup>522</sup>

It is the middle, never an extreme.

It is nirvāṇa, never saṃsāra.

It is primordial awareness,  
never consciousness.

It is pure, never impure.

It is the sublime self, never nothingness.

It is great bliss, never suffering.

It is permanent and stable,  
never impermanent.

It is self-arisen,  
never other-arisen.

It is the fully established,  
never the imagined.

It is natural, never fabricated.

It is primordial, never incidental.

It is Buddha, never sentient being.

It is the kernel, never the husk.

It is definitive meaning,  
never provisional meaning.

It is ultimate, never temporary.

It is the ground and the result,  
never the truth of the path.

It is the ground of purification,  
never the object of purification.

It is the true mode of reality,  
never the mode of confusion.

It is the sublime other,  
never the outer and the inner.

It is true, never false.

It is perfect, never mistaken. [392]

It is the ground of emptiness,  
never just empty.

It is the ground of separation,  
never just separate.

It is the ground of nonexistence,  
never just nonexistence.

It is an established phenomenon,  
never a nonimplicative negation.

It is virtue, never vice.

It is authentic, never inauthentic.

It is correct, never incorrect.

It is stainless, never stain.

Therefore, these are the same  
as Great Madhyamaka.

All the sublime sūtras of the third Dharma wheel  
and all the treatises of Maitreya<sup>523</sup>  
are the same as Great Madhyamaka.

The pristine tantras are also likewise.

[Mentioning the flaw in claiming that dependent origination is Madhyamaka and Madhyamaka is also dependent origination, which leads to the absurd consequence that all conditioned phenomena would be Madhyamaka, 260.7]

Most experts in the Tretāyuga  
and later eons allege, "Relative dependent  
origination is Great Madhyamaka,  
and that which is Madhyamaka  
is dependent origination."

If that were the case, since  
the conditioned and impermanent  
are also dependent origination,  
they would be Madhyamaka.

If that were accepted, they would be  
the absolute basic space of phenomena.

If even that were accepted,  
they would be unconditioned.

If that were accepted, it would  
contradict even being phenomena.<sup>524</sup>

[The need to understand also the division of the two truths in regard to dependent origination, 261.1]

Therefore, concerning statements  
about dependent origination,  
a division of the two truths  
is taught in the Kṛtayuga Dharma.<sup>525</sup>

[Realization of relative dependent origination is the path of Madhyamaka, but that dependent origination is not all the ultimate, profound, true modes of reality, such as Madhyamaka, 261.2]

Correct realization of relative  
dependent origination is the path [393]  
of entry into the city of Great Madhyamaka.

[That absolute dependent origination is taught in all sūtras and tantras to be the twelve aspects of truth and so forth, the ground in which the twelve limbs of relative dependent origination and the vital action winds of the twelve zodiac signs have ceased from the beginning. 261.3]



Absolute dependent origination,  
the profound basic space of phenomena,  
is not this dependent origination,  
but a sublime other dependent origination.

The twelve limbs at the root  
of existence have been extracted.<sup>526</sup>  
It holds the twelve pure aspects.<sup>527</sup>

Those are the twelve aspects of truth<sup>528</sup>  
and the twelve such as the places.<sup>529</sup>

The breaths of the zodiac signs  
and the sun have ceased.<sup>530</sup>

This is taught in the Mother Sūtras,  
the *Avatamsaka Sūtra*, and Mantrayāna.<sup>531</sup>

It is taught by the sublime  
experts of the Kṛtayuga.

It is not the field of experience  
of most in the Tretāyuga and later eons.

[That pure ground, absolute thusness, the immutable, fully established nature, empty and barren of everything relative from the beginning, is far beyond Cittamātra, so those who teach and accept this are also far beyond adherents of Cittamātra. 261.4]

The reason those are not Cittamātra  
is because they are a third category,  
the ground of emptiness beyond extremes,  
and because if they were Cittamātra,  
they would be asserted to be entities.

Those grounds of emptiness  
transcend the phenomena of consciousness.

Since they uphold a nondual primordial awareness,  
and since they are beyond single and multiple moments,  
how could they be phenomena accepted as entities?

[The main topic of the middle wheel of the teaching is also the thusness of the profound emptiness of other. It is never similar to an emptiness of self-nature, a nihilistic emptiness, an inanimate emptiness, a nonimplicative negation, a totally unestablished determination, but it is an emptiness possessing the most sublime of all aspects, with infinite qualities complete, and it is everything profound and ultimate, such as the absolute Evaṃ, the kāya of primordial awareness, natural luminosity, the Great Mother, Vajrasattva, Vajradhara, and the profound perfection of wisdom. 261.5]

Because the meaning  
of the second Dharma wheel  
is also thusness with infinite qualities  
complete, it is not a nonimplicative negation,  
and thus not an emptiness of self-nature,  
an emptiness of nothingness,  
or a nihilistic emptiness. [394]

Thus it is the ground of emptiness  
possessing the most sublime of all aspects,  
and it is immutable, sublime great bliss.

Thus it is the Great Seal equivalent  
to the eight prognostic images,<sup>532</sup>  
and it is the absolute syllables Evaṃ.

Thus it is the kāya of primordial awareness  
equivalent to the eight prognostic images,  
and it is the absolute tetrahedron drop.

Thus it is the vajrakāya equivalent  
to the eight prognostic images,  
and it is the absolute vajra *bhaga*.<sup>533</sup>

Thus it is the mantrakāya equivalent  
to the eight prognostic images,  
and it is the absolute vowels such as *a*  
and consonant-syllables such as *ka*.

Thus it is the everlasting kāya

equivalent to the eight prognostic images,  
and it is the absolute vajra and lotus.

Thus it is the eternal kāya equivalent  
to the eight prognostic images,  
and it is the absolute vajra moon and sun.

Thus it is the kāya of the true nature  
equivalent to the eight prognostic images,  
and it is absolute vajra semen and uterine blood.

Thus it is vajra space equivalent  
to the eight prognostic images,  
and it is absolute partless omnipresence.

Thus it is the space of mantra equivalent  
to the eight prognostic images,  
and it is the absolute, powerful tenfold anagram.<sup>534</sup>

Thus it is the space of bliss equivalent  
to the eight prognostic images,  
and it is the absolute bodiless vajra.

Thus it is Great Madhyamaka equivalent  
to the eight prognostic images,  
and it is the absolute vajra essence. [395]

Thus it is Vajradhara equivalent  
to the eight prognostic images,  
and it is all that is profound and ultimate,  
such as absolute Vajrasattva,  
and such as the absolute perfection of wisdom,  
the Mother of the Conquerors.

[The main topic of the last two wheels of the teaching and the four sets of tantra is the same profound emptiness, and it is impossible for this to be consciousness, emptiness of self-nature, or any relative phenomena. It is everything profound and ultimate, such as self-arisen primordial awareness, the absolute valid cognition,

aggregates, constituents, and so forth, total awareness of self and others, and the partless, omnipresent, immutable fully established nature. 262.1]

Therefore, the profound emptiness  
of the second Dharma wheel,  
such as in the extensive, medium,  
and condensed sūtras on the perfection of wisdom,  
the profound emptiness of the third Dharma wheel,  
such as in the Five Sūtras on the Essence  
and the Ten Sūtras [on the Essence],  
and the profound emptiness  
of the four sets of tantra,<sup>535</sup>  
all the profound emptiness  
of the profound sūtras and tantras,  
are not relative, but absolute truth.

It is not conditioned,  
it is unconditioned space.

It is not unstable,  
it is permanent, stable, and eternal.

It is not false,  
it is perfect truth.

It is not fallible,  
it is the sublime, infallible refuge.

It is not changeable,  
it is the immutable fully established nature.

It is not this authenticity,  
it is the absolute authenticity.

It is not this reasoning,  
it is the reasoning of the true nature.

It is not this Cittamātra,  
it is a sublime other Cittamātra.

It is not this self-awareness,  
it is a sublime other self-awareness.

It is not this natural lucidity,  
it is a sublime other natural lucidity.

It is not this cognizance,  
it is a sublime other cognizance.

It is not consciousness,  
it is self-arisen primordial awareness.

It is not the imagined nature,  
it is fully established primordial awareness. [396]

It is not acceptance of an entity,  
it is Great Madhyamaka.

It is not inanimate,  
it is cognition of all and awareness of all.

It is not a concept,  
it is nonconceptual primordial awareness.

It is not for a dialectician,  
it is the field of experience of a yogin.

It is not these aggregates,  
it is the sublime other aggregates.<sup>536</sup>

It is also not these constituents,  
it is transcendent, sublime other constituents.

It is not these sensory bases,  
it is sublime other sensory bases.

It is not these action faculties,  
it is sublime other action faculties.

And the activities of these are likewise.

It is not this three realms,  
it is a sublime other three realms.<sup>537</sup>

It is not this three worlds,  
it is a sublime other three worlds.

It is not this three times,  
it is a sublime other three times.<sup>538</sup>

It is not this three vehicles,  
it is a sublime other three vehicles.<sup>539</sup>

It is not these stable and mobile phenomena,  
it is sublime other stable and mobile phenomena.

It is not this cause and result,  
it is a sublime other cause and result.

It is not this birth and cessation,  
it is a sublime other birth and cessation.

It is not this apparent and empty,  
it is a sublime other apparent and empty.

It is not this central figure and entourage,  
it is a sublime other central figure and entourage.<sup>540</sup>

It is not this Father and Mother,  
it is a sublime other Father and Mother.<sup>541</sup>

It is not this male and female,  
it is a sublime other male and female.

It is not this androgyny,  
it is a sublime other androgyny.

It is not this dependent origination,  
it is a sublime other dependent origination. [397]

It is not this perfection,  
it is a sublime other perfection.

It is not this emptiness,  
it is a sublime other emptiness.

[Also applying the division of the two truths to the factors conducive to enlightenment, from phenomena up through the eighteen exclusive qualities, to show that all the absolute factors conducive to enlightenment, and so forth, are never relative, but are the profound truth of cessation, 262.3]

All the factors conducive to enlightenment  
are also not this truth of the path,  
but the absolute truth of cessation.<sup>542</sup>

The noble truths, the measureless meditations,  
the formless absorptions,  
the nine absorptions of liberation,<sup>543</sup>  
the three doors of liberation,<sup>544</sup>  
the dhāraṇī door of meditative concentration,  
and a tathāgata's ten powers, four fearless attributes,  
four discriminating awarenesses,  
great love and great compassion,  
eighteen exclusive qualities,  
and three noble knowledges<sup>545</sup> are also  
not this relative, conditioned truth of the path,  
but a sublime, transcendent, other  
truth of cessation beyond this.

[The intent of the Dharma as expressed by the simile of the sky, 262.4]

Being causeless, changeless,  
partless, omnipresent, all-pervasive,  
and so forth is taught by the simile  
of the unconditioned sky.

[The intended meaning of similes for the mode of emptiness that apply to the emptiness of the basic space of phenomena, 262.5]

Not empty of self-nature,  
 but empty of other  
 is taught by similes such as  
 an empty village and an empty vase.

[The intent of teaching by application of a simile and its meaning to what is sometimes apparent, but sometimes not apparent, 262.5]

Not apparent to concepts,  
 but directly apparent  
 to nonconceptual primordial awareness  
 is taught by the simile of the prognostic image.<sup>546</sup>

[The intent of teaching by application of a simile and its meaning that the basic space of phenomena is great bliss, 262.6]

The discriminating self-awareness  
 of natural great bliss is taught by the simile  
 of the bliss arisen during sexual union.<sup>547</sup>

[The intent indicated by the simile of a great roll of cloth, 262.7]

The equal extent of the two truths,  
 their similar aspects, multiple aspects, [398]  
 many qualities, difficulty to contain  
 within the sheath of the stains, and so forth  
 are clearly taught by the simile of a great roll of cloth.<sup>548</sup>

[The intent indicated by the similes of the eye not seeing because of flaws such as cataracts, by the digging of a well, and so forth, 262.7]

All-pervasive and always  
 present in front of us,  
 yet unseen by all types of consciousness  
 is taught by many similes,  
 such as that of digging a well,  
 and those of eye diseases such as cataracts.



[The intent of statements that the basic space of phenomena is beyond similes, 263.1]

By similes that present  
many flawless paradoxes,  
such as formless fine form  
and bodiless sublime body,  
it is carefully taught that,  
“It does not exist in this world,  
so it is beyond worldly simile,”  
and, “It is beyond all conceivable similes.”

[The intent indicated by similes such as a lamp within a vase and the great treasure of a pauper, 263.2]

That it exists in all, but is obscured  
by the afflictions of sentient beings  
is taught by many similes,  
such as a lamp within a vase  
and the great treasure of a pauper.<sup>549</sup>

[The intent indicated by similes such as the element water, gold, and the sky, 263.2]

That it will actualize if the stains  
are removed is taught by similes  
such as the element water, gold, and the sky.

[The intent indicated by similes such as the endless sky, 263.3]

That the stains end,  
but the essence does not end  
is also taught by many similes,  
such as the sky.

[The intent indicated by the similes of the sky with clouds and without clouds, which is still the same sky, 263.4]

The ultimate ground and result  
are indivisible in essence

and no different in pure nature,  
 but by the similes of the sky with clouds  
 and the sky without clouds [399]  
 they are taught to be “the ground  
 with stain” and “the result separated from stain.”

[The intent indicated by the simile of the cloudy sky becoming free of clouds,  
 263.4]

In the transformation of ultimate,  
 profound definitive meaning,  
 the essence does not change,  
 but the stained becomes stainless,  
 and the result separated from stain is obtained,  
 as taught by the simile of the sky  
 that has become free of clouds.

[The intent of statements (about no simile and) with simile, 263.5]

No simile completely presents it exactly,  
 but with many similes that partially present it, . . .

[The pristine scriptures present the true mode of reality and the mode of confusion, what is to be rejected and the antidote, and so forth, without mixing these, but (the scriptures of) the flawed Tretāyuga and later eons apply their own flawed understanding to the meaning, thus causing the deterioration of pristine view and meditation. 263.6]

. . . and with very many perfect reasons,  
 the Kṛtayuga Dharma clearly teaches  
 the condensed meaning of the true mode of reality,  
 the mode of confusion, the rejection of confusion,  
 and the removal of confusion,  
 the ground, path, result, and accompanying  
 factors of the ground of purification,  
 the object of purification, the purifying agent,  
 and the result of purification,  
 and the condensed meaning  
 of pristine view, meditation, and conduct,

but that type of classification has deteriorated  
for the Tretāyuga and later eons.

[Pristine view and meditation, 263.7]

The view that precisely  
realizes the true mode of reality  
and the meditation that precisely  
sees the true mode of existence . . .

[Rejoicing in the pure conduct of those who preserve moral discipline and so forth  
even though they lack and do not primarily accept the view and meditation of the  
profound definitive meaning, and also rejoicing with faith and respect toward all  
who engage without error in all the view, meditation, and conduct, 264.1]

. . . have mostly deteriorated,  
but many sublime individuals  
have also appeared who have  
greatly accumulated merit and  
possess good experience and good conduct.

To them I also join my palms  
together, happily rejoice in all  
accomplished virtues such as generosity,  
moral discipline, patience, and diligence, [400]  
meditation, wisdom, power of method,  
and prayer, and prostrate with the crown  
of my head bowed in faithful  
and respectful homage.

I also have faith in those who,  
serving, honoring, and revering  
the Three Jewels with faith and respect,  
and the three representations  
with faith and respect,  
thus enrich themselves and others.

With pure thoughts, I prostrate  
to those who, definitely realizing

that all sentient beings are our kind parents  
 and possess the buddha essence,  
 exchange self for others  
 with love and compassion,  
 and respect everyone as teachers.

With the crown of my head  
 I take the dust from the feet of all  
 who realize the unity of appearances  
 and emptiness indivisible,  
 even though all these appearances  
 and sounds are never established  
 in reality's true mode of existence,  
 like the horn of a rabbit, and are like  
 dream or illusion in the perception  
 of conventional confusion, and who,  
 realizing that cause and result are infallible,  
 reject evil actions and carefully cultivate  
 good actions, fulfilling sublime prayers  
 to liberate all living beings.

I respectfully prostrate  
 to the sublime individuals who,  
 realizing that all relative phenomena  
 are each empty of self-nature, [401]  
 and carefully realizing  
 that all these stable and mobile phenomena,  
 apparent while nonexistent,  
 are only a confusing appearance,  
 do not act with attachment.

I also have faith in those who,  
 realizing that all afflictions and concepts  
 arisen from clinging to a self  
 are like enemies, totally subdue them  
 and live peacefully and morally.

I respectfully prostrate  
 to the sublime individuals who,

victorious over the enemy  
 of the afflictions and concepts,  
 thoroughly cultivate each  
 antidote for what is to be rejected,  
 such as ugliness as the antidote for desire,  
 cultivation of love as the antidote for hatred,  
 dependent origination as the antidote for ignorance,  
 the divisions of the constituents as the antidote for pride,  
 and the exhalation and inhalation of breath  
 as the antidote for conceptualization.

I prostrate to those who,  
 transforming the circulating vital action winds,  
 on which consciousness is mounted,  
 into the vital wind of primordial awareness  
 in the central channel,  
 practice the yoga of nonconceptual,  
 nondual primordial awareness.<sup>550</sup>

I have faith in those who,  
 carefully realizing that the appearance  
 of outer and inner relative and incidental  
 stains is only a confusing appearance, [402]  
 actualize the appearance of an other,  
 sublime, transcendent absolute beyond this.<sup>551</sup>

I also have faith in those who,  
 utterly abandoning all things  
 toward which attachment and anger arise,  
 such as a homeland, relatives,  
 and valuable possessions,  
 teach what increases the practice  
 of Dharma in places without distinction,  
 without bias, and toward which  
 they have no attachment.

I also have faith in those who,  
 utterly abandoning lucrative jobs  
 and affairs, fully apply body,

speech, and mind to virtue,  
 and fulfill sublime prayers  
 by means of threefold purity,<sup>552</sup>  
 raising a great wealth of virtue.

I also have faith in those who,  
 by carefully giving them away  
 to higher recipients and lower recipients,  
 make the most of effortlessly,  
 naturally occurring, transient  
 possessions that have no essence.

I also have faith in those who  
 carefully accomplish, cause to be accomplished,  
 and urge others toward accomplishing  
 the ten types of Dharma practice,<sup>553</sup>  
 such as copying the exceptional,  
 sublime Kṛtayuga Dharma.

I also have faith in those who  
 do not think and talk about the faults  
 of all who practice the Dharma,  
 such as abbots, disciples, masters,  
 spiritual friends, and close companions,  
 and act faithfully and respectfully,  
 without jealousy. [403]

I also have faith in those who,  
 with great beneficial intentions,  
 make careful appeals to evil,  
 nonreligious persons  
 who have entered a wrong path,  
 and happily rejoice for those  
 who have entered a good path  
 and are accomplishing virtue.

I also have faith in those who teach that,  
 not to mention anti-Dharma,  
 even Dharma is to be abandoned

in the context of decisiveness  
 during profound meditative equipoise,  
 and who carefully distinguish existence,  
 nonexistence, and so forth in the context  
 of distinguishing during postmeditation.<sup>554</sup>

I also have faith in those who  
 carefully realize, carefully practice,  
 and carefully teach that what is  
 changeable melting bliss is to be rejected,  
 what is immutable melting bliss is to be tended,<sup>555</sup>  
 and what is naturally immutable is to be obtained.

In brief, I also respectfully prostrate  
 to all those who carefully realize,  
 carefully practice, and carefully teach  
 the ground, path, result, view,  
 meditation, and conduct in accordance  
 with the Kṛtayuga Dharma.

[Motivated by the enlightenment mind, unyielding advice is offered to people who have entered into wrong views and meditation: “Renounce those wrong views and meditation!” 264.3]

I cannot yield to those who,  
 relying on the flawed [treatises of the]  
 Tretāyuga and later eons,  
 accept that all is precisely empty of self-nature,  
 accept that emptiness of self-nature is the absolute,  
 accept that the absolute is empty of self-nature,  
 accept that concepts are the dharmakāya,<sup>556</sup> [404]  
 accept that the five poisons are primordial awareness,  
 accept that consciousness is Buddha,<sup>557</sup>  
 accept that karmic appearances are Buddha,  
 accept that Buddha is just an empty name,  
 accept that Buddha never exists,  
 accept that absolute Buddha does not exist,  
 accept that the two truths have a single essence,  
 accept that saṃsāra and nirvāṇa

have a single essence,  
 accept that what is to be rejected  
 and the antidote have a single essence,  
 accept that the object of purification  
 and the ground of purification are one,  
 and accept that this saṃsāra of suffering  
 arisen from its origins “is Buddha if realized,  
 but saṃsāra if not realized.”

Like sending a message,  
 I here call out these fine words.

[It is taught in (the scriptures of) definitive meaning that the nine immutable and fully established natures, the twelve, and so forth always exist as thusness, so do not say the absolute is nothing! 264.4]

Please consider statements  
 in the Kṛtayuga Dharma  
 that whether the tathāgatas  
 appear or do not appear,<sup>558</sup>  
 the nine fully established natures  
 are always “present precisely unchanged.”<sup>559</sup>

[In particular, no pristine scriptures and reasoning teach that precisely these afflictions are ultimate primordial awareness, so an instruction is given to reject the wrong view that accepts these afflictions and concepts to be primordial awareness. 264.5]

I cannot yield to those who  
 accept that even these afflictions,  
 concepts, and groups of consciousness  
 “are the dharmakāya if realized,  
 but the stains if not realized,”  
 so joining my palms together,  
 I call out and offer advice: [405]  
 “Act in accordance with the Kṛtayuga Dharma!”

What difference do you see between that and claiming,  
 “It is gold if realized, but brass if not realized,”  
 “It is a horse if realized, but a bull if not realized,”



“It is light if realized, but darkness if not realized,”  
 “It is medicine if realized, but poison if not realized.”

If there are pristine scriptures,  
 reasoning, and esoteric instructions  
 that teach such as this,  
 please show them to me also.

[The pristine (scriptures of) definitive meaning say the basic space of phenomena is the place, support, and ground of all phenomena, so do not say all is groundless and rootless! 264.6]

I cannot yield to those who accept,  
 “All is groundless and rootless,”<sup>560</sup>  
 so joining my palms together,  
 I call out and offer advice.

Please consider that the Kṛtayuga Dharma  
 also teaches that the universal-ground  
 primordial awareness, the space of thusness,  
 is the partless, omnipresent, all-pervasive ground,  
 place, and support of all phenomena.

[Everything that is the ultimate absolute is never an entity or a nonentity, it is a third category, so all knowables are not determined to be either entities or nonentities. 264.7]

To all who accept that everything  
 knowable is determined to be an entity  
 or a nonentity, and to those who accept  
 that whatever is inanimate or aware is an entity,  
 I also join my palms together and call out.

It is taught that the ultimate true mode  
 of reality is a third category,  
 a sublime, middle, central androgyny.

The unconditioned bliss, cognition, [406]  
 primordial awareness, pure awareness,

aggregates, constituents, and so forth,  
 from form up through the exclusive qualities;  
 and all the phenomena of permanent,  
 stable, eternal, everlasting, and immutable  
 form up through omniscience;<sup>561</sup>  
 and form up through the phenomena  
 of the Buddha of the immutable,  
 fully established true nature are also  
 the ultimate knowable, the absolute truth.

These are unconditioned,  
 not conditioned entities.

Please look at the sublime  
 scriptures that teach in that way.

Please also look at the sublime  
 scriptures that say the thirty-six aspects  
 of the tastes, the constituents, and so forth;  
 the thirty-six aspects of the aggregates;  
 and the thirty-six such as the aggregates,  
 constituents, and so forth that are  
 a transcendent, sublime other beyond this relative  
 are the ultimate knowable, thusness,  
 but never entities or nonentities.<sup>562</sup>

[All phenomena are untrue, but many scriptures of definitive meaning teach that  
 the true nature, thusness, is the most sublime truth, so do not say there is no truth!  
 265.2]

I cannot yield to those who  
 accept that there is no perfect truth,  
 and so I call out and offer advice.

The Kṛtayuga Dharma teaches  
 that great nirvāṇa is truth,  
 it teaches that the truth of cessation  
 is the sublime truth,  
 it teaches that thusness is true,

but others are false, [407]  
 and that the twelve aspects of truth<sup>563</sup>  
 and so forth are the ultimate truth  
 of the true mode of reality.

Please look carefully  
 at those [scriptures] also.

[Motivated by beneficial intentions toward them, people who claim this is the view of eternalism or nihilism are urged, "Do not say that!" 265.3]

I also cannot yield to those who accept that  
 every understanding of permanence  
 is the flawed view of eternalism,  
 every understanding of nothingness  
 is the flawed view of nihilism,  
 every understanding of existence  
 is the flawed view of existence,  
 and every understanding of nonexistence  
 is the flawed view of nonexistence,  
 so joining my palms together  
 I send a message and offer advice.

[There is not a flaw in understanding what is permanent and so forth in reality (to be so), and there is not a flaw in understanding what is nothing and so forth in reality to be nothing and so forth, but there is a flaw in reversing each of those understandings. 265.4]

Please look at the statements  
 in the Kṛtayuga Dharma that  
 there is both a flaw and a quality  
 in understanding permanence,  
 there is also both a flaw and a quality  
 in understanding impermanence,  
 there is also both a flaw and a quality  
 in understanding purity,  
 there is also both a flaw and a quality  
 in understanding impurity,  
 there is also both a flaw and a quality

in understanding bliss,  
 there is also both a flaw and a quality  
 in understanding suffering,  
 there is also both a flaw and a quality  
 in understanding the existence of a self,  
 there is also both a flaw and a quality  
 in understanding the nonexistence of a self,  
 there is also both a flaw and a quality  
 in understanding existence,  
 there is also both a flaw and a quality  
 in understanding nonexistence,  
 and there is also both a flaw and a quality  
 in understanding nothingness. [408]

[Buddha *is* established in the absolute because the Primordial Buddha is established.  
 So do not say Buddha does not exist in the absolute! 265.5]

I also cannot yield to those who accept  
 that Buddha does not exist in reality,  
 who do not accept an unconditioned Buddha,  
 and who do not accept a permanent,  
 stable, and eternal Buddha,  
 so joining my palms together  
 I offer advice and make an appeal.

Please also look at those Kṛtayuga  
 statements that say absolute truth,  
 indivisible space and pure awareness,  
 is the Primordial Buddha,  
 the Buddha of the ground, permanent, stable,  
 eternal, everlasting, all-pervasive thusness,  
 the “enlightenment of the Buddha.”

[Permanent and stable primordial awareness beyond the momentary is taught in  
 many of the scriptures of definitive meaning, so do not say primordial awareness does  
 not exist in reality! 265.6]

I also offer a request to those who claim  
 that primordial awareness does not exist in reality,

and who do not accept self-arisen  
primordial awareness as permanent.

The sublime conquerors teach  
in the Kṛtayuga Dharma that primordial awareness  
beyond single and multiple moments  
is “thatness,” so please look at those [scriptures].<sup>564</sup>

[The flaw of extremely absurd consequences that would arise if the sugata essence  
were provisional in meaning, 265.7]

I also cannot yield to those who accept,  
“The sugata essence is provisional in meaning,”  
so joining my palms together,  
I call out and offer an appeal.<sup>565</sup>

The sugata essence is thusness, [409]  
and thusness is also the sugata essence,  
so if the sugata essence were provisional in meaning,  
thusness would also be provisional in meaning.

The absolute dharmakāya  
would also be provisional in meaning.

The svābhāvīkākāya  
would also be provisional in meaning.

The natural family  
would also be provisional in meaning.

The profound perfection of wisdom  
would also be provisional in meaning.

Great Madhyamaka  
would also be provisional in meaning.

Great nirvāṇa  
would also be provisional in meaning.

The Great Seal  
would also be provisional in meaning.

Great luminosity  
would also be provisional in meaning.

All the ultimate deities, mantras,  
maṇḍalas, tantras, and mudrās  
of the profound true mode of reality,  
such as Cakrasamvara, Hevajra,  
Kālacakra, and Guhyasamāja,  
would also be provisional  
in meaning, which is refuted  
by extremely absurd consequences.

[There is no pristine proof that the sugata essence is provisional in meaning. 266.1]

If there are scripture and reasoning  
that present the sugata essence  
to be provisional in meaning,  
please show them.

[Pristine scripture and reasoning establish that it is definitive in meaning, so it cannot be refuted that it is definitive in meaning, 266.1]

Very many profound scriptures,  
reasoning, and esoteric instructions  
present it to be definitive in meaning.

[Refutation by showing that there is no proof, but there are contradictions, in saying, "The statements in the scriptures of definitive meaning that the sugata essence has infinite qualities mean the sugata essence is definitive in meaning, but its qualities are provisional." 266.2]

Some people with wrong ideas might think this:  
"The sugata essence is not provisional in meaning,  
but all its qualities are provisional in meaning. [410]  
Therefore, a sugata essence with the many qualities  
complete does not exist in reality."

The Conqueror's Mother Sūtras carefully teach, "The qualities of each of the nine fully established natures are also measureless," and other Kṛtayuga Dharma, such as the Ten Sūtras on the Essence and the Ten Sūtras on Definitive Meaning, also teaches that the absolute, permanent qualities are countless,<sup>566</sup> so please look at those.

[If a permanent Buddha is impossible, there is also no unconditioned Buddha, which is equivalent. The relative Buddha exists, so the absolute Buddha also exists. No pristine scripture and reasoning teach that the absolute Buddha does not exist. 266.4]

You might say, "A permanent Buddha is impossible, so statements that it is permanent are provisional in meaning."

In that case, I would ask you, "Are statements that it is unconditioned provisional in meaning or not?"

Unconditioned and permanent have equal connotation.

Impermanent and conditioned have equal connotation.

Therefore, if one were negated, both would be negated.

Thus, if the permanent were negated, the unconditioned would be negated, so that even the absolute basic space of phenomena would be negated, and thus, alas, all phenomena would be negated.

This is because, if the pervading  
property is negated,  
what is pervaded is negated,  
and if the support is negated,  
what is supported is negated.<sup>567</sup>

Very many exist as support  
and what is supported,  
and as pervading property  
and what is pervaded,  
such as the absolute as the support  
and the relative as what is supported,  
the true nature as the support  
and phenomena as what are supported,  
the absolute as the pervading property  
and the relative as what is pervaded, [411]  
and the middle and the extremes.

Please consider all those in detail.

The many statements about  
the pervading property  
and what is pervaded,  
and the many about the support  
and what is supported,  
such as, "The sugata essence  
pervades all living beings,"<sup>568</sup>  
also mean that if the pervading  
property were negated,  
what is pervaded would be negated,  
and if the support did not exist,  
what is supported would not exist.

If a permanent Buddha  
is impossible,  
please present scripture  
and reasoning as proof of that.



Concerning its possibility,  
there are infinite scripture and reasoning.

[The assertion, "Even though the two assemblies have not been accumulated, buddhahood is reached merely by recognizing your very essence," is refuted by the reply, "All sentient beings, who have recognition of their very essence because they all have cognition, would have already reached buddhahood." 266.5]

I cannot yield to those who  
accept, "Since buddhahood is reached  
by recognizing your very essence,  
you do not need to accumulate the two  
assemblies and purify the two obscurations,  
because recognizing the very essence  
naturally purifies them, without rejection."<sup>569</sup>

So joining my palms together,  
I offer advice and make an appeal.

A sentient being without self-awareness  
is impossible, and if you have self-awareness,  
you have recognition of your very essence.

If you were totally unaware  
of self and others,  
it would contradict being aware,  
like the gross elements.<sup>570</sup>

Therefore, all sentient beings  
have minds, and all who [412]  
have minds have self-awareness,  
so they have recognition of their  
very essence as soon as they are born.

This approach is known to those  
who understand scripture and reasoning.

Arrogant fools with little learning,  
who are usurpers, pretenders, and

fabricators of Dharma, are numerous,  
but have never understood this approach,  
or even heard about or seen it.

Therefore, such a wrong view,  
in which recognizing your  
very essence is sufficient,  
is the secret words of Māra.

Reject such an evil view,  
the work of Māra, which says,  
“You enter the perfect path  
or the wrong path through such  
realization or lack of realization.  
Therefore, you are liberated<sup>571</sup>  
by recognizing your very essence.”

[The flaw of extremely absurd consequences, such as the consequence that all light would be darkness, that would occur from claiming that buddhahood is reached by realizing this consciousness of your own mind to be the dharmakāya, 266.7]

You might say, “The meaning  
of recognizing your very essence  
refers to precisely the realization  
that this consciousness of your  
own mind is the dharmakāya.”

Because this consciousness  
is the opposite of the dharmakāya,  
it is never the dharmakāya.

If it is, is poison also nectar  
or pitch-black darkness also light?

Are negative factors also positive factors?  
Are what are to be rejected also the antidotes?  
Are executioners also sublime friends?  
Are the types of māras also the masters?<sup>572</sup> [413]  
Are sins also virtues?

Are all lower realms also higher realms?  
 Is everything conditioned permanent?  
 Is all saṃsāra bliss?  
 Is all consciousness primordial awareness?  
 Is all emission nonemission?  
 Is all fabrication natural?  
 Is all the incidental the primordial?  
 Are all the stains the essence?  
 Is all the relative the absolute?  
 Are all phenomena the true nature?  
 Are all karmic forms luminosity?  
 Are all faults qualities?  
 Are all ominous signs glorious?  
 Is all wrong right?  
 Is all low high?  
 Is all bad good?  
 Is all far close?  
 Is all the tainted taintless?  
 Is all the impeded unimpeded?  
 Is all that has form formless?  
 Is all the revealed unrevealed? [414]  
 Is all provisional meaning definitive meaning?  
 Is all wrong dharma sublime Dharma?  
 Are all wrong paths sublime paths?  
 Are all frightening places pleasant places?

Is all black white?  
 Are all squares round?

This also applies equally  
 to other colors and shapes.

This also applies to all such knowables.

Why? Because if [consciousness]  
 were the dharmakāya even though  
 it is the opposite of the dharmakāya,  
 that would involve identical reasoning.

Experts know this approach  
and this sort of reasoning in regard  
to all conditioned and unconditioned phenomena.

It is not the field of experience  
of foolish fabricators.

[A careful presentation of the division of the true nature and emptiness, by making such points as, “The dharmakāya and emptiness are not at all different, yet are not one, because there are endless examples of what are emptiness, but are not the dharmakāya.” 267.1]

If you say that if your own mind,  
these groups of consciousness,  
were not<sup>573</sup> the dharmakāya,  
they would not be emptiness,  
and if they were not the basic space of phenomena,  
they would not be emptiness,  
and if they were not the true nature,  
they would not be emptiness,  
that would be a ridiculous doctrine.

Why? Because emptiness and  
the dharmakāya are two alternatives,  
but never equivalents.

It is just the nocturnal raving<sup>574</sup> of those  
intoxicated by the poisonous drink  
of wrong explanations, those who  
lack the profound esoteric instructions  
about the two alternatives concerning [415]  
emptiness and all that is fully established,  
such as the basic space of phenomena.

Therefore, never depart in any way  
from the Kṛtayuga [Dharma]  
that establishes all phenomena  
by means of two alternatives,  
three alternatives, and four alternatives!<sup>575</sup>

[Mentioning the (bad) opinion that says, “Since everything is empty of self-nature, without performing traceable virtues such as construction of the three representations, perform traceless virtues such as ritual feasts!” and, with beneficial intentions, making the appeal, “Do not say that!” 267.2]

Those of the flawed Tretāyuga  
and later eons say, “Buddha, enlightenment,  
and primordial awareness are just names.  
The many qualities that are taught  
are also provisional in meaning.  
Therefore, construction of the three  
representations is meaningless.<sup>576</sup>  
As a side effect sentient beings die,  
and the sin of their ruin is even greater  
than the merit of their construction.  
The earth is sinless, while a stūpa is sinful.  
Therefore, without performing traceable  
virtues, fully offer up all offerings,  
and make all virtues traceless!”<sup>577</sup>

I also cannot yield to those statements,  
and joining my palms together,  
I offer advice and make an appeal.

[Establishing through scripture and reasoning that since all the Jewels included in the two truths have infinite blessing and power, the construction of their three representations will yield infinite merit, 267.4]

The Conqueror teaches that  
the absolute Buddha exists as absolute truth  
and even the relative Buddha born  
from his blessings and accumulated virtue  
exists in just the relative.

The Kṛtayuga Dharma teaches that  
the relative Buddha is empty of self-nature,  
yet benefit to others occurs as from [416]  
a jewel and a heavenly tree.

For sublime sons of the conquerors  
and for infinite arhats, the infinite qualities  
of the absolute dharmakāya  
perform benefit to others.<sup>578</sup>

Fabricators and pretenders  
who have not heard or seen such  
[teachings] deny the Conqueror,  
and also denying his three representations,<sup>579</sup>  
completely shut many gates of virtue.

May they also quickly see  
the sublime Kṛtayuga Dharma,  
completely reject evil views,  
and open many gates of virtue!

[Because the Buddha perfected the two goals, great merit is obtained by constructing his three representations. If these are purposely destroyed, it is a great sin, but it is not a sin if they naturally fall into ruin. So I would advise, "Those who desire merit, construct the three representations!" 267.5]

The Conqueror is flawless  
and has perfected all qualities.  
Therefore, it is taught that the results  
of any benefit or harm done to him  
are much greater than others.

Therefore, if [a stūpa, etc.]  
were purposely destroyed,  
it would be a great sin,  
but I have not seen it taught  
that natural ruin is a great sin.

[The wish to be able to do in all lifetimes what is to be done for the precious doctrine,  
267.7]

May I clarify the doctrine in all lifetimes!

Even if unable to clarify the doctrine,  
may I bear the great responsibility of the doctrine!

Even if unable to bear the great responsibility,  
may I just stand watch with concern  
for the doctrine and fear for the decline  
of the doctrine! [417]

May I remove all the sufferings  
of all infinite beings, who are my parents!

Even if unable to remove all sufferings,  
may I just be their companion in suffering!<sup>580</sup>

[An instruction and a prayer to reject the opinions and wrong explanations of others  
who have not realized the profound key points of the scriptures, 267.7]

May I and all others always reject  
the wrong explanations that contradict  
the Kṛtayuga Dharma,  
such as the wrong explanation of Cittamātra  
and Madhyamaka according to whether  
the three natures are accepted or not accepted,  
the wrong explanation of Cittamātra  
and Madhyamaka according to whether  
the universal-ground consciousness  
is accepted or not accepted,<sup>581</sup>  
the wrong explanation of Cittamātra  
and Madhyamaka according to whether  
the eight groups of consciousness  
are accepted or not accepted,<sup>582</sup>  
and the wrong explanation of Cittamātra  
and Madhyamaka according to whether  
a severed family is accepted or not accepted!<sup>583</sup>

This impartial and unbiased treatise is known as the *Great Calculation of the Doctrine That Has the Significance of a Fourth Council*. Glorious Lama Dampa Sönam Gyaltzen Palsangpo made many fine gifts and said, "Compose

many treatises like this!" Thus it was composed by the Possessor of the Four Reliances. It is now complete.<sup>584</sup>

May it benefit the doctrine and sentient beings!

*Maṅgalam*



### 3. *Autocommentary to the “Fourth Council”*

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*Om.* Prostrations and offerings to the masters, buddhas, and bodhisattvas.<sup>585</sup>

I respectfully prostrate to the absolute  
perfect Buddha, the Blessed One,  
who is thusness, ultimate purity,  
self, great bliss, and permanence,  
and will fully explain the classification  
of the two sets of four eons.

That single quatrain expresses offerings to all the Jewels of the ultimate, profound, true mode of reality, thatness, and the promise is made to explain the classification of the two sets of great and lesser four eons. What are those?

The great four eons concern  
the quality of the eons of a cosmic age,  
and the lesser four eons,  
the quality of the doctrine.

The years of the first set are 4,320,000,  
a quarter of which is taught to be a *foot*,  
and one foot, two, three, and four, in sequence,  
are taught to be the Kaliyuga, the Dvāparayuga,  
the Tretāyuga, and the Kṛtayuga.

The lesser four eons,  
concerning the quality of the doctrine,

last for 21,600 human years,  
a quarter of which is the measure  
of each of the four eons.

The flawless, with qualities complete,  
is the Kṛtayuga Dharma.

When a quarter then degenerates,  
it is the former Tretāyuga.  
If half has degenerated,  
it is the latter Tretāyuga.

The remainder when three-quarters  
has degenerated is the Dvāparayuga.

If there is not even one-quarter,  
it is the Kaliyuga,  
taught to be the wicked dharma  
of the demon barbarians.

With those four quatrains, the meaning is easily understood.<sup>586</sup>

Fully understanding each  
of those divisions, . . .

Carefully understanding the divisions of the great and lesser times, and, in the lesser, the difference of the Kṛtayuga, Tretāyuga, and so forth as suitable witnesses, [587] a purging of the doctrine is performed, and we and everyone else are turned away from bad and inferior paths and established on the sublime perfect path.

. . . I wish to purge the doctrine,  
and wishing for myself and others  
to enter the fine path,  
I honor the sublime Kṛtayuga Dharma  
as the witness.

The Tretāyuga and later eons  
are flawed, and their treatises

that have been diluted like milk  
in the market are in every case  
unfit to act as witnesses.

The higher refute the lower,  
as the higher philosophical tenets  
refute the lower.

The Kṛtayuga Dharma is the stainless  
words of the Conqueror,  
and what is finely taught by the lords  
on the tenth level,  
and by the great system founders,  
flawless and endowed with sublime qualities.

In that tradition all is not  
empty of self-nature.

Carefully distinguishing  
empty of self-nature and empty of other,  
what is relative is all taught  
to be empty of self-nature,  
and what is absolute is taught  
to be precisely empty of other.

Those four quatrains are thus easily understood.

Why? Because concerning the two truths,  
two modes of truth are taught, . . .

Let me comment on this and what follows. If what is true is divided, it does not transcend both the absolutely true and the relatively true. Furthermore, these should be understood as the absolutely infallible and the relatively infallible. An appearance of two moons and so forth, which are fallible even in the relative sense, are taught to be [588] the "mistaken relative" and the "mere relative," but are not the perfect relative and relative truth.

The perfect and the imperfect  
relative are alike in appearance,

but are distinguished  
by ability or inability to function.<sup>587</sup>

Such explanations are also good. Thus a difference between those two relatives exists, but in consideration of the audience, in many contexts “relative truth,” “by the mundane relative,” “by the mundane truth,” and so forth are also included within those when teaching.

### ... two modes of appearance, ...

Absolute truth appears to nonconceptual primordial awareness, but it is impossible for it to appear to relative consciousness. There are very many [examples] of the relative appearing to consciousness alone, and also appearing to the sense organs with clear form. Likewise, absolute truth does not appear while the breath has not ceased or entered the central channel, but the relative appears while there is a circulation of the breath.

### ... two modes of emptiness, ...

Because the absolute in the true mode of reality is not empty of itself and is the ground empty of all relative phenomena, it is a profound emptiness of other, the mode of emptiness of the true nature. It is an emptiness that is not a nonimplicative negation,<sup>588</sup> an emptiness that is not empty, a birthless emptiness, [589] and an emptiness that is the very essence of the lack of an entity, far removed from the emptiness of the aggregates through analysis, which is a nihilistic emptiness.

Because the relative in the true mode of reality is empty of own-essence, it is like the horn of a rabbit, the child of a barren woman, a skyflower, and so forth,<sup>589</sup> totally unestablished and completely nonexistent, a nonimplicative negation, an empty emptiness, a born emptiness, an emptiness of nonentity, and the emptiness of the aggregates through analysis, which is a nihilistic emptiness.

In that way, the mode of truth for the two truths is not identical, the mode of appearance is also not identical, and the mode of emptiness is also not identical. Therefore, if you carefully realize that these exist as two separate kingdoms, that is<sup>590</sup> a realization corresponding to the truth. Moreover, this is very clearly taught in the profound, exceptional, sublime Dharma of the Kṛtayuga, and especially in the profound, sublime Dharma teachings of Shambhala, so please look carefully at those.

... and because the many forms  
of exaggeration and denial, ...

You fall into the extreme of exaggeration if you claim, "These apparent and audible relative phenomena are established in the true mode of reality," or, "These are the true nature, the dharmakāya, the Great Seal, and self-arisen primordial awareness," and so forth. [590]

You fall into the extreme of denial if you claim, "The absolute dharmakāya, the Great Seal, self-arisen primordial awareness, and so forth are also empty of self-nature, so they are not established in reality."

If free from those two extremes, you will realize the middle, central, third category, the androgynous citadel, Vajrasattva, similar to the eight prognostic images. Because of precisely that, the realization of Great Madhyamaka must be free of all extremes of exaggeration and denial or extremes of existence and nonexistence. But it is not sufficient to just be free from anything. After noble Nāgārjuna taught the Collection of Eulogies to refute the extreme of nonexistence, he taught the Collection of Reasoning to refute the extreme of existence.<sup>591</sup> The *Sixty Verses on Reasoning* says,

Nonexistence, the source of all faults,  
has already been thoroughly refuted.

Listen to the reasoning by which  
existence itself is also refuted.<sup>592</sup>

This same noble being is prophesied in the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*:

He will be called by the name  
"Nāga," and destroy the extremes  
of existence and nonexistence.<sup>593</sup>

The *Root Chapter of Mañjuśrī* also prophesies this same noble being with extensive statements such as:

He will understand the meaning  
of various treatises and the meaning  
of nonsubstantiality.<sup>594</sup>

The meaning of very many statements in many other Kṛtayuga Dharma teachings, such as “transcending existence and nonexistence,”<sup>595</sup> and such as “not existent and not nonexistent,”<sup>596</sup> [591] is also precisely that ground free of all extremes, a middle, central, third category, the androgynous citadel, Vajrasattva.

Furthermore, statements such as, “These apparent and audible relative [phenomena] are the expanse of the true nature. They are the expanse of the three kāyas,” and, “The mind, this flickering consciousness, is Buddha. It is stainless, pure awareness. Everything apparent is the *nirmāṇakāya*. Everything empty is the *dharmakāya*. Everything aware is the *sambhogakāya*. Their indivisibility is the *svābhāvīkākāya*,” are also exaggerations, saying “it is” what it is not.

Statements such as, “In reality there is no Buddha. There is no enlightenment. There is no primordial awareness. There is no sugata essence,” are also denial. Statements such as, “Even in the relative, there are no causes and results of actions: There are no past and future lives. There is no arising of one from another in the arising of dependent origination,” are also the view of denial. The former is denial of the absolute, while the latter is denial of the relative.

Likewise, to claim that the self of the individual exists in reality is exaggeration. To claim that the self of the true nature does not exist is denial.

To claim that the quintessence of the imagined nature and the dependent nature exists in reality is exaggeration. To claim that the quintessence of the fully established true nature does not exist is denial.

To claim that the selves of individuals and of phenomena exist in reality is [592] exaggeration. To claim that the self of thusness, the pure self, does not exist is denial.

To claim that consciousness exists in reality is exaggeration. To claim that primordial awareness does not exist is denial.

To claim that the relative exists in reality is exaggeration. To claim that the absolute does not exist is denial.

To claim that fabricated, incidental phenomena exist in reality is exaggeration. To claim that the natural, primordial phenomena of the true nature do not exist is denial.

To claim that the phenomena of the extremes exist in reality is exaggeration. To claim that the phenomena of the middle do not exist is denial.

To claim that the phenomena of the truths of suffering, origin, and the path exist in reality is exaggeration. To claim that the phenomena of the truth of cessation do not exist is denial.

To claim that the phenomena of the object of purification and the purifying agent exist in reality is exaggeration. To claim that the phenomena of the ground of purification and the result of purification do not exist is denial.

To claim that the phenomena of total affliction exist in reality is exaggeration. To claim that the phenomena of natural purity do not exist is denial.

To claim that the phenomena of saṃsāra exist in reality is exaggeration. To claim that the phenomena of great nīrvāṇa do not exist is denial. [593]

To claim that the sentient beings of the six realms exist in reality is exaggeration. To claim that Buddha and enlightenment do not exist is denial.

To claim that these outer and inner stable and mobile phenomena exist in reality is exaggeration. To claim that the stable and mobile phenomena of the other, sublime, transcendent, excellent Primordial Buddha do not exist beyond these is denial.

To claim that these aggregates exist in reality is exaggeration. To claim that the aggregates of the other, sublime, transcendent, excellent Primordial Buddha do not exist beyond these is denial.

To claim that these constituents exist in reality is exaggeration. To claim that the constituents of the other, sublime, transcendent, excellent Primordial Buddha do not exist beyond these is denial.

To claim that these sensory bases exist in reality is exaggeration. To claim that the sensory bases of the other, sublime, transcendent, excellent Primordial Buddha do not exist beyond these is denial.

To claim that these action faculties exist in reality is exaggeration. To claim that the action faculties of the other, sublime, transcendent, excellent Primordial Buddha do not exist beyond these is denial.

To claim that these activities of the action faculties exist in reality is exaggeration. To claim that [594] the activities of the action faculties of the other, sublime, transcendent, excellent Primordial Buddha do not exist beyond these is denial.

To claim that these three realms exist in reality is exaggeration. To claim that the three realms of the other, sublime, transcendent, excellent Primordial Buddha do not exist beyond these is denial.

To claim that these three worlds exist in reality is exaggeration. To claim that the three worlds of the other, sublime, transcendent, excellent Primordial Buddha do not exist beyond these is denial.

To claim that these three times exist in reality is exaggeration. To claim that the three times of the other, sublime, transcendent, excellent Primordial Buddha do not exist beyond these is denial.

To claim that this individual being exists in reality is exaggeration. To

claim that the individual being of the other, sublime, transcendent, excellent Primordial Buddha does not exist beyond this is denial.

To claim that the produced result, the form *kāyas*, exist in reality is exaggeration. To claim that the separated result, the *dharmakāya*, does not exist is denial.

To claim that the relative conditioned qualities such as the ten powers exist in reality is exaggeration. To claim that the absolute unconditioned qualities such as the ten powers do not exist is denial.

To claim that the marks, characteristics, and so forth of the relative form *kāyas* exist [595] in reality is exaggeration. To claim that the marks, characteristics, and so forth of the absolute *dharmakāya* do not exist is denial.

To claim that, concerning the relative truth of the path, the factors conducive to the objective of enlightenment, from phenomena up through omniscience, exist in reality is exaggeration.<sup>597</sup> To claim that, concerning the absolute truth of cessation, the factors conducive to the objective of enlightenment, from phenomena up through omniscience, do not exist is denial.

To claim that from imagined and imputed form<sup>598</sup> up through the phenomena of a buddha exist in reality is exaggeration. To claim that from the form of the true nature up through the phenomena of a buddha do not exist is denial.

To claim that from form that is nonexistent and has an inferior existence up through aging and death exist in reality is exaggeration. To claim that from form that is existent<sup>599</sup> up through aging and death do not exist is denial.

To claim that conditioned dependent originations exist in reality is exaggeration. To claim that unconditioned dependent originations do not exist is denial.

To claim that natural vice, misdeed, taint, affliction, total affliction, and mundane phenomena exist in reality is exaggeration. [596] To claim that natural virtue, freedom from misdeed, taintlessness, absence of affliction, purity, and from transcendent form up through the unmixed phenomena of a buddha do not exist is denial.

To claim that from conditioned form up through the unmixed phenomena of a buddha exist in reality is exaggeration. To claim that from unconditioned form up through the unmixed phenomena of a buddha do not exist is denial.

To claim that the relative two assemblies exist in reality is exaggeration. To claim that the absolute two assemblies do not exist is denial.

To claim that relative renunciation and realization exist in reality is



exaggeration. To claim that absolute renunciation and realization do not exist is denial.

To claim that the relative Jewels, the buddhas, bodhisattvas, śrāvakas, pratyekabuddhas, and Dharma exist in reality is exaggeration. To claim that the absolute Jewels, the buddhas, bodhisattvas, śrāvakas, pratyekabuddhas, and Dharma do not exist is denial.

To claim that the relative perfections such as generosity exist in reality is exaggeration. To claim that the absolute perfections such as generosity do not exist is denial. [597]

To claim that the relative deities exist in reality is exaggeration. To claim that the absolute deities do not exist is denial.

To claim that the relative mantras exist in reality is exaggeration. To claim that the absolute mantras do not exist is denial.

To claim that the relative tantras exist in reality is exaggeration. To claim that the absolute tantras do not exist is denial.

To claim that the relative maṇḍalas exist in reality is exaggeration. To claim that the absolute maṇḍalas do not exist is denial.

To claim that the relative mudrās exist in reality is exaggeration. To claim that the absolute mudrās do not exist is denial.

To claim that relative attainment exists in reality is exaggeration. To claim that absolute attainment does not exist is denial.

Please reject all extremes of exaggeration and denial, existence and non-existence, and eternalism and nihilism such as those.<sup>600</sup>

Furthermore, this will become totally clear after meditating upon and experiencing the truth of the exceptional sublime Kṛtayuga Dharma and, in particular, the ultimate, profound Dharma teachings of Shambhala, and after carefully establishing these through scripture, reasoning, and pristine<sup>601</sup> esoteric instructions. [598]

The exaggerations here entail the fault of the view of existence and the view of eternalism, because what does not exist in truth is viewed as existing and what is not permanent is viewed as permanent.

The denials entail the fault of the view of nonexistence and the fault of the view of nihilism, because what exists in truth is viewed as not existing and what is not nothing is viewed as nothing.

Whatever views do not correspond to the truth all entail faults, but views that correspond to the truth are faultless.

That is in the context of distinguishing.

In the context of decisiveness it is necessary to have no view whatsoever and adhere to nothing, so if even a view and adherence that correspond to the truth entail a fault, what need is there to even mention a view and adherence that do not correspond to the truth?

You might ask, "If we viewed these conditioned phenomena, which do not exist in the true mode of reality, as existing in reality, it would be the fault of the view of existence, but how would it be the fault of the view of eternalism?"

Because whatever exist in reality are all permanent.

You might ask, "If we viewed the absolute sugata essence, which exists in the true mode of reality, as not existing, it would be the fault of the view of nonexistence, but how would it be the fault of the view of nihilism?"

Because nonexistent in reality and nothing in reality have the same meaning; because if there were no support, what is supported would be impossible; because if the pervading property were negated, what is pervaded would be negated; [599] and because if there were no absolute, there would also be no relative; which would lead to the fault of the nonexistence and nothingness of everything.

Likewise, if there were no primordial awareness, there would be no consciousness, so if there were no universal-ground primordial awareness, a universal-ground consciousness would be impossible.

If there were no true nature, phenomena would be impossible, so if there were no middle, the extremes would be impossible.

If there were no naturally primordial, the fabricated and incidental would be impossible, so if there were no naturally pure nirvāṇa, a saṃsāra of total affliction would be impossible.

If there were no sugata essence, the incidental stains would be impossible, and if there were no truth of cessation, the other three truths would be impossible.

If there were no self-arisen primordial awareness, other-arisen primordial awareness would be impossible, and if there were no separated result of the dharmakāya, the produced result of the form kāyas would be impossible.

If there were no fully established true nature, the imagined and the

dependent would be impossible, and if there were no other, sublime, transcendent, these outer and inner stable and mobile phenomena would be impossible.

If there were no thusness, the other four factors<sup>602</sup> such as perfect primordial awareness would be impossible, and if there were no ground of purification, the object of purification, the purifying agent, and the result of purification would be impossible.

If there were no true mode of the existence of reality, the mode of confusion, the rejection of confusion, and the result of resolved confusion would be impossible, and if there were no fully established, the imagined would be impossible.

If there were no dharmakāya, the form kāyas would be impossible, so if there were no Buddha, [600] sentient beings would be impossible, and if there were no perfect, the mistaken would be impossible.

If there were no truth, the false would be impossible, and if there were no infallible, the fallible would be impossible.

If there were no pure, the impure would be impossible, and if there were no self of the true nature, conditioned phenomena would be utterly impossible.

If there were no natural innate bliss, the three and the eight sufferings<sup>603</sup> would be impossible, and if there were no permanent, stable, eternal, and unchanging, then impermanent, unstable, changeable phenomena would be impossible.

This can be known in detail from the treatise entitled *Distinguishing the Possible and the Impossible*.<sup>604</sup>

Therefore, if the absolute Madhyamaka were viewed as nonexistent, it would entail the fault of the view of the nonexistence and nothingness of everything. Thus very many bad views would occur, such as views that deny the Buddha by saying, "There is no Buddha," "The result is annihilation," and "The result is nothing," those that say, "The ground is confusion, the path is mistaken, and the result is obliteration," those that say, "The ground is annihilation, the path is annihilation, and the result is annihilation," and those that say, "The view is annihilation, meditation is annihilation, conduct is annihilation, and the result is annihilation," and views that also deny the absolute Dharma and Saṅgha, deny the path they accomplish, adhere to paths that are not the path, and so forth. This is just as taught extensively in the *Sūtra on the Thorough Cultivation of Faith in the Mahāyāna* and [601] the *Enumeration of Dharmas in the Great Mirror of Dharma*.<sup>605</sup>

Those refute many bad views that conflict with the Kṛtayuga Dharma, such as those that claim, "It is impossible for the truth to be a knowable, so there is no ground for separating the two truths, and, if a truth were possible, it would be a bad view," and so forth; and, "Other than just exclusion, there is no establishing of determination," and so forth; and those that claim, "There is no classification of the relative in the tradition of the Madhyamaka itself, so you are following the School of Worldly Consensus,<sup>606</sup> or the Cittamātra, or the Sautrantika," and so forth.

... flawed and flawless paradox, and so forth, ...

If relative truth is paradoxical, it is flawed, because it is impossible for formless fine form, bodiless body, nonexistent existence, mindless mind-vajra, and so forth to be identical in essence.

Absolute truth is paradoxical, but flawless, because a huge number of flawless paradoxes are taught, such as the formless fine form and so forth mentioned above, and, furthermore, such as possessing all aspects yet aspectless.<sup>607</sup>

The phrase "and so forth" refers to the vast statements concerning the field of experience of a dialectician, the field of experience of a yogin, the common and [602] the uncommon, and such as form that is nonexistent, such as form that has an inferior existence, such as form that is existent, such as imagined form, such as imputed form, and such as the form of the true nature.

... phenomena and true nature,  
and conditioned and unconditioned ...

Phenomena and true nature are the relative and the absolute. If the knowable is divided, there are the conditioned and the unconditioned. If the conditioned is divided, there are also the inanimate and the aware. If the unconditioned is divided, there are also the inanimate and the aware. The inanimate that is conditioned is stone mountains and so forth. The aware that is conditioned is the eight groups of consciousness with associating factors, and other-arisen primordial awareness. The inanimate that is unconditioned is the unconditioned sky, because it is a particular knowable that is not self-aware. The aware that is unconditioned is the indivisible space and awareness of the true nature, which is the quintessence of the five or ten types of self-arisen primordial awareness, primordial awareness beyond

single and multiple moments, partless, omnipresent, pervasive, permanent, stable, eternal, unchanging, and immutable, a flawless paradox beyond all similes. [603] Furthermore, the sky is labeled as unconditioned just because it is unproduced, and is the nominal. The real unconditioned is self-arisen primordial awareness.<sup>608</sup>

Also, if the knowable is divided, there are both the inanimate and the aware, or the knowable that is not self-aware and the knowable that is self-aware. Each of those is also divided into both conditioned and unconditioned. This method comes from the Kṛtayuga tradition.

In the traditions of the Tretāyuga and later eons there is much acceptance of, "If the knowable is divided, there are both entities and nonentities, and if entities are divided, there are both the inanimate and the aware," so that the unconditioned inanimate and aware are not accepted.

If this is carefully viewed from a great lofty perspective, like the viewpoint of a vulture, it has very many serious faults. The high precious tantras teach that all knowables are included in both the inanimate and the aware, with very many statements such as, "Because it is not inanimate, it is precisely self-aware,"<sup>609</sup> and, "Because it is not inanimate, it is aware of itself."<sup>610</sup> Furthermore, because all knowables that are not self-aware are inanimate and all knowables that are self-aware are aware, [604] if knowables are divided, it is determined that they are either not self-aware or are self-aware.

Therefore, those who say, "If the sky, which is nominally unconditioned, is inanimate, it must be an entity," and, "If the basic space of phenomena is also awareness or cognition, it must be impermanent," and so forth, do so precisely because they have not penetrated the core and realized the meaning of the exceptional, sublime Kṛtayuga Dharma.

If whatever is awareness or cognition were impermanent, the basic space of phenomena, thusness, would also be impermanent, because it is the most sublime awareness and the most sublime cognition. If that were accepted, it would contradict being unconditioned. If it were not awareness or cognition, it would also not be the true mode of reality, the ultimate perfection of wisdom, and the twelve fully established natures. It would also not be all the deities, mantras, tantras, maṇḍalas, and mudrās of self-arisen primordial awareness. It would not be all the truths taught in the *Perfect Expression of the Absolute Names*,<sup>611</sup> such as the ten types of primordial awareness with pristine quintessence, omnipotent self of the five types of primordial awareness, culmination of the perfection of wisdom, sea of omniscient primordial awareness, lake of all-knowing primordial awareness, [605] immobile discriminating self-awareness, complete awareness of

self and awareness of others, and excellent cognition of all and awareness of all.

I cannot accept that, because the exceptional, sublime Kṛtayuga Dharma teachings clearly say and repeatedly say it is the opposite of that.

... are taught to be two great kingdoms.

These are the great kingdom of the absolute and the great kingdom of the relative. Therefore:

It is impossible for the two truths  
to have a single essence,  
but they are also not different in essence,  
nor are they without any difference,  
for there is the difference  
of the exclusion of a single essence.

Concerning precisely this,  
it is taught that the essence  
is inexpressible as the same or another.

Precisely this process also applies  
to phenomena and true nature,  
and for saṃsāra and nirvāṇa,  
extremes and middle,  
incidental and primordial,  
fabricated and natural,  
and husk and kernel  
the procedure is also precisely this.

Those two-and-a-half quatrains are easily understood.

Those of the Tretāyuga  
and later eons say other than that.

From the flawless Kṛtayuga Dharma there has been a degeneration of one foot of qualities, or a degeneration of two, or a degeneration of three, with *foot* here being a term for one-quarter.

What do they say?

Except for what are empty  
of self-nature, what are empty of other  
do not fit their definition of emptiness.

Therefore, what are taught to be  
the ultimate, profound, true modes of reality,  
such as the absolute basic space of phenomena,  
thusness, natural luminosity,  
natural innateness, and the immutable nature,  
the ultimate dharmakāya,  
the ultimate perfection of wisdom,  
ultimate Madhyamaka, ultimate nirvāṇa,  
and the ultimate great enlightenment,  
the ultimate Buddha, ultimate Dharma,  
ultimate Saṅgha, ultimate deities and mantras,  
and ultimate tantras and maṇḍalas,  
are all said to be precisely empty of self-nature.

They claim that what are  
empty of self-nature are the ultimate,  
profound, true modes of reality,  
such as absolute truth,  
the basic space of phenomena,  
the true nature, and thusness.

Without dividing the two truths  
into two kingdoms,  
they claim that what is apparent  
is relative truth and what is empty  
is absolute truth.

They say that since those two,  
the apparent and the empty,  
are in essence indivisible,  
they have a single essence  
but are different conceptual isolates.

Without dividing saṃsāra and nirvāṇa  
into two kingdoms, they say,

“The apparent aspect is saṃsāra;  
the empty aspect is nirvāṇa,”  
and also claim that is the meaning  
of the indivisibility of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa.

“Flawed paradox  
is relative truth and flawless  
paradox is absolute truth,”  
but without dividing them  
into two kingdoms in that way,  
they say what are apparent  
and empty are the two truths.

“A dialectician’s field of  
experience is saṃsāra and a yogin’s  
field of experience is nirvāṇa,”  
but without dividing them into  
two kingdoms in that way,  
they claim the pair of apparent and empty  
to be the meaning of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa.

That mentions<sup>612</sup> the mode of assertion for those bad views, and the meaning of the words is easily understood.

If everything apparent were relative saṃsāra,  
the appearance of the absolute  
would also be relative saṃsāra.

If everything empty were absolute nirvāṇa,  
all that is empty of self-nature  
would be absolute nirvāṇa.

If that is claimed, the absurd  
consequence would be that  
all sufferings and their origins  
would also be absolute nirvāṇa.

If that too is claimed,  
they would be taintless.



They would also be pure,  
self, great bliss, and permanent.

All the absolute qualities,  
such as the powers  
as numerous as the sands  
of the Ganges River,  
would also be complete.

Those [sufferings and their origins]  
would be the ultimate acquisitions.

They would be the ultimate  
protectors of living beings.

They would be the ultimate,  
omniscient primordial awareness.

They would also be  
the imperishable vajrakāya.

They would also be the vajra  
deities, mantras, and tantras.

They would be the five  
immutable great emptinesses,  
the six immutable empty drops, and so forth,  
and all the naturally primordial phenomena  
such as the ultimate *evam*  
of the profound true mode of reality,  
the ultimate *ahaṃ*, the ultimate *haṃkṣa*,  
the vajra lotus, Vajrasattva, vajra *bhaga*,  
vajra summit, vajra space, the tetrahedron drop,  
and the vajra vowels such as *a*  
and consonant-syllables such as *ka*.

It would be totally incorrect  
to reject them with the antidote.

The truth of the path would  
also actually be meaningless.

The attainment of Buddha  
would be totally impossible.

Dharma and Saṅgha  
would also be impossible. [606]

This [view] also has infinite  
other faults and flaws.

The excellent Kṛtayuga scriptures and reasoning refute those bad views. If you claim that whatever is apparent is relative saṃsāra and whatever is empty is absolute nirvāṇa, it is taught that, "Infinite faults and flaws<sup>613</sup> will ensue." The meaning of the words is easily understood.

If the two truths,  
and saṃsāra and nirvāṇa,  
are identical in essence, . . .

The sugata essence and the incidental stains would also have to be indivisible and identical, but if they were identical, that would contradict being two parts from which it is feasible or not to separate.<sup>614</sup> Thus, when the incidental stains are destroyed by the truth of the path, the sugata essence would also have to be destroyed, but that is impossible. Therefore:

. . . examine whether  
it is feasible or not  
to separate from the sugata  
essence and the incidental stains!

As it is feasible to destroy the incidental stains,  
is it also feasible to destroy the sugata essence?

As the incidental stains are conditioned,  
is the sugata essence also conditioned?

As the incidental stains are relative,  
is the sugata essence also relative?

As the incidental stains are the imagined nature,  
is the sugata essence also the imagined nature?

As the incidental stains are the inner and outer,  
is the sugata essence also inner and outer?

As the sugata essence is absolute,  
are the incidental stains also absolute?

As the sugata essence is permanent,  
are the incidental stains also permanent?

As the sugata essence is the fully established nature,  
are the incidental stains also the fully established nature?

As the sugata essence is Buddha,  
are the incidental stains also Buddha?

As the sugata essence is self-arisen,  
are the incidental stains also self-arisen?

As the sugata essence is primordial awareness,  
are the incidental stains also primordial awareness?

As the sugata essence is omniscience,  
are the incidental stains also omniscience?

As the sugata essence is the basic space of phenomena,  
are the incidental stains also the basic space of phenomena?

As the sugata essence is great bliss,  
are the incidental stains also great bliss?

As the sugata essence is nirvāṇa,  
are the incidental stains also nirvāṇa?

As the sugata essence is the perfection of wisdom,  
are the incidental stains also the perfection of wisdom?

As the sugata essence is Madhyamaka,  
are the incidental stains also Madhyamaka?

