



WISDOM ACADEMY

Sutra and Tantra:
The Profound and Miraculous

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Lesson 8:
Tantra and the Subtle Body

Reading:

Brilliant Illumination of the Lamp of the Five Stages
(The American Institute of Buddhist Studies, 2010)
Chapter 6: Speech Isolation—How to Practice,
pages 287–349

*Brilliant Illumination
of the
Lamp of the Five Stages*

(Rim lnga rab tu gsal ba'i sgron me)

Practical Instruction in the King of Tantras,
The Glorious Esoteric Community

by Tsong Khapa Losang Drakpa

INTRODUCTION AND TRANSLATION

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*Treasury of the Buddhist Sciences series
Tengyur Translation Initiative
Jey Yabsey Sungbum Collection*

Published by
The American Institute of Buddhist Studies
Columbia University Center for Buddhist Studies
Tibet House US
New York
2010

CHAPTER VI

Speech Isolation—How to Practice

[143b.1–176a.6]

[VL.B.3.b.ii.C'3'd'i'B''6'' – The way to put speech isolation into practice]

The sixth has three parts, explaining: [a''] The stage of meditating the three life-energy controls; [b''] The uncommon function of vajra recitation; and [c''] Having meditated life-energy control, the stage of generating experience.

[VL.B.3.b.ii.C'3'd'i'B''6''a'' – The stage of meditating the three life-energy controls]

The first has three parts, explaining: [i''] Meditating life-energy control of the mantra drop at the heart center nose tip; [ii''] Meditating life-energy control of the light drop at the face nose tip; [iii''] Meditating life-energy control of the substance drop at the secret nose tip.

[VL.B.3.b.ii.C'3'd'i'B''6''a''i'' – Meditating life-energy control of the mantra drop at the heart center nose tip]

The first has two parts, explaining: [A'''] The way to meditate the partial mantra drop; [B'''] The way to meditate the mantra wheel.

[VL.B.3.b.ii.C'3'd'i'B''6''a''i''A''' – The way to meditate the partial mantra drop]

As for the place where to meditate, it is according to the *Vajra Rosary* statement:

A person will achieve the chief of mantras
In a solitary, divine place, without demon problems,
Free of piercing sounds, and far from crowds,
Delightful to the fortunate, a peaceful pleasure grove,
While enjoying the five desires, full of great bliss.

A “divine place” here means a chapel and so forth.

As for the [topics of the] vital points of the body, which conducts are useful for meditation, and the vital points of the wind-energies, they are, according to the same text:

The path of conduct is the place of great bliss,
Whereby supreme accomplishment will develop;
The practitioner sits upon a comfortable seat
And having aimed the two eyes to the nose tip
And placed the nose in line with the navel,
Keeps shoulders level, tongue pressed on palate,
Teeth and lips left relaxed
Exhalation and inhalation loosened,
Bit by bit freed of control,
Breathing naturally,
And sits well in the spiritual hero posture.
Maintaining such a path of conduct, [144a]
One should constantly recite the two letters.

Such statements made in the context of the two-syllable vajra recitation apply similarly to the three-syllable vajra recitation. Other translations have “the vajra [instead of ‘spiritual hero’] posture.”

As for the key point of time, it is as previously explained.

As for the supporting embodiment, one should perform [vajra recitation] by visualizing [oneself] as the body isolation, great secret, single clan father-mother [in union]. In the *Five Stages*, quoting the *Further Tantra*, [Nāgārjuna] states:

By visualizing the heart center, put the life-energy into
dwelling in the drop.

The *Illumination of the Lamp* explains the meaning of this to be meditating on the indestructible drop in the heart center. And [other] *Five Stages* commentators also explain it as meditating the mantra drop in the heart center. Just after the *Four Goddess Dialogue* passage quoted in the *Five Stages*, such statements as “Supreme subtleness, the mere size of a split [pea],” like the above quotes, have the same meaning as the above reference from the *Further Tantra*. In the *Integrated Practices*, [Āryadeva] also quotes a reference from the *Vajra Mandala Ornament [Tantra]*, and states that the short A of the heart center indestructible and the indestructible [itself] are the places for compressing the wind-

energies, in order to make the meditation on the heart-center indestructible understandable.

Further, in the *Illumination of the Lamp Third Chapter*, [Chandrakīrti] states:

The precious jewel of five colors with the nature of the five transcendent lords is reknowned as the indestructible, because it creates the precious jewel of buddhahood. It has the precise measure of a grain of mustard seed, because that is the form of the drop. “On the tip of the nose” indicates the hub of the heart center lotus. “Intensely” means that you should meditate constantly day and night by focusing on it and using the yogas of inhaling, holding, releasing, and compressing. [144b]

Thus the text states that you should meditate the heart center indestructible day and night through the yoga of inhaling and so on.

As for the sequence of the meditations of the indestructible and the vajra recitation, the following [*Illumination of the Lamp* passage, coming right after the one above, teaches, in commentary on a *Root Tantra* passage, namely,] “Having made the jewel stable, one radiates, and one does not radiate without its becoming stable”⁹⁰—

“Stable” is constant. What is that? The indestructible. From it you should massively radiate “jewel,” or five colored, light rays, and you should engage with it by inhaling, holding, and releasing. “Without its becoming stable” means that you should practice this yoga with [constant focus on] the realization of the thatness of the indestructible, and not otherwise.

The meaning of this is as follows. Meditating on the indestructible drop mentioned previously in the statement that “you should constantly meditate the indestructible by the yoga of inhaling and so on,” you develop firmness. Thereby you should practice the yoga of making the

⁹⁰ The *Root Tantra* passage and the commentary on it are in reverse order in the Tibetan texts, due no doubt to scribal error, so I have reversed the order back to make it clearer.

wind-energies enter, etc. within [the central channel]. Thus, by any other way than by having realized the natural experience of the thatness of the indestructible and developed stability in taking the indestructible as object, you should not perform this yoga of inhaling etc. Such being the meaning, first you must stabilize a constant and unchanging meditative indestructible, and after that you can practice vajra recitation.

This explanation is said by [Chandrakīrti in] the *Illumination of the Lamp* to be an ultimate [meaning] explanation. To that, a certain objector argues that this is the way of explaining the vajra recitation [only] for a person who has [already] embodied the ultimate communion. [145a] Others do indeed explain the “indestructible” as the fourth stage clear light. However, from the extensive explanation of this point in the commentary on the [Root Tantra] *Third Chapter*, after explaining the wind-energies of the four [elemental] spheres emerging from the indestructible, the Chag translation has the statement:

By achieving such a body, speech, and mind, the body and so on are created; and “emerging from the vajra” refers to the creation of the divine circle which has the nature of the two realities arisen from clear light transparency.

Thus the explanation is said to be “ultimate” in terms of [its referring to] the objective of vajra recitation, which is the creation of communion by the wind-energies through the practice of vajra recitation. This is similar to the *Seventeenth Chapter*’s explanation of the three voids being called “ultimate.”

As for the place where the indestructible is meditated, its objective vital point is the hub of the heart center lotus; and it is the same in meaning as the *Vajra Rosary*’s statement to meditate the mantra drop in the hub of the eight-petalled Dharma wheel [of the heart center]. Lakṣhmī’s statement that you should meditate within the center of the heart center’s *avadhūti* [channel] is good; and it does not mean the [same thing as] the *Five Point*’s mention of the black and white boundary in the heart, or the *Four Point*’s mention of the empty space in the heart center. As for the *dhūti* channel, it is stated in the *Great Seal Drop* and the *Wisdom-Intuition Drop* to be stabilized as the “staff of the life-energy wind” and the root of the life-energy wind. Since the hub of the heart center channel

wheel is in front of the life-energy wind channel at the height of, and in the center between, the two breasts, you should visualize it there.

In regard to such reasonable instructions as this [concerning] the meditations on the drops and so on as accurately penetrating the vital points of the body, if you know well the vital points of the body, when you aim the mind there, [145b] it will reach those vital points; and otherwise not.

As for the drop meditated in that place, the *Vajra Rosary* does not explicitly mention a drop other than the syllables, but the *Illumination of the Lamp* teaches the meditation on the indestructible in the form of a drop. In this context, some followers of the Gö tradition wish to meditate the short *A* in the center of a drop which is an interlaced sun and moon. The *Concise Five Stages* teaches the meditation of the indestructible drop together with the short *A*. In both of the personal instructions of Serdingpa, the drop is explained as white and the short *A* as black. In one, a half-white, half-black short *A* resides within a white drop; again in another a bar-shaped *A* resides within a half-black, half-white drop; yet another recommends meditating a white, reddish-tinged drop. As for a red-white-interfaced drop, it is in agreement with the great adept Kukuripa's statement [in his *Vajrasattva Sādhana*] about the drop used as support for vajra recitation:

Visualizing in its hub
A sun disc, a drop, and a moon disc,
Shaped like a closed [round] shrine-box,
The sun of art, and the moon of wisdom.

However, here [in the Noble system], a syllable is used in place of the drop in the center of that [heart center]; the *Personal Instruction* explains it as a slightly reddish white. The heart center is explained to be the place where the between person's consciousness enters in the center of the semen and ovum of father and mother in the womb; and is also explained as the support of the mind. And that is the key of the basic reality cultivation foundation of both those [Noble and Jñānapāda] systems of meditation.

The measure of the drop is said to be just that of a mustard seed; for if you hold the mind on a subtle object, it is easy to eradicate thought constructions and compress the wind-energies.

As for the syllable, [146a] the *Vajra Rosary* mentions both *A* and *HŪM* as the syllable in the heart center, and the *Integrated Practices* mentions the *A* syllable; and they are meditated as representatives of the indestructible. Since there is something established there in the form of a syllable, there is indeed no certainty [about which one], so here one can meditate either *A* or *HŪM*. In either case the color should be dark blue; or the *Vow Arisal* also suggests white. Here, “wind-energy” stands for the indestructible, and the “white-red drop” stands for the indestructible enlightenment spirit. In this context the five-colored jewel is blazing with the five light rays, which is proper to connect with either syllable or drop. Other traditions explain the drop as being on top of a syllable itself located on a hand symbol; but here [in this Noble system] it is better as above.

Thus one should focus the mind, practicing free of the faults of holding the mind either much too tightly or much too loosely on the heart center indestructible.

This is highly praised in the *Liberation Drop*:

That brilliant form of the indestructible drop,
Just the measure of a grain of mustard,
Dripping and blazing with five light rays,
Properly always stands in the heart center.
Gazing on that, great wisdom will blaze up
In the yogī/nī in just an instant—
There should be no doubt about it.

It is also praised in other Tantras, as in the *Unexcelled Clear Articulation*:

Always dwelling in the heart,
Unchanging in the sole drop,
The person who meditates on that
Will definitely generate wisdom.

And from that [Tantra’s] meaning commentary [by Ghaṇṭapāda], called the *Supreme Bliss Five Stages*:

The mind which has the drop and the sound, [146b]
You should place it in the heart center:
This will dispel the fog of delusion—
You will become a master divine lord buddha.

Thus depending on the meditation of the indestructible drop in the heart center, the orgasmic [wisdom] that radically cuts off ignorance will arise. Also the *Vow Arisal* states:

The energy gone into the heart-center lotus,
 In the likeness of a white *HŪM* letter—
 You should visualize and be entranced with that,
 And you will not be bound by objects.
 The energy moving up into the life-cycle
 Will progress downward into nirvana.
 The totally non-local nirvana
 Dwells in the heart-center lotus' anthers.

Thus, if you can collect, stop, and stabilize the energy—by the distinctive arts such as explained above—in the center of the heart-center channel-wheel, you cannot be bound any more by the mental constructions engaged with objects such as form and sound, and it will grant you the exalted state of nirvana not located in the extremes of existence and peace.