As the sugata essence is empty of other,  
are the incidental stains also empty of other?

As the sugata essence is the ground of emptiness,  
are the incidental stains also the ground of emptiness?

As the sugata essence is the sublime other,  
are the incidental stains also the sublime other?

As the sugata essence is the truth of cessation,  
are the incidental stains also the truth of cessation?

As the sugata essence is the ground of cessation,  
are the incidental stains also the ground of cessation?

As the sugata essence is the ground of separation,  
are the incidental stains also the ground of separation?

As the sugata essence is the ground of isolation,  
are the incidental stains also the ground of isolation?

As the sugata essence is the ground of purity,  
are the incidental stains also the ground of purity?

As the sugata essence is the ground of nonexistence,  
are the incidental stains also the ground of nonexistence?

If you claim them to be so,  
there are infinite faults and flaws.

The Kṛtayuga tradition  
does not have those faults and flaws.

That is easily understood, because it corresponds to the perfect intention of the Kṛtayuga, which is that these are not identical, but different and unrelated.

To claim that everything knowable is included in [the categories of] entity and nonentity is the tradition of the Tretāyuga and later eons, which is flawed.

Why? Because the true nature, Madhyamaka, is the most sublime of knowables, and to accept it as a third category that is neither an entity or nonentity is the Kṛtayuga tradition, which refutes that.

Therefore, everything knowable is not included within entity and non-entity, because there is a third category.<sup>615</sup> [607]

Furthermore, that is what is taught in the commentary to Āryadeva's *Compendium of the Essence of Primordial Awareness*:

It says, "Neither existent nor nonexistent,"<sup>616</sup> because it is a third category.<sup>617</sup>

Concerning the third category, there is both a third category that is relative and a third category that is absolute. Likewise, there are very many third categories, such as those that are and are not conditioned, those that are and are not impermanent, those that are and are not consciousness, and those that are and are not primordial awareness. Of those, this is the primordial awareness that is absolute, unconditioned, and permanent. It is taught,

I prostrate to that calm  
enlightenment mind,  
beginningless and endless,  
the lord who has exhausted  
entity and nonentity.<sup>618</sup>

The third category that is absolute includes as one topic the third category that is not both and the third category that is both. It is said,

I am entity and I am nonentity,  
Tathāgata free from the very beginning.<sup>619</sup>

Such lines teach the third category that is both. The third category that is not both has already been explained.

In that way, the two third categories<sup>620</sup> that are both and that are not both are included as one in the third category that is absolute. [608] But such is impossible for the third category that is relative, because absolute truth is a flawless paradox and relative truth is a flawed paradox.

In that way, there is a third category concerning entity and nonentity, but no third category concerning the inanimate and the aware, because **everything knowable is determined to be either inanimate or aware.**<sup>621</sup>

Moreover, if it is a knowable, it does not transcend being either self-aware or not aware. So there is no third category, because if it is self-aware, it contradicts being not aware, but if it is not self-aware, it contradicts being aware.

**“So there is no third category concerning that.”**

**This is the Kṛtayuga Dharma tradition.**

This is not the field of experience of those of the Tretāyuga and later eons, so it is difficult for them to fathom.

Those in the tradition of the flawed Tretāyuga and later eons claim that the true nature, thusness, the culmination of perfection, and so forth is a third category that is neither inanimate or aware.<sup>622</sup> There are very many refutations of this.

“What are they?” you might ask.

If the basic space of phenomena is not pure awareness, in that case what about the primordial awareness of indivisible space and pure awareness, the primordial awareness of the basic space of phenomena, and absolute self-arisen primordial awareness?<sup>623</sup>

You might reply, “Those are primordial awareness of what is conditioned and impermanent.” [609]

**“I bow to you, absolute, immobile,  
discriminating self-awareness,  
absolute total awareness  
of self and awareness of others,  
with absolute, excellent cognition  
of all and awareness of all,  
absolute, omnipotent self of the five types  
of primordial awareness, absolute, self-arisen  
kāya of primordial awareness,  
sea of absolute, omniscient primordial awareness,**

retainer of the treasury of absolute,  
 omniscient primordial awareness,  
 absolute primordial awareness,  
 great source of primordial awareness,  
 endowed with absolute primordial awareness  
 and awareness of existence and nonexistence,  
 holder of each and every absolute  
 kāya of primordial awareness,  
 absolute Samantabhadra with fine intelligence,  
 great essence of all absolute buddhas,  
 great absolute offering that is vast passion,  
 great absolute offering that is vast hatred,  
 great absolute offering that is vast ignorance,  
 great absolute offering that is vast wrath,  
 and great absolute offering that is vast attachment,  
 vast bliss that is great absolute desire,  
 vast pleasure that is great absolute joy,  
 holder of the great magic of absolute expertise,  
 joy beyond joy of great absolute magic,  
 site of the meditative concentration  
 of absolute great mental stability,  
 holder of the kāya of great absolute wisdom,  
 sea of the primordial awareness of absolute prayer,  
 absolute great love, infinite in nature,  
 absolute great compassion with sublime intellect,  
 absolute great wisdom possessing great intellect,  
 absolute great expert with great method,  
 ten types of absolute primordial awareness  
 with pristine quintessence,  
 holder of ten types of pristine,  
 absolute primordial awareness,  
 absolute sole cognition, definitely bright,  
 holder of the realization of eight knowledges,  
 great fire of absolute wisdom  
 and primordial awareness,  
 vivid appearance of absolute primordial awareness,  
 flame of absolute primordial awareness,  
 pellucid light, absolute Buddha,  
 unsurpassed enlightenment,

absolute Buddha, Mahāvairocana,  
 absolute perfect Buddha, guide for the world,  
 pure, pristine awareness of the three absolutes,  
 possessor of the six absolute clairvoyances  
 and the six subsequent mindfulnesses,  
 absolute sublime perfection of wisdom,  
 the absolute powerful Sage  
 omnipotent with the ten powers,  
 absolute Mañjuśrī possessing  
 splendor sublime, and the absolute  
 kāya of primordial awareness itself.”

In many such forms the absolute truth is presented as being cognition, pure awareness, and primordial awareness.<sup>624</sup> Awareness of self and awareness of others, cognition of all and awareness of all, the self of the five types of primordial awareness, the pristine ten types of primordial awareness, the self-arisen kāya of primordial awareness, sea of omniscient primordial awareness, and so forth, just as they appear in the scripture, correspond to absolute truth. Therefore, this is not mixed with any phenomena that are conditioned, impermanent, and consciousness. This tantra<sup>625</sup> is the perfect expression of the names of the absolute just as they are; it is not an expression of the names of the relative. So explanations of the meaning of this to be conditioned, impermanent, dependent origination, and momentary consciousness are simply wrong explanations. The meaning of the individual words [in the verses] is easily understood.

Therefore, the conquerors have taught,  
 “Primordial awareness transcending the momentary  
 is the ultimate thatness of all phenomena.”

The meaning is that, in the *Stainless Light*, the extensive commentary to the *Glorious Kālacakra Tantra*, the blessed, honorable Avalokiteśvara says, in the context of identifying ultimate thatness,

The conquerors have taught that primordial awareness beyond  
 single and multiple moments is thatness.<sup>626</sup> [610]

If the absolute truth were not cognition, pure awareness, and self-awareness, that would contradict all profound sūtra and tantra, the Kṛtayuga



Dharma that presents the profound true mode of reality. Those repeatedly teach that everything that is the absolute true nature is pure awareness, self-awareness, bliss, cognition, primordial awareness, permanent, unconditioned, omnipotent, and so forth, refuting [those wrong explanations] like the roof collapsing on your heads.

According to the wrong ideas of the Tretāyuga and later eons, you might say, "If the absolute were cognition, it would also be conditioned and impermanent."

There is no such logical implication. Accepting such implications is the tradition of the flawed Tretāyuga and later eons, but in the exceptional tradition of sublime Kṛtayuga Dharma, it has been explained and will still be explained in very many ways, such as unconditioned and permanent cognition, pure awareness, primordial awareness, self-awareness, bliss, great passion, great hatred, great joy, and great pleasure.<sup>627</sup> Therefore,

... for cognition there is also  
conditioned and unconditioned.

For pure awareness  
there is also conditioned and unconditioned.

For primordial awareness  
there is also conditioned and unconditioned.

For all, even the Three Jewels and so forth,  
there is a stated division into two truths,  
and conditioned and unconditioned.

There is a stated division  
of impermanent and permanent.

There is a carefully stated division  
of empty of self-nature and empty of other.

There is a carefully stated division  
of consciousness and primordial awareness.

There is a carefully stated division  
of other-arisen and self-arisen.

There is a stated division  
of phenomena and true nature,  
and extremes and middle.

There is a carefully stated division  
of fabricated and natural.

There is a carefully stated division  
of incidental and primordial.

There is a carefully stated division  
of the imagined and the fully established.

There is a carefully stated division  
of postmeditation and meditative equipoise.

There is a carefully stated division  
of decisiveness and distinguishing.

That is easily understood. [611]

There is a carefully stated division  
of divisible and indivisible.

This has two topics: a divisible set and an indivisible set. The first is the authentic two truths, the authentic saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, the authentic existence and quiescence, the authentic four truths, the authentic three natures, and so forth.

The second, the indivisible set, is all the classifications of families that are taught, the deities, maṇḍalas, and so forth of the four sets of the tantras of the true nature, such as Kālacakra, Cakrasamvara, Hevajra, and Guhyasamāja, all of which are divisible by name and form, but indivisible in true essence. The very many such as the Great Seal, Great Madhyamaka, great nirvāṇa, great luminosity, great soul, great offering, great passion, and great form and those such as Atiyoga, extreme lack of elaboration, the profound perfection of wisdom, and the twelve fully established natures are indivisible in true essence.

The claim that these are different individual entities is refuted by Kṛtayuga scripture, because it is taught,

That which is pristine form is the pristine perfection of wisdom. That which is the pristine [612] perfection of wisdom is pristine form. In that way, this pristine form and pristine perfection of wisdom are nondual, not divided into two, not individual, and not different.<sup>628</sup>

[The Buddha] bestowed vast and extensive such teachings, but did not say, "These are dual. These are divided into two. These are individual. These are different."

This should also be extended to the others and understood in a similar way.<sup>629</sup>

In the Kṛtayuga tradition these divisible and indivisible [sets] are unmistakable, but very many mistaken explanations by those of the flawed Tretāyuga and later eons have appeared. Thus, if you take these as witnesses, you will undoubtedly be deceived.

The true mode of reality is the profound true mode of the existence of reality, the way the true nature is present, which is omnipresent, self-arisen primordial awareness.

The mode of confusion is all the confusion of consciousness, like a conch appearing to be yellow.

The true mode of being is the true mode of the existence of the absolute.<sup>630</sup>

The mode of assertion is the various modes of assertion of various individuals, in which there is no certainty of correspondence to the truth.<sup>631</sup>

... the founding system and the obstructing system.

The founding system is the system in which the excellent, sublime persons of the Kṛtayuga present empty of self-nature and empty of other; consciousness and primordial awareness; imagined and fully established; [613] the triad of outer, inner, and other; the three natures; the division of the three selves; and the division of the three emptinesses; and in which they present all the ultimate true modes of reality, such as emptiness and the nine fully established natures, to exist as pairs of alternatives. If defined in detail, there would be very many.

The obstructing system makes such claims as, "All is empty of self-nature, so all the profound true modes of reality such as the nine and the twelve

fully established natures are empty of self-nature. And everything that is empty of self-nature, even though it is<sup>632</sup> the ultimate, profound, true mode of reality such as the absolute dharmakāya, is never established as an absolute. In reality, Buddha, enlightenment, enlightenment mind, bodhisattvas, deities, mantras, tantras, maṇḍalas, mudrās, Dharma, Saṅgha, and so forth are never established, and so are all simply names.”

Thus the traditions of the flawed Tretāyuga and later eons have caused the degeneration and disappearance of that earlier fine system and have spread and increased this bad later system. [614] If defined in detail it would appear infinite.

Therefore, experts who are concerned about the doctrine should please investigate the founding system and the obstructing system, which are more different than light and darkness.

**There is a carefully stated division  
of the existence and nonexistence of a third category.**

A third category concerning entities and nonentities exists, because thusness that is neither of those two is permanently present as a third category.

The third category that is both is everything fully established, such as thusness. Existence and nonexistence are also likewise.

A third category concerning the inanimate and the aware does not exist, because no particular knowable exists that is not included in either the inanimate or the aware.

These profound key points of definitive truth are known to the Kṛtayuga Dharma and individuals, but that is not the case for the Dharma and individuals of the Tretāyuga and later eons, so people nowadays find them difficult to fathom.

As for the carefully stated division of the great and lesser four eons in the *Great Commentary on the Glorious Kālacakra Tantra*, the great four eons concern the quality of the eons of a cosmic age in general, but the lesser four eons concern the quality of the doctrine. [615] There is no bad in the Buddha's Dharma, but because of the greater and greater amount of flaws and contamination that enter by virtue of individuals, the Tretāyuga, Dvāparayuga, and Kaliyuga also occur.

You might ask, “Of those, which are suitable and unsuitable as believable witnesses?”

The Kṛtayuga Dharma is suitable as the believable witness because just

what is taught there corresponds to the truth. The Tretāyuga and later eons are not suitable as witnesses because they are mixed, extremely mixed, or very extremely mixed with the flaws of the obstructing system.<sup>633</sup> Therefore,

... there is a stated division of suitability  
and unsuitability as a witness.

There is a carefully stated division  
of the three natures.

This is in the autocommentaries on the Madhyamaka perfection of wisdom and so forth taught by the Buddha, the Blessed One himself. In the eighty-third chapter of the *Sūtra on the Perfection of Wisdom in Eighteen Thousand Lines* and the seventy-second chapter of the *Sūtra on the Perfection of Wisdom in Twenty-five Thousand Lines*,<sup>634</sup> a fine division into three sets is made, from form up through the phenomena of a buddha. It is taught that the phenomena of form and so forth that are the imagined nature are to be understood, the phenomena of form and so forth that are the dependent nature are to be rejected, [616] and the phenomena of form and so forth that are the fully established true nature are precisely what are to be attained after removing the stains.

Also, in the *Sūtra on the Perfection of Wisdom in Five Hundred Lines*, form and so forth that are nonexistent are to be understood because they are imagined; form and so forth that have an inferior existence are to be rejected because they are dependent; and, because form and so forth that are existent in reality are fully established, they are precisely what are to be attained after removing the stains. In that way, those abiding in three categories are taught to be understood, rejected, and actualized after removing the stains. It is taught that if even the enlightenment of the śrāvaka and the pratyekabuddha are not attained if you have not practiced in that way, what need is there to mention the enlightenment of the Mahāyāna?<sup>635</sup>

The Great Madhyamaka *Ornament for the Sūtras* also says,

That which is always free from duality,  
that which is the support of confusion,  
and that which can never be expressed  
and is thatness with a quintessence  
beyond conceptual elaboration  
are to be understood, to be rejected,

and to be accepted as a stainless nature to be purified.  
That [stainless nature] is accepted to be pure  
from the afflictions, like the sky, gold, and water.<sup>636</sup>

The Great Madhyamaka treatise of *Distinguishing the Middle and the Extremes* also says,

By thorough understanding,  
rejection, and actualized attainment, . . .<sup>637</sup>

And that is taught in a very great many sublime treatises of Kṛtayuga Madhyamaka, such as the *Sūtra of Excellent Golden Light*.<sup>638</sup> [617]

There is a carefully stated division  
of a classification of three selves.

The three selves are the self of the individual, the self of phenomena, and the pure self, which are the quintessence of the imagined, the quintessence of the dependent, and the quintessence of thusness, and are to be understood, to be rejected, and to be attained.

. . . a classification of three emptinesses.

The Great Madhyamaka *Ornament for the Sūtras* teaches,

It is said, "If emptiness  
of nonexistence is understood,  
and if emptiness of existence  
and natural emptiness  
are likewise understood,  
emptiness is understood."<sup>639</sup>

This is the stated division in many sublime treatises of Kṛtayuga Madhyamaka, such as the *Sūtra on the Perfection of Wisdom in Five Hundred Lines*.<sup>640</sup>  
The first two are empty of self-nature, which is not profound, and the last is empty of other, which is profound.

There is a carefully stated division  
of outer, inner, and sublime other.

It is taught that this inferior, relative, outer and inner environment and its inhabitants, and the other, sublime, transcendent, excellent Primordial Buddha beyond this are [like] the outer portion of a husk of grain, the inner portion, and the kernel of grain, which are not identical in essence, but are similar in form.

Many sublime, profound Kṛtayuga tantras say,

Just as the outer, likewise the inner.

Just as the inner, likewise the other.<sup>641</sup> [618]

These outer and inner stable and mobile phenomena are empty of self-nature, which is not profound, and the other, sublime, transcendent, excellent Primordial Buddha beyond this is empty of other, which is profound.

The divisible four truths are well known. The truth of cessation is empty of other, which is profound, and the remaining three are empty of self-nature, which is not profound.

The indivisible four truths are precisely the one absolute truth in the guise of the four truths, so that all four are empty of other, which is profound.

The four factors are the ground of purification, the object of purification, the purifying agent, and the result of purification, which can be understood by the similes of the unconditioned<sup>642</sup> sky, the clouds present in it, the wind that scatters them, and the sky free of clouds.

The ultimate ground of purification and result of purification are empty of other, which is profound, and the remaining ones are empty of self-nature, which is not profound.

The five factors are name, causal characteristic, conceptualization, thusness, and perfect primordial awareness. Thusness is empty of other, which is profound, but the remaining four are empty of self-nature.

The phrase "and so forth" indicates a third group of knowables, which are the aggregate of form, the constituent of phenomena, and the mental sensory base, because no apparent or audible<sup>643</sup> phenomena are not included in those.

The relative or nominal unconditioned<sup>644</sup> are included in the constituent of phenomena, [619] and thusness is also included in the unconditioned in this context.<sup>645</sup>

Moreover, the nominal conditioned and the absolute unconditioned are grouped by example and meaning or by similar traits, but in definitive meaning thusness is simply beyond aggregates, constituents, and sensory bases.<sup>646</sup>

If you become accustomed  
to the sublime Kṛtayuga Dharma  
as taught in the Dharma wheels  
that carefully distinguish the four truths,  
the four factors, five factors, and so forth,  
you will become a great, peerless expert.

All the conquerors  
and their spiritual sons will be pleased.

The citadel of a conqueror  
will quickly be attained.

All the classifications of the essential  
maṇḍalas, deities, mantras, tantras,  
and families taught in the exceptional,  
sublime Kṛtayuga Dharma  
are indivisible space and pure awareness,  
absolute, unconditioned, partless,  
omnipresent, and omnipotent,  
but [the treatises of] the flawed Tretāyuga  
and later eons allege that they are all conditioned.

In that case, they would be relative.

They would not be the ultimate  
and durable sublime refuge.

They would also be false  
and deceptive phenomena.

That is refuted by repeated statements  
in the five Sūtras [on the Essence],  
the Ten Sūtras on the Essence, and so forth



that the ultimate three sublime refuges  
are all also permanent, stable, eternal,  
everlasting, unconditioned absolute truth.

You might say, "Those statements  
are provisional in meaning."

There is not any proof that they  
are provisional in meaning.

Very many pristine scriptures  
and reasons refute that.

Therefore, abandon  
such wrong explanation!

That is clear.

You might say, "Those are all relative.  
Absolute truth is never established,  
so it is also not the essential maṇḍalas and so forth."

Having mentioned the mode of assertion of the flawed Tretāyuga and later  
eons, the refutation of it is:

If the pervading property were negated,  
what is pervaded would be negated,  
and if the support were negated,  
what is supported would be also negated.

Therefore, if the absolute were negated,  
the relative would be negated.

If the true nature were negated,  
phenomena would be negated.

If the middle were negated,  
the extremes would be negated.

If the fully established nature were negated,  
the imagined would be negated.

If the natural were negated,  
the fabricated would be negated.

If the primordial were negated,  
the incidental would be negated.

If empty of other were negated,  
empty of self-nature would be negated.

If absolute truth were never established, absolute truth would be totally negated, like the horn of a rabbit. But if it were negated, the support of the relative, and the pervading property, would be negated, so that the relative would also be negated. And so forth.

If the essence were negated,  
the stains would be negated.

Up through that is totally clear, because if the support and the pervading property were negated, what is supported and what is pervaded would be negated.

Therefore, if purity, the sublime self, great bliss, and the permanent were negated, [620] the sugata essence would be negated. But if that were negated, all phenomena, such as the impermanent and the impure, would be negated. The reasons, that if there were no Buddha, there would be no sentient beings, and so forth, are the same key points as those presented before.<sup>647</sup>

There are supports and what are supported  
that are connected.<sup>648</sup>

There are supports and what are supported  
that are unconnected.

There are pervading properties  
and what are pervaded that are connected.<sup>649</sup>

There are pervading properties  
and what are pervaded that are unconnected.

There are supports and what are supported  
that have a single essence.

There are supports and what are supported  
that have individual essences.

There are pervading properties  
and what are pervaded that have a single essence.

There are pervading properties  
and what are pervaded that have individual essences.

After carefully realizing their differences,  
clarify the doctrine of the Buddha!

Those are verses of esoteric instruction.

To divide what is knowable  
into both conditioned and unconditioned,  
or inanimate and aware, is the Kṛtayuga tradition.

The Kṛtayuga tradition has  
the fine division of conditioned  
and unconditioned in regard to the inanimate,  
and also conditioned and unconditioned  
in regard to the aware,  
consciousness and primordial  
awareness in regard to cognition,  
and self-arisen and other-arisen  
in regard to primordial awareness,  
permanent and impermanent  
primordial awareness,  
and conditioned and unconditioned  
primordial awareness.

Therefore, that which is the primordial  
 awareness of the basic space  
 of phenomena is a permanent,  
 unconditioned primordial awareness,  
 an absolute primordial awareness  
 of indivisible space and pure awareness,  
 a primordial awareness of flawless paradox  
 beyond simile, a primordial awareness  
 of natural innateness,  
 a natural, immutable, fully established  
 primordial awareness,  
 and a primordial awareness  
 of natural great bliss.

That is the Kṛtayuga tradition, which is exceptional.

As for statements that the basic space of phenomena, thusness, is the ultimate perfection of wisdom, the *Presentation of the Perfection of Wisdom Requested by Suvikrāntavikrami*, which is a sublime Kṛtayuga Dharma, says,

All phenomena such as the aggregates, constituents, sensory bases, and dependent origination are not the perfection of wisdom, but the thusness of those phenomena, [621] their unmistakable thusness, thusness that is not another, and thusness just as it is are the perfection of wisdom.<sup>650</sup>

[The Buddha] bestowed vast and extensive teachings on this point. The *Middle Length Mother Sūtra* says,

“Kauśika, in this way, this basic space of phenomena and the perfection of wisdom are nondual and not divided into two.”<sup>651</sup>

And the *One Hundred and Eight Names of the Perfection of Wisdom* also says,

It is omniscience, the culmination of perfection, thusness, unmistakable thusness, thusness that is not another, truth, thatness, perfection, the infallible, the true nature, the basic space

of phenomena, the place of Dharma, immutable Dharma, and flawless Dharma.<sup>652</sup>

The *Precept of Mañjuśrī* also says,

In that way, focusing on  
the thusness of all phenomena,  
which is infinite, superb excellence,  
the ritual of cultivating the arising  
of perfection is explained,  
and its synonyms also fully presented.

It is thusness, the culmination of perfection,  
inconceivable space, the true nature,  
flawless phenomenon, emptiness,  
signlessness, wishlessness, [622]  
and also destroyer of the confusing  
mechanism of the afflictions,  
birthless luminosity, direct enlightenment,  
knower of others' minds,  
bestower of divine hearing and,  
likewise, bestower of divine vision,<sup>653</sup>  
magical creator of infinite miracles,  
perfect entity, absolute truth,  
completion stage, pure, pristine kāya,  
what all should rely upon,  
pristine like the sky, not veiled  
by incidental stains, pure, lucid,  
and indestructible from the very beginning.<sup>654</sup>

Concerning that entity, the sūtras  
and tantras teach and perfectly teach  
such limitless attributes.

They never teach that it  
is other than this thusness.<sup>655</sup>

And also,

Lord, sublime Vajradhara,  
 yogin of the completion stage  
 who has done what was to be done  
 and is doing what is to be done,  
 Maheśvara, who has discarded the great burden,  
 extractor of thorns, omniscient one,  
 heroic wise man, elephant tamer,  
 one who has transcended the limits of saṃsāra,  
 great yogin of nondual absolute  
 and relative truth, one who has abandoned rigidity  
 or completed all paths, source of qualities,  
 Samantabhadra, [623] all-inclusive thatness,  
 one who fills<sup>656</sup> all realms with kāyas, and so forth,  
 perfectly present, above whom are none.

Such famous names for it have limitless forms,  
 indicating nondual, primordial awareness,  
 which the intelligent can understand  
 in all sūtras and tantras.<sup>657</sup>

Further statements such as this are in the *Sūtra on Utterly Quiescent and Certain Magical Meditative Concentration*:

The basic space of phenomena is Buddha, and Buddha is the culmination of perfection.<sup>658</sup>

Statements such as this are also in the *Sūtra on the Perfection of Wisdom in Seven Hundred Lines*:

Because the basic space of phenomena itself is the Blessed One.<sup>659</sup>

And:

Precisely that basic space of phenomena is enlightenment.<sup>660</sup>

Such statements as this are also in the Mother Sūtras:

In thusness there is no coming or going. That which is thusness is the Tathāgata.<sup>661</sup>

And such as this:

The perfection of wisdom is unconditioned, but not because it is apart from anything.<sup>662</sup>

And this is quoted in both [texts known as] *Destruction of Objections*:

"Subhūti, 'Tathāgata' is a synonym for perfect thusness."<sup>663</sup>

The *Sūtra on Utterly Quiescent and Certain Magical Meditative Concentration* also says,

What is not true is not thusness. What is not thusness is not the Tathāgata.<sup>664</sup> [624]

And the *Ghanavyūha Sūtra* says,

The Tathāgata, who is permanent, stable, eternal, and indestructible, is the object of those practicing the yoga of cultivating the subsequent mindfulness of a buddha. What is known as "tathāgata essence" is nirvāṇa, indestructible like space and the sky. The past, present, and future blessed buddhas present it with the word *nirvāṇa* and the term *basic space of phenomena*. In this way, whether the tathāgatas appear or do not appear, this true nature of phenomena, precise place of phenomena,<sup>665</sup> basic space of phenomena, and flawless phenomenon is the Tathāgata.<sup>666</sup>

The *Ornament for Direct Realization* also says,

Enlightenment is the defining characteristic of thusness.  
That [thusness] is also accepted as its defining characteristic.<sup>667</sup>

And the *Expression of the Names* says,

Absolute truth has the quintessence  
of the five kāyas of the Buddha  
and is the omnipotent self  
of the five types of primordial awareness.<sup>668</sup>

The *Ornament for the Sūtras* also says,

Thusness is accepted to be Buddha.  
It is neither pure nor impure.<sup>669</sup>

The *Cloud of Jewels Sūtra* contains such statements as:

That is known as “thusness.”  
It is known as “culmination of perfection.” [625]  
It is known as “omniscience itself.”  
It is known as “total omniscience itself.”<sup>670</sup>

The *Avatamsaka Sūtra* says,

The excellent basic space of phenomena,  
the Tathāgata, . . .<sup>671</sup>

And,

The ultimate basic space of phenomena,  
the sugatakāya, . . .<sup>672</sup>

And,

Look at this enlightenment,  
the sugata essence.<sup>673</sup>

And,

Unconditioned primordial awareness will be attained, and . . .<sup>674</sup>

And,

The primordial awareness of the Tathāgata, which is the ultimate  
unconditioned, and . . .<sup>675</sup>

Very many such pristine Kṛtayuga scriptural quotations cause great refutations to strike. Therefore, if you discard those bad views and act with faith and respect toward permanent, unconditioned<sup>676</sup> primordial awareness, primordial awareness beyond single and multiple moments, and primordial awareness of indivisible space and pure awareness, you will be in accordance with the intention of the Kṛtayuga, so please act only in that way.

Those very many statements that the basic space of phenomena,



thusness, is the profound, ultimate perfection of wisdom also mean that it is permanent, unconditioned primordial awareness, down through the pure self of the ten types of pristine primordial awareness. Thus, if you realize that to be so, it is a realization in accordance with the Kṛtayuga.<sup>677</sup> Therefore, please consider that to be the case. [626]

The tradition of those of the flawed Tretāyuga and later eons claims that all that is wisdom is a conditioned entity. Therefore, they also claim that even the profound, ultimate perfection of wisdom is conditioned, impermanent, and momentary. That has also brought up the dregs of the view.<sup>678</sup>

In regard to cause, not knowing  
to divide it into the two kingdoms  
of productive and separating,  
they claim that all causes are only productive.

Also in regard to result, not knowing  
to divide it into the two kingdoms  
of produced and separated,  
they claim that whatever is a result  
is only a produced result.

Therefore, to not accept  
a permanent cause and result,  
not accept an unconditioned cause and result,  
not accept that cause and result  
have a single essence,  
also not accept that ground  
and result have a single essence,  
and not accept a transcendent,  
sublime, other cause and result  
are the flawed and diluted tradition  
of the Tretāyuga and later eons.

That expresses the mode of assertion of the Tretāyuga and later eons.

The Kṛtayuga has an exceptional Dharma tradition that is the opposite of each of those.<sup>679</sup> In regard to cause, the two kingdoms of productive

causes and separating causes exist, and, in regard to result, the two kingdoms of produced results and separated results. There are also profound, unconditioned cause and result; profound, permanent, and stable cause and result; cause and result with a single essence; ground and result<sup>680</sup> with a single essence; and a sublime other cause and result, the cause and result of the transcendent, excellent Primordial Buddha.

Unconditioned, permanent cause and result are the other cause and result, the cause and result of the absolute true nature, absolute emptiness and absolute great compassion. Absolute wisdom and method. The absolute support and what is supported. Absolute great emptiness and great bliss. [627] The absolute syllable *e* and syllable *vaṃ*. The absolute syllable *a* and syllable *haṃ*. The absolute syllable *kṣaṇ* and syllable *haṃ*. The absolute consonant-syllables such as *ka* and vowels such as *a*. The absolute sun and moon. Absolute uterine blood and semen. Absolute night and day. The absolute lotus and vajra. The absolute tetrahedron and drop. The absolute bhaga and vajra. Absolute sattva and vajra. The absolute Father and Mother. The absolute maṇḍalas and assemblies of deities. The great part of the sixteen types of absolute emptiness and the great part of the sixteen compassions. The absolute coffer and precious Buddha. The absolute knowable and knowing. The absolute primary female and primary male. The absolute tathāgatās and tathāgatas. The absolute bodhisattvās and bodhisattvas. The absolute female wrathful beings and male wrathful beings. All the absolute goddesses and gods. If extensively classified, these would be infinite.

The kāya in which those are all blended together as one, without duality, extends to everything down through “the kāya in which all goddesses and gods are blended together as one,” as in “the kāya in which knowing and knowable are one.”<sup>681</sup> [628] The thatness of all phenomena such as form is blended together as one, the same as the eight prognostic images. This is the same as blending together as one with the space that pervades all entities at all places and times.

All of those are not even slightly blended together with the conditioned and the impermanent and are not blended together with any phenomena that are empty of self-nature and dependently originated. But they are the immutable, fully established ground free of all the imagined; the natural, primordial ground free of all incidental fabrication; the ground free of all extremes, a middle, central, third category, Vajrasattva, the androgynous citadel, flawless paradox beyond worldly similes and beyond all to which similes apply; inconceivable, omnipotent space and pure awareness indivisible, where the myriad have a single taste; and they are also indivisible cause and

result and indivisible ground and result.<sup>682</sup> This is known in the Kṛtayuga Dharma, and to its individuals, but is difficult for those of the Tretāyuga and later eons to fathom.

In regard to the universal ground,  
the Kṛtayuga tradition has fine classifications,  
such as dividing consciousness and primordial awareness,  
relative and absolute, phenomena and true nature,  
and conditioned and unconditioned,  
dividing the object of purification  
and the ground of purification,  
dividing the incidental and the primordial,  
dividing the fabricated and the natural,  
the mode of confusion and the true mode of reality,  
and dividing the husk and kernel,  
the permanent and the impermanent,  
and the extremes and the middle.

For the Tretāyuga and later eons  
that type of Dharma language has vanished.

They claim that which is the universal ground  
is unobscured and neutral,  
precisely the appropriating consciousness.

That has also brought up  
the dregs of the view.

That is clear and can also be understood from the extensive presentation in  
*Distinguishing the Universal Ground*.<sup>683</sup>

The universal ground that is taught  
to be the sugata essence,  
the universal ground that is taught  
to be taintless virtue,  
the universal ground that is  
the various levels,  
and the universal ground that is  
natural luminosity . . .

It is not identical [629] to the appropriating consciousness and also not identical to the consciousness containing all seeds, the root consciousness, and so forth, because it is not identical to any consciousness.

... refer to the immutable  
 fully established nature, Great Madhyamaka,  
 great nirvāṇa, the Great Seal,  
 great enlightenment, and the ultimate Evaṃ,  
 all the deities, mantras, and tantras such as  
 ultimate Kālacakra and ultimate  
 Cakrasamvara, Hevajra, and Guhyasamāja,  
 all that is ultimate, such as the ultimate maṇḍalas,  
 and the basic space where the myriad drawn  
 together from everywhere has a single taste,  
 the culmination of the ultimate perfection of wisdom.

Precisely that is the impartial  
 Primordial Buddha,  
 the primordially free Tathāgata,  
 the truth of cessation that is pure,  
 self, bliss, and permanent,  
 the twelve aspects of truth,  
 the sixteen aspects of thatness,  
 Vajrasattva, absolute enlightenment mind,  
 unconditioned emptiness and compassion,  
 permanent and stable method  
 and wisdom indivisible,  
 Buddha even before all the buddhas.

The ground of emptiness is thusness, so the true essence is not different, but for the Tretāyuga and later eons that type of classification has vanished. That has also brought up the dregs of the view.<sup>684</sup>

In the exceptional, sublime  
 Kṛtayuga Dharma, the statements  
 that the tantras are the “causal continuum”  
 refer to the sugata essence,  
 the universal-ground primordial awareness,

but never refer to  
the universal-ground consciousness.

Why? Because what is profound tantra  
is taught to be the basic space  
of phenomena, absolute and unconditioned.

If it is the universal-ground  
consciousness, it is not absolute.

It is also not naturally  
primordial and unconditioned.

It is also not the sublime that is pure,  
self, great bliss, and permanent.

It is also not the natural family  
and the svābhāvikakāya.

It is never the nine or twelve  
fully established natures.

If it is not those, it is never the deities,  
mantras, tantras, and maṇḍalas  
of the profound true mode of reality.

It is also not a continuum  
with ground and result indivisible.

If it is not those,  
it is not natural luminosity.

Because it is also not natural innate bliss,  
the Primordial Buddha, and so forth,  
it is also not the causal continuum  
and the resultant continuum.

I cannot yield to those  
who accept the universal-ground

consciousness as natural luminosity,  
 so I join my palms together,  
 give advice, and offer an appeal.

Because the universal-ground  
 consciousness is unestablished,  
 neutral, and includes incidental stain,  
 because natural luminosity is virtuous  
 and stain is purified from the very beginning,  
 and because the universal-ground consciousness  
 is conditioned and natural luminosity is unconditioned,  
 if it is consciousness, it is not natural luminosity.

If it is consciousness,  
 it is not self-arisen primordial awareness.

If it is consciousness,  
 it is not permanent, stable, and eternal.

If it is consciousness,  
 it is not the sugata essence.

If it is consciousness,  
 it is not Great Madhyamaka.

If it is consciousness,  
 it is not the Great Seal.

If it is consciousness,  
 it is not great nirvāṇa.

If it is consciousness,  
 it is not the innate kāya.

If it is consciousness,  
 it is not the profound perfection of wisdom.

If it is consciousness,  
 it is not the profound emptiness of other.

If it is consciousness,  
it is not all that is fully established.

If it is not those,  
it is also not the causal continuum.

If it is natural luminosity,  
it is not consciousness.

If it is not consciousness,  
it is not the universal-ground consciousness.

Since primordial awareness and consciousness  
are just like light and darkness,  
and exist like nectar and poison,  
it is completely impossible  
for them to have a common ground,  
so do not mix them together as one!

If they are mixed together,  
the Buddha's doctrine is damaged,  
not clarified.

In the exceptional, sublime  
Kṛtayuga Dharma teachings,  
the ground of purification  
is the universal-ground primordial  
awareness that is like the sky,  
the object of purification is the incidental  
stains that are like clouds,  
the purifying agent is the truth  
of the path that is like a relentless wind,  
and the result of purification  
is the separated result that is like  
the sky free of clouds.

Thus it has been taught,  
but many [adherents] of the flawed Tretāyuga  
and later eons, who are not expert in that,

claim that the object of purification  
and the ground of purification are one,  
which is the same as claiming that  
the clouds and the sky are one.

Here, the ground of purification,  
thusness with stains, is the unconditioned  
universal-ground primordial awareness,  
but the object of purification is the conditioned stains,  
so please consider whether or not those two are one.

The ground of purification is permanent  
and the object of purification is impermanent.  
Please consider whether or not those two are one.

The ground of purification is taintless  
and the object of purification is the taints.  
Please consider whether or not those two are one.

The ground of purification is utter purity  
and the object of purification is total affliction.  
Please consider whether or not those two are one.

There are also very many  
others such as that.

That is clear.

The fully established nature and Madhyamaka are different merely in name, but not different in meaning, like buddha and tathāgata. It is like that in the Kṛtayuga tradition, but in the traditions of the Tretāyuga and later eons that have declined from that,<sup>685</sup>

... it is claimed that the immutable  
fully established nature is only Cittamātra.

They allege that all three natures  
are also only Cittamātra.



That expresses the flawed mode of assertion. As for the true mode of being,

Because the three natures  
are repeatedly taught in the treatises  
of flawless Kṛtayuga Madhyamaka, . . . [630]

This is because they are repeatedly taught in a very great many sublime scriptures of Kṛtayuga Madhyamaka, such as the *Sūtra on the Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines*, the *Sūtra on the Perfection of Wisdom in Twenty-five Thousand Lines*, the *Sūtra on the Perfection of Wisdom in Five Hundred Lines*, the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*, the *Sūtra of Definitive Commentary on the Intention*, and the *Sūtra of Excellent Golden Light*,<sup>686</sup> and because that language does not occur in Cittamātra treatises, since the immutable, fully established nature and the philosophical tenets of the Cittamātra conflict.<sup>687</sup>

You might ask, "How do they conflict?" Because Cittamātra adherents claim that momentary consciousness is truth in the absolute; because the immutable, fully established nature is absolute, unconditioned space and pure awareness indivisible, beyond momentary consciousness; because momentary consciousness is a conditioned, impermanent, fabricated, incidental, exteme phenomenon; and because the immutable, fully established nature is the unconditioned, permanent, natural, primordial middle free from extremes.

Therefore, you cannot claim that momentary consciousness is the immutable, fully established nature, because it is a changeable phenomenon.<sup>688</sup>

You might reply, "We take its empty aspect to be the immutable, fully established nature."

So you might, but many refutations will come, like the roof collapsing on the tops of your heads.

"What are they?" you might ask. [631]

Is that empty aspect that is the immutable, fully established nature empty of self-nature or empty of other? If it is empty of self-nature, that is a nonimplicative negation, which conflicts with being fully established, because the fully established nature is an established phenomenon.

If it is empty of other, what is its ground of emptiness? If you say, "It is the basic space of phenomena," our assertion is proven, because the ground

empty of momentary consciousness, which is precisely the basic space of phenomena, is Great Madhyamaka, and precisely that is also the immutable, fully established nature.

Therefore, as long it does not transcend the phenomena of consciousness, it is not the bearer of nondual primordial awareness. So it is not Great Madhyamaka, as it is also not the immutable, fully established nature.<sup>689</sup>

Whenever the phenomena of consciousness have been transcended, at that point the immutable, fully established nature is attained, but Cittamātra has been transcended. Therefore, the immutable, fully established nature is Madhyamaka, not Cittamātra.

Cittamātra (Mind Only) is a conditioned entity, so it is an extreme, not the middle. It is a fabricated, incidental, conditioned phenomenon, but it is not the natural, primordial, unconditioned true nature.

Here it is necessary to also understand the division of the two truths according to the Cittamātra. Absolute Cittamātra [632] is identical to Madhyamaka, because in reality no phenomena exist other than absolute mind, and because absolute mind is always present as the omnipresent thatness that nothing can destroy.

The Cittamātra that is relative is identical to this Cittamātra that is nowadays famous. Adherence to this is taught to be “Vijñānavāda (Advocates of Consciousness).”

The other [Cittamātra] corresponds in truth to the Advocates of Nondual Primordial Awareness, because the very statement that no phenomena exist other than the basic space of phenomena means, “No phenomena exist other than nondual primordial awareness.”

That is the section on the ultimate, profound, true mode of reality.

Likewise, no phenomena exist other than Great Madhyamaka, which also extends to all the ultimate, profound, true modes of reality, such as the Great Seal, great nirvāṇa, and the absolute deities, mantras, tantras, maṇḍalas, and mudrās, such as Kālacakra, Cakrasamvara, Hevajra, and Guhyasamāja.

Therefore, it emerges from the Kṛtayuga tradition that the three natures are the Dharma tradition of the Madhyamaka alone.

The division of the two truths in relation to mind, cognition, pure awareness, self-awareness, and bliss has also not been understood. [633] Therefore, by not understanding and mixing up that type of classification, saying, “The three natures are the Dharma language of the Cittamātra alone,” or “It

is the uncommon Dharma language of the Cittamātra,"<sup>690</sup> the dregs of the view have arisen.

Those Madhyamaka [treatises] that present the three natures of the fully established and so forth have also been demoted to Cittamātra treatises. The third wheel of the teaching and very many treatises that are definitely Great Madhyamaka, such as the *Ornament for the Sūtras* and *Distinguishing the Middle and the Extremes*,<sup>691</sup> have been demoted to treatises that advocate mere consciousness. The [teachers of] Great Madhyamaka, such as the masters Vasubandhu and Dignāga, the great experts who taught those [treatises], have also been demoted to Cittamātra adherents and sin accumulated. Those [actions] have obstructed the fine system of the Kṛtayuga and caused the spread of the bad system of the Tretāyuga and later eons.

You might ask, "How have they caused that?" Those bad treatises that teach, "Everything is empty of self-nature, so the absolute, Madhyamaka, the dharmakāya, and so forth are totally unestablished," thus falling into the extreme of denial, and falling into the nihilistic position of nonexistence, are complimented and praised with the faith of fools, who say, "They are Madhyamaka." Their authors and those who teach such [634] are also complimented and praised with, "They are great masters of Madhyamaka."<sup>692</sup> They are not that, yet are taken to be so. Because what is extreme is taken to be Madhyamaka and those who are extremists are taken to be great [masters of] Madhyamaka, it is also a form of deranged knowledge and also deception by the words of those whose hearts have been entered by the throngs of Māra.

Those have arisen in the Tretāyuga and later eons, but for the Kṛtayuga, that type of bad view is the same as the horn of a rabbit.<sup>693</sup>

May I and everyone else  
always reject the wrong explanations  
that contradict the Kṛtayuga Dharma,  
such as the wrong explanation  
of Cittamātra and Madhyamaka  
according to whether the three natures  
are accepted or not accepted,  
the division of Cittamātra and Madhyamaka  
according to whether the universal-ground  
consciousness is accepted or not accepted,  
the distinction of Cittamātra and Madhyamaka

according to whether the eight groups  
of consciousness are accepted or not accepted,  
and the distinguishing of Cittamātra  
and Madhyamaka according to whether  
a severed family is accepted or not accepted.<sup>694</sup>

Those are verses of esoteric instruction.

Those of the Tretāyuga and later eons say,  
“Absolute truth is totally unestablished,  
but relative action and result are infallible,  
so we are free from the extremes of exaggeration  
and denial concerning existence and nonexistence.”

Is a relative possible  
without an absolute?

Is what is pervaded possible  
without a pervading property?

Is what is supported possible  
without a supporting ground?

Is the incidental possible  
without a primordial?

Are phenomena possible  
without a true nature?

If they were possible, would *they*  
not become an omnipresent true nature?

If it is impossible for there to be no absolute,  
does that not contradict a totally unestablished absolute?

Now, this also clarifies the assertion, “Absolute truth is totally unestablished, but since relative truth is not denied, there is no fault whatsoever.” And it also shows that if the absolute is claimed to be nonexistent, [635] there is no other fault greater than that, because it is the same as claiming, “If the nails

are not cut off, even if the head is cut off, there will be no fault." The other [verses] are easily understood.

If Madhyamaka is divided, the division according to the pair of "establishment by independent inference (*svatantra*) and elimination through absurd consequence (*prasaṅga*)" is thoroughly known to the tradition of the flawed Tretāyuga and later eons. But it is an improper division of Madhyamaka, because it is an improper division of thusness, because it is an improper division of the natural family and the svābhāvikakāya of the true nature, and because it is an improper division of all the profound true modes of reality, such as the absolute deities, mantras, tantras, maṇḍalas, and mudrās.<sup>695</sup>

There is a logical implication. If it is never those profound true modes of reality, it is impossible for it to be Madhyamaka, because it is impossible for it to ever be the ground for the divisions of Madhyamaka and to be one of the divisions.

It is not taught in that way  
in the treatises of the Kṛtayuga,  
but occurs in the treatises  
of the flawed Tretāyuga and later eons.

That also has brought up  
the dregs of the view.

As for the division of Madhyamaka  
in the Kṛtayuga tradition,  
the divisions such as the nine  
fully established natures,  
the divisions of the families  
taught in the tantras,  
and also the entire presentation  
by means of the divisions  
of the names carefully stated  
in the *Tantra of the Expression  
of the Absolute Names*  
are the divisions of Great  
Madhyamaka beyond extremes.

Likewise, all the stated divisions  
of the profound, ultimate, true mode  
of reality are also the divisions  
of Great Madhyamaka beyond extremes.

Here there is no mixture with  
even one conditioned phenomenon.

These are the divisions  
of the unconditioned basic space of phenomena.

Here there is not the slightest  
mixture with the impermanent.

These are the divisions  
of permanent, stable, and eternal space.

Here there is no mixture  
with even one relative phenomenon.

In the division of the absolute  
fully established nature alone,  
there is not the slightest division of essence.

There are very many  
divisions of name and aspect.

Why? The meaning of the basic space  
of phenomena where the myriad  
has a single taste is that the names  
are myriad, but the meaning has a single taste,  
and the aspects are myriad,  
but the essence has a single taste.

Therefore, these are the divisions  
of all that is profound and ultimate,  
such as the ultimate perfection of wisdom,  
great nirvāṇa, the Great Seal, the Atiyoga,

the Vajrayoga, union with innateness,  
Kālacakra, Cakrasamvara, and Hevajra.

If understood in that way,  
all is understood by understanding one point.

You will become a great expert  
without ignorance about all the  
profound, ultimate, true modes of reality.

That is totally clear.

Both establishment by independent inference and elimination through absurd consequence are conditioned entities. Therefore, they fall into the extreme of phenomena and fit into the category of existence, so they are not the middle, central, third category, the androgynous citadel.<sup>696</sup>

Therefore, [636] as black and white are not appropriate divisions of Madhyamaka, neither are independent inference and absurd consequence.<sup>697</sup>

What is not Madhyamaka is never suitable  
as the ground for the divisions of Madhyamaka  
and as one of the divisions.

What is not authentic is never suitable  
as the ground for the divisions of the authentic  
and as one of the divisions.

What is not true is never suitable  
to be the ground for the divisions of truth  
and as one of the divisions.

The Kṛtayuga tradition is like that.

That is easily understood.

But those of the flawed Tretāyuga  
and later eons allege, "Mere freedom  
from extremes is just labeled 'Madhyamaka';

there is no Madhyamaka in reality,  
because even Madhyamaka is empty of Madhyamaka.”

That is easily understood, but also produces nausea, revulsion, sorrow, and great compassion.

If that were the case,  
it would be a great evil view  
denying the absolute dharmakāya,  
the svābhāvikakāya, the innate kāya,  
and all the permanent, stable,  
eternal, everlasting, and omnipresent  
Buddha, Dharma, and Saṅgha.

Why? Because it is taught that  
these are the profound empty of other,  
which is not empty of self-nature.

That refutes those bad views.

All the statements of profound emptiness  
in all the pristine, profound sūtras and tantras  
refer to a ground empty  
of both exaggeration and denial.

Likewise, they refer to a ground  
empty of both existence and nonexistence,  
a ground empty of both entities and nonentities,  
and a ground empty of everything relative.

Precisely that ground of emptiness  
is the sugata essence, the natural family,  
the natural Buddha, natural Dharma,  
and natural Saṅgha, the natural spontaneous  
maṇḍalas, natural deities, natural tantras  
and mantras, natural nirvāṇa, natural luminosity,  
natural purity, primordially pristine,  
pristine form up through omniscience,



the form of the fully established, immutable  
true nature up through the phenomena  
of a buddha and so forth,  
the ten unconditioned powers and so forth,  
thusness with infinite qualities complete,  
and the Buddha of the ground, the Primordial Buddha.

It is the Tathāgata free  
from the very beginning,  
initially liberated enlightened mind  
with the nature of space,  
Buddha even before all the buddhas.

Therefore, the ultimate reality  
of all profound sūtras and tantras  
that carefully present thusness and so forth  
is emptiness of other,  
never emptiness of self-nature.

It is absolute, never relative.

It is the true nature, never a phenomenon.

It is the middle, never an extreme.

It is nirvāṇa, never saṃsāra.

It is primordial awareness,  
never consciousness.

It is pure, never impure.

It is a sublime self, never nothingness.

It is great bliss, never suffering.

It is permanent and stable,  
never impermanent.

It is self-arisen,  
never other-arisen.

It is the fully established,  
never the imagined.

It is natural, never fabricated.

It is primordial, never incidental.

It is Buddha, never sentient being.

It is the kernel, never the husk.

It is definitive meaning,  
never provisional meaning.

It is ultimate, never temporary.

It is the ground and the result,  
never the truth of the path.

It is the ground of purification,  
never the object of purification.

It is the true mode of reality,  
never the mode of confusion.

It is the sublime other,  
never the outer and the inner.

It is true, never false.

It is perfect, never mistaken.

It is the ground of emptiness,  
never just empty.

It is the ground of separation,  
never just separate.

It is the ground of nonexistence,  
never just nonexistence.

It is an established phenomenon,  
never a nonimplicative negation.

It is virtue, never vice.

It is authentic, never inauthentic.

It is correct, never incorrect.

It is stainless, never stain.

Therefore, these are the same  
as Great Madhyamaka.

All the sublime sūtras of the third Dharma wheel  
and all the treatises of Maitreya  
are the same as Great Madhyamaka.

The pristine tantras are also likewise.

That is the extensive explanation.

Most experts in the Tretāyuga and later eons allege, "That which is the dependent origination of all the relative is Great Madhyamaka, and that which is Madhyamaka is also dependent origination, so those two have equal connotation and identical essence."<sup>698</sup>

If that were the case, since  
the conditioned and impermanent  
are also dependent origination,  
they would be Madhyamaka.

If that were accepted, they would be  
the absolute basic space of phenomena.

If even that were accepted,  
they would be unconditioned.

If that were accepted, it would  
contradict even being phenomena.

That refutes that bad view. [637]

Likewise, if it is accepted that Madhyamaka and dependent origination have equal connotation and identical essence, the twelve fully established natures that are unconditioned would also be dependent origination, because they are Madhyamaka.

If that were accepted, they would also be conditioned and impermanent, because they would be this [relative] dependent origination.

If even that were accepted, they would also be false and deceptive phenomena, because the *Root Verses on Madhyamaka* says,

The Blessed One taught,  
“Whatever phenomenon  
is deceptive, that is false.”

Everything conditioned  
are deceptive phenomena,  
thus they are false.<sup>699</sup>

Furthermore, the exceptional, perfect Kṛtayuga scriptures and reasoning that cut through all nets of doubt should also be taught concerning all these bad, chaotic views that contain various internal contradictions, such as the claim that dependent origination and emptiness have equal connotation and identical essence.

Therefore, concerning statements about dependent origination, a division of the two truths is taught in the Kṛtayuga Dharma. Correct realization of relative dependent origination is the path of entry into the city of Great Madhyamaka, because after realizing that all conditioned phenomena are never established in reality, but are infallible in the conventional, relative sense, [638] unmistakable acceptance and rejection are practiced. But that is not the real Madhyamaka, because that does not transcend dependent origination.<sup>700</sup>

Likewise, after correctly realizing how that which is the ground and the separated result is unconditioned and transcends dependent origination, but that which is the path is conditioned<sup>701</sup> and does not transcend dependent origination, this should be extended to all that is the profound ultimate, such as the perfection of wisdom, the Great Seal, Kālacakra, Cakrasamvara, Hevajra, and Guhyasamāja.

Absolute dependent origination,  
the profound basic space of phenomena,  
is not this dependent origination,  
but a sublime other dependent origination.

It is not this outer and inner relative dependent origination, but the dependent origination of the other, sublime, transcendent, excellent Primordial Buddha beyond this, a dependent origination of flawless paradox beyond worldly similes.

It is the ground from which the twelve limbs at the root of existence have been naturally extracted from the beginning, it is the ground that is naturally pure of those stains from the beginning, and it also holds the absolute twelve levels indivisible. Precisely those are the aspects of truth in the absolute, they are the twelve faces of the four vajras,<sup>702</sup> [639] they are another ignorance down through another aging and death, and also a primordial, naturally pure, pristine, and extremely pristine ignorance down through aging and death.

Precisely those are also the twelve such as the absolute places: the absolute places and nearby places, fields and nearby fields, Chandoha and nearby Chandoha,<sup>703</sup> areas and nearby areas for congregation, charnel grounds and nearby charnel grounds, and Pīlava and nearby Pīlava.<sup>704</sup> And they are also the ground in which the 21,600 breaths of the twelve, the zodiac signs and the sun, have naturally ceased from the beginning.<sup>705</sup>

This is taught in the Mother Sūtras,  
the *Avatamsaka Sūtra*, and *Mantrayāna*.<sup>706</sup>

This is taught in the *Extensive Mother Sūtra*, beginning with,

Ignorance is unconditioned, but not because it is apart  
from anything.

And ending with,

Aging and death are unconditioned, but not because they are apart from anything.<sup>707</sup>

The *Middle Length Mother Sūtra* and the *Condensed Mother Sūtra* also say,

All phenomena are unconditioned, but not because they are apart from anything.<sup>708</sup>

Dependent origination is also included within *all*. The unconditioned dependent origination taught in the *Avatamsaka Sūtra* also has the same intention as this. [640] The *Stainless Light*, the extensive commentary to the *Glorious Kālacakra Tantra*, says,

The twelve truths are ignorance, conditioning factors, consciousness, name and form, the six sensory bases, contact, feeling, craving, appropriation, existence, birth, and aging and death. But the twelve truths of beings born from a womb include obscuration, while those of the buddhas are free from obscuration.<sup>709</sup>

Because the vital wind of life circulates due to the divisions of the life of the twelve transits, [the twelve truths] of beings born from a womb include obscuration, while those of the buddhas are free from obscuration, because the twelve limbs have ceased.<sup>710</sup>

And,

In that way, the three qualities concerning the primordial-awareness vajra are ignorance, conditioning factors, and consciousness. Concerning the body vajra, they are name and form, the six sensory bases, and contact. Concerning the speech vajra, they are feeling, craving, and appropriation. Concerning the mind vajra, they are existence, birth, and aging and death, due to the force of the form of the drop.

In that way, ignorance and so forth are produced, but “the primordial-awareness vajra that causes sublime bliss is the fourth”<sup>711</sup> indicates the womb of mantras. “The body, speech, mind, and primordial-awareness vajras with twelve aspects everywhere”<sup>712</sup> is the certainty of the Blessed One.<sup>713</sup> [641]

And also,

Likewise, *total light* is the level beautified by the great orb of the sun, *nectar light* is the level illuminated by the light of the great moon, *sky light* is the level of total presence like the sky, *vajra light* is the level of delightful mind, *jewel light* is the level of presence in bestowal of direct initiation, and *lotus light* is the level of full adherence to stainless, naturally pure phenomena. And there are the level of *performing the deeds of the buddhas*, the level *without simile*, and the level of *total realization of the examples of all similes*. *Wisdom light* is the unsurpassed level, *omniscience itself* is the level of great luminosity, and *pure awareness of individual quintessence* is the level where the primordial awareness of a yogin is completed.<sup>714</sup>

The *Tantra of the Vajra Essence Ornament* also says,

That great level of *total light*  
is like the orb of the sun.

*Nectar light*, the second;  
is very luminous, like the moon.

*Sky light*, the third,  
is total presence, just like the sky.

*Vajra light* is the fourth, and  
the light of that level delights the mind.  
Because of firm union with altruistic  
intent, it is named *vajra*.

The fifth is known as *jewel light*,  
which is total presence  
in the bestowal of initiation. [642]

*Lotus light*, the sixth,  
arises like a lotus.  
The essence of naturally pure mind  
fully adheres to the stainless.

The seventh is known as *light of deeds*,  
which is accepted as performance  
of the enlightened actions of the buddhas.

The eighth is known as *without simile*,  
because there are no similes for it.

The one known as *with simile* is the ninth,  
which is realization of all similes.

The tenth is known as *wisdom light*,  
the unsurpassed level of a buddha.

The eleventh is *omniscience itself*,  
the great level, total luminosity.

The twelfth is *pure awareness*  
*of individual quintessence*,  
the total completion  
of the primordial awareness of a yogin.<sup>715</sup>

Those are the twelve levels included in the absolute truth of cessation.  
The levels of *delight* and so forth are included in the relative truth of the  
path.<sup>716</sup>

Tantras should be understood  
by means of other tantras.

Sūtras should be understood  
by means of other sūtras.

Sūtras should also be understood  
by means of tantras.

Tantras should also be understood  
by means of sūtras.

Both should be understood  
by means of both.



And, furthermore, by means  
of pristine learning, reflection,  
meditation, explication, and practice.

Multiple profound grounds,  
paths, and results of multiple  
profound teachings are thereby realized.

All the grounds and results  
of definitive meaning are one  
as the sugata essence itself.  
The path is its yoga.

The grounds, paths, and results  
of provisional meaning [643]  
belong in the company of each of those.

It should be understood in that way  
from the sublime Kṛtayuga Dharma  
and the autocommentaries of the Conqueror.

Those are verses of esoteric instruction.

**It is taught by the sublime  
experts of the Kṛtayuga.**

This is taught by lords of the tenth level and by great accomplished experts,  
beginning with Saraha, down through Nāropa and so forth.

It is not the field of experience of most in the Tretāyuga and later eons,  
because they have not realized that to be so and because many explanations  
the opposite of it have appeared.

The reason those are not Cittamātra is because they are the ground  
beyond all extremes, because they are the ground empty of all relative phe-  
nomena, and because they are a middle, central, third category that is never  
an entity or nonentity. So they are not objects asserted to be entities. And  
if they are not objects asserted to be entities, they are also unacceptable to  
the philosophical tenets of the Cittamātra.

Furthermore, all those grounds empty of all relative phenomena tran-  
scend the phenomena of consciousness.<sup>717</sup>

Since they uphold a nondual primordial awareness,  
and since they are beyond single and multiple moments,  
how could they be phenomena accepted as entities?

That is clear.

Not only is the principal meaning of the third Dharma wheel thusness, [644] the principal meaning of the second Dharma wheel is also thusness, because thusness is also complete with infinite qualities, such as the absolute, unconditioned powers.<sup>718</sup>

... it is not a nonimplicative negation,  
and thus not an emptiness of self-nature,  
an emptiness of nothingness,  
or a nihilistic emptiness.

Thus it is the ground of emptiness  
possessing the most sublime of all aspects,  
and it is immutable, sublime great bliss.

Thus it is the Great Seal equivalent  
to the eight prognostic images,  
and it is the absolute syllables *Evaṃ*.

Thus it is the *kāya* of primordial awareness  
equivalent to the eight prognostic images,  
and it is the absolute tetrahedron drop.

Thus it is the vajrakāya equivalent  
to the eight prognostic images,  
and it is the absolute vajra *bhaga*.

Thus it is the mantrakāya equivalent  
to the eight prognostic images,  
and it is the absolute vowels such as *a*  
and consonant-syllables such as *ka*.

Thus it is the everlasting *kāya*  
equivalent to the eight prognostic images,  
and it is the absolute vajra and lotus.

Thus it is the eternal kāya equivalent  
to the eight prognostic images,  
and it is the absolute vajra moon and sun.

Thus it is the kāya of the true nature  
equivalent to the eight prognostic images,  
and it is absolute vajra semen and uterine blood.

Thus it is vajra space equivalent  
to the eight prognostic images,  
and it is absolute partless omnipresence.

Thus it is the space of mantra equivalent  
to the eight prognostic images,  
and it is the absolute, powerful tenfold anagram.

Thus it is the space of bliss equivalent  
to the eight prognostic images,  
and it is the absolute bodiless vajra.

Thus it is Great Madhyamaka equivalent  
to the eight prognostic images,  
and it is the absolute vajra essence.

Thus it is Vajradhara equivalent  
to the eight prognostic images,  
and it is all that is profound and ultimate,  
such as absolute Vajrasattva,  
and such as the absolute perfection of wisdom,  
the Mother of the Conquerors.

Therefore, the profound emptiness  
of the second Dharma wheel,  
such as in the extensive, medium,  
and condensed sūtras on the perfection of wisdom,  
the profound emptiness of the third Dharma wheel,  
such as in the five Sūtras on the Essence  
and the Ten Sūtras [on the Essence],  
and the profound emptiness  
of the four sets of tantra,

all the profound emptiness  
of the profound sūtras and tantras,  
are not relative, but absolute truth.

It is not conditioned,  
it is unconditioned space.

It is not unstable,  
it is permanent, stable, and eternal.

It is not false,  
it is perfect truth.

It is not fallible,  
it is the sublime, infallible refuge.

It is not changeable,  
it is the immutable fully established nature.

It is not this authenticity,  
it is the absolute authenticity.

It is not this reasoning,  
it is the reasoning of the true nature.

It is not this Cittamātra,  
it is a sublime other Cittamātra.

It is not this self-awareness,  
it is a sublime other self-awareness.

It is not this natural lucidity,  
it is a sublime other natural lucidity.

It is not this cognizance,  
it is a sublime other cognizance.

It is not consciousness,  
it is self-arisen primordial awareness.

It is not the imagined nature,  
it is fully established primordial awareness.

It is not acceptance of an entity,  
it is Great Madhyamaka.

It is not inanimate,  
it is cognition of all and awareness of all.

It is not a concept,  
it is nonconceptual primordial awareness.

It is not for a dialectician,  
it is the field of experience of a yogin.

It is not these aggregates,  
it is the sublime other aggregates.

It is also not these constituents,  
it is transcendent, sublime other constituents.

It is not these sensory bases,  
it is sublime other sensory bases.

It is not these action faculties,  
it is sublime other action faculties.

And the activities of these are likewise.

It is not this three realms,  
it is a sublime other three realms.

It is not this three worlds,  
it is a sublime other three worlds.

It is not this three times,  
it is a sublime other three times.

It is not this three vehicles,  
it is a sublime other three vehicles.

It is not these stable and mobile phenomena,  
it is sublime other stable and mobile phenomena.

It is not this cause and result,  
it is a sublime other cause and result.

It is not this birth and cessation,  
it is a sublime other birth and cessation.

It is not this apparent and empty,  
it is a sublime other apparent and empty.

It is not this central figure and entourage,  
it is a sublime other central figure and entourage.

It is not this Father and Mother,  
it is a sublime other Father and Mother.

It is not this male and female,  
it is a sublime other male and female.

It is not this androgyny,  
it is a sublime other androgyny.

It is not this dependent origination,  
it is a sublime other dependent origination.

It is not this perfection,  
it is a sublime other perfection.

It is not this emptiness,  
it is a sublime other emptiness.

All the factors conducive to enlightenment  
are also not this truth of the path,  
but the absolute truth of cessation.

The noble truths, the measureless meditations,  
the formless absorptions,

the nine absorptions of liberation,  
the three doors of liberation,  
the dhāraṇī door of meditative concentration,  
and a tathāgata's ten powers, four fearless attributes,  
four discriminating awarenesses,  
great love and great compassion,  
eighteen exclusive qualities,  
and three noble knowledges are also  
not this relative, conditioned truth of the path,  
but a sublime, transcendent, other  
truth of cessation beyond this.

Being causeless, changeless,  
partless, omnipresent, all-pervasive,  
and so forth is taught by the simile  
of the unconditioned sky.

Not empty of self-nature,  
but empty of other  
is taught by similes such as  
an empty village and an empty vase.

Not apparent to concepts,  
but directly apparent  
to nonconceptual primordial awareness  
is taught by the simile of the prognostic image.

The discriminating self-awareness  
of natural great bliss is taught by the simile  
of the bliss arisen during sexual union.

The equal extent of the two truths,  
their similar aspects, multiple aspects,  
many qualities, difficulty to contain  
within the sheath of the stains, and so forth  
are clearly taught by the simile of a great roll of cloth.

All-pervasive and always  
present in front of us,

yet unseen by all types of consciousness  
 is taught by many similes,  
 such as that of digging a well,  
 and those of eye diseases such as cataracts.

By similes that present  
 many flawless paradoxes,  
 such as formless fine form  
 and bodiless sublime body,  
 it is carefully taught that,  
 “It does not exist in this world,  
 so it is beyond worldly simile,”  
 and, “It is beyond all conceivable similes.”

That it exists in all, but is obscured  
 by the afflictions of sentient beings  
 is taught by many similes,  
 such as a lamp within a vase  
 and the great treasure of a pauper.

That it will actualize if the stains  
 are removed is taught by similes  
 such as the element water, gold, and the sky.

That the stains end,  
 but the essence does not end  
 is also taught by many similes,  
 such as the sky.

The ultimate ground and result  
 are indivisible in essence,  
 and no different in pure nature,  
 but by the similes of the sky with clouds  
 and the sky without clouds  
 they are taught to be “the ground  
 with stain” and “the result separated from stain.”

In the transformation of ultimate,  
 profound definitive meaning,  
 the essence does not change,



but the stained becomes stainless,  
and the result separated from stain is obtained,  
as taught by the simile of the sky  
that has become free of clouds.

No simile completely presents it exactly,  
but with many similes that partially present it,  
and with very many perfect reasons,  
the Kṛtayuga Dharma clearly teaches  
the condensed meaning of the true mode of reality,  
the mode of confusion, the rejection of confusion,  
and the removal of confusion,  
the ground, path, result, and accompanying  
factors of the ground of purification,  
the object of purification, the purifying agent,  
and the result of purification,  
and the condensed meaning  
of pristine view, meditation, and conduct,  
but that type of classification has deteriorated  
for the Tretāyuga and later eons.

The view that precisely  
realizes the true mode of reality  
and the meditation that precisely  
sees the true mode of existence  
have mostly deteriorated,  
but many sublime individuals  
have also appeared who have  
greatly accumulated merit and  
possess good experience and good conduct.

To them I also join my palms  
together, happily rejoice in all  
accomplished virtues such as generosity,  
moral discipline, patience, and diligence,  
meditation, wisdom, power of method,  
and prayer, and prostrate with the crown  
of my head bowed in faithful  
and respectful homage.

I also have faith in those who,  
 serving, honoring, and revering  
 the Three Jewels with faith and respect,  
 and the three representations  
 with faith and respect,  
 enrich themselves and others.

With pure thoughts, I prostrate  
 to those who, definitely realizing  
 that all sentient beings are our kind parents  
 and possess the buddha essence,  
 exchange self for others  
 with love and compassion,  
 and respect everyone as teachers.

With the crown of my head  
 I take the dust from the feet of all  
 who realize the unity of appearances  
 and emptiness indivisible,  
 even though all these appearances  
 and sounds are never established  
 in reality's true mode of existence,  
 like the horn of a rabbit, and are like  
 dream or illusion in the perception  
 of conventional confusion, and who,  
 realizing that cause and result are infallible,  
 reject evil actions and carefully cultivate  
 good actions, fulfilling sublime prayers  
 to liberate all living beings.

I respectfully prostrate  
 to the sublime individuals who,  
 realizing that all relative phenomena  
 are each empty of self-nature,  
 and carefully realizing  
 that all these stable and mobile phenomena,  
 apparent while nonexistent,  
 are only a confusing appearance,  
 do not act with attachment.

I also have faith in those who,  
realizing that all afflictions and concepts  
arisen from clinging to a self  
are like enemies, totally subdue them  
and live peacefully and morally.

I respectfully prostrate  
to the sublime individuals who,  
victorious over the enemy  
of the afflictions and concepts,  
thoroughly cultivate each  
antidote for what is to be rejected,  
such as ugliness as the antidote for desire,  
cultivation of love as the antidote for hatred,  
dependent origination as the antidote for ignorance,  
the divisions of the constituents as the antidote for pride,  
and the exhalation and inhalation of breath  
as the antidote for conceptualization.

I prostrate to those who,  
transforming the circulating vital action winds,  
on which consciousness is mounted,  
into the vital wind of primordial awareness  
in the central channel,  
practice the yoga of nonconceptual,  
nondual primordial awareness.

I have faith in those who,  
carefully realizing that the appearance  
of outer and inner relative and incidental  
stains is only a confusing appearance,  
actualize the appearance of an other,  
sublime, transcendent absolute beyond this.

I also have faith in those who,  
utterly abandoning all things  
toward which attachment and anger arise,  
such as a homeland, relatives,

and valuable possessions,  
 teach what increases the practice  
 of Dharma in places without distinction,  
 without bias, and toward which  
 they have no attachment.

I also have faith in those who,  
 utterly abandoning lucrative jobs  
 and affairs, fully apply body,  
 speech, and mind to virtue,  
 and fulfill sublime prayers  
 by means of threefold purity,  
 raising a great wealth of virtue.

I also have faith in those who,  
 carefully giving them away  
 to higher recipients and lower recipients,  
 make the most of effortlessly,  
 naturally occurring, transient  
 possessions that have no essence.

I also have faith in those who  
 carefully accomplish, cause to be accomplished,  
 and urge others toward accomplishing  
 the ten types of Dharma practice,  
 such as copying the exceptional,  
 sublime Kṛtayuga Dharma.

I also have faith in those who  
 do not think and talk about the faults  
 of all who practice the Dharma,  
 such as abbots, disciples, masters,  
 spiritual friends, and close companions,  
 and act faithfully and respectfully,  
 without jealousy.

I also have faith in those who,  
 with great beneficial intentions,  
 make careful appeals to evil,

nonreligious persons  
 who have entered a wrong path,  
 and happily rejoice for those  
 who have entered a good path  
 and are accomplishing virtue.

I also have faith in those who teach that,  
 not to mention anti-Dharma,  
 even Dharma is to be abandoned  
 in the context of decisiveness  
 during profound meditative equipoise,  
 and who carefully distinguish existence,  
 nonexistence, and so forth in the context  
 of distinguishing during postmeditation.

I also have faith in those who  
 carefully realize, carefully practice,  
 and carefully teach that what is  
 changeable melting bliss is to be rejected,  
 what is immutable melting bliss is to be tended,  
 and what is naturally immutable is to be obtained.

In brief, I also respectfully prostrate  
 to all those who carefully realize,  
 carefully practice, and carefully teach  
 the ground, path, result, view,  
 meditation, and conduct in accordance  
 with the Kṛtayuga Dharma.

That is easily understood.

I cannot yield to those who,  
 relying on the flawed [treatises of the]  
 Tretāyuga and later eons,  
 accept that all is precisely empty of self-nature,  
 accept that emptiness of self-nature is the absolute,  
 accept that the absolute is empty of self-nature,  
 accept that concepts are the dharmakāya,  
 accept that the five poisons are primordial awareness,

accept that consciousness is Buddha,  
 accept that karmic appearances are Buddha,  
 accept that Buddha is just an empty name,  
 accept that Buddha never exists,  
 accept that absolute Buddha does not exist,  
 accept that the two truths have a single essence,  
 accept that saṃsāra and nirvāṇa  
 have a single essence,  
 accept that what is to be rejected  
 and the antidote have a single essence,  
 accept that the object of purification  
 and the ground of purification are one,  
 and accept that this saṃsāra of suffering  
 arisen from its origins "is Buddha if realized,  
 but saṃsāra if not realized."

Like sending a message,  
 I here call out these fine words.

Not yielding to those who have entered a wrong path, I call out fine words  
 and offer advice with great beneficial intent, just like sending a message after  
 an enemy has recognized defeat.

... whether the tathāgatas appear or do not appear, ...

The force of that statement also actually conveys the meanings "whether  
 individuals realize it or do not realize it, see it or do not see it, believe it or  
 do not believe it, attain it or do not attain it," and so forth.

The nine fully established natures are the true nature of phenomena, the  
 basic space of phenomena, precise place of phenomena, flawless phenom-  
 enon, thusness, unmistakable thusness, thusness that is not another, culmina-  
 tion of perfection, [645] and inconceivable space.

In addition, these are also taught as twelve, by adding three fully estab-  
 lished natures: the true nature that never deteriorates, constant abiding in  
 equanimity, and primordial awareness of omniscience.

Many bad views about those, such as definition of their existence or  
 nonexistence by whether they are recognized or not recognized, are always  
 refuted by the force of this statement, as much pitch blackness is illumi-  
 nated by a single lamp:

Just as before, thus later,  
present precisely unchanged.<sup>719</sup>

This shows that all the deities, mantras, tantras, maṇḍalas, and mudrās of the profound true mode of reality are also always present as thusness, whether the tathāgatas appear or do not appear, and whether individuals comprehend or do not comprehend, thus teaching how the ground of emptiness, the sugata essence, is present.<sup>720</sup>

These lines are clear:

I cannot yield to those who  
accept that even these afflictions,  
concepts, and groups of consciousness  
"are the dharmakāya if realized,  
but the stains if not realized,"  
so joining my palms together,  
I call out and offer advice:  
"Act in accordance with the Kṛtayuga Dharma!"

What difference do you see between that and claiming,  
"It is gold if realized, but brass if not realized,"  
"It is a horse if realized, but a bull if not realized,"  
"It is light if realized, but darkness if not realized,"  
"It is medicine if realized, but poison if not realized."

If there are pristine scriptures,  
reasoning, and esoteric instructions  
that teach such as this,  
please show them to me also.

I cannot yield to those who accept that all is just groundless and rootless,  
so I would mention that the Blessed One carefully taught,<sup>721</sup>

The space of beginningless time  
is the place of all phenomena. [646]

Because it exists, so do all living beings,  
and nirvāṇa is also attained.<sup>722</sup>

After quoting precisely that in the *Commentary to the "Highest Continuum,"* the Great Madhyamaka master noble Asaṅga explains in detail.<sup>723</sup> The *Noble Sūtra of the Eternal Jewels* also says,

Blessed One, thus the tathāgata essence is the place, ground, and support of connected, indivisible, inseparable, and unconditioned phenomena.

Blessed One, the tathāgata essence is also the ground, place, and support of unconnected, divisible phenomena, and of separable, conditioned phenomena.<sup>724</sup>

[The view that all is groundless and rootless] contradicts statements in the *Sūtra of the Lion's Roar of Noble Śrīmālā*<sup>725</sup> and also contradicts a statement by the honorable, noble Nāgārjuna:

That very space, which is the seed,  
is accepted as the support of all phenomena.

Through gradual purification,  
the enlightenment of a buddha will be attained.<sup>726</sup>

This is how the ground, place, and support are also extensively taught in the *Sūtra to Benefit Aṅgulimāla*, [647] which is as rare as the noble udumvara flower:<sup>727</sup>

Then the Blessed One took seven steps like a swan king and,  
looking everywhere with the gaze of a lion, spoke these verses  
to Aṅgulimāla:

I dwell at the very culmination of perfection,  
but you are not aware of that, Aṅgulimāla.

I am the completely perfect Buddha,  
and I will give you a gift,  
so drink the delicious libation of Dharma.

Stay still! Aṅgulimāla, you must stay still!



Perfect the qualities of the deliberate  
conduct of morality, and stay still.

I am the completely perfect Buddha,  
and I will give you the gift of a sharp weapon.<sup>728</sup>

Likewise, those [last] seven lines [in Tibetan] are also appended to [each of] the following:

I dwell at the culmination of perfect inaction, ...  
I dwell at the culmination of birthless peace, ...  
I dwell at the unconditioned culmination, ...  
I dwell at the ageless<sup>729</sup> culmination, ...  
I dwell at the culmination without illness, ...  
I dwell at the deathless culmination, ...  
I dwell at the culmination without total affliction, ...  
I dwell at the culmination without taint, ...  
I dwell at the culmination without harm, ...  
At the culmination of truth I dwell, ...  
At the culmination of phenomena I dwell, ...  
At the culmination of knowledge I dwell, ... [648]  
At the culmination of bliss<sup>730</sup> I dwell, ...  
At the culmination free from misery I dwell, ...  
I dwell at the culmination without minute particles, ...  
I dwell at the culmination beyond minute particles, ...  
I dwell at the culmination without fluctuation, ...  
I dwell at the culmination without plague, ...  
I dwell at the culmination without injury, ...  
I dwell at the culmination without disease, ...  
I dwell at the culmination of nothingness, ...  
I dwell at the culmination of the infinite, ...  
I dwell at the culmination of the immeasurable, ...  
I dwell at the culmination of the principal sublime, ...  
At the culmination of the superb I dwell, ...  
At the culmination of excellence<sup>731</sup> I dwell, ...  
I dwell at the unsurpassed culmination, ...  
I dwell at the eternal culmination, ...  
I dwell at the indestructible culmination, ...  
I dwell at the culmination of fearless Dharma, ...

I dwell at the culmination of limitless Dharma, ...  
 I dwell at the culmination of indemonstrable Dharma, ...  
 I dwell at the culmination of profound Dharma, ...  
 I dwell at the culmination of Dharma difficult to perceive, ...  
 I dwell at the culmination of subtle Dharma, ...  
 I dwell at the culmination of the Dharma of experts, ...  
 I dwell at the culmination difficult to see, ...  
 I dwell at the culmination without universal ground, ... [649]  
 I dwell at the culmination without hatred, ...  
 I dwell at the culmination without afflictions, ...<sup>732</sup>  
 At the culmination of purity I dwell, ...  
 I dwell at the culmination of liberation, ...  
 At the culmination of peace I dwell, ...  
 At the culmination of calm abiding I dwell, ...  
 I dwell at the culmination of utter peace, ...  
 I dwell at the culmination of utter nothingness, ...  
 At the culmination of abundance I dwell, ...  
 I dwell at the culmination without conceptual elaboration, ...  
 At the nonabiding culmination I dwell, ...  
 I dwell at the culmination of subdued pride, ...  
 I dwell at the culmination of subdued illusion, ...  
 I dwell at the culmination of subdued ignorance, ...  
 I dwell at the culmination of renunciation, ...  
 I dwell at the culmination of certain rejection, ...  
 I dwell at the culmination of the basic space of phenomena, ...  
 At the culmination of sensory cognition I dwell, ...  
 At the culmination of virtue I dwell, ...  
 I dwell at the transcendent culmination, ...  
 I dwell at the unshakable culmination, ...  
 I dwell at the culmination of place and home, ...  
 I dwell at the culmination of no regret, ...  
 I dwell at the culmination of total refinement, ...  
 At the ultimate culmination I dwell, ... [650]  
 I dwell at the culmination of the rejection  
 of anger, stupidity, and desire, ...  
 I dwell at the culmination of the rejection  
 of the afflictions, ...  
 I dwell at the culmination of the rejection  
 of the aggregates, ...  
 I dwell at the culmination of the exhaustion

of anger, stupidity, and desire, . . .  
 At the culmination of cessation I dwell, . . .  
 At the culmination of support I dwell, . . .  
 At the culmination of protection I dwell, . . .  
 At the culmination of refuge I dwell, . . .  
 At the culmination of assistance I dwell, . . .  
 At the culmination of the continents I dwell, . . .  
 I dwell at the culmination of opportune awareness, . . .  
 I dwell at the culmination of subdued  
 avarice and jealousy, . . .  
 I dwell at the culmination of quenched thirst, . . .  
 I dwell at the culmination of self and no self, . . .  
 I dwell at the culmination of the certain rejection  
 of the aggregates, . . .  
 I dwell at the culmination of all calm abiding, . . .  
 I dwell at the culmination of severing the path, . . .  
 I dwell at the culmination of the gate of great emptiness, . . .  
 I dwell at the culmination of the perfect, complete  
 rejection of the afflictions, . . .  
 I dwell at the culmination of the exhaustion of craving, . . .  
 I dwell at the culmination of cessation free from passion, . . .  
 I dwell at the culmination of sublime bliss, nirvāṇa, . . .  
 I dwell at the culmination of sublimely auspicious,  
 cool permanence and stability,  
 but you are not aware of that, Aṅgulimāla.<sup>733</sup>

Those who claim that everything is groundless and rootless are in very serious conflict with many declarations such as those. [651]

The *Commentary on the "Sūtra Taught by Noble Akṣayamati,"* composed by the great Madhyamaka master honorable Vasubandhu also says,

From "Rājagṛha" down through "dwells in an infinite accumulation of all qualities" presents the perfect place of the Blessed One. "Rājagṛha" refers to the great city Rājagṛha. Or else, *rāja* refers to the Buddha, the Blessed One, who is the king of Dharma, and *gṛha* refers to the dwelling place of that king of Dharma. Furthermore, it refers to the basic space of phenomena itself, because in the absolute sense he dwells in the pristine basic space of phenomena itself.<sup>734</sup>

The *Stainless Light* says,

Likewise, the dwelling place is also definitely presented in other sovereign root tantras and condensed tantras.<sup>735</sup>

And so forth. All the definitive statements in the many exceptional bodhisattva commentaries of Shambhala say the dwelling place of the Buddha, the Blessed One, is the basic space of phenomena. Precisely that is the ground, place, and support of all phenomena, so this is like the roof collapsing on the tops of the heads of those who claim that everything is groundless and rootless.

There are also very many other [examples] like this, but I have not written them from fear of being verbose. [652]

Please consider that the Kṛtayuga Dharma  
also teaches that the universal-ground  
primordial awareness, the space of thusness,  
is the partless, omnipresent, all-pervasive ground,  
place, and support of all phenomena.

To all who accept that everything  
knowable is determined to be an entity  
or a nonentity, and to those who accept  
that whatever is inanimate or aware is an entity,  
I also join my palms together and call out.

It is taught that the ultimate true mode  
of reality is a third category,  
a sublime, middle, central androgyny.

The unconditioned bliss, cognition,  
primordial awareness, pure awareness,  
aggregates, constituents, and so forth,  
from form up through the exclusive qualities;  
and all the phenomena of permanent,  
stable, eternal, everlasting, and immutable  
form up through omniscience;  
and form up through the phenomena  
of the Buddha of the immutable,

fully established true nature are also  
the ultimate knowable, the absolute truth.

These are unconditioned,  
not conditioned entities.

Please look at the sublime  
scriptures that teach in that way.

Please also look at the sublime  
scriptures that say the thirty-six aspects  
of the tastes, the constituents, and so forth;  
the thirty-six aspects of the aggregates;  
and the thirty-six such as the aggregates,  
constituents, and so forth that are  
a transcendent, sublime other beyond this relative  
are the ultimate knowable, thusness,  
but never entities or nonentities.

That is easily understood, and some has also been explained before.

I cannot yield to those who accept that there is no perfect truth, and so  
I call out and offer advice.

The conquerors teach  
that nirvāṇa is the sole truth.

At that point, what expert  
could imagine, "The rest is not false."<sup>736</sup>

The *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* also says,

Nirvāṇa is rejection  
of conceptual mind.  
That alone is truth.

See the imagined world  
to be like an illusion  
and a plantain tree.<sup>737</sup>

Such lines teach that **great nirvāṇa is the sublime truth.**

There is one truth, not two.<sup>738</sup>

And:

Truth is one, not two. In this way, it is the truth of cessation.<sup>739</sup>

Such lines teach that **the truth of cessation is the sublime truth.**<sup>740</sup> And the *Sūtra Perfectly Summarizing the Dharma* says,

Thusness is true, but other phenomena not included in thusness are false.<sup>741</sup>

By such statements, [653] this is easily understood:

... it teaches that thusness is true,  
but others are false,  
and that the twelve aspects of truth  
and so forth are the ultimate truth  
of the true mode of reality.

Please look carefully  
at those [scriptures] also.

I also cannot yield to those who accept that  
every understanding of permanence  
is the flawed view of eternalism,  
every understanding of nothingness  
is the flawed view of nihilism,  
every understanding of existence  
is the flawed view of existence,  
and every understanding of nonexistence  
is the flawed view of nonexistence,  
so joining my palms together  
I send a message and offer advice.

And some of that has also been explained before.

... there is both a flaw and a quality  
in understanding permanence, ...<sup>742</sup>



Plate 1. Kālacakra.



Plate 2. Dölpopa Sherab Gyaltzen (1292–1361).





Plate 3. The great stūpa at Jonang, begun by Dölpopa in 1330 and completed in 1333.



Plate 4. Dölpopa flanked by two of his major disciples, Jonang Choglé Namgyal (1306–86), to his right, and Nya Ön Kunga Pal, to his left.





Plate 5. Remains of Dölpopa's primary residence, Dewachen, on the mountainside above the stūpa at Jonang.



Plate 6. Jonang Tāranātha (1575–1635).



Plate 7. Takten Damchö Ling, the monastic citadel completed by Jonang Tāranātha in 1628.





Plate 8. The Sakya master Lama Dampa Sönam Gyaltzen (1312–75).

There is a **flaw in understanding everything to be permanent**, because that is refuted by everything conditioned being impermanent.

There is a **quality in understanding the absolute dharmakāya to be permanent**, because if Buddha is realized to be always present, the sugata essence is recognized and faith is gained.

There is a **flaw in understanding everything to be impermanent**, because everything unconditioned is permanent.

There is a **quality in understanding everything conditioned to be impermanent**, because there is a need for the intellect to be in accord with the truth, adherence to permanence to be refuted, and so forth.

There is a **flaw in understanding everything to be pure**, because that is refuted by everything tainted being impure.

There is a **quality in understanding the sugata essence to be pure**, because there is a need to understand the meaning of naturally pure, totally pure, pristine, and extremely pristine from the beginning. [654]

There is a **flaw in understanding everything to be impure**, because that is refuted by the basic space of phenomena always being present, pure from the beginning.

There is a **quality in understanding the appropriating aggregates to be impure**, because that repulses obsessive attachment. The cultivation of the nine perceptions of ugliness is also taught for that purpose.<sup>743</sup>

There is a **flaw in understanding everything to be bliss**, because that is refuted by saṃsāra being suffering, and because weariness and renunciation of saṃsāra would not arise.

There is a **quality in understanding the basic space of phenomena to be bliss**, because the intellect will be in accord with the truth and delight in meditation on the basic space of phenomena will arise.

There is a **flaw in understanding everything to be suffering**, because that is refuted by all the profound true modes of reality being great bliss.

There is a **quality in understanding saṃsāra to be suffering**, because obsessive attachment will be repulsed and renunciation and sadness will arise.

There is **both a flaw and a quality in understanding the existence of a self**, because it is a flaw to understand the selves of individuals and phenomena to exist, and a quality to understand the self of thusness to exist. [655]

There is **also both a flaw and a quality in understanding the nonexistence of a self**, because it is a flaw to understand the pure self to not exist, and a quality to understand the selves of individuals and phenomena to not exist.<sup>744</sup>

Because there is a flaw if all relative phenomena are understood to exist

in reality, and a quality if all absolute phenomena are understood to exist in reality:

... there is also both a flaw and a quality  
in understanding existence, ...

Because there is a flaw if the sugata essence possessing many qualities is understood to not exist, and a quality if all the incidental stains are understood to not exist in reality:

... there is also both a flaw and a quality  
in understanding nonexistence, ...

It is a flaw if all the natural, primordial qualities are understood to be nothing in reality, and it is a quality if all the fabricated, incidental phenomena are understood to be nothing in reality, so,

... and there is also both a flaw and a quality  
in understanding nothingness.

Likewise,

There is understanding  
permanence, but not falling  
into the view of eternalism,  
and also what appears to fall  
into the extreme of eternalism  
and should be rejected.

There is understanding  
nothingness, but not falling  
into the view of nihilism,  
and also what appears to fall  
into the extreme of nihilism  
and should be rejected.

There is understanding  
existence, but not falling



into the view of existence,  
and also what appears to fall  
into the extreme of existence  
and should be rejected. [656]

There is understanding  
nonexistence, but not falling  
into the extreme of nonexistence,  
and also what appears to fall  
into the extreme of nonexistence  
and should be rejected.

Those are intermediate verses.

In that way, the meaning of these great, crucial, key points of Dharma is taught in the Kṛtayuga Dharma, so "please look"<sup>745</sup> is my unyielding appeal.

I also cannot yield to those who accept  
that Buddha does not exist in reality,  
who do not accept an unconditioned Buddha,  
and who do not accept a permanent,  
stable, and eternal Buddha,  
so joining my palms together  
I offer advice and make an appeal.

Please also look at those Kṛtayuga  
statements that say absolute truth,  
indivisible space and pure awareness,  
is the Primordial Buddha,  
the Buddha of the ground, permanent, stable,  
eternal, everlasting, all-pervasive thusness,  
the "enlightenment of the Buddha."

I also offer a request to those who claim  
that primordial awareness does not exist in reality,  
and who do not accept self-arisen  
primordial awareness as permanent.

The sublime conquerors teach  
 in the Kṛtayuga Dharma that primordial awareness  
 beyond single and multiple moments  
 is “thatness,” so please look at those [scriptures].

I also cannot yield to those who accept,  
 “The sugata essence is provisional in meaning,”  
 so joining my palms together,  
 I call out and offer an appeal.

The sugata essence is thusness,  
 and thusness is also the sugata essence,  
 so if the sugata essence were provisional in meaning,  
 thusness would also be provisional in meaning.

The absolute dharmakāya  
 would also be provisional in meaning.

The svābhāvikakāya  
 would also be provisional in meaning.

The natural family  
 would also be provisional in meaning.

The profound perfection of wisdom  
 would also be provisional in meaning.

Great Madhyamaka  
 would also be provisional in meaning.

Great nirvāṇa  
 would also be provisional in meaning.

The Great Seal  
 would also be provisional in meaning.

Great luminosity  
 would also be provisional in meaning.

All the ultimate deities, mantras,  
maṇḍalas, tantras, and mudrās  
of the profound true mode of reality,  
such as Cakrasamvara, Hevajra,  
Kālacakra, and Guhyasamāja,  
would also be provisional  
in meaning, which is refuted  
by extremely absurd consequences.

If there are scripture and reasoning  
that present the sugata essence  
to be provisional in meaning,  
please show them.

Very many profound scriptures,  
reasoning, and esoteric instructions  
present it to be definitive in meaning.

That is easily understood, and some has also been explained before.

Some people with wrong ideas might think this:  
"The sugata essence is not provisional in meaning,  
but all its qualities are provisional in meaning.  
Therefore, a sugata essence with the many qualities  
complete does not exist in reality."

That is the confused mode of assertion in the Tretāyuga and later eons. It is  
refuted in the Conqueror's Mother Sūtras:

How can the immense qualities of thusness be expressed? The  
qualities of thusness have no measure.

Likewise, that applies to the qualities of unmistaken thusness,  
thusness that is not another, the true nature, the basic space of  
phenomena, the very place of phenomena, the very immutable  
nature of phenomena, the culmination of perfection, and incon-  
ceivable space, which have no measure.<sup>746</sup>

The *Intermediate Mother Sūtra*<sup>747</sup> also has many statements agreeing with  
that, [657] and the *Highest Continuum* also says,

Luminosity, uncreated  
and indivisibly pervading,  
possesses all the phenomena  
of a buddha, exceeding the grains  
of sand in the Ganges River.<sup>748</sup>

And so forth. This is also taught in great detail in the *Sūtra of the Lion's Roar of Noble Śrīmālā*, the *Sūtra to Benefit Aṅgulimāla*, and so forth.<sup>749</sup> Therefore,

The Conqueror's Mother Sūtras  
carefully teach, "The qualities  
of each of the nine fully established  
natures are also measureless,"  
and other Kṛtayuga Dharma,  
such as the Ten Sūtras on the Essence  
and the Ten Sūtras on Definitive Meaning,  
also teaches that the absolute, permanent qualities  
are countless, so please look at those.

You might say, "A permanent  
Buddha is impossible,  
so statements that it is permanent  
are provisional in meaning."

In that case, I would ask you,  
"Are statements that it is unconditioned  
provisional in meaning or not?"

Unconditioned and permanent  
have equal connotation.

Impermanent and conditioned  
have equal connotation.

Therefore, if one were negated,  
both would be negated.

Thus, if the permanent were negated,  
the unconditioned would be negated,  
so that even the absolute basic space  
of phenomena would be negated,  
and thus, alas, all phenomena would be negated.

This is because, if the pervading  
property is negated,  
what is pervaded is negated,  
and if the support is negated,  
what is supported is negated.

Very many exist as support  
and what is supported,  
and as pervading property  
and what is pervaded,  
such as the absolute as the support  
and the relative as what is supported,  
the true nature as the support  
and phenomena as what are supported,  
the absolute as the pervading property  
and the relative as what is pervaded,  
and the middle and the extremes.

Please consider all those in detail.

That is also easily understood.

The many statements about  
the pervading property  
and what is pervaded,  
and the many about the support  
and what is supported,  
such as, "The sugata essence  
pervades all living beings,"  
also mean that if the pervading  
property were negated,  
what is pervaded would be negated,

and if the support did not exist,  
what is supported would not exist.

If a permanent Buddha  
is impossible,  
please present scripture  
and reasoning as proof of that.

Concerning its possibility,  
there are infinite scripture and reasoning.

That is also easily understood, and some has also already been explained before.

I cannot yield to those who  
accept, "Since buddhahood is reached  
by recognizing your very essence,  
you do not need to accumulate the two  
assemblies and purify the two obscurations,  
because recognizing the very essence  
naturally purifies them, without rejection."

So joining my palms together,  
I offer advice and make an appeal.

A sentient being without self-awareness  
is impossible, and if you have self-awareness,  
you have recognition of your very essence.

If you were totally unaware  
of self and others,  
it would contradict being aware,  
like the gross elements.

Therefore, all sentient beings  
have minds, and all who  
have minds have self-awareness,  
so they have recognition of their  
very essence as soon as they are born.

This approach is known to those  
who understand scripture and reasoning.

Arrogant fools with little learning,  
who are usurpers, pretenders, and  
fabricators of Dharma, are numerous,  
but have never understood this approach,  
or even heard about or seen it.

Therefore, such a wrong view,  
in which recognizing your  
very essence is sufficient,  
is the secret words of Māra.

Reject such an evil view,  
the work of Māra, which says,  
"You enter the perfect path  
or the wrong path through such  
realization or lack of realization.  
Therefore, you are liberated  
by recognizing your very essence."

That refutes the confused modes of assertion, confused even beyond confusion, which are objects of criticism by experts.

It is alleged, "Recognizing the very  
essence of afflictions and thoughts  
is sufficient. Nothing is to be rejected  
by resorting to an antidote. They are  
naturally pure, without rejection."

If that is so, please consider  
or see whether all that needs washing,  
such as the body and the hands, [658]  
and such as a vessel and its contents,<sup>750</sup>  
are naturally pure, without  
rejection [of impurities].

Those are intermediate verses.

You might say, "The meaning of recognizing your very essence refers to precisely the realization that this consciousness of your own mind is the dharmakāya."

So you might say, because fabricating fools reach countless conclusions.<sup>751</sup> Because this consciousness is the opposite of the dharmakāya, it is never the dharmakāya.<sup>752</sup> If it were that, even though it is its opposite, then I would ask:

If it is, is poison also nectar  
or pitch-black darkness also light?

Are negative factors also positive factors?  
Are what are to be rejected also the antidotes?  
Are executioners also sublime friends?  
Are the types of māras also the masters?  
Are sins also virtues?  
Are all lower realms also higher realms?  
Is everything conditioned permanent?  
Is all saṃsāra bliss?  
Is all consciousness primordial awareness?  
Is all emission nonemission?  
Is all fabrication natural?  
Is all the incidental the primordial?  
Are all the stains the essence?  
Is all the relative the absolute?  
Are all phenomena the true nature?  
Are all karmic forms luminosity?  
Are all faults qualities?  
Are all ominous signs glorious?  
Is all wrong right?  
Is all low high?  
Is all bad good?  
Is all far close?  
Is all the tainted taintless?  
Is all the impeded unimpeded?  
Is all that has form formless?  
Is all the revealed unrevealed?  
Is all provisional meaning definitive meaning?  
Is all wrong dharma sublime Dharma?



Are all wrong paths sublime paths?  
Are all frightening places pleasant places?

Is all black white?  
Are all squares round?

This also applies equally  
to other colors and shapes.

This also applies to all such knowables.

Why? Because if [consciousness]  
were the dharmakāya even though  
it is the opposite of the dharmakāya,  
that would involve identical reasoning.

Experts know this approach  
and this sort of reasoning in regard  
to all conditioned and unconditioned phenomena.

It is not the field of experience  
of foolish fabricators.

If you say that if your own mind,  
these groups of consciousness,  
were not the dharmakāya,  
they would not be emptiness,  
and if they were not the basic space of phenomena,  
they would not be emptiness,  
and if they were not the true nature,  
they would not be emptiness,  
that would be a ridiculous doctrine.

Why? Because emptiness and  
the dharmakāya are two alternatives,  
but never equivalents.

It is just the nocturnal raving of those  
intoxicated by the poisonous drink

of wrong explanations, those who  
 lack the profound esoteric instructions  
 about the two alternatives concerning  
 emptiness and all that is fully established,  
 such as the basic space of phenomena.

Therefore, never depart in any way  
 from the Kṛtayuga [Dharma]  
 that establishes all phenomena  
 by means of two alternatives,  
 three alternatives, and four alternatives!

That is easily understood, and should be known from the *Treatise That Distinguishes Emptiness*, which is separately available.<sup>753</sup>

Those of the flawed Tretāyuga and later eons say, “All is empty of self-nature, and so Buddha, enlightenment, primordial awareness, qualities, and so forth are also empty of self-nature and thus not established in reality, or are simply just names. The many qualities of the Three Jewels that are taught in the sūtras and tantras are also provisional in meaning. Therefore, construction of the three representations of enlightened body, speech, and mind is meaningless; as a side effect sentient beings die; and the sin of their ruin is even greater than the merit of their construction, [659] because if they are destroyed, it will be action that is near to inexpiable. Therefore, since the earth is sinless, if it is left as it is, no sin will occur, while if a stūpa and so forth are constructed, they will inevitably be destroyed in the end, so they are sinful.”<sup>754</sup>

“Therefore, without performing traceable  
 virtues, fully offer up all offerings,  
 and make all virtues traceless!”

I also cannot yield to those statements,  
 and joining my palms together,  
 I offer advice and make an appeal.

That is easily understood.

As for the true mode of being, since the Conqueror and his spiritual sons repeatedly teach that the absolute Buddha exists as absolute truth and the relative Buddha exists in the relative, it is not right to deny them. The relative Buddha is empty of self-nature, yet due to the force of previous prayers and the two accumulations, benefit to others occurs without thought, as from a wish-fulfilling jewel, a heavenly tree, and so forth.

The detailed correctness of this is extensively taught in a huge number of stainless scriptures and treatises, and a very small amount has also been written in *Sublime Method for Gaining Faith Upon Understanding the Buddha*, *Sublime Method for Opening Many Gates of Virtue*,<sup>755</sup> and so forth, so please understand it in detail from those.

The Kṛtayuga Dharma teaches that the absolute dharmakāya is not empty of self-nature, [660] but is also profound, ultimate emptiness, and, since it has indivisible and infinite qualities equal in extent to the sky, such as the ten absolute, unconditioned powers, they perform benefit to others for sublime sons of the conquerors and for infinite arhats.<sup>756</sup>

In the context of performing limitless benefit for others by training them with any means necessary, the *Glorious Kālacakra, King of Tantras* says,

By the dharmakāya, for the conquerors' sons and so forth,  
and the arhats, in the sky . . .<sup>757</sup>

Thus [the Buddha] carefully taught.

Fabricators and pretenders  
who have not heard or seen such  
[teachings] deny the Conqueror,  
and also denying his three representations,  
completely shut many gates of virtue.

May they also quickly see  
the sublime Kṛtayuga Dharma,  
completely reject evil views,  
and open many gates of virtue!

That is easily understood.

The Conqueror is flawless  
and has perfected all qualities.  
Therefore, it is taught that the results  
of any benefit or harm done to him  
are much greater than others.

Thus the pristine sūtras, tantras, and treatises teach.

Great benefit occurs if [a stūpa, etc.] is constructed and great negative consequences if it is destroyed. Therefore, if [a stūpa, etc.] were purposely destroyed, it would be a great sin, but if it is not destroyed and naturally falls to ruin, it is not a great sin. For example, the sin of taking a life comes from killing a creature, but when it dies by itself without being killed, there is no sin of taking a life.

Therefore, I have not seen it taught that natural ruin is a great sin.<sup>758</sup>  
[661] If you see it, please write it down and show it to me also.

Those of the Tretāyuga and later eons who claim that everything is precisely empty of self-nature, denying the Buddha and, based on that, also denying his three representations, are in accord with the philosophical tenets of some non-Buddhists and the barbarian demons.<sup>759</sup> In the *Eulogy to the Exceptional*, the master Udbhaṭasiddhisvāmin says,

Jain ascetics claim, "Building  
temples and so forth is a cause of sin."

Omniscient one, you have taught,  
"Precisely that is a cause of merit."<sup>760</sup>

The master Prajñāvarman also fully clarifies this in its commentary.<sup>761</sup> So after seeing and understanding these, may Dharma persons act to benefit everyone, themselves and others!

If not connected with the seal  
of the game board,  
the pieces may be many,  
but they are dead bodies.<sup>762</sup>

If not connected with the seal  
of the divine Dharma,

the human Dharmas may be many,  
but they are dead bodies.

If not connected with the seal  
of the Kṛtayuga,  
the Tretāyuga may be many,  
but they are dead bodies.

If not connected with the seal  
of the fully established,  
the imagined may be many,  
but they are dead bodies.

If not connected with the seal  
of the autocomentaries,  
the commentaries by others may be many,  
but they are dead bodies.<sup>763</sup>

If not connected with the seal  
of definitive meaning, [662]  
the provisional meanings may be many,  
but they are dead bodies.

If not connected with the seal  
of primordial awareness,  
the types of consciousness may be many,  
but they are dead bodies.

If not connected with the seal  
of the kernel,  
the husks may be many,  
but they are dead bodies.

If not connected with the seal  
of the emptiness of other,  
the emptinesses of self-nature may be many,  
but they are dead bodies.

If not connected with the seal  
of the absolute,

the relative may be many,  
but they are dead bodies.

If not connected with the seal  
of the true nature,  
the phenomena may be many,  
but they are dead bodies.

If not connected with the seal  
of the natural,  
the fabricated may be many,  
but they are dead bodies.

If not connected with the seal  
of the primordial,  
the incidentals may be many,  
but they are dead bodies.

If not connected with the seal  
of the middle,  
the extremes may be many,  
but they are dead bodies.

If not connected with the seal  
of luminosity,  
the karmic forms may be many,  
but they are dead bodies.

If not connected with the seal  
of the taintless,  
the tainted may be many,  
but they are dead bodies.

If not connected with the seal  
of the sublime other,  
the outer and inner may be many,  
but they are dead bodies.

If not connected with the seal  
of the founding system,

the obstructing systems may be many,  
but they are dead bodies.

If not connected with the seal  
of scripture and reasoning,  
the fabrications may be many,  
but they are dead bodies.

If not connected with the seal  
of the true mode of reality,  
the modes of confusion may be many,  
but they are dead bodies.

If not connected with the seal  
of the true mode of being,  
the modes of assertion may be many,  
but they are dead bodies.

If not connected with the seal  
of the ground of emptiness,  
the merely empty may be many,  
but they are dead bodies.

If not connected with the seal  
of the ground of nonexistence,  
the merely nonexistent may be many,  
but they are dead bodies. [663]

If not connected with the seal  
of the ground of separation,  
the merely separated may be many,  
but they are dead bodies.

If not connected with the seal  
of the ground of purity,  
the merely pure may be many,  
but they are dead bodies.

If not connected with the seal  
of the ground of isolation,

the merely isolated may be many,  
but they are dead bodies.

If not connected with the seal  
of the ground of cessation,  
the mere cessations may be many,  
but they are dead bodies.

If not connected with  
the seal of honesty,  
the mistakes may be many,  
but they are dead bodies.

“What are each of those  
mistakes?” you might ask.

Very many mistakes have  
appeared, such as mistaking  
divisibility and indivisibility,  
mistaking the existence  
and nonexistence of a third category,  
mistaking new and old,  
mistaking earlier and later,  
mistaking existence and nonexistence,  
mistaking the founding  
system and the obstructing system,  
and mistaking having appearance  
and no appearance.<sup>764</sup>

Why is attachment to seven  
sets of ten as a hundred<sup>765</sup>  
not equal to no attachment?

Why is understanding all  
as empty of self-nature  
not equal to not understanding?

Why is explaining all  
as empty of self-nature  
not equal to not explaining?



Why is writing that all  
is empty of self-nature  
not equal to not writing?

Those are summarizing verses.

By correctly distinguishing in that way, you will correctly understand which doctrines are flawless and which are flawed. Understanding that, you will correctly understand which are suitable as witnesses and which are unsuitable. [664] If you understand in such a way, and if you discard those that are unsuitable as witnesses and are faithful and respectful toward those that are suitable as witnesses, and practice them, you will be in accord with our father's Dharma.

The father of Dharma persons  
is the Buddha.

The Dharma he taught  
is the Dharma of our father.

So all the pristine sūtras and tantras  
are our father's perfect Dharma.

Do not part from  
that Dharma of our father!

It is better to lack the Dharma  
of the fathers of the School of Worldly Consensus.

May all realize that sublime  
Dharma of our father!

If you are in accord  
with that Dharma of our father,  
it will always be good.

If you are in conflict with  
that Dharma of our father,  
it will always be bad.

So be faithful and respectful  
to those who are in accord.

To those that are in conflict,  
meditate on the exchange of self and others.

Dedicate all the virtue  
to great enlightenment.

By means of this, it is understood that the Buddha's doctrine survives in superior, middling, and inferior forms. The superior is the Kṛtayuga Dharma, which is the witness and authority. The middling is the Tretāyuga Dharma and the inferior is the Dvāparayuga Dharma. It is crucial that the experts who stand guard over the doctrine realize that those two are not witnesses.

To remove the flaws that the flawed minds of individuals have mixed into the flawless doctrine, and the corruptions that they have imposed, and then establish us on the path of perfect view, meditation, and conduct is also the significance of a council. [665] There were three councils in the past, and this is the fourth. It is also a great calculation of the doctrine. It is called impartial and unbiased because all the faithful respect, pure vision, offerings of unyielding advice, appeals, love, compassion, and so forth remain impartial and unbiased, without falling into any partiality.<sup>766</sup>

You might ask, "While it is known that many arhats gathered for the councils in the past, how many arhats are gathered here?"

The sublime Kṛtayuga Dharma teachings contain many thousands of profound quotes by the Great Arhat, the Buddha, the Blessed One, which teach the meaning of this with extreme clarity. Those are the same as the Great Arhat, so they have been gathered according to his tradition.

Future compilers, please also do likewise,<sup>767</sup> and if there is disagreement about the interpretation of the quotes, please use the autocomentaries of the Buddha himself as witnesses.

This is known as the *Impartial and Unbiased Commentary to the "Great Calculation of the Doctrine That Has the Significance of a Fourth Council."* Glorious Lama Dampa Sönam Gyaltzen Palsangpo made many fine gifts such as gold and horses<sup>768</sup> and [666] said, "Compose many treatises like this!" Thus it was composed by the Possessor of the Four Reliances. This is now complete.

May this also bring infinite benefit to the precious doctrine and all sentient beings!

*Mangalam*



## Notes



- 1 For interesting comments on this point see Seyfort Ruegg (1989), 8.
- 2 The Indian and Tibetan texts use a variety of terms, such as sugata essence (*sugatagarbha*, *bde gshegs snying po*), tathāgata essence (*tathāgatagarbha*, *de bzhin gshegs pa'i snying po*), buddha essence (*buddhagarbha*, *sangs rgyas kyi snying po*), and, more rarely, buddha nature (*sangs rgyas kyi rang bzhin*, \**buddhaprakṛti*). In my discussion I will mostly use the term *buddha nature*, which is now widely used in Western literature, but in translated passages I will use the appropriate terms mentioned above as they occur in the original texts. Dölpopa himself almost always uses the term *sugata essence* (*bde gshegs snying po*).
- 3 See Schaeffer (1995) for a translation and study of an important text by Rangjung Dorjé (Rang byung rdo rje) on the tathāgata essence (*tathāgatagarbha*). See Brunnhölzl (2004), 445–526, for a discussion of *rangtong* and *shentong* primarily from the perspective of several eminent Kagyü masters, and Brunnhölzl (2007) for a translation and study of Rangjung Dorjé's commentary on Nāgārjuna's *Eulogy to the Basic Space of Phenomena*, especially 171–84 and 189–93, where *rangtong/shentong* issues are discussed. Also see Mathes (2008), 51–75, for Rangjung Dorjé's views on the buddha nature, or sugata essence. See Seyfort Ruegg (1966), (1969), and (1973) for studies and translations of Butön's (Bu ston) biography and his writings on the tathāgata essence. Also see Seyfort Ruegg (1963) for some information on both Dölpopa's life and the *shentong* teachings, but from the viewpoint of a harsh Geluk (Dge lugs) critic. Kapstein (1992a) provides a translation of a synopsis of Dölpopa's life, a brief discussion of his views, and the translation of a short text, and Kapstein (2000), 106–19, further elaborates several specific aspects of Dölpopa's teachings. Hookham (1991) uses Dölpopa's *Mountain Dharma: An Ocean of Definitive Meaning* (*Ri chos nges don rgya mtsho*) in her discussion of the *shentong* approach to the interpretation of the *Highest Continuum* (*Uttaratantra* or *Ratnagotravibhāga*). In Stearns (1995) I presented some of the material found in chapter 1, sections 3–5, and chapter 2, section 2, of the present book. Concerning Dölpopa, also see Jeffrey Hopkins's introduction to Döl-bo-ba Shay-rap-gyel-tsen (2006), 1–44, Mathes (2004), and Mathes (2008), 75–84. Both Herbert Guenther and Richard Barron have translated a number of Longchenpa's (Klong chen pa) important writings. Mathes (2008), 98–113, has specifically examined Longchenpa's views on the buddha nature. Germano (1992) is a translation and study of a section of one of Longchenpa's major works. The life and thought of Lama Dampa Sönam Gyaltzen (Bla ma dam pa Bsod nams

rgyal mtshan) remains largely unexplored. Barawa Gyaltzen Palsang ('Ba' ra ba Rgyal mtshan dpal bzang), who studied with both Dölpopa and Butön, left a huge corpus of work on the buddha nature and related issues. Barawa's views are briefly examined in Mathes (2008), 113–25. Burchardi (2007) examines the *shentong* views of several masters described in two comparative studies by Tāranātha and the twentieth-century scholar Padma bi dza. See also Seyfort Ruegg (1968) and (1989), Sheehy (2007), and Cabezón and Dargay (2007).

- 4 See especially Seyfort Ruegg (1963) and Thurman (1984).
- 5 As noted by Seyfort Ruegg (1989), 5–6, the teachings of the Chinese master Hashang Mahāyāna (Hva shang Mahāyāna) suffered a similar fate in Tibet.
- 6 For instance, see the important comments in Seyfort Ruegg (1995), 168.
- 7 This summary of the orthodox Sakya (Sa skya) position is based on private conversations with Dezhung Rinpoché (Sde gzhung Rin po che Kun dga' bstan pa'i nyi ma, 1906–87).
- 8 For example, see Dölpopa, *Fourth Council*, 387. Unless otherwise noted, all references to the *Fourth Council* and the *Autocommentary to the "Fourth Council"* are to the 1984 Bhutanese reproductions of the Tibetan texts.
- 9 Dölpopa, *Autocommentary to the "Fourth Council"*, 663: *thams cad rang stong du rtogs pa/ ma rtogs pa dang cis ma mnyam/ thams cad rang stong du bshad pa/ ma bshad pa dang cis ma mnyam/ thams cad rang stong du bris pa/ ma bris pa dang cis ma mnyam/*.
- 10 For example, see Dölpopa, *Instruction to Lhajé Tsultrim Ö*, 678–79, and Dölpopa, *Reply to the Questions of Lotsāwa Sherab Rinchen*, 774. The extant Sanskrit manuscripts have the spelling Sambhala, but I will use the more familiar spelling of Shambhala, as found in all Tibetan sources.
- 11 Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig, in their translation of the Hebrew Bible into German (1925–62), also strove to remove what Buber called the "palimpsest," or the accumulated theological, historical, and psychological ideas that they felt had often obscured the true meaning of the scripture. See Hirsch (1995), 5.
- 12 See Dölpopa, *General Commentary on the Doctrine*. All references to this text are from the Bhutanese edition prepared from tracings of the original Gyantsé Fortress (Rgyal rtse rdzong) blocks.
- 13 See Nya Ön Kunga Pal, *Explanation of the "General Commentary on the Doctrine"*. I am grateful to Leonard van der Kuijp for a photocopy of a rare manuscript of this work.
- 14 See Dölpopa, *Fourth Council* and Dölpopa, *Autocommentary to the "Fourth Council"*. Unless otherwise noted, all references to these texts are also to the Bhutanese editions.
- 15 See Lamotte (1988), XXIV.
- 16 For brief summaries of Dölpopa's life see also Kapstein (1992a), 7–21; Roerich (1976), 775–77; and Seyfort Ruegg (1963), 80–81.

- 17 See Lhai Gyaltsen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, and Kunpang Chödrak Palsang, *Biography of the Omniscient Dharma Lord*. Kunpang's work was the earlier of the two, apparently written in 1362 or 1363, while Lhai Gyaltsen's can only be dated to between 1380, when Lochen Jangchup Tsemo (Lo chen Byang chub rtse mo) died (mentioned on 55b), and 1401, the year of the author's death. Nevertheless, Lhai Gyaltsen's work is the more reliable, being based on information given by Dölpopa himself and notes set down by his chosen heir, Jonang Lotsāwa Lodrö Pal (Jo nang Lo tsā ba Blo gros dpal, 1299–1354), as well as a biography composed by the Kālacakra expert Jamgeg (Dus 'khor ba 'Jam sgeg) only one month after Dölpopa's death. Lhai Gyaltsen's work also includes what the author himself had seen and heard. For these reasons, in the following treatment of the major phases of Dölpopa's career the chronology set forth in Lhai Gyaltsen's work will be followed, with reference to variances found in the other sources. I thank Leonard van der Kuijp for a photocopy of Lhai Gyaltsen's rare work. As will be noted, there are also serious chronological problems in Kunpang's work and certain later additions by an unknown editor.

For the life of Gharungwa Lhai Gyaltsen (Gha rung ba Lha'i rgyal mtshan), also known as Garongwa ('Ga' rong ba), see Gyalwa Josang Palsangpo, *Brilliant Marvels*, 615–19, and Ngawang Lodrö Drakpa, *History of the Jonang Tradition*, 35–36. In 1588 Tāranātha received the textual transmission for the biography (*rnam thar*) written by Garongwa. See Tāranātha, *Autobiography of the Wanderer Tāranātha*, 89. See also Könchok Tenpa Rabgyé, *History of Buddhism in Domé*, 11. For a brief biography of Kunpang Chödrak Palsang (Kun spangs Chos grags dpal bzang), see Gyalwa Josang Palsangpo, *Brilliant Marvels*, 566–73, and Ngawang Lodrö Drakpa, *History of the Jonang Tradition*, 32–33. The two later sources that deal with Dölpopa's life are Tāranātha, *History of the Kālacakra Teachings*, and Mangtö Ludrup Gyatso, *Chronology of the Doctrine*. Shalu Lotsāwa Chökyong Sangpo (Zhwa lu lo tsā ba Chos skyong bzang po, 1441–1528) also apparently wrote a biography of Dölpopa. See Könchok Tenpa Rabgyé, *History of Buddhism in Domé*, 11. For an extremely abbreviated version of Lhai Gyaltsen's work, see Lhai Gyaltsen, *Condensed Biography of Dölpopa*.

- 18 Lhai Gyaltsen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, 2a–4a, and Kunpang Chödrak Palsang, *Biography of the Omniscient Dharma Lord*, 297. Also see Kapstein (1992a), 8–9.
- 19 Kunpang Chödrak Palsang, *Biography of the Omniscient Dharma Lord*, 296.
- 20 Lhai Gyaltsen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, 5a.
- 21 Lhai Gyaltsen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, 5a. Mangtö Ludrup Gyatso, *Chronology of the Doctrine*, 178, says Kyitön Shākbum (Skyi ston Shāk 'būm) and Kyitön Drakpa Gyaltsen (Skyi ston Grags pa rgyal mtshan) were uncle and nephew.
- 22 Kapstein (1992a), 10–11, understandably mistook this event for Dölpopa's own later departure for Sakya. The original source for the condensed text Kapstein translated and reproduced can now be identified as Lhai Gyaltsen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, which was not available at the time.
- 23 See Lhai Gyaltsen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, 6a; Kunpang Chödrak Palsang, *Biography of the Omniscient Dharma Lord*, 298; and Tāranātha, *History of the Kālacakra Teachings*, 25.

- 24 See Tāranātha, *Supplication to the Lineage of the Profound Madhyamaka Emptiness of Other*, 488–89.
- 25 See Kunga Drölchok, *Life of the Omniscient Sanghabhadra*, 231–33.
- 26 See Roerich (1976), 756, 785, and Stearns (1996), 163, note 117, for information on Rongpa Sherab Sengé (Rong pa shes rab seng ge). Lotsāwa Chokden (Lo tsā ba Mchog ldan) was a disciple of Shongtön Dorjé Gyaltsen (Shong ston Rdo rje rgyal mtshan) and his brother, and became the teacher of Pang Lotsāwa Lodrö Tenpa (Dpang Lo tsā ba Blo gros brtan pa, 1276–1342). See Dradul Wangpo, *History of the Five Sciences*, 299.
- 27 The Bodhisattva Trilogy (*Sems 'grel skor gsum*) is (1) *Vimalaprabhā* or *Stainless Light* (Toh 1347), which is an immense commentary on the *Kālacakra Tantra* by Kalkī Puṇḍarīka; (2) *Hevajrapīṇḍārthaṭīkā* (Toh 1180), which is a commentary on the *Hevajra Tantra* by Bodhisattva Vajragarbha; and (3) *Lakṣābhīdhanāduddhṛtalaḥṭu tantrapīṇḍārthavivaraṇa* (Toh 1402), which is a commentary on the *Cakrasamvara Tantra* by Bodhisattva Vajrapāṇi. The first chapter of the *Stainless Light* has now been partially translated and studied in Newman (1987), the second chapter is completely translated in Wallace (2004) and investigated in depth in Wallace (2001), the third chapter is translated in Andresen (1997), and the fifth chapter is partially translated in Hartzell (1997).
- 28 According to Dölpopa, *Reply to Questions*, 344–45, the Ten Sūtras on the Essence (*Snying po'i mdo*) are (1) *Sūtra on the Tathāgata Essence* (*De bzhin gshegs pa'i snying po'i mdo*), (2) *Dhāraṇī for Entering the Nonconceptual* (*Rnam par mi rtog pa la 'jug pa'i gzungs*), (3) *Sūtra of the Lion's Roar of Śrīmālādevī* (*Lha mo dpal phreng seng ge sgra'i mdo*), (4) *Sūtra of the Great Drum* (*Rnga bo che chen po'i mdo*), (5) *Sūtra to Benefit Aṅgulimāla* (*Sor mo'i phreng ba la phan pa'i mdo*), (6) *Sūtra of Great Emptiness* (*Stong nyid chen po'i mdo*), (7) *Sūtra Presenting the Great Compassion of the Tathāgata* (*De bzhin gshegs pa'i thugs rje chen po bstan pa'i mdo*), (8) *Sūtra Presenting the Inconceivable Qualities and Primordial Awareness of the Tathāgata* (*De bzhin gshegs pa'i yon tan dang ye shes bsam gyis mi khyab pa'i bstan pa'i mdo*), (9) *Extensive Sūtra of the Great Cloud* (*Sprin chen po'i mdo rgyas pa*), and (10) the condensed and extensive *Sūtra of Great Nirvāṇa* (*Myang 'das chen po'i mdo*), both counted together as one. The first five texts in this list are also called the Five Sūtras on the Essence. Lhai Gyaltsen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, 10b, has copied the same list from Dölpopa's work.
- 29 The Five Sūtras of Definitive Meaning (*Nges don mdo*) are (1) *Perfection of Wisdom in Five Hundred Lines* (*Sher phyin lnga brgya pa*), (2) *Maitreya's Questions* (*Byang chub sems pa'i bslab pa rab tu dbye ba'i le'u cha gnyis gcig tu byas pa byams zhus su'ang grags pa*), (3) *Ghanavyūha Sūtra* (*Rgyan btug po'i mdo*), (4) *Sūtra on Utterly Quiescent and Certain Magical Meditative Concentration* (*Rab tu zhi ba rnam par nges pa'i cho 'phrul gyi ting nge 'dzin kyi mdo*), and (5) *Cloud of Jewels Sūtra* (*Dkon mchog sprin gyi mdo*). The two versions of *Maitreya's Questions* that Dölpopa mentions in his description of (2) are found in the eighteen-thousand-line and the twenty-five-thousand-line sūtras on the perfection of wisdom. A set of Ten Sūtras of Definitive Meaning is made by adding the following sūtras to the list: (1) *Great Excellent Golden Light* (*Gser 'od dam chen*), (2) *Definitive Commentary on the Intention* (*Dgongs pa nges par 'grel pa*), (3) *Laṅkāvatāra* (*Lang kar gshegs pa*), (4) *Sūtra Ornament of the Appearance*



of *Primordial Awareness* (*Ye shes snang ba rgyan gyi mdo*), and (5) *Avatamsaka* (*Sang rgyas phal po che*). See Dölpopa, *Reply to Questions*, 344–45, and Lhai Gyaltsen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, 11a.

- 30 The Five Treatises of Maitreya (*Byams chos*) are (1) *Highest Continuum* (*Uttaratantra*, *Ratnagotravibhāga*), (2) *Ornament for Direct Realization* (*Abhisamayālaṅkāra*), (3) *Distinguishing Phenomena and True Nature* (*Dharmadharmatāvibhāga*), (4) *Ornament for the Sūtras* (*Mahāyānasūtrālaṅkāra*), and (5) *Distinguishing the Middle and the Extremes* (*Madhyāntavibhāga*). Kytön also taught Dölpopa a number of Nāgārjuna's works. The teachings that Dölpopa received from Kytön are said to all be listed in his *Record of Teachings Received* (*Gsan yig*), which does not seem to have survived. See Lhai Gyaltsen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, 6a.
- 31 A brief discussion of the six branches is given in chapter 3, section 3. For more information, see Newman (1987), Grönbold (1982) and (1983), and Wallace (2001). Kongtrul (2007b), 289–330, is a clear summary of the Six-branch Yoga practices copied almost entirely from Jetsun Tāranātha's *Meaningful to Behold* (*Mthong ba don ldan*). For a very detailed treatment from the perspective of the Geluk tradition, see also Khedrup Norsang Gyatso (2004), 391–584.
- 32 Lhai Gyaltsen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, 8b.
- 33 Tāranātha, *History of the Kālacakra Teachings*, 25.
- 34 Kunpang Chödrak Palsang, *Biography of the Omniscient Dharma Lord*, 301, places Dölpopa's studies with Drakpa Gyaltsen (*Grags pa rgyal mtshan*) at a later time, after he returned to Sakya from a tour of the teaching institutes of Tsang and Central Tibet. Lhai Gyaltsen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, 6a, mentions these studies before his departure from Sakya. See Mangtö Ludrup Gyatso, *Chronology of the Doctrine*, 170, for Drakpa Gyaltsen's possible dates. Van der Kuijp (1994a), 143–45, has gathered considerable information about Kunpang Drakpa Gyaltsen (*Kun spangs Grags pa rgyal mtshan*), also known as Lama Nyamepa (*Bla ma mnyam med pa*), from whom Tai Situ Jangchup Gyaltsen (*Ta'i Situ Byang chub rgyal mtshan*, 1302–64) received the Sakya teachings of the Path with the Result (*Lam 'bras*).
- 35 Lhai Gyaltsen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, 6a–b. Kunga Dorjé, *Red Annals*, 51, says Sengé Pal (*Seng ge dpal*) died in China at the age of thirty, while his brother Kunga Sönam (*Kun dga' bsod nams*) held the Sharpa (*Shar pa*) monastic seat (*gdan sa*) for thirty-four years and died at the age of sixty-two in a Fire Male Dog Year (*me pho khyi*, 1346). Paljor Sangpo, *Chronicle of China and Tibet*, 353, relates the same information in a somewhat clearer fashion.
- 36 Dölpopa's studies with Rinchen Yeshé (*Rin chen ye shes*) are mentioned in Tāranātha, *History of the Kālacakra Teachings*, 25, and Lhai Gyaltsen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, 6b. Also see Kunga Drölchok, *Lineage History of the "Hundred Guiding Instructions"*, 326: *thams cad mkhyen pa bu ston gyi dris lan zhig na'ang/ sngon rta nag pa rin chen ye shes pa'i grub mtha' zhig yod pa phyis dol bu pas rtsal 'don du skyong bar snang gsungs pa la yang zhib dpyod mdzad 'tshal*. Kunga Drölchok's text is translated in chapter 2, section 1.
- 37 See Lhai Gyaltsen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, 6b, and Kunpang Chödrak Palsang, *Biography of the Omniscient Dharma Lord*, 299–300.

- 38 Lhai Gyaltsen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, 6b. Kunpang Chödrak Palsang, *Biography of the Omniscient Dharma Lord*, 302, lists many of the places Dölpopa visited.
- 39 Tāranātha, *History of the Kālacakra Teachings*, 25.
- 40 Lhai Gyaltsen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, 7b. Kunpang Chödrak Palsang, *Biography of the Omniscient Dharma Lord*, 300, places Dölpopa's ordination ceremony at Shalu (Zhwa lu) when he was twenty-one years old. It is interesting that Dölpopa wrote a short versified work on the Madyamaka view at the order of this Khenchen Sönam Drakpa (Mkhan chen Bsod nams grags pa). See Dölpopa, *Esoteric Instruction on Madhyamaka*. This text, which does not contain the special Dharma language Dölpopa later developed, is obviously one of his earlier works, and could conceivably have been composed at the time of his ordination in 1314, although there is no way to be certain. The death of Sönam Drakpa is mentioned in Jangchup Tsemo, *Biography of Dharma Lord Lama Dampa*, 31a. See Seyfort Ruegg (1966), 77–78, for the ordination of Butön, and Jangchup Tsemo, *Biography of Dharma Lord Lama Dampa*, 9b–10a, for the ordinations of Lama Dampa (Bla ma dam pa) and his brother.
- 41 For example, Dölpopa received the *Amulet Great Seal* (*Phyag rgya chen po ga'u ma*) of the Shangpa (Shangs pa) tradition at Samding (Bsam sdings) Monastery from a certain Khedrup (Mkhas grub), who can probably be identified as Khedrup Shönu Drup (Mkhas grub Gzhon nu grub, d. 1319). He also received many teachings of Severance (Gcod), Pacification (Zhi byed), the Great Seal (Phyag rgya chen po), and the Great Perfection (Rdzogs chen) from a yogin called Nakbum (Nag 'bum) and from a Khenchen Dzimpa (Mkhan chen 'Dzims pa). See Lhai Gyaltsen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, 7b–8a. More teachings from those traditions were also received from the master Dorjé Gyaltsen (Bla ma Rdo rje rgyal mtshan). See Kunpang Chödrak Palsang, *Biography of the Omniscient Dharma Lord*, 302.
- 42 Lhai Gyaltsen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, 8b, describes the texts written at this time as a ritual for awakening the enlightenment mind (*sems bskyed cho ga*) and a versified eulogy to the precious Jowo (*Jo bo rin po che la bstod pa'i tshigs bcad*). Neither text is found among Dölpopa's available works.
- 43 Lhai Gyaltsen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, 8b. Kunpang Chödrak Palsang, *Biography of the Omniscient Dharma Lord*, 300, places this event earlier, before Dölpopa received full ordination.
- 44 See Tāranātha, *History of the Kālacakra Teachings*, 25–26, and Kunpang Chödrak Palsang, *Biography of the Omniscient Dharma Lord*, 302–3.
- 45 See Gyalwa Josang Palsangpo, *Brilliant Marvels*, 563. To my knowledge, this event is not mentioned in any literary work of the Sakya tradition.
- 46 Tāranātha, *History of the Kālacakra Teachings*, 26.
- 47 Lhai Gyaltsen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, 9a: *mkhas pa mang po ji tsam 'tshogs kyiin yang nga zhums nas mi 'gro'i stengs su spobs pa je bzang je bzang la 'gro ba gcig yod pa yin pa la/ jo nang du phyin dus sgom chen pho mo re re'i sgom gyi gnas lugs rtogs tsa na nga yang shin tu zhum par gyur cing/ khong tso la dad pa dang dag snang*

*dbang med du skye ba byung!*. Tāranātha, *History of the Kālacakra Teachings*, 26, also refers to this event.

- 48 See Tāranātha, *History of the Kālacakra Teachings*, 26, for the meeting with Rangjung Dorjé (Rang byung rdo rje). The significance of this meeting is discussed in chapter 2, section 2. For the biography of Yönten Gyatso (Yon tan rgya mtsho), see Dölpopa, *Biography of Master Yönten Gyatso*. Dölpopa's first meeting with Yönten Gyatso is described in Lhai Gyaltsen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, 9a, and Kunpang Chödrak Palsang, *Biography of the Omniscient Dharma Lord*, 304.
- 49 See Kunpang Chödrak Palsang, *Biography of the Omniscient Dharma Lord*, 304–6. Two of the monks accompanying Dölpopa were named Rinchen Pal (Rin chen dpal) and Lodrö Pal (Blo gros dpal). Dölpopa would later be considered an emanation of Kalki Puṇḍarika, who in turn was believed to have been an emanation of Avalokiteśvara. Kunpang provides a long list of the many *śaḍaṅgayoga* transmissions that Dölpopa received, such as *kha che pan chen gyi sbyor drug*, *a bha ya'i sbyor drug*, *rga lo'i sbyor drug*, *na ro pa'i sbyor drug*, *sha ba ri pa'i sbyor drug*, *bram ze bsod snyoms pa'i sbyor drug*, *dpal gsang ba 'dus pa'i sbyor drug*, *kye'i rdo rje'i sbyor drug*, *gnyos khong pa'i sbyor drug*, and *zhang gyu brag pa'i sbyor drug*. He also received the transmissions of many Tibetan treatises on the *śaḍaṅgayoga*, such as the *tsa mi lo tsā'i sbyor drug*, *gyi jo lo tsā'i sbyor drug*, *'bro lo tsā'i sbyor drug*, *rwa lo tsā'i sbyor drug*, and *'jam dbyang gsar ma'i sbyor drug*. He is said to have achieved precise experience and realization according to each, and mastered all the words and meanings.
- 50 Kunpang Chödrak Palsang, *Biography of the Omniscient Dharma Lord*, 306–8, and Lhai Gyaltsen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, 9a–9b.
- 51 Kunpang Chödrak Palsang, *Biography of the Omniscient Dharma Lord*, 308.
- 52 Kunpang Chödrak Palsang, *Biography of the Omniscient Dharma Lord*, 308: *sor bsam gnyis la brten nas sangs rgyas kyi sku dang zhing khams dpag du med pa gzigs so/ srog rtsol dang 'dzin [309] pa la brten nas bde drod 'bar bas nyams rtogs khyad par can 'khrungs so/*.
- 53 Tāranātha, *Guidebook of Khyogpo Hermitage*, 2a: *chos rje kun mkhyen chen pos kyang lo gnyis ngo gsum bzugs/ sor sdud bsam gtan srog rtsol gsum mthar phyin pa'i tshul ston sa yang 'di lags/*. I would like to thank Franz-Karl Ehrhard for a photocopy of this text.
- 54 Tāranātha, *History of the Kālacakra Teachings*, 26: *sbyor drug la nyams 'khrid mdzad/ dmigs pa zhu ba'i skabs ma gtogs su dang yang mi 'phrad par mkha' spyod bde ldan du bzugs/ sor bsadud bsam gtan gyi nyams rtogs mthar phyin pas/ bla ma'i gsung nas mgyogs khrid bya gsung pa la/ gol le skyong bar zhu zhus te sgom par mdzad pas/ srog rtsol mthar phyin pa'i rtags rgyud nas bshad pa bzhin mnga'!*
- 55 Tāranātha, *History of the Kālacakra Teachings*, 27: *gzhan stong gi lta sgom khyad par can ni/ mkha' spyod bde ldan du bzugs pa'i tshe thugs la 'khrungs pa yin kyang/ lo shas shig gzhan la ma gsungs/*.
- 56 Tāranātha, *History of the Kālacakra Teachings*, 27.
- 57 Lhai Gyaltsen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, 10a, mentions that the request was made about two years before the death of Yönten Gyatso in 1327. Dölpopa's own words are quoted in describing these events and his feelings about them.