Again, as explained above, the twelve subject-object wind-energies are said to arise in the heart center. If you practice the art of penetrating the body's vital points and holding the mind therein, those wind-energies will compress back there, and by the key process of their dissolving there, you can easily cut off the constructions of subject and object. By such a procedure, you generate the great certitude about this that is praised in the many treatises of the great adepts and in many Tantras. Thus you should strive to meditate the life-energy control of the mantra drop, the indestructible in the heart-center nose tip.

[VL.B.3.b.ii.C'3'd'i'B''6''a''i''B''' – The way to meditate the mantra wheel]

The *Concise Five Stages* [attributed to Nāropa] states:

Since the various memories and mental constructions
 Arise from the mind as evolutionary actions,
 Meditate the mantra wheel at the heart center, [147a]
 The base where consciousness and life-energy converge.

Thus [it is explained that] the various mental constructs arise from the mind, and the place where the energy and mind gather together is the heart center, so the meditating of the mantra wheel should penetrate the vital [point] in the heart center. Further [the *Concise Five Stages* states]:

As for the wheel of mantra syllables;
First, contemplate an eight petaled lotus
Containing rows [of letters],
In a pattern of outer, inner, and secret.

[This explains] the meditation of an eight-petaled lotus with three rows [of letters on it] in the heart center.

Further [the *Concise Five Stages* states]:

The outer row is marked by wisdom-vowels,
The middle row by the art-consonants,
And the nondual letters stand within—
This samadhi of rows in cardinals and quarters,
Has the nature of the three yogas,
With the indestructible drop in the center,
With its A-syllable which becomes life-energy,
Essence of all, radiating and gathering back.

Thus, this teaches that you should meditate the outer [row on the] eight petals of the lotus as marked with the twelve vowels [which are] the actuality of wisdom; the middle [row on the] eight petals as marked with the consonants which are the actuality of art; and the inner [row] with the four neuter letters [*R̄, Ṝ, L̄, Ḍ̄*], which are the actuality of art and wisdom nondual; and the center as the indestructible drop, together with a short A.⁹¹

In this regard, three [texts by Serdingpa] explain that you should meditate the mantra wheel as a preliminary of the vajra recitation: the *Five Point*, the *Wheel Endowed*, and the *Five Stages Single Session*.

⁹¹ The way this commentary is written, one could think that this eight-petalled heart lotus is actually 24-petalled, since it seems as if the three rows are marked each on a different row of petals. I believe that is because in the short-hand way of dictating, Tsong Khapa assumes everyone know the heart lotus has only eight petals, and the letters are arranged in three rows on the eight petals, vowels near the tips of the petals, consonants in the middle, and the four neuter semi-vowels on the base of the four directional petals.

Though the *Four Point* [by Serdingpa] explains this in the context of mind isolation, in the *Root Text* [of the *Concise Five Stages*, attributed to Nāropa] it explains that you do the vajra recitation after previously meditating the mantra wheel; so you should do it according to the previous three texts.

Serdingpa said that the lotus petals should be red, the shape should be [convex] like an upheld mirror. [147b] From some of the other instructions of the Marpa tradition, it is explained that on the channel having a form like a lotus and which is white with a reddish tinge, the letters are white. With regard to the lotus which is the place established in the heart center for the drop which is the support of the vajra recitation, Kukuripa says that that lotus should be thought of as having the nature of the four elements, with four white petals and four red petals. This is to think of them as being the actuality of the four channels of the directions of the heart center. From some other treatises also, on the occasion of the perfection stage, the lotuses in the navel etc., whereon are established the drop and the letters etc., are explained as “channel-petals,” and that is how one should take them, or else one can also visualize that the lotus petals themselves are the actuality of the channels.

There being uncertainty about the color of the heart-center lotus, and there being many explanations of the eight-petaled [lotus] of the channel-wheel, it appears that there are two explanations; and a third explanation is not often found elsewhere. If you visualize it like a lotus-flower petal, then there is no point in [visualizing it] like a raised mirror. Serdingpa has the consonants established on the outer [rows on the] petals and the vowels on the middle [rows]; but this does not accord with the *Root Text* [of the *Concise Five Stages*]. Therefore, you should establish [them] according to what appears elsewhere in the Marpa tradition, which accords with the *Root Text*, [Nāropa’s *Clarification of the Concise Five Stages*], which says that the vowels are luminance, the consonants radiance, and the neuter syllables are imminence. That being the case, it is good if you make the outer letters white, the middle letters red, and the inner letters blue or black. The *Root Text* says “Twelve letters having drops...,” meaning that on the eleven vowels, excluding the four neuters, there is a drop, [148a] so you should place a drop on the head of those

eleven.⁹² It does not mean that you should accept that you place the drop in front of them, [or that] you establish them with no drop.

As for the way of setting the [syllables] up, you begin from the east; and in the four directions you put two-two, then starting from the south-east in each four quarters you do one each, or else you arrange them in continuous order from the east, according to Serdingpa's instruction. The consonants are also like that.

As for setting up the consonants, the *Root Text* says:

From *KA* up to *HA*,
leaving out *KṢHA*, having four.

This [is explained by some to] mean that one should start from the east, on five petals, and place the five sets [beginning with] *KA CA ṬA TA PA*. Then, on three petals put the *YA* and *SHA* sets [on two of them], and then, on the last petal, put the four letters *KLA BLA SLA SHLA*, these four being called the “hidden,” or “the four tongue-rooted letters.” But that comes from not knowing the meaning. What the text [actually] means is [that] on each of eight petals, leaving out *KṢHA* from *KA* to *HA*, you put four. In this way, the five sets of four *KA CA ṬA TA PA*, the *NGA NYA ṆA NA* set of four, and the two *YA* and *SHA* sets of four are eight [sets in total]. The *MA* letter is the drop on the vowels.

On the inner lotus petals of the four cardinal directions, *Ṛ Ṝ Ḷ Ḹ* are placed, and the quarter petals are left empty. When you put them on the channel [of the] petals, and the letters are not alone [on that part of the petal], you set [the four consonants] sequentially in the channel [of the petal] from outer to inner, and have them standing up. If you set them in the [circular] plane of the petal itself, put them in the form of the arrangement of a garland. [148b]

As for setting the indestructible in the center together with its *A*, it is as already explained.

The *Root Text* says:

⁹² Tsong Khapa interprets the statement about twelve letters as referring to eleven letters, apparently meaning that the short *A* is in the center and not repeated in the outermost row.

Present in the center of the realm of space,
You should visualize the brilliant mandala.

As for the meaning of this stated in the context of the mantra wheel, it does not mean, as some people assert, to meditate that, from within voidness, awareness arises as a mere *nāda* [channel] and transforms into the moon disk of the heart center. With regard to the definitive meaning of that statement in the *Root Tantra*, the *Illumination of the Lamp* says that the realm of space means clear light transparence and the moon disk which stands in its center is said to be the indestructible. That very [explanation] is to be applied here, because by that it is shown that the supporting body of the vajra recitation is the indestructible [drop].

As for meditating the mantra wheel in this way, except for the personal instruction of Nāropa, it does not occur in the treatises together with the personal instructions of the Noble tradition. In some of the instructions of the lineage from Jñānakara to Nagtso there are things disagreeing with this. Even in the instruction [manuals] of the Marpa tradition, dissimilar things sometimes appear. What is explained above, [coming from Nāropa], is correct.

In regard to what Serdingpa says—that the *Revelation of the Hidden Intention* quotes cited in the *Five Stages*, “Five having truly five,” and “Four definitely attached in threes,” and “Sixteen abiding in parts, and so on,” show the ways of establishing the letters on the petals—that is not what they mean; because, although those letters—*OM ĀḤ HŪM*—are collected from the vowels, they do not show how you meditate when you place the vowels on the lotus petals.

In other Tantras there are statements [to the effect that one] sets up many letters in the wheels and then meditates; [149a] [thus,] they are taught in order to compress the wind-energies there; here it is similar. Thus, if, for the sake of compressing the wind-energies in the heart center, you visualize setting up letters there in the cardinal and quarter directions, you do so in order to collect the wind-energies gradually into the indestructible; so this is just the personal instruction for doing that.

In that context, first you visualize the lotus petals, and then gradually from without, in sequence, you visualize the letters of the directions and quarters and hold the mind [on them, until] the energy is collected in the indestructible. In this way, [the energies] easily go closer and closer [to the center]—that is the key to the way they teach. It is not definitely nec-

essary for the mantra wheel to be very elaborate. Just as in the five stages instruction manuals of the Marpa tradition there are explanations of practicing vajra recitation by establishing no wheel at all, [by visualizing] the triply-nested spiritual heroes, all three simultaneously without any mantra wheel, [or visualizing] the indestructible drop with the short A and setting up the *HŪM* syllable—according to [whichever of] these explanations, [you can perform] the vajra recitation.

Nevertheless, it is definitely necessary to meditate the indestructible drop together with [its] letter as explained above, [but] whether the mantra wheel is necessary depends on whether one does it extensively or briefly. For example, in the *Sheaf of Instructions* you establish both hub letters and petal letters in the four wheels, [although] a second way is [also] explained which requires the four letters only in the centers [of the wheels].

[VI.B.3.b.ii.C'3'd'i'B''6''a''ii'' – Meditating life-energy control of the light drop at the face nose tip]

The second has two parts: [A'''] In what place and with what wind-energy does one practice the vajra recitation; and [B'''] The way of uniting wind-energy and mantra, showing the way to differentiate [various types of] vajra recitation.

[VI.B.3.b.ii.C'3'd'i'B''6''a''ii''A'' – In what place and with what wind-energy does one practice the vajra recitation]

Thus you meditate either the indestructible together with the mantra wheel, or the indestructible together with the letter, [until you] become stable without vacillating; relying on that you should practice vajra recitation. Now, if the perfection stage practitioner performs the vajra recitation for the sake of the ritual actions of either pacification, prosperity, [149b] dominion, or destruction, s/he performs them with the four root wind-energies; and if this perfection stage practitioner performs the vajra recitation for the sake of the five higher knowledges of “divine eye” etc., then s/he should do it with the five branch wind-energies. If the body isolation has preceded, and if one practices the vajra recitation for the sake of achieving the [four] voids of the mind isolation, first [you practice with] the four root wind-energies; and from the point when you discover the power there, you then practice with the five branch wind-

energies. On the three occasions of practicing vajra recitation stated in the text, this refers to the latter.

Here, one might inquire, “If that is the way you practice vajra recitation with regard to such-and-such wind-energies, is it certain or not about the place in the body about which one might say ‘you should practice through this spot which is the vital point in the body’?”

In this regard, most people, except for their mere making the energy enter in and go out of the nostrils from the inner hollow of the body, have no certitude that they should practice from such and such a spot in the channel wheels of the body. Again, some people say that the four root wind-energies should be understood as residing in the four elemental spheres in the four [wheels], the throat, and so on.

In regard to the first of these [two opinions]: although it allows that there exist the union of the three letters with the three [processes] of the energy—exhaling, inhaling and abiding—if you lack the personal instruction which says that “you should practice in this vital channel wheel of the body,” however much you strive, it will not happen that the four voids will develop through the dissolving of the energy injected into the *dhūti*. Otherwise, [if that were not the case,] you could not avoid the logical absurdity that by counting the exhalations and inhalations of the wind-energy as explained in the *Disciples’ Stages*, you would get the same result.

In regard to the second opinion, though it has the idea that there is a mere penetration of the vital point of the channels, it has not discovered the import of the key of how the vajra recitation of this system penetrates the vital point in the body. Therefore, in our own system, the three—inhaling, exhaling and holding—are done from the [150a] indestructible drop, along with its letter, itself in the center of the heart.