- 58 See Kunpang Chödrak Palsang, *Biography of the Omniscient Dharma Lord*, 309–11, and Lhai Gyaltsen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, 10a–b.
- 59 See notes 27–30 for an identification of these texts. Also see Lhai Gyaltsen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, 10b–11a.
- 60 Kunpang Chödrak Palsang, *Biography of the Omniscient Dharma Lord*, 312.
- 61 Kunpang Chödrak Palsang, *Biography of the Omniscient Dharma Lord*, 310: *nga'i ri khrod 'dir bu bas tsha bo bzang/ tsha bo bas kyang yang tsha bzang bar 'ong/ ma 'ongs pa na bzang ldan gong mar chos 'chad/ bzang ldan 'og mar mchod rten chen po bzhangs/*. This prophecy is also found, with less detail, in Lhai Gyaltsen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, 12a, and also on 23b, where it is quoted from a letter sent to Dölpopa by a Rinpoché Sherbumpa (Rin po che Sher 'bum pa), who was a disciple of Kunpang Tukjé Tsöndrū (Kun spangs Thugs rje brtson 'grus). Sherbumpa expressed his certainty that Dölpopa was the one Kunpang had prophesied. Kunpang's spiritual son and Dharma heir was Jangsem Gyalwa Yeshé (Byang sems Rgyal ba ye shes, 1257–1320), the grandson was Yönten Gyatso, and the heralded great-grandson was Dölpopa.
- 62 Lhai Gyaltsen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, 12a. Tropu Lotsāwa's (Khro phu Lo tsā ba) stūpa was probably the model on which Dölpopa based his own monument. Tropu Lotsāwa began his stūpa when he was fifty-eight years old (1230) and completed the shrines on the third floor in 1234. It was constructed to serve as a reliquary shrine for some of the remains and special relics (*ring bsrel*) of his master, Śākyaśrībhadrā (d. 1225?), that were brought from Kāśmīr to Tibet by two paṇḍita disciples of Śākyaśrībhadrā. See Jampa Pal, *Autobiography of Tropu Lotsāwa*, 86a–87a. My thanks go to Leonard van der Kuijp for a photocopy of this text. The only other available description is the brief mention in Chökyi Gyatso, *Pilgrimage Journal of Central Tibet and Tsang*, 481, where the Tropu structure is said to have been built of stone, with three stories (*bang rim*) of five temples on each of the four sides, totaling sixty.
- 63 Lhai Gyaltsen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, 12a–b. Kunpang Chödrak Palsang, *Biography of the Omniscient Dharma Lord*, 312, gives the date for this event. He also supplies a fantastic story about how the central poles (*srog shing*) were put in place in upper Sangden (Bzang ldan), but were hurled down to the sandy plain of lower Sangden through the supernatural intervention of the Protectors of the Four Directions (Rgyal chen bzhi), and the stūpa therefore had to be constructed there. See Kunpang Chödrak Palsang, *Biography of the Omniscient Dharma Lord*, 313. Based on the tone and contents of both sources, it would seem that the first attempt to build at upper Sangden was unsuccessful and construction was delayed until the next spring, when the work commenced at the more favorable site of lower Sangden.
- 64 Kunpang Chödrak Palsang, *Biography of the Omniscient Dharma Lord*, 316–19, and Lhai Gyaltsen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, 12b.
- 65 Kunpang Chödrak Palsang, *Biography of the Omniscient Dharma Lord*, 318–19: *ngas dang po grwa skor gyi dus su/ khro phu lo tsā ba'i mchod rten mthong nas lhag par dad pa'i shugs kyis smon lam mang po btab/ mdo rgyud mang po nas/ sku gzugs dang mchod rien gyi rgya dpang tshad can bzhangs na tshogs rdzogs pa'i lung mang du*

*mthong/ yin lugs su ting nge 'dzin bsgrub [319] pa'i dge ba'i rtsa ba khyad par 'phags te/ de lta bu'i gang zag ni nyung/ sems can spyi'i gnas lugs la bsam na snying rje tshad med pa skye/ mchod rten 'di gang gis mthong thos reg pa tsam gyis grol ba dang/ thar pa'i sa bon thebs pa dang/ gzhan don rgya chen po 'byung bar gdon mi za/ log sgrub can rnams physis na 'gyod par gyur.* The actual construction of the Jonang stūpa, which was known by many names, such as Pal Yöchen (Dpal yon can), Kumbum Chenpo (Sku 'bum chen po), Pal Gomang (Dpal sgo mangs), and so forth, is detailed in Kunpang Chödrak Palsang, *Biography of the Omniscient Dharma Lord*, 313–28, and Lhai Gyaltzen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, 12a–20a. Dölpopa also wrote two short texts eulogizing the stūpa. See Dölpopa, *Eulogy to the Stūpa of Jonang*, and *Eulogy about How the Stūpa Was Built*. Lhai Gyaltzen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, 23a, mentions that Dölpopa wrote five texts concerning the great monument, the most important of which was Dölpopa, *Sublime Method for Opening Many Gates of Dharma*. The stūpa at Jonang was visited and its interior art work described by Tucci (1980), 190–96. Photographs of it are found in Tucci (1973), pls. 78 and 79, although incorrectly captioned as the stūpa at Gyang (Rgyang). See Vitali (1990), 128, pl. 82, for a photograph of the ruined remains following the Cultural Revolution, and 129 for a reproduction of Tucci's old photograph, but with the correct caption. More recent photographs are included in the present book.

- 66 It is very interesting that four long iron chains (*lcags thag*) were salvaged from an iron suspension bridge (*lcags zam*) in the Ngamring (Ngam ring) district and used for structural support in the Jonang stūpa. See Kunpang Chödrak Palsang, *Biography of the Omniscient Dharma Lord*, 326–28. This is barely mentioned in Lhai Gyaltzen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, 13a. The existence of an iron bridge is noteworthy because the received tradition is that iron suspension bridges were not introduced in Tibet until the great adept Tangtong Gyalpo (Grub chen Thang stong rgyal po, 1361?–1485) built the first one over the Kyichu River (Skyi chu) in 1430, exactly one hundred years after Dölpopa began the construction of his stūpa. Incredibly, Tāranātha, *History of the Kālacakra Teachings*, 30, says the iron bridge from which Dölpopa obtained the chains was at Rinchen Ding (Rin chen sding). This is the birthplace of Tangtong Gyalpo, who would later claim to be the rebirth of Dölpopa! See Stearns (2007) for further information about Tangtong Gyalpo and Dölpopa.
- 67 See Lhai Gyaltzen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, 13a and 15b. One of those who sent offerings was the Sakya Tishri Kunga Gyaltzen (Sa skya Ti shri Kun dga' rgyal mtshan), who was a disciple of Dölpopa. On 20a, this same Sakya master is also said to have offered materials for the construction of a large silk maṇḍala of Kālacakra after the completion of the stūpa.
- 68 The participation of these teachers in the construction work is mentioned by Lhai Gyaltzen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, 12b.
- 69 See Kunpang Chödrak Palsang, *Biography of the Omniscient Dharma Lord*, 323: *chos rje'i thugs dgyes nas/ kun rdzob rang stong dang don dam gzhan stong gi phye bsal chen mo dang . . .*. In Stearns (1995), 833, note 17, upper Sangden (Bzang ldan gong) was identified as Sangden Monastery (Bzang ldan chos sde) near Jang Ngamring (Byang Ngam ring), which was founded by Dölpopa's disciple and biographer, Kunpang Chödrak Palsang. This is incorrect. Upper (*gong*) Sangden and lower (*og*) Sangden are areas of Jonang itself. Tāranātha's comments are found in Tāranātha, *History of the Kālacakra Teachings*, 27.

- 70 See Lhai Gyaltsen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, 15a–b.
- 71 Lhai Gyaltsen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, 21a: *sngar bod du ma grags pa don dam gzhan stong dang . . .*/. This is from a long and significant list of topics that Dölpopa felt he had been the first in Tibet to realize and explicate correctly.
- 72 Both Dölpopa's comments and the opinions of Lhai Gyaltsen are found in Lhai Gyaltsen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, 22a.
- 73 Kalāpa is the name of the court of the Kalki emperors of the legendary land of Shambhala, which is the stronghold of the Kālacakra teachings.
- 74 The three wisdoms arise from study (*thos pa*), reflection (*bsam pa*), and meditation (*sgom pa*). This single couplet from Dölpopa's series of verses was also quoted later in Gö Lotsāwa's *Blue Annals*. See Roerich (1976), 776.
- 75 Lhai Gyaltsen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, 22a: *kye ma bdag gi skal ba rab dman yang/ 'di 'dra snyed pas skal ba bzang snyam byed/ le lo can gyi blun pos 'di rnyed pa/ rigs ldan rgyal pos byin gyis brlabs yin nam/ lus kyis ka lā pa ru ma sleb kyang/ dad pa'i sems la rigs ldan zhugs sam ci/ shes rab gsum la blo 'gros sbyangs min yang/ lhun po bzhengs pas rgya mtsho rdol ba snyam/ 'phags rnam kyis kyang rtogs par dka' ba'i gnas/ gang gis drin gyis ji bzhin rtogs mdzad pa/ bla ma sangs rgyas rigs ldan thams cad dang/ de yi mchod rten che la phyag 'tshal 'dud/*. It can now be said that these lines are from a series of verses that Dölpopa wrote at the end of his annotations to the *Stainless Light*. See Choglé Namgyal, *Annotations to the "Stainless Light,"* vol. 20: 456. See note 91 below concerning the identification of these annotations.
- 76 Several examples of the Tibetan text of *Mountain Dharma: An Ocean of Definitive Meaning* (*Ri chos nges don rgya mtsho*) have now been published. See especially Dölpopa, *Mountain Dharma*, which has many annotations believed to be by Dölpopa himself. For an English translation of *Mountain Dharma* by Jeffrey Hopkins, see Döl-bo-ba Shay-rap-gyel-tsen (2006). See also Broido (1989), for a very brief sketch of Dölpopa's views according to the *Mountain Dharma*. Lhai Gyaltsen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, 17a, gives the date of the stūpa consecration as *dpal ldong gyi lo smin drug gi zla ba'i dkar phyogs kyi tshes bcu*, which corresponds to Friday, October 30, 1333. This date has been calculated based on Schuh (1973).
- 77 See Tāranātha, *History of the Kālacakra Teachings*, 27. The very appropriate term "hermeneutical shock" has been borrowed from Katz (1983), 110.
- 78 Tāranātha, *Twenty-one Differences Concerning the Profound Meaning*, 793–94. Two English translations of Tāranātha's text are now available. See Mathes (2004) and Tāranātha (2007), 117–36.
- 79 For example, the Sakya master Gungruwa Sherab Sangpo (Gung ru ba Shes rab bzang po, 1411–75) claims that when Kunpang Tukjé Tsöndrū (Kun spangs Thugs rje brtson 'grus, 1243–1313) founded Jonang Monastery it was an affiliate monastery of Sakya. He says no separate "Jonangpa" tradition existed at that time, but was established by Kunpang's disciple, the omniscient Dölpopa. See Gungruwa Sherab Sangpo, *History of the Path with the Result*, 122.1: *jo nang gi dgon pa btab pas jo nang yang sa skyā'i dgon lag ste/ 'di'i dus na jo nang pa zhes zur pa med/ khong gi dngos slob kun mkhyen dol bu pas byas pa'o/*. Gungruwa is mistaken about Dölpopa being Kunpang's disciple, and it is doubtful that Kunpang considered himself "Sakyapa."

Kunpang was a very eclectic master, receiving and practicing teachings from many traditions. He certainly did study and practice Sakya teachings, especially the Path with the Result, but the same can also be said about teachings from other traditions. Kunpang's main emphasis was the Kālacakra Six-branch Yoga, of which he received every existing lineage. Much research remains to be done, but it seems that Jonang was originally an independent hermitage that had close connections with the Sakya tradition. According to the recent Jonang master Ngawang Lodrö Drakpa, *History of the Jonang Tradition*, 102, even during the time of Dölpopa and his disciples, the Jonangpa primarily maintained their own special teachings of definitive meaning, the Great Madhyamaka, and Kālacakra, but also emphasized the profound teachings of the Sakya tradition and, to a lesser degree, those of other lineages.

- 80 See Jamgön Ameshap, *History of the Mahākāla Teachings*, vol. 2: 285: ... *kun mkhyen dol bu yi/ sngon med gzhan stong lta ba'i srol brod pas/ 'di la mkhas mchog rnam kyis mgrin gcig tul/ khyed [286] nyid sa skya'i grub mtha'i rjes 'jug tul/ khas lan bzhin du rje btsun gong ma yi/ gsung dang 'gal ba'i lta ba 'di 'dod pa/ 'thad pa min zhes rtsod ngag mang du bsgrags/ 'on kyang kun mkhyen de yi/ gzhan stong gi/ lta ba ston byed gsung rab mang brtsams nas/ sa skyar byon tshe chos rje sa paṇ gyi/ na bza' bla gos sku drag can zhig la/ mjal bas dad gus chen pos sku chos de/ zhal du 'jibs cing gsol ba mang btap pas/ gzhan stong lta ba la zhen thugs 'gyur te/ de phyin gong ma'i gsung dang mthun pa yi/ lta ba rang stong skyong la gus pa zhig/ byung ba yin zhes bdag gi bla ma gsungs/.*
- 81 Lhai Gyaltsen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, 45b, mentions all of these Sakya masters, with the exception of Dönyö Gyaltsen (Don yod rgyal mtshan), in a list of Dölpopa's disciples. Concerning Chökyi Gyaltsen (Chos kyi rgyal mtshan) and Lodrö Gyaltsen (Blo gros rgyal mtshan), see van der Kuip (1988), 300, note 24.
- 82 See Lhai Gyaltsen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, 48a, and Kunpang Chödrak Palsang, *Biography of the Omniscient Dharma Lord*, 423–25.
- 83 For Tuken's comments about Panchen Shākya Chokden, see Seyfort Ruegg (1963), 90.
- 84 See Tāranātha, *History of the Kālacakra Teachings*, 25.
- 85 The monastery of Chusang (Chu bzang) had been offered by the Path with the Result (Lam 'bras) master Tönpa Yeshé Pal (Ston pa Ye shes dpal, 1281–1365) to Dölpopa's disciple Kunpang Chödrak Palsang, from whom Yeshé Pal had received the Six-branch Yoga. Kunpang then taught there. See Ngawang Lodrö Drakpa, *History of the Jonang Tradition*, 33, and Dradul Wangpo, *History of the Five Sciences*, 174.
- 86 Barawa, *Reply to Eight Major Disciples of Dölpopa*, 637–39. See especially 639, where he quotes from Dölpopa's letter to him: *'di skad ces byung ste kun gzhi la dbye na/ ye shes yin pa'i kun gzhi dang/ rnam shes yin pa'i kun gzhi gnyis lung rigs rnam dag gi legs par grub kyang/ de gnyis rang bzhin tha dad du de ni mi 'dod cing/ gzhan 'dod pa 'dug na'ang/ 'di skad byung ste/ lung rig rnam dag gi dgag pa byed do gsungs pas/ slob mas chos rje'i dgongs pa mtha' ma longs pa'i bab chol smras par zad/*. Dölpopa's statements in this letter directly contradict the opinions of his disciples quoted by Barawa ('Ba' ra ba) on 638. Therefore, there would seem to be some truth to Barawa's final comment that the disciples did not really comprehend the depth of Dölpopa's thought. The same point about some major disciples not truly mastering Dölpopa's intentions was later made by Jamling Panchen Sönam Namgyal (Byams gling Paṇ chen Bsod nams

rnam rgyal, 1400–1475), specifically when discussing the master's works concerning the *Kālacakra Tantra*. Kunga Drölchok quotes Jamling Panchen in Kunga Drölchok, *Biography of the Dharma King Namgyal Drakpa Sangpo*, 22b: *kun mkhyen chen po nyid kyi mkhyen rab zab cing gting dpag dka' pa'i cha rnams slob ma'i gtso bor grags pa kun gyis kyang/ ji bzhin du ma rtogs pa 'dra/*. The entire text of Jamling Panchen's remarks is translated below. Tucci (1980), 164, mistakenly attributed Kunga Drölchok's work to Tāranātha.

- 87 Tāranātha, *History of the Kālacakra Teachings*, 27.
- 88 For sketches of the lives of Mati Panchen (Ma ti Paṇ chen) and Jonang Lotsāwa Lodrö Pal (Jo nang Lo tsā ba Blo gros dpal), see Gyalwa Josang Palsangpo, *Brilliant Marvels*, 577–82 and 573–77, and Ngawang Lodrö Drakpa, *History of the Jonang Tradition*, 33. According to Tāranātha, *History of the Kālacakra Teachings*, 30, Lodrö Pal was also known as Lub Lotsā (Klubs 'Lo tsā). These two yogin-scholars were among the greatest Sanskrit grammarians in Tibetan history. Their translation of Sanskrit grammatical texts is reviewed in Verhagen (1994), 142–44. See also Seyfort Ruegg (1963), 81, notes 36–37. Seyfort Ruegg's conjecture that the attribution of a revised translation of the *Kālacakra* to Mati Panchen and Lotsā Lodrö Pal referred to their translation of the *Garuḍasādhana* is not tenable. The colophon to this work clearly says it is an extract from the *Kālacakra Tantra* that was written out precisely according to the new translation ('gyur gсар) of Jonang Lotsāwa Lodrö Pal and Sasang Lodrö Gyaltzen (Sa bzang Blo gros rgyal mtshan). See *Method for Accomplishment of Garuḍa* (*Garuḍasādhana*, *Mkha' lding gi sgrub thabs*), Peking Tripiṭaka, 5167, vol. 87: 253.5.8: *'di'i rgya skad dus kyi 'khor lo'i rgyud tshig las bkol ba kho na yin pa stel jo nang lo tsa blo gros dpal dang/ sa bzang blo gros rgyal mtshan gyi 'gyur gсар ji lta bar bris so/*. This work is not found in the Dergé edition of the Kangyur.
- 89 See Kunpang Chödrak Palsang, *Biography of the Omniscient Dharma Lord*, 331, concerning Dölpopa's orders for the new translation, as well as his composition of the outline and annotations: *de nas khyi lor bde ba can du bzhugs nas/ lo tsa blo gros rnam gnyis la dus kyi 'khor lo'i 'gyur gyi dag pa'i gzhi gyis gsungs nas/ chos rje dang kho bo gnyis dpang por bzhag nas/ slar legs pa'i nang nas legs pa yang dag par mdzad do/ de nas bdag gis bskul nas sa bcad dang mchan pu mdzad do/*. Also see Roerich (1976), 776. Here and elsewhere, the terms "summary" (*bsdus don*) and "topical outline" (*sa bcad*) are used to refer to the same work by Dölpopa.
- 90 See Dölpopa, *Comprehensive Summary of the Commentary to the Glorious "Kālacakra Tantra"*.
- 91 An incomplete annotated manuscript of the *Stainless Light* (missing chapter 5) was reproduced in *Dus 'khor 'grel mchan phyogs bsgrigs*, vols. 6–7 (Beijing: Krung go'i bod rig pa dpe skrun khang, 2007). This text was mistakenly identified as Dölpopa's annotations to the *Stainless Light*, although in the booklet accompanying the collection the publisher does acknowledge the uncertainty of the identification. The manuscript is actually another, somewhat variant, copy of Choglé Namgyal's annotations (also published in vols. 4–5 of the same collection), not those of his teacher Dölpopa. A third, computerized edition of Choglé Namgyal's annotations has also been published, using several different manuscripts, one of which concludes with a set of anonymous verses that can be identified as the work of Dölpopa. See Choglé



Namgyal, *Annotations to the "Stainless Light,"* Jo nang dpe tshogs, vol. 20: 456. The identification of these concluding verses is based on their content and quotations from them by Dölpopa's disciple Lhai Gyaltsen and the fifteenth-century Kagyü master Gö Lotsāwa Shönu Pal, who name Dölpopa as the author. See note 75 above for an excerpt from the verses, which are partially translated in this book.

According to the Jo nang dpe tshogs edition, the original manuscript from Se Monastery (Bse dgon) that ends with Dölpopa's verses contains many annotations in black ink, but only a few in red ink. Dölpopa's concluding verses are written in red ink. The large number of black annotations in the manuscript correspond to the annotations of Choglé Namgyal, which conclude with a clear first-person statement of his authorship. Considering the great reputation of Dölpopa's annotations, it seems highly unlikely that the few red annotations in this manuscript are all that Dölpopa ever wrote. The editors of the new, computerized edition also question whether the red annotations in the original manuscript should be considered Dölpopa's. This complicated situation leads to the conclusion that Dölpopa's annotations, written at Jonang in 1334, were at some point perhaps conflated with those composed by his disciple Choglé Namgyal about 30 years later at the hermitage of Se Kharchung (Se Mkhar chung). See Tenpai Gyaltsen, *Biography of Dharma Lord Choglé Namgyal*, 24a.

It seems possible that both Dölpopa and Choglé Namgyal's annotations were written together in ancient manuscripts, probably with different colored ink or in different scripts. At some point scribal mistakes may have caused the two to be conflated. This could have happened many centuries ago. The extent of the problem is illustrated by a large annotation concerning the location and landscape of Shambhala that is found in all three editions of Choglé Namgyal's work. See Choglé Namgyal, *Annotations to the "Stainless Light,"* in Jo nang dpe tshogs, vol. 18: 75, and in *Dus 'khor 'grel mchan phyogs bsgrigs*, vol. 4: 261 and vol. 6: 85. At the end of this annotation the author refers the reader to a separate text that he has written with more details on the subject. Dölpopa is not known to have written such a text, but Choglé Namgyal did write one during the same period that he wrote his annotations to the *Stainless Light*. See Tenpai Gyaltsen, *Biography of Dharma Lord Choglé Namgyal*, 24a. Choglé Namgyal's work has now been published. See Choglé Namgyal, *Ornament for Shambhala*. Thus it would seem to be certain that this large annotation is by Choglé Namgyal.

When composing his *Removing Tarnish from the Beryl* (*Bai durya gya'sel*) in 1668, Desi Sangyé Gyatso (Sde srid Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho, 1653–1705) used and quoted from a work that he identified as Dölpopa's annotations to the *Stainless Light*. The Desi's work contains the only independent quotation from Dölpopa's annotations that I have noticed. No clear evidence of their existence after 1668 has been located. Incredibly, the quotation that Sangyé Gyatso provides from Dölpopa's annotations is from the large annotation that I have just shown must be by Choglé Namgyal, not Dölpopa! See Sangyé Gyatso, *Removing Tarnish from the Beryl*, vol. 1: 94: *kun mkhyen dol bu pa'i 'grel chen gyi mchan dul 'dzam gling chung ngu'i lho nas byang gangs ldan chen po'i bar la sa'i dum bu drug du byas pa'i byang gi dum bu lnga pa'i sa la shambha la'i yul yod de zhes stong phrag nyer lnga'i phyed rang la 'dzam gling chung ngur bzhed pa dang!* The puzzle of whether Dölpopa's annotations have actually survived will perhaps only be solved when an annotated manuscript of the *Stainless Light* is located that concludes with Dölpopa's verses, but does not also contain Choglé Namgyal's annotations.

- 92 The Jonang translation of the *Kālacakra Tantra* has been preserved in the Peking edition of the Tibetan Kangyur. See also Choglé Namgyal, *Annotations to the "Kālacakra Tantra,"* for the Jonang translation of the tantra together with his illuminating annotations. The translation of the *Stainless Light* in the Peking edition of the Kangyur is by Shongtön Dorjé Gyaltsen (Shong ston Rdo rje rgyal mtshan). For a complete edition of the Jonang translation of the *Stainless Light* with Choglé Namgyal's annotations, see Choglé Namgyal, *Annotations to the "Stainless Light."* Three-fifths of the Jonang translation of the *Stainless Light* is included in the Dergé (Sde dge) edition of the Tibetan Tengyur. In this example the Jonang translation of the *Stainless Light* is preserved in a strange hybrid version, consisting of Shongtön's translation of the first two sections of the work and the revised Jonang translation of the last three sections. See Puṇḍarīka, *Stainless Light*. The colophon translated here is found at the end of the Jonang translation of both the *Kālacakra Tantra* and the *Stainless Light*. That the Dergé edition of the *Stainless Light* is in fact a hybrid, despite the colophon identifying it as the revised Jonang translation, is specified by Shuchen Tsultrim Rinchen (Zhu chen Tshul khriims rin chen, 1697–1774), the editor of the collection. See Tsultrim Rinchen, *Tengyur Catalogue*, 624. Situ Panchen Chökyi Jungné (Si tu Pan chen Chos kyi 'byung gnas, 1700–1774) also expressed a desire to have the new Jonang translations cut in woodblocks for printing at Dergé. See Chökyi Jungné, *Autobiography and Diaries*, 151: *jo nang pa'i gsar 'gyur rnams kyang par du dgod par 'dod do!*. Thus it is curious that the Dergé edition of the Kangyur, for which Situ wrote the descriptive catalogue, contains the Shongtön translation of the *Kālacakra Tantra*, and not that of the Jonang scholars.
- 93 The Omniscient Dharma Lord is Dölpopa himself, and Dharmakīrtiśrībhadrā is the Sanskrit form of the name of his major disciple and biographer, (Kunpang) Chödrak Palsang (Chos grags dpal bzang), who was also a skilled translator of Sanskrit texts. Sthiramati is the Sanskrit translation of Lodrö Tenpa (Blo gros brtan pa), the personal name of the great Pang Lotsāwa (Dpang Lo tsā ba, 1276–1342), who was the early teacher of both Mati Panchen Lodrö Gyaltsen and Jonang Lotsāwa Lodrö Pal. See Ngawang Lodrö Drakpa, *History of the Jonang Tradition*, 33, and Roerich (1976), 837. Dradul Wangpo, *History of the Five Sciences*, 299–303, provides the most information about Pang Lotsāwa.
- 94 *Kālacakra Tantra*, Peking edition, 174.5: *slar yang dpal ldan bla ma dam pa chos kyi rje thams cad mkhyen pa dang/ dpal dus kyi 'khor lo pa chen po dharma kīrti shrī bhādras/ 'di'i don rnams legs par dgongs shing bka' yis bskul nas de dag gi gsung bzhin du/ paṇ ḍi ta chen po sthi ra ma ti'i bka' drin las/ legs par sgyur ba'i tshul rig pa lo tsā shākyā'i dge slong blo gros rgyal mtshan dang/ blo gros dpal bzang pos/ rgyud dang 'grel pa'i rgya dpe mang po la gtugs nas dag pa rnams dang mthun par bsgyur cing zhus te gtan la phab ba'o!*. Part of this colophon is also quoted in the Fifth Dalai Lama's "record of teachings received" (*thob yig*), where the Jonang translation would seem to have been the version of the *Kālacakra* that he received. An anonymous note in the Tibetan text mentions that this version was very famous "nowadays," but the best scholars still preferred the translation by Shongtön. See the annotation to Ngawang Losang Gyatso, *Record of Teachings Received*, vol. 4, 610: *deng sang grags ché'ang ha cang skye ba mi dgos par ma nges pas shong 'gyur rang bzang zhes mkhas pa rnams gsung!*.
- 95 See Dölpopa, *Reply to the Questions of Lotsāwa Sherab Rinchen*, 773: *lo tsā ba blo gros rnam gnyis kyi yang 'gyur bcos pas sngar gyi legs pa rnams kyi steng du slar yang legs pa'i*

*cha mang du rnyed cing/ 'chad nyan dang bsgoms bsgrub mang pos yang dang yang du gtan la phab pa las kyang rgyud 'grel man ngag dang bcas pa'i dgongs pa zab mo rnyed pa mang du byung la/ bla ma rgyal ba sras bcas kun gyi sku 'bum bzhangs shing gsol ba btab pa las kyang mthar thug zab mo'i rang skad ji lta ba bzhin thon pa dang/ rgyud sde zab mo'i gsang tshig ji lta ba bzhin thon pa dang/*. Kunpang Chödrak Palsang, *Biography of the Omniscient Dharma Lord*, 358, mentions the visit of Lotsā Sherab Rinchen (Lo tsā Shes rab rin chen) sometime after 1336. He offered about fifty rolls of silk to Dölpopa, prayed to be reborn at his feet, and requested a practical meditation instruction (*dmar khrid*).

- 96 Namgyal Draksang (Rnam rgyal grags bzang), who viewed Dölpopa as the final authority on the Kālacakra, wrote many works on the Kālacakra system, only one of which is presently available. See Namgyal Drakpa Sangpo, *Beautiful Ornament for the Glorious "Kālacakra Tantra"*, which is a refutation of Rendawa Shönu Lodrö's criticisms that will be discussed below. See Kunga Drölchok, *Biography of the Dharma King Namgyal Drakpa Sangpo*, 28a–29b, for a list of Namgyal Draksang's Kālacakra works. Jamling Panchen (Byams gling Paṇ chen) was also one of the greatest Tibetan masters of the Kālacakra. His seven-volume explication of the *Stainless Light*, also not presently available, was the most extensive in Tibet. See Pema Karpo, *Commentary to the "Kālacakra Tantra"*, 57.
- 97 Tsetangpa Sangyé Lhundrup (Rtse thang pa Sangs rgyas lhun grub) was a famous Sakya scholar who wrote a refutation of the *shentong* view. See Tāranātha, *Autobiography of the Wanderer Tāranātha*, 154b.
- 98 The use of the phrase *gyi jo'i 'gyur mangs* (*Gyijo's multiple translation*) refers to the first translation of these texts in Tibet done in the eleventh century by Gyijo Dawai Öser (Gyi jo Zla ba'i 'od zer) with the Indian master Bhadrabodhi, and then by Gyijo's disciples. Gyijo first made a draft translation (*gzhi 'gyur*) of the *Stainless Light* and taught it to the junior translators (*lo chung*) and others. Then Gyijo's disciples, the junior translators such as Trom Lotsāwa Pema Öser (Khrom Lo tsā ba Padma 'od zer), divided the *Stainless Light* into sections and worked further on the translation. This "multiple translation" (*'gyur mangs*) was thus a group effort. See Taktsang Lotsāwa Sherab Rinchen, *General Meaning of Glorious Kālacakra*, 75;<sup>1</sup> Desi Sangyé Gyatso, *Removing Tarnish from the Beryl*, 159; and Pawo Tsuklak Trengwa, *Feast for Experts*, vol. 2: 1499.
- 99 Pakpa, the protector of living beings ('Gro mgon 'Phags pa), is the Sakya patriarch Pakpa Lodrö Gyaltsen ('Phags pa Blo gros rgyal mtshan, 1235–80) who issued an edict (*bka' shog*) eulogizing Shongtön Dorjé Gyaltsen's (Shong ston Rdo rje rgyal mtshan) translation of the *Kālacakra Tantra* and the *Stainless Light*.
- 100 The points Butön felt were in need of correction were in the translations of both the *Kālacakra Tantra* and the *Stainless Light*. By comparing the Peking edition of Shongtön's translation of some of the phrases Butön singled out for correction in the *Stainless Light* against those in the Dergé edition, it does become clear that the first two sections in the Dergé version have not been revised according to Butön's suggestions, but the last three sections do contain Butön's suggested changes. This verifies Shuchen Tsultrim Rinchen's (Zhu chen Tshul khri rin chen) assertion that the last three sections are the revised work of the Jonang translators, while the first two are the original work of Shongtön. See note 92.

- 101 Roerich (1976), 794, translated the second sentence referring to this event in the *Blue Annals* as: “While he [Butön] was writing down notes on the Vimalaprabhā (Commentary on the Tantra), he revised the translation by Śoṇ. He wrote it out properly, after it had been translated by two translators at Jo-nañ.” I would translate the passage as: “When [Butön] made annotations to the [*Kālacakra*] Tantra commentary, he made many revisions to the Shong translation. When the two translators translated it at Jonang, they wrote down [Butön’s revisions] just as they were.” See Shönu Pal, *Blue Annals*, vol. 2: 929: *rgyud ’grel la mchan bu mdzad pa na/ shong ’gyur la ’gyur bcos mang du mdzad del/ de jo nang du lo* [930] *tsa ba gnyis kyis ’gyur mdzad pa na ji lta ba bzhi du bris/*.
- 102 The Tibetan phrase *don la rton pa*, refers to one of the “four reliances” (*rton pa bzhi*), which is to rely on the meaning (*don*), not the words (*tshig*). See chapter 3, section 2 for a discussion of these four topics.
- 103 As briefly discussed in the introductions to the translations in part 2, these are often mentioned as Dölpopa’s three most important works.
- 104 Dölpopa’s main disciples certainly did not always later agree with each other on certain points of theory and practice. For example, Nya Öñ Kunga Pal (Nya dbon Kun dga’ dpal) sometimes strongly criticizes his fellow major disciples (*bu chen*) by name, such as master Kunpang Chödrak Pal (Bla ma Kun spangs Chos grags pa), master Sasang Lotsāwa (Bla ma Sa bzang Lo tsā ba), and master Jonang Lotsāwa (Jo nang Lo tsā ba). See Nya Öñ Kunga Pal, *Ornament of Luminosity*, 20b, 24a.
- 105 Dharma lord Chogpa (Chos rje Phyogs pa) is Dölpopa’s great disciple and Dharma heir Choglé Namgyal (Phyogs las rnam rgyal). For his annotations, see Choglé Namgyal, *Annotations to the “Kālacakra Tantra,”* and Choglé Namgyal, *Annotations to the “Stainless Light.”* The “pair’s translation” (*rnam gnyis ’gyur*) is the revised translation of the *Kālacakra Tantra* and the *Stainless Light* made by Dölpopa’s disciples Sasang Lotsāwa Mati Panchen (Sa bzangs Lo tsā ba Ma ti Pañ chen) and Jonang Lotsāwa Lodrö Pal (Jo nang Lo tsā ba Blo gros dpal).
- 106 The Sakya master Sharpa Yeshé Gyaltsen (Shar pa Ye shes rgyal mtshan) is also known as Sharchen Yeshé Gyaltsen (Shar chen Ye shes Rgyal mtshan, d. 1406). He was a disciple of Jonang Choglé Namgyal and became one of the most important teachers of the great Sakya master Ngorchon Kunga Sangpo (Ngor chen Kun dga’ bzang po, 1382–1456). The meaning of the term Yarpa (*yar pa*) here is uncertain. Jamling Panchen is sometimes called “lord of Yar descent” (Rje Yar dbon pa), in reference to his heritage. Perhaps the term Yarpa here refers to members of his family line.
- 107 This long passage contains several problematic phrases that could be interpreted differently. See Kunga Drölchok, *Biography of the Dharma King Namgyal Drakpa Sangpo*, 22a–b: *dpal dus kyis ’khor lo ’di nyid rgyud sde ma lus pa’i bla na bzhus shing/ rdo rje’i tshig mdud du bsdams pa’i rgyud ma lus pa’i gnad don ’grol zhing/ phyi nang gis bsdu pa’i grub pa’i mtha’ ci dang ci mchis pa’i nges gnas ’dir ma tshang ba med pas gcig shes kun grol nyid yin kyang phyogs re’i mig can mtha’ dag gi ji ltar yang gting dpogs par mi spyod pas mkhas rlom dag kyang mgo ’thoms nas chos ma yin par ’dzin pa’i log shes rgya ’byams kyis skal ba dman pa’i khung bur ngang gis ’jug la/ lo tsā ba chos kyis mig can dag kyang don spyi tsam las/ gnas don la ’bru ’jem par nges pa’i spobs pa ma rnyed pas/ gyi jo’i ’gyur mangs nas shong ’gyur bar la yang rnam gzbag tha dad pa’i*

dbang ldan kho nar yod la/ shong la 'gro mgon 'phags pas kyang legs so stsal/ sngon chad ma rtogs/ log rtogs the tshom gyi mun pas bsgrigs pa kun sel ba'i dbugs dbyung gnang ba'i snyan pas sa stengs pa kun gyis yid ches su 'dzin par gyur cing/ thams cad mkhyen pa bu ston pas kyang shong 'gyur nyid 'chad dpe'i mthil du mdzad nas/ 'dir mi bcos su mi rung ba sum bcu so bgrangs tsam yod ces bka' stsal pa ltar/ kun mkhyen chen po dol bu sangs rgyas kyis lo tsā ba rnam gnyis la bka' bsgo nas 'gyur sar mdzad skabs sngar gyi bu ston gyis mchan bur btab pa'i 'gyur bcos kun thad sor bzahag/ de las don la rton pa'i dbang gis nges pa'i mthar thug rnams rang skad zur phyin par mdzad de/ dol mchan nyid kyi gzer bur bsdams nas/ gnas don rgyas 'grel nges [22b] don rgya mtsho bstan pa spyi 'grel bka' bsdu bzhi pa sogs kyis gsal zhing gsal ba'i shing rta'i srol phye ba 'di las gung pa'i byang shambha la na yang dpal ldan rgyud la 'grel mdzad med nges snyam pa'i yid ches yod cing/ bstan pa spyi'i sgo mtha' dag la 'chad rtsom gyi khur bu ston che ba tsam 'dug kyang/ dus 'khor nyag gcig gi nges gsang 'doms pa'i skabs dol bu ba'i char mi bskrun nges na'ang/ kun mkhyen chen po nyid kyi mkhyen rab zab cing gting dpag dka' pa'i cha rnams slob ma'i gtso bor grags pa kun gyis kyang/ ji bzhi du ma rtogs pa 'dra/ chos rje phyogs pas rnam gnyis 'gyur la dol mchan la skyogs pa'i mchan bu mdzad pa la/ sa bzangs ma tis gzhung mchan nang 'gal ba'i skyon bzung rjes slar shong 'gyur la mchan mdzad/ 'di shar pa ye shes rgyal mtshan pa sogs kyis thugs mos kyi bsngags pa rgya cher gnang ba'i skyo mas yar pa mtha' dag yid bder 'dzin mod kyang 'di la yang ma ti'i gsung ltar gzhung mchan mi 'grig pa'i skyon gnas te/ de min na/ shong 'gyur las slad ma 'gyur gsar phye ba la dgongs pa ci yang med pas so/. This final portion raises some confusing points. Mati Panchen and Jonang Lotsāwa made their new revised translation in 1334, but Choglé Namgyal wrote his annotations to it about thirty years later. The statement here mentions a second (otherwise unknown) set of annotations by Choglé Namgyal to Shongtön's translation, and places Mati Panchen's work on the new translation after both of Choglé Namgyal's sets of annotations. I have not been able to resolve this problem.

- 108 The new translation made at Jonang did not receive universal approval. For example, the great Sakya master Ngorchon Kunga Sangpo later criticized the Jonang translation in a written reply to questions from Sasang Sönam Pal (Sa bzangs Bsod nams dpal), one of the successors to Mati Panchen (Ma ti Pan chen) at Sasang (Sa bzangs) Monastery. See Kunga Sangpo, *Reply to Questions from Sasang Sönam Pal*, especially 380, where he compares a passage from the two translations.
- 109 Ngawang Lodrö Drakpa, *History of the Jonang Tradition*, 33. Pang Lotsāwa's (Dpang Lo tsā ba) statement was made to Dölpopa's future disciple, Lotsāwa Lodrö Pal (Lo tsā ba Blo gros dpal), who then proceeded to Jonang to request teachings from Dölpopa.
- 110 Seyfort Ruegg (1966), 110–11.
- 111 Lhai Gyaltsen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, 20b: chos rje'i zhal nas/ nges don zab mo'i gnad thams cad dus kyi 'khor lo'i rgyud 'grel chen po nas rnyed pas khong shin tu bka' drin chel/ ngas kyang gzhung la 'khrul pa 'gog pa la bsdu don dang chan bu khyad 'phags dang/ gzhan yang yig cha du ma byas/.
- 112 Lhai Gyaltsen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, 20b: rgyud 'grel chen po'i chan bu la sogs pa dus 'khor gyi phyogs la yig cha sum bcu so brgyad/ nges don rgya mtsho la sogs pa grub mtha'i bskor bcu drug/ yum gsum gyi chan bu la sogs pa sher phyin kyi phyogs [22b] la bdun/.

- 113 Lhai Gyaltsen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, 34b: *chos rje nyid kyi zhal nas/ rgyud 'grel chen po'i chan la gzigs nas/ a la la 'di 'dra kho kun su'i mdzad dam ngo mtshar che gsung nas yang yang thal mo sbyar/ nges don zab mo go lugs 'di 'dra la bltas tsa na nga rang yang su yin nam snyam pa yong gin 'dug gsung/*.
- 114 See for example Kunpang Chödrak Palsang, *Biography of the Omniscient Dharma Lord*, 327; Tāranātha, *History of the Nyang Region*, 90; Nya Ōn Kunga Pal, *Explanation of the "General Commentary on the Doctrine"*, 53a; and Lhai Gyaltsen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, 35b. Specifically, the anonymous series of verses at the end of Dölpopa, *Distinguishing the Views*, 810, refers to him as the nirmāṇakāya of Kalki Puṇḍarīka. The modern Jonang master Ngawang Lodrö Drakpa (Ngag dbang blo gros grags pa), when discussing the significance of Dölpopa's exclamation in regard to his composition of the annotations, also arrives at the conclusion that Dölpopa was stating his own belief that he was an actual emanation of the Kalki emperor. See Ngawang Lodrö Drakpa, *History of the Jonang Tradition*, 542.
- 115 See Lhai Gyaltsen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, 24a, and especially Kunpang Chödrak Palsang, *Biography of the Omniscient Dharma Lord*, 333–48.
- 116 Kunpang Chödrak Palsang, *Biography of the Omniscient Dharma Lord*, 333, 348. Dölpopa's visionary trip to Shambhala seems to have occurred in 1335. Also see Stearns (1995), 838–39. During a visit to the monastery of Sangpu (Gsang phu) Dölpopa directly beheld the pure land of Sukhāvātī and composed a eulogy to it that is included in Kunpang Chödrak Palsang, *Biography of the Omniscient Dharma Lord*, 337–43. This eulogy is different than the two prayers to Sukhāvātī (*bde ba can smon lam*) found in Dölpopa's *Collected Works*.
- 117 Kunpang Chödrak Palsang, *Biography of the Omniscient Dharma Lord*, 343. In this instance (and many others) Kunpang cannot be relied on to provide accurate chronological information. The texts mentioned by name are *Ocean of Primordial Awareness: A Rite of Initiation* (*Dbang chog ye shes rgya mtsho*), *Elegant Explication of Initiation with Scriptural Quotations* (*Dbang gi legs bshad lung sbyor*), *Vajra Garland: A Brief Rite of Initiation* (*Dbang gi cho ga bsdus pa rdo rje 'pheng ba*), *Memorandum on the Dances* (*Gar gyi brjed byang*), *Topical Outline of the "Sekoddeśa"* (*Dbang mdor gyi sa bcad*), *Small Analysis and Great Analysis* (*Shag 'byed che chung*), and *Geometry [of the Maṇḍala]* (*Thig rtsa*). Kunpang also mentions that Dölpopa wrote praises to the deities Vajrabhairava, Dākinisāgara, and Samvara, as well as many texts on astrology, such as *Necessary Astrological Calculations* (*Rtsis kyi rgyu mtshan*), *The Five Planets* (*Gza' lnga*), and *The Eclipses* (*Gza' zin*). These texts are all found in the *Collected Works*, but there are many indications that some of them were not written during this period. For example, the three texts on astrology are found in a collection of similar works in Dölpopa's *Collected Works*, vol. 6: 76–129. Although not mentioned by name in the biography, one of this group of texts on astrology, *How the Ten Planets Enter Emptiness* (*Gza' bcu stong par 'jug tshul*), 109–14, was written in the Wood Female Ox Year (*shing mo glang*) of 1325, ten years before the period being discussed here. This work—and *Scriptural Quotations Prohibiting the Consumption of Meat and Alcohol* (*Sha chang bkag pa'i lung 'dren rnams*), vol. 5: 757–78—are the earliest dated texts written by Dölpopa. *Ocean of Primordial Awareness: A Rite of Initiation*, which Kunpang does list among the texts composed at Kyipuk (Skyid phug), was actually written at Sakya. See *Collected Works*, vol. 6: 734. Finally, *Memorandum on*

*the Dances*, also mentioned by Kunpang, was actually written at the request of Yönten Gyatso, who passed away in 1327. See *Collected Works*, vol. 7, pt. 1: 25.

- 118 See Lhai Gyaltsen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, 23b. The series of letters between Dölpopa and Dönyö Gyaltsen (Don yod rgyal mtshan) can be dated 1333–34, and is preserved in Dölpopa's *Collected Works*, vol. 7, pt. 2: 739–58. For the mention of offerings from Kunga Gyaltsen (Kun dga' rgyal mtshan) and Rangjung Dorjé (Rang byung rdo rje), see Kunpang Chödrak Palsang, *Biography of the Omniscient Dharma Lord*, 347. Other offerings were also made by Nya Ōn Ghuna Shri (Nya dbon Ghu na shri), Tönpa Namkha Sengé (Ston pa Nam mkha' seng ge), and the brothers Dorjé Pal (Rtse'i dbon Rdo rje dpal) and Chödrak Sarma, who was the ruler of Shangdo (Shang rdo'i dpon Chos grags gsar ma).
- 119 Kunpang Chödrak Palsang, *Biography of the Omniscient Dharma Lord*, 349–50. Some of the renowned scholars in attendance were Khenchen Tokgyal (Mkhan chen Gtogs rgyal), Nedrukpa (Gnas drug pa), Jamtön ('Jam ston), and Jamgeg ('Jam sgegs). The last of these may be identified as the Kālacakra expert Jamgeg (Dus 'khor ba 'Jam sgag>sgegs), who wrote a biography of Dölpopa about one month after his death. This text was later used by Lhai Gyaltsen as the basis for his biography of Dölpopa. See Lhai Gyaltsen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, 56b.
- 120 Lhai Gyaltsen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, 24a.
- 121 Lhai Gyaltsen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, 24b. For the invitation to Butön, see Seyfort Ruegg (1966), 122. For information on Dzambhala (Dzam bha la) and the significance of his title *tu shri* (Ch. *tuanshi*, "judge, legal officer") and Bhate's (Bha the) title *tshen dben* (Ch. *qian yuan*, "department secretary"), see van der Kuijp (1993b). Emperor Toghon Temür (Shun Di Emperor, reigned July 19, 1333–September 10, 1368) would have first heard of Dölpopa soon after the completion of the great stūpa at Jonang on October 30, 1333, when Dölpopa's disciple Lopön Dawa Sangpo (Slob dpon Zla ba bzang po) was sent to the imperial court to solicit offerings for the monument. Lavish offerings were received at Jonang. See Lhai Gyaltsen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, 17b.
- 122 Lhai Gyaltsen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, 24b.
- 123 Tāranātha, *History of the Kālacakra Teachings*, 29. While in retreat Dölpopa composed a prayer for no obstacles such as the Mongolian envoys to come his way: *da lta rtse gcig bsgrub pa 'phel ba'i rkyen/ gnas 'khor la sogs mthun rkyen phun tshogs shing/ hor kyi 'bod mi gtong ba la sogs pa'il 'gal rkyen bar chad gang yang med par shog/*. He sent this prayer to Jonang, where it was recited by all the men and women meditating there. See Lhai Gyaltsen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, 24b–25a.
- 124 Lhai Gyaltsen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, 25a, and Tāranātha, *History of the Kālacakra Teachings*, 29. It is interesting that one modern source mentions that Kunpang Chödrak Palsang went to China as Dölpopa's representative (*sku tshab*). See Ngawang Lodrö Drakpa, *History of the Jonang Tradition*, 33.
- 125 Toghon Temür did later invite Butön to the imperial court in 1355. See Tashi Wangdü, *Tibetan Historical Documents*, 213–14, for the text of this imperial edict.
- 126 The following narrative is summarized from Kunpang Chödrak Palsang, *Biography of the Omniscient Dharma Lord*, 400–421. As is often the case in this work, these events

seem to be entirely out of order chronologically. In Kunpang's text they are the last events described before the narration of Dölpopa's final days.

- 127 Jangtsé Lotsāwa (Byang rtse Lo tsā ba) is Lochen Jangchup Tsemo (Lo chen Byang chub rtse mo, 1302–80), who is known to have studied with Dölpopa. Drigung Lotsāwa Maṇikaśrī ('Bri gung Lo tsā ba Ma ṇi ka shrī) was one of Dölpopa's thirteen major disciples. See Gyalwa Josang Palsangpo, *Brilliant Marvels*, 589–93, and Ngawang Lodrö Drakpa, *History of the Jonang Tradition*, 33–34.
- 128 Since Lodrö Pal is known to have passed away in 1354, this statement is the main reason the previously mentioned Monkey (*sprel*) Year should be understood as 1344 and not 1356.
- 129 See Kunpang Chödrak Palsang, *Biography of the Omniscient Dharma Lord*, 405, and 420–21, for the events surrounding the making of this image. See Gyalwa Josang Palsangpo, *Brilliant Marvels*, 611–15, and Ngawang Lodrö Drakpa, *History of the Jonang Tradition*, 35, for information on the life of Khenchen Rintsulwa (Mkhan chen Rin tshul ba). An image was actually made in 1359 when Dölpopa was in the Lhasa area, partly at the invitation of Rintsulwa. Ngawang Lodrö Drakpa, *History of the Jonang Tradition*, 35, who is probably following the information in Kunpang's work, also says Rintsulwa made the image when Dölpopa was on his way to China and that it was kept in the Jokhang Temple in Lhasa. Lhai Gyaltsen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, 54b, mentions that after Dölpopa's death Rintsulwa made two images of the buddha Amitabha and the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara, which were placed to the right and left of the clay image (*sku lder*) of Dölpopa in the Magically Manifest Temple of Lhasa (Lha sa 'phrul snang), which is more commonly known as the Jokhang. All three images are mentioned by the Fifth Dalai Lama, Ngawang Losang Gyatso, in his guidebook to the Jokhang Temple, written in 1645. The images were still in the temple when it was visited by Situ Chökyi Gyatso in 1918. See Ngawang Losang Gyatso, *Guidebook to the Jokhang Temple*, 24, and Chökyi Gyatso, *Pilgrimage Journal of Central Tibet and Tsang*, 126.
- 130 The ruler of the two citadels (*sde pa rtse gnyis*) was probably the ruler of Gyantsé (Rgyal mkhar rtse), which was also known as the eastern citadel, and Tsechen (Rtse chen), which was also known as the western citadel. However, the governor Pakpa Palsang (Nang so 'Phags pa dpal bzang) is said to have built the Tsechen citadel in 1365, four years after the death of Dölpopa, and the Gyantsé citadel slightly later.
- 131 This teaching, which seems quite authentic, is found in Kunpang Chödrak Palsang, *Biography of the Omniscient Dharma Lord*, 411–19.
- 132 See Kapstein (1992c) on the *Compendium of Maṇis* (*Ma ṇi bka' 'bum*).
- 133 Lhai Gyaltsen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, 37b–38a. Both classical Tibetan and modern Western scholars have consistently confused this Jonang Choglé Namgyal (Jo nang Phyogs las rnam rgyal) with Bodong Choglé Namgyal (Bo dong Phyogs las rnam rgyal, 1376–1451), who was born fifteen years after Dölpopa passed away. The best source for information about Jonang Choglé Namgyal, who was also born in the Dölpo (Dol po) region of present-day Nepal, is Tenpai Gyaltsen, *Biography of Dharma Lord Choglé Namgyal*. See also Gyalwa Josang Palsangpo, *Brilliant Marvels*, 582–88; Ngawang Lodrö Drakpa, *History of the Jonang Tradition*, 37–38; and Mangtö Ludrup Gyatso, *Chronology of the Doctrine*, 181. Lhai Gyaltsen,



*Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, 38a, and Gyalwa Josang Palsangpo, *Brilliant Marvels*, 587, both say Choglé Namgyal held the monastic seat for four years. Ngawang Lodrö Drakpa, *History of the Jonang Tradition*, 37, says he held the position for six years, and Mangtö Ludrup Gyatso, *Chronology of the Doctrine*, 181, says for five years.

- 134 Gyalwa Josang Palsangpo, *Brilliant Marvels*, 586–87, and Ngawang Lodrö Drakpa, *History of the Jonang Tradition*, 37, say Choglé Namgyal was already at Ngamring when Lotsāwa Lodrö Pal passed away. The founding of this institute is mentioned in a number of sources, but dated only in Mangtö Ludrup Gyatso, *Chronology of the Doctrine*, 181, where it is mentioned that it was enlarged by Choglé Namgyal in 1338, and in the *Chronological Study (Re'u mig)* of Sumpa Khenpo (Sum pa mkhan po), which according to Seyfort Rugg (1963), 81, note 39, gives the date 1354. Lhai Gyaltsen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, 25a, says that while Dölpopa was at Ngamring he cured the great ruler (Dpon chen pa) of an illness. Tāranātha, *History of the Kālacakra Teachings*, 30, connects this event with the time at which Dölpopa founded the institute at Ngamring. If that is the case, the ruler may be identified as Tai En Namkha Tenpa (Ta'i dben Nam mkha' brtan pa). See Palden Chökyi Sangpo, *Genealogy of the Jang Rulers*, 176, for information on Namkha Tenpa, who received the title Tai En Gushri (Ta'i dben gu shri) in 1345. For more details about his career, see Petech (1990), 120–21, 132. Namkha Tenpa's demand that Choglé Namgyal continue to hold both the Ngamring and Jonang monastic seats simultaneously is mentioned in Lhai Gyaltsen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, 38b.
- 135 Kunpang Chödrak Palsang, *Biography of the Omniscient Dharma Lord*, 352. This is probably Ta En Kunga Rinchen (Ta dben Kun dga' rin chen, 1339–99).
- 136 Kunpang Chödrak Palsang, *Biography of the Omniscient Dharma Lord*, 352. This Kunpangpa (Kun spangs pa), who was so instrumental in the power struggle between the Sakya and the Pakmodru (Phag mo gru), has been identified by Petech (1990), 103, note 75, as Dölpopa's disciple Kunpang Chödrak Palsang. This very complicated problem cannot be solved here. The mention of Kunpangpa at Dölpopa's teachings is recorded by Kunpang Chödrak Palsang himself. He cannot be referring to himself as "Kunpangpa," because in the biography he always uses a first-person pronoun if he is involved in events. None of the many instances when Kunpang Chödrak Palsang appears in the biographies of Dölpopa and in the literature of the Jonang tradition indicate that he was ever active in political intrigues. He is only described as a great yogin, scholar, and translator of Sanskrit texts. Nevertheless, he could certainly have been brought into negotiations as a mediator, as were Lama Dampa Sönam Gyaltzen (Bla ma dam pa Bsod nams rgyal mtshan) and Lama Nyamepa (Bla ma Mnyam med pa), who was also called Kunpangpa, and others. The problem is that the personal name of the politically involved Kunpangpa is never provided.
- Kunpang Chödrak Palsang is said to have died in 1363, murdered by a warlord called Jangpa Siddhi (Byang pa Siddhi). See Gyalwa Josang Palsangpo, *Brilliant Marvels*, 571–72, and Ngawang Lodrö Drakpa, *History of the Jonang Tradition*, 33. The Sakya master Kunpangpa was murdered in 1357, with the ruler of Jang (Byang Dpon chen) possibly under suspicion. See Jangchup Gyaltzen, *Genealogy of the Lang Family*, 298. In the year 1352 the Sakya patriarch Lama Dampa Sönam Gyaltzen visited Jonang and had extensive discussions with Dölpopa about points of Buddhist doctrine. At that time a master Kunpangpa (Bla ma Kun dpangs pa) invited Lama

Dampa to Sangden (Bzang ldan) Monastery and, together with the Jang ruler Ta En Namkha (Ta dben Nam mkha'), requested the Hevajra initiation. See Jangchup Tsemo, *Biography of Dharma Lord Lama Dampa*, 31a–b. Kunpang Chödrak Palsang founded the monastery of Sangden, so it is certain that he is indicated here.

Dölpopa's death in 1361 and the funeral ceremonies are described in the biography by Kunpang Chödrak Palsang, which would obviously not be possible if he were the political figure who died in 1357. On the other hand, considerable evidence shows that material was inserted into the biography as late as the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, most notably Dölpopa's long last testament (*kha chems*), in which Kunpang Chödrak Palsang's own murder by Jangpa Siddhi is predicted (426) and many religious and political figures long after Dölpopa's time are mentioned. See Kunpang Chödrak Palsang, *Biography of the Omniscient Dharma Lord*, 425–37. It is also suspicious that the biography of Dölpopa by Lhai Gyaltsen does not mention Kunpang Chödrak Palsang at the funeral of Dölpopa, when all the other major disciples gather. Gyalwa Josang Palsangpo, *Brilliant Marvels*, 607–8, says Dölpopa's disciple Menchukhawa Lodrö Gyaltsen (Sman chu kha ba Blo gros rgyal mtshan, 1314–89) was forty-eight years old (1361) when he received many teachings from Chödrak Pal. But according to Ngawang Lodrö Drakpa, *History of the Jonang Tradition*, 35, Menchukhawa was sixty-seven years old (1381) at the time. These problems remain to be solved by future research.

- 137 Kunpang Chödrak Palsang, *Biography of the Omniscient Dharma Lord*, 352. Gyal-sang (Rgyal bzang) is the famous Grand Governor of Sakya (Sa skya Dpon chen) Gyalwa Sangpo (Rgyal ba bzang po). See Petech (1990) and van der Kuijp (1988) about these figures and the political situation in Tibet at this time. Jangpa Siddhi (Byang pa Siddhi) has yet to be definitely identified. He is said to have murdered Kunpang Chödrak Palsang. Dölpopa's reply to some of Yakdé Panchen Namkha Sönam's (G.yag sde Pañ chen Nam mkha' bsod nams, 1299–1378) questions is found in Dölpopa's *Collected Works*, vol. 7, pt. 2: 758–63.
- 138 Lhai Gyaltsen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, 38a.
- 139 This master from the House of Shar at Sakya was the youngest brother of Sengé Pal (Seng ge dpal) and Kunga Sönam (Kun dga' bsod nams), who had been teachers of Dölpopa when he was a young man in Sakya. Kunga Dorjé, *Red Annals*, 51, says Rinchen Gyaltsen (Rin chen rgyal mtshan) was born in a Horse (*rta*) Year and lived for fifty years.
- 140 Lhai Gyaltsen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, 38a. An instruction by Dölpopa to his disciple, the Kālacakra expert Dorjé Nyingpo (Dus 'khor ba Rdo rje snying po), is found in his *Collected Works*, vol. 7, pt. 1: 658–61.
- 141 Lhai Gyaltsen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, 38b.
- 142 Kunpang Chödrak Palsang, *Biography of the Omniscient Dharma Lord*, 352.
- 143 See Lhai Gyaltsen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, 38b and 40a. Choglé Namgyal (Phyogs las nam rgyal) then retired to the hermitage of Se Kharchung (Se Mkharchung), which had been home centuries before to Setön Kunrik (Se ston Kun rig, 1025?–1122?), a renowned master of the Path with the Result. Later, after the death of Dölpopa, Choglé Namgyal would again occupy the monastic seat at Jonang.

and also hold the same position at Ngamring a second time. See Ngawang Lodrö Drakpa, *History of the Jonang Tradition*, 37–38, and Palden Chökyi Sangpo, *Genealogy of the Jang Rulers*, 200–201.

- 144 Kunpang Chödrak Palsang, *Biography of the Omniscient Dharma Lord*, 363, says that Dölpopa's disciple, the abbot Rintsulwa (Rin tshul ba), had sent an invitation and came to escort him to Lhasa.
- 145 See Lhai Gyaltsen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, 26b, 39a, for descriptions of Dölpopa's weight and size, and 39b for his departure for Central Tibet and his early route along the way.
- 146 Lhai Gyaltsen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, 40a, does not mention the *Fourth Council*, which is mentioned in Jangchup Tsemo, *Biography of Dharma Lord Lama Dampa*, 36b, and Kunpang Chödrak Palsang, *Biography of the Omniscient Dharma Lord*, 363. Mangtö Ludrup Gyatso, *Chronology of the Doctrine*, 178, also mentions the *Fourth Council*, but dates its composition to 1361. The *Fourth Council* and the *Autocommentary* are translated and studied in part 2, where the circumstances of their composition are discussed.
- 147 Lhai Gyaltsen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, 40a. Tangpoché Kunga Bum (Thang po che Kun dga' bum, 1331–1402) was one of Dölpopa's major disciples. He later became the head of Tanak (Rta nag) Monastery in 1378 and, in 1387, Lopön Yepal (Slob dpon Ye dpal) offered him a monastery in Yarlung (Yar lung). See Ngawang Lodrö Drakpa, *History of the Jonang Tradition*, 34. Kunpang Chödrak Palsang, *Biography of the Omniscient Dharma Lord*, 363, also mentions that Dölpopa taught the *Sekoddesa* (*Dbang mdor bstan pa*) at Tangpoché's request.
- 148 Lhai Gyaltsen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, 40a–b. Information on the life of Khenchen Rintsulwa (Mkhan chen Rin tshul ba) is found in Gyalwa Josang Palsangpo, *Brilliant Marvels*, 611–15, and Ngawang Lodrö Drakpa, *History of the Jonang Tradition*, 35. The "Commander in Chief" (*du dben sha*) Shönu Gyaltsen (Gzhon nu rgyal mtshan) was at this time probably the highest ranking official of the Yüan imperial organization in Tibet. See Petech (1990), 122, note 144.
- 149 Lhai Gyaltsen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, 41a. Kunpang Chödrak Palsang, *Biography of the Omniscient Dharma Lord*, 364, says Dölpopa taught the *Sūtra on the Perfection of Wisdom in One Hundred Thousand Lines* according to the Kālacakra (*'bum 'dus 'khor ltar bshad pa*) at Draklha Lupuk (Brag lha klu phugs).
- 150 Lhai Gyaltsen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, 41a. Tāranātha, *History of the Kālacakra Teachings*, 31, says Dölpopa gave the instructions of the Six-branch Yoga seven times in Lhasa. At first he gave it to fifty, one hundred, or two hundred people, as the situation required. The last time he gave it was known as the "great guiding instruction" (*'khrīd mo che*), to which more than eighteen hundred people came. He gave the great initiation of Kālacakra to many thousands of people. Lhai Gyaltsen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, 42a, describes the scenes.
- 151 Lhai Gyaltsen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, 42a. The great leader (*chen po*) Gewai Lodrö (Dge ba'i blo gros) is one of several names for Tsarpa Kunga Dorjé (Tshal pa Kun dga' rdo rje), the author of the famous *Red Annals* (*Deb ther dmar po*). He is also mentioned in Jangchup Tsemo, *Biography of Dharma Lord Lama Dampa*,

35b, where Lama Dampa Sönam Gyaltsen is said to have given him initiations in Gungtang (Gung thang) in 1357. On 42a his death is mentioned in the tenth month of the Dragon Year ('brug, 1364).

- 152 Lhai Gyaltsen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, 43a–b.
- 153 Lhai Gyaltsen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, 43b. Lopön Situpa (Slob dpon Si tu pa) is Tai Situ Jangchup Gyaltsen (Ta'i si tu Byang chub rgyal mtshan), the supreme political power in Tibet at this time. Palrin (Dpal rin) was one of his close assistants. See van der Kuijp (1988) and Petech (1990). An important meeting had occurred at Rabtsun (Rab btsun) in 1350 between the leaders of the Sakya and Pakmodru factions. See Petech (1990), 110.
- 154 See Tāranātha, *History of the Nyang Region*, 48, 90–91, and 93. Also see Lhai Gyaltsen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, 43b–44a. Ricca and Lo Bue (1993), 11–17, provide biographical information on the ruler of Nyang (Myang), Governor Pakpa Palsang (Nang chen 'Phags pa dpal bzang), and his younger brother, Du En Sha (Du dben sha), "Commander in Chief," Pakpa Rinchen ('Phags pa rin chen). Pakpa Palsang was an important political figure in fourteenth-century Tibet and founded the great castle palace of Gyantsé (Rgyal rtse) in 1365. In fulfillment of Dölpopa's prophecy, he also laid the foundations for the monastery of Tsechen (Rtse chen), which was founded in 1366 by Dölpopa's disciple Nya Ōn Kunga Pal (Nya dbon Kun dga' dpal).
- 155 Lhai Gyaltsen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, 44a.
- 156 Pema Karpo, *History of the Dharma*, 311–12: *des bu ston ri* [312] *phug na bzhuḡs dus rtsod du byon pas/ bu ston gyis ma nus/ thal skad br̄on pas gzims khang gas zer ba'i gtam khungs gzhan na mi 'dug jo nang pa'i sgom ma rnams kyi nyams las so snyam mo/*. Ripuk (Ri phug) is the hermitage near Shalu (Zhwa lu) that was Butön's residence.
- 157 Tāranātha, *History of the Kālacakra Teachings*, 31. Tāranātha also mentions an account in which the great Butön had earlier wished to see the Jonang stūpa. He had taken conscious control of a dream, as may be done in some tantric yoga practices, and traveled toward Jonang. But when he reached the lower Jonang Valley, Dölpopa exclaimed "Phet," and Butön woke up. He was thus unable to see the monument. See Tāranātha, *History of the Kālacakra Teachings*, 31–32. This indeed seems like the sort of story that could have originated in the meditative experiences of practitioners in retreat at Jonang.
- 158 The following information is summarized from Kunpang Chödrak Palsang, *Biography of the Omniscient Dharma Lord*, 365–66. As discussed in note 136, the date of Kunpang's death uncertain. If he is to be identified with the Kunpangpa who mediated in the political discussions of the time and died in 1357, this event involving Butön would have occurred after the purported author's death. Thus it could be a later addition to the original work.
- 159 The *Small Lotus Commentary* ('Grel chung padma can) is Kālacakrapāda the Elder's *Lotus Commentary on Difficult Points* (Padminnāmapañjikā), Toh 1350, Tengyur, rgyud na, 72b–220a. This important commentary on difficult points in the *Kālacakra Tantra* was translated into Tibetan in the eleventh century by the Kāśmīri master Somanātha.

- 160 Lhai Gyaltsen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, 44a–b. The abbot of Nartang (Snar thang) was Chim Losang Drakpa ('Chims Blo bzang grags pa), who had previously requested teachings from Dölpopa on several occasions. He was an important teacher of the time and his devotion to Dölpopa is significant because of the implication that the ancient Kadam (Bka' gdams) monastery of Nartang was probably strongly influenced by Dölpopa's teachings during this period. The master who was the holder of the monastic seat (Bla ma gdan sa pa) was Könchok Gyaltsen (Dkon mchog rgyal mtshan), whom Dölpopa had installed on the monastic seat of Jonang in 1359 before leaving for Central Tibet.
- 161 Lhai Gyaltsen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, 44a–b. The autobiography of Tropu Lotsāwa (Khro phu Lo tsā ba) is the *'Phags bsam khri shing*, which has survived. Lhai Gyaltsen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, 28b, mentions it by name as a text that particularly moved Dölpopa. The emotional procession back to Jonang is vividly described by Lhai Gyaltsen, who was present at the time. See Lhai Gyaltsen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, 44b.
- 162 Dölpopa's arrival at Jonang is described in Lhai Gyaltsen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, 45a, and Kunpang Chödrak Palsang, *Biography of the Omniscient Dharma Lord*, 367, where the Bird (*bya*) Year should be corrected to Mouse (*byi*) Year. Drung Zhitokpa (Drung Bzhi thog pa) is the Sakya master Ta En Kunga Rinchen (Ta dben Kun dga' rin chen, 1339–99), Lama Panchenpa (Bla ma Paṇ chen pa) is Mati Panchen (Ma ti Paṇ chen). The great master abbot (Bla ma Mkhan chen pa) is Choglé Namgyal (Phyogs las rnam rgyal), who had been abbot of Jonang and would later hold the post for a second time. Khenchen Namkha Yeshé (Mkhan chen Nam mkha' ye shes) has not been identified. The great ruler (Dpon chen pa) is probably the Jang ruler Namkha Tenpa (Nam mkha' brtan pa).
- 163 This is found only in Kunpang Chödrak Palsang, *Biography of the Omniscient Dharma Lord*, 371 and 378. Kunpang says he received from Dölpopa this "extremely direct transmission of the path of profound esoteric instructions" (*man ngag zab mo'i lam shin tu nye rgyud*) that came directly from Śavaripa. From the context and terminology it is clear that these instructions were on the Six-branch Yoga. See Kunpang Chödrak Palsang, *Biography of the Omniscient Dharma Lord*, 377. If our author Kunpang were to be identified with the politically involved Kunpangpa who died in 1357, this episode would have to have occurred earlier in Dölpopa's life.
- 164 The holder of the monastic seat (*gdan sa pa*) was Könchok Gyaltsen (Dkon mchog rgyal mtshan). The following description of Dölpopa's last days is mostly based on Lhai Gyaltsen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, 47b–48b, but some is taken from Kunpang Chödrak Palsang, *Biography of the Omniscient Dharma Lord*, 423–25, and 437–38.
- 165 This is only in Kunpang Chödrak Palsang, *Biography of the Omniscient Dharma Lord*, 423.
- 166 In Kunpang Chödrak Palsang, *Biography of the Omniscient Dharma Lord*, 424, Dölpopa is asked what he saw at this time. He laughed and spoke a series of verses about his visions of deities and great teachers in the sky.
- 167 Lhai Gyaltsen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, 50b, mentions that Dölpopa

often had said, “I will make the stūpa my place to die” (*’chi sa sku ’bum du byed do*). At this point he knew he was going to die soon.

- 168 This is only in Kunpang Chödrak Palsang, *Biography of the Omniscient Dharma Lord*, 425. The “powerful tenfold anagram” (*rnam bcu dbang ldan*) is the term for the famous anagram in Laṅtsa script of the ten syllables of the Kālacakra mantra. The entire Kālacakra system can be explained using this single symbol. Also see note 534.
- 169 Lhai Gyaltsen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, 51a–b. Kunpang Chödrak Palsang, *Biography of the Omniscient Dharma Lord*, 439, gives somewhat different information. He says that on the eighth day Dölpopa’s body was placed into a casket of white and red *a kar* wood and white and red sandalwood. It was then taken onto the roof of the residence and all the people were allowed to pay their respects.
- 170 Lhai Gyaltsen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, 51b. Lama Panchenpa (Bla ma Paṇ chen pa) is Mati Panchen (Ma ti Paṇ chen), the great master abbot (Bla ma Mkhan chen pa) is Choglé Namgyal (Phyogs las rnam rgyal), and the holder of the monastic seat (Bla ma Gdan sa pa) is Könchok Gyaltsen (Dkon mchog rgyal mtshan). Also mentioned at this ceremony are Lama Gyaljungwa (Bla ma Rgyal ’byung ba), Khenchen Drakrampa (Mkhan chen Brag ram pa) – whose name was Könchok Sangpo (Dkon mchog bzang po), Khenchen Nagpukpa (Mkhan chen Nags phug pa), and Khenchen Gharongpa (Mkhan chen Gha rong pa).
- 171 Lhai Gyaltsen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, 52a–b. As explained in note 139, Lama Sharpa (Bla ma Shar pa) is Sharpa Rinchen Gyaltsen (Shar pa Rin chen rgyal mtshan), who is listed among Dölpopa’s chief disciples. Lhai Gyaltsen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, 45b, 46a, says most of the teachers and Saṅgha members at Sakya were disciples of Dölpopa.
- 172 Kunpang Chödrak Palsang, *Biography of the Omniscient Dharma Lord*, 450.
- 173 Lhai Gyaltsen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, 27b.
- 174 Lhai Gyaltsen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, 28a: *’u cag jo mo nang pa ni/ gang gi yang phyogs su lung ba med/ phyogs ris kyi chos kyi sangs rgyas mi thob pas/ don med sdig pa’i sgo skal ma len/ ’u cag ni nam mkha’i sprin dang ’dra bar gang gi’ang phyogs su lung ba med dol*.
- 175 Lhai Gyaltsen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, 28a: *phyogs med ris med pa rton pa bzhi ldan gyis sbyar ba’ol*. The significance of the “four reliances” is mentioned in chapter 3, section 2. The *Fourth Council*, translated in part 2, is also described as an “impartial and unbiased” treatise.
- 176 Jamgön Kongtrul, *Guiding Instructions on the View of the Emptiness of Other*, 609: *kun mkhyen dol po pas/ bde gshegs snying po’i mtshan thos pa tsam gyis kyang sangs rgyas thob par ’gyur na/ dad cing gus pa dang mngon tu byas nas bsgoms pa lta ci smos/ mkhas pa snying rje dang ldan pa rnams kyi rang gi srog la sogs pa dor nas kyang bstan par bya ba dang/ thar pa don du gnyer ba rnams kyi me’i ’obs chen po las ’bogs nas kyang btsal cing mnyan par bya’ol/ zhes gdams par [610] mdzad pa nyid snying gi thig ler bcang bar bya’ol*. Dölpopa’s original words are found in Dölpopa, *Mountain Dharma*, 109.

- 177 See Lhai Gyaltsen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, 54b: *sngar bod du nges don phyogs re tsam nas dgongs pa'i gang zag ni mang du byon zhing/ khyad par sgom chen pa rnams shas che na'ang bka' bstan chos man ngag rnams kyi nges don mtha' dag thugs su chud pas grub mtha' khyad par can myur du sangs rgya ba'i lam mchog ston pa ni/ chos rje rin po che 'ba' zhig las sgnar bod du ma byon no/*.
- 178 Tāranātha, *Supplication to the Lineage of the Profound Madhyamaka Emptiness of Other*, and Tāranātha, *Untitled*.
- 179 Tāranātha, *Supplication to the Lineage of the Profound Madhyamaka Emptiness of Other*, 488–89. Dölpopa's teacher Kiytön Jampaiyang (Skyi ston 'Jam pa'i dbyangs) is listed here before Dölpopa, and Chomden Raltri (Bcom ldan Ral gri) is listed before his student Kiytön. Chomden Rikpai Raltri (Bcom ldan Rig pa'i ral gri, 1227–1305) was a great scholar of the Kadampa (Bka' gdams pa) tradition. His inclusion in a *shentong* lineage is fascinating and unexpected. Some of Rikpai Raltri's works have now been published, and future research into his views may indicate why he is considered to have passed on the *shentong* teachings.
- 180 Tāranātha, *Supplication to the Lineage of the Profound Madhyamaka Emptiness of Other*, 485, lists the Tibetan translator Gawai Dorjé (Dga' ba'i rdo rje), who translated for Tsen Khawoché (Btsan Kha bo che), as the first Tibetan in the lineage of the *shentong* approach to Madhyamaka realization. He says this translator was a great expert who had a vision of the deity Cakrasamvara, taught the *shentong* view in Tibet (*phyogs 'dir*), and achieved the vajrakāya in Kāśmīr. Tāranātha provides the personal name of Tsen Khawoché, mentions that he was a monk, and says Tsen (Btsan) was his family name. For some very brief information on Tsen Khawoché's life, see Roerich (1976), 347–48.
- 181 A translation of the only extant passages from the work of Tsen Khawoché, which was also preserved by Kunga Drölchok (Kun dga' grol mchog), is found in chapter 3, section 2.
- 182 Kunga Drölchok, *Lineage History of the "Hundred Guiding Instructions,"* 325–26: *gzhan stong lta khrid yang btsan kha bo che'i gsung las/ kha che paṇḍi ta sadzda na'i gsung gi rgyal bas 'khor lo dang po bden bzhi/ bar pa mtshan nyid med pa/ mthar legs par nam par phyé ba'i chos kyi 'khor lo bzlas pa lan gsum bskor ba las nga ma gnyis dngos btags ma phyé ba/ phyi ma don dam par nges pa'i tshel/ dbus dang mtha' phyé/ chos dang chos nyid phyé nas gsungs zhing/ chos nyid nam 'byed dang rgyud bla ma'i dpe'i phyi mo tsam gyar ba la yang dpe 'di gnyis nub na byams pa bde bar gshegs pa'i tshod tsam jin zer bka' gnad chen po byung zer la/ padma lcags kyu'i ming bzhas pa'i btsan kha bo che rang gi zin tho rnying pa zhig snang ba 'dis/ phyis gzhan stong bya ba'i tha snyad rgya gar du gtan ma grags bod du yang kun mkhyen dol bu phyi na byung zhes sgrogs pa la bya gtong du mtshon zhing/ thams cad mkhyen pa bu ston gyi dris lan zhig na'ang/ sngon rta nag pa rin chen ye shes pa'i grub mtha' zhig yod pa phyis dol bu pas rtsal 'don du skyong bar snang gsungs pa la yang zhib dpyod mdzad 'tshal. The text actually has the spelling Dol bu pa, an alternate form for Dol po pa, which has been standardized in the translations.*
- 183 A reply to a Lama Rinchen Yeshé (Bla ma Rin chen ye shes) is included in Butön's *Collected Works*, but no passage there corresponds to Kunga Drölchok's reference. See Butön Rinchen Drup, *Miscellaneous Works*, 185–216.

- 184 Tāranātha, *History of the Kālacakra Teachings*, 25, also mentions that these teachings were received while Dölpopa was performing certain fasting austerities that involved subsisting on the ingestion of small pebbles. Lhai Gyaltsen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, 6b, only mentions that Dölpopa received this fasting practice and teachings on the physical yogic exercises (*'khrul 'khor*) from Rinchen Yeshe.
- 185 See Yumowa Mikyö Dorjé, *Set of Four Bright Lamps*. Published as a set under the title *Gsal sgron skor bzhi*, the four texts are *Zung 'jug gsal sgron*, 1–14, *Phyag rgya chen po'i gsal sgron*, 14–26, *'Od gsal gsal sgron*, 27–50, and *Stong nyid gsal ba'i sgron me*, 51–105. The modern publisher has mistakenly attributed them to an Awadhūtipa Sönam (A wa dhū ti pa Bsod nams). Ngawang Lodrö Drakpa, *History of the Jonang Tradition*, 18, says Yumowa (Yu mo ba) was born in the first Tibetan calendrical cycle, which began in 1027. The most information on Yumowa is found in Choglé Namgyal, *Introductory Treatise for Teaching the Commentary to the "Kālacakra Tantra"*, 41–43, and Jangsem Gyalwa Yeshe, *Biographies of the Masters in the Lineage of the Jonangpa Tradition of Glorious Kālacakra*, 32–35. Also see Tāranātha, *History of the Kālacakra Teachings*, 16, where the statement about Yumowa as the originator of the tantric *shentong* system is found: *sngags kyi gzhan stong grub mtha'i srol ka phyel*.
- 186 Tuken also seems to attribute the independent use of the terms *rtag* (permanent), *brtan* (stable), and *ther zug* (eternal) to Yumowa, but they are not found in his available writings. See Tuken, *Philosophical Tenets*, 217, and Seyfort Ruegg (1963), 82–83.
- 187 Shönu Pal, *Offered to the Jang Ruler Namgyal Drakpa*, 8b–9a: *bde gshegs snying po'i chos skad 'di nges don gyi mthar thug/ bstan pa'i snying po dam pa yin pa'i go ba tsam skyes/ dbus gtsang du snga rabs kyi dge ba'i bshes gnyen phal mo che so so rang gis rig pa'i gtam la zhal phyir phyogs pa/ grub chen yu mos gsal sgron bzhi'i bstan bcos mdzad nas bstan pa'i dbu gtsugs/ dus [9a] phyis chos kyi rje kun mkhyen chen pos dar zhing rgyas par mdzad pa/*.
- 188 In a eulogy written at the time of Dölpopa's death, his disciple Mati Panchen Lodrö Gyaltsen (Ma ti Pañ chen Blo gros rgyal mtshan) refers to him as one who taught the adept Yumowa's *Four Bright Lamps* (*Gsal sgron rnam bzhi*). See Mati Panchen Lodrö Gyaltsen, *Eulogy to the Omniscient Dharma Lord*, 1087.
- 189 Kunpang Tukjé Tsöndrū, *Guiding Instructions on Individual Withdrawal and Mental Stability*, 8b: *ngo sprod ni gsal sgron bzhi'o/*.
- 190 See Yumowa Mikyö Dorjé, *Set of Four Bright Lamps*, 12–14. The mention of the "Precious Omniscient One" (Kun mkhyen rin po che) as the recipient of the direct transmission from lord Śavaripa (Sha ba ra dbang phyug) refers to an event mentioned in Dölpopa's biography. See Kunpang Chödrak Palsang, *Biography of the Omniscient Dharma Lord*, 377–78.
- 191 See Yumowa Mikyö Dorjé, *Set of Four Bright Lamps*, 57–59 and 100–101. The most common Tibetan term for the images of emptiness is *stong gzugs*, which is an abbreviation of *stong pa nyid kyi gzugs brnyan* (*śūnyatābimba*).
- 192 See Kunpang Tukjé Tsöndrū, *Guiding Instructions on Individual Withdrawal and Mental Stability*, 12a: *de nyid don dam pa chos nyid kyi yi dam lha'i zhal mthong ba yin/*.



- 193 See note 27 for the identification of these three commentaries. See Dölpopa, *Analysis of Dharma for the Ruler of Jang*, 487, for his comments to the ruler of Jang, which are translated and discussed in chapter 3, section 1.
- 194 Lhai Gyaltsen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, 20b: *chos rje'i zhal nas/ nges don zab mo'i gnad thams cad dus kyi 'khor lo'i rgyud 'grel chen po nas rnyed pas khong shin tu bka' drin chel*.
- 195 Tanabe (1992), 1.
- 196 See Kunpang Chödrak Palsang, *Biography of the Omniscient Dharma Lord*, 348, for a description of the Shambhala experience. For the claims of a unique knowledge of the nature of Shambhala and Kailash, see Dölpopa, *Eulogy to Shambhala*, 860: *rgya bod mkhas pas sngon chad ma rnyed pa'i/ sham bha la dang dpal ldan ke la sha'i/ gnas tshul ci bzhin bdag gi skal bas rnyed/*. Kunpang Chödrak Palsang, *Biography of the Omniscient Dharma Lord*, 333–37, records a eulogy to Shambhala that Dölpopa composed after directly perceiving (*nye bar gzigs*) that pure land.
- 197 Dölpopa, *Instruction to Depa Sengé*, 634: *lar drang por smras na gzhan mi dga' / gzhan gang zer byas na slob ma bslu/ [635] dus da lta'i slob dpon bya bar dka' / de yin yang khyed la drang por smra/ byang sham bha la na rigs ldan bzhugs/ ka la pa chos kyi pho brang na/ nyams 'di 'dra mkhyen pa mang du bzhugs/ bod kha ba can gyi rgyal kham na/ nyams 'di 'dra shes pa kho bo tsam/*.
- 198 Dölpopa, *Instruction to Sherab Lama*, 628: *tshul 'di deng sang mkhas par grags rnam dang/ bsgom bzang rtogs pa mtho bar 'dod rnam dang/ grub thob chen po rlom pa phal cher gyis/ ma tshor ba de rigs ldan drin gyis rnyed/*. Also see Dölpopa, *Instruction to Sangrin*, 638: *sham bha la chos kyi pho brang na/ nyams 'di 'dra mkhyen pa mang du bzhugs/ yul gang can khrod na kho bo tsam/ de kha po ma lags drang gtam yin/ pha chos rje'i snying gtam sems la babs/*. Another example is found in Kunpang Chödrak Palsang, *Biography of the Omniscient Dharma Lord*, 385: *lta ngan med pa'i dpal ldan sham bha lar/ sems nyid mkhyen pa'i skye bo mang du bzhugs/ yul gang can khrod na kho bo tsam/ bu khyod yang dag chos la 'jug par 'tshal/*.
- 199 The only surviving portion of a teaching by Tsen Khawoché (Btsan Kha bo che) is translated in chapter 3, section 2.
- 200 No evidence has been found in the writings of Rangjung Dorjé (Rang byung rdo rje) or any other Tibetan source that would support the assertion in Hookham (1991), 173, that Rangjung Dorjé “was very much influenced by Dol po pa and his *Shentong* doctrine.” At the time of their meeting, it seems clear that the young Dölpopa was encouraged by the Karmapa, and not the other way around. The biographies of Dölpopa and Rangjung Dorjé also do not provide any information to justify Hookham’s certainty that the Karmapa visited Jonang. Her hypothesis that Rangjung Dorjé was actually the author of Dölpopa’s commentary on the *Highest Continuum* (*Uttaratantra*) is totally without basis. The text is signed by the Possessor of the Four Reliances (Rton pa bzhi ldan), which is the most common pseudonym used by Dölpopa in his works.
- 201 Mangtö Ludrup Gyatso, *Chronology of the Doctrine*, 179: *des na rje 'di karma rang byung rdo rje dang mjal te rang stong pa'i grub mtha' bzung bas/ karma pas phyis gzhan stong par 'gyur bar lung bstan zer/ spyir gzhan stong pa'i lugs thog mar karma rang*

*byung rdo rjes bzung bar sems/ jo nang du ni kun mkhyen chen po man chad gzhan stong  
par song ba yin nol.*

- 202 Tāranātha, *History of the Kālacakra Teachings*, 26: *de nas lha sa dang 'tshur phu sogs su phebs/ chos rje rang byung pa dang chos kyi gsung gleng mang du mdzad/ rang byung pas rje 'di'i lung rig gi zhal ya ma thegs kyang/ mngon shes bzang po mnga' bas/ khyed la lta grub dang chos skad da lta'i 'di bas kyang ches bzang ba cig myur du 'ong/ ces lung bstan/.*
- 203 There is a mere mention of gifts sent (?) by Dharma lord Rangjung Dorjé (Chos rje Rang byung rdo rje) to Dölpopa at Jonang around 1335. Kunpang Chödrak Palsang, *Biography of the Omniscient Dharma Lord*, 347.
- 204 Chökyi Jungné, *History of the Karma Kamtsang Tradition*, 208: *kun mkhyen dol po pa chen pos kyang 'di skabs mjal bar 'dug cing khyed kyi da lta'i 'di ma yin pa'i lta ba khyad 'phags zhiig rtogs par 'dug gsungs pa/ khong de skabs dbu ma rang stong gi grub mthar dgyes kyang/ mi ring bar gzhan stong dbu ma chen po'i gnad ji bzhin du mkhyen pa la dgongs par 'dug/.*
- 205 Tāranātha, *History of the Kālacakra Teachings*, 27.
- 206 See Seyfort Ruegg (1995), 158–60, for a discussion of source/author-familiar and source/author-alien terminology.
- 207 See especially Seyfort Ruegg (1989), 19 and 26–35.
- 208 Jangsem Gyalwa Yeshé, *Biography of Dharma Lord Kunpang*, 2a, quotes the *Lañkāvatāra Sūtra* describing the buddha nature, or sugata essence, as “permanent, stable, and eternal” (*rtag pa dang/ brtan pa ther zug*). Dölpopa, *Mirror Containing the Qualities of the Sugata Essence*, 426, quotes the *Ghanavyūha*: “The Tathāgata is permanent, stable, eternal, and indestructible” (*de bzhin gshegs pa ni rtag pa/ brtan pa ther zug mi 'jig pa*). Dölpopa, *Mirror Containing the Qualities of the Sugata Essence*, 432, quotes the *Sūtra on Utterly Quiescent and Certain Magical Meditative Concentration* (*Prasāntaviniścayaaprātibhāyasamādhisūtra*. *Rab tu zhi ba rnam par nges pa'i cho 'phrul gyi mdo*): “The Tathāgata is permanent. The Tathāgata is everlasting” (*de bzhin gshegs pa ni rtag pa'o/ de bzhin gshegs pa ni g.yung drung ngo*). On 433 of the same text Dölpopa quotes the *Āṅgulimālīya Sūtra*: “The Tathāgata should be praised as permanent and perfect” (*de bzhin gshegs pa rtag pa dang yang dag pa nyid du bsngags par bya'o*). For the occurrence of these terms in the *Śrīmālādevī Sūtra*, *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*, and the *Highest Continuum* (*Uttaratantra*), see Takasaki (1966), especially 38–40 and 256–57. Also see Seyfort Ruegg (1969), 360–71. Many similar quotations are also found in Dölpopa's *Autocommentary to the “Fourth Council,”* translated in part 2.
- 209 For Butön's refutations, see Seyfort Ruegg (1973), especially 122–40. Karmapa Rangjung Dorjé (Karma pa Rang byung rdo rje) sometimes uses at least one of these terms, *bdag* (self), in a similar context. See Rangjung Dorjé, *Profound Inner Reality*, 1b.
- 210 For example, see Dölpopa, *General Commentary on the Doctrine*, 686; Dölpopa, *Exceptional Esoteric Instructions on Madhyamaka*, 1172, 1174, 1177, and 1178; and Dölpopa, *Fourth Council*, especially 364, 375, and 394.
- 211 Cf. Kapstein (1992a), 23–24.

- 212 Dölpopa, *Sun Clarifying the Two Truths*, 814–15: rje po ri pas/ kun rdzob bden pa rang gis stong pa dang/ don dam bden pa gzhan gyi stong pa ste/ bden gnyis stong [815] tshul de ltar ma shes na/ rdzogs sangs rgyas la bskur pa btab nyen gda'o/.
- 213 A few lines about Poriwa Könchok Gyaltsen (Po ri ba Dkon cog rgyal mtshan) are found in Tsewang Gyal, *Lhorong History of the Kagyü Tradition*, 751. He was a disciple of the Kagyü master Götsangpa Gönpö Dorjé (Rgod tshang pa Mgon po rdo rje, 1189–1258). In Roerich (1976), 687, his name is given as Puriwa (Phu ri ba).
- 214 Ra Yeshé Sengé, *Biography of Ra Lotsāwa*, 178: [rig pa ye shes] 'di rang stong min te bdag 'dzin yul las 'das/ 'di gzhan stong min te shes 'dzin dri ma med/. I thank Hubert Decler for a photocopy of his unpublished paper in which he investigates the evidence for a later revision of Ra Lotsāwa's biography.
- 215 See Longchen Rabjampa, *Great Chariot*, 220–21, and Padmasambhava, *Stainless Essence*, 64: gzhan la ma ltos pas gzhan stong pa/. I am grateful to David Germano for providing me with this information and the other references from Longchenpa and Padmasambhava.
- 216 Lhai Gyaltsen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, 21a.
- 217 See Longchen Rabjampa, *Mirror of Key Points*, 263–70, and Germano (1992), 231–61.
- 218 See Sakya Paṇḍita, *Distinguishing the Three Vows*, 87: mig mangs rgya dang ma 'brel na/ rdé'u mang yang shi ro yin/ de bzhin khungs dang ma 'brel ba'i/ chos lugs mang yang ro dang 'dra/. Cf. Dölpopa, *Autocommentary to the "Fourth Council"*, 661: mig mang rgya dang ma brel na/ rdé'u mang yang shi ro yin/ lha chos brgya dang ma 'brel na/ mi chos mang yang shi ro yin/. Dölpopa then continues with similar verses for the next two pages.
- 219 For the special significance of the terms Tretāyuga and Kṛtayuga in the works of Dölpopa, see the beginning of chapter 3 and the translations of the *Fourth Council* and the *Autocommentary* in part 2.
- 220 Dölpopa, *Autocommentary to the "Fourth Council"*, 661–63. Some of these same verses are also found in Dölpopa, *Annotations to the "Perfection of Wisdom in Eighteen Thousand Lines"*, vol. 3, pt. 1: 602; Dölpopa, *Explanation of the "Perfection of Wisdom in Twenty-five Thousand Lines"*, vol. 3, pt. 2: 1005; and Dölpopa, *Perfection of Wisdom in Eighteen Thousand Lines*, vol. 4, pt. 1: 39.
- 221 No name is given for this ruler, who is only referred to as the Jang ruler (Dpon Byang pa), but he may be tentatively identified as Tai Situ Lopön Dorjé Pal (Ta'i Situ Slob dpon Rdo rje dpal), the father of Tai En Namkha Tenpa (Ta'i dben Nam mkha' brtan pa, b. 1316), or perhaps even as Namkha Tenpa himself. See Palden Chökyi Sangpo, *Genealogy of the Jang Rulers*, 173–77, and Petech (1990), 84 and 121. It should be taken into account that the Jang ruler in question had written doctrinal tracts that Dölpopa disagreed with and was responding to in this text.
- 222 These three are Mañjuśrī, Vajrapāṇi, and Avalokiteśvara.
- 223 And so he apparently did, in the extensive *Dpon byang pa'i phyag tu phul ba'i chos kyi shan 'byed*, which deals with the same points as the briefer *Gshag 'byed bsdus pa*,

but with exhaustive scriptural quotations and detailed explanations. See Dölpopa, *Analysis of Dharma for the Ruler of Jang*. Kunpang Chödrak Palsang, *Biography of the Omniscient Dharma Lord*, 343, also places the composition of this text between 1334 and 1336, although his chronology is often unreliable.

- 224 Dölpopa, *Brief Analysis*, 468–71: 'di rnams don yin lugs [469] ci lta ba'i steng nas gnam thig drang por gtab pa lags kyi/ nye ring dang/ phyogs lhung dang/ skyo ma snga btsan la sogs pa'i dri mas bsad pa mi bdogs te/ thams cad mkhyen pa sangs rgyas bcom ldan 'das dang/ rigs gsum mgon po dang/ rdo rje snying po dang/ mgon po byams pa la sogs pa sa bcu'i dbang phyug dam pa rnams dang 'phags pa thogs med dang/ bram ze chen po sa ra ha pa dang/ na ro pan chen la sogs pa shing rta chen po rnams dang/ mkhas grub dam pa rnams kyi bzhed pa dbang du byas pa'i phyir dang/ de rnams kyi dgongs pa ci lta ba bzhin du legs par khad du chud nas sgro bskur spangs te bris pa'i phyir ro/ yang gal te de rnams kyi dgongs pa ci lta ba bzhin du rtogs par rlom yang don la ma rtogs pa'i dbang gis bod kyi slob dpon gzhan dag dang/ dgongs pa mi mthun par gyur pa yin nam snyam na de ltar yang ma yin te ma rtogs pa'i rgyu ni blo gros dman pa dang/ dam pa'i gdams ngag dang bral ba dang/ thos pa nyung ba dang/ bsgoms pa'i nyams rtogs med pa dang/ nga rgyal dang/ rlom pas khengs pa dang/ skyo ma snga btsan dang/ kha mang nyung gi bden rdzun du 'jog pa la sogs pa yin mod kyi/ bdag gis ni dang por gzhang lugs chen po rnams la mang du thos pa bgyis shing/ de nas rgya bod kyi gdams ngag zab par grags pa rnams la nyams len bgyis nas/ so so'i nyams rtogs kyang thad ka thad kar skyes la/ de nas rtsa rgyud chen po rnams kyi nges don/ dpal ldan ka la pa'i gdams ngag [470] rigs ldan sa bcu pa rnams kyi snying gtam zab mo thun mong ma yin pa dang/ mjal ba'i byin rlabs cung zad zhugs pa la brten nas/ bdag 'dzin can gyi pan di ta rnams dang/ nyams rtogs can gyi sgom chen pa phal dang/ gsang sngags 'dzin pa chen por rlom pa phal gyis ma rnyed cing ma rtogs la/ khung ma chod pa'i gnad zab mo mang du rnyed cing/ rtogs pa bzang po nang nas rdol ba'i phyir/ nyams rtogs can gyi sgom chen pa phal dang/ gsang sngags 'dzin pa chen por rlom pa rnams ma zad don 'di la sangs rgyas kyi kyang nges par bzlog par mi spyod cing/ the tshom dri rgyu med pa'i nges shes khyad par can mchis pa'i phyir ro/ ci ste yang nges shes de kun rab rib mun sgom mam log shes yin gyi shes byed kyi lung yang dag med do/ snyam na med pa ma yin te/ sa bcu gnyis pa rnams dang/ sa bcu pa rnams dang/ klu sgrub yab sras dang/ na ro pan chen la sogs pa mkhas grub dam pa rnams kyi lung gsal po rig pa dang bcas shing man ngag dang bcas pa shin tu mang bar yod pa'i phyir ro/ de lta na yang 'dir yi ge mang gi dogs nas ma bris mod kyi/ gal te bzhed cing don du gnyer na slad nas bris te 'bul bas/ don 'di rnams sngar bod du grags pa 'ga' zhiig dang mi mthun pa'i khyad 'phags 'ga' re bdog mod kyang/ sngar gyi grub mtha' la yun ring du 'dri pas/ de'i bag chags brtan por gyur pa dang/ lugs de 'dod pa bod na mang ba'i phyir/ grub mtha' snga phyi 'di rnams la bag [471] chags brtan ma brtan gyi khyad par dang/ 'dod mkhan mang nyung gi khyad par bdog mod kyang/ khyad par de dag gi dbang du mi gtong bar sangs rgyas dang/ byang chub sems dpa' rnams kyi lung la dpang du mdzad nas don la gang gnas gzu bor gnas pa'i blo gros kyi dpyad par zhu/. According to the sometimes questionable chronology of Dölpopa's life in Kunpang Chödrak Palsang, *Biography of the Omniscient Dharma Lord*, 343, this text was composed between 1334 and 1336.

- 225 A number of significant texts by Choglé Namgyal, Mati Panchen, Nya Ōn, and other major disciples of Dölpopa have now been published in the excellent series entitled *Jo nang dpe tshogs* (Jonang Publication Series), 2007 and 2008. See also Nya Ōn's explanations of Dölpopa's teachings in the annotations to the translation of *General*

*Commentary on the Doctrine*, found in part 2 of this book. Jackson (1989b), of which only an early unpublished version is available to me, catalogues a very important example of an early refutation of the Jonang theories, addressing chiefly some works by Nya Ōn Kunga Pal, but also mentioning the author's refutation of Choglé Namgyal (Phyogs las rnam rgyal), which he sent to him. The author, Kashipa Rinchen Dorjé (Bka' bzhi pa Rin chen rdo rje), praises Tsongkapa (Tsong kha pa Blo bzang grags pa, 1357–1419) as one of the great teachers of that time. This text is kept in the collection of the Bihar Research Society and is thus not available. It is the earliest known extensive refutation of the Jonang doctrine. It was probably written before the end of the fourteenth century. A refutation of the Jonang teachings by this same author is mentioned in the translation by Seyfort Ruegg (1963), 88.

- 226 For example, see Mangtö Ludrup Gyatso, *Chronology of the Doctrine*, 194.
- 227 Kunpang Chödrak Palsang, *Biography of the Omniscient Dharma Lord*, 427: ... *kha ba can gyi rgyal khams 'dir/ med par lta ba'i rigs can kha rgyal che/ bsam yas chos 'bar snying la zhugs pa yi/ dge slong gzugs can mda' yi ming can 'byung/ kye ma ky'i hud bdud rigs nag po des/ gzhi yi mthar thug bder gshegs snying po bkag/ lam gyi mthar thug rdo rje rnal 'byor smod/ 'bras bu'i mthar thug dri bral med par sgrog/ rtsa rgyud 'di skad bdag thos med do skad/ bsdus pa'i rgyud la gshe ba sna tshogs byed/ rgyud 'grel dpe cha bsdus nas chu la bskur/ bstan pa'i snying po rin chen nyams chung byed/ bkra mi shes pa de ni shi nas zung ...*
- 228 Rendawa, *Jewel Garland*, 119: *'on kyang 'phags pas mdzad dam min kyang bla/ legs par bshad pa'ang mang du mthong bas na/ thar 'dod rnams ky'i 'jug ngögs ma yin zhes/ kho bo 'di la gcig tu skur mi 'debs/*. For a clarification of Rendawa's position in regard to the *Kālacakra*, see Sangyé Tsemo, *Biography of Glorious Rendawa*, 54b–55a, where these verses are also cited.
- 229 Rendawa, *Reply to Questions*, 120: *deng sang gangs ri'i khrod ky'i mkhas rlom rnams/ ldem po'i ngag gis zab mo'i tshul ston pa/ dus ky'i 'khor lo 'grel pa dang bcas pa'i/ tshig la ji bzhin sgra ru mngon zhen nas/ rnams dag mdo rgyud tshogs dang 'gal ba yi/ log pa'i tha snyad mang du spel mthong nas/ 'khyog po'i shing la srong ba'i tshul bzhin du/ rgal zhing brtag pa'i sgo nas bdag gis bris/*. These verses are also quoted in Sangyé Tsemo, *Biography of Glorious Rendawa*, 54b.
- 230 These events are described in the greatest detail in Rendawa's biography written by his disciple Sangyé Tsemo (Sangs rgyas rtse mo). See Sangyé Tsemo, *Biography of Glorious Rendawa*, 53a–55b. Mangtö Ludrup Gyatso, *Chronology of the Doctrine*, 195, summarizes the account of Rendawa's threefold examination of the scriptures from this source.
- 231 Sangyé Tsemo, *Biography of Glorious Rendawa*, 53a.
- 232 Sangyé Tsemo, *Biography of Glorious Rendawa*, 54b. While still at Sakya, Rendawa also composed his *Reply to Questions*.
- 233 Sangyé Tsemo, *Biography of Glorious Rendawa*, 53b–54b. The master Drung Zhitokpa (Drung Bzhi thog pa) is the Sakya master of the Zhitok (Bzhi thog) Palace, Ta En Kunga Rinchen (Ta dben Kun dga' rin chen), who was an important disciple of Dölpopa. Karma Könshön (Karma Dkon gzhon) was a disciple of the Third Karma-pa, Rangjung Dorjé.

- 234 Rendawa (Red midā' ba) himself mentions the angry reaction to his criticisms of the *Kālacakra*. See his comments in Sangyé Tsemo, *Biography of Glorious Rendawa*, 70b. For the series of refutations, see Jangchup Sengé, *Garland of Pristine Scriptural References*; Namgyal Drakpa Sangpo, *Beautiful Ornament for the Glorious "Kālacakra Tantra"*; Taktasang Lotsāwa Sherab Rinchen, *Reply to Criticisms of the Glorious Kālacakra by the Great Expert Rendawa and Others*; and Shönu Pal, *Banquet of Water Lilies That Relieve Distress*. See Pawo Tsuklak Trengwa, *Feast for Experts*, vol. 2: 1482–85, for a brief refutation of Rendawa's criticisms. Pawo also mentions Chomden Rikpai Raltri's (Bcom ldan Rig pa'i ral gri, 1227–1305) doubts about the *Kālacakra*.
- 235 See Rendawa, *Jewel Lamp*. The sequence of events related in Sangyé Tsemo, *Biography of Glorious Rendawa*, 63b and 72b, clearly indicates that Rendawa spent much of the latter part of his life at Gangbulé (Gangs bu le), where he was in retreat for five years and taught for another seven. It thus seems certain that his third work on the *Kālacakra* was a product of this later time.
- 236 Rendawa, *Jewel Lamp*, 340–41: rgyud 'di'i lugs kyis bden pa gnyis kyī rnam gzahag 'di ltar/ ma rig pa'i 'khrul rkyen las byung ba'i glo bur dri ma'i chos ji snyed pa rnams ni/ de kho na nyid mthong ba la sgrub pa dang kun nas nyon mongs kyī dmigs pa yin pa'i phyir/ kun rdzob kyī bden pa yin la/ de yang yang dag pa'i ye shes kyī yul du ma grub pa'i phyir/ rang stong dang/ chad stong dang/ bems po'i stong pa nyid do/ gnyug ma sems kyī rang bzhin 'od gsal gyi chos ji snyed pa rnams ni/ don dam pa'i bden pa ste/ de yang rigs pas dpyad bzod du grub pa'i sgo nas ma yin gyi . . . [a single quotation omitted] rnam par mi rtog pa'i spyod yul yin pa'i phyir/ don dam pa yin la glo bur dri mas dben pa'i phyir gzhan stong dang/ so so rang rig pa'i tshul gyis nyams su myong ba'i phyir chad stong dang bems stong ma yin no/ . . . [a single quotation omitted] de la rang stong ni chad pa'i mthar ltung ba'i phyir/ de rtogs pa ni thar pa'i lam yang dag pa ma yin gyi/ gzhan stong sems kyī chos nyid 'od gsal bsgoms pa'i stobs kyis so so rang rig pa'i tshul gyis myong [341] ba'i nang rig 'gyur med kho na yang dag pa'i lam du gzbed de/.
- 237 Rendawa, *Jewel Lamp*, 329: gang dag rdo rje'i sku brtan gyo kun la khyab pa'i rtag brtan du 'dod pa ni/ mu stegs pa gang dag rig byed kyī gzhang las/ tshangs pa dang dbang po la sogs pa lha chen po gsum gyi chos sku rtag pa rang byung gi mkhyen pa brtan gyo kun la khyab cing/ byed pa por 'dod pa dang khyad par ci yang med pa'i phyir/ ches shin tu 'khrul pa kho na yin no/. On 332 he further refutes the notion of a permanent reality always present as both the ground of purification (*sbyang gzhi*) and the result of purification (*sbyang 'bras*).
- 238 See for example Pawo Tsuklak Trengwa, *Feast for Experts*, vol. 2: 1482–85.
- 239 This sūtra quote is found in Kunpang Chödrak Palsang, *Biography of the Omniscient Dharma Lord*, 365.
- 240 Tāranātha, *History of the Kālacakra Teachings*, 34.
- 241 Tāranātha, *History of the Kālacakra Teachings*, 34.
- 242 For information about the life and writings of Shākya Chokden (Shākya mchog ldan), see Komarovski (2000), (2006), and (2007), and Caumanns (2006).
- 243 See Tāranātha, *Twenty-one Differences Concerning the Profound Meaning*, and Mathes (2004) and Tāranātha (2007), 117–36. In response to questions from Lhatong

Lotsāwa Shenyen Namgyal (Lha mthongs Lo tsā ba Bshes gnyen rnam rgyal, b. 1512), who had just returned from Nepal, the Drukpa Kagyü ('Brug pa Bka' brgyud) hierarch Pema Karpo (Padma dkar po, 1527–92) also expressed his opinion about the differences between the views of Dölpopa and Shākya Chokden: *pañ chen shāk mchog pa dang/ jo nang pa'i gzhan stong la khyad yod med dri ba la/ pañ chen gyi bzhed pa/ sems tsam rnam rdzun pa'i lugs gtsang ma yin tshul/ jo nang pa sngags dang bsres nas 'chad kyi 'dug pa'i khyad par zhib gsed cig byas pas . . . /*. See Pema Karpo, *Autobiography of Pema Karpo*, 451. Lhatong Lotsāwa's own strong preference for the *shentong* view is evident in his versified travel journal of the trip to Nepal. See Lhatong Lotsāwa Shenyen Namgyal, *Journal of My Trip to Nepal*, 13b: *mtha' bral dbu ma'i blta ba gzhan gyi stong/ brtag brtan gyung drung zhi ba chen po'i lam/ mngon sum gangs can yul 'dir 'dom pa'i rje/ 'jam dbyangs grags pa mchog de slar byon nam/ de bas lta ngan mun pa yi/ tshangs skud 'dzin pa'i u lu ka/ smongs pa'i phug ring da dor las/ lhag bsam dad spro'i gar byos shig/*. These are among his comments when visiting Jonang on the way to Nepal. I am grateful to Hubert Decler for a photocopy of this text.

- 244 For the Geluk critic's comments, see the translation in Seyfort Ruegg (1963), 89–90. Although Shākya Chokden's views did not survive in the Sakya tradition, Gorampa's (Go rams pa) treatises have become accepted as canonical. His *Distinguishing the Views* (*Lta ba'i shan 'byed*) in particular is to the present day a key reference for understanding the orthodox Sakya doctrinal position. In this work Gorampa refutes the views of Dölpopa as eternalistic (*rtag mtha'*), those of Tsongkapa as nihilistic (*chad mtha'*), and establishes the true Sakya view as the real Madhyamaka beyond all extremes (*mtha' bral*). Dölpopa's views are first summarized in Gorampa, *Distinguishing the Views*, 1.4–2.3. See Cabezón and Dargyay (2007) for a partial translation and study of Gorampa's work.
- 245 For information on Rongtön (Rong ston), see Jackson (1989a). Dhongthog Rinpoche's (Gdong thog Rin po che) opinion is found in Dhongthog, *Comments Prompted by the Publication of Shākya Chokden's Writings*, 21: *pañ chen 'di pas kun mkhyen rong ston chen po'i rjes su 'brangs nas gzhan stong dbu ma'i legs bshad kyi sgra dbyangs gsang por bsgrags pa dang/ rje rin po che tsong kha pa'i gzhung lugs la rigs pas dgag pa mdzad pa sogs . . . /*. These remarks also highlight one of the weaknesses of the methodology in Hookham (1991), where the views of Rongtön are lumped together with the views of Tsongkapa's disciple Gyaltsap Darma Rinchen (Rgyal tshab Dar ma rin chen) as representative of a *rangtong* (*rang stong*) tradition.
- 246 See Rongtön, *Miscellaneous Writings*, 28a: *kun mkhyen chen po dol po pa shes rab rgyal mtshan la bstod pa/ zab don rin chen phreng ba zhes bya ba/ bla ma dang lhag pa'i lha la phyag 'tshal lo/ blo gros zab mo rtogs pa'i brlabs phreng can/ kun rtog mi g.yo ting 'dzin brtan pa'i sku/ zab mo'i legs bshad snang ba rab rgyas tel/ ma rig mun sel rtogs pa klong du gyur/ grub pa'i nye lam rgyud la sbyor mdzad pa/ gsung rab kun gyi snying po'i don bsdu nas/ 'chad rtsod rtsom pa'i bya bas gzhan dag la/ brtse bas rjes su 'dzin pa'i 'phrin las can/ snyan pas sa gsum khyab mdzad la bstod pa'i/ dge bas bshes gnyen dam pa mnyes gyur cig/ ces rong ston chen pos shri nā len tra'i dgon par sbyar ba'o/*. I thank Leonard van der Kuijp for a photocopy of this work.
- 247 Karma Trinlepa, *Reply to Chakmo's Questions*, 91–92, explains how his teacher, Karma Chödrak Gyatso (Karma pa Chos grags rgya mtsho), interpreted the *shentong* view accepted by the Third Karmapa, Rangjung Dorjé.

- 248 See Kunga Drölchok, *Biography of the Great Paṇḍita Shākya Chokden*, 203 and 206, for a description of the two meetings, and Pawo Tsulak Trengwa, *Feast for Experts*, vol. 2: 1103, for the arrival of the Karmapa in Rinpung (Rin spungs). Kunga Drölchok, *Biography of the Great Paṇḍita Shākya Chokden*, 206, mentions the length of Shākya Chokden's stay at the court. Pawo Tsulak Trengwa, *Feast for Experts*, 1104, says Shākya Chokden accepted the Karmapa as his main master at this point.
- 249 For the Karmapa's declaration that their minds had blended together, see Belo Tsewang Kunkhyap, *History of the Karma Kamtsang Tradition*, vol. 1: 584. For the statement of both of their views being *shentong*, see the same text, 646.
- 250 Dezhung Rinpoché, Kunga Tenpai Nyima (Sde gzhung sprul sku, Kun dga' bstan pa'i nyi ma), told me this in a private conversation in Seattle, Washington, in the late 1970s. Rinpoché was probably basing his opinion on the information found in Belo Tsewang Kunkhyap, *History of the Karma Kamtsang Tradition*, vol. 1: 582–84.
- 251 See Kunga Drölchok, *Biography of the Great Paṇḍita Shākya Chokden*, 119–21, and Kunga Drölchok, *Biography of the Dharma King Namgyal Drakpa Sangpo*, 24b–25b.
- 252 Khenchen Pema Sangpo (Mkhan chen Padma bzang po) was an important teacher of the Jonang abbot Jamyang Könchok Sangpo (1398–1475), and is known to have written a history of Dharma and a large commentary on the *Kālacakra*. See Jamgön Ameshap Ngawang Kunga Sönam, *Chariot of Amazing Faith*, 237, and Losang Trinlé, *Clarification of Knowledge*, 423.
- 253 See Kunga Drölchok, *Biography of the Dharma King Namgyal Drakpa Sangpo*, 25a: *nged la gzigs nas/ dbon chung shes rab 'dug pa 'di 'dra'i skor la gzhig pa chug cig ces ja'i gsol ras kyang gnang ba de dus man nas nges don la gzhig 'brel chug pa yin kyang grub mtha'i gzhung shin tu bsgril ba'i bstan bcos su zhib rgyas rang 'khod pa med/ than thun ngag nas smras pa tsam yin/ slar nas rigs ldan chen po ba'i bka'i bsgo ba thob phyir rtsal 'don du bskyangs pa yin no/*.
- 254 See Kunga Drölchok, *Biography of the Dharma King Namgyal Drakpa Sangpo*, 25a–b, and Jamgön Ameshap Ngawang Kunga Sönam, *Chariot of Amazing Faith*, 211. I have followed the spellings in Jamgön Ameshap's reproduction of Kunga Drölchok's work: *paṇ chen rin po che nyid kyi mnga' ris su ma phebs gong gi thugs rtsom dang/ de'i man gi thugs rtsom rnams shes rab kyi mig gis bltas na so sor nges pa 'drongs pa yod la/*.
- 255 See Dhongthog, *Comments Prompted by the Publication of Shākya Chokden's Writings*, 22–23. The works of Jonang Tāranātha were also banned at this time.
- 256 See Jackson (1994), 128–33, for a discussion of the strategies Shākya Chokden employed in trying to bring the views of the Sakya and the Kagyü traditions into harmony. Seyfort Rugg (1989), 105–8, is excellent on this topic. For the views of Shākya Chokden and Dölpopa, see in particular Tāranātha, *Twenty-one Differences Concerning the Profound Meaning*, a text entirely devoted to the differences between the views of these two masters. On 792 Tāranātha points out that the single basis for their minor differences was that Shākya Chokden maintained that nondual primordial awareness (*gnyis med ye shes*) is momentary and impermanent, but Dölpopa asserted that it is permanent, partless, and omnipresent. See Mathes (2004) and Tāranātha (2007), 117–36, for translations of Tāranātha's work. Dreyfus (1997), 28–29, briefly discusses Shākya Chokden and the *shentong* view.



- 257 See Shākya Chokden, *Untitled*. It is interesting to see that Shākya Chokden was not alone in this opinion. His younger contemporary Gungruwa Sherab Sangpo (Gung ru ba Shes rab bzang po, 1411–75), a Sakya master who opposed the *shentong*, also says both Dölpopa and Butön proclaimed the *shentong* as the supreme view and denied the older traditions of tantric exegesis, probably meaning that of the earlier Sakya masters. See Gungruwa Sherab Sangpo, *History of the Path with the Result*, 122.3. The Sakya master Jamyang Khyentsé Wangchuk ('Jam dbyangs mkhyen brtse'i dbang phyug, 1524–68) also felt that Dölpopa and Butön were essentially in agreement.
- 258 For Belo's comments, see Belo Tsewang Kunkhyap, *History of the Karma Kamtsang Tradition*, vol. 1: 651, and for Karma Trinlepa's record of the Karmapa's teachings, see Karma Trinlepa, *Reply to Chakmo's Questions*, 88–92. The text by the Eighth Karmapa is Mikyö Dorjé, *Lamp to Distinguish the Tradition of the Emptiness of Other*. For Mikyö Dorjé's refutations of the *shentong* view, see Seyfort Ruegg (1988), 1267–69, and Williams (1983), especially 140, note 17, and 143, note 39.
- 259 See Shongchen Tenpai Gyaltsen, *Tenets of Great Madhyamaka*.
- 260 Jamyang Khyentsé Wangchuk, *Biography of the Venerable Lord Gorumpa*, 278, describes the teachings Gorumpa (Sgo rum pa) received in about 1495 from the Jonang master Namkha Chökyong (Nam mkha' chos skyong, 1436–1507), who occupied the monastic seat of Jonang at that time. Writing in 1561, the author also refers to the contemporary unadulterated Jonang tradition of the Kālacakra initiation and teachings. Jamyang Khyentsé Wangchuk, *Biography of the Venerable Lord Gorumpa*, 333 and 341, mentions the years of Gorumpa's tenure and, on 341–42, those of his successor.
- 261 Kunga Drölchok, *Autobiography of Kunga Drölchok*, 235.
- 262 Kunga Drölchok, *Life of the Omniscient Sanghabhadra*, 233, and *Remembering Past Lives*, 18.
- 263 There is to the present day a strong link between the Shangpa (Shangs pa) lineages and those of Jonang. This emphasis began with Kunga Drölchok's great devotion to the Shangpa practices and increased after Jetsun Tāranātha's writings on the Six Dharmas of Niguma (Ni gu chos drug) and other fundamental practices of the Shangpa tradition became the definitive texts for those practices.
- 264 These four masters were Nya Ön Kunga Pal, the great adept Kunga Lodrö (Grub chen Kun dga' blo gros, 1365–1443), Jamyang Könchok Sangpo, and Gorumpa Kunga Lekpa. All except Kunga Lodrö occupied the monastic seat of Jonang.
- 265 As mentioned in note 244, Gorampa had already clearly defined the Sakya position as a middle path between the two extremes of the Jonang and Geluk. See Jackson (1989a) for an example of the strong influence of the Geluk tradition at a great Sakya monastery.
- 266 For example, in Shākya Chokden, *Reply to Mūpa Rabjampa's Questions*, 367, he first cites the opinions of some latter-day adherents of the Path with the Result teachings (*lam 'bras pa phyi ma dag*), and then, in regard to certain terminology he is criticizing, says, "This is the Dharma language of Tsongkapa, which does not exist in the Sakya tradition" (*'di tsong kha pa'i chos skad yin gyi/ sa skya pa la med do/*).
- 267 Kunga Drölchok, *In Defense of the Venerable Lord's Intention*, 8b: *khyed bstan las log*

*tsong kha pa'i/ bsang chos yid la gnags pa 'gas/ sa skya'i bstan pa spel tshul gyis/ bu ru rdzus nas khyod rabs bcad/*. In this text Kunga Drölchok is concerned only with establishing the authentic view of the original masters of the Sakya teachings of the Path with the Result, which he defends against two threats. The first threat is the views of the great Tsongkapa, and the description of the second seems to match what is known of the teachings of Latö Wangyal (La stod Dbang rgyal), a major disciple of Kunpang Tukjé Tsöndrü (Kun spangs Thugs rje brtson 'grus), although it is uncertain that Latö's teachings of the Path with the Result survived into the sixteenth century. I am grateful to Leonard van der Kuip for a photocopy of Kunga Drölchok's text. See Stearns (1996), 149, note 78, for details on Latö Wangyal's view, which had earlier been criticized by Ngorchon Kunga Sangpo.

- 268 For example, as mentioned in the previous note, Kunga Drölchok defended the authentic view of the Path with the Result against that of what would seem to be a version of the *shentong* approach, although considerably different than that maintained by Dölpopa. See Kunga Drölchok, *In Defense of the Venerable Lord's Intention*, 9a–10a.
- 269 Kunga Drölchok, *Song Sung as an Introduction to the Six-branch Yoga*, 26b–27a: *rje bla ma rnams gsum 'dus pa'i sku/ ma kham ssum 'gro ba'i skyabs gcig pul dpal dus gsum kyi sangs rgyas dol bu pa/ mtshan shes rab rgyal mtshan ma lags sam/ rje khong gi chos kyi khrir 'khod nias/ rje khong gi ring lugs skyongs ba la/ rje do bu sangs rgyas slar logs pa/ nga rnal 'byor rang grol ma yin nam/*. The “three regal masters” is a reference to Dölpopa's predecessors at Jonang: Kunpang Tukjé Tsöndrü (Kun spangs Thugs rje brtson 'grus), Jangsem Gyalwa Yeshe (Byang sems Rgyal ba ye shes), and Khedrup Yönten Gyatso (Mkhas grub Yon tan rgya mtsho).
- 270 See Kunga Drölchok, *Song Sung as an Introduction to the Six-branch Yoga*, 28a: *rang bzhin gyi 'od gsal rgyal kham che/ chos dbyings kyi brag ri rtag cing brtan*, and 44a: *dus 'gyur med rtag pa'i ye shes sku*.
- 271 Ngawang Losang Gyatso, *Biography of Tsarchen Losel Gyatso*, 65a, quotes from Tsarchen's travel journal: *sang snga dro sku 'bum mthong grol chen mo/ shyor drug brgyud pa'i lha khang sogs mjal/ ri khrod la rgyang bltas byas pas blo 'gro zhing yid 'phrog pa/ sngon gyi dam pa rnams kyis 'di lta bu'i gnas su sgrub grwa'i rgyun btsugs/ skye bo mang po thar pa'i lam la 'god par mdzad pa ches cher ngo mtshar zhing rmad du byung ba'i rnam thar du 'dug/ kho bo cag kyang 'di lta bu'i dben gnas zbig tu byang chub sgrub pa zbig nam 'ong snyam pa snying gi dkyil du lhang lhang ba'i dag snang byung ngo*.
- 272 See Ngawang Losang Gyatso, *Biography of Tsarchen Losel Gyatso*, 84a–84b.
- 273 Jamyang Khyentsé Wangchuk, *Autobiography of Jamyang Khyentsé Wangchuk*, 29b.
- 274 See Jamyang Khyentsé Wangchuk, *Autobiography of Jamyang Khyentsé Wangchuk*, 66a–b. Khyentsé's concluding verses sum up the event and his view of Dölpopa nicely: *rgyal bas lung bstan kun mkhyen jo nang pa/ 'gal 'du skyon med grub mtha' bzched lags mod/ gtsang dag bde dang rtag pa'i mthar thug pa'i/ bde gshegs snying po dngos por bzched re skan/*.

The omniscient Jonangpa,  
prophesied by the Conqueror,  
did accept a philosophical tenet

of flawless paradox,  
 but it is impossible that he accepted  
 the ultimately pure, pristine, blissful,  
 and permanent sugata essence to be an entity.

What is meant by "flawless paradox" (*gal 'dus skyon med*) is explained by Dölpopa in the *Fourth Council* and the *Autocommentary*, both translated in part 2. See also Dölpopa, *Analysis of Dharma for the Ruler of Jang*, 511, where he does discuss the use of the term *ngos po*, or *entity*, as applied to the absolute true nature (*don dam chos nyid*, *paramārthadharma*). In this case it is clarified to be a *nonsubstantial entity* (*ngos po med pa'i ngos po*). He also mentions the eight *unconditioned entities* (*'dus ma byas kyi ngos po*). This is in the context of a continuing discussion of the doctrine taught in texts such as the *Madhyāntavibhāga*.

- 275 As previously mentioned, Shākya Chokden and Gungruwa Sherab Sangpo also maintained that Dölpopa and Butön both taught the *shentong* view.
- 276 A number of Tāranātha's translations are found in the Tibetan canon. His translation of the *Kapālāvatāra*, a guide to Shambhala, was made in the year 1615 from a Newar Sanskrit manuscript found among ten volumes of Sanskrit texts that Tāranātha received from Chung Riwoché (Gcung Ri bo che), the monastery of the great adept Tangtong Gyalpo (Thang stong rgyal po). Because of its title, the *Kapālāvatāra* had been misplaced among many Sanskrit grammatical texts. See Tāranātha, *Autobiography of the Wanderer Tāranātha*, 489, 499-500. The *Kapālāvatāra* has been translated and studied in Bernbaum (1985), 44-80. See Newman (1987), 193-206, for a critical discussion of Bernbaum's conclusions.
- 277 Tāranātha, *Autobiography of the Wanderer Tāranātha*, 329b-330a, is very forthright about his eclectic nature. He is also extremely outspoken about not having the brainless and empty-headed naive view (*klad med mgo stong pa'i dag snang*) that sees faults as qualities. He rejoices at the good qualities of others, but does not hesitate to point out their faults. By being honest he admits to having made many enemies of those who cannot accept unbiased criticism.
- 278 Lord Orgyan Dzongpa (Rje O rgyan rdzong pa), whose personal name was Chökyong Gyaltzen (Chos skyong rgyal mtshan), was one of the main teachers of Lochen Ratnabhadra (Lo chen Ratna bha dra, 1489-1563). Ratnabhadra was one of Kunga Drölchok's most important teachers. Orgyan Dzongpa was a Sakya master who occupied the Jonang monastic seat for a brief time at the end of his life.
- 279 Tāranātha, *Autobiography of the Wanderer Tāranātha*, 74a-b.
- 280 Tāranātha, *Autobiography of the Wanderer Tāranātha*, 140b-141a. Tāranātha received numerous visions during his life. For instance, he mentions that on many occasions during the years 1618-19 he had repeatedly experienced visions of the Kalāpa court of the Shambhala emperors, and also had visions of them and heard their teachings. These visions were a result of his belief that the intent of all sūtras and tantras was the Madhyamaka emptiness of other. See Tāranātha, *Autobiography of the Wanderer Tāranātha*, 280a.
- 281 Tāranātha, *Autobiography of the Wanderer Tāranātha*, 141b. See Tāranātha, *Ornament for the Madhyamaka Emptiness of Other and Scriptural Quotations for "Ornament for*

the *Madhyamaka Emptiness of Other*,” The colophon of the former says he was thirty years old when he wrote it.

- 282 Tāranātha, *Secret Autobiography*, 680–81: *da lta kun mkhyen chen po dol po pa'i lta ba la mkhas shing dgongs pa skyong ba'i rgyu mtshan* [681] *yang de lags*!
- 283 The meeting and discussions at Trompa Lhatsé (Grom pa Lha rtse) are described in Tāranātha, *Autobiography of the Wanderer Tāranātha*, 200a–201b. Tāranātha, *Autobiography of the Wanderer Tāranātha*, 154b, also mentions a discussion of *rangtong* versus *shentong* with an otherwise unidentified Lopön Drubtopa (Slob dpon Grub thob pa), who had studied many works that refuted the *shentong* view by authors such as lord Gorampa (Rje Go ram pa), Tsetang Sanglhun (Rtse thang Sangs lhun), and Ngödrup Palbar (Dngos grub dpal 'bar).
- 284 See Tāranātha, *Autobiography of the Wanderer Tāranātha*, 298b.
- 285 See Ngawang Lodrö Drakpa, *History of the Jonang Tradition*, 59–60, and *Nirvāṇa of Lord Tāranātha*, 139–40. Sangyé Gyatso (Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho, d. 1635), who was also known as Jamyang Tulku Sangyé Gyatso ('Jam dbyangs sprul sku Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho), should not be confused with Jamyang Tulku Yeshe Dorjé, who was also known as Losang Tenpai Gyaltsen ('Jam dbyangs sprul sku Ye shes rdo rje or Blo bzang bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan, 1635–1723), the Mongolian prince who would later be recognized as Tāranātha's rebirth.
- 286 This was first noted by Vostrikov (1970), 228, based on a note in the *Yellow Beryl* (*Bai dūrya ser po*) of Desi Sangyé Gyatso (Sde srid Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho). See also Seyfort Ruegg (1963), 77–78 and 82, for information on the Geluk conversion of Jonang.
- 287 See Smith (1970), 17.
- 288 Ngawang Losang Gyatso, *Autobiography of the Fifth Dalai Lama*, vol. 1: 521. As noted by Smith (1968), 16–17, Situ Panchen Chökyi Jungné (Situ Paṇ chen Chos kyi 'byung gnas, 1700–1774) visited Takten (Rtag brtan) and Jonang in 1723. Situ's account places the blame for the Geluk conversion of Jonang on the Fifth Dalai Lama's teacher Möndro Panchen (Smon 'gro Paṇ chen), who had earlier received Jonang teachings but later spread slander about them to the Fifth Dalai Lama. The Dalai Lama took his teacher's advice, ordered the change of the Jonang philosophical tenet (*grub mtha' sgyur*) to that of the Geluk, and had the silver reliquary containing Tāranātha's remains destroyed. See Chökyi Jungné, *Autobiography and Diaries*, 104–105.
- 289 Ngawang Losang Gyatso, *Autobiography of the Fifth Dalai Lama*, vol. 1: 521. See also Jampa Tupten, *History of Ganden Puntsok Ling*, x, who dates both the conversion of the Jonang philosophical tenet and the change of the name of Tāranātha's monastery to the year 1650, not 1658. He is certainly correct about the initial conversion, but not about the name change, which did not take place for another eight years.
- 290 Ngawang Lodrö Drakpa, *History of the Jonang Tradition*, 60–61.
- 291 Ngawang Losang Gyatso, *Autobiography of the Fifth Dalai Lama*, vol. 1: 309.
- 292 See Ngaki Wangpo, *Biography of Jetsun Dampa Losang Tenpai Gyaltsen*, 286. I am grateful to Hubert Decler for directing my attention to this source. See also Smith

- (1969), 12, and Jampa Tupten, *History of Ganden Puntsok Ling*, 330–34. The Khalkha Jetsun Dampa (Rje btsun dam pa) incarnations have continued as the leaders of Buddhism in Mongolia up into modern times.
- 293 Jamyang Tashi ('Jam dbyangs bkra shis), often known as Jamyang Chöjé ('Jam dbyangs chos rje), founded the monastery of Drepung ('Bras spungs) in 1417, and was an important disciple of lord Tsongkapa. See also Ngaki Wangpo, *Biography of Jetsun Dampa Losang Tenpai Gyaltsen*, 277–78.
- 294 Ngaki Wangpo, *Biography of Jetsun Dampa Losang Tenpai Gyaltsen*, 278: *nged kyi jo nang pa'i bstan pa spel ba de tsam gyis chog pa bgyis/ da ni dga' ldan pa'i bsrung ma rnams kyis gsol ba btad pa dang/ sngon gyi smon lam gyi mthus mtha' 'khob tu rje tsong kha pa'i bstan pa spel bar byed dol*. The source of this account is identified only as *skyabs mgon sku gong ma'i rnam thar*, "the biography of the previous refuge lord."
- 295 Cf. Ngawang Lodrö Drakpa, *History of the Jonang Tradition*, 59, and *Nirvāṇa of Lord Tāranātha*, 134–35.
- 296 Tāranātha's nephew was Kunga Tenpa of the Ra clan (Rwa'i dbon [=Sku dbon Rwa ba] Kun dga' brtan pa), who had been appointed treasurer (*phyag mdzod*) of Takten Monastery by the Tsang ruler Kunga Rabten Wangi Gyalpo (Gtsang sde srid Kun dga' rab brtan dbang gi rgyal po). See Ngawang Lodrö Drakpa, *History of the Jonang Tradition*, 59, and Trinlé Wangmo, *Brief Story of the Venerable Lady Ratna Badzriṇi*, 20a.
- 297 The "precious rebirth" (Sku skyes Rin po che) is Sangyé Gyatso (Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho, d. 1635), Tāranātha's chosen successor on the monastic seat of Takten.
- 298 See Trinlé Wangmo, *Brief Story of the Venerable Lady Ratna Badzriṇi*, 21a: *yang rtag brtan nas 'dir pheba pa gcig la/ khar sang 'bras spung kyi grwa pa de 'dra byung/ kho rang tsho'i chos skyongs yang rgyab na sleb 'dug/ dge ldan pa'i bstan pa la phan pa'i spyir yong dgos zer/ snying nas mos gus gdung shugs che bas/ lam tsam khas blang yod/ khyad par de'i sang gnang gcig/ rtag brtan gyi las tshan rnams kyi gros byas pa'i yi ge gcig dbon po la brgyud nas/ nged la sprad byung/ de'i don la/ da lta'i sku skyes rin po che rang 'dir yod ring ma gtogs/ de'i rteng la gdan sa'i bla ma ring ri'i [>rang re'i] dbon rgyud la 'dzag pa dgos zer nan chags 'dug/ rten 'brel snga phyi 'di gnyis ltar na/ dus [?] kyi chos srid skyong par [>sar?] skye ba mi len pa chos nyid kho [21b] na yin pas/ da ni nges par 'bras spungs pa'i bstan pa la phan pa'i sar skye ba len dgos par 'dug gsung/ de dus bdag gi [>gis] spyir sems can thams cad dang dgos [>sgos] su dgon pa 'di tsam gyi 'gangs che ba dang/ nges ston [>don] gyi bstan pa la dgongs pa'i sku tshe brtan pa dang/ slar sku skyes yang 'di rang gi bstan pa la phan pa gcig rang thugs rjes gzigs dgos zhus kyang bka' las/ gzhan phar gzahag phu mda' 'di kun rang na yang bsam blo mi gcig pa mang/ khyod rang gcig bu sems dag pas de ltar yin kyang/ thams cad gcig tu 'dril nas blo rtse gcig pa'i gsol ba 'debs pa gcig dgos te dga' kha tsam la ni nges pa med/ da ni rten 'brel gang 'grigs dang gdung shugs gang che'i dbang du 'gro/ rten 'brel bsgyur phyogs shes na da dung 'di'i bstan pa la phan pa'ang srid gsung. This episode contains some difficult passages that could be interpreted in other ways. I am grateful to Michael Sheehy for a copy of this rare manuscript, which I hope to fully translate in the near future. Although clearly using this text, it is interesting that Ngawang Lodrö Drakpa, *History of the Jonang Tradition*, 59, and *Nirvāṇa of Lord Tāranātha*, 134–35, repeats only a few select passages from the episode, leaving out all mention of Tāranātha's rebirth in the Geluk tradition.*

- 299 See Trinlé Wangmo, *Brief Story of the Venerable Lady Ratna Badzriñi*, 30a.
- 300 As mentioned in note 288, the Fifth Dalai Lama's teacher Möndro Panchen (Smon 'gro Pañ chen) was also probably involved in the suppression of the Jonang School. Jampa Tupten, *History of Ganden Puntsok Ling*, 331, mentions the vows and teachings from the Panchen Lama.
- 301 Losang Chökyi Gyaltsen, *Autobiography of Panchen Losang Chökyi Gyaltsen*, 249. At this time there were apparently about eight hundred monks at Takten (Rtag brtan).
- 302 See Trinlé Wangmo, *Brief Story of the Venerable Lady Ratna Badzriñi*, 31a.
- 303 Ngawang Losang Gyatso, *Autobiography of the Fifth Dalai Lama*, 521.
- 304 There is much evidence in Ngawang Lodrö Drakpa's *History of the Jonang Tradition* that shows the Jonang teachings continued to be taught to a surprising extent in the Tsang region after the suppression. For information on the state of the Jonang tradition today in Amdo, see Kapstein (1991), and especially Sheehy (2007).
- 305 Jampa Khawoché's (Byams pa kha bo che) personal name was Lodrö Drakpa (Blo gros grags pa). See Ngawang Lodrö Drakpa, *History of the Jonang Tradition*, 39, 61, and 103–4.
- 306 Ratnashrī (Ratna shrī) is the Sanskrit form of this master's Tibetan name, Rinchen Pal (Rin chen dpal). For a sketch of his life, see Ngawang Lodrö Drakpa, *History of the Jonang Tradition*, 104–12.
- 307 See Ngawang Lodrö Drakpa, *History of the Jonang Tradition*, 67–69, 170–71.
- 308 See Ngawang Lodrö Drakpa, *History of the Jonang Tradition*, 77–78. This master, who is often known as Drogé Kunga Palsang ('Brog ge Kun dga' dpal bzang), should not be mistaken for Jedrung Kunga Palsang (Rje drung Kun dga' dpal bzang, 1513–95), who was Kunga Drölchok's nephew and successor on the monastic seat of Jonang.
- 309 Tsewang Norbu, *Autobiographical Notes*, 605.
- 310 Chökyi Wangchuk, *Biography of Tsewang Norbu*, 139. On this occasion Tsewang Norbu remembered his earlier life as Jamyang Yeshé Gyatso ('Jam dbyangs ye shes rgya mtsho), the son of the king of Tingkyé (Gting skyes Rgyal po). This is said to explain why he was so attracted to the Jonang view and philosophical tenets and understood them without much effort.
- 311 Tsewang Norbu, *History of the Instructions on the Great Seal in the Dakpo Kagyü*, 224, and Chökyi Wangchuk, *Biography of Tsewang Norbu*, 122, describe Tsewang Norbu's first attempts to receive teachings from Kunsang Wangpo (Kun bzang dbang po). For a short biographical note on Kunsang Wangpo, who is often known as Samantabhadrendra, the Sanskrit form of his name, see Ngawang Lodrö Drakpa, *History of the Jonang Tradition*, 534–35. For a study of Tsewang Norbu's restoration activities in Kathmandu, see Ehrhard (1989).
- 312 Tsewang Norbu's final success in receiving teachings from Kunsang Wangpo are described in Chökyi Wangchuk, *Biography of Tsewang Norbu*, 138–39, and Tsewang Norbu, *Autobiographical Notes*, 604–5. His teaching at Jonang in 1734 is described in Chökyi Wangchuk, *Biography of Tsewang Norbu*, 164.