So, to first establish this point with the [statements from] the *Illumination of the Lamp*; compared to the previous *Illumination of the Lamp* quotation, giving the meaning of the passage that you should meditate by the yoga of inhaling, exhaling and holding, the later passage makes it more clear, and states that it is from within that indestructible drop that one should perform the exhaling, inhaling and holding of a mass of five colored light rays. Also the *Illumination of the Lamp* third chapter, when it explains the definitive meaning of the statements that “you should draw a moon disc standing in the center of space,” and “standing in the center of the sphere of clear light transparence, you

should visualize a wheel mandala and a lotus mandala and a jewel mandala,” and “you should draw a yoga mandala,” [it identifies] “the sphere of clear transparency” as the indestructible, “standing in the center,” and as arising from that; and it states that you should know the four elemental spheres that arise from that as the emerging four wind-energies of the four spheres of water, fire, earth, and wind, in that order. Again, in comment on the *[Root] Tantra* sixth chapter statement that you should meditate the four discs as standing in the middle of the realm of space—sun, clear light transparency, jewel, and light discs, “the realm of space” is the indestructible, “standing in the middle” [means] emerging from there, and the four discs that are emerging are explained as, in order, the wind-energies of the four elements. [150b] It says that in those you should practice the vajra recitation of the three letters, and also that you should command with vajra recitation the Vajrasattva who dwells in the heart center.

As for the explanation of the vajra recitation of the four wind-energies which is taught in the *[Root Tantra]* third chapter, [the *Illumination of the Lamp*] explains it by quoting the Explanatory Tantra *Revelation of the Hidden Intention*. Especially to eliminate doubts arising from the *Vajra Rosary’s* statement that you should perform going and coming of the four wind-energies from these four places, “at the adam’s apple, the heart center, the navel, and the lotus of the secret [center], manifest coming and going”; the *Four Goddess Dialogue* states that “the going and coming of the wind-energies” is from the indestructible of the heart, which fits with the above-explained meaning of the *Illumination of the Lamp*; therefore you should understand that from the detailed analysis in the *[Lamp’s]* subcommentary.

From the *Integrated Practices*, it says:

In the context of the vajra recitation of the three letters, mantras such as “the snake,” and so on, are those that arise from the vowels and consonants. The reality of those is the three letters that arise from the indestructible.

This also means that the recitation of the three mantras of the vajra recitation should be recited by the method of coming [in and out] of the indestructible. It does not mean that one should recite by the method of causing them to enter and exit from the [central] places of the four chakras. As for the reason of needing to do it that way: as explained above, the

four voids emerge from the compression of the wind-energies in the indestructible, and the vital key of vajra recitation is that it is the means of compressing the wind-energies into the indestructible of the heart center; because the principle method of causing the entrance of the three explained above such as entering, [holding, and coming out] etc. [151a] is the vajra recitation. Therefore, Ekādaśhanirghoṣha explains:

Coming out from the indestructible drop, which abides in the center of the lotus in the heart-center, is the exhalation, *HŪM*, entering inhaled there is *OM* and held abiding there is the nature of *ĀH*. These depend on the color white etc. having the characteristic of the elemental spheres of water etc. They occur with the process of [normal breathing] through the superficial right nostril etc. Thus you do the vajra recitation which effortlessly accomplishes the activities of pacification etc., and effects the purification of all previous obscurations.

Also, from Bhavyakīrti's *Five Stages Difficult Point Commentary*, he correctly explains that you should do the vajra recitation of the triple process of having all four elemental spheres leave, enter, and hold within the indestructible drop.

In the *Root Text* it is explained that in the central indestructible, the essence of the whole body, wind-energies etc. are first radiated and then finally gathered back, so that is how you should do the vajra recitation, as it is a repetition of the [natural] process of all things arising from the indestructible [in the first place]. The *Four Point* explains that from that indestructible abiding in the center of the heart, you should do the recitation connecting the letters with the entering, leaving, and standing still of the five root wind-energies radiating in their five colors of light. That is the meaning of the *Root Text*, and also it is the ultimate key point of the practice of vajra recitation. Nevertheless, it seems there are still those who do not understand the good explanations in those texts, mainly because of their not understanding the need to know well the vital point of the heart center in this system.

Some others of the Marpa tradition [151b] claim that, by visualizing in order from the outside the letters in three rows on the lotus petals, you should do the vajra recitation of the three wind-energies of entering, abiding and exiting in those ranks; thinking that is the meaning of the phrase,

“the nature of three kinds of yoga.” But that is incorrect, because the meaning of [the passage from Nāropa’s *Concise Five Stages*]:

The samadhi of the rows in cardinal and quarter directions
Has the nature of the three kinds of yoga.

is the actuality of the three yogas which practice the three samadhis visualizing three rows [of letters] in the cardinal and quarter directions. Kukuripa teaches that you should practice the vajra recitation of exhaling and inhaling from within the kiss of the [two halves of the] drop set in the heart center. Although the *Personal Instruction [of Mañjuśhrī]* teaches [variously] that you should practice the vajra recitation by meditating the three vajras in the center of the two breasts, in the heart center, in the throat and in the crown, [by meditating] the three letters abiding in the moon in the center of the elemental spheres of wind, water, fire, and earth standing in order in the symbol in the heart center of the meditated wisdom hero, and [by meditating] the seed-syllable of your own deity; nevertheless, you should not do it through the heart center of each individual deity, but through the indestructible [in your own heart]; as [Jñānapāda] says, “you should do the actual vajra recitation of the indestructible drop by these [various] procedures.”

Therefore, when the *Liberation Drop* says that you should practice the vajra recitation of the four wind-energies which emerge from the upper nostril as light rays radiating from the four [element] letters, [meaning that] the right side wind [element] is the body-vajra, the left side water element is the speech-vajra, and the both-together fire element is the mind-vajra, and the both-together earth element is the nature of all deities, it is explaining in that way wishing to show that those four wind-energies are the wind-energies of the four elements, and [152a] not that you do the vajra recitation by having the entrance, exit and holding go from there. It is just like [the way you should understand] the explanations, in both this text, [that you should do vajra recitation] in the nostrils with the elemental wind-energies,] and in the *Personal Instruction*, that [you should do vajra recitation as] the inhalation, exhalation, and holding of the wind-energies as the four letters set in the heart center of the deity, and [the many other explanations elsewhere that you should do vajra recitation], apart from those two [ways]. [At least] those [two texts] are mentioning [procedures] that correspond with this [Noble] system, while other systems teach that you should practice vajra recitation in the navel center.

[VL.B.3.b.ii.C'3'd'i'B''6''a''ii''B''' – The way of uniting wind-energy and mantra, showing the way to differentiate (various types of) vajra recitation]

As for the way of uniting wind-energy and mantra, while there is the teaching of the *Illumination of the Lamp* that the white *OM*, [red *ĀH*, and blue *HŪM*], having certain forms, shapes and colors, and being established in the places of the body, are [identical with] the wind-energies' being inhaled, held, and exhaled, and the symbolic meaning of the three letters is these [movements of the] three wind-energies, nevertheless, it is not the case that those [symbolic] meanings of the [three letters as placed in the body etc.] are to be meditated as the [movements of the] three wind-energies. Also, this is not in the context of the vajra recitation.

In the context of the vajra recitation, in [the literature] of the Noble tradition and from the Tantra, it seems that there is no explicit teaching of any sound or form of the three letters and, in regard to the reality of the energy connected with them, [no clear mention of] which energy and which tone. Although Master Gö gave [an explanation] of the resonance of the sound, he did not give [an explanation] of the syllable as a shape, and so skilled persons who follow this [Noble system] also accept [the *OM ĀH HŪM*] in that way. Many Marpa followers assert that the energy is like a rosary-cord and the syllables are arranged like rosary-beads, having that form if you drew them. In the *Root Tantra* seventh chapter, it is said, “Do not recite while eating alms-food,” and the ultimate meaning of that statement is given in the *Revelation of the Hidden Intention*, as quoted in the *Illumination of the Lamp*:

A separate syllable is the alms-food, and to recite those [syllables] is to eat. That is accepted as [the meaning of] “eating alms-food.”

This passage explains that practicing recitation with wind-energy and mantra being different is the opposite of vajra recitation; [152b] so that means you must understand them as not being different. Here, the [Sanskrit] word for “alms-food” is *bhikṣha* and by way of etymological analysis, *bhinna* means “different,” and *akṣhara* means “syllable.” So to recite with energy and syllable as different is “to eat alms-food.” Even when you practice dividing energy and mantra in two, the mantra is pronounced as

a sound; it is not taught that you should think about its written form. Therefore, when you take energy and mantra as non-different, you must take the mantra's sound as what is non-different [from the wind-energy], but you do not take the mantra's form as non-different from the energy. Though it is a sound, if it is recited as a word, it becomes an outer speech; this is not [what Āryadeva means] in the *Integrated Practices*, by saying it is an inner word. Even when it is not spoken as a word, it is not a sound that is mentally thought in the form of a spoken word. Therefore, the natural sound of the three wind-energies which enter, abide and exit are here taken as the three syllables. The meaning of the expression "uniting energy and mantra indivisibly" is that indivisible union of the sound of the mantra with just the natural sound of the wind-energy. When you recognize that your wind-energies sound like the sound of the three letters, aiming the mind without distraction towards that [recognition], you are practicing this [vajra-]recitation. And on this, even though the *Illumination of the Lamp* refers to it as "mental recitation," you should make a clear distinction, since it is very different from the "mental recitation" which is the mental imagining of the form of the pronunciation of a word by the efforts of the palate and tongue. The meaning of "wind-energy and mantra indivisibly united" must be that they arise as one in mental experience; but if you do it as above, they will not arise as the same in mental experience.

Concerning the *Private Instruction*⁹³ statement, "When the energy abides within, you should make it longer each time"; certain scholars state [criticisms] with reference to the intention of the *[Root] Tantra* commentary [153a] "you should leave the energy just as it is, without any artificial effort!" Their statement is incorrect: because there would be no practice of the vajra recitation of exiting, entering and abiding, since it is taught that there are no more than 21,600 [breaths] per day, taking inhalation and exhalation as one [breath], so if you were to leave it [as natural] without any artificial effort, there would be no abiding, which is neither inhalation nor exhalation. Therefore, if you practice according to the statement of the vajra recitation of just the two letters, it would be sufficient to do it without any special effort, nevertheless, in the personal

⁹³ Tib. *gdams ngag*, not elsewhere cited as a text name in this way by Tsong Khapa.

instructions of both Marpa and Gö, you must practice with a special intention to hold the breath in between, to fit with the [practice with] three letters. For the *Personal Instruction [of Mañjuśhrī]* explains four times to “hold gently at the time of abiding with the nature of $\bar{A}\bar{H}$.”

Though many people desire to hold it a long [time] inside, apart from when one is exhaling or inhaling, it is good to [do it] according to Master Gö who maintains that all three should be equal. The *Personal Instruction* says that when you exhale the energy, you purify all things and they become elixir, and reaching the nature of OM when inhaling you purify the instincts of your own inner process, and by the nature of $\bar{A}\bar{H}$ you purify your inner process. The *Liberation Drop* says:

With a $H\bar{U}\bar{M}$, when you emanate buddhas etc., you achieve [the perfection of] all inanimate phenomena. With OM at the time of collecting all buddhas, you achieve [the perfection of] all animate things. With the letter $\bar{A}\bar{H}$ at the time of upholding the buddhas etc., you cause the entry into nondual wisdom of all things animate and inanimate.

As for “achieve,” the commentary explains that it means “purify.” The Noble tradition [153b] does not teach that way of practicing it. Though some people want to [think that it is saying] “from the *Five Stages*, the verse ‘The $H\bar{U}\bar{M}$ letter truly radiates living beings,’” that’s not the meaning. The *Five Point* says [words to the effect that], “Practice just twenty-one vajra recitations of the three letters each time. When you count more than that, as for the actual vajra recitation, when you feel well and it is easy to hold the energy, the upper energy is pressed down by OM , the lower energy is drawn up by $H\bar{U}\bar{M}$, and you should practice visualizing the kiss of the wind-energies in the heart center.” In the *Four Point* it is taught that “When by doing the vajra recitation of the three letters the energy enters into the central channel and no longer flows, you should do it up to the perfection of the vajra recitation where you generate the experience of bliss-void.” In the *Wheel Endowed* also it explains that by doing the vajra recitation again and again one hundred and eight times, and so forth, the five signs arise.

Thus, the first of those [three passages supposed to be from Serdingpa], which seems to disagree, presents the vajra recitation of the three letters as practiced only a bit more than twenty-one times etc. That

appears to be a great error, which contradicts the *Root* and *Explanatory Tantras* and the treatises of the father and sons. And, the explanation of the vajra recitation as the holding of the energy in an [inner] kiss appears to be just a fabrication. Our own system contradicts many [of others'] claims about the energy yogas of the mind isolation. Therefore you must practice according to the *Four Point* teaching, and interpret the *Wheel Endowed* as in agreement.

In the *Condensed [Sādhana]*, quoting the *Four Goddess Dialogue* as authority, it is explained that at the time of eating one uses this kiss [of the two wind-energies]; but except for some commentaries which do teach this as a kiss [of wind-energies], it is not so taught in any Indian treatises of the Noble tradition. Even if you use personal instructions, if you interpret them in accord with the other personal instructions of our own system's teaching in the context of the mind isolation, it will agree with our system. [154a]

In regard to the vajra recitations, if we divide them according to their objects, the wind-energies, there are the two kinds of vajra recitations, focusing [respectively] on root and branch [wind-energies]; and each of those also can be divided into four and five [respectively]. To divide them according to the recited mantras, the *Vajra Rosary* teaches both the vajra recitation of the two letters *HŪM* and *HO* and the vajra recitation of the three letters. The *Revelation of the Hidden Intention* and the *Further Tantra* teach the vajra recitation of the three letters.

Lakṣhmī and Kalden Drakpa et al. teach eleven [types of] six-clan, fierce, three-poison, and neuter vajra recitations, claiming that to be the meaning of the root text and commentaries of the *[Root Tantra] Thirteenth Chapter*.

As for the intention of the *Illumination of the Lamp*, you should understand its meaning by analysing the thatness of the three letters; [Chandrakīrti] teaches the vajra recitation of the body, speech and mind. Then there are the “jewel recitation” and the “unobstructed recitation,” said to be the main vajra recitations.

Therefore, just the previous three do not constitute the full-fledged vajra recitation. They teach those [previous three] vajra recitations to be mental recitations, and teach the fierce recitation to be a verbal recitation; so it is very clear that these do not constitute the vajra recitation. As for the three-poison recitation, this is taught as a visualization of all beings possessing the three poisons as being placed in clear light; but this is not

a wind-energy recitation. As for the neuter recitation, it seems to be interpreted as a meditation on clear light transparency, so this also is not a wind-energy recitation, and those are also not said to be vajra recitations.

Declaring the principle vajra recitation, the *[Root] Tantra* says:

Recitation following the [ultimate] meaning, [154b]
Through the goodness of realitylessness,
Discerning the three times buddhas—
This is taught as the jewel recitation.
The buddhaverses everywhere,
Radiating clouds of embodiments,
Inviting them back and forth is the meaning of “vajra”—
That is called the unobstructed recitation.

For the second line, the Chag translation has “Through the goodness of reality itself,” which is better. As for the meaning of those, the recitation that follows after the three—inhalation, exhalation, and retention—as the meaning of the three letters, is said to be the recitation following the meaning. By the goodness which arises from the reality of the indestructible means that by that cause which radiates uninterruptedly one discerns the buddhas which arise in the three times to be [identical with] the three-fold [wind-energy control], inhalation, exhalation and retention. In that regard, this means that one comes to realize that which is the actuality of all the transcendent buddhas is the reality of the indestructible drop. That is what is called the “jewel recitation.” This is explained in accord with the good translations of the commentaries. And that means that the vajra recitation compresses the wind-energies into the indestructible.

Thus compressing them, they dissolve there; and when you exhale from the buddhaverse, your own heart-lotus indestructible, you gush forth everywhere, through all the doors of your eye sense-medium etc., clouds of [buddha-]embodiments and invite them back within; and all of this radiation, which has the nature of what is meant by “vajra,” standing within [the indestructible], is the “unobstructed recitation.”

As for calling the previous one the “jewel recitation,” it intends that the vajra recitation of the root energy brings the energy into the jewel of the indestructible, and does not indicate a recitation related to Ratnasambhava of the five clans. [155a] Similarly, the “unobstructed recitation” is called that because, having developed the ability to compress

the wind-energies, it practices the branch energy vajra recitation, entering without obstruction the door of each sense faculty; it does not indicate a recitation related to Amoghasiddhi. From a quote in the *Five Stages* the former are called vajra recitations. Except for the *Illumination of the Lamp*, in the treatises of the father and sons and the *Concise Five Stages* etc. there is no teaching of the branch energy vajra recitation. After that previously indicated boundary, if you then practice the recitation of the branch wind-energies, then you must recite by way of emerging from the indestructible of the heart center; and by doing it that way, Master Gö maintains that it serves as an ancillary cause for bliss to burn in the perception of all objects. This seems to be the supreme intention of the *Vajra Rosary*.

Now in regard to the verbal meaning of vajra recitation, though certain Tibetans and Indians seem to explain various things, the *Illumination of the Lamp* says:

Their meaning is the three syllables. Reciting them, it is the three, entering etc. Their existence is symbolized by the indivisible three vajras. And that is called the “vajra recitation of their reality.”

Therefore, “vajra recitation” is the reality of the indivisible union of the three sounds of the three wind-energies with the three syllables of the three vajras. Therefore, in trance meditation, from within the experiential reality of having [in mind] the four vital points, the above taught points of the body etc., getting rid of all faults which could turn into depression or elation, by the enthusiastic force of seeing well the excellences of both the wind-energy yogas and the recitation yogas, [155b] you should properly learn how to have the sound of the three wind-energies arise as mantras; and you should also keep on learning in the aftermath states. [You should practice] according to the *Revelation of the Hidden Intention* statement:

In every kind of activity,
By staying aware of this yoga, even sleeping, etc.,
Always recite, leaving the three times,
The nameless and inexpressible.

As for the meaning of the latter two lines, Śhraddhā explains that it means that you recite in all three times the three syllables, free of any nominal or verbal expression.

[VL.B.3.b.ii.C'3'd'i'B''6''a''iii'' – Meditating life-energy control of the substance drop at the secret nose tip]

There are two parts to meditating on the substance-drop at the nose-tip of the secret center.

[First,] although the *Vajra Rosary* mentions that “the meditation on the drop involves holding the enlightenment spirit without emitting it in the boundary where there is the meeting of the consort’s lotus nose-tip and your vajra’s lotus nose-tip,” it is not the case that you meditate by visualizing the form of a drop there. The *Illumination of the Lamp* states, when explaining the *Further Tantra*, that meditating by visualizing the drop is “when the wind-energy emerges with the form of a drop from the hole of your vajra and is imagined with the form of a drop in the nose-tip of the lotus of the consort.” Now clearly that is inside the wisdom seal, and moreover, that is meditated at the boundary where the two nose-tips meet, so it is not the same as meditating on the nose-tip of each one.

In general, in meditating relying upon the wisdom seal, there are three main types of meditation explained in the literature of the Noble tradition. These three are: a creation of bliss by uniting with that [wisdom seal]; a meditation upon the mandala [environment] within the drop which is settled within the lotus [of the consort], which is the objective spirit of enlightenment that [melts down] though uniting with that [consort]; and a meditation visualizing the drop at the juncture of meeting of the two nose tips of the secret places of the father and mother. Here, the latter [is under discussion]. [156a]

While the need of that [practice] is for the sake of compressing the wind-energies into the *dhūti* channel, it does not mean that you can compress [through this practice the energies] you were previously unable to compress in the *dhūti* channel; because when you learn the body isolation you gain the ability to compress the wind-energies. Therefore, the meditation of the life-energy control in this context is the means of compressing [wind-energies] you were not able to compress in the heart center by the two previous [methods]. Thus, this [vajra recitation] serves as a way of heightening the impact of compressing [the wind-energies] in

the heart center.⁹⁴ On other [subsequent] occasions also, you should apply the same reasoning.

[VI.B.3.b.ii.c'3'd'i'b''6''b'' – The uncommon function of vajra recitation]

The second has two parts: [i''] Showing how the vajra recitation releases the channel knot at the heart center; and [ii''] Showing how that release of the heart-center channel knot is the principle channel-knot release.

[VI.B.3.b.ii.c'3'd'i'b''6''b''i'' – Showing how the vajra recitation releases the channel knot at the heart center]

Thus, the reason why it is necessary to practice vajra recitation through the indestructible in the center of the heart center wheel is clearly stated in the *Vajra Rosary*:

Abiding in the center of the urna,
The drop is truly taught as wind-energy,
And is opened through the reality of mantra.
The yogī/nī upon releasing the [heart] knot,
Knows the reality of wind-energy;
[But] to apply a distinctive opening,
[If] the yoga itself is not understood;
This yoga of holding the wind-energy,
For those who see wrongly and unclearly,
Transcends expression and expressible,
Lacks contemplation and meditative object,
And is hard even for buddhas to attain.
Yet by the kindness of the yoginī,
It endures transmitted face to face.

As for the import of the first two phrases, same text says:

⁹⁴ Here we can see why Tsong Khapa considers that the *Esoteric Community* and its Noble tradition of investigation and practice is said to be unparalleled in the Father Tantra context of unraveling the heart knot, opening the indestructible, and creating the magic body.

The A dwells in the Dharma wheel lotus,
And pervades the wheel of wind.
This only is the great wind-energy
“Life-energy” is thus declared.

By stating that there is a six-petaled wind wheel at the place of the urna-tuft in between the eyebrows, [156b] this shows the *dhūti* channel as the abode of the life-wind-energy, which pervades up to there from the heart center.

Here, in regard to [the knot] that is opened through the reality of mantra and energy, “mantra” is the one [mentioned]. Another [one mentioned] is the yoga of the opening of the knot of the *dhūti* channel. But if you do not understand the distinctive means of opening, which comes from having the reasoning of the reality of [both] mantra and wind-energy, that objective will be hard to achieve by the yoga of holding the wind-energy. That is the meaning additionally supplied in the section of the verse from “energy” up to “hard [even for buddhas] to attain.”

The translation by Zhiwa Öd:

If you did not also know that yoga
By the yoga of supreme differentiation,

is better, and there he also translates, “Understanding the reality of wind-energy.”

As for not being able to understand that meaning without the personal instructions of the mentor, [it is because] “it transcends expression and expressible.” “Unclearly” means that you will not understand it clearly. As for apprehending wrongly the meaning of the textual reference, that is “wrongly seeing.” Thus having known [wrongly] the reality of mantra and wind-energy, since you lack the meditation of contemplating that [correctly], it is difficult even for buddhas to release the knot at the heart center by the power of yoga. The translation of Zhiwa Öd says:

Even buddhas find it hard to attain.