- 313 Ngawang Lodrö Drakpa, *History of the Jonang Tradition*, 536.
- 314 See also note 288 and Chökyi Jungné, *Autobiography and Diaries*, 104–5.
- 315 Smith (1968), 8, mentions that this ban was not lifted until 1874, when the Shalu master Losel Tenkyong (Blo gsal bstan skyong, b. 1804) finally gained permission to reopen the printery at Ganden Puntsok Ling (Dga' ldan phun tshogs gling) and reprint some of the Jonang texts. The original sealing of the books probably occurred at the same time as the banning of Shākya Chokden's works in the mid-seventeenth century.
- 316 Chökyi Jungné, *Autobiography and Diaries*, 105.
- 317 In Chökyi Jungné, *Autobiography and Diaries*, 267, it seems that the event occurred at Bodhnāth, but Ngawang Lodrö Drakpa, *History of the Jonang Tradition*, 536–37, locates it at the self-arisen stūpa (*rang byung mchod rten*), which indicates Svayambhunāth.
- 318 Chökyi Jungné, *Autobiography and Diaries*, 267: *nged la zab mo gzhan stong gi lta ba 'dzin dgos tshul dang/ de ltar na sku tshe mdzad phrin rgyas pa'i rten 'brel yod tshul dang/ lta ba'i skor gsung 'phros mang po byung/*. I first heard about this event in a private conversation in the 1970s with my teacher Dezhung Rinpoché, who also believed that adherence to the *shentong* view brings longevity.
- 319 Chökyi Jungné, *Autobiography and Diaries*, 267: *bdag gis ni gzhan stong rang la'ang bzbed tshul cung zad mi 'dra ba 'ga' re yod pa'i nang nas/ dol po'i bzbed pa las thal rang gnyis po'ang rig tshogs kyi dgongs pa rma med du 'dod pa ni khyad par dang/ rje bdun pa dang zi lung pa'i bzbed pa dang ches nye ba zhig 'dod pa yin no/*. The Seventh Lord is the Seventh Karmapa, Chödrak Gyatso (Chos grags rgya mtsho), and Silungpa (Zi lung pa) is Panchen Shākya Chokden.
- 320 See Smith (1970), 34.
- 321 The best treatment of the nonsectarian (*ris med*) movement is still Smith (1970). At least one brief work by Khyentsé Wangpo is dedicated to the *shentong* view. See Jamyang Khyentsé Wangpo, *Brief Presentation of the View of the Emptiness of Other*. Mipam Gyatso's *Lion's Roar of Accepting the Emptiness of Other* is translated in Pettit (1999), 415–27.
- 322 For example, Dölpopa's commentary to the *Highest Continuum* was largely copied by Jamgön Kongtrul and used as the basis for his own commentary. Jamgön Kongtrul, *Guiding Instructions on the View of the Emptiness of Other* is a text devoted solely to the instructions of the *shentong* view, which Kongtrul wrote at the Jonang monastery of Dzamtang ('Dzam thang). For information about Kongtrul's life and works, see Smith (1970), and especially Richard Barron's translation of Kongtrul's autobiography in Kongtrul (2003). See also Kongtrul (2007a), 249–68, for a discussion of the Madhyamaka emptiness of other.
- 323 Jamgön Kongtrul's section on the Six-branch Yoga instructions in his *Treasury of Knowledge*, vol. 3: 429–57, is drawn almost verbatim from Tāranātha, *Meaningful to Behold*. For an English translation of Kongtrul's work by Sarah Harding, see Kongtrul (2007b), 289–330. Kongtrul's historical survey of these instructions in *Treasury of Knowledge*, vol. 1: 549–51, is copied directly from Tāranātha, *Blazing of a Hundred*

*Lights*, 476–78. Kongtrul viewed the Jonang tradition of Dölpopa and Tāranātha as the most exceptional of all the lineages of the Six-branch Yoga.

- 324 On several occasions Dezhung Rinpoché told me that his teacher Jamyang Chökyi Lodrö ('Jam dbyangs chos kyi blo gros) liked (*thugs mnyes*) the *shentong* view. For the dream-vision of Tāranātha, see Jamyang Chökyi Lodrö, *Secret Autobiographical Notes*, 96–98. Chökyi Lodrö also wrote a guruyoga practice focusing on Dölpopa.
- 325 See especially Dudjom (1991), 169–216, concerning the *rangtong* and *shentong* contrasts and the teachings of Great Madhyamaka. According to Kapstein (n.d.), this section of Dudjom Rinpoché's text is largely derived from the earlier work of the Katok (Kaḥ thog) master Getsé Paṇḍita Gyurmé Tsewang Chokdrup (Dge rtse Paṇḍi ta 'Gyur med tshe dbang mchog sgrub, b. 1764), who was regarded as an emanation of Dölpopa and actively taught the *shentong*.
- 326 In the late 1970s I once asked Dezhung Rinpoché for his opinion about the *shentong* teachings upheld at that time in the different Tibetan traditions. Rinpoché replied that members of the Nyingma and Kagyü traditions had to accept (*khas len dgos red*) the *shentong* view because it was the view of Dudjom Rinpoché, Dilgo Khyentsé Rinpoché, and Kalu Rinpoché. When I asked about followers of the Sakya tradition, Dezhung Rinpoché laughed and said they had to keep an open mind about the topic (*dag snang dgos red*). When I asked about the Geluk position, Rinpoché exclaimed that they viewed the *shentong* teachings as the "enemy of the doctrine" (*bstan pa'i dgra bo red*).
- 327 In a private conversation in Bodhanāth, Nepal, in 1989, Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso (Mkhan po Tshul 'khriims rgya mtsho) told me he had not received even the reading transmission of any texts by Dölpopa. But the Kagyü master Khenchen Thrangu Rinpoché did receive the transmission of Dölpopa's *Mountain Dharma* and has taught from it in recent years.
- 328 The difference between the teachings of Dölpopa and the many later adherents of the *shentong* view, such as Shākya Chokden, Karmapa Chödrak Gyatso, Tsewang Norbu, Situ Panchen, and, most recently, Jamgön Kongtrul and Mipam Gyatso, remains a subject for future research. One of the most obvious points of Dölpopa's doctrine that has been dropped by later Kagyü and Nyingma teachers is the radical separation of the thoughts or concepts (*rnam rtog*) from the dharmakāya. This will be discussed in chapter 3, section 2, and in note 556. For a brief mention of some other differences between Dölpopa and modern followers of the *shentong*, see Broido (1989), 89–90.
- 329 Puṇḍarīka, *Stainless Light*, Toh 1347, Tengyur, rgyud *tha*, 145a. Bhagavān Avalokiteśvara is the pseudonym of Kalkī Puṇḍarīka. This simple statement could serve as a slogan expressing the crux of Dölpopa's message. My thanks to John Newman for first locating it for me in Puṇḍarīka's work. Also see Newman (1987), 373. The passage is cited in Dölpopa, *Reply to the Questions of Joworipa Lama Könchok Göṅ*, 731: *bcom ldan 'das spyang ras gzigs dbang phyug gi zhal snga nas kyang/ srid pa dang mya ngan las 'das pa ni gcig pa nyid ma yin te/ grib ma dang nyi ma bzhin no/*.
- 330 The term *bstan rtsis* (*calculation of the doctrine*) generally denotes a genre of Tibetan literature that is concerned with calculating important historical events in the development of Buddhism, usually by means of calculating the number of years that have



passed since the final nirvāṇa of Śākyamuni Buddha. Dölpopa uses the term more in the sense of an analysis of the Buddhist doctrine itself, in this case on the basis of the historical degeneracy through the eons of the Kṛtayuga, Tretāyuga, and so forth, as will be discussed below. The most detailed treatment of the genre of *bstan rtsis* in Tibet is found in Vostrikov (1970), 101–37, who translates the term as “chronological treatise.”

- 331 For example, see the detailed descriptions in Butön's *History of Buddhism* translated in Obermiller (1932), pt. II: 73–101. Much has been written about the three councils. Two of the more important studies are Hofinger (1946) and Bareau (1958). Prebish (1974) reviews and evaluates the results of previous research.
- 332 Dölpopa, *Autocommentary to the “Fourth Council,”* 664–65: ‘dis ni sangs rgyas kyi bstan pa rab ‘bring tha gsum du gnas pa rtogs par byas nas/ rab rdzogs ldan gyi chos ni dpang du gyur cing tshad mar gyur pa’o/ ‘bring gsum ldan gyi chos dang tha ma gnyis ldan gyi chos te/ de gnyis ni dpang du gyur pa ma yin par mkhas pa bstan pa la bya ra mdzad pa rnams kyi dgongs pa gal che ste/ gang zag gi blo skyon gyis bstan pa skyon med pa la skyon bsres pa dang lhad bcug pa rnams bsal nas/ lta sgom spyod pa yang dag gi lam la ‘god pa ni bka’ bsdu pa’i don yang yin [665] te/ sngar bka’ bsdu pa gsum song nas/ ‘di ni bzhi pa yin la/ bstan rtsis chen po yang yin zhing/ dad gus dang dag smang dang ma phod pa’i gros ‘debs dang zhu ‘bul dang byams snying rje la sogs thams cad phyogs med ris med du gnas kyi gang gi yang phyogs su lung ba med pa’i phyir phyogs med ris med ces bya’o/ sngar gyi bka’ bsdu ba rnams la ni dgra bcom pa mang po ‘dus par grags mod/ ‘dir dgra bcom du tsam ‘dus zhe na/ dgra bcom chen po sangs rgyas bcom ldan ‘das kyi/ rdzogs ldan gyi chos mchog rnams su ‘di’i don rab tu gsal bar ston pa’i lung zab mo stong phrag mang po gda’ ba de rnams dgra bcom chen po dang mtshungs par gda’ bas/ de’i lugs bzhi bsdus pa’o/ phyis sdud pa rnams kyi kyang de bzhi du mdzad par zhu zhing lung gi dgongs pa len pa la ma mthun na/ sangs rgyas nyid kyi rang ‘grel rnams dpang du mdzad par zhu/.
- 333 See the opening section of the translation of the *Fourth Council* in part 2. On the theme of the four eons in Dölpopa’s writings, see also the brief treatment in Kapstein (1992a), 24–25. Dölpopa, *Autocommentary to the “Fourth Council,”* 614, specifies the *Stainless Light* as the source of these ideas.
- 334 Kapstein (2000), 114.
- 335 Dölpopa, *Autocommentary to the “Fourth Council,”* 614–15.
- 336 Kapstein (2000), 115–16, briefly discusses this aspect of Dölpopa’s doctrine. For the explanation of verses 22–23 of the *Chapter on the Worldly Realm* (*Lokadhātupātāla*) of the *Kālacakra Tantra*, see Butön Rinchen Drup, *Annotations to the Chapter on the Worldly Realm in the “Stainless Light,”* 470–71, and Choglé Namgyal, *Annotations to the “Stainless Light,”* vol. 18: 190–93. For an English translation of the verses with the annotations by Butön, see Newman (1987), 514–19. The annotations of Dölpopa’s major disciple, Choglé Namgyal, are the most extensive and are very different than those of Butön.
- 337 See notes 27–29 for complete lists of these texts.
- 338 Kapstein (1992a), 25.

- 339 Dölpopa, *Fourth Council*, 365–66: *de dang de'i rnam dbye rab shes nas/ bstan la byi dor bya bar 'dod pa dang/ [366] rang gzhan legs pa'i lam la 'jug 'dod pas/ rdzogs ldan chos mchog dpang gyur gtsug gis blangs/ gsum ldan mar bcad skyon dang bcas gyur cing/ tshong 'dus 'o ma lta bur bsad pa'i gzhang/ gang na 'dug kyang dpang du bya mi rung/ gong ma gong mas 'og ma 'og mar gnod/ grub mtha' gong mas 'og mar gnod pa bzhin/ rdzogs ldan chos ni dri med rgyal ba'i bka'/ sa bcu'i dbang phyug rnams dang shing rta yi/ srol 'byed chen po rnams kyis legs gsungs pa/ skyon med yon tan mchog mnga' rnams yin no/ de yi lugs la thams cad rang stong min/ rang stong gzhan stong legs par rnam phye nas/ kun rdzob gang yin thams cad rang stong dang/ don dam gang yin gzhan stong nyid du gsungs/.*
- 340 Dölpopa, *Analysis of Dharma for the Ruler of Jang*, 489: *stong tshul gnyis su gnas pa thams cad stong pa nyid du mtshungs pa'i phyir/ thams cad stong pa nyid ces ming gcig gis gsung pa yang yod la rang stong dang gzhan stong du phye nas gsungs pa yang yod pas/ de dag gis dgongs pa yang ci lta ba bzhin du bstan par bya'o/ de la kun rdzob glo bur ba'i dngos po rnams ni gnas lugs la gtan nas med pa'i phyir rang gi ngo bos stong ste de ni rang stong ngo/ kun rdzob de rnams kyis stong pa'i don dam pa gnyug ma ni nam yang med pa ma yin pa'i phyir gzhan stong ngo/.*
- 341 Dölpopa, *Esoteric Instruction on Madhyamaka*, 1174: *dbyings de 'khor ba'i rgyu ni min mod kyang/ de med na ni de yang mi srid pas/ mkha' la rlung gi dkyil 'khor brten pa ltar/ 'khor ba'i gzhi gyur zhes pa'i rnam bzhag byas/*. The term *dbyings* (space) in this quotation refers to *don dam dbyings* (absolute space), which is equivalent to the buddha nature, or sugata essence.
- 342 Dölpopa, *Analysis of Dharma for the Ruler of Jang*, 486–88: *rgya gar du 'phags pa ma yin pa'i pañdi ta 'ga' zhig dang/ bod du 'ang dge ba'i bshes gnyen 'ga' zhig gi bzhed pa ka ba bum pa stong pa la sogs pas gzhan gyis gzhan stong pas [487] stong pa nyid kyi go mi chod/ des na chos thams cad rang rang ngo bos stong pa'i rang stong kho na stong nyid go chod po yin gyi de las lhag pa'i stong nyid go chod po 'ga' tsam yang med/ de lta bas na kun rdzob kyi stong pa ltar don dam yang don dam gyis stong chos chos kyi stong pa ltar chos nyid kyang chos nyid kyis stong/ 'khor ba 'khor bas stong pa ltar myang 'das chen po yang mya ngan 'das pa chen pos stong/ gzugs sku gzugs skus stong pa ltar chos sku yang chos skus stong zhes pa la sogs pa mdor na thams cad rang stong du khas len gyi rang stong ma yin pa 'ga' tsam yang mi srid par bzhed pa mang bar gda'/ de ltar grags pa de'i bag chags la bdag gi blo yang yun ring du 'driś par gyur cing chos kyi rnam grangs cung zad cung zad shes kyang chos mchog khyad 'phags zab mo thun mong ma yin pa'i rgyal khams chen po ma mthong gis bar de srid du bdag gis kyang stong nyid go chod po rang stong kho na yin gyis de las lhag pa'i stong nyid go chod med ces pa la sogs pa sngar smos pa ltar smras te gzhan gyi kha skyugs la brten pa tsam du gda'/ des na lugs de yang bdag gis ma shes pa ni ma yin no/ dus phyis byang chub sems dpa'i 'grel pa skor gsum dang mjal ba'i bka' drin la brten nas [. . .] chos kyi gnad zab mo gal shin tu che ba mang po zhig legs par ma rtogs par sngar bzhin pa'i dus na rtogs pa de dang de bzhin ngag tu brjod pa de rnams la ni bsams na shin tu ngo tsha ba skye ba tsam tu gda'o/*. A long list of important points of Dharma that Dölpopa felt he realized as a result of the teachings in the Trilogy of Bodhisattva Commentaries has been omitted in the translation. See note 27 for information on the Trilogy of Bodhisattva Commentaries.
- 343 See Dölpopa, *Brief Analysis*, 443–52.

- 344 Mati Panchen Lodrö Gyaltzen, *Reply to the Questions of Lodrö Sengé*, 1082: *kun rdzob stong tshul 'khor lo bar pa'i don/ don dam stong tshul 'khor lo tha ma'i don/ med la med dang yod la yod ces par/ ston pas gnyis ka'ang mthar thug dgongs pa gcig/*.
- 345 For a recent work concerned with showing the continuity of Madhyamaka and Yogācāra in India, see Harris (1991).
- 346 Dölpopa's position on the relation between the teachings of the three turnings of the Dharma wheel is clear in the translation of *General Commentary on the Doctrine* and in the accompanying endnotes based on the commentary of his disciple Nya Ōn Kunga Pal, and in the translation of the *Fourth Council* and its *Autocommentary*.
- 347 See Dölpopa, *Explanation of the Nine Fully Established Natures*, 116, and *Instruction to Shönu Döndrup*, 682–83.
- 348 The Buddhist three-nature theory is a difficult and complex issue. No attempt is made in this book to explain it outside the context of Dölpopa's ideas. For more information on this theory, see the works by Anacker, Harris, Kochumuttom, Nagao, and Williams (1989) listed in the Bibliography.
- 349 Jamgön Kongtrul, *Treasury of Knowledge*, vol. 1: 460–61, notes that the omniscient Dharmākara (Kun mkhyen Dharmākara) said the texts in Tsen Khawoché's (Btsan Kha bo che) lineage (or the texts of Tsen Khawoché himself?) accepted a veridically established (*bden grub*) self-awareness, a naturally luminous cognition empty of both subject and object, to be the vital cause of buddhahood. The omniscient Dharmākara is Situ Panchen Chökyi Jungné (Si tu Pan.chen Chos kyi 'byung gnas).
- 350 The expression "from form to omniscience" (*gzugs nas rnam mkhyen gyi bar*) is a standard phrase referring to all the phenomena that make up the universe. There are 108 categories, beginning with form (which is the first of the five aggregates) and ending with a buddha's omniscience. See Lopez (1996), 224, note 6.
- 351 Kunga Drölchok, *One Hundred and Eight Profound Guiding Instructions*, 412–13: *'khrul pa la bden zhen kun brtags/ yang dag ma yin pa'i kun rtog nyid gzung 'dzin dngos por zhen pa thag khra sbrul bzhin gzugs nas rnam mkhyen gyi bar ji snyed la/ de dang der bzung ba'i kun brtag kyang de snyed/ rgyu rkyen la ltsos na gzhan dbang sna tshogs su snang ba yang dag ma yin rtog pa tsam du zad la/ sbrul du 'khrul pa'i gzhi thag khra/ las dang nyon mongs rnam rtog du gyur ba'i gzugs nas rnam mkhyen gyi bar/ gzhan dbang rnam la gdod ma nas khyab pa'i chos nyid rang byung thag khra la khyab par yod pa'i nam mkha' bzhin phyin ci ma log pa'i yongs grub/ 'gyur med yongs grub/ gzugs sku gnyis/ byang phyogs lam bden rnam dang chos nyid kyi gzugs nas rnam mkhyen bar/ tha snyad du kun brtag mtshan nyid kyi stong/ ngo bo nyid med gsum du bzahag kyang/ dpyad na/ sems las ma gtogs pa'i gzung 'dzin med pa'i phyir chos can gzhan dbang dang/ chos nyid yongs grub kho na dri ma dang bral zhing lhun gyis grub pa'i chos nyid gcig pu/ des na kun brtag rang gi ngo bos stong pa nyid ri bong gi rwa lta bu/ gzhan dbang kun brtags kyi stong pas sgyu ma lta bu/ yongs grub kun brtag gzhan dbang gnyis kar gyis stong pas nam mkha' lta bu/ kun brtag gzhan dbang gi tha snyad kun rdzob tu yod kyi don dam du med la/ chos nyid yongs grub ni don dam du yod kyi/ chos can kun rdzob dang ngo bo gcig tha dad gang yang ma yin pa mtha' thams cad dang bral ba'i dbu ma chen po'o/*.

- 352 For a translation of instructions on the Great Middle Way taken from the same collection compiled by Kunga Drölchok, see Kapstein (1996), 282–83.
- 353 Maiteya's *Ornament for the Sūtras* (*Sūtrāṃkāra*) and *Distinguishing the Middle and the Extremes* (*Madhyāntavibhāga*) are two texts that Dölpopa considers Great Madhyamaka, but are usually said to be Cittamātra.
- 354 Dölpopa, *Fourth Council*, 386: *gsum ldan mar bcad skyon can lugs la ni/ 'gyur med yongs grub sems tsam kho nar 'dod/ rang bzhin gsum ka'ang sems tsam kho na lo/ skyon med rdzogs ldan dbu ma'i gzhung rnams su/ ngo bo nyid gsum yang yang gsungs phyir dang/ sems tsam gzhung du de skad mi byung shing/ de la gnod byed mang po yod pa'i phyir/ ngo bo nyid gsum dbu ma kho na yi/ chos lugs yin par rdzogs ldan lugs las 'byung/ de phyir de 'dra'i rnam bzhag ma shes shing/ rnam par 'khrugs pas lta ba'i snyigs ma byung/ yongs grub la sogs rang bzhin gsum ston pa'i/ dbu ma rnams kyang sems tsam gzhung du phab/ de ston mkhas pa chen po dbu ma pa/ chen po dag kyang sems tsam pa ru phab*. Vasubandhu and Dignāga are examples of great teachers of Great Madhyamaka whom Dölpopa says have been incorrectly called representatives of Cittamātra.
- 355 Dölpopa, *Autocommentary to the "Fourth Council"*, 629–32.
- 356 Among European scholars, this "Maitreya Chapter" first attracted the attention of Obermiller, who noted the Tibetan controversy about its origins and teachings in his translation of Butön's *History of Buddhism*. See Obermiller (1932), pt. II, 50, note 335. But it was not until 1968 that Edward Conze, the foremost modern scholar of the sūtras on the perfection of wisdom, published an edited Sanskrit text of the chapter with Iida Shotaro. See Conze and Iida (1968). This Sanskrit text corresponds almost literally to the Tibetan translation of the "Maitreya Chapter" found in the eighteen-thousand-line scripture, but only approximately to that found in the translation of the twenty-five-thousand-line sūtra. It is not found in other versions. See Conze (1975), 644–52, for a translation of the Sanskrit text of the chapter. Thurman has translated an important text by Tsongkapa, one chapter of which deals with apparent contradictions between the presentation of the three natures found in the *Samdhinirmocana Sūtra* and the "Maitreya Chapter." See Thurman (1984), 355–63. Some of Tsongkapa's treatment of the "Maitreya Chapter" is also translated in Iida (1980), 259–69. Ian Harris has dealt with the significance of the views in the "Maitreya Chapter" and compared them to other Yogācāra sources. See Harris (1991), 102–31.
- 357 The section of the commentary that explains the "Maitreya Chapter" is found in Anonymous (Vasubandhu?), *Vast Explication*, Toh 3808, Tengyur, shes phyin pha, 281b–292b. This text was translated from Sanskrit into Tibetan by the Indian abbot Surendrabodhi and the Tibetan translator Yeshé Dé (Ye shes sde), who were active in the late eighth century. Seyfort Ruegg (1969), 61, 325–26, and 343, utilizes the *Vast Explication* and sometimes quotes from it via Tsongkapa's critique, but does not seem to have consulted the section devoted to the "Maitreya Chapter."
- 358 See in particular Dölpopa, *General Commentary to All Profound Sūtras and Tantras*, 332–33, and Dölpopa, *Instruction to Shönu Döndrup*, 679–83, which is a very interesting instruction addressed to a man who disliked the *shentong* presentation of emptiness.

- 359 Among Western scholars, Obermiller first mentioned the existence of a Tibetan controversy concerning the authorship of the *Vast Explication*. See Obermiller (1988), 4, note 7, and 146, note 1038. Also see Thurman (1984), 244–48. In his catalogue to the Dergé edition of the Tibetan Tengyur, the enormous collection of translated exegetical literature, Shuchen Tsultrim Rinchen quotes Butön's comments verbatim. See Tsultrim Rinchen, *Tengyur Catalogue*, 625. Dölpopa, *Explanation of the Nine Fully Established Natures*, 137, listed Damṣṭrāsena in the transmission line of the extensive version of the sūtra on the perfection of wisdom, but long after Vasubandhu.
- 360 See Ngorchon Kunga Sangpo, *Catalogue to the Tengyur*, 359: *shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa 'bum pa dang/ nyi khri lnga stong pa dang/ khri brgyad stong pa rnam kyī bshad pa/ slob dpon chen po dbyig gnyen gyis mdzad pa ye shes sde'i 'gyur/*. The text is also mentioned in Dudjom (1991), vol.1: 944.
- 361 Butön had said the *Vast Explication* (*Bṛhaṭṭikā*) was actually the *Paddhati* of Vasubandhu mentioned by Haribhadra in the opening verses of his *Abhisamayālaṃkāra-ālokā*. But Tsongkapa later pointed out that the *Vast Explication* contains an opinion of Śāntarakṣita in relation to the epochs of the Buddhist teachings. See Obermiller (1988), 4, note 7. If this Śāntarakṣita is the same as the Indian master who was active in Tibet in the late eighth century, this alone would be sufficient to prove that the text was not by Vasubandhu. Seyfort Ruegg (1992), 269, note 22, has also mentioned that the *Vast Explication* gives five thousand years as the total duration of the Buddhist teachings, while Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* (viii. 39) gives one thousand years for the duration of the *adhigama* section alone. The passages about the duration of the doctrine are found in Anonymous (Vasubandhu?), *Vast Explication*, Toh 3808, Tengyur, *shes phyin pha*, 208a–b. One Tibetan source seems to have considered the *Vast Explication* to have actually been written by the Tibetan translator of the text, Yeshé Dé (Ye shes sde), who was also active in the later eighth century. Finally, it should be mentioned that a massive, but apparently incomplete, commentary to the one-hundred-thousand-line version of the sūtra on the perfection of wisdom is also generally attributed to the master Damṣṭrāsena. See Tsultrim Rinchen, *Tengyur Catalogue*, 779, where it is mentioned that the earlier Pangkhang ('Phang khang) catalogue to the Tibetan canon attributed this text to the Tibetan king Trisong Deutsen (Khri strong lde'u tsan). This text (Toh 3807) immediately precedes the *Vast Explication* in the Tibetan canon. As will be discussed below, the three-nature paradigm is frequently utilized in the *Vast Explication*. If it were actually authored by Damṣṭrāsena, it would seem reasonable to expect occurrences of the three natures in his commentary to the one-hundred-thousand-line version as well. But such is not the case. This fact argues for the conclusion that the two texts were written by different authors.
- 362 See especially Anonymous (Vasubandhu?), *Vast Explication*, Toh 3808, Tengyur, *shes phyin pha*, 97b ff. There is no clear indication in the text as to which version of the sūtra is being commented on in this chapter, and no attempt has been made to trace the quotations elsewhere.
- 363 Anonymous (Vasubandhu?), *Vast Explication*, Toh 3808, Tengyur, *shes phyin pha*, 98a–b: *gzugs ni gzugs kyis stong ngo zhes bya ba gsungs pa 'di la gzugs kyang rnam pa gsum ste/ kun brtags pa'i gzugs dang/ rnam par brtags pa'i* [98b] *gzugs dang/ chos nyid*

kyi gzugs so/ de la byis pa so so'i skye bo rnams kyi gzugs su rung ba la sogs pa'i mtshan nyid du bzung ba dngos po'i gzugs gang yin pa de ni kun brtags pa'i gzugs zhes bya'o/ de nyid rnam pa gang gi don du snang ba'i rnam par shes pa'i yul du gyur ba de ni rnam par brtags pa'i gzugs zhes bya'o/ kun brtags dang/ rnam par brtags pa de gnyis kyi rnam pa dang bral ba yongs su grub pa de bzhin nyid tsam du zad pa gang yin pa de ni chos nyid kyi gzugs zhes bya'o/ de la yongs su grub pa chos nyid kyi gzugs gang yin pa de ni kun brtags pa'i gzugs su yod pa la sogs pa'i mtshan nyid dang/ gzugs su rnam par brtags pa yul gyi rnam par snang ba'i gzugs kyis stong pas na/ stong pa zhes bya'o/ de skad bshad pa dang/ kun brtags pa dang rnam par brtags pa'i gzugs kyis stong pa'i chos nyid kyi gzugs gang yin pa de la ci gzugs kyi mtshan nyid gzhan zhig kyang yod dam/ gang gi phyir de la yang gzugs zhes bya snyam du the tshom za ba de'i phyir gzugs kyi stong pa nyid gang lags pa de yang gzugs ma lags zhes bya ba bshad de/ kun brtags pa dang rnam par brtags pa'i gzugs kyis stong pa gang yin pa de nyid yongs su grub pa'i mtshan nyid chos [nyid] kyi gzugs de ni gzugs kyi ngo bo nyid ma yin te/ rnam pa thams cad du gzugs kyi rnam pa las dben pa'i phyir ro zhes bya ba'i tha tshig go/.

- 364 Dölpopa, *Autocommentary to the "Fourth Council,"* 599: chos nyid yongs grub med na kun brtags gzhan dbang mi srid/.
- 365 Dölpopa, *General Commentary on the Doctrine*, 688. This text is translated and studied in part 2.
- 366 See Nya Ōn Kunga Pal, *Explanation of the "General Commentary on the Doctrine,"* 34b–36a. The following paragraph is closely based on Nya Ōn's commentary.
- 367 Kapstein (1992a), 24–25 and 35–43. Of the great Tibetan scholars of the fourteenth century, Dölpopa was not alone in feeling that the attribution of idealism to Asaṅga and Vasubandhu was inaccurate. The Nyingma master Longchenpa also made this point. See Kapstein (1992a), 23, note 1.
- 368 For example, Dölpopa, *Explanation of the "Perfection of Wisdom in Twenty-five Thousand Lines,"* 1006–22, is a collection of annotations to the "Maitreya Chapter" from the twenty-five-thousand-line version. Almost all of it seems to have been drawn directly from Anonymous (Vasubandhu?), *Vast Explication*, Toh 3808, Tengyur, shes phyin pha, 281b–292b.
- 369 Dölpopa, *Autocommentary to the "Fourth Council,"* 616: sher phyin lnga brgya par yang/ dngos po med pa'i gzugs sogs ni kun brtags yin pas shes par bya ba dang/ dngos po ngan pa'i gzugs sogs ni gzhan dbang yin pas spang bar bya ba dang/ gshis la dngos po yod pa'i gzugs sogs ni yongs grub yin pas dri ma bsal nas thob par bya ba nyid te/ de ltar le'u gsum du gnas pa de rnams shes pa dang/ spang ba dang/ dri ma bsal nas mngon du bya bar gsüngs shing/ de ltar ma byas na nyan rang gi byang chub kyang mi thob na theg chen gyi byang chub lta ci smos par gsungs pa/. Dölpopa, *Exceptional Introduction*, 607–8, is also excellent on the *trisvabhāva* in the *Perfection of Wisdom in Five Hundred Lines*.
- 370 *Sūtra on the Perfection of Wisdom in Five Hundred Lines*, Toh 15, Kangyur, shes phyin ka, 104a: rab 'byor gzugs ni dngos po med pa/ dngos po dman pa/ dngos po yod pa'o. 243.3. The text is preserved only in Tibetan translation. Conze (1973b), 108, translates this passage as "Form, Subhūti, is nonexistence, it has a poorish kind of existence, it is existence."
- 371 *Sūtra on the Perfection of Wisdom in Five Hundred Lines*, Toh 15, Kangyur, shes phyin

ka, 104a: *de ltar gzugs de le'u gsum du byis pa so so'i skye bo rnams kyis yang dag pa ji lta ba bzhin tu rab tu mi shes pas gzugs de la mngon par zhen to/ mngon par sgrub bo/ sgrub par byed do/ de dag gzugs de la mngon par zhen cing mngon par sgrub ste/ sgrub par byed pas nyan thos kyi theg pa'am/ rang sangs rgyas kyi theg pas kyang nges par 'byung bar mi 'gyur na/ theg pa chen pos lta smos kyang ci dgos. Cf. Conze (1973b), 108. The Tibetan term translated here as "conceptually attached" is *mngon par zhen pa*, which literally means to be directly or obviously attached. Dölpopa's connection of this with the *parikalpita* is also intriguing in light of Nagao's statement that a suggestion of attachment is conveyed by the Sanskrit participle form and that the Chinese translation of *parikalpita* conveys this as well. See Nagao (1991), "The Buddhist World View," 62.*

- 372 Tāranātha, *Scriptural Quotations for "Ornament for the Madhyamaka Emptiness of Other,"* 534–37 and 538–39.
- 373 See Dölpopa, *Explanation of the Nine Fully Established Natures*, 116, 126, and 137. In this he is following the precedent of the *Stainless Light*, where the sūtras on the perfection of wisdom are also discussed.
- 374 Dölpopa, *Explanation of the Nine Fully Established Natures*, 127.
- 375 Dölpopa, *Autocommentary to the "Fourth Council,"* 642: *rgyud ni rgyud gzhan gyis shes bya/ mdo ni mdo gzhan gyis shes bya/ mdo yang rgyud kyis shes par bya/ rgyud kyang mdo yis shes par bya/ gnyi gas gnyis ka shes par bya/ de yang thos bsam bsgom pa dang/ bshad bsgrub rnam par dag pas so/ des na gsung rab zab dgu yi/ gzhi lam 'bras bu zab dgu rtogs/ nges pa'i don gyi gzhi 'bras kun/ bde gshegs snying po nyid du gcig/ lam ni de yi rnal 'byor ro/.*
- 376 Sönam Pal, *Biography of Phakmodrupa*, 151. Pakmodrupa was in the habit of asking each teacher he met about the cause for birth in saṃsāra. He was not impressed with Sachen's answer, nor that of Jamsem Dawa Gyaltsen (Byang sems Zla ba rgyal mtshan), who said that the cause was ignorance, nor the replies of others who said that it was not having accumulated the assemblies of merit and primordial awareness, or not having purified the obscurations. But then he met the great Kagyü master Gampopa (Sgam po pa, 1079–1153), who told him that the cause for birth in saṃsāra was not resting the mind in ordinary awareness (*tha mal gyi shes pa*). Just hearing this from Gampopa caused Pakmodrupa to experience that awareness, and he gained an instant and total certainty in Gampopa's words. See Sönam Pal, *Biography of Phakmodrupa*, 151 and 154. See Jackson (1994), 40–41, for some information on what Gampopa meant by "ordinary awareness."
- 377 Dölpopa, *Autocommentary to the "Fourth Council,"* 588:
- 378 Dölpopa, *Untitled*, 851: *de phyir 'khrul pa ji srid ma zad par/ 'khrul snang skye 'chi'i 'khor lo zad mi srid/ dbugs kyi rgyun 'di ji srid ma 'gags par/ de srid rnam shes rgyun 'di 'gag mi srid/ sems dang sems byung rgyun 'di ma 'gags par/ khams gsum 'khrul snang 'di yang 'gag mi srid/ de phyir sdug bsngal rang bzhin khams gsum las/ 'da' bar 'dod pas rnam gyeng kun spangs te/ bla ma dam pa'i zhal gyi bdud rtsi mchog/ rdo rje rnal 'byor zab mo rab sgoms na/ rlung sems lhan cig 'gyu ba'i rgyun 'di dgag/.* Vajrayoga is another term for the Six-branch Yoga.
- 379 That is, if sentient beings had no awareness at all they would be no different than the inanimate gross elements of earth, water, and so forth.

- 380 Dölpopa, *Fourth Council*, 411-12: rang ngo shes pas sangs rgyas thob pa'i phyir/ tshogs gnyis bsogs dang sgrib gnyis sbyong mi dgos/ rang ngo shes pas ma spangs gnas dag ces/ bzched pa rnams la bdag ni ma phod pas/ thal mo sbyar nas gros 'debs zhu ba 'bul/ rang rig med pa'i sems can mi srid cing/ rang rig yod na rang ngo shes pa yod/ gal te rang gzhan gang yang mi rig na/ rig pa yin par 'gal te 'byung chen bzhin/ de phyir sems can kun la sems yod cing/ sems yod [412] kun la rang rig yod pa'i phyir/ rang ngo shes pa skyes tsam nyid nas yod/ tshul 'di lung rigs mkhyen pa rnams la grags/ blun po thos chung mngon pa'i nga rgyal can/ chos la dbang za gzu lum rang bzo mkhan/ shin tu mang yang tshul 'di rtogs pa'am/ thos dang mthong ba tsam yang yod re skan/ de phyir rang ngo shes pas chog pa yi/ lta log de 'dra bdud kyi gsang tshig yin/ de ltar rtogs dang ma rtogs pa las ni/ yang dag lam dang log pa'i lam du 'jug/ de phyir rang ngo shes pas grol zhes pa'i/ sdig lta bdud las de 'dra spong gyur cig/ gal te rang ngo rang gis shes pa'i don/ rang sems rnam shes 'di ni chos kyi sku/ yin par rtogs pa nyid la byed ce na/ rnam shes 'di ni chos sku'i mi mthun phyogs/ yin phyir chos sku gtan nas ma yin no/.
- 381 See Jackson (1994).
- 382 See note 556 for two examples of prominent Kagyü and Nyingma masters who taught in this way.
- 383 Dölpopa, *Instruction to Tönpa Drupsang*, 652: glo bur dri ma bral dang ma bral ba'i/ de bzhin nyid la sangs rgyas sems can dang/ mya ngan 'das dang 'khor ba pa zhes brjod/.
- 384 Dölpopa, *Instruction to Lhajé Tsultrim Ö*, 670-71: 'khrul snang 'khrul snang nyid du rtogs kyang/ rlung sems kyi rgyu ba 'di ma 'gags kyi bar du 'khrul pa'i snang ba 'di mi 'gag ste/ khriś nad ma byang gi bar du dung la ser po'i snang ba mi 'gag pa dang 'dra/ rlung sems kyi 'gyu ba 'gags pa la byang sham bha la'i khyad chos rigs ldan sa bcu pa rnams kyi snying gtam dus 'khor bde gshes snying po'i gdam ngag thun mong ma yin pa gcig dgos kyi gzhan thun gyis dgag mi nus/ rlung sems kyi 'gyu ba 'di dgag pas bems po 'am/ cang med du 'gyur ba ma yin te/ kun tu rtog pa thams cad spangs pa nyid kyiś rnam par mi rtog ye shes lhun gyis grub pa rnam [671] par shes pa'i chos las 'das pa nyid kyiś gnyis med ye shes chen po'i ngang tshul du 'gyur te/ khriś nad byang ba nyid kyiś dung dkar po ji ltar gnas pa bzhin du mthong ba'am/ bum pa bcag pa nyid kyiś de'i nang na gnas pa'i mar me mthong ba 'am/ nam mkha' la sprin sangs pa nyid kyiś gza' skar mthong ba dang 'dra bar lag na'ang/ de ltar rtogs par chos pa'i nang na yang dkon zhing/ sgom chen pa'i nang na'ang dkon na/ skye bo gzhan dag gi khrod na smos kyang ci 'tshal/ 'od gsal phyag rgya chen po sku bzhi ye shes lnga'i dbyings bsam gyis mi khyab pa cig/ sems can thams cad kyi snying la rtag tu gnas par mdo rgyud khungs ma rnams su gsungs shing/ don la gnas par gda' na 'ang/ de'i khungs ma chod pa rnams kyiś snang srid thams cad phyag rgya chen po dang sku bzhi ye shes lnga yin no zhes sgro 'dogs 'byung bar gda' bas/.
- 385 Dölpopa, *Instruction to Lhajé Tsultrim Ö*, 672: de la gzhi'i sangs rgyas chos kyi sku dang/ 'bras bu'i sangs rgyas chos kyi sku la ngo bo tha dad cung zad tsam yang med mod kyi glo bur gyi dri ma yod med kyi sgo nas gzhi dang 'bras bur 'byed de/ nam mkha'i dbyings nyid sprin la sogs pas ma dag pa dang/ dag pa'i gnas skabs su brjod pa dang 'dra bar gda' sangs rgyas ye shes kyi sku gsungs shing/ glo bur dri ma rnam shes kyi tshogs su gsungs te/ de ltar ye shes dang rnam shes ni snang ba dang mun pa'am/ bdud rtsi dang dug chu bzhin du khyad par shin tu che bar gsungs na'ang/ de gnyis kyi khyad par phyed ba shin tu dkon par gda' ting sang phal cher sems nyid 'di ka chos sku rang byung ye shes:



*phyag rgya chen po zhes 'dod pa dang/ rnam rtoḡ chos sku nyon mongs ye shes 'khor 'das dbyer med snang grags 'di sku gsum sku bzhi zhes pa la sogs par 'dod pa mang bar gda'.*

- 386 Dölpopa, *Instruction to Lhajé Tsultrim Ö*, 677–78: *de la sogs pa chu dangs snyigs 'byed pa ltar rang bzhi 'od gsal dang glo bur dri ma 'byed pa'i man ngag thun mongs ma yin pa giig 'tshal/ de med na dug la sman du bzung ba'am ra gan la gser du bzung ba ltar/ glo bur ba'i sems dang sems byung gya gyu 'di la sku dang/ ye shes la sogs par bzung bar gda/ ma dag pa'i sems gya gyu 'di ngo shes na sangs rgyas/ ngo ma shes na 'khor ba ngo shes na ye shes/ ma shes na ma rig pa la sogs/ zhes 'dod pa gda' ste sangs rgyas kyi bka' dang mi mthun zhiḡ rigs pa dang yang 'gal/ [678] dpe na me 'di ngo shes na bsil ba/ ngo ma shes na tsha ba zhes 'dod pa 'am/ btsan dug 'di ngo shes na bdud rtsi/ ngo ma shes na dug yin zhes 'dod pa'am/ gyang sa chen po 'di ngo shes na thang bde mo yin/ ngo ma shes na gyang sa chen po yin/ zhes 'dod pa'am/ spu gri 'di ngo shes na lus la gcod mi nus/ ngo ma shes na gcod nus zhes 'dod pa la sogs pa dang 'dra bar gda'.*
- 387 The early Tibetan Nyingma master Rongsom Chökyi Sangpo (Rong zom Chos kyi bzang po) gives a quotation from the *Jñānālokālaṃkāra Sūtra* (Toh 100, Kangyur, mdo sde ga, 276a–305a) that illustrates Dölpopa's viewpoint: "Those with childish minds who grasp at characteristics relate to phenomena that do not exist in the worlds." See Rongsom Chökyi Sangpo, *Establishing Appearances as Divine*, 345: *byis pa'i blo can mshan mar 'dzin pa dag/ 'jig rten dag na med pa'i chos la spyod/*. Rongsom's text has now been studied and translated in Köppl (2008).
- 388 An eloquent versified discussion of all these points is found in Dölpopa, *Untitled*.
- 389 In another context, Dölpopa says that in the absolute there is no saṃsāra and nirvāṇa; such designations are only made on the level of relative perception. See Dölpopa, *Instruction to Tönpa Drupsang*, 652: *dam pa'i don du 'khor 'das gang yang med/ kun rdzob snang ngor brjod pa de ltar lags/*.
- 390 See note 329.
- 391 The title of this text should be translated as *General Commentary on the Doctrine*, not *Commentary on the General Doctrine*, as found in Roerich (1976), 777. Nya Ön Kunga Pal, *Explanation of the "General Commentary on the Doctrine"*, 52a, and Lhai Gyaltzen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, 28b, both expand the title to *Bstan pa'i spyi 'grel*. It is possible that Dölpopa named his text in recognition of an earlier work by Kunpang Tukjé Tsöndrū (Kun spangs Thugs rje brtson 'grus). Kunpang's text, entitled *Bstan pa spyi'i 'grel*, is listed in a forty-three-folio edition in the catalogue of the Puntsok Ling (Phun tshogs gling) printery compiled by Shalü Losel Tenkyong (Zhwa lu Blo gsal bstan skyong). See Losel Tenkyong, *Catalogue of Works in the Puntsok Ling Printery*, 301.
- 392 For a discussion of the circumstances of Dölpopa's first public explanations of the *shentong* view, see chapter 1, sections 4–5, and for information on the development of his special terminology, see chapter 3, section 2.
- 393 See Kunga Drölchok, *Biography of the Dharma King Namgyal Drakpa Sangpo*, 22b (passage translated in chapter 1, section 6), and Roerich (1976), 777.
- 394 Establishing the dates of Nya Ön's birth and death are a tangled and difficult problem. Gyalwa Josang Palsangpo, *Brilliant Marvels*, 597 and 601, says he was born in a Water

Bird Year (*chu mo bya*) and died at the age of ninety-four in an Earth Sheep Year (*sa mo lug*). This would mean he was born in 1285 and died in 1379, both of which are certainly incorrect. It is not yet possible to definitely establish Nya Ōn's dates, but from some of his own writings and the biographies of contemporaries and students, it is clear that he was active until at least the end of the fourteenth century. Nya Ōn ascended the monastic seat of Jonang sometime after 1381 (which was the year his predecessor Jangchup Sengé took the seat), placed the great adept Kunga Lodrö on the monastic seat of Tsechen Monastery in 1386, and wrote his commentary to Dölpopa's *General Commentary on the Doctrine* in 1393. He wrote annotations to his own *Ornament of Luminosity* ('*Od gsal rgyan*') in the Fire Ox Year (*me mo glang*) of 1397, which he says was forty-one years after he had composed the original work in Sakya in the Fire Bird Year (*me mo bya*) of 1357. See Nya Ōn Kunga Pal, *Ornament of Luminosity*, 52a.

- 395 Mahākaruṇika is another name for Avalokiteśvara. See Jamgön Ameshap, *Chariot of Amazing Faith*, 234: *kun mkhyen chen po'i drung du byin rlabs zhus ma thag nad las grol/ kun mkhyen chen po'i zhal nas lo sgrub lo gsum gyis dang/ spyen ras gzigs dang mngon sum du mjal nas mdo rgyud kyi dgongs pa phyin ci ma log pa'i don thams cad shes pa ngas khag theg/ ngas kyang mdo rgyud kyi tshig don ma shes pa thams cad bla ma dkon mchog dang thugs rje chen po la gsol ba btab pas rgyal ba'i dgongs pa phyin ci ma logs pa shes pa yin/ ma shes pa than thun byung yang thugs rje chen po la zhus pas chog pa yin gsungs pas/ bka' bzhih bsgrubs pas yi dam gyi zhal gzigs/ dus kyi 'khor lo sogs bka' dang bstan bcos rgya mtsho'i pha rol tu gson/.*
- 396 This summary of Nya Ōn's life is based on Gyalwa Josang Palsangpo, *Brilliant Marvels*, 597–602. See also Ngawang Lodrö Drakpa, *History of the Jonang Tradition*, 38, and Tāranātha, *History of the Kālacakra Teachings*, 39. Further information about Nya Ōn is found in Tāranātha, *History of the Nyang Region*, 93–94, where he is described as one of the main Dharma heirs of the Sakya master Lama Dampa Sönam Gyaltzen. According to this source he was the foremost of Lama Dampa's eight major disciples who upheld his tradition of the Sakya teachings of the Path with the Result (*lam 'bras srol 'dzin mkhas pa mi brgyad*). In his prayer to the masters of the Path with the Result, the great Tsarchen Losel Gyatso (Tshar chen Blo gsal rgya mtsho) eulogized Nya Ōn as the treasury of the profound teachings of definitive meaning. See Tsarchen Losel Gyatso, *Supplication to the Masters of the Precious Teaching*, 239.
- 397 See Nya Ōn Kunga Pal, *Explanation of the "General Commentary on the Doctrine,"* 35a, for specific mention of Dölpopa's opinions. The date of composition is given on folio 53a: *chu mo bya'i lo dbyar zla 'bring po'i tshes bco lnga*. On 52b, Nya Ōn says the text was composed at the request of Tashi Dorjé (Bkra shis rdo rje), whom he identifies as the imperial chaplain (*bla'i mchod gnas*) of the emperor of the Ming dynasty (*Ta'i mi[ng] rgyal po*). The Ming dynasty was founded in 1368 by Zhu Yuanzhang (1328–98), the Hongwu Emperor, who reigned from 1368 to 1398. Therefore, the Water Female Bird (*chu mo bya*) Year of composition must correspond to 1393.
- 398 See Gyalwa Josang Palsangpo, *Brilliant Marvels*, 603–604, and Ngawang Lodrö Drakpa, *History of the Jonang Tradition*, 34.
- 399 Lhai Gyaltzen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, 28b: *bla ma yi dam dbyer med la gsol ba 'debs pa bstan pa'i spyi 'grel . . . la sogs pa'i gsol 'debs khyad par can mdzad pa*

*ltar gsol ba drag tu btāb pa'i mthar spyān chab char bzhin du 'bab cing/ khyed mkhyen khyed mkhyen zhes phur tshugs su gsol ba 'debs pa/.*

- 400 Lhai Gyaltsen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, 48a. See chapter 1, section 10 for a full description of this event.
- 401 Writing in 1561, Jamyang Khyentsé Wangchuk, *Biography of the Venerable Lord Gorumpa*, 278, describes the teachings Gorumpa (Sgo rum pa) received from the Jonang abbot Namkha Chökyong (Nam mkha' chos skyong) in about 1495, among which he singles out the *Mountain Dharma* or *Ocean of Definitive Meaning* (*Nges don rgya mtsho*), the *Fourth Council* and its *Autocommentary* (*Bka' bsdu bzhi pa'i rtsa 'grel*), and the *General Commentary on the Doctrine* (*Bstan pa spyi 'grel*). He also refers to the contemporary unadulterated Jonang tradition of the Kālacakra initiation and teachings.
- 402 Nya Ōn Kunga Pal, *Explanation of the "General Commentary on the Doctrine,"* 2a–b, gives several examples. A commentary that explains both the words and the meaning in detail is "a vast commentary" (*rgya chen 'grel pa*), one that clearly explains every word of the basic text is "a word-by-word commentary" (*tshig 'grel*), one that presents the principal meaning of the text in a condensed fashion is "a summarizing commentary" (*bsdus don 'grel pa*), one that explains the meaning without citing every word is "a commentary on just the meaning" (*don tsam gyi 'grel pa*), and one that is easy to understand is "an easily understood commentary" (*go sla'i 'grel pa*).
- 403 See Nya Ōn Kunga Pal, *Explanation of the "General Commentary on the Doctrine,"* 1b.
- 404 See Nya Ōn Kunga Pal, *Explanation of the "General Commentary on the Doctrine,"* 52b.
- 405 Nya Ōn Kunga Pal, *Explanation of the "General Commentary on the Doctrine,"* 2b–3a: This Sanskrit invocation is the first part of Dölpopa's expression of homage and offering. *Om* is an opening expression of homage. In the context of definitive meaning, *om* is the tathāgata essence (*de bzhin gshegs pa'i snying po*), and its position at the beginning of all mantras is to indicate that the sugata essence (*bde gshegs snying po*) pervades all sentient beings. *Guru* in Sanskrit means *heavy*, in the sense of being full of qualities. The main cause of liberation from samsāra is the practice of Dharma and the main reason the Buddha appeared in the world was to teach Dharma. A guru or master is considered *heavy* with kindness because such a person teaches Dharma and thus carries out the enlightened activity of the Buddha. *Buddha* has the meaning of both awakening from the sleep of ignorance and the expansion of the mind to encompass everything knowable. Since it is explained in many scriptures that a buddha possesses the quintessence of primordial awareness (*ye shes kyi bdag nyid can*), the view that no primordial awareness exists at the point of buddhahood is simply a nihilistic view (*chad lta*). A *bodhisattva* is a being (*sattva*) who is intently focused on the ultimate dharmakāya, or enlightenment (*bodhi*). *Bhvo* is the form of the Sanskrit dative plural indicator. Dölpopa intends the first *namo* as an expression of homage and the second *namah* as an expression of offering.
- 406 Nya Ōn Kunga Pal, *Explanation of the "General Commentary on the Doctrine,"* 3b: The term Dharma lord (*chos kyi rje*) actually applies to the Buddha himself, since he

is the lord of all the Dharma teachings and the master of all who accept the doctrine and teach Dharma. Here the masters who carry out the Buddha's activities and act in a manner similar to that of the Buddha himself are also called Dharma lords. In all the verses of this text Dölpopa is bowing at the feet of Buddha Śākyamuni, the master of the three realms, and, in particular, at the feet of his own masters, Khetsün Yönten Gyatso (Mkhas btsun Yon tan rgya mtsho) and Kyitön Jampaiyang Drakpa Gyaltsen (Skyi ston 'Jam pa'i dbyangs grags pa rgyal mtshan). See Nya Ön Kunga Pal, *Explanation of the "General Commentary on the Doctrine,"* 9b. Dölpopa offers prostrations to those excellent masters who are embodiments of the buddhas and bodhisattvas and are thus regarded as *nirmāṇakāya* (or emanated bodies) appearing in this world for the benefit of others. This homage is humbly offered to the lowest portion of those teachers' bodies, which is their feet, poetically rendered in the form of lotus flowers (*padma'i gzugs su bkod pa*). Dölpopa not only prostrates to them, but further prays for their protection in all the terrifying circumstances of *samsāra*. Finally, on behalf of himself and all sentient beings, he asks to be graced by their great love, saved from the abyss of *samsāra* into which everyone has fallen, and led onto the pleasant plain of liberation.

- 407 Curiously, Nya Ön does not touch on this verse in his commentary. The significance of Dölpopa's use of the terms *permanent* (*rtag*), *stable* (*brtan*) and *eternal* (*gyung drung*) in this early text has been mentioned in chapter 2, section 2. The *four reliances* (*rton pa bzhi*) have also been mentioned in chapter 3, section 2. Dölpopa's favorite pseudonym was Possessor of the Four Reliances (Rton pa bzhi ldan), which alludes to his own hermeneutical approach.
- 408 Nya Ön Kunga Pal, *Explanation of the "General Commentary on the Doctrine,"* 8b–9b: All conditioned entities (*'dus byas kyi dngos po*) are considered impermanent simply because they exist for a certain length of time and then no longer exist. Two ways to consider the impermanence of phenomena are illustrated here by way of traditional examples. First, any conditioned, inanimate entity does not remain the same from one moment to the next, as a waterfall cascading down a mountain cliff is rapidly falling and is composed of different molecules of water from one moment to the next. It is unstable and constantly changing. Second, a phenomenon is impermanent in the sense that it appears and disappears in a moment, like a cloud that appears in the sky and then immediately vanishes, or like a flash of lightning, or the dew on a blade of grass.
- 409 Nya Ön Kunga Pal, *Explanation of the "General Commentary on the Doctrine,"* 9b–11a: The realization that all conditioned phenomena are impermanent by nature leads to the understanding that they are tainted and produce suffering. This verse points out that suffering is the nature of the desire realm, the form realm, and the formless realm. In the desire realm, there is attachment to the objects of the senses. Without those, there is still attachment to form in the form realm. And even without both of those, there is still attachment to self-identity in the formless realm. Thus the nature or basic state of all three realms is suffering. The examples of falling into a pit of fire or being caught by a poisonous viper directly illustrate the suffering of suffering and allude to the suffering of change. The example of a bee flying in circles inside a pot and not knowing how to escape from the only opening illustrates the suffering of conditioning. The examples here and in the previous verse

are drawn from scriptures such as the *Lalitavistara Sūtra*, Toh 95, Kangyur, mdo sde kha, 1b–216b.

- 410 Nya Ōn Kunga Pal, *Explanation of the "General Commentary on the Doctrine,"* 11a–b: Having demonstrated that all tainted phenomena produce suffering, Dōlpopa now points out that they unworthy of attachment. In particular, he illustrates why human beings in the desire realm should not be attached to their own or other's bodies. For many people the greatest delusion is thinking that their own bodies and those of persons to whom they are attached—bodies that are actually composed of various impure substances—become pure when they are cleaned, perfumed, dressed, and adorned. Attachment and desire for a body that is in reality impure is the same as attachment or desire for a vase filled with vomit, urine, or feces. If a vase is cleaned on the outside, smeared with perfume, wrapped in silk, adorned with many beautiful jewels, and then filled with vomit, urine, or feces and shown to some children who are ignorant of what is inside the vase, they will be delighted and want it. Desire for the body of another attractive person is much the same, and should be understood as a cause for many of the sufferings in saṃsāra's lower realms.
- 411 Nya Ōn Kunga Pal, *Explanation of the "General Commentary on the Doctrine,"* 13a–14a: After describing the nature of the three realms of saṃsāra and so forth, Dōlpopa presents the method for liberation from saṃsāra. Karma and the afflictions are the causes of repeated birth and death in saṃsāra. Sentient beings who like the inferior and tainted happiness of saṃsāra and do not think of practicing the Dharma should be taught that everything in the three realms of saṃsāra in general is impermanent. In particular, the lives of human beings are impermanent and unstable. The desired body is composed only of impure substances, so it should not be an object of attachment. All the attractive objects of the senses, such as physical form, wealth, and pleasant sensations, are by nature impermanent and unstable and are actually deceptive and false phenomena with no true essence, like a plantain tree. Teaching this produces a revulsion, disgust, and sadness toward those objects. When such disillusionment has arisen, the individual can study and reflect upon selflessness, or the fact that oneself and others are empty of self or substantial nature, and then through meditation actually realize it. This will result in a total or partial cessation of suffering. The four truths are taught as the path for achieving this result. Briefly, the truth of suffering is the teaching that all the three realms are by nature suffering. The truth of origin is that all tainted karma and afflictions produce suffering. Therefore, all the causes of saṃsāra are what must be abandoned. The truth of cessation, which is the cessation of all suffering, is what must be achieved. The truth of the path is the method by which that goal is reached.
- 412 Nya Ōn Kunga Pal, *Explanation of the "General Commentary on the Doctrine,"* 17a–18b: The first turning of the Dharma wheel taught that all internal phenomena such as the aggregates (*skandha*) are empty of an individual self, and that coarse external entities such as forms are merely phenomena that appear as a result of a combination of elements, atoms, and so forth. Now Dōlpopa begins to describe the teachings of the second turning of the Dharma wheel, which demonstrate not only the absence of a self or substantial nature in individual living beings, but also that there is no substantial nature to phenomena that are apprehended as external objects. Nya Ōn specifies that although Dōlpopa simply says "all phenomena" (*chos rnam thams cad*),

it should be understood that he is referring only to “conditioned phenomena” (*‘dus byas kyi chos*), all of which arise from a conjunction of causes and conditions and never appear without a cause. It must be understood that there is no permanent self (*ātman*), no truly existing sentient beings, and no eternal soul (*śroṅ*), in contrast to what the different non-Buddhist traditions in India maintained. Nor is there any creator (*byed pa po*) of the animate and inanimate universe, such as the gods Śiva or Viṣṇu. Without any permanent creator, phenomena appear only due to a combination of causes and conditions. For example, like a dream that appears as a result of a combination of sleep and habitual propensities; or like the horses and cattle that may appear in an illusion created by an illusionist using certain spells, drugs, and substances; or like seeing a shimmering mirage as a result of a combination of vapor from the earth being moved by subtle winds and struck by sunlight; or like an echo that occurs due to the conditions of sound in conjunction with stone or other substances.

- 413 Nya Ōn Kunga Pal, *Explanation of the “General Commentary on the Doctrine,”* 21a–23b: Having illustrated that all entities lack any substantial and absolute nature, Dölpopa now shows that both the dependent apprehending mind and the apprehended objects that appear to be external lack any such absolute nature. Mountains, houses, human bodies, and so forth appear to the five sense faculties to exist externally, but there is no external entity that can withstand a rigorous examination in search of an absolute nature. Both the apprehension of the external appearance of the objects and the objects that so appear are merely the appearances of a confused mind or consciousness contaminated by the habitual propensities for dualistic appearances. The situation is similar to that of a person with an eye disease who sees everything permeated with fine hairlike lines. There are no real external entities to be apprehended, but an apprehension of their external presence appears clearly in the mind. Thus it can be said that there is also no internal apprehending mind, intellect, or consciousness that is not confused. The apparently external objects and the internal mind, intellect, and consciousness that perceive them to be so are merely names or designations, empty of any true internal or external existence. They are emptiness, like unconditioned space.
- 414 Nya Ōn Kunga Pal, *Explanation of the “General Commentary on the Doctrine,”* 24b–26a: After demonstrating in the previous verse that both the apprehending mind and the apprehended objects that depend on the existence of external phenomena are not entities existing in absolute truth, Dölpopa now proceeds to show that the aggregates, constituents, and sensory bases are also not entities existing in absolute truth. The ephemeral nature of the first three of the five aggregates of form, feeling, discernment, conditioning factors, and consciousness are respectively compared to foam, water bubbles, and a mirage. The last two are traditionally compared to a plantain tree and an illusion. No truly existing self is to be found in the twelve sensory bases, the six pairs such as the eyes and form and so forth, and so these are said to be like an empty town without residents and property owners. The eighteen constituents, comprising the six pairs of the twelve sensory bases plus the six consciousnesses of sight and so forth, are considered to be the causes or sources of suffering produced through interaction with entities. Since these cause a variety of harm, they are compared to vicious vipers.

- 415 Nya Ōn Kunga Pal, *Explanation of the "General Commentary on the Doctrine,"* 26b–32a: In this verse Dölpopa indicates that not one of the phenomena included in saṃsāra and nirvāṇa is a truly existing entity. None of these phenomena have a true essence that can withstand a rigorous and reasoned examination. Therefore, in the ultimate sense they are birthless. Since they have never arisen, they cannot cease, and thus in the ultimate sense they are ceaseless. They are at peace and unestablished from the very beginning, by nature nirvāṇa, empty and selfless. When reasonably examined from the perspective of the absolute, they do not go from here to anywhere else, they have not come here from anywhere else, and they do not remain or endure like the unconditioned sky. Another way to interpret these terms is to say that the nature of all phenomena never goes out of existence or is destroyed, never comes into existence or is born, and does not permanently remain. Since extremes and middle are established in relation to each other, in the ultimate sense there is no first and last extreme, and thus no true phenomena in the middle between the two extremes. In brief, each of these phenomena is in reality empty of any true essence.
- 416 Nya Ōn Kunga Pal, *Explanation of the "General Commentary on the Doctrine,"* 32a–34a: With this verse Dölpopa begins to describe the third turning of the Dharma wheel, the most distinctive feature of which is the teachings about buddha nature, or sugata essence. The term *sugata* (*bde bar gshegs pa*), *one gone to bliss*, is used to describe a completely perfect buddha. The *essence* (*garbha*, *snying po*) of such a buddha is luminosity, the nature of mind. While a person is still bound by all the various restrictions of the afflictions and so forth, this nature of mind, or luminosity, is called *tathāgatagarbha* (*de bzhin gshegs pa'i snying po*), *tathāgata essence*, but when one is free of all the incidental impurities, it is referred to as the absolute dharmakāya (*don dam chos sku*). This definition is based on statements found in the *Sūtra of the Lion's Roar of Noble Śrīmālā*, Toh 92, Kangyur, dkon brtsegs *cha*, 255a–277b. The *buddha essence* (*buddhagarbha*, *sangs rgyas kyi snying po*), the absolute dharmakāya, is the unconditioned luminosity that is the nature of all sentient beings, like the immutable sky. However, this is not directly perceived because it is obscured and covered by relative phenomena that do not exist by nature. Unlike the buddha essence, which is originally unproduced by causes and conditions, these relative factors are newly arisen, incidental accumulations or aggregates of various phenomena. The buddha essence exists within the mindstream of all afflicted sentient beings as their true nature (*dharmatā*, *chos nyid*), but is concealed within the incidental heaps or aggregates, the sheath or envelope of the incidental impurities. In a number of scriptures, such as the *Sūtra on the Tathāgata Essence* (*Tathāgatagarbha Sūtra*) and the *Avatamsaka Sūtra*, nine similes are used for the essence concealed within the impurities. The simile of the basic space of phenomena (*dharmadhātu*, *chos dbyings*), which is synonymous with the buddha nature, being like a lamp within a vase is perhaps most widely cited from the *Eulogy to the Basic Space of Phenomena* (*Dharmadhātustava*) of Ārya Nāgārjuna. The simile of the buddha nature being like an unrecognized treasure in the earth beneath the home of a pauper is found in the *Sūtra on the Tathāgata Essence*, the *Highest Continuum*, and other fundamental Indian scriptures and treatises.
- 417 Nya Ōn Kunga Pal, *Explanation of the "General Commentary on the Doctrine,"* 34b–36a: Having established the existence of the buddha nature in the previous verse, Dölpopa now notes the importance of carefully distinguishing between what actually exists and what does not. This analysis is based on the paradigm of the *trisvabhāva*,

or *three natures*, which is discussed in chapter 3, section 2 of the present book. Nya Ōn specifically refers to Dölpopa's opinions several times when commenting on this verse. According to Dölpopa, the phenomena of *parikalpita* or the *imagined nature* are nonexistent. The elements and so forth that appear to be external actually have no existence outside the consciousness of the beholder and are totally nonexistent, like the horn of a rabbit. This is termed the "authentic imagined nature" (*kun brtags mtshan nyid pa*). The concepts that arise in the mind in the wake of the appearance of apparent phenomena and identify those phenomena as external are termed "the imagined nature existing in merely the conventional sense" (*tha snyad tsam du yod pa'i kun brtags*). The *paratantra*, the *dependent nature*, is also twofold. The "impure dependent nature" (*ma dag pa'i gzhan dbang*) is all the ordinary worldly thoughts and mental states. The "pure dependent nature" (*dag pa'i gzhan dbang*) is the conditioned primordial awareness that directly realizes selflessness and the worldly primordial awareness experienced outside of meditation sessions. These are the dependent nature because they arise from causes and conditions. The *pariniṣpanna*, the *fully established nature*, is the state of ultimate reality that can withstand rigorous and reasoned examination from the perspective of the absolute and is empty of both the imagined and the dependent natures. In this way all the imagined and dependent phenomena of *parikalpita* and *paratantra* are nonexistent in reality, while the *pariniṣpanna* is fully established in reality, is never nonexistent as the true nature of phenomena, and always exists in truth. To say the first two natures exist in the absolute is the extreme view of eternalism and to say the third nature does not exist in the absolute is the extreme view of nihilism. The fully established nature, or absolute reality, is the ultimate Madhyamaka or middle that transcends those two extremes. Here Nya Ōn pointedly observes that people who accept that the absolute dharmakāya and so forth do not exist in the absolute, but do exist in the relative, are maintaining a very unreasonable position. He says this is no different than saying "there is no 'horse' in this horse, but there is in a donkey" (*rta 'di rta du med kyi bong bu du yod*).

- 418 Nya Ōn Kunga Pal, *Explanation of the "General Commentary on the Doctrine,"* 36a–b: Now Dölpopa points out the need to distinguish between what arises in dependent origination (*pratītyasamutpāda*, *rten cing 'brel bar byung ba*) and what does not. All conditioned and relative phenomena are the results of specific causes and conditions and are thus said to merely arise in a process of dependent origination. However, the absolute, unconditioned dharmakāya is self-arisen and not produced by causes and conditions. The primordial awareness of the basic space of phenomena (*dharmadhātu*), which is naturally established from the beginning, transcends dependent origination. A distinction must be made between primordial awareness that is newly arisen from causes and conditions, and self-arisen primordial awareness that is different than that. In his comments on this verse, Nya Ōn specifically notes that Nāgārjuna's famous statement that no phenomena do not arise in dependent origination is intended to apply only to conditioned phenomena. Furthermore, Nya Ōn mentions that Avalokiteśvara (by whom he means the Shambhala emperor Kalki Puṇḍarika) teaches that absolute truth, such as the svābhāvīkākāya, is not subject to dependent origination. The *Sūtra of Definitive Commentary on the Intention* (*Samdhinirmocana Sūtra*, Toh 106, Kangyur, mdo sde ca, 1b–55b) also teaches that unconditioned phenomena transcend dependent origination.