In this [*Vajra Rosary*] *Tantra* it is said that the reality of mantra is to be understood by the kindness of the yoginī and the speech of the mentor. Therefore, “yoginī” does not mean the mentor. “Who then?” if you ask. In this *Tantra*’s chapter on the characteristics of the formation of the channels, it says that by condensing the seventy-two channels,

they become the channels numbered according to the twenty-four holy places such as *Pulliramālaya*; [157a] again condensing those [into] the eight channels which are the exact measure of the heart center; those eight again [are condensed into] the three channels of the center of the heart center; and those three again are united to become the single *dhūti* itself. You should understand this pattern through the Yoginī Tantra, according to [this *Vajra Rosary Tantra*]. And that *Tantra* teaches the reason for necessity for the vajra recitation, the reality of mantra and wind, to open the heart center channel knot; in that way, it intends the instruction in the [*Unexcelled*] *Clear Articulation 100,000* and so forth, given in response to the inquiry of the yoginīs, about the first formation of the channels and the final ultimate places of compression [of the wind-energies].

As for the above statements of that kind, the vajra god Vajrapāṇi implored [Vajradhara] with [this] vajra petition [in the *Vajra Rosary Tantra*]:

Oh Saviour of beings, I pray you to teach
The opening of the drop, with its rationale.
Who knows it, quickly practicing the supreme yoga,
Will accomplish the opening of the knot.
These beings of the three realms
Will go quickly to supreme accomplishment.

“The opening of the drop” refers to the means of opening the reality of wind-energy and mantra; by knowing which, you can open the heart center knot through the practice of the supreme yoga of meditation, and thus you will proceed quickly to the supreme accomplishment. So he prayed to the Savior of Beings please to teach it. As for the answer given to that request [in the *Vajra Rosary Tantra*]:

The Vajrin thus having been asked,
He said to the Vajra Lord:
“The nature of the supreme secret
Which is not stated clearly anywhere,
That opening of the drop—
I will explain—you listen to it!
In the sky chamber of the heart-lotus,
The intuitive wisdom vajra always dwells,

Showing truly the lower and the upper, [157b]
 Home of the great life and evacuative energies.
 There again, in the center of the hard to open,
 It is wrapped up by three knots.
 These defeat the evacuative energies,
 Which do not succeed going upward.
 These also defeat the fivefold energies;
 The vitalizing, evacuative, ascending,
 Pervading, and metabolic wind-energies.
 These flow from the five tips,
 And depend on the five channels.
 The expansive, the extremely expansive,
 The crazy, the falling, and the friendly—
 You should know these as the five channels;
 Under the vajra, they clearly spread.
 In the center of the upper life-energy [channel],
 They go into the vajra hub realm of space.
 “Vitalizing,” the great wind-energy,
 Emerging depending upon the knot,
 Is also defeated and moves fivefold.
 On the tips of the five channels,
 The moon-portion and luminance...

So it continues as previously quoted.

Here, what is not clearly stated in any other Tantra, the extremely secret point, is this yoga of opening the channel-knot of the heart center by the vajra recitation. As for the knot which is to be opened, it is in the void space in the chamber of the *dhūti* channel in the center of the channel wheel of the heart center, at the height of the home of the wisdom vajra indestructible, and it is wrapped three times by three extremely hard to open knots. From the right, the *rasanā* channel, and from the left, the *lalanā* channel, each wrap three knots. Although that makes six, there are three if you take both in common.

That knot blocks the evacuative energy and does not allow it to go upward, meaning that it does not release it upward within the *dhūti* beyond the boundary of the knot, though I have already explained above the general upward movement [not in the *dhūti* channel] of the evacuative energy. Defeated by the [knot], it becomes fivefold; [158a] it is not

that the evacuative energy moves in the five wind-energies, but below the block by the knot the five wind-energies move downward. They move pervasively below the previously mentioned wisdom vajra. That is according to what is stated in this Tantra about drawing downward the evacuative wind-energies.

The word “again” shows that the five wind-energies also move upwards. In regard to the five, the life-energy etc., in order, proceed from the five channels called “expansive” etc. In the upper center of the hub of the vajra, the life-energy emerges from the sphere of space of the channel-chamber of the life energy, and also one should add that it moves in its five forms.

As for being defeated depending on the knot, because the upper life-energy wind is blocked by that knot, within that [*dhūti* channel] it is not allowed to go downward. As the same [text, the *Vajra Rosary Tantra*,] states:

The upper ones also go downward;
Even though defeated by the life-energy,
They also are within the life-channel,
Entering and facing down,
They do not go downward,
Bound by the knot of ignorance.

As for the defeat of the life-energy wind’s movement, to translate it “defeated by the life-energy” is not felicitous. Although the upper wind-energies do go downward, they do not go downward within the central channel from the level of the knots. Because it is taught that ignorance is the reason, the translation of Zhiwa Öd, “the machine of the knot of ignorance,” is not good.

It is said that the life-energy wind moves with the five wind-energies which are “Dragon,” etc., from the upper channel chamber [above the heart knot], and that it drives the five wind-energies upward to the doors of the senses. Here, the [*Vajra Rosary*] *Tantra* states that the wind-energy, the chariot of consciousness, mixing with the instincts of consciousness and engaging with objects, [158b] generates the [eighty] instinctual natures, that it wanders in samsara by the power of being polluted by the instincts, and that “without that, there is no life-cycle.” Just after that it states:

Thus, in order to abandon the life-cycle,
 Meditate with the greatest effort
 The clear state of the opening of the drop;
 Not known [usually] due to other unknowing [senses],⁹⁵
 When you have opened that central knot,
 You will become [the supreme] accomplishment.

Thus, this Tantra states that, in order to purify the instincts for wandering in life-cycle, you should “open the drop,” that is, cause the opening of the chamber of the egg of ignorance which binds the heart center *dhūti* channel, meditating on the reality of energy and mantra. Until you dissolve the life-wind-energy and evacuative energy, which generate the [natural] instinctual constructs, into the heart center indestructible, the clear light will not fully arise. For that purpose, you must open the heart center channel knot. “Opening that” means opening it by [meditating on] the reality [of mantra and wind-energy].

Thus, the *Vajra Rosary* sixth chapter expresses the need for opening the heart center channel knot; that, if you open that with the reality of mantra, you will achieve the superknowledges of sword and pill, etc., and the great seal accomplishment; that the reality of mantra is the recitation combining *HŪM* and *HO* with inhalation and exhalation; and that if you practice it for six months, you will certainly achieve [accomplishments].

Here, you might wonder, “Well, is it the teaching of reality that the vajra recitation of the two syllables opens the channel knot? Or is it the vajra recitation of the three syllables?”

Of the two types of “reality of mantra” stated to “open [the heart knot] by the reality of mantra,” one is stated in the [*Vajra Rosary*] sixth chapter and the second is stated in the [*Vajra Rosary*] fifteenth chapter:

The vajras of body, speech and mind,
 You should pronounce reciting three mantras; [159a]
 Thereby you will swiftly achieve accomplishments,
 And will transcend the reality of mantra.

⁹⁵ Thanks to David Kittay for helping me clarify the meaning of this line, with the help of Alamkakaśha’s commentary.

And:

As for teaching the reality of mantra,
It illuminates the unperceivable stage,
The cause of Vajrasattva himself,
Possessing all the virtues of mantra,
The vow of body, speech and mind.
Supreme wisdom generates that reality,
Reality that concentrates the sense of all,
The reality of mantra which is unexcelled—
Repeat it for six months, you will achieve
[Accomplishments]; otherwise no way.

Thus, it is very clearly stated that by practicing for six months through the lotus of the heart center the three-syllable reality of mantra and energy, you will achieve [accomplishments]. Therefore both the two-letter and three-letter vajra recitation are undoubtedly intended by the [*Vajra Rosary*] *Tantra* to open the channel knot.

As for how to open it, from the same text:

Having named the sound *HŪM* and the drop *HOH*,
By opening with the two wind-energies
You cause the opening of the ignorance-knot.

For example, just as when the chamber of a bamboo is blocked, putting a long spoon in there and pulling it in and out opens it up, the inhalation and exhalation of the energy also opens up [the knot] like that.

The same [text] states:

The being who is lacking the *A HAM*,
Is like a tree whose root is cut.

If you lack the knowledge of the definitive meaning of *A HAM*, it is like having the root [of your practice] cut off. [It continues]:

A is explained as the life-energy wind,
And likewise the evacuative energy is said to be *HAM*.
As for those two becoming one,
That is renowned as *A HAM*.

That is what is stated [in the *Vajra Rosary Tantra*]. This method merges the vitalizing and evacuative wind-energies in the home of the heart center indestructible.

[VL.B.3.b.ii.C'3'd'i'B''6''b''ii'' – Showing how that release of the heart center channel knot is the principle channel knot release]

Of the two ways [—interpretable and definitive—] of collecting the mantras of the three letters, [159b] as for collecting the mantras of interpretable meaning: according to the *Vajra Rosary* fifteenth chapter, there are three [syllables], the first vowel which is *A*, the fifth vowel which is the letter *U*, and the last syllable of the last division of *KA CA TA TA PA*, which is *MA*; then from *A* and *U* comes *O*, the *U* becoming non-manifest, and then, putting an *O* sign upon the *MA* letter you get *OM*.

Then, according to this Tantra's chapter on the essence of body, speech and mind, in place of *U*, *O* is written in all three translations, which is not correct; according to the commentary an *U* syllable is written, which is correct. At the beginning of the vowels there are two *A*'s; and there is the warmth factor, which is the warmth [sibilant] division's last letter, *HA*; and as for the first two of three, with regard to similar syllables, the former becomes long, and the latter is erased, leaving one long *Ā* [with a visarga terminal *Ḥ* sound attached]. As for the *H* letter having no [vowel to give it] life, the commentary explains that it should be put in the place of a strong [terminal] point; on two occasions the *H* letter is mentioned.

The heat factor *H* letter, by being adorned with the sixth vowel—long *Ū*—becomes *HŪ*. By adding the *Ṁ* letter which is the end of the *PA* division as an *anusvāra* terminal point above, there is *HŪṀ*.

In the text of the commentary, “Having the last part of the heat [sibilant class],” Here, the commentary explains this indicates a crescent moon. In that way, you should interpret it according to the *Integrated Practices*' statement that each of the three letters arises from three letters.

As for the definitive meaning collection of the mantras, there are three.

As for the way of bringing together the definitive meaning *OM*, in the same [*Vajra Rosary*] *Tantra* it says:

A abides in the lotus of the Dharma wheel,
Pervading the wheel of wind-energy.

Only this is the great wind-energy,
Everywhere it is called “the life-energy.”

Thus, as for the definitive meaning of the *A* letter of the three letters of the letter *OM̄*, is explained as the life-energy wind. [160a] In the translation of the [*Vajra Rosary Commentary*], [the last line of the verse] is given [in Tibetan] as:

The so-called life-energy collects everything.

It is explained that this means that all wind-energies are collected in it.

[The *Vajra Rosary Tantra* states:]

As for the [*U* in the]⁹⁶ *OM̄*, it abides in the beatific wheel,
With its likeness of fire and sun,
Home between the limits of throat and crown,
It pervades as the body of radiant energy.

This means that the definitive meaning of the *U* letter is that it pervades from the beatific wheel up to the great bliss wheel. Its color is like fire and like sunlight, and it is a body of blazing energy, its actuality shown to be the ascending energy. In the translations of the commentary, Zhiwa Öd and [the translator] Ra write *U*, which is correct.

[The *Vajra Rosary Tantra* states:]

In the place called “the great bliss wheel”
Is the *MA* letter, just as a drop.
Its height is twelve finger-widths.
It dwells in the place of a royal uṣṅṅīṣha.

Thus, the definitive meaning of the *MA* letter is the spirit of enlightenment drop, located from the brow level measured twelve fingers up to the place of the crown protuberance. In Zhiwa Öd’s translation [of the *Vajra Rosary Commentary*] he writes:

As for its height, it is across twelve fingers,
Dwelling within the uṣṅṅīṣha.

⁹⁶ This should be “*U*,” not “*OM̄*,” as the following commentary indicates, since it explains the definitive meaning of the *U* in the middle of the *OM̄*. Derge printing has *Ū*.

Just as the $OṀ$ is placed on the crown in the interpretable meaning, in the definitive meaning three things—[namely] the vitalizing life-energy, the ascending energy, and the $HAṀ$ drop—are collected in the interior of the channel knot of the $dhūti$ channel at the great bliss wheel.

As for the way of collecting the definitive-meaning $ĀḢ$ letter, [the *Vajra Rosary Tantra* states:]

The letter A has already been explained;
It is the supreme life-energy wind...

and:

A from the lotus of the Dharma wheel,
Becomes a double letter A at the throat.
Life-energy itself and the evacuative energies,
Are wholly bound by the HA letter
To dwell in the center of the throat [wheel].

Thus, the heart center life-energy, [160b] combined with the throat center ascending energy, the two becoming a double A , is the [definitive] meaning of “long $Ā$.” The third, the evacuative energy, is the meaning of what is symbolized by HA . The meaning of the $ĀḢ$ letter placed in the throat is said to be the collection [of these energies] inside the central channel of the channel knot of the beatific wheel.

As for how to collect the definitive-meaning $HŪṀ$, [the *Vajra Rosary Tantra* states:]

As for HA , it is the energy named “evacuative.”
It dwells in the center of the anal secret place.
The [long] $Ū$ letter is the wind going upward,
Dwelling in the lotus of the throat.
The MA letter is the life-energy.
In the wind-wheel of the forehead
They become one. When in the heart center,
They are declared the heart seed.

So here the meaning of HA is evacuative [energy], and the meaning of MA is the life-energy pervading the wind wheel in the interval from the heart center to the brow. The meaning of the [long] $Ū$ is the upward-going or ascending energy, the third [of these three wind-energies]. As the $HŪṀ$ syllable is set in the heart center, it is said that it compresses

[all three winds] within the *dhūti* channel in the center of the Dharma wheel channel knot. Saying twice “they become one,” [you should] apply this also in the same way to the definitive meanings of *OM* and *ĀḤ*.

As for thus explaining the definitive meanings of the three letters, it indicates a merging of the life-energy, evacuative and ascending wind-energies within the *dhūti* channel, having released the three wheels’ channel knots. To consecrate body, speech and mind by setting in the three places the three definitive meaning syllables *OM ĀḤ HŪM*, as taught in many authoritative mantric treatises, that is the way to give a blessing.

In [response to] that statement [in the *Vajra Rosary Tantra*], Vajrapāṇi [says]:

I understand the verbal meaning of three vajras
And the opening of their places—
[Now,] who is the master in their center?
What does the Lord declare?” [161a]

Thus, though he has understood the merging of the wind-energies as the definitive meaning creation of the three syllables by [each] uniting three syllables [and wind-energies], and also, where in the body’s channel wheels the mergings occur, he asks about what sort of master is there within the center of those three. In answer to that [the Lord declares]:

You ask for the hidden meaning
Of the supreme secret of secrets,
Which is not taught in all the Tantras—
I will fully explain; so do you listen!
The master of the seed of the heart
Within it all, is mental-construct-free;
Whereby the other [two] Lords
Will also be obstructed and removed.

The [Lord declares that], in the place of the released channel knots of the three channel wheels of heart, throat and crown, within the merged three wind-energies of life-energy, evacuative, etc., “this is the great key point.” [It is] the point which is greatest secret of secrets, hidden within other Tantras. So [while I] explain this, you should listen. Within all three of those, the definitive meaning *HŪM* syllable, the seed of the heart, is the master merger within the *dhūti* channel [central chamber]

of the released heart channel-knot. Why? The release of the heart channel knot is the freedom from mental constructions. It is the supreme of causes of cutting off [the instinctual constructs]; because, unless you hold the wind-energies there without moving, those wind-energies become the chief thing that moves the constructs to obscure and deprive [you of accomplishments].

Or else, as for the other Lords, the body and speech vajras other than the mind vajra, and the places of those two, their crown and throat channel knots are [automatically] destroyed by the release of the mind vajra channel knot, [161b] which you should understand is what is meant by “obstructed and removed.” This refers to the key point which is taught below that when you release the heart center channel knot, by the power of that the other knots are released. The commentary [says] that “among the three letters the *HŪM* letter is chief, because all things depend upon the mind.” However, that explanation [is too simplistic, and] comes from not properly discovering the definitive meaning of the three syllables.

Then, [the *Vajra Rosary Tantra*] states:

Third, you, the yogī/nī, realize
 The thought-free great miracle.
 By stopping all wind-energies,
 You realize [reality] in this very life.

As for the “third,” it is the entry of the wind-energy into the place of the release of the heart center channel knot, which is the verbal meaning of the mind-vajra. As for “realize,” that [mind-vajra] becomes manifest to the yogī/nī. At that time, the freedom from mental constructions is a miracle, and [you should] add that you generate the miraculous orgasmic wisdom. “Realize reality” means that it is miraculous. As for the reason, it is because all wind-energies and thoughts cease, since you can collect them in the heart center indestructible. Here [Buddha Vajradhara] makes more explicit the reason previously explained that the heart seed is the master.

That shows that compressing the wind-energies in the heart center is the great vital key for ceasing all thought constructs and the wind-energies that move them, which shows that compressing them in other channel centers does not have that much power; since this [*Vajra Rosary*] is the authoritative text that teaches the reason why compression in the heart center is the main practice. Then, it [goes on to] state:

In the center of the emanation and Dharma wheels,
 [The Buddha] said there are two lotuses;
 One of sixty-four and one of eight petals,
 Their blooms facing upward and downward.
 Relying on the above and the below,
 Life and evacuative energies [162a] circulate.
 Just those two are clearly stated
 To be the wind-energies of instinctual notions.
 The two essences of body and speech,
 The *lalanā* and the *rasanā* [channels].

The emanation center has sixty-four petals, and the truth [Dharma] center has eight. In regard to the fourth line, the commentary aptly states, “they dwell like a jewel-sack,” which means that the heart center lotus facing downward and the navel center lotus facing upward, as explained in the *Samputa [Tantra]*, stand in a shape like a jewel-sack with its two halves joined together. These verses teach the condition of the heart and navel center wheels, and also that the circulation of the vitalizing and evacuative wind-energies located above and below produce the [eighty] instinctual notions. Thereafter, [the *Vajra Rosary*] continues:

[In] the supreme channel, the *avadhūti*,
 Supreme supreme, central between those two,
 Lies the wind-energy free of instinctual notions,
 Always circulating, all-pervading.
 The yogī/nī, whatever s/he attains,
 Always can accomplish the aims of beings.
 The specific natural pattern of energy,
 Whichever prevails of the hundred and eight,
 At all times remains prevailing.
 Not understood by the childish yogī/nī,
 In one instant, manifestly perfect enlightenment
 Is attained thereby, according to this Tantra.

Instinctual notions are cut off when you inject the energy into the *dhūti* that lies in the center of the two [side] channels. That channel is superior to the two side channels. A yogī/nī who attains that can benefit others, prevailing over the wind-energies that generate the hundred and eight notional patterns. This is not understood by a creation stage [yogī/nī],

that by injecting the two wind-energies into the *dhūti*, [162b] in an instant, that is quickly, you are said to attain the clear light of manifest buddhahood. In order to inject the wind-energies into the *dhūti*, first you must perfect the creation stage, and then there is the stage where you must practice the vajra recitation; [as the *Vajra Rosary* states:]

Further, however you effect attainment,
It is pronounced to be rational.
First the great yogī/nī,
Good-hearted one, meditates quiescence.

By the yoga of the creation stage,
Having made the seal of ferocity,
In the nine doors of the faculties,
All of them are entirely bound.

Repeating *HŪM̐*, perform the peerless,
Supremely uninterrupted,
Practice for six months;
Afterward, you will attain in an instant.

Here the “seal” is the great seal, the deity body developed in the creation stage. The commentary calls the “ferocity seal” the “blazing seal,” which refers to the creation stage’s burning away conceptual notions of ordinariness. “Reciting *HŪM̐*” is one aspect of practicing the vajra recitation. Thereby, you compress within the wind-energies back from the eye and so on, the nine sense doors, which [process] is described in the two lines from [the one with] “faculties.” Thereafter, it continues:

Wherefore, having recited that [*HŪM̐*],
The heart lotus [knot] is destroyed,
[And the navel center knot also], by gazing up.
Then, though you performed the embrace
Of the lotus of the secret [center],
The two conceptual notion energies
Still go, along with their patterns.
Freedom from thoughts bestows the bliss—
[Then,] you will attain by the reality of mantra,
And you will stay in the *avadhūti* stream.

Energy having opened the center of the brow,
 You attain—and the joy of such attainment
 Continuously arises and does not end.

Thus, the first two lines teach the destruction of the heart center channel knot by practicing the vajra recitation for six months. The translation of the commentary by Zhiwa Öd and [the translator] Ra says, “the heart center lotus goes by looking upward”; [163a] and Darma Tsöndru translates it as above. The commentary explains that the meaning of “goes by looking upward” is that the [jewel sack’s two halves] break open their cover as they join together the [heart and navel] channel wheels, and that such opening, taking the “lotus of the secret [center]” as the emanation wheel, is the undoing of the binding of the jewel sack; so it does not seem to differ from the previous [translation.]

The heart and navel wheels face downward and upward respectively, but are not united [forming an enclosure], so it is not a question of opening each of them individually.

In this Tantra’s teaching of the six channel wheels, the secret [genital] center wheel is not mentioned; yet in the verse “It manifests coming and going in the throat center, heart center, navel center, and secret lotus,” a “secret lotus” is mentioned apart from the navel [center], which does not indicate the emanation wheel. This Tantra teaches that the vajra recitation “opens” the knot, “destroys” the knot, and “conquers” the knot; here again it teaches the “destruction” of the knot by the vajra recitation; therefore “destroying the heart center lotus” refers to the releasing of the heart center channel knot. “Destroyed by looking upward” refers to the navel channel knot. In releasing the heart center channel knot, it must happen in the sequence of the death process. The *Sheaf of Instructions* explains that you reverse the heart lotus upward at the time of practicing [soul] ejection, and the *Great Seal Drop* states:

The life-energy wind in the heart center channel,
 When it does not function even for an instant,
 Its lotus is turned upside down,
 And in an instant it goes upward.

Thus, it seems the heart lotus must be reversed upward. In that Tantra, the navel seems not to be mentioned explicitly, [163b] and the heart center is widely recommended; or else, it is as mentioned the “navel of the heart

center lotus.” In some texts it reads “if you don’t eliminate it for a mere instant,” supporting the interpretation that it means binding the life-energy wind there and stabilizing it. The “secret center lotus union” refers to the knot by the *rasanā* and *lalanā* channels uniting around the central channel.

So, here it is taught that the navel and secret center’s knots are released when the heart center channel knot is released. “The midbrow is opened by energy” shows that the wind-energies open the wheels’ channel knots, meaning that all the other channel knots are opened by opening that [heart center] knot. When the [heart] channel knot is released it cuts off the vitalizing and evacuating wind-energies’ circulation in other channels, causing them to circulate only in the central channel *dhūti* alone, giving rise to the unceasing stream of great bliss free of thoughts; thus it declares that the reality of mantra is realized by the vajra recitation.

Those explanations, just as the *Vajra Rosary* repeatedly states “you will achieve by means of the reality of mantra alone,” and also [as] the Noble father and sons [teach], do not explain any other explicit yoga of meditation of wind-energy, but explain the vajra recitation itself. Thus it seems to be the indispensable method that grants the great certainty; and so I have explained it extensively.