- 419 Nya Ōn Kunga Pal, *Explanation of the "General Commentary on the Doctrine,"* 36b–37b: In this verse Dölpopa first begins to speak of tantra, and especially the teachings



of the *Kālacakra Tantra*. In the particular terminology of the *Kālacakra*, the *outer* is the inanimate world, the *inner* is the bodies of sentient beings, and the *other* is chiefly the svābhāvikakāya or the innate kāya (*sahajakāya*). All the *outer* and *inner*, or inanimate and animate phenomena included in saṃsāra, are the confusing appearances of consciousness emanated (*sprul pa*) by a beginningless ignorance. They are merely the confusing sphere of this ignorance, and, if examined carefully, can be seen to lack any truth whatsoever. Self-arisen primordial awareness, the true nature of reality, is an *other* beyond or superior to that confusing sphere of *outer* and *inner* phenomena, because it has not been produced by causes and conditions and is the Primordial Buddha (*ādibuddha*, *dang po'i sangs rgyas*). Furthermore, the eight groups of consciousness and so forth are characterized by imperfect conceptualization and are confused and lacking in awareness. The dominance of this state of consciousness keeps sentient beings circling in saṃsāra. However, the primordial awareness of a bodhisattva of the tenth level during meditation and also the conditioned primordial awareness of a buddha directly perceive the perfect nature of reality and are not included in the categories of *outer* and *inner*. This is the authentic *other* mentioned above. Consciousness is blind to perfect reality, while even the conditioned self-arisen primordial awareness of highly realized bodhisattvas and buddhas directly perceives reality. It is also important to clearly distinguish between saṃsāra, which is composed of all the outer and inner inanimate and animate phenomena that are emanations of ignorance, and the varieties of primordial awareness mentioned above, which are the phenomena of nirvāṇa. There are many different ways to describe relative and absolute truth. For example, these may be distinguished by speaking of the creation-stage meditation as the relative and the profound completion stage as the absolute. In this context, the process of an ordinary person mentally conceiving of a deity in meditation—which is not actually the perfect deity—is the relative, while the emptiness possessing the most sublime of all aspects, which appears as the actual object of meditation during the cultivation of the profound completion-stage practices such as *pratyāhara* or *individual withdrawal*, the first branch of the Six-branch Yoga, is the absolute truth. Other-arisen primordial awareness (*gzhan byung ye shes*) directly perceives sublime emptiness due to the force of meditation, and is absolute truth, but not actually the ultimate absolute truth (*mthar thug don dam bden pa ngos*).

- 420 Nya Ōn Kunga Pal, *Explanation of the "General Commentary on the Doctrine,"* 37b–38a: After distinguishing between the two truths and so forth in relation to the triad of outer, inner, and other, Dölpopa again defines the two truths, but now in relation to the three worlds (*srid gsum*). This verse continues to focus on the specific view of the *Kālacakra Tantra* as explained in the *Stainless Light*. The relative three worlds are the three realms included in saṃsāra. These are confusing appearances emanated by ignorance, but in reality just a exaggeration that can be destroyed by perfect primordial awareness. The images of emptiness (*śūnyatābimba*, *stong gzugs*) that clearly arise in the form of the three worlds that appear during direct yogic perception are the absolute three worlds. Because this is the luminosity of the nature of mind, it is the sugata essence. It is indestructible, and since it is the ultimate perfect nature, it is not superimposed by concepts of the yogin, and is the appearance of an unconfused cognition.
- 421 Nya Ōn Kunga Pal, *Explanation of the "General Commentary on the Doctrine,"* 38a–b: Dölpopa previously presented the individual teachings of each of the three turnings of the Dharma wheel, and he now deals with the teachings of all three together. The

teachings of the first turning of the Dharma wheel focus primarily on the four truths and stress that all conditioned phenomena are impermanent, that everything tainted produces suffering, that all phenomena lack substantial nature, that individual beings are empty of self-nature, and so forth. The second turning of the Dharma wheel teaches that in the absolute all phenomena are without essence, are birthless, ceaseless, and so forth, and in reality have no true specific or general characteristics. The third turning of the Dharma wheel teaches that everything relative does not exist in absolute reality, but also teaches that the ultimate nature of phenomena certainly and truly does exist in absolute reality.

- 422 Nya Ōn Kunga Pal, *Explanation of the "General Commentary on the Doctrine,"* 38b: After the three stains of the mental continua of fortunate disciples have been cleansed by the nectar stream of the three sequential turnings of the Dharma wheel, which cures the illnesses of the afflictions, the sublime jewel of the dharmakāya separated from stain can be obtained. The stains of ignorance due to which the existence of a self in individuals is accepted are removed by the teachings of the first turning of the Dharma wheel. The stains of ignorance due to which conditioned entities such as the apprehending mind and apprehended objects are believed to actually exist are removed by the teachings of the second turning of the Dharma wheel. The stains of ignorance due to which it is believed that nothing exists in the absolute are removed by the teachings of the third turning of the Dharma wheel, which carefully distinguish between what really exists and what does not.

In this verse there are significant variants among the two editions of Dölpopa's text and its commentary. Following the 'Dzam thang edition of the basic text, 496, and Nya Ōn Kunga Pal, *Explanation of the "General Commentary on the Doctrine,"* 38b, which both read *rin chen*, instead of the *rang bzhin* found in the Bhutanese edition, 689, I have translated *jewel* instead of *nature*. Both the Bhutanese edition, 689, and Nya Ōn Kunga Pal, *Explanation of the "General Commentary on the Doctrine,"* 38b, have *thob*, instead of the *ston* found in the 'Dzam thang edition, 496. Thus I have translated *obtained* instead of *teach*. It should be noticed, however, that *ston* (*teach*) is found at the end of most of the other verses in both editions of the text.

- 423 Nya Ōn Kunga Pal, *Explanation of the "General Commentary on the Doctrine,"* 38b–39a: Those individuals who accept the truth of external phenomena such as atoms learn through reasoned examination, study, and reflection that the three realms are not externally existent and are actually just mind. They are taught that everything is just mind, consciousness, or the appearance of consciousness. But then some individuals who accept the nonexistence of external phenomena become attached to the internal mind that appears as external phenomena and believe that mind to be true or real. They must be taught that all external and internal entities are in the absolute sense empty. Therefore, in the absolute nothing is established as real and nothing appears or is seen during meditative equipoise. This is the Madhyamaka of no appearance (*snang med dbu ma*), in which it is taught that seeing nothing is seeing reality. Statements to this effect found in certain sūtras and in some of the works of Ārya Nāgārjuna are intentional (*dgongs pa can*) and provisional in meaning. But some individuals become attached to these teachings and maintain that absolutely nothing is established in the absolute, and that even in the meditative equipoise of highly advanced bodhisattvas of the Mahāyāna nothing whatever appears, and that there is merely an absence of conceptual elaboration (*spros bral tsam*). These persons must

be taught that perfect reality directly appears and is seen in the meditative equipoise of the Mahāyāna, and that this is the authentic Madhyamaka of perfect appearance (*yang dag snang ba'i dbu ma*), or the profound apprehensible emptiness (*dmigs bcas stong nyid*).

- 424 Nya Ōn Kunga Pal, *Explanation of the "General Commentary on the Doctrine,"* 39b–40a: Individuals with inferior faculties who believe that pleasant and painful results are caused by a permanent self in individuals, or by a supreme creator god, or by chance are taught the infallible truth of cause and result, in which it is understood that good results come from good causes, bad results come from bad causes, and mixed results come from mixed causes. In this way they learn to cultivate virtuous actions and avoid vice. But those who adhere to the true and absolute existence of all phenomena, such as cause and result, must be taught that all such phenomena are in reality empty of any true essence. Such teachings as these in the scriptures are intended to show that all relative phenomena have no absolutely true nature. But those individuals who have not fully comprehended the significance of these teachings, and have come to believe that the nature of reality is a simple freedom from conceptual elaboration (*spros bral*), and that nothing whatsoever is established, must be taught that the immutable sugata essence of luminosity, the absolute dharmakāya, is always present (*rtag du gnas*).
- 425 Nya Ōn Kunga Pal, *Explanation of the "General Commentary on the Doctrine,"* 40a–41a: In this verse Dōlpopa refers to the necessity of giving teachings that correspond to the abilities of the recipients. Individuals who are striving for liberation may be classified according to their naturally dull, middling, or acute faculties. Those disciples who have naturally inferior and dull faculties are taught the “vehicle of the śrāvakas” (*śrāvakayāna*), and thus escape from saṃsāra. The śrāvaka, or “listener,” listens to and practices the teachings of a buddha or another master through all stages of the path. When this individual finally becomes an arhat, which is the goal of the śrāvaka vehicle, he then orally explains the Dharma to others based on the degree of his own realization. Those disciples with naturally middling faculties are taught the “vehicle of the pratyekabuddhas” (*pratyekabuddhayāna*), and thus escape from saṃsāra. The pratyekabuddha, or “solitary buddha,” strives to become an arhat only for his own benefit, and, at the point of achieving the goal, he does not teach the Dharma of the Buddha to others. Those disciples with naturally superior and acute faculties are taught the sublime vehicle, the Mahāyāna. Of them, those with dull faculties are taught the vehicle of the perfections (*pāramitāyāna*) in which the cause, emptiness, is taken as the path. Those with acute faculties are taught the mantra vehicle (*mantrayāna*), in which the result, bliss, is taken as the path.
- 426 Nya Ōn Kunga Pal, *Explanation of the "General Commentary on the Doctrine,"* 41b: After mentioning the importance of teaching the three vehicles according to the natural faculties of disciples, Dōlpopa now focuses on the need to care for disciples according to their stages of development. Loving fathers and mothers care for their children from when they are infants up until they are young adults, providing them with food and drink, clothing and shoes, and so forth, according to the development of their bodies and minds. Likewise, a master cares for disciples according to their states of mind, inclinations, faculties, and so forth by means of the teachings of

the three turnings of the Dharma wheel in sequence, and especially by means of the Vajrayāna teachings of secret mantra.

- 427 Nya Ōn Kunga Pal, *Explanation of the "General Commentary on the Doctrine,"* 41b–42a: Now Dōlpopa speaks of guiding disciples according to the mental abilities (*blo nus*) that will enable them to achieve either the results of the higher realms or of liberation. This verse presents an alternative approach to that of the previous verse. It is customary to assign worldly work to children of inferior, middling, and superior faculties or intelligence according to each one's character (*rgyud*) or mental ability. Likewise, the classifications of the view, meditation, conduct, result, and so forth of the three turnings of the Dharma wheel, and especially of the tradition of secret mantra, should be taught according to the individual character, mental ability, and good fortune of the disciples.
- 428 Nya Ōn Kunga Pal, *Explanation of the "General Commentary on the Doctrine,"* 42a–43a: With this verse Dōlpopa makes clear the necessity to progress through the teachings of the three turnings of the Dharma wheel in sequence, and then proceed to those of the mantra vehicle, in that way moving from the lower teachings up to the highest. For example, in the three-storied mansion of a royal minister one climbs up to the top floor, and there enjoys oneself. Likewise, one should climb up in the three-storied Dharma mansion of scripture and realization, the doctrine of the Buddha that is arranged sequentially according to the teachings of the three turnings of the Dharma wheel, and especially the turning of the Dharma wheel of secret mantra. Then one should enjoy the teachings of the Mahāyāna, which are like the top floor, and of them, those of the Vajrayāna. In this way the sublime result can quickly be reached. Furthermore, Nya Ōn declares that those who claim that the mantra vehicle follows the Cittamātra tradition, and that the view and meditation of the Madhyamaka is higher than that of the tantras, are extremely confused. They hold a nihilistic emptiness (*chad stong*) to be supreme and lack the practical experience of the profound Dharma.
- 429 Nya Ōn Kunga Pal, *Explanation of the "General Commentary on the Doctrine,"* 43a–b: Numerous statements of definitive meaning in many sūtras and tantras specify that all sentient beings possess the sugata essence, which is synonymous with the nature of mind, luminous emptiness possessing the most sublime of all aspects. This is also the absolute dharmakāya present in all sentient beings. It is not something achieved or obtained, but is the innate true nature of all living beings. It is always present, but while obscured or veiled by the incidental stains, such as attachment, it is not seen or heard about, and living beings continue to circle in saṃsāra. To gain liberation from saṃsāra it is necessary to remove those stains. The method of their removal is mentioned by Dōlpopa in this verse. For example, a skillful jeweler cleanses in sequence the coarse, subtle, and extremely subtle stains that may cover a large piece of beryl, or any other jewel. Likewise, the sugata essence, the absolute dharmakāya, exists in the mental continua of all sentient beings, but is obscured by the veils of the incidental stains. Therefore, the three coarse, subtle, and extremely subtle incidental stains that veil the existence of the sugata essence in each living being must be cleansed by training in the meaning of the three turnings of the Dharma wheel in sequence, and especially the turning of the Dharma wheel of secret mantra. This is the most important message of all the turnings of the Dharma wheel.

- 430 Nya Ōn Kunga Pal, *Explanation of the "General Commentary on the Doctrine,"* 43b–44b: Dōlpopa begins this series of verses on mantra by mentioning the cause and result of the sugata essence taught in many sūtras and tantras. This cause and result is not a productive cause, like a seed, or a produced result, like a sprout. As the *Stainless Light* says, there is another cause and another result, an unconditioned cause and result. The other cause of the sugata essence is naturally luminous emptiness possessing the most sublime of all aspects. This is the other images of emptiness (*stong nyid gzugs gzhan*), the images of emptiness (*stong gzugs*) directly seen by means of the yogic practices of the Six-branch Yoga. These forms are also referred to in the sūtras on the perfection of wisdom and elsewhere as "the forms of the true nature" (*chos nyid kyi gzugs*). The other result of the sugata essence is naturally immutable great bliss (*rang bzhin 'gyur med kyi bde ba chen po*), which is not merely the bliss of immutable melting bliss (*zhu bde 'gyur med kyi bde ba*). This unconditioned bliss and emptiness is the sugata essence, the absolute dharmakāya, the ultimate true nature. It is not just the absence of conceptual elaboration (*spros bral*) that is taught in the ordinary vehicles as an emptiness of negation established through analytical refutation. This other result is similar to the prognostic images (*pratisenā, pra phab*) or other forms that may directly appear to a young girl during a traditional ceremony of divination. The simile of the eight prognostic images has an important role in the teachings of the *Kālacakra Tantra* and the *Stainless Light*. (See note 532 for an explanation of the eight types of prognostic images.) Likewise, the other result, other forms, or images of emptiness arise clearly and directly to the discriminating, self-aware, primordial awareness (*so so rang rig ye shes*) of a yogin. If this were only the emptiness that is an absence of conceptual elaboration, an emptiness of negation established through analytical refutation, it would be impossible for it to ever appear directly to anyone. In this way, those who pride themselves in maintaining that sublime emptiness is only an emptiness of self-nature (*rang stong*) are left with a problem—the impossibility of a direct realization, or appearance as a knowable, of absolute reality, the true nature of phenomena.
- 431 Nya Ōn Kunga Pal, *Explanation of the "General Commentary on the Doctrine,"* 44b–45a: Ultimate emptiness, emptiness possessing the most sublime of all aspects, has many different names in the profound tantras. Dōlpopa has drawn his examples from a number of sources. In both the *Samvara Root Tantra* and the *Samvara Condensed Tantra*, *secret* (*gsang*) and *great secret* (*gsang chen*) are spoken of as the ever-present quintessence (*bdag nyid*) of everything, or of all sentient beings. In scriptures such as the *Vajrapañjāra Tantra*, the *element of space* (*mkha' kham*) is referred to as being not inanimate (*bems min*), and also described as awareness or cognition (*shes pa*). And in the sūtras on the perfection of wisdom it is said that meditation on the perfection of wisdom is meditation on *space*. In the *Kālacakra Tantra* emptiness is called by the name Viśvamātā (Sna tshogs yum), who is actually the consort of Kālacakra. She bears this name, meaning "Variegated Mother," because she is both emptiness possessing the most sublime of all aspects and she is the Great Seal (*mahāmudrā, phyag rgya chen mo*). In scriptures such as the *Hevajra Tantra*, emptiness is spoken of as *source of phenomena* (*dharmākara*) and as *bhaga*, which means *vulva*. This is because the ten powers and so forth of a buddha, which are other-arisen qualities (*gzhan byung yon tan*), are newly arisen in the continuum of an individual who has perfected the meditation and actualized the realization of emptiness, but the infinite

qualities of the unconditioned dharmakāya are naturally present. In other scriptures, such as the *Vajrabhairava Tantra*, known in Tibetan as the *Rnal 'byor rjes su rig pa'i rgyud*, emptiness is referred to as *lotus (padma)*. In the *Kālacakra Tantra* emptiness is also given the name *lion throne (seng ge'i khri)*. It is like a lion because all the packs of the wild beasts of the two obscurations of the afflictions and of knowledge have been naturally vanquished from the beginning, and like a throne because it naturally supports the great bliss from which it is indivisible. Likewise, emptiness is Vajra Nairātmyā, "Adamantine Selfless Lady," the consort of Hevajra, because it is empty of both types of self. It is Vajra Varāhī, "Adamantine Sow," the consort of Cakrasamvara, because it is free from all concepts of pure and impure and so forth. Almost all of the names cited in this verse are also found mentioned together in quotes from the *Kālacakra Root Tantra*.

- 432 Nya Ōn Kunga Pal, *Explanation of the "General Commentary on the Doctrine,"* 45a–b: Now Dölpopa notes that precisely that same emptiness is also absolute, ultimate, and immutable great bliss, and as such is referred to by many different names. This great bliss is *vajra (adamantine)* because it cannot be cut or destroyed by the weapons of conceptualization, but in fact vanquishes them. It is called *drop (thig le)* because it is by nature great bliss. *He* means emptiness of cause and so forth, *ru* means apart from groups, and *ka* means not dwelling anywhere. It is *gathering (samāja)* because it gathers the great bliss of all the buddhas. It is *restraint (samvara, sdom pa)* because the habitual propensity for the emission of sexual fluids has been abandoned. *He* and *mahākaruṇā* both mean *great compassion*. Great bliss is referred to as the Primordial Buddha (*ādibuddha*) because all obscurations have been absent from the beginning, not just removed by the force of meditating on the path. According to the *Stainless Light*, the term *ādi (dang po)* means without beginning and without end. In a number of scriptural sources great bliss is also called absolute *enlightenment mind (bodhicitta)*.
- 433 Nya Ōn Kunga Pal, *Explanation of the "General Commentary on the Doctrine,"* 45b–46a: Dölpopa now makes the crucial point that ultimate great bliss is cognition (*shes pa*), because it is a complete awareness of both self and others (*bdag rig gzhan rig thams cad pa*). And it is the profound emptiness that is the most sublime of all that can be known or cognized, which is what must be directly realized. Both great bliss and emptiness, the cognition and what is to be cognized, appear in enlightened divine forms known by many names, such as Vajrasattva, Evaṃ, Kālacakra, Cakrasamvara, Hevajra, Māyājāla, Guhyasamāja, and so forth. All of these names have the single meaning of the unity of bliss and emptiness.
- 434 Nya Ōn Kunga Pal, *Explanation of the "General Commentary on the Doctrine,"* 46a–b: In general the Buddhist teachings speak of a triad of ground, path, and result. Here Dölpopa focuses on the absolute and ultimate "universal ground" (*ālaya, kun gzhi*). This he identifies with the unity of ultimate bliss and emptiness, just described in the previous verse. United bliss and emptiness are indivisible, and thus equal-flavored. This indestructible state cannot be destroyed by conceptualization and so forth, and is known as self-arisen primordial awareness because it is an awareness of self and others that has not been produced by causes and conditions. Since it is also an original or natural buddha, it is called *ādibuddha*, "Primordial Buddha." These different names all signify the absolute dharmakāya that is present as the true nature of the mental continua of all individuals. This exists in impure circumstances and

also in circumstances when the impurities have been purified. Since the absolute dharmakāya is present as the true nature of a mental continuum in which the incidental stains exist, it is referred to as thusness with stains (*dri bcas de bzhin nyid*). Furthermore, like the sky on which the wind is dependent, this absolute dharmakāya, the unity of bliss and emptiness, is known as the universal ground because, in dependence on it, liberation is achieved through energetic practice of the path to liberation or the lower realms are experienced because of an accumulation of negative acts. This universal ground, the true nature described in scripture as the natural luminosity of mind, must not be confused with the universal-ground consciousness (*ālayavijñāna*, *kun gzhi rnam shes*) that is one of the eight groups of consciousness.

- 435 Nya Ōn Kunga Pal, *Explanation of the "General Commentary on the Doctrine,"* 46b: After describing the universal ground, Dölpopa now briefly mentions the ultimate path for actualizing the reality of the Primordial Buddha (*ādibuddha*) with stains. Precisely that Primordial Buddha is in essence itself primordially free from the sheath of the incidental stains, but there is a special method for freeing it from the incidental stains that bind the mental continua of sentient beings in which it is present. This method is known as the path of the Vajrayoga, or "adamantine yoga," which is another name for the Six-branch Yoga (*ṣaḍaṅgayoga*), the path of the Perfection of Wisdom (*prajñāpāramitā*), the path of the Atiyoga, and the path of the meditation of the Great Seal. This is the direct path to the ultimate result. Although Nya Ōn does not comment on these terms, it is probable that in this context Dölpopa intends Atiyoga (*shin tu rnal 'byor*) to be understood as the completion-stage practices of the *Guhyasamāja Tantra*, and not the practices of the Great Perfection that also bear that name. This seems probable because the Six-branch Yoga is also explicitly taught in the *Guhyasamāja*.
- 436 Nya Ōn Kunga Pal, *Explanation of the "General Commentary on the Doctrine,"* 46b–47a: The Primordial Buddha (*ādibuddha*) is present throughout beginningless time as the ground that is itself naturally separate from all stains. Through the practice of the sublime method of the nonconceptual path, the meditation of the Great Seal, and the force of the cultivation of nonconceptual calm and insight, all of the incidental stains in the mental continuum of an individual who has perfected this meditation are purged or removed, and the ultimate result of stainless thusness or reality remains. It is essential to understand that this was not previously absent and now newly arisen, but is referred to as the result that is merely actualized or obtained due to the force of having perfected the meditation of the path. For example, when the clouds, dust, and so forth in the sky are swept away by a strong wind, the unconditioned sky itself remains. The conditioned clouds and so forth do not benefit or harm the essence of the sky in any way. Likewise, the conditioned incidental stains do not benefit or harm the essence of the absolute dharmakāya that is always present as the ground. The incidental stains merely prevent what is known as other-arisen primordial awareness (*gzhan byung ye shes*) from directly perceiving this reality, and prevent the appearance of the ultimate produced results (*bskyed 'bras*) of the *nirmāṇakāya* and the *sambhogakāya*.
- 437 Nya Ōn Kunga Pal, *Explanation of the "General Commentary on the Doctrine,"* 47a: The excellent benefit for oneself and others is the result to be achieved through the perfection of meditation on the path. In this verse Dölpopa describes the result that is beneficial for oneself. What is to be cultivated or meditated on is the Great Seal

(*mahāmudrā*) of naturally immutable luminosity. The force of the perfect cultivation of the assembly of nonconceptual other-arisen primordial awareness (*gzhan byung ye shes*) destroys the sheath of stains that obscure or veil the self-arisen primordial awareness (*rang byung ye shes*). This reveals or actualizes the absolute dharmakāya endowed with infinite unconditioned qualities, and thus the excellent benefit for oneself is achieved.

- 438 Nya Ōn Kunga Pal, *Explanation of the "General Commentary on the Doctrine,"* 47a–b: Now Dölpopa describes what it takes to achieve real benefit for others. The luminosity of the absolute dharmakāya is present in all sentient beings as the nature of their minds, but is obscured by ignorance. Without seeing it and without understanding that it is present, sentient beings wander through the three realms of saṃsāra because of their tainted acts and afflictions. Acting with a special attitude of great love for all sentient beings suffering in saṃsāra, and with a wish to free them from their suffering and its causes, accumulates the assembly of merit that creates benefit in this life and happiness in the next, or the temporary benefit of rebirth in the higher realms and the lasting benefit of the great bliss of liberation. As a result of this accumulation of merit, the two excellent, relative form kāyas are produced, and with them the ultimate excellent benefit for others is accomplished. Following the reading in both the 'Dzam thang edition of the basic text, 499, and the commentary, I have in this verse translated "without understanding" (*ma rtogs*), instead of the "maternal" (*ma gyur*), which is found only in the Bhutanese edition of the basic text, 691.
- 439 Nya Ōn Kunga Pal, *Explanation of the "General Commentary on the Doctrine,"* 47b–48a: In this verse Dölpopa answers a hypothetical objection to his teachings. Some might object that if the unconditioned absolute dharmakāya is present within us there is no need for any perfection, maturation, or purification. Dölpopa answers by specifying what must still be perfected, matured, and purified. An infinite sea of prayers for the liberation of sentient beings who have not yet been liberated must be fully perfected or realized. If it is accepted that saṃsāra has an end, the perfection of infinite prayers means actually establishing all sentient beings in buddhahood. If it is accepted that saṃsāra is endless, the perfection of the prayers means becoming endowed with the complete causes necessary for establishing all sentient beings in nirvāṇa. This sea of infinite sentient beings must be spiritually matured, and thus become able to abandon whatever is to be abandoned, able to employ the appropriate antidotes to the afflictions and so forth, and able to proceed upon the perfect path to liberation. According to the *Vimalakīrtinīrdeśa Sūtra* (Toh 176, Kangyur, mdo sde ma, 175a–239b), the purification of pure realms or buddha fields actually means the purification of one's own mind. Furthermore, wherever one achieves buddhahood becomes the realm from which one must establish an infinite number of sentient beings in the higher realms or in liberation. Each bodhisattva who achieves buddhahood in the sambhogakāya in an infinite number of realms throughout the universe then manifests an infinite number of nirmāṇakāyas (or emanated bodies) for the purpose of benefiting the infinite sentient beings in those infinite realms for whose benefit previous prayers have been made. After perfection, maturation, and purification have been accomplished in this way, one dissolves into, or actualizes, the kāya of the absolute true nature (*don dam chos nyid kyi sku*), a culmination that is perfectly true, stable, and infallible, unlike false and fallible relative phenomena.



- 440 Nya Ōn Kunga Pal, *Explanation of the "General Commentary on the Doctrine,"* 48a–b: In this verse Dōlpopa again addresses a potential objection to his view of enlightenment. Some may say that if one dissolves into the culmination of perfection (*yang dag pa'i mtha'*) at the point of attaining buddhahood, there will then be no primordial awareness (*ye shes med par 'gyur*), and that this is an excellent view because it is the opinion of the Madhyamaka masters such as Nāgārjuna, Candrakīrti, and Śāntideva. Dōlpopa uses traditional examples to illustrate his response. The fine magical vase provides whatever food, clothing, wealth, and so forth are necessary. And the orb of the sun, the wish-fulfilling jewel, the heavenly tree, and the great divine drum of the gods all benefit sentient beings without effort and without thought. Likewise, without exerting any effort and without any thought of performing a specific action to bring about any specific benefit, what is beneficial to others will spontaneously occur in all directions and at all times due to the fully perfected force of the impetus of previous prayers in which one prayed for the ability to provide sentient beings with whatever they need. Furthermore, the use of these examples to illustrate the spontaneous occurrence of a buddha's enlightened activities is actually in agreement with the teachings of Nāgārjuna, Candrakīrti, and Śāntideva. The intent of their statements is not that enlightened actions occur in the absence of primordial awareness, but that actions beneficial to others still occur in the absence of conscious thought.
- 441 Nya Ōn Kunga Pal, *Explanation of the "General Commentary on the Doctrine,"* 48b–49a: In keeping with the teachings of the *Sūtra of Definitive Commentary on the Intention* (*Samādhinirmocana Sūtra*), Dōlpopa maintains that the third turning of the Dharma wheel clearly presents the ultimate definitive meaning without concealing it in any way, and that this final or third turning of the Dharma wheel is thus the ultimate turning of the Dharma wheel. Of the three vehicles (*yāna, theg pa*), the ultimate or consummate vehicle is the Mahāyāna, the "great vehicle." The ultimate pinnacle of the Mahāyāna teachings are the teachings that actually and clearly present the sugata essence that is pure, self, blissful, and permanent (*gtsang bdag bde dang rtag pa*). Thus the ultimate sugata essence is pure and permanent great bliss. Here Dōlpopa specifies that the ultimate sugata essence is great bliss in order to refute the mistaken opinions of those who identify it with a true nature that is a mere freedom from conceptual elaborations (*chos nyid spros bral tsam*), or a nihilistic emptiness (*chad stong*); those who identify it with the mere awareness and lucidity of the present state of mind (*da lta'i sems rig cing gsal tsam*); those who identify it with the universal-ground consciousness (*ālayavijñāna, kun gzhi rnam shes*); and those who accept that it is the mere seed of buddhahood (*sangs rgyas kyī sa bon tsam*) present in the universal-ground consciousness, but that cannot be identified as anything conditioned or unconditioned, tainted or untainted.
- 442 Nya Ōn Kunga Pal, *Explanation of the "General Commentary on the Doctrine,"* 49a–b: The ultimate scriptures and realization of the Buddhist doctrine are the teachings of the scriptures and realization of the Mahāyāna, and the ultimate scriptures and realization of the Mahāyāna are the scriptures and realization of the Mantrayāna. Likewise, the ultimate scriptures and realization of the Mantrayāna are the teachings of the scriptures and realization of Kālacakra. The ultimate scriptures and realization of Kālacakra are those passages of scripture that present naturally immutable great bliss and emptiness possessing the most sublime of all aspects, as well as the actual realization of the great bliss and profound emptiness that they express. Here Dōlpopa

has specified the ultimate Kālacakra as the unity of bliss and emptiness in order to refute those who maintain that the ultimate Kālacakra is only conditioned and so forth.

- 443 Nya Ōn Kunga Pal, *Explanation of the "General Commentary on the Doctrine,"* 49b–50a: Of the four great philosophical tenets in Buddhism, Dōlpopa maintains that the ultimate philosophical tenet is that of Great Madhyamaka (*dbu ma chen po*), the Great Middle Way. The ultimate Madhyamaka is free from all extremes, as taught by Ārya Nāgārjuna. Reality can be said to be free from the four extremes of existence, nonexistence, both, and neither. And although it is birthless and ceaseless, it must be free from the extremes of eternalism and nihilism. The ultimate freedom from extremes is not just a separation or absence, but a luminosity that is the nature of mind. And the ultimate luminosity is a naturally immutable great bliss. There is no luminosity that is the true nature of mind and not also a naturally immutable great bliss. But some upholders of the tantric teachings identified the true nature as completely unestablished and merely a nonapprehending absence of subject and object. Here Dōlpopa makes a point of saying ultimate luminosity is great bliss in order to refute such mistaken opinions.
- 444 Nya Ōn Kunga Pal, *Explanation of the "General Commentary on the Doctrine,"* 50a: There are both mistaken views, such as those of eternalism and nihilism, and correct views. There are also both the correct mundane view that pleasant and unpleasant results come from virtuous and sinful actions, and the correct views of the Buddhist philosophical tenets that are primarily concerned with the nature of the absolute and the relative. In this verse Dōlpopa says the ultimate object of such a view is emptiness free from all extremes, which was just mentioned in the previous verse. And the ultimate emptiness free from extremes is the profound emptiness that is apprehensible (*dmigs bcas*) or clearly and directly perceived by a perfectly discriminating, self-aware primordial awareness (*yang dag pa'i so so rang rig'ye shes*). The ultimate conduct that serves as a method for achieving enlightenment is a great compassion intent on liberating all sentient beings from suffering and its causes. And this ultimate compassion has a quintessence of nonconceptual primordial awareness that is nonapprehending (*dmigs med*), with no thought or concept of object, agent, and so forth.
- 445 Nya Ōn Kunga Pal, *Explanation of the "General Commentary on the Doctrine,"* 50a–51a: In most tantric scriptures a fourfold scheme of initiation is taught, beginning with the vase initiation. In the *Kālacakra Root Tantra*, the *Vajrapañjāra Tantra*, and others, eleven initiations are taught. Moreover, there is a classification of both a mundane and a transcendent vase initiation. These are all termed "initiation" or "empowerment" (*abhiṣeka*, *dbang bskur ba*) because they initiate the disciple into the practice, or empower the disciple to perform the practice, of the yoga of the two stages of meditation that lead either directly or eventually to liberation. Of these initiations, the ultimate initiation is the transcendent initiation, which is the fourth initiation. In most of the "condensed tantras" (*laghutantras*, *bsdus rgyud*) and most of the commentaries composed by Indian masters, the third initiation (of primordial awareness dependent on an embodiment of wisdom [*shes rab ye shes kyi dbang*]) is itself explained to be the fourth initiation, which is why the fourth initiation does not have a separate descriptive name, as do the first three. This explanation is followed in the *Hevajra Tantra* and the *Trilogy of Bodhisattva Commentaries*. The ultimate method for the realization and achievement of enlightenment as the result of practice

is the nonconceptual yoga of the profound completion stage, which is taught to be the sole path of perfect enlightenment. The completion stage is the practice of the definitive meaning made into the path for the attainment of buddhahood in this very lifetime, or in seven lifetimes, or within sixteen lifetimes, depending on the skill of the practitioner. The paths of conceptual meditation, such as the creation stage, are not direct paths to the attainment of perfect enlightenment, and presentations of them as being so are intended to be understood as provisional in meaning (*drang don dgongs pa can*). The basic intent of such statements is that the creation-stage paths act as antidotes to the many erroneous concepts that cause suffering, and thus these paths are merely causes for eventual buddhahood. Initiation is basically granted for the purpose of achieving attainments (*siddhi, dngos grub*). There are two general classifications of attainments. The mundane attainments are just temporary, but the ultimate attainment is the sublime attainment of enlightenment. The ultimate initiation, completion stage, and great attainment are taught for the benefit of ultimate disciples, who are not attached to the mundane attainments, and who are engaged in the single-minded practice of the nonconceptual yoga of the profound completion stage.

- 446 Nya Ōn Kunga Pal, *Explanation of the "General Commentary on the Doctrine,"* § 1a-b: Many different topics are taught in the tantric scriptures, such as the nature of the maṇḍalas, deities, mantras, and mudrās. There are maṇḍalas drawn or painted on cloth, constructed of colored powders, and made from bunches of flowers. There is also the naturally created maṇḍala or body-maṇḍala. In some tantras there is a classification of seven maṇḍalas. But the sublime or ultimate maṇḍala is the natural luminosity of emptiness possessing the most sublime of all aspects. In the tantric scriptures this is what is meant when it is said that *maṇḍa(la)* is (*sugata*)*garbha*, or when the maṇḍala of absolute enlightenment mind (*bodhicitta*) is mentioned. The ultimate deity is the kāya of primordial awareness (*ye shes sku*), the unity of naturally immutable bliss and emptiness possessing the most sublime of all aspects. This is how Kālacakra himself is described in the *Stainless Light*, and his consort Viśvamātā is also described there as the ultimate seal (*mudrā*), the Great Seal (*mahāmudrā*) of the natural luminosity of emptiness possessing the most sublime of all aspects. The term *mantra* is usually understood as a verbally recited formula or as a mentally conceptualized formula. But here the sublime or ultimate secret mantra is the primordial awareness of great nonapprehending compassion and profound emptiness that directly perceives reality and thus protects the mind from afflictions and conceptual marks. This interpretation corresponds to the etymology of the term *mantra* that is provided in the tantras, where it is taught that *man* means *mind* and *tra* means *to protect*.
- 447 Nya Ōn Kunga Pal, *Explanation of the "General Commentary on the Doctrine,"* § 1b-§ 2a: The sūtras and tantras discuss the ground, path, and result. In particular there are many different descriptions of the ground, such as the universal-ground consciousness (*ālayavijñāna, kun gzhi rnam shes*). But the ultimate ground is thusness or reality with stains, which has already been explained above. Although there are many descriptions of the paths to the higher realms and to liberation, the sublime ultimate path is the Six-branch Yoga taught in many tantras and commentaries. There are also many different results mentioned in the scriptures and commentaries, but the sublime ultimate result is the thusness of the separated result (*bral 'bras*) of the absolute

dharmakāya separate from all incidental stains. In this way, from the opening line of this eighth part of the main section of *General Commentary on the Doctrine*, which says, “the ultimate Dharma wheel is the final wheel,” down through the last line of this final verse, which says, “the ultimate result as the thusness of the separated result,” the complete, ultimate Dhārma has been taught.

- 448 Sherab Gyaltzen Palsangpo (Shes rab rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po) is the name Dölpopa received when taking full ordination.
- 449 The separated result (*bral 'bras*) is the absolute dharmakāya separate from all incidental and relative stains, while the produced result (*bskyed 'bras*) is the relative form kāyas, composed of the nirmānakāya and the sambhogakāya, which are produced as a result of the accumulation of the assemblies of merit and primordial awareness.
- 450 The cleansing of the coarse, subtle, and extremely subtle stains on the sugata essence, like a jeweler cleansing the three types of stains on a jewel, were mentioned in an earlier verse and explained in note 429.
- 451 This final Sanskrit exclamation, “May it be auspicious,” is found in the 'Dzam thang edition, 501, and in Nya Ōn Kunga Pal, *Explanation of the “General Commentary on the Doctrine,”* 52b, but not in the Bhutanese edition.
- 452 The *Blue Annals* of Shōnu Pal lists these three, along with commentaries on the *Highest Continuum* (*Uttaratantra*) and the *Ornament for Direct Realization* (*Abhisamayālaṃkāra*). See Roerich (1976), 777. Roerich's informant, the Tibetan scholar Gendun Chöpel (Dge 'dun chos 'phel), added the comment that monks of the Geluk tradition were specifically forbidden to keep copies of the *Ocean of Definitive Meaning* (*Nges don rgya mtsho*) and the *Fourth Council* in their monasteries. One of Dölpopa's successors, Jonang Kunga Drölchok, also quotes Jamling Panchen Sönam Namgyal's (Byams gling Paṅ chen Bsod nams rnam rgyal) mention of the *Ocean of Definitive Meaning*, *General Commentary on the Doctrine*, and *Fourth Council* as Dölpopa's major works. See Kunga Drölchok, *Biography of the Dharma King Namgyal Drakpa Sangpo*, 22a–b. For a translation of this passage, see chapter 1, section 6.
- 453 Jangchup Tsemo, *Biography of Dharma Lord Lama Dampa*, 31b.
- 454 See Lhai Gyaltzen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, 39b, and Kunpang Chödrak Palsang, *Biography of the Omniscient Dharma Lord*, 363, for descriptions of the beginning of Dölpopa's trip to Central Tibet. The specific mention of horses and gold among the offerings made by Lama Dampa is found in the colophon of Dölpopa, *Autocommentary to the “Fourth Council,”* 665. The meeting between Dölpopa and Lama Dampa is mentioned in Lhai Gyaltzen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, 39b; Kunpang Chödrak Palsang, *Biography of the Omniscient Dharma Lord*, 363; and Jangchup Tsemo, *Biography of Dharma Lord Lama Dampa*, 36b. Mangtö Ludrup Gyatso, *Chronology of the Doctrine*, 178, says Dölpopa gave the *Fourth Council* to Lama Dampa at Chölung (Chos lung) Monastery in 1361, when Dölpopa was sixty-nine years old, which conflicts with the contemporary reports of Kunpang and Jangchup Tsemo. Lhai Gyaltzen mentions the meeting in 1358, but not the composition of texts.
- 455 One troubling exception is a mention by Dölpopa himself of the *Fourth Council*. See Dölpopa, *Explanation of the Nine Fully Established Natures*, 122. On page 116

of this text Dölpopa mentions teaching the *Sūtra on the Perfection of Wisdom in One Hundred Thousand Lines* according to the *Kālacakra* to a large gathering of scholars and practitioners in a Sheep Year, which can only correspond to 1355. After a detailed list of the names of dozens of the recipients of this teaching, he mentions that it was given according to the *Great Calculation of the Doctrine: A Fourth Council* (*Bstan rtsis chen po bka' bsdus bzhi pa*), and some other canonical texts. This reference is somewhat problematic because the text in which it is found could well have been written some years after the event, which occurred at Draklha Lupuk (Brag lha Klu phug) in the Lhasa area in 1355. See Kunpang Chödrak Palsang, *Biography of the Omniscient Dharma Lord*, 364.

- 456 These dates are mentioned in Jangchup Tsemo, *Biography of Dharma Lord Lama Dampa*, 36a and 37a, and the textual transmission is mentioned on 36b.
- 457 Lhai Gyaltsen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, 29b–30a, quotes verses that are found in the *Fourth Council*, 399–400 and 403. Barawa's comments are found in Barawa, *Distinguishing the Universal-Ground Consciousness and Primordial Awareness*, 602.
- 458 The Ninth Karmapa, Wangchuk Dorjé (Dbang phyug rdo rje, 1556–1603), criticizes the views of Dölpopa and specifically quotes a section of the *Fourth Council*. See Wangchuk Dorje (2008), 445–53. In his commentary to the *Highest Continuum*, Jamgön Kongtrul refers to the *Fourth Council* as expressing the essence of the definitive meaning (*nītārtha*). See Hookham (1991), 277.
- 459 See Ngawang Lodrö Drakpa, *History of the Jonang Tradition*, 103–4.
- 460 See Kapstein (1992a) for a catalogue of the texts in both available editions of Dölpopa's writings. Kapstein (1991) is a description of his trip to Sichuan in search of texts.
- 461 For example, see Dölpopa, *Qualities of the Basic Space of Phenomena or Sugata Essence*, 755.
- 462 See note 405 for a full explanation of this Sanskrit expression of homage and offering that is also at the beginning of the *General Commentary on the Doctrine*.
- 463 See Seyfort Ruegg (1989), especially 19–26, 40–44, and 50–55, for discussion of the equation of “self” (*ātman*, *bdag*) with the tathāgata essence (*tathāgatagarbha*) in a number of Mahāyāna scriptures.
- 464 On the theory of the *four eons* (*caturyuga*, *dus bzhi*), and the four “feet” of the Dharma mentioned below, see Newman (1987), 518; La Vallée Poussin (1908), 189; and Jacobi (1908), 200.
- 465 A greater and a lesser set of the four eons are briefly mentioned in the *Stainless Light's* explanation of verses 22–23 of the *Chapter on the Worldly Realm* (*Lokadhātupaṭāla*) of the *Kālacakra Tantra*. More explanation is found in Butön Rinchen Drup, *Annotations to the Chapter on the Worldly Realm in the “Stainless Light,”* 469–71, and Choglé Namgyal, *Annotations to the “Stainless Light,”* vol. 18: 190–93. Butön's annotations completely agree with Dölpopa's presentation here. Choglé Namgyal's annotations to these verses are very different than Butön's. The verses from the tantra and this section of the *Stainless Light*, with Butön's comments, are translated in Newman (1987), 514–19. As mentioned in the following verse, the four *yugas* or eons are known as

Kṛtayuga, Dvāparayuga, Tretāyuga, and Kaliyuga. According to the *Stainless Light*, the four *yugas* concerning the duration of the doctrine are each 5,400 human years in length. The *Stainless Light* is chiefly concerned with the lesser *yuga* and provides no further information about the nature of the great *yuga*.

- 466 The same number of years is given in Butön Rinchen Drup, *Annotations to the Chapter on the Worldly Realm in the "Stainless Light,"* 470, translated in Newman (1987), 516. See also Choglé Namgyal, *Annotations to the "Stainless Light,"* vol. 18: 191–92, whose comments are very different and provide no information about the greater set of four eons. In translating the word *quarter*, I have followed the reading in the 'Dzam thang edition, 208, which has *bzhi cha* (*quarter*), where the Bhutanese edition has *bcu cha* (*tenth*), which is a scribal error. When discussing the lesser eons in his *Autocommentary*, 605, Dölpopa specifically says the word *foot* (*rkang pa*) is a term for a *quarter* (*bzhi cha*).
- 467 This is precisely according to the *Stainless Light's* explanation of verse 23 of the *Chapter on the Worldly Realm* (*Lokadhātupāṭala*) of the *Kālacakra Tantra*. See Choglé Namgyal, *Annotations to the "Stainless Light,"* vol. 18: 192–93, Butön Rinchen Drup, *Annotations to the Chapter on the Worldly Realm in the "Stainless Light,"* 471, and Newman (1987), 518. On 519, note 49, Newman mentions that the equal duration of the *yugas* presented here in the *Stainless Light* is unusual. The more common arrangement, which he mentions as being the case in the *Manusmṛti* and the *Mahābhārata*, is one of unequal *yugas*, with the Kṛtayuga lasting 4,800 years, the Tretāyuga 3,600 years, the Dvāparayuga 2,400 years, and the Kaliyuga 1,200 years. The years of the *yugas* are more often calculated by divine years consisting of 360 human years. See Jacobi (1908), 200–201. According to Pingree (1981), 14, Āryadeva's *Āryabhaṭṭīya* has a system of equal *yugas*, each of which lasts 1,080,000 human years. This agrees with Dölpopa's figure concerning the great four eons in the previous verse, as well as the annotations of Butön mentioned in note 465.
- 468 This description of the degeneration of the Buddhist doctrine is also based on the *Stainless Light's* commentary to verse 23 of the *Chapter on the Worldly Realm* (*Lokadhātupāṭala*) of the *Kālacakra Tantra*. See Choglé Namgyal, *Annotations to the "Stainless Light,"* vol. 18: 192–93, Butön Rinchen Drup, *Annotations to the Chapter on the Worldly Realm in the "Stainless Light,"* 471, and Newman (1987), 517–19. More of the same is also found in the *Stainless Light's* commentary to verse 169, translated in Newman (1987), 650–52.
- 469 Dölpopa certainly considered the Kṛtayuga Dharma to include all the highest tantras, and the Trilogy of Bodhisattva Commentaries, the Ten Sūtras on the Essence, the Ten Sūtras of Definitive Meaning, and the works of Maitreya, Nāgārjuna, Vasubandhu, Asaṅga, Nāropa, Saraha, and other Indian masters. See notes 27–30 for a list of commentaries and sūtras.
- 470 The two truths are the absolute (*don dam*) and the relative (*kun rdzob*). The two modes of emptiness are emptiness of self-nature (*rang stong*) and emptiness of other (*gzhan stong*). Exaggeration (*sgro 'dogs*) involves exaggeration of the existence of relative phenomena, and denial (*skur 'debs*) is denial of the existence of absolute reality. Paradoxical terms, such as "formless form" (*gzugs med gzugs*) and "mindless mind" (*sems med pa'i sems*), are used in some scriptures and treatises to describe the absolute, but not the relative. Phenomena (*chos*) and true nature (*chos snyid*) are the relative

and the absolute. Everything knowable can be divided into the two categories of conditioned and unconditioned. The two great kingdoms are the great kingdom of the absolute and the great kingdom of the relative. These topics are explained in depth in the *Autocommentary*.

- 471 Here and throughout his writings Dölpopa uses the term Madhyamaka, and especially Great Madhyamaka, as a synonym for ultimate reality and not just in the sense of the philosophical tenet known as Madhyamaka.
- 472 The phrase “indivisibility of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa” (*khor ’das dbyer med*) is most commonly used for the distinctive view of the Path with the Result, which is the most important system of theory and meditation taught in the Sakya tradition. For more about this tradition, see Stearns (2001) and (2006).
- 473 An example of what Dölpopa considers appearances of the absolute would be the images of emptiness (*sūnyatābimba*, *stong pa nyid kyi gzugs*) that appear to the yogin during practice of the Six-branch Yoga (*ṣaḍaṅgayoga*). In what was a controversial position, Dölpopa considered these to actually be the buddha nature, or complete buddhahood. The later Kagyü master Karma Trinlepa (Karma ’phrin las pa) commented: “. . . accepting the images of emptiness possessing the most sublime of all aspects to be complete buddhahood is the tradition of the omniscient Jonangpa.” See Karma Trinlepa, *Reply to Ngodro Lama’s Questions*, 121: “. . . *rnam kun mchog ldan gyi/ stong gzugs rdzogs sangs rgyas su khas len pa/ de ni kun mkhyen jo nang pa yi lugs/*.
- 474 This is because absolute reality and nirvāṇa are often described by these terms in certain sūtras and tantras.
- 475 The ten powers (*stobs bcu*) of a buddha are the powers of knowing what are and are not appropriate circumstances; knowing the maturation of actions; knowing various inclinations; knowing various constituents; knowing who has supreme faculties and inferior faculties; knowing the paths going everywhere; knowing meditation, liberation, meditative concentration, absorption, and so forth; knowing previous existences; knowing the transference of consciousness at death and birth; and knowing the cessation of taints.
- 476 This line is found only in the ’Dzam thang edition, 212: *rnam mkhyen ye shes mthar thug yin par gyur/*.
- 477 The five immutable great emptinesses (*stong pa chen po ’gyur med lnga*) and the six immutable empty drops (*thig le stong pa ’gyur med drug*) are taught in detail in Puṇḍarīka’s *Stainless Light* (*Vimalaprabhā*, *Dri med ’od*). The key passages from Puṇḍarīka’s work are cited in Dölpopa’s *Mountain Dharma*. See Döl-bo-ba Shay-rap-gyel-tsen (2006), 376–80. See also the excellent explanation of these topics (based on Puṇḍarīka’s *Stainless Light*) in Kongtrul (2005), 188–97. Briefly, the five immutable great emptinesses refer to freedom from the obscurations of the five aggregates, the five constituents, and so forth. The six immutable empty drops refer to freedom from the obscurations of the six sense faculties, their six objects, and so forth.
- 478 These are all terms used in the tantras to indicate the indivisibility, nonduality, and unity of method (*upāya*, *thabs*) and wisdom (*prajñā*, *shes rab*), as well as the identical essence of the ground and result of the path. It is interesting that Dölpopa uses the

Sanskrit word *ahaṃ*, “I.” For some discussion of these terms see Dölpopa, *Reply to the Questions of Joworipa Lama Könchok Göṇ*, 728–29, and *Brief Analysis*, 459–60.

- 479 As explained in note 419, the terminology of *outer*, *inner*, and *other* is from the Kālacakra system.
- 480 In response to the hypothetical claim that these types of primordial awareness are conditioned and impermanent, Dölpopa lists some names for absolute reality culled from the *Perfect Expression of the Absolute Names of Mañjuśrī* (Toh 360, Kangyur, rgyud 'bum ka, 1b–13b). These names from the scripture describe absolute truth in terms of cognition, pure awareness, and primordial awareness, and do not apply to anything that is conditioned, impermanent, and ordinary consciousness. As its title specifies, this tantra is concerned with expressing the names of the absolute, not those of the relative. See Davidson (1981) for a study and translation of this text, which is accepted in the Tibetan tradition as one of the most authoritative scriptures of definitive meaning.
- 481 The term *shes bcu* is understood here to be identical to the ten types of primordial awareness (*daśajñāna*, *ye shes bcu*). These are listed in Davidson (1981), 24, note 68. They are primordial awareness of phenomena, successive primordial awareness, primordial awareness of worldly usage, of others' minds, of suffering, of its arising, of its extinction, of the path, of final destruction, and of no future arising.
- 482 For the eight knowledges (*shes brgyad*), see Davidson (1981), 34, note 110. These are the knowledges of the elements of the four noble truths and the knowledges of the succeeding moments of the four noble truths. The first four are the realization of the four noble truths in the desire realm, and the second four are the realization of the same four noble truths in the form and formless realms.
- 483 See Davidson (1981), 37, note 125. The six clairvoyances are realization of the knowledge of the object of concentration, of the knowledge of divine hearing, of the knowledge of the gradations of other's minds, of the knowledge of the memory of previous existences, of the knowledge of the arising and passing away (of beings), and of the knowledge of the utter destruction of impurities. The six subsequent mindfulnesses are also listed in Davidson (1981), 37, note 126. These are subsequent mindfulness of the Buddha, the Dharma, the Saṅgha, one's own discipline, one's own renunciation, and one's own chosen deity.
- 484 See note 475. See also the *Highest Continuum (Uttaratantra)*, translated in Takasaki (1966), 338–39.
- 485 This is a paraphrase of a statement in the *Stainless Light* that says, “The conquerors have taught that primordial awareness beyond single and multiple moments is thatness.” See Puṇḍarīka, *Stainless Light*, Toh 1347, Tengyur, rgyud 'tha, 145b.
- 486 Dölpopa frequently emphasizes in his writings that relative phenomena would be impossible without the existence of a fully established and real absolute, or dharmakāya.
- 487 The nine fully established natures (*pariniṣpanna*, *yongs grub*) are the true nature of phenomena (*chos rnam kyī chos nyid*), the basic space of phenomena (*chos kyī dbyings*), the very place of phenomena (*chos kyī gnas nyid*), flawless phenomena (*chos*



*skyon med pa nyid*), thusness (*de bzhin nyid*), unmistakable thusness (*ma nor ba de bzhin*), thusness that is not another (*gzhan ma yin pa de bzhin nyid*), the culmination of perfection (*yang dag pa'i mtha'*), and inconceivable space (*bsam gyis mi khyab pa'i dbyings*). Most of these are also listed among the 108 names of the perfection of wisdom. See also Conze (1973b), 196.

- 488 The Bhutanese edition has recorded this line twice with a minor error in the repeated line. The repetition is not found in the 'Dzam thang edition and has not been translated here.
- 489 The mode of confusion is all the confusion of ordinary consciousness, while the true mode of reality is the way the true nature actually exists as omnipresent, self-arisen primordial awareness.
- 490 According to Dölpopa, the founding system is the teachings of the Kṛtayuga and the obstructing system is that of the Tretāyuga and later eons. Their differences are detailed in the *Autocommentary*.
- 491 Briefly, there is a third category in regard to entities and nonentities, because permanent thusness is neither of those two. This third category is everything that is the fully established nature (*pariniṣpanna*), or absolute reality. There is no third category in regard to the inanimate and the aware, because there is nothing knowable that is not either inanimate or aware.
- 492 The names, duration, and characteristics of the great and lesser four eons are presented in a series of verses at the beginning of the *Fourth Council*.
- 493 These are the triad of the imagined (*parikalpita*, *kun brtags*), the dependent (*paratantra*, *gzhan dbang*), and the fully established (*pariniṣpanna*, *yongs grub*) natures. They are usually considered to be one of the fundamental paradigms employed in the Yogācāra or Cittamātra tradition. Dölpopa challenges this doxographical ascription and maintains that the three natures (*trisvabhāva*) are an integral part of the Great Madhyamaka tradition.
- 494 The three selves (*ātman*) are the *self* of the individual, the *self* of phenomena, and the pure *self*. These are the essence of the imagined nature (*parikalpita*), the essence of the dependent nature (*paratantra*), and the essence of thusness or the fully established nature (*pariniṣpanna*), which are respectively to be understood, to be rejected, and to be attained.
- 495 The three emptinesses are of nonexistence (*med pa'i stong nyid*), existence (*yod pa'i stong nyid*), and natural emptiness (*rang bzhin stong nyid*).
- 496 This terminology is from the Kālacakra tradition. There is this inferior and relative outer and inner environment and its inhabitants, and there is the other, sublime, transcendent, excellent Primordial Buddha (*ādibuddha*) beyond this. These are said to be like the outer portion of a husk of grain, the inner portion, and the kernel of grain, which are similar in form but not identical in essence. Dölpopa says this outer and inner, static and mobile world is empty of self-nature, while the other, sublime, transcendent, excellent Primordial Buddha beyond this is empty of other.
- 497 The four truths are the truth of suffering, the truth of the origin of suffering, the truth of cessation, and the truth of the path. The four factors (*chos bzhi*) are the ground of

purification (*sbyang gzhi*), the object of purification (*sbyang bya*), the purifying agent (*sbyong byed*), and the result of purification (*sbyangs 'bras*). The five factors (*chos lnga*) are name (*ming*), causal characteristic (*rgyu mshan*), conceptualization (*rnam par rtog pa*), thusness (*de bzhin nyid*), and perfect primordial awareness (*yang dag pa'i ye shes*). These five are taught in many different Mahāyāna scriptures and treatises. See Suganuma (1967) for a study of their occurrence in the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*.

- 498 See note 477 for the five immutable great emptinesses. The five conquerors are the five buddhas: Akṣobhya, Vairocana, Ratnasambhava, Amitābha, and Amoghasiddhi.
- 499 The five consorts (*vidyā, rig ma*) are the female counterparts to the five conquerors or buddhas. They are Māmaki, Vajradhātviśvarī, Locanī, Pāṇḍara Vāsini, and Samaya Tārā. The five buddhas are the same as the five conquerors listed in the previous note. The five kāyas (*pañcakāya, sku lnga*) of a buddha are usually given as the nirmāṇakāya, the sambhogakāya, the dharmakāya, the svābhāvikakāya, and the kāya of primordial awareness (*jñānakāya*). The five types of primordial awareness are mirrorlike primordial awareness, primordial awareness of equality, discriminating primordial awareness, all-accomplishing primordial awareness, and primordial awareness of the basic space of phenomena. The ten types of primordial awareness (*daśajñāna, ye shes bcu*) are mentioned in the *Perfect Expression of the Absolute Names of Mañjuśrī*. They are primordial awareness of phenomena, successive primordial awareness, primordial awareness of worldly usage, of others' minds, of suffering, of its arising, of its extinction, of the path, of final destruction, and of no future arising. See Davidson (1981), 24, note 68.
- 500 In the Kṛtāyuga tradition there are both productive (*skyed byed*) and separating (*bral byed*) causes, which yield produced results (*skyed 'bras*) and separated results (*bral 'bras*). Buddha is a separated result, in the sense that the true nature is separated from the various veils that have previously concealed the eternally present buddha nature, or sugata essence, which is never produced.
- 501 That is to say, those of the Tretāyuga and later eons accept only a universal-ground consciousness (*ālayavijñāna, kun gzhi rnam shes*), but not a universal-ground primordial awareness (*kun gzhi ye shes*).
- 502 The Sanskrit term *evaṃ* symbolizes the unity of emptiness (*e*) and great bliss (*vaṃ*).
- 503 The twelve aspects of truth (*bden don bcu gnyis*) or twelve truths (*bden pa bcu gnyis*) are defined in various ways. For example, see below in Dölpopa, *Autocommentary to the "Fourth Council"* (640 of the Tibetan text), where they are explained from the *Stainless Light*. See also Davidson (1981), 34, notes 109 and 111, for an explanation of these twelve as the twelve purified senses and sensory bases. The sixteen aspects of reality or thatness (*de nyid bcu drug*) are also explained in different ways. For these sixteen in the *Stainless Light*, see the translation in Newman (1987), 236. But see also Davidson (1981), note 112, where they are equated with the sixteen kinds of emptiness. Other definitions are also found.
- 504 According to Dölpopa, the natural family (*rang bzhin rigs*) is the tathāgata essence, the true nature, the basic space of nonconceptual luminosity.
- 505 See note 487 for a list of the nine fully established natures (*pariniṣpanna*). The twelve fully established natures are those nine plus the addition of the true nature that never deteriorates (*yongs su mi nyams pa'i chos nyid*), constant abiding in

equanimity (*rtag tu btang snyoms su gnas pa*), and the primordial awareness of omniscience (*rnam mkhyen gyi ye shes*). See Dölpopa, *Autocommentary to the "Fourth Council,"* 645.

- 506 The position of the Sakya tradition in regard to the universal ground, as expressed by Sakya Paṇḍita in his famous *Distinguishing the Three Vows* (*Sdom gsum rab dbye*), may well be the object of Dölpopa's objection here. Sakya Paṇḍita wrote:

The statements in some [sūtras]  
concerning a "taintless mental continuum"  
refer to precisely the luminous aspect  
of the universal-ground consciousness.  
Since that is unobscured and neutral,  
it is not designated as virtue.

If there were a "taintless mental continuum"  
outside of the eight groups [of consciousness],  
there would then be nine groups of consciousness.  
Therefore a taintless mental continuum  
outside of the eight groups is incorrect.

See Sakya Paṇḍita, *Distinguishing the Three Vows*, 14: 'ga' las zag med sems rgyud ces/ gsungs pa kun gzhi'i rnam shes kyi/ gsal cha nyid la dgongs pa yin/ de ni ma bsgribs lung ma bstan/ yin phyir dge ba'i tha snyad med/ 'on te zag med sems rgyud ces/ tshogs brgyad las gzhan yod na ni/ de tshe rnam shes tshogs dgur gyur / des na tshogs brgyad las gzhan pa'i/ zag med sems rgyud mi 'thad do/. Dölpopa would perhaps respond by saying that he is concerned with the universal-ground primordial awareness, which is not consciousness.

- 507 The translation follows the 'Dzam thang edition reading of *ma bsgrubs*, instead of the *ma sgribs* in the Bhutanese edition.
- 508 The translation follows the 'Dzam thang edition reading of *dge ba*, instead of the *dag pa* in the Bhutanese edition.
- 509 Dölpopa often uses the term *Madhyamaka* as a synonym for absolute reality.
- 510 Maiteya's *Ornament for the Sūtras* (*Sūtrālaṃkāra*) and *Distinguishing the Middle and the Extremes* (*Madhyāntavibhāga*) are examples of texts that Dölpopa considers representative of Great Madhyamaka, but that are usually felt to be Cittamātra.
- 511 Vasubandhu and Dignāga are examples of great teachers of Great Madhyamaka whom Dölpopa says have been incorrectly called representatives of Cittamātra.
- 512 The translation follows the 'Dzam thang edition, 227, reading of *gzhung ngan*, "bad treatises," instead of the Bhutanese reading of *gzhung don*, "meaning of the treatises."
- 513 That is, nonexistent.
- 514 In this context it is very interesting to read the following statement by Lama Dampa Sönam Gyaltzen, the Sakya master who asked Dölpopa to compose the *Fourth Council* and the *Autocommentary*:

[Lama Dampa] said, "In general, a true nature without phenomena is impossible. Phenomena without a true nature are also impossible. Therefore, the true

nature is not realized without realizing phenomena. There is no greater or lesser essence of the true nature, but obscurations become increasingly thinner during the path, by which the realization of the true nature becomes greater.”

These comments were recorded by Lama Dampa's disciple Gyal Lhakhangpa Lodrö Sengé (Rgyal lha khang pa Blo gros seng ge). See Jamgön Ameshap, *Summarizing Notes on Key Points of the Path with the Result Taught by Lama Dampa*, 3b: *spyir chos can med pa'i chos nyid mi srid/ chos nyid med pa'i chos can yang mi srid/ des na chos can ma rtogs par chos nyid mi rtogs/ chos nyid kyi ngo bo rgya che chung med kyang/ lam gyi skabs su sgrib pa je srab la song ba'i dbang gi[s] chos nyid rtog[s] pa rgya cher 'gro ba yin gsungs/*.

- 515 In this section Dölpopa is using the term *Madhyamaka* as a synonym for ultimate reality, not just the philosophical tenet that goes by the name *Madhyamaka*. The divisions of the *Madhyamaka* tradition of philosophy into the traditions of *Svātantrika* and *Prāsaṅgika* may be a Tibetan invention, as Dölpopa seems to be arguing, since these terms are not found in any extant Sanskrit sources. See Seyfort Ruegg (1981), 58. See Onada (1992), 71–91, for a description of some of the various opinions about *svatantra* (“independent inference”) and *prasaṅga* (“absurd consequence”) in Tibet.
- 516 See note 487.
- 517 The *Tantra of the Expression of the Absolute Names* (*Don dam mtshan brjod rgyud*) is the *Perfect Expression of the Absolute Names of Mañjuśrī* (Toh 360, Kangyur, rgyud 'bum ka, 1b–13b) Dölpopa has already repeated many names of the absolute drawn from this text.
- 518 *Atiyoga* is a term used for both the completion-stage practices of the *Guhyasamāja Tantra* and the highest practices of the Great Perfection tradition. *Vajrayoga* is a synonym for the Six-branch Yoga taught in many tantras, especially the *Kālacakra* and the *Guhyasamāja*.
- 519 Here the translation follows the spelling *dbus ma* (*middle*) found in the explanation of these verses in the *Autocommentary*, where it is paired with *bar ma* (*central*), not the spelling *dbu ma* (*Madhyamaka*, *Middle Way*) found here in the basic verses. Dölpopa often plays with these two spellings, which sound almost identical and have the same meaning, to highlight the meaning of *Madhyamaka* (*Middle Way*) as a synonym for the true nature of reality, the middle (*dbus ma*) that is beyond all extremes and categories.
- 520 Here the translation follows the 'Dzam thang edition, 229, spelling of *dbu ma* (*Madhyamaka*), instead of *dbus ma* (*middle*), which is found in the Bhutanese edition, although either spelling makes equal sense!
- 521 See note 475.
- 522 The translation follows the 'Dzam thang edition, 230, reading of *chos can*, instead of the Bhutanese reading of *chos rnam*.
- 523 The Five Treatises of Maitreya are listed in note 30.
- 524 By definition, ordinary phenomena are conditioned and impermanent.

- 525 For example, a division into a relative and an absolute dependent origination is also made by Kamalaśīla in his commentary to the *Śālistamba Sūtra*. See Schoening (1995), 95-104 and 243-328. In the translation on 245-64, Kamalaśīla glosses a series of fifteen adjectives used in the sūtra to describe ultimate dependent origination, such as "permanent," "unconditioned," and so forth.
- 526 This and the following line are almost identical to lines in the *Perfect Expression of the Absolute Names of Mañjuśrī*, Toh 360, Kangyur, rgyud 'bum ka, 7a. The translation follows the 'Dzam thang edition's spelling *btön*, instead of the Bhutanese edition's *ston*. The twelve limbs of dependent origination (*pratītyāsamutpāda*, *rten cing 'brel bar byung ba*) are ignorance, conditioning factors, consciousness, name and form, the six sensory bases, contact, feeling, craving, appropriation, existence, birth, and aging and death.
- 527 See Dölpopa, *Autocommentary to the "Fourth Council"* (638 of the Tibetan text), where these are explained in several ways. See also Davidson (1981), 34, note 109, for an explanation of the twelve pure aspects (*dag pa rnam pa bcu gnyis*) as the result that is obtained after the eradication of the twelve limbs of dependent origination. Some sources also say these same twelve are the twelve purified senses and sensory bases.
- 528 See below in Dölpopa, *Autocommentary to the "Fourth Council"* (640 of the Tibetan text), and Davidson (1981), 34, note 111.
- 529 These twelve places are sites in the spiritual topography of the tantras, which are to be understood in both an external and an internal sense.
- 530 The Kālacakra system applies astrological terminology to both the outer movements of the heavenly bodies and the inner processes within living beings. Here the reference is to the dissolution of the vital winds (*vāyu*) in the central channel (*avadhūtī*) of the subtle body as a result of the practice of the Six-branch Yoga.
- 531 The Tibetan term *yum*, "mother" is used to refer to six versions of the *Sūtra on the Perfection of Wisdom*: those in one hundred thousand, twenty-five thousand, eighteen thousand, ten thousand, and eight thousand lines, and the condensed sūtra. The huge *Avatamsaka Sūtra* fills four volumes of the Kangyur (Toh 44, Kangyur, phal chen ka, kha, ga, a).
- 532 The simile of the prognostic image (*pratisenā*, *pra phab*) is peculiar to the Kālacakra tradition. Newman (1988), 133, notes the term *pratisenā* as a rare Sanskrit term found only in the Kālacakra literature. He translates a passage from the *Stainless Light* to illustrate the usage of this term: "Like a maiden's prognostic image in a mirror and so forth, the luminosity of the yogis' own minds appears manifest in the sky." He adds that the "sky" here refers to emptiness. In another passage the *Stainless Light* says the Great Seal (*mahāmudrā*) is similar to the eight prognostic images. Furthermore, Newman quotes a reference from Nāropa, who cites the *Pratisenāvatāra Tantra* concerning the appearance of eight kinds of prognostic images in a mirror, a sword, a thumbnail, a lamp, the moon, the sun, a water well, and the eye. Only these eight specific objects can serve as supports for the prognostication. Orofino (1994), 613, summarizes the topic:

In all the texts concerning the *śaḍaṅgayoga*, as it is transmitted in the Kālacakra system, the *pratisenā* divination is the main metaphor used to describe the intrin-

sis nature of the visions that appear in the sky to the yogin once the *pratyāhāra* and the *dhyāna*, the first two stages of this yoga, have been accomplished.