[VL.B.3.b.ii.C’3’d’i’B’’6’’c’’ – Having meditated life-energy control, the stage of generating experience]

The third has two parts: [i’] How to produce experience by meditating on the heart center indestructible; and [ii’] How to produce experience by meditating on the other life-energy control practices.

[VL.B.3.b.ii.C’3’d’i’B’’6’’c’’i’’ – How to produce experience by meditating on the heart center indestructible]

As explained above, it is taught that by gathering the energy into the heart center, clear light arises. In the *Illumination of the Lamp* it is stated that, before entering into clear light, the process of dissolving earth into water, etc., [164a] gives rise to the five signs, mirage, etc. And it states that this happens not only on the occasion of entry into objective clear light, but also on all occasions of the arising of the four voids, after the energy has been collected into the *dhūti* channel and has dissolved

there. Thus, meditating on the indestructible in the heart center gives rise to the five signs.

In the *Personal Instruction* it says:

You should set the mind in the drop.
Holding your faculty there,
The earth element enters into water;
In turn, that water enters into fire;
Then the fire enters into the wind,
And the wind enters into the [subtle] mind.
When your mind just enters into nondual wisdom,
The signs [of dissolution] ensue.
Because Vajrasattva enters [your central channel],
The five signs arise, appearing
Mirage-like, like smoke,
Like a candle and like fireflies,
And like a cloudless sky.

Also, Kukuripa says [in his *Vajrasattva Sādhana*]:

With the intention of great effort,
Regard the drop of shape itself.
Again, entering into that,
The five or eight signs will emerge.
Then you will abide in clear light,
Abiding as long as you like,
A day, a month, a year, etc.
Then all your activities such as the aims of beings
Will effortlessly be accomplished.

The five signs are the [usual] five, mirage, etc. The eight signs add the three luminances, [with signs of] moon, sun, and darkness, onto those. Since Vaidyapāda explains that there are three signs [within each sign], as the false earth etc. are ready to be eliminated, slightly eliminated, and totally eliminated, [164b] you must understand that there are many degrees of these signs.

It is taught that these signs become more clear [as you progress] from the earlier to later [stages], being mirage-like, etc. However, among the three opinions of various persons, expressed as “It is not that they arise seeming just like them,” “The consciousness which has the signs

has various degrees of stability or variability,” or “The smoke-like, etc., visions arise,” the latter one is best.

Further, the visions of [the signs] like moon, sun, and darkness happen at the very time of the [states of] luminance, radiance, and imminence. The vision of a cloudless sky is the time of the universal void. The signs such as mirage-likeness, etc., are the preliminary signals of the wisdoms of the four voids being produced in your mind-stream.

In the Tantras, infinite praises are lavished on the clear light of the universal void and the orgasmic joy, which, as explained above, is the yoga of bliss and void practiced by one who is expert in the way of indivisibly uniting bliss and voidness. As for the first development of such distinctive bliss, it is definitely necessary that you gather the left and right wind-energies and dissolve them into the *dhūti* channel.

As for that [development], you will never produce it no matter how long you practice, if you lack the direct meditation on the wind-energies in paths of outer and inner life-energy control, which is the art of penetrating the vital points in the body, and the yogas of the drops, etc., even though you have incisively determined the view of voidness and know how to cultivate it unerringly. Thus, you need definitely to meditate on what is taught in the authoritative treatises about the art of penetrating the vital points in the body. When you meditate on that, if you are one of those who wish your meditation to reach the vital point unerringly, you must definitely experience the signs which are the preliminary signals of the production of the orgasmic joy or the universal void wisdom. [165a] And that is the key point of why so much praise is lavished on those signs.

However, you should bear in mind that even when you practice only the settling of the mind in nonconceptuality, some simulation of those signs will arise. Thus it is extremely difficult to tell precisely the difference between such [simulations] and the signs which arise by meditating on the art of penetrating the vital points in the body—[so] you must be skillful! As for the [genuine] signs which arise from penetrating the vital points in the body, they begin with the signs from the initial slight inward reversal of the wind-energies, which [usually] move totally outward from the doors of the senses, from their [actual] slight reversal, from their being slightly injected into the central channel, and so forth. There are many stages of distinctive [energy] reversal signs and actual [energy] reversals on the occasions when the path has become advanced.

So do not be content with thinking [wrongly] that all of the benefits explained for the true [signs] fully function with the [merely] simulated signs, and, even though you have the real signs, do not be content with just having found the tip of the nose [of the full experiences]. But, understanding clearly the lower and higher stages, you must seek the distinctive excellences of the highest stage.

If you understand all of those procedures well, in the many treatises of the great adepts, such as the *Personal Instruction* of His Holiness [Mañjuśhrī], [and the treatises of] Nāgārjunapāda, Kukuripa, Ghaṇṭapāda, etc., there are statements regarding the perfection stage which explain the art of penetrating the vital points in the body such as energy, drop, and letter visualizations, statements that you must definitely generate wisdom meditating on the drop in the heart center, and statements that there is no doubt that you will blaze with wisdom. Finding the marvellous certitude from these, [165b] you will develop the resolve from your heart to make these practices your essential [purpose]. People of inferior discrimination who don't understand this accurately, do not understand the key points of the Tantras by means of the instructions of the great adepts, practice the perfection stage as a partial meditation on voidness, and even though they might try out numerous samadhis properly described in those [treatises], they tend to think that "This is not the supreme perfection stage," and then, [tragically,] they take a false path as the essence of their lives.

Therefore, since the unerring voidness is extremely difficult to realize, and the Tantras and adepts' treatises are very deep when it concerns the extraordinary bliss, very hard to subtly understand, it seems that uniting bliss and void is extremely difficult. Nevertheless, if you know their vital points roughly and do not mistake their distinctive arts, you will correctly develop great bliss by the power of cultivating them. Even meditating only that is an extremely wondrous samadhi, very different from other things claimed to be profound.

About the vision of the cloudless sky, the fifth sign, two types arise; one from the meditation which depends on the personal instructions on how to penetrate the vital points in the body and another from mere one-pointed samadhi meditation without those [instructions]. This is very difficult to differentiate for those unskilled in the key points of the Tantras. Even as for what is taught in the Tantras, there is one version [of the cloudless sky samadhi] explained in other Tantras concerning

[its arisal on] the occasion of slightly withdrawing the wind-energies within, and another here. [Here,] when we talk about the fifth sign, we are talking about the time of the universal voidness clear light that is the last of the four voids. Before that, it is necessary for there to be the three states of luminance, radiance and imminence which arise with the signs of moon-like, sun-like, and dark-like, and those can only arise by dissolving the wind-energies into the central channel. Thus, the meanings [of the two types of arisal] are different. [166a]

Now some followers of the Marpa school have said that there is no certainty about the precise arrangement of the eight signs and the awarenesses holding the signs. Nevertheless, the intention of the treatises is that they should arise in a certain way. And it seems that they do arise in that way for those who have incorporated the vital points of the art of compressing the wind-energies. Now if you understand well the key point of meditating the indestructible in the heart center and you meditate on it for a long time, from the time when you first generate the wisdom of the four voids, it is called the “simulated mind isolation.” Thus from that point of view, though it is fine to call it “mind isolation,” it is not mind isolation true to its definition.

Further, as for that, there are the two arisals of the four voids, in the emergent order and in the reverse order; and of those, the former is easier and the latter is a bit harder. As for that [arisal] of the four voids, you must let [the process run its course], just as long as you stay steady in each [void]. When you arise from them, you visualize your embodiment as before [you entered], which is to perceive [yourself] as just a drop. As Kukuripa says [in his *Vajrasattva Sādhana*]:

At the time you arise from that samadhi,
Do not think of some other thing,
But always hold [yourself as] that same drop.

By that artful method, once you compress the wind-energies and dissolve them into the *dhūti* channel, you get the ability to generate the four voids. When you visualize [yourself as] a drop, compressing the wind-energies is very easy; without spending a long time at it, you are able to develop the four voids. By the very holding of the mind aimed at the visualization of [yourself as] the drop, and so on, in the most greatly vital point of the body, you compress the wind-energies into the *dhūti* channel and generate the orgasmic wisdom; and this seems to be the

extremely wondrous point which fascinates the wise. So you should understand the qualities of the extremely great differences involved when you use forceful methods of compressing the wind-energies, such as being capable or not and being stable or not, depending on whether you [know well or] do not know well this key point of the wind-energy yoga—[166b] which is not even [slightly] rivaled by any other ways of holding the mind.

[VI.B.3.b.ii.C'3'd'i'B''6''c''ii'' – How to produce experience by meditating on the other life-energy control practices]

The second has three parts: [A'''] How to generate month-by-month experience by practicing vajra recitation; [B'''] How to make the wind-energies dissolve into the central *dhūti* channel by vajra recitation; and [C'''] How to make the furor-fire ignite.

[VI.B.3.b.ii.C'3'd'i'B''6''c''ii''A'' – How to generate month-by-month experience by practicing vajra recitation]

When you have completed coarse and subtle creation stages and have practiced the body isolation, as for how you should practice vajra recitation in the first month, the *Vajra Rosary* states:

First, exhalations and the inhalations,
 Having the definite count of twenty-one
 Thousand and six hundred
 In the course of a day and a night,
 Focusing 'til you achieve that count
 Throughout twenty-seven days—
 That continuous yoga
 Is considered [successful] counting.

As for the last part of this verse, the Zhiwa Öd translation says “you should consider the number again and again.”

In a single day [and night], counting inhalations and exhalations as one, you have 21,600 breaths. Then, over twenty-seven days, until you gain the certainty of the count of just how much the wind-energies move in a day and night, it is taught that you should count them again and again, and that, during the count of each day and night period, you should keep [inhalation and exhalation] even, without increase or decrease, excluding

holding [the breath]. When the breaths of each time period are even, the great elements of the body become equalized, and when that happens, the virtues produced depending on the body are easily produced—that is the necessity [of this practice].

As for the way of practicing the second month, [the *Vajra Rosary* states]:

Then after that you should recite accordingly,
[With] the vital life-wind-energies
In each session and break;
You should mark [your] control of them. [167a]
Then, counting 2,700 [breaths],
You should hold them truly.
Then with the form of determination,
Over twenty-seven days,
Dividing into the four wheels,
With certainty day and night...

Thus, in the second month, in each of eight time periods, you should keep [your breaths even], using the procedure of [counting the] moving of the 2700 wind-energies. The former month's practice was easy; this one is difficult. Now the commentary explains that in each of the sessions there is a set of 900 breaths multiplied by three as they are inhaling, holding or exhaling, that being how it derives 2700; but that is not a good [interpretation].⁹⁷ Because then the [valid] teaching that in one day there are 24 [sets of] 900 breaths would be incorrect; because there are only eight sessions.⁹⁸ “You should make it definite in 27 [days]” means that you should practice the vajra recitation with the four wind-energies that emerge from the four wheels.

As for the way of practice in the third month, [the *Vajra Rosary* states]:

⁹⁷ The correct interpretation is that each of the 2700 breaths include inhalation, exhalation, and retention.

⁹⁸ This means that 900 times 24 is 21,600 and so each hour has 900 breaths, and each of the eight sessions is three-hours.

By making effort staying with that,
You should attend to it differently.
By moving in the channel wheel
Ascertaining inhalation and exhalation,
By the yoga of certain holding
You should investigate the channel wheel,
And by opening the wheel channel
During twenty-seven days...

From that kind of equalizing the energy in sessions, by the art of ascertaining the moving of the energy of exhalation and inhalation in the channel wheel, the place where the energy moves, you should analyze the differences in the channel wheels during the 27 days. This means that you should clearly see individually the channels within the channel wheels.

Now the way of practicing in the fourth month, [the *Vajra Rosary* states]:

Then, you should discern the true sign
By the opening of its places,
And to the places which are individually noted, [167b]
You should strongly move 108 times.
The supreme practice that is thought-free,
Its nature being the abandoning of thought,
Master of the natural instincts of all things,
Move it strongly 108 times.
This is truly the supreme yoga,
Through which, during 27 days,
The yogī/nī who meditates its nature,
Meditates intensely as it stands.

This states that, having individually determined the channels, the yogī/nī meditates the nature of the wind-energies as they stand, sees the 108 wind-energies moving in the channel in the fourth month, and so they are ascertained.

This teaches the supreme yoga of the vajra recitation that is the means of cutting off habitual thoughts, the art of entering into clear light

that abandons notions of the instinctual natures of all things, while mentioning “conceptual thoughts” three times, and “this” once.⁹⁹

As for the way to practice in the fifth month, [the *Vajra Rosary* states]:

The yogī/nī who has instinctual thoughts,
 Then turns the yoga away from them,
 And the great energy of thoughtlessness
 Is moved into the channel wheel.
 Then, having been fully bound by the addictions,
 S/he determines the ultimate reality [of energy],
 And during the twenty-seven days,
 The intelligent [yogī/nī] should eliminate
 The practices of the beginners.

Zhiwa Öd’s translation reads, “The intelligent one, through eliminating....”

In the fifth month, depending on the consummation of the vajra recitation, the wind-energy yogas posited as [for] beginners are given up by intelligent yogī/nīs, along with the wind-energy-driven instinctual thoughts, and they then make the great wind-energy that develops instinctual thoughtlessness move in the channel wheel. And this is the occasion when you begin to reverse the wind-energies [168a] into the place of the indestructible.

As for “the ultimate reality of energy,” you should add that the ascertainment of reality eliminates being driven by the binding addictions.

As for the way of practice in the sixth month, [the *Vajra Rosary* states]:

Then those purifications,
 By the power of true yoga,
 Those conceptual notions of life-energy control
 Are totally abandoned,

⁹⁹ Tsong Khapa is perhaps suggesting here that the mention of “conceptual thoughts” (*rnam rtog*) three times (I can only count two in this quote, unless we take *rang bzhin* as *rang bzin rtog pa*) refer to the three states of the subtle mind—luminance, radiance, and imminence—and “this” to the clear light transparency.

The reality of energy moves,
 And you should meditate the supreme yoga.
 By this supreme nondual yoga,
 During the twenty-seven days,
 You stabilize the reality of energy.
 And the vacillating mind is purified.

In the sixth month, by the power of meditating vajra recitation which has stability in its moving of the reality of energy, you abandon instinctual thoughts and the life-wind-energies and controls. And you also purify the mind bound by its instinctual thought, which gets distracted towards objects. As for those [procedures of the sixth month] they are given the designations of [1] counting, [2] conforming, [3] notions of the difference of places, [4] notions of the difference of times, [5] reversal of the wind-energies, and [6] total purity.

As for [this statement about] the complete release of the heart center channel knot at the end of practicing the six months of vajra recitation, it is intending the disciple of extremely sharp faculties.

In many contexts in this *Tantra*, [the Buddha] does not mention holding [the breath], as other than just exhaling and inhaling. But when he mentions “teaching coming and going,” the commentators explain that it refers to the going and the not going [of the breath]. Nevertheless, they [go on to say] clearly, “The yoga of the perfection stage is entering, holding, and exiting.”

According to Master Gö, the criterion for completing the training of the coarse wind-energies is the clarity of their movement; [168b] which [amounts to] the clarity of the sense-faculty direct experience of the forms of the colors [of the wind-energies], the clarity of the lack of confusion and error in regard to the forms of the counting, the clarity in the nature of the sounds of the form of the three letters [*OM ĀḤ HŪM*], and the clarity about the nature of the places [in the body], and the degrees of subtlety, speed and of weight. The sign of completing it is that no sudden illness can occur.

The criterion of completing the training of the subtle wind-energies is that you become able to mix external and internal [worlds] by causing the wind-energies of the outer universe to enter through the hair-pores of your skin and fit within your body, and by causing the the inner wind-

energies to go out fill the universe; and that you feel contact and bliss by the mere touch of the outer wind-energies.

The criterion of completing your training of the branch wind-energies is said to be that you become able to project [all] your sense faculties through each sense door, and to bind them [there] in freedom from any harm, according to the system of Abhijña. When the four wind-energies of wind, fire, earth and water move, and you bind them within without allowing them outside, respectively then, without any harm to yourself, you will fly in the sky, you will not be hurt by outer cold, you will not be pushed around even assaulted by a champion wrestler, and so on; and finally you will not be hurt by fire, etc.

[VL.B.3.b.ii.C'3'd'i'B''6''c''ii''B''' – How to make the wind-energies dissolve into the central *dhuti* channel by vajra recitation]

As already explained, when you practiced the recitation that indivisibly connects mantras and wind-energies, you experience not mere imagination, but an intense mind-transforming feeling where in your mind the wind-energies' tones resound as the three syllables; just as, for example, [169a] the creation stage practitioner first has to accustom himself or herself to meditate by imagining the deity, but later his or her mind does not have to be expressly contrived but naturally transforms itself into the pride of the deity. When that happens [in vajra recitation], you can terminate both perception and conception of the difference between energy and mantra; and furthermore, having recited with the entry, exit and holding at the level of the center of the *dhūti* channel, by the key [practice] of the energy and mind functioning in unison, you can make the wind-energies move directly through the *dhūti* channel. Here again, while first you have to construct this on purpose and make the wind-energies enter and exit in such a way, when you become accustomed to it, conditioned by your vajra recitation, you have experienced the properly defined injection of the wind-energies there [in the central *dhūti* channel].

As for the sign of that [happening], when you have not practiced vajra recitation, the [wind-energies] move in each of the left and right nostrils. When you practice vajra recitation, before very long the wind-energies definitely begin to be drawn into an equal flow, as the vajra recitation merely injects the wind-energies there [in the central channel]. You should understand that this also [happens] when you meditate on the

subtle [drops] in the lower [genital center] door and in the heart center. Although thus you may have the mere ability to inject the wind-energies into the *dhūti* channel, the problem with having only a slight bit of practice is that before long it will migrate to each of the left or the right nostrils. If you have a practice, as already explained, of injecting [the energies there] and making them enter and exit, and the heart center channel knot little by little has become slightly looser, then finally you become able to release the heart channel knot.

Now here you might suspect, “well, although it can happen that the vajra recitation practiced within the *dhūti* channel depending upon the vital point of the heart center can allow the wind-energies to be injected into the *dhūti* channel and the channel knot to become looser, the vajra recitation is incapable of stopping the energy in the central channel; because vajra recitation is set up as having the function making the wind-energies go in and out without stopping. [169b] Therefore, if you lack the stopping of the exit and entry of the wind-energies by holding them compressed together within, your vajra recitation is unable to cause the energy to dissolve into the *dhūti* channel.”¹⁰⁰

It is true that such doubts arise for those who are satisfied with some biased [understanding] of the perfection stage, who in general do not understand how to compress the wind-energies by the yogas of the drop etc. as explained in the authoritative treatises, and in particular who do not know the literature of the *Community* which explains all the keys of that [dissolution process] emphasizing vajra recitation. However, there is no such fault [in this system of vajra recitation]. When, as already explained, you have become accustomed to the vajra recitation which equalizes the three [movements], entering, holding, and exiting, of the wind-energies, though you do not purposely cause them to hold still at a certain threshold, the wind-energies stand still on their own momentum. Their [stillness] gets longer and longer, and then, though you do not purposely block the inhalation and exhalation of the wind-energies, they become shorter and shorter. So when you first practice, in the process of

¹⁰⁰ This refers to the vase breathing called *kumbhaka*. What it means is you take the upward energy and the lower energy and unite them at the navel center or heart center or wherever and hold them there, one pressing up and one pressing down in the central channel.

breathing naturally you do not need to purposely lengthen exhaling and inhaling, but still, anyway, when you work on vajra recitation, the in and out movement of the wind-energies will eventually stop completely and [the wind-energies will] stay within.

Thus, further, the *Revelation of the Hidden Intention [Tantra]* declares:

By [such a] sign, [wind-]reality stays [all] three,
The nature of natural recitation;
Nameless and inexpressible,
This is supreme enlightenment spirit.
Those very three become one,
And neither go nor come.

This teaches that, after having practiced the recitation as wind-energies of the spirit of enlightenment, with the realities of mantra and energy indivisibly united, being the natural recitation inexpressible in naming words, the three [energy-movements], inhalation, exhalation and holding still, [170a] become a single experience without any separation; and then there are no more going out and coming in of wind-energies.

In that [same] *Tantra*, it states that “the spirit of enlightenment becomes wind-energy,” and this means that here the spirit of enlightenment is wind-energy. In that *Tantra*, it states that the reality of wind-energies entering, exiting, and abiding becomes of one experiential taste, and thus the other [Tantras] have a similar meaning.

The *Vajra Rosary* also states:

By practicing vajra recitation,
Knowing its own nature,
You cut off the instinctual wind-energies.

This means that the vajra recitation stops the movement of wind-energies. And again:

At the nine sense doors,
All of them are totally bound,
Repeating *HŪM*, become incomparable!

This states that vajra recitation binds the wind-energies within, not letting them move out from all doors such as the upper and lower nostrils, etc.

As for the meaning of those *Vajra Rosary* statements, the *Personal Instruction [of Mañjuśhrī]* states:

Then you exhale with *HŪṂ*,
 Collect with *OM*, hold with *ĀH*,
 And holding still the reality therein,
 You discover the intuitive wisdom,
 Free from inhaling, exhaling and holding,
 And you need have no doubting ambivalence.

Thus it very clearly states that by practicing vajra recitation from the dissolution of the wind-energies getting free of the threefold inhaling, exhaling and holding, you attain wisdom, and about that there need be no doubt or ambivalence.

Here you might wonder, “Well, how do you get the energy to dissolve within by the vajra recitation of two letters?”

By practicing that [vajra recitation], injecting the energy into the *dhūti* channel and releasing the channel knot is similar to [the same process with] the three letters. So then the energy finds the path to go to its own root place, [170b] and it enters into its own place, as in the time of death. The Tantra explains the two kinds of vajra recitation, while the Noble father and son set forth the vajra recitation with the three letters just as an example. The *Personal Instruction* states that not only can you be liberated from both inhalation and exhalation, but also you are liberated from holding; what that means is that you need first to reverse the moving of the exhalation and inhalation and to hold the energy within, and then you have also to dissolve the holding within.

By practicing recitation of exiting and entering you reach the non-moving of energy, and since there is a type of non-moving under the influence of depression, you must be able to tell them apart. When you stop the nostril movement of energy, if it stays within without dissolving [into the central channel], then the body will seem to be inflated; but this is eradicated when it dissolves. As already explained, when the definite signs of the energy entering the *dhūti* channel by its own force occur, and the energy naturally stays within for a long time and then dissolves into the *dhūti* channel, what arises is like what is taught about [the four] voids. On dissimilar occasions, although there is an inner dissolution, it is not a dissolution into the *dhūti* channel, and so [the experience] will not match what is taught about the voids. In order for the wind-energies

to dissolve into the actual indestructible heart center, you need to have loosened the channel knot of that [heart center]; before that, even if you [seem to] compress [the energies] into the *dhūti* channel by means of the art of compressing [energies] into the heart center, that is a dissolution into the near-*dhūti* channel, but not into the *dhūti* itself.¹⁰¹ Similarly, although it can happen that your energy can dissolve into the *dhūti* channel, you are unable to make it come and go from the *dhūti