... the images that appear to the young girl in the mirror are devoid of any materiality; in the same way one must consider the nature of the images that appear to the yogin who, because of the power of his own mind, sees in the ether immaterial visions that transcend the three realms.

- 533 In the tantras emptiness is sometimes spoken of as *bhaga* (*vulva*). This is because the ten powers and so forth of a buddha, which are other-arisen qualities, are newly born in the continuum of an individual who has perfected the meditation and actualized the realization of emptiness, while the infinite qualities of the unconditioned dharmakāya are naturally present.
- 534 The "powerful tenfold anagram" (*rnam bcu dbang ldan*) is the name used for the well-known anagram of the ten-syllable Kālacakra mantra written in Lañtsa script. The entire teachings of the *Kālacakra Tantra* are encoded in this one symbol. The outer teachings concerning the inanimate world, the inner teachings about the nature of the animate beings in the world, the other teachings of the creation-stage meditation, and the other teachings of the completion-stage meditation can all be presented on the basis of this single anagram.
- 535 According to the categories applied in Tibet to tantras translated during the second major influx of Buddhism beginning in the tenth century, the four sets of tantra are highest yogatantra (*anuttarayogatantra*, *bla med rgyud*), yogatantra (*rnal 'byor rgyud*), performance tantra (*caryātantra*, *spyod rgyud*), and action tantra (*kriyātantra*, *bya rgyud*).
- 536 Dölpopa contrasts "this" and "other" in reference to an absolute reality that is "other" than "this" relative reality. See especially Dölpopa, *Brief Analysis*, 459-60. He is also certainly indicating the meaning of "other" in the triad of outer, inner, and other that is characteristic of the Kālacakra system. In this context, "other" refers to the level of absolute reality perceived through the visionary awareness of the practitioner who has achieved unity with the deity, which is "other" than "this" relative perception. For example, during the practice of the first branch of the Six-branch Yoga the link between the ordinary five sense faculties and their objects is broken and the consciousness that was previously projected outward toward those objects is withdrawn, so that five "other" sense faculties with the nature of primordial awareness can engage five "other" objects that have the nature of luminosity.
- 537 The three realms (*tridhātu*, *kham ssum*) are the desire realm (*kāmadhātu*, *'dod kham*), form realm (*rūpadhātu*, *gzugs kham*), and formless realm (*arūpadhātu*, *gzugs med kham*).
- 538 The three times are the past, present, and future.
- 539 The three vehicles are the vehicle of the śrāvakas (*śrāvakayāna*), the vehicle of the pratyekabuddhas (*pratyekabuddhayāna*), and the vehicle of the bodhisattvas (*bodhisattvayāna*).
- 540 That is, the central figure in a maṇḍala and the entourage of surrounding deities.
- 541 Father (*yab*) and Mother (*yum*) are terms commonly used to designate a pair of male and female deities.

- 542 The thirty-seven factors conducive to enlightenment (*bodhipakṣadharma*, *byang chub phyogs chos*) are conveniently placed in a chart in Kapstein (1992b), 204–5. As noted earlier, Dölpopa says three of the four truths are relative and empty of self-nature, and only the truth of cessation is absolute and empty of other. Here he is speaking of the absolute aspect of the factors conducive to enlightenment, not the relative.
- 543 The nine absorptions (*snyoms 'jug dgu*) are the four meditative states (*bsam gtan bzhi*), the four formless states (*gzugs med bzhi*), and the absorption of cessation (*gogs pa'i snyoms 'jug*).
- 544 The three doors of liberation (*rnam thar sgo gsum*) are three meditative concentrations that create liberation. They are emptiness (*stong pa nyid*), signlessness (*mtshan ma med pa*), and wishlessness (*smon pa med pa*).
- 545 See note 475 for the ten powers. See Takasaki (1966), 339–41, for a list of the four fearless attributes. Krang Yi Sun, ed., *Great Dictionary of Tibetan and Chinese*, vol. 2: 2958, has an entry for *so so yang dag par rig pa bzhi*, which are four types of discriminating perfect awareness with which a bodhisattva perceives various phenomena. These are awareness of phenomena, awareness of meaning, awareness of definitions, and awareness of ability. The eighteen exclusive qualities (*ma 'dres bco brgyad*) of a buddha are described in the *Highest Continuum* (*Uttaratantra*), translated in Takasaki (1966), 341–43. According to Krang Yi Sun, ed., *Great Dictionary of Tibetan and Chinese*, vol. 1: 307, the three knowledges (*mkhyen pa gsum*) are knowledge of the ground, knowledge of the path, and omniscience.
- 546 See note 532 concerning the eight prognostic images. As certain visions or prognostic images may only be experienced during the ritual of divination or prognostication, so also the “images of emptiness” that appear as manifestations of the sugata essence or buddha nature during the practice of the Six-branch Yoga only appear when the mind is resting in a nonconceptual state, although the buddha nature is eternally present.
- 547 The Tibetan term is *kun tu ru*, which is a rendering of the Sanskrit word *kunduru*, meaning olibanum or frankincense. This term is used in the tantras as a code word for sexual union.
- 548 This simile is from chapter thirty-two of the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*, which is sometimes referred to in Tibetan as the *Sūtra of the Great Roll of Cloth* (*Dar yug chen po'i mdo*). The passage from the sūtra is quoted at length in Asaṅga's commentary to the *Highest Continuum*. For a translation, see Takasaki (1966), 189–92.
- 549 The simile of an unknown treasure beneath a pauper's house is found in many scriptures and treatises, such as the *Sūtra on the Tathāgata Essence*, the *Sūtra of Great Nirvāṇa* (*Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*), and the commentary to the *Highest Continuum*. Also see Takasaki (1966), 272–73, for the use of this example in the *Highest Continuum*. The simile of a lamp in a vase is also found in such texts as Nāgārjuna's *Eulogy to the Basic Space of Phenomena* (*Dharmadhātustava*).
- 550 The ordinary vital action winds (*karmavāyu*, *las rlung*) are drawn into the central channel (*avadhūti*) during the practice of tantric yoga and are transformed into the vital wind of primordial awareness (*jñānavāyu*, *ye shes rlung*). Until this is achieved one remains under the power of ordinary consciousness, which is “mounted” on the

action winds. When these winds have been drawn into the central channel and transformed into the vital wind of primordial awareness, this becomes the support for nonconceptual primordial awareness.

- 551 The translation follows the 'Dzam chang edition, 240, reading of *'di las*, "beyond this," instead of the Bhutanese reading of *'di la*, "concerning this."
- 552 The phrase *threefold purity* (*'khor gsum dag pa*) refers to performing an act with full awareness of the nonsubstantiality of the person doing the action, the action itself, and the object of the action.
- 553 The ten types of Dharma practice (*chos spyod nam bcu*) are to copy the scriptures, present offerings, practice generosity, listen to Dharma, uphold it, read it, explain it, recite it, think about the meaning of the Dharma, and meditate on the meaning of the Dharma. See Krang Yi Sun, ed., *Great Dictionary of Tibetan and Chinese*, vol. 1: 840.
- 554 During the decisiveness (*la zlo*) of meditative equipoise all points of reference, including the teachings of Dharma, must be relinquished in order to correctly experience the nature of reality. Following sessions of meditation, phenomena encountered during ordinary daily activities must be analyzed or distinguished (*shan 'byed*).
- 555 *Melting bliss* (*zhu bde*) is a term for experiences arising from union with a consort, whether actual or imagined, during the practice of tantric yoga. Common sexual bliss, which is changeable, is to be rejected in favor of the immutable bliss experienced as a result of the unity of bliss and emptiness without emission of sexual fluids.
- 556 See also chapter 3, section 3. The idea that the essence of the thoughts or concepts is the dharmakāya is widespread in Tibetan Buddhism, perhaps especially in the Kagyü and Nyingma traditions. Dölpopa repeatedly criticizes this in the strongest terms. Examples of what he is criticizing are found in the mystical songs of Karmapa Rangjung Dorjé. See Rangjung Dorjé, *Mystical Songs of Rangjung Dorjé*, 58: "These various concepts that arise in the mind dawn as the pure land of the buddhas" (*sems byung nam rtog sna tshogs 'di/ sangs rgyas nam kyi zhing du shar*). See also Rangjung Dorjé, *Mystical Songs of Rangjung Dorjé*, 92: "The very essence of the six groups [of consciousness] is primordial awareness. Recognition of that is so amazing!" (*tshogs drug rang ngo ye shes yin/ de ngo shes pa a re mtshar*). Even the great adept Tangtong Gyalpo (Grub chen Thang stong rgyal po), who would claim to be Dölpopa's rebirth, said thoughts are the dynamic energy (*rtsal*) of the dharmakāya. See Stearns (2007), 330. This point in Dölpopa's work was certainly not accepted by many later upholders of the *shentong* view in the Kagyü and Nyingma traditions.
- 557 The view that the *essence* of the five poisons of desire, hatred, ignorance, jealousy, and greed are the five types of primordial awareness identified with the five conquerors or buddhas is also widespread in Tibet, as is the idea that consciousness is to be transformed into primordial awareness. For example, in the Sakya tradition the practice of Hevajra according to the Path with the Result is done to transform the five aggregates, the five poisons, and so forth into the five types of primordial awareness. This issue hinges on different interpretations of what is meant by "transformation" (*gnas gyur*).
- 558 Statements about the presence of absolute reality whether buddhas appear or do not appear is found in many Buddhist scriptures. For example, the "Maitreya Chapter" of



the *Perfection of Wisdom in Twenty-five Thousand Lines* says, “Whether the tathāgatas appear or the tathāgathas do not appear, the true nature and space of the existence of phenomena remains.” See Conze (1975), 648. Similar statements are also found in other scriptures such as the *Samyutta*, the *Aṅguttara*, the *Śālistamba Sūtra*, and the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*. See Lamotte (1988), 25, note 25. Significantly for Dölpopa, the *Vast Explication*, the great commentary to the sūtras on the perfection of wisdom, says, “whether the tathāgatas appear or do not appear” indicates “that true nature is the quintessence, but is not impermanent.” See Anonymous (Vasubandhu?), *Vast Explication*, Toh 3808, Tengyur, shes phyin pha, 287a: *chos nyid de ngo bo nyid yin gyi mi rtag pa ni ma yin no!*.

- 559 Maitreya, *Highest Continuum*, Toh 4024, Tengyur, sems tsam phi, 57a. In the Tengyur the last phrase reads *gyur ba med pa'i chos nyid do*, instead of Dölpopa's quotation of *gyur ba med pa nyid du gnas so*.
- 560 Dölpopa's criticism of this use of the terms “groundless and rootless” (*gzhi med rtasal*), which is a fairly common phrase, is probably directed at certain presentations of the view according to the Great Perfection (Rdzogs chen) of the Nyingma tradition, and also according to some Kagyü teachings.
- 561 The phrase “from form to omniscience” (*gzugs nas nam mkhyen gyi bar*) is a standard phrase referring to all the phenomena that make up the universe. There are 108 categories, beginning with form, the first of the five aggregates, and ending with a buddha's omniscience.
- 562 Dölpopa here refers to a series of divisions of the aggregates, constituents, and so forth that is taught in the *Stainless Light*. According to Puṇḍarīka's explanation, the thirty-six tastes and constituents are the six tastes, the six constituents, the six sense faculties, their six objects, the six action faculties, and their six objects. The thirty-six aggregates are the six types of consciousness, the six conditioning factors, the six feelings, the six perceptions, the six form aggregates, and the six aggregates of primordial awareness. See Puṇḍarīka, *Stainless Light*, Toh 1347, Tengyur, rgyud tha, 150b–51a. For a translation, see Newman (1987), 397–99. Dölpopa, *Mountain Dharma*, 226–31, discusses these topics in detail. See also the translation by Jeffrey Hopkins in Dölbo-ba Shay-rap-gyel-tsen (2006), 319–22.
- 563 See note 528.
- 564 This is a paraphrase of a statement in the *Stainless Light*: “The conquerors have taught that primordial awareness beyond single and multiple moments is thatness.” See Puṇḍarīka, *Stainless Light*, Toh 1347, Tengyur, rgyud tha, 145b.
- 565 This is certainly directed at the position of the Sakya tradition. In *Distinguishing the Three Vows* (*Sdom gsum rab dbye*) Sakya Paṇḍita says:

The statement in some sūtras,  
and in the Mahāyāna's *Highest Continuum*,  
that all sentient beings have  
the buddha essence like a jewel within rags  
should be understood as provisional.

The intention of that provisional  
[teaching] is emptiness. It was taught  
for the purpose of rejecting the five poisons.

The logic that refutes it as an entity  
is that if such an essential constituent  
of a buddha existed, it would be the same  
as the self of the non-Buddhists,  
it would be a real entity,  
and that would completely contradict  
the sūtras of definitive meaning.

Look at the *Tathāgatagarbhaparivarta*  
Sūtra concerning the meaning of this.  
And know that the master Candrakīrti,  
in *Entering the Madhyamaka*,  
also spoke of the sugata essence  
as provisional in meaning.

See Sakya Paṇḍita, *Distinguishing the Three Vows*, 16: ... mdo sde 'ga zbig dang/ theg pa chen po rgyud bla mar/ gos ngan nang na rin chen ltar/ sems can rnams la sangs rgyas kyi/ snying po yod par gsungs pa ni/ dgongs pa yin par shes par bya/ de yi dgongs gzhi stong nyid yin/ dgos pa skyon lnga spang phyir gsungs/ dngos la gnod byed tshad ma ni/ de 'dra'i sangs rgyas kham yod na/ mu stegs bdag dang mtshungs pa dang/ bden pa'i dngos por 'gyur phyir dang/ nges pa'i don gyi mdo sde dang/ rnam pa kun tu 'gal phyir rol/ 'di don de bzhin gshegs pa yi/ snying po'i le'u'i mdo sder ltos/ slob dpon zla ba grags pas kyang/ dbu ma la ni 'jug pa las/ bde gshegs snying po drang don du/ gsungs pa de yang shes par gyis/.

- 566 The translation follows the 'Dzam thang edition, 246, reading of *bgrang yas*, "countless," instead of the Bhutanese reading of *bgrang yod*, "countable."
- 567 The line "... and if the support is negated, what is supported is negated," is found only in the 'Dzam thang edition, 247: *rten khegs na yang rten pa khegs phyir dang/*.
- 568 "The sugata essence pervades all living beings" (*bde gshegs snying pos 'gro kun yongs la khyab*) is a famous statement often said to be from the *Samādhirāja Sūtra* (Toh 127, Kangyur, mdo sde da, 1b–17ob). However, the quotation has not been located in that scripture.
- 569 These comments also criticize a style of teaching popular in the Nyingma and Kagyü traditions. It would seem to be specifically directed against the view expounded in certain Nyingma tantras of the Great Perfection. For example, see the "Presentation of the Natural Purity, Without Rejection, of Even the Five Poisons Such as Desire and Hatred, Which Are Qualities of the Five Elements" (*'Byung ba'i yon tan lnga chags sdang la sogs pa dug lnga yang ma spangs gnas su dag par bstan pa*), which is the twenty-fourth chapter (580–82) of the *Tantra of Great Perfection, The Essence of All Views* (*Rdzogs pa chen po lta ba thams cad kyi snying po'i rgyud*), in vol. 7: 534–87, of *The mTshams brag Edition of the Collected Tantras of the Ancients*, Thimphu: National Library, Royal Government of Bhutan, 1982.
- 570 That is, if sentient beings were completely without awareness, they would be no different than the inanimate gross elements of earth, water, and so forth.
- 571 The translation follows the 'Dzam thang edition, 248, reading of *grol*, instead of the Bhutanese reading of *gol*.

- 572 This and the previous two lines are missing from the 'Dzam thang edition.
- 573 The translation follows the spelling *min* in the 'Dzam thang edition, 250, instead of the *yin* in the Bhutanese edition.
- 574 The translation follows the reading *brlab bcol* in the 'Dzam thang edition, 250, instead of the *slab btsal* found in the Bhutanese text. The spelling *brlab bcol* seems to be a variant or mistake for *lab 'chol*, a term used for babbling nonsense in one's sleep.
- 575 In the *Autocommentary*, Dölpopa directs the reader to his *Stong nyid kyi rab tu dbye ba'i bstan bcos* for clarification of this section. See Dölpopa, *Exceptional Distinguishing of Emptiness*.
- 576 The three representations (*rten gsum*) are of the Buddha's enlightened body, such as images; of the enlightened speech, such as written scriptures; and of enlightened mind, such as stūpas.
- 577 These opinions are perhaps representative of the types of arguments used by people who opposed Dölpopa's construction of the great stūpa at Jonang during the years 1330–33.
- 578 See note 440 concerning a verse in *General Commentary on the Doctrine* that deals with this same point.
- 579 The line "... and also denying his three representations," is found only in the 'Dzam thang edition, 251: *de yi rten gsum la yang skur btab nas/*.
- 580 Lhai Gyaltzen, *Biography of the Dharma Lord of Jonang*, 32a, mentions that Dölpopa constantly used these verses when making prayers. The same verses are also found at the end of several other texts. See Dölpopa, *Exceptional Distinguishing of Emptiness*, 157–58; *Distinguishing the Possible and the Impossible*, 379; *Distinguishing Naturally Lucid Self-Awareness*, 400; and *Explanation of the Nine Fully Established Natures*, 138.
- 581 The universal-ground consciousness (*ālayavijñāna*) is often identified with the Yogācāra or Cittamātra tradition. However, Nya Ōn Kunga Pal, *Explanation of the "General Commentary on the Doctrine"*, 24b, notes that Nāgārjuna (the founder of Mādhyamaka) also taught the existence of the universal-ground consciousness in his *Commentary on Enlightenment Mind (Bodhicittavivaraṇa)*, Toh 1800, Tengyur, rgyud ngi, 38a–42b.
- 582 The eight groups of consciousness are also commonly identified with the Yogācāra or Cittamātra tradition. These eight are the universal-ground consciousness, afflicted mind, mental consciousness, consciousness of touch, consciousness of taste, consciousness of smell, consciousness of hearing, and visual consciousness.
- 583 Takasaki (1966), 40, discusses the question of the *icchantikas*, who were said not to belong to any family (*agotra*) and thus have absolutely no possibility of attaining buddhahood. He sees this as one of the key points for distinguishing the pure theory of the tathāgata essence (*tathāgatagarbha*), in which the notion of *agotra* was considered a provisional teaching to convert people, from that of the Vijñānavāda.
- 584 Lama Dampa Sönam Gyaltzen was the leader of the Sakya tradition. See the introduction to the translation of the *Fourth Council* for a discussion of the circumstances

in which Lama Dampa made his request to Dölpopa. As discussed in chapter 3, section 2, Possessor of the Four Reliances (Rton pa bzhi ldan) was Dölpopa's favorite pseudonym. He sometimes also signed works as "the great calculator of the doctrine, the Possessor of the Four Reliances" (Bstan rtsis chen po Rton pa bzhi ldan). For example, see Dölpopa, *Qualities of the Basic Space of Phenomena or Sugata Essence*, 755.

- 585 This line in Tibetan is the equivalent of the Sanskrit invocation written at the beginning of the *Fourth Council*.
- 586 This dreaded phrase, "the meaning is easily understood" (*don ni rtogs par sla'o*), which seems to so often appear in Tibetan commentaries such as this just when a clear explanation would be greatly appreciated, brings to mind the comment of Michel de Montaigne: "I normally find matter for doubt in what the gloss has not condescended to touch upon. Like certain horses I know which miss their footing on a level path, I stumble more easily on the flat." See Montaigne (1993), 1210.
- 587 Jñānagarbha, *Distinguishing the Two Truths*, Toh 3881, Tengyur, dbu ma sa, 2a. My thanks go to Elizabeth Callahan for locating this quotation.
- 588 The translation follows the reading *med dgag ma yin pa'i stong pa nyid* found in the 'Dzam thang edition, 272, instead of the *ma yin pa'i stong pa nyid* in the Bhutanese.
- 589 The Bhutanese edition has *gnas lugs la* here, which is missing in the 'Dzam thang edition, 272, and has not been translated.
- 590 The translation follows the reading *lags* in the 'Dzam thang edition, 272, instead of the *legs* found in the Bhutanese edition.
- 591 Nāgārjuna's Collection of Eulogies (*Bstod pa'i tshogs*) is composed of eighteen works and his Collection of Reasoning (*Rigs pa'i tshogs*) is composed of five or six works. See Brunnhölzl (2007), 22–30, for a list of these texts and a discussion.
- 592 Nāgārjuna, *Sixty Verses on Reasoning*, Toh 3825, Tengyur, dbu ma tsa, 20a.
- 593 *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*, Toh 107, Kangyur, mdo sde ca, 165b.
- 594 *Mañjuśrī Root Tantra*, Toh 543, Kangyur, rgyud 'bum na, 308b–309a. Dölpopa refers to this work by its alternate name, *Root Chapter of Mañjuśrī* (*'Jam dpal rtsa ba'i rtog pa*), which is also the title used by Situ Panchen Chökyi Jungné (Si tu Pan chen Chos kyi 'byung gnas, 1700–1774) in his catalogue to the Tibetan Kangyur collection. See Chökyi Jungné, *Catalogue to the Dergé Edition of the Kangyur*, 420. The couplet in the tantra itself, which is in a series of verses about Nāgārjuna, is quite different than Dölpopa's quote, which could have been written from memory or when using a different Tibetan translation. Dölpopa quotes *khamd don bstan bcos du ma dang/ dngos med don gyi de nyid rig*, but the tantra itself has *bstan bcos sna tshogs don dang ni/ dngos po med pa'i don de rigs*. The translation follows the reading of the tantra itself, while correcting the final *rigs* to *rig*.
- 595 This line is from a series of verses in the lost *Kālacakra Root Tantra* that are quoted in Puṇḍarīka, *Stainless Light*, Toh 1347, Tengyur, rgyud tha, 144b.
- 596 For example, see Puṇḍarīka, *Stainless Light*, Toh 1347, Tengyur, rgyud da, 26b, and *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*, Toh 107, Kangyur, mdo sde ca, 115b–116a and 176a.

- 597 The 'Dzam thang edition, 277, has two lines here that are not in the Bhutanese edition and have not been translated: *don dam chos sku'i lam bden gyi byang chub phyogs kyi chos nas rnam mkhyen gyi bar med par 'dod pa ni skur pa 'debs pa'o/ gshis la kun rdzob 'gog bden byang chub phyogs kyi chos nas rnam mkhyen gyi bar yod par 'dod pa ni sgro 'dogs pa'o/*.
- 598 The Bhutanese text reads *kun brtags pa dang rnam par brtags pa'i sangs rgyas*. The 'Dzam thang edition, 595, reads *kun rdzob brtags pa dang rnam par brtags pa'i gzugs nas sangs rgyas*. The translation follows the *kun brtags pa* of the Bhutanese edition, instead of the *kun rdzob rtags pa* of the 'Dzam thang text, and the *gzugs nas sangs rgyas* of the 'Dzam thang edition, instead of the *sangs rgyas* of the Bhutanese.
- 599 Here the translation follows the 'Dzam thang edition, 595: *angos po yod pa'i gzugs nas*, instead of the Bhutanese edition's *gshis la angos po yod pa ni gzugs nas*.
- 600 The translation follows the 'Dzam thang edition, 279: *spang du gsol*, instead of the *spangs dgos la* in the Bhutanese edition.
- 601 The *rnam dag* is found only in the 'Dzam thang edition, 279.
- 602 See note 497 for the five factors, which are listed later in this text.
- 603 The three sufferings are of suffering, change, and conditioning. The eight sufferings are of birth, old age, sickness, death, separation from loved ones, encountering the undesirable, not obtaining the desirable, and the five aggregates.
- 604 See Dölpopa, *Distinguishing the Possible and the Impossible*.
- 605 *Sūtra on the Thorough Cultivation of Faith in the Mahāyāna* (*Theg pa chen po la dad pa rab tu sgom pa'i mdo*), Toh 144, Kangyur, mdo sde pa, 6b–34a. A sūtra with the name *Enumeration of Dharmas in the Great Mirror of Dharma* (*Chos kyi me long chen po'i chos kyi rnam grangs*) has not been located.
- 606 The School of Worldly Consensus (*jig rten grags sde*) is a name given by some Tibetan scholars to Buddhapālita's and Candrakīrti's school of Madhyamaka. See Seyfort Ruegg (1981), 80.
- 607 The phrases "formless fine form" (*gzugs med gzugs bzang*) and "possessing all aspects yet aspectless" (*rnam pa kun ldan rnam pa med*) are both from the *Perfect Expression of the Absolute Names of Mañjuśrī*, Toh 360, Kangyur, rgyud 'bum ka, 5a, 7b. The spellings in the Kangyur version of this scripture are slightly different: "formless yet possessing form" (*gzugs med gzugs ldan*) and "all forms yet formless" (*rnam pa thams cad rnam pa med*). However, the spellings in the same lines in Mati Panchen's commentary are identical to the phrases quoted here by Dölpopa, who was his teacher. See Mati Panchen, *Stainless Result*, 301 and 327. The version of the scripture in the Kangyur was translated by Pang Lotsāwa Lodrö Tenpa (Dpang Lo tsā ba Blo gros brtan pa, 1276–1342), from whom Mati Panchen first learned Sanskrit. It seems possible that Mati Panchen later revised the translation of his teacher, which was then perhaps used by Dölpopa.
- 608 These last two sentences are missing in the 'Dzam thang edition of the text.
- 609 Source of quote not located.
- 610 *Samvarodaya Tantra*, Toh 373, Kangyur, rgyud 'bum kha, 310a.

- 611 *Perfect Expression of the Absolute Names of Mañjuśrī*, Toh 360, Kangyur, rgyud 'bum ka, 1b–13b.
- 612 The translation follows the 'Dzam thang edition, 286, which has *brjod*, instead of the *bkod* found in the Bhutanese edition.
- 613 The translation follows the reading *nyes skyon* in the 'Dzam thang edition, 286, instead of the *nyes pa* found in the Bhutanese edition.
- 614 The translation follows the reading *'bral du* in the 'Dzam thang edition, 286, instead of the *'bras bu* found in the Bhutanese edition.
- 615 The sections in bold font are prose renderings of verses in the *Fourth Council*, 372.
- 616 The quoted words are from the basic verses by Āryadeva in his *Compendium of the Essence of Primordial Awareness*, Toh 3851, Tengyur, dbu ma tsha, 27b. It is significant that another series of verses from Āryadeva's text are embedded in the *Stainless Light* itself. See Newman (1992) for a study of the verses found in the *Stainless Light*.
- 617 Bodhibhadra, *Commentary to the "Compendium of the Essence of Primordial Awareness"*, Toh 3852, Tengyur, dbu ma tsha, 44a.
- 618 Puṇḍarīka, *Stainless Light*, Toh 1347, Tengyur, rgyud tha, 108a.
- 619 The translation follows the Bhutanese edition, which reads *ngos nga ngos po med pa nga/ gdod nas grol ba'i de bzhin gshegs*, instead of the 'Dzam thang edition, 288, which has *ngos dang ngos po med pa dang/ gdod nas grol ba'i de bzhin gshegs*. In several other texts, these lines are said to be from the *Vajrapañjara Tantra*, and were located there, but with yet another reading. See the *Vajrapañjara Tantra*, Toh 419, Kangyur, rgyud 'bum nga, 58a: *nga nyid ngos dang ngos med nga/ dang po'i de bzhin gshegs par brjod*.
- 620 The translation follows the reading *phung po gsum pa* in the 'Dzam thang edition, 288, instead of the *phung po gsum po gsum pa* found in the Bhutanese edition.
- 621 The words in bold font are a line of verse in the *Fourth Council*, 372, embedded here in a prose sentence.
- 622 The words in bold font are two lines of verse in the *Fourth Council*, 372, written here in a prose sentence.
- 623 The words in bold font are from four lines of verse in the *Fourth Council*, 372.
- 624 The words in bold font are two lines of verse in the *Fourth Council*, 374.
- 625 That is, the *Perfect Expression of the Absolute Names of Mañjuśrī*, Toh 360, Kangyur, rgyud 'bum ka, 1b–13b.
- 626 Puṇḍarīka, *Stainless Light*, Toh 1347, Tengyur, rgyud tha, 145b. Puṇḍarīka is said to be an incarnation of the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara.
- 627 The words in bold font in the previous three paragraphs are from a series of nineteen lines of verse in the *Fourth Council*, 374–75.
- 628 This passage is clearly from one of the Mother Sūtras, but the exact source has not been located.

- 629 The translation follows the spelling *'gres* in the 'Dzam thang edition, 291, instead of the *'dres* found in the Bhutanese edition.
- 630 The translation follows the reading *don dam* in the 'Dzam thang edition, 291, instead of the *don* found in the Bhutanese edition.
- 631 The words in bold font in the previous paragraphs are from two lines of verse in the *Fourth Council*, 376.
- 632 The translation follows the reading *yin* in the 'Dzam thang edition, 292, instead of the *zer* found in the Bhutanese edition.
- 633 The words in bold font in these paragraphs are from three lines of verse in the *Fourth Council*, 376.
- 634 *Sūtra on the Perfection of Wisdom in Eighteen Thousand Lines*, Toh 10, Kangyur, shes phyin *ka-ga*; *Sūtra on the Perfection of Wisdom in Twenty-five Thousand Lines*, Toh 9, Kangyur, shes phyin *ka-ga*.
- 635 *Sūtra on the Perfection of Wisdom in Five Hundred Lines*, Toh 15, Kangyur, shes phyin *ka*, 104a.
- 636 Maitreya, *Ornament for the Sūtras*, Toh 4020, Tengyur, sems tsam *phi*, 13b.
- 637 Maitreya, *Distinguishing the Middle and the Extremes*, Toh 4021, Tengyur, sems tsam *phi*, 42b.
- 638 *Sūtra of Excellent Golden Light*, Toh 556, Kangyur, rgyud 'bum *pa*, 151b–273a.
- 639 Maitreya, *Ornament for the Sūtras*, Toh 4020, Tengyur, sems tsam *phi*, 20a.
- 640 *Sūtra on the Perfection of Wisdom in Five Hundred Lines*, Toh 15, Kangyur, shes phyin *ka*, 104a–120b.
- 641 These lines from the lost *Kālacakra Root Tantra* are preserved in *Kālacakrapāda the Elder*, *Lotus Commentary on Difficult Points (Padminnāmapañjikā)*, Toh 1350, Tengyur, rgyud *na*, 84a.
- 642 The words *'dus ma byas kyi* are found only in the 'Dzam thang edition, 296.
- 643 The words *snang grags kyi* are missing in the 'Dzam thang edition, 296.
- 644 The words *kun rdzob kyi'am rnam grangs kyi* are missing in the 'Dzam thang edition, 296.
- 645 The words *skabs 'di'i* are missing in the 'Dzam thang edition, 296.
- 646 This entire paragraph of text is missing in the 'Dzam thang edition, 296.
- 647 The words in bold font are from five lines of verse in the *Fourth Council*, 378–79.
- 648 The translation follows the reading *'brel pa yod pa'i* found in the 'Dzam thang edition, 297, instead of the *'brel pa grub pa'i* of the Bhutanese edition.
- 649 This line is missing in the Bhutanese edition and is translated according to the 'Dzam thang edition, 297.
- 650 *Presentation of the Perfection of Wisdom Requested by Suvikrāntavikrami*, Toh 14, Kangyur, shes phyin *ka*, 44b–45b. Dölpopa seems to have summarized the canonical

passage in this quotation. The sūtra itself devotes sentences to each topic, not just one sentence listing all.

- 651 *Sūtra on the Perfection of Wisdom in Twenty-five Thousand Lines*, Toh 9, Kangyur, shes phyin *kha*, 102a.
- 652 *One Hundred and Eight Names of the Perfection of Wisdom*, Toh 25, Kangyur, shes phyin *ka*, 174a.
- 653 The translation follows the spellings in the Tengyur edition of the text, *rna ba ster ba* instead of *rna ba byed pa*, and *de bzhin* instead of *rang bzhin*.
- 654 The translation follows Dölpopa's quotation, although a number of lines in the Tengyur version of this text are missing at this point in both editions of his work, which reads: *ngos po de la mdo rgyud rnams/ de 'dra rnam pa mtha' yas pa/*. Instead of those two lines, the Tengyur version has: *ngos po med pa nyid dang ni/ rgyu sogs bcu gnyis 'byung byed dang/ dpal chen ye shes yongs dag dang/ thig le chen po yongs dag dang/ sangs rgyas kun gyi gsang chen dang/ nam mkha' nam mkha'i spyod yul dang/ bsgom pa med pa nyid dang ni/ rje btsun man ngag chen po dang/ sna nas rna bar 'pho byed dang/ nyan thos kyis ni shes min dang/ rang sangs rgyas sogs mi shes dang/ yi ge med pa nyid dang ni/ tshig dang bral dang brjod med sogs/ de la mdo dang rgyud rnams las/ de 'dra rnam pa mtha' yas pa/*. Then the text continues as quoted by Dölpopa.
- 655 Buddhaśrījñāna, *Precept of Mañjuśrī*, Toh 1853, Tengyur, rgyud *di*, 12a–b. The Tengyur version of this text contains many phrases and spellings that vary from those in Dölpopa's quotation. Only those that have influenced the translation have been mentioned in these notes. See Roerich (1976), 167–69, for information about the *Precept of Mañjuśrī*, which is specifically associated with the Mental Class (Sems sde) of the teachings of the Great Perfection (Rdzogs chen) in the Nyingma tradition of Tibet.
- 656 The translation follows the spelling *'gengs pa po* found in the Tengyur, instead of the *'gags pa po* in Dölpopa's text.
- 657 Buddhaśrījñāna, *Precept of Mañjuśrī*, Toh 1853, Tengyur, rgyud *di*, 13a.
- 658 *Sūtra on Utterly Quiescent and Certain Magical Meditative Concentration*, Toh 129, Kangyur, mdo sde *da*, 191a.
- 659 *Sūtra on the Perfection of Wisdom in Seven Hundred Lines*, Toh 24, Kangyur, shes phyin *ka*, 156a.
- 660 *Sūtra on the Perfection of Wisdom in Seven Hundred Lines*, Toh 24, Kangyur, shes phyin *ka*, 156a.
- 661 Exact source not located. The translation follows the 'Dzam thang edition, 300, which begins with the following phrases not found in the Bhutanese edition: *de bzhin nyid la ni 'ong ba'am/ 'gro ba med do/*. The term *yum* (mother) is used in the Tibetan tradition to refer to six versions of the *Sūtra on the Perfection of Wisdom*: those in one hundred thousand lines, twenty-five thousand, eighteen thousand, ten thousand, eight thousand, and the condensed sūtra.
- 662 The exact sources for this quote from the vast Mother Sūtras has not been located.



- 663 Anonymous (Vasubandhu?), *Vast Explication*, Toh 3808, Tengyur, shes phyin *pha*, 40a. This text is commonly known as the *Destruction of Objections* (*Gnod 'joms*). A second text by this name has not been identified.
- 664 *Sūtra on Utterly Quiescent and Certain Magical Meditative Concentration*, Toh 129, Kangyur, mdo sde *da*, 187a–b.
- 665 The words *dang chos kyi gnas nyid dang* are missing in the Bhutanese edition of the text, but are found in the 'Dzam thang edition, 301, and in the canonical version of the sūtra in the Kangyur.
- 666 *Ghanavyūha Sūtra*, Toh 110, Kangyur, mdo sde *cha*, 6a.
- 667 Maitreya, *Ornament for Direct Realization*, Toh 3786, Tengyur, shes phyin *ka*, 9a.
- 668 *Perfect Expression of the Absolute Names of Mañjuśrī*, Toh 360, Kangyur, rgyud 'bum *ka*, 4a.
- 669 Maitreya, *Ornament for the Sūtras*, Toh 4020, Tengyur, sems tsam *phi*, 9b. The Bhutanese edition has omitted one syllable in the first line, having *de bzhin* instead of *de bzhin nyid*, which is in the Tengyur version and the 'Dzam thang edition, 301.
- 670 *Cloud of Jewels Sūtra*, Toh 231, Kangyur, mdo sde *wa*, 69a.
- 671 *Avatamsaka Sūtra*, Toh 44, Kangyur, phal chen *ka*, 20b.
- 672 *Avatamsaka Sūtra*, Toh 44, Kangyur, phal chen *ka*, 18b.
- 673 *Avatamsaka Sūtra*, Toh 44, Kangyur, phal chen *ka*, 60b–61a.
- 674 Quote not located.
- 675 Quote not located.
- 676 The 'Dzam thang edition, 301, has the correct *'dus ma byas*, instead of the *'dus byas* found in the Bhutanese edition.
- 677 The previous section, with many quotations from scriptures, comments on a series of ten lines of verse in the *Fourth Council*, 380, some words from which are highlighted here in bold font.
- 678 This paragraph summarizes five lines of verse in the *Fourth Council*, 380, some words from which are highlighted here in bold font.
- 679 This sentence is composed of two lines of verse from the *Fourth Council*, 381.
- 680 The word *'bras* (*result*) is found only in the 'Dzam thang edition, 302.
- 681 Puṇḍarīka, *Stainless Light*, Toh 1347, Tengyur, rgyud *tha*, 107b.
- 682 The words *dang gzhi 'bras dbyer med* (*and indivisible ground and result*) are missing in the 'Dzam thang edition, 304.
- 683 See Dölpopa, *Distinguishing the Universal Ground*, and Dölpopa, *Exceptional Distinguishing of the Universal Ground*. The reference here is probably to the second title.
- 684 The words in bold font duplicate exactly two lines of verse in the *Fourth Council*, 382–83.

- 685 The words in bold font are from three lines of verse in the *Fourth Council*, 386.
- 686 All the preceding lines of this paragraph, corresponding to the first one-and-a-half lines of the Tibetan page, are missing in the 'Dzam thang edition, 305.
- 687 *Sūtra on the Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines*, Toh 12, Kangyur, shes phyin ka, 1b–286a; *Sūtra on the Perfection of Wisdom in Twenty-five Thousand Lines*, Toh 9, Kangyur, shes phyin ka–ga; *Sūtra on the Perfection of Wisdom in Five Hundred Lines*, Toh 15, Kangyur, shes phyin ka, 104a–120b; *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*, Toh 107, Kangyur, mdo sde ca, 56a–191b; *Sūtra of Definitive Commentary on the Intention*, Toh 106, Kangyur, mdo sde ca, 1b–55b; and *Sūtra of Excellent Golden Light*, Toh 556, Kangyur, rgyud 'bum pa, 151b–273a.
- 688 The previous four lines, corresponding to approximately the last one-and-a-half lines of the Tibetan page, are missing in the 'Dzam thang edition, 305.
- 689 This paragraph, corresponding to about one full line of text on the Tibetan page, is missing in the 'Dzam thang edition, 306.
- 690 The translation here follows the 'Dzam thang edition, 307, which does not have the word *blo gros* that is in the Bhutanese edition.
- 691 Maitreya, *Ornament for the Sūtras*, Toh 4020, Tengyur, sems tsam phi, 1b–39a; and Maitreya, *Distinguishing the Middle and the Extremes*, Toh 4021, Tengyur, sems tsam phi, 40b–45a.
- 692 From this point forward, eight-and-a-half lines of the Tibetan text in the Bhutanese edition, filling almost one-and-a-half pages, are completely missing in the 'Dzam thang edition, beginning on the first line of 308.
- 693 The previous four pages of Tibetan text, with many quotations, elaborate on the meaning of seventeen lines of verse in the *Fourth Council*, 386–87. The words of those lines are almost all woven into the prose sentences of the commentary.
- 694 These same verses, with a few minor variations, are also the final verses of the *Fourth Council*, 418.
- 695 This paragraph comments on three lines of verse in the *Fourth Council*, 387.
- 696 This paragraph comments on three lines of verse in the *Fourth Council*, 388–89.
- 697 This sentence is missing in the 'Dzam thang edition of the text, 308.
- 698 This paragraph comments on three lines of verse in the *Fourth Council*, 392.
- 699 Nāgārjuna, *Root Verses on Madhyamaka*, Toh 3824, Tengyur, dbu ma tsa, 8a.
- 700 The words in bold font are four lines of verse in the *Fourth Council*, 392–93, which have been written as prose in the commentary.
- 701 The term *conditioned* (*'dus byas*) is found only in the 'Dzam thang edition of the text, 310.
- 702 In one of his forms, Kālacakra has twelve faces that are related to his four vajras of mind, speech, body, and primordial awareness. This topic is discussed in Puṇḍarika, *Stainless Light*, Toh 1347, Tengyur, rgyud da, 206a.

- 703 The phrase “Chandoha and nearby Chandoha” (*’dun pa dang nye ba’i ’dun pa*) is missing in the ’Dzam thang edition, 311.
- 704 This list of meeting places is discussed in the *Hevajra Tantra*, where they are said to correspond to the twelve levels of a bodhisattva. See *Hevajra Tantra*, Toh 417, Kangyur, rgyud ’bum *nga*, 8a. See also Snellgrove (1959), vol. 1: 68–70, and vol. 2: 22–23. The same topic is discussed in many tantric scriptures and treatises, such as the *Stainless Light*.
- 705 The words in bold font in the previous paragraphs are from four lines of verse in the *Fourth Council*, 393.
- 706 See note 661 concerning the various Mother Sūtras. *Avatamsaka Sūtra*, Toh 44, Kangyur, phal chen *ka-ga* and *a*.
- 707 Quote not located in the *Sūtra on the Perfection of Wisdom in One Hundred Thousand Lines*, Toh 8, Kangyur, shes phyin *ka-da* and *a*. This massive scripture fills twelve volumes of the Kangyur.
- 708 *Sūtra on the Perfection of Wisdom in Twenty-five Thousand Lines*, Toh 9, Kangyur, shes phyin *ka*, 336b. The previous line of the Tibetan text is missing in the ’Dzam thang edition, 311.
- 709 Both editions of Dölpopa’s commentary, and this same quotation in his *Mountain Dharma*, 230, read *bden pa bcu gnyis ni mngal skyes rnams kyi*. The text in the Tengyur reads *mngal skyes rnams kyi bden pa bcu gnyis ni*.
- 710 Puṇḍarika, *Stainless Light*, Toh 1347, Tengyur, rgyud *tha*, 122b.
- 711 *Kālacakra Tantra*, Toh 362, Kangyur, rgyud ’bum *ka*, 63b.
- 712 This would seem to be another quotation from the *Kālacakra Tantra*, but it has not been located there.
- 713 Puṇḍarika, *Stainless Light*, Toh 1347, Tengyur, rgyud *da*, 128b.
- 714 Puṇḍarika, *Stainless Light*, Toh 1347, Tengyur, rgyud *da*, 228a. The previous two quotations of seven lines of Tibetan text, filling more than one page in the Bhutanese edition of Dölpopa’s commentary, are completely missing from the ’Dzam thang edition.
- 715 *Tantra of the Vajra Essence Ornament*, Toh 490, Kangyur, rgyud ’bum *tha*, 58a. The Tibetan translation in the Tengyur is similar but different than the quotation in Dölpopa’s text. The translation of this tantra was originally made by Sakya Paṇḍita and the Indian scholar Sugataśrī in the thirteenth century, but left unfinished. Their work was later revised by Butön Rinchen Drup, and the final sections that had not been translated before were translated by Pang Lotsāwa Lodrö Tenpa. Dölpopa perhaps used the original translation of Sakya Paṇḍita and Sugataśrī, not the revised version now in the Tengyur.
- 716 That is, the twelve more commonly known levels beginning with *delight*.
- 717 The words in bold font in the previous three paragraphs are from five lines of verse in the *Fourth Council*, 393.
- 718 The words in bold font in this paragraph are from two lines of verse in the *Fourth Council*, 393.

- 719 Maitreya, *Highest Continuum*, Toh 4024, Tengyur, sems tsam *phi*, 57a. The last line quoted by Dölpopa as 'gyur ba med pa nyid du gnas is different in the Tengyur, which reads 'gyur ba med pa'i chos nyid do (*unchanging true nature*).
- 720 The few words in bold font in the previous four paragraphs are from twelve lines of verse in the *Fourth Council*, 404–5. The previous five lines of Tibetan text, filling almost one page in the Bhutanese edition of the commentary, are completely missing in the 'Dzam thang edition, 314.
- 721 The words in bold font in this sentence are from three lines of verse in the *Fourth Council*, 405.
- 722 Asaṅga, *Commentary to the "Highest Continuum"*, Toh 4025, Tengyur, sems tsam *phi*, 111b. The text in the Tengyur reads *kham*s (*essential constituent*) where Dölpopa has *dbyings* (*space*). In such contexts, Dölpopa strongly prefers the Tibetan term *dbyings* instead of *kham*s, both of which are used to translate the Sanskrit term *dhātu*. He discusses this issue in his annotations to his *Mountain Dharma*, 6, when also quoting from another section of the *Commentary to the "Highest Continuum"*. There he only makes the revision in his annotations, not in the quotation itself, which he does here. See also Takasaki (1966), 290–91, who discusses the Tibetan and Chinese choices when translating the Sanskrit *dhātu*. Takasaki also mentions that these lines are said to be quoted from the lost *Abhidharma Sūtra*.
- 723 Asaṅga, *Commentary to the "Highest Continuum"*, Toh 4025, Tengyur, sems tsam *phi*, 111b–112a.
- 724 This quote is also found in Asaṅga, *Commentary to the "Highest Continuum"*, Toh 4025, Tengyur, sems tsam *phi*, 112a. However, Asaṅga does not identify his original source and no scripture with the name *Noble Sūtra of the Eternal Jewels* ('Phags pa dkon mchog ther zug gi mdo) has been located in the Kangyur.
- 725 *Sūtra of the Lion's Roar of Noble Śrīmālā*, Toh 92, Kangyur, dkon brtsegs *cha*, 255a–277b.
- 726 Nāgārjuna, *Eulogy to the Basic Space of Phenomena*, Toh 1118, Tengyur, bstod tshogs *ka*, 64a. The text in the Tengyur reads *kham*s (*essential constituent*) instead of *dbyings* (*space*), which is found in the first line of the quotation given by Dölpopa, and *go 'phangs* (*citadel*) instead of *byang chub* (*enlightenment*) in the last line. As briefly discussed in note 722, Dölpopa often prefers *dbyings* instead of *kham*s for the Sanskrit *dhātu*, and seems to have revised the translation here.
- 727 An udumvara lotus is said to blossom only when a buddha appears in the world.
- 728 *Sūtra to Benefit Angulimāla*, Toh 213, Kangyur, mdo sde *tsha*, 129b. The meaning of the Tibetan word *sho gam*, translated in these verses as *gift*, is obscure.
- 729 The translation follows the spelling *rga ba med pa* in the sūtra itself, 129b, and the 'Dzam thang edition of Dölpopa's text, 316, instead of the *dga' ba med pa* in the Bhutanese edition.
- 730 The translation follows the spelling *bde ba* in the Bhutanese edition, instead of the *bden pa* in the sūtra itself, 131a, and the 'Dzam thang edition of Dölpopa's text, 316. A line with the spelling *bden pa* would be an exact duplicate of another line just three verses before.

- 731 The sūtra itself, 132b, has *dam pa'i chos* instead of *dam pa'i mtha'*.
- 732 The next nine-and-a-half lines of Tibetan text, filling more than one-and-a-half pages of the Bhutanese edition, are completely missing in the 'Dzam thang edition, 317.
- 733 These lines are taken from a series of verses in the *Sūtra to Benefit Āṅgulimāla*, Toh 213, Kangyur, mdo sde tsha, 129b–138b.
- 734 Vasubandhu, *Commentary on the "Sūtra Taught by Noble Akṣayamati,"* Toh 3994, Tengyur, mdo 'grel ci, 4a.
- 735 Puṇḍarīka, *Stainless Light*, Toh 1347, Tengyur, rgyud tha, 134a. The next five lines in the Bhutanese edition of Dölpopa's commentary, filling nearly one page of the Tibetan text, are completely missing in the 'Dzam thang edition, 318.
- 736 Nāgārjuna, *Sixty Verses on Reasoning*, Toh 3825, Tengyur, dbu ma tsa, 21b.
- 737 *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*, Toh 107, Kangyur, mdo sde ca, 176a.
- 738 Buddhapaṇita, *Commentary to the "Root Verses on Madhyamaka,"* Toh 3842, Tengyur, dbu ma tsa, 217b.
- 739 *'Sūtra of the Bodhisattva Scriptures*, Toh 56, Kangyur, dkon brtsegs ga, 167b.
- 740 The words in bold font in the previous paragraphs are all from four lines of verse in the *Fourth Council*, 406.
- 741 *Sūtra Perfectly Summarizing the Dharma*, Toh 238, Kangyur, mdo sde zha, 6a.
- 742 Throughout the following section the translation follows the consistent spelling of *rtogs* found in the 'Dzam thang edition instead of the *rtog* of the Bhutanese edition.
- 743 The nine perceptions of ugliness (*mi sdug pa'i 'du shes dgu*) are cultivated to destroy attachment to the body. This is done by contemplating the bloating, the worm infestation, the bleeding, the lividity, the festering, the gnawing, the scattering, the burning, and the rotting of a corpse.
- 744 The words in bold font in the previous paragraphs are from seven lines of verse in the *Fourth Council*, 407.
- 745 "Please look" is a repetition of Dölpopa's initial appeal at the beginning of this section of the basic verses.
- 746 The specific source for this quote in the vast Mother Sūtras has not been located.
- 747 The *Intermediate Mother Sūtra* (*Yum bar ma*) is the *Perfection of Wisdom in Twenty-five Thousand Lines*, Toh 9, Kangyur, shes phyin ka–ga.
- 748 Maitreya, *Highest Continuum*, Toh 4024, Tengyur, sems tsam phi, 62b.
- 749 *Sūtra of the Lion's Roar of Noble Śrīmālā*, Toh 92, Kangyur, dkon brtsegs cha, 255a–277b; and *Sūtra to Benefit Āṅgulimāla*, Toh 213, Kangyur, mdo sde tsha, 126a–206b.
- 750 Instead of the *snod bcud* of the Bhutanese edition, the 'Dzam thang edition, 322, reads *snang brgyad*, which makes no sense.
- 751 The translation of this line is uncertain. The Bhutanese edition reads *zhe na byed la*

*rag te/ blun po rang bzo mkhan la zla tshad med pa'i phyir ro.* The *zhe na* here is also in the basic verses, but missing in the 'Dzam thang edition of the commentary, 322, which has *ces byed pa lags te/ blun po dang rang bzo mkhan la tshad med pa'i phyir ro.*

- 752 The words in bold font in these two paragraphs are from four lines of verse in the *Fourth Council*, 412.
- 753 See Dölpopa, *Exceptional Distinguishing of Emptiness*.
- 754 The words in bold font in this paragraph are from seven lines of verse in the *Fourth Council*, 415.
- 755 The titles mentioned here are slightly different than those of the works themselves. See Dölpopa, *Benefits of Gaining Faith Upon Understanding the Qualities of the Buddha*, and Dölpopa, *Sublime Method for Opening Many Gates of Dharma*.
- 756 The words in bold font in the previous three paragraphs are scattered through nine lines of verse in the *Fourth Council*, 415–16.
- 757 *Kālacakra Tantra*, Toh 362, Kangyur, rgyud 'bum ka, 107b.
- 758 The words in bold font in these two paragraphs are from three lines of verse in the *Fourth Council*, 416.
- 759 Instead of the *mu stegs 'ga' zbig dang/ kla klo lha min gyi grub mtha'* (the philosophical tenets of some non-Buddhists and the barbarian demons) found in the Bhutanese edition, the 'Dzam thang edition, 325, has *mu stegs gcer bu ba'i grub mtha'* (the philosophical tenets of the non-Buddhist Jain ascetics).
- 760 Udbhaṭasiddhisvāmin, *Eulogy to the Exceptional*, Toh 1109, Tengyur, bstod tshogs ka, 3b. The translation follows the spelling *gcer bus* found in the Tengyur edition of Udbhaṭasiddhisvāmin's text, instead of the *gces bu* of Dölpopa's commentary. The reference is to the naked ascetics of the Digambara tradition of the Jain religion. Udbhaṭasiddhisvāmin was a brahmin who built eight temples at Nālandā and was responsible for first gathering together all the Mahāyāna scriptures there. See Jamgön Kongtrul, *Treasury of Knowledge*, vol. 1: 403.
- 761 Prajñāvarman, *Extensive Explication of the "Eulogy to the Exceptional,"* Toh 1110, Tengyur, bstod tshogs ka, 5a–42b.
- 762 Dölpopa has borrowed the first couplet of this series from a famous work by Sakya Paṇḍita and then extended the use of the same metaphor throughout the following series of verses. See Sakya Paṇḍita, *Distinguishing the Three Vows*, 87: *mig mangs rgya dang ma 'brel na/ rde'u mang yang shi ro yin/ de bzhin khungs dang ma 'brel ba'i/ chos lugs mang yang ro dang 'dra/*. Compare these lines to Dölpopa's *mig mang rgya dang ma brel na/ rde'u mang yang shi ro yin/ lha chos brgya dang ma 'brel na/ mi chos mang yang shi ro yin*.
- 763 The translation follows the 'Dzam thang edition, 325, which has the spellings *rang 'grel* and *gzhan 'grel*, instead of the *rang 'brel* and *gzhan 'brel* found in the Bhutanese edition.
- 764 Here the terms *snang bcas* (having appearance) and *snang med* (no appearance) probably refer to the Madhyamaka of perfect appearance (*yang dag snang ba'i dbu ma*), in which it is taught that perfect reality directly appears and is seen in meditative

equipoise and is the authentic Madhyamaka of apprehensible emptiness (*dmigs bcas stong nyid*), and to the Madhyamaka of no appearance (*snang med dbu ma*), in which it is taught that seeing nothing is seeing reality. See also note 423.

- 765 The meaning of this line is totally obscure. The Bhutanese edition reads *bcu bdun khras la brgya chags pa* and the 'Dzam thang edition, 327, has *bcu bdun gras la brgya chags pa*.
- 766 The words in bold font in this paragraph are from the colophon to the *Fourth Council*, 417.
- 767 The previous line of the Tibetan text (which also includes most of the previous paragraph of the English translation) is missing here in the 'Dzam thang edition, 329.
- 768 The specific mention of gold and horses is missing in the 'Dzam thang edition, 329.





## Bibliography



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- Avatamsaka Sūtra. Buddhāvataṃsakanāmahāvaiṣṭyasūtra.* Sangs rgyas phal po che zhes bya ba shin tu rgyas pa chen po'i mdo. Toh 44, phal chen ka, kha, ga, and a.
- Cloud of Jewels Sūtra. Āryaratnameghanāmahāyānasūtra.* 'Phags pa dkon mchog sprin zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo. Toh 231, mdo sde wa, 1b–112b.
- Condensed Verses on the Perfection of Wisdom. Āryaprajñāpāramitāsañcaya-gāthā.* 'Phags pa shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa sdud pa tshigs su bcad pa. Toh 13, shes phyin ka, 1b–19b. P735, tsi.
- Extensive Mother Sūtra (Yum rgyas pa).* Short title for the *Sūtra on the Perfection of Wisdom in One Hundred Thousand Lines*.
- Ghanavyūha Sūtra. Āryaghanavyūhanāmahāyānasūtra.* 'Phags pa rgyan stug po bkod pa zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo. Toh 110, mdo sde cha, 1b–55b.
- Hevajra Tantra. Hevajratantrarājanāma.* Kye rdo rje zhes bya ba rgyud kyi rgyal po/ Kye'i rdo rje mkha' 'gro ma dra ba'i sdom pa'i rgyud kyi rgyal po. Also known as the *Two Parts*. Brtags pa gnyis pa. Toh 417/18, rgyud 'bum nga, 1b–30a. P10, ka.
- Kālacakra Tantra. Paramādibuddhoddhṛtaśrīkālacakranāmatantrarājā.* Mchog gi dang po'i sangs rgyas las phyung ba rgyud kyi rgyal po dpal dus kyi 'khor lo zhes bya ba. Toh 362, rgyud 'bum ka, 22b–128b. For the Peking edition, see the Tibetan Tripitaka, ed. D. T. Suzuki, vol. 1: 127.4.1–174.5.8. Tokyo-Kyoto: Tibetan Tripitaka Research Institute, 1956.
- Lalitavistara Sūtra. Āryalalitavistaranāmahāyānasūtra.* 'Phags pa rgya cher rol pa zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo. Toh 95, mdo sde kha, 1b–216b. P763, ku.

- Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra. Āryalaṅkāvatāramahāyānasūtra.* 'Phags pa lang kar gshegs pa'i theg pa chen po'i mdo. Toh 107, mdo sde ca, 56a-191b.
- Mañjuśrī Root Tantra. Āryamañjuśrīmūlatantra.* 'Phags pa 'jam dpal gyi rtsa ba'i rgyud. Toh 543, rgyud 'bum na, 105a-351a. P162, na.
- One Hundred and Eight Names of the Perfection of Wisdom. Āryaprajñāpāramitānāmāṣṭaśataka.* 'Phags pa shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa'i mtshan brgya rtsa brgyad pa. Toh 25, shes phyin ka, 174a-175b.
- Perfect Expression of the Absolute Names of Mañjuśrī, the Embodiment of Primordial Awareness. Mañjuśrījñānasattvasyaparamārthanāmasaṃgīti.* 'Jam dpal ye shes sems dpa'i don dam pa'i mtshan yang dag par brjod pa. Toh 360, rgyud 'bum ka, 1b-13b. P2, ka.
- Presentation of the Perfection of Wisdom Requested by Suvikrāntavikrami. Āryasuvikrāntavikramipariprcchāprajñāpāramitānirdeśa.* 'Phags pa rab kyi rtsal gyis rnām par gnōn pas zhus pa shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa bstan pa. Toh 14, shes phyin ka, 20a-103b.
- Samvarodaya Tantra. Śrīmahāsamvarodayatantrarājanāma.* Dpal bde mchog 'byung ba shes bya ba'i rgyud kyi rgyal po chen po. Toh 373, rgyud 'bum kha, 265a-311a.
- Sūtra of Definitive Commentary on the Intention. Āryasaṃdhinirmocanānāmamahāyānasūtra.* 'Phags pa dgongs pa nges par 'grel pa zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo. Toh 106, mdo sde ca, 1b-55b. P664, ngu.
- Sūtra of Excellent Golden Light. Āryasuvarṇaprabhāsottamasūtreन्द्रajānāmamahāyānasūtra.* 'Phags pa gser 'od dam pa mdo sde'i dbang po'i rgyal po zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo. Toh 556, rgyud 'bum pa, 151b-273a.
- Sūtra of the Bodhisattva Scriptures. Āryabodhisattapīṭakanāmamahāyānasūtra.* 'Phags pa byang chub sems dpa'i sde snod ces bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo. Toh 56, dkon brtsegs kha, 255b-94a, ga, 1b-205b.
- Sūtra of the Lion's Roar of Noble Śrīmālā. Āryaśrīmālādevīsiṃhanādanāmamahāyānasūtra.* 'Phags pa lha mo dpal phreng gi seng ge'i sgra zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo. Toh 92, dkon brtsegs cha, 255a-277b.
- Sūtra on the Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines. Āryāṣṭasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitā.* 'Phags pa shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa brgyad stong pa. Toh 12, shes phyin ka, 1b-286a.
- Sūtra on the Perfection of Wisdom in Eighteen Thousand Lines. Āryāṣṭādaśasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitānāmamahāyānasūtra.* 'Phags pa shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa khri brgyad stong pa zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo. Toh 10, shes phyin ka-ga.
- Sūtra on the Perfection of Wisdom in Five Hundred Lines. Āryapañcaśati-*

- kāprajñāpāramitā*. 'Phags pa shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa lnga brgya pa. Toh 15, shes phyin ka, 104a-120b.
- Sūtra on the Perfection of Wisdom in One Hundred Thousand Lines*. Śata-sāhasrikāprajñāpāramitā. Shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa stong phrag brgya pa. Toh 8, shes phyin ka-da, and a. This massive sūtra fills the first twelve volumes of the shes phyin section of the Kangyur.
- Sūtra on the Perfection of Wisdom in Seven Hundred Lines*. Āryasapaśatikānāmaprajñāpāramitāmahāyānasūtra. 'Phags pa shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa bdun brgya pa zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo. Toh 24, shes phyin ka, 148a-174a.
- Sūtra on the Perfection of Wisdom in Twenty-five Thousand Lines*. Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikāprajñāpāramitā. Shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa stong phrag nyi shu lnga pa. Toh 9, shes phyin ka-ga.
- Sūtra on Utterly Quiescent and Certain Magical Meditative Concentration*. Āryaprasāntaviniścayaaprātihāryasamādhināmamahāyānasūtra. 'Phags pa rab tu zhi ba rnam par nges pa'i cho 'phrul gyi ting nge 'dzin zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo. Toh 129, mdo sde da, 174b-210b.
- Sūtra Perfectly Summarizing the Dharma*. Āryadharmasamgītināmamahāyānasūtra. 'Phags pa chos yang dag par sdud pa zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo. Toh 238, mdo sde zha, 1b-99b.
- Sūtra to Benefit Aṅgulimāla*. Āryaṅgulimālīyanāmamahāyānasūtra. 'Phags pa sor mo'i phreng ba la phan pa zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo. Toh 213, mdo sde tsha, 126a-206b.
- Tantra of the Vajra Essence Ornament*. Śrīvajra maṇḍalāṅkāranāmamahātantrarājā. Dpal rdo rje snying po rgyan zhes bya ba'i rgyud kyi rgyal po. Toh 490, rgyud 'bum tha, 1b-82a.
- Vajrapañjara Tantra*. Āryadākinīvajrapañjaramahātantrarājakaḥpanāma. 'Phags pa mkha' 'gro ma rdo rje gur zhes bya ba'i rgyud kyi rgyal po chen po'i brtag pa. Toh 419, rgyud 'bum nga, 30a-65b. P11, ka.

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- Anonymous (Vasubandhu?). *Vast Explication*. Brhaṭṭikā. Short title for Āryasatasāhasrikāpañcaviṃśatisāhasrikāśṭādaśasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitābrhaṭṭikā. 'Phags pa shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa 'bum pa dang nyi khri lnga stong pa dang khri brgyad stong pa'i rgya cher bshad pa. Toh 3808, shes phyin pha, 1b-292b.

- Āryadeva. *Compendium of the Essence of Primordial Awareness. Jñānasāra-samuccaya. Ye shes snying po kun las btus pa.* Toh 3851, dbu ma tsha, 26b–28a.
- Asaṅga. *Commentary to the "Highest Continuum." Mahāyānottaratantraśāstravyākhyā. Theg pa chen po rgyud bla ma'i bstan bcos rnam par bshad pa.* Toh 4025, sems tsam phi, 74b–129a.
- Bodhibhadra. *Commentary to the "Compendium of the Essence of Primordial Awareness." Jñānasārasamuccayanāmanibandhana. Ye shes snying po kun las btus kyi bshad sbyar.* Toh 3852, dbu ma tsha, 28a–45b.
- Buddhapālita. *Commentary to the "Root Verses on Madhyamaka." Buddha-pālitamūlamadhyamakavṛtti. Dbu ma rtsa ba'i 'grel pa buddha pā li ta.* Toh 3842, dbu ma tsa, 158b–281a.
- Buddhaśrījñāna. *Precept of Mañjuśrī ('Jam dpal zhal gyi lung).* Title in Tengyur: *A Precept Known as "Cultivating the Thatness of the Two Stages." Dvikramatattvabhāvanānāmamukhāgama. Rim pa gnyis pa'i de kho na nyid bsgom pa zhes bya ba'i zhal gyi lung.* Toh 1853, rgyud di, 36a–42b.
- Jñānagarbha. *Distinguishing the Two Truths. Satyadvayavibhāgakārikā. Bden pa gnyis rnam par 'byed pa'i tshig le'ur byas pa.* Toh 3881, dbu ma sa, 1b–3b.
- Kālacakrapāda the Elder. *Lotus Commentary on Difficult Points. Padminnāmapaṇjikā. Padma can zhes bya ba'i dka' 'grel.* Toh 1350, rgyud na, 72b–220a.
- Maitreya. *Distinguishing the Middle and the Extremes. Madhyāntavibhāgakārikā. Dbus dang mtha' rnam par 'byed pa'i tshig le'ur byas pa.* Toh 4021, sems tsam phi, 40b–45a.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Highest Continuum. Mahāyānottaratantraśāstra. Theg pa chen po rgyud bla ma'i bstan bcos.* Toh 4024, sems tsam phi, 54b–73a.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Ornament for Direct Realization. Abhisamayālaṃkāranāmaprajñāpāramitopadeśaśāstrakārikā. Shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa'i man ngag gi bstan bcos mngon par rtogs pa'i rgyan zhes bya ba'i tshig le'ur byas pa.* Toh 3786, shes phyin ka, 1b–13a.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Ornament for the Sūtras. Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāranāmakārikā. Theg pa chen po mdo sde'i rgyan zhes bya ba'i tshig le'ur byas pa.* Toh 4020, sems tsam phi, 1b–39a. P5521, phi.
- Nāgārjuna. *Eulogy to the Basic Space of Phenomena. Dharmadhātustava. Chos kyi dbyings su bstod pa.* Toh 1118, bstod tshogs ka, 63b–67b.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Root Verses on Madhyamaka. Prajñānāmamūlamadhyamakakārikā. Dbu ma rtsa ba'i tshig le'ur byas pa shes rab ces bya ba.* Toh 3824, dbu ma tsa, 1b–19a. P5224, tsa.

- \_\_\_\_\_. *Sixty Verses on Reasoning. Yuktiṣaṣṭhikākārikā. Rigs pa drug cu pa'i tshig le'ur byas pa.* Toh 3825, dbu ma tsa, 20a–22b.
- Prajñāvarman. *Extensive Explication of the "Eulogy to the Exceptional." Viśeṣastavanāmaṭikā. Khyad par du 'phags pa'i bstod pa'i rgya cher bshad pa.* Toh 1110, bstod tshogs ka, 5a–442b.
- Puṇḍarika, Kalkī. *Stainless Light. Vimalaprabhā. Dri med 'od.* Short title for *Vimalaprabhānāmamūlatantrānusāriṇīdvādaśasāhasrikālagukāla-cakratantrārājatīkā. Bsdus pa'i rgyud kyi rgyal po dus kyi 'khor lo'i 'grel bshad/ rtsa ba'i rgyud kyi rjes su 'jug pa stong phrag bcu gnyis pa dri ma med pa'i 'od.* Toh 1347, rgyud tha, 107b–277a, rgyud da 1b–297a. P2064, ka.
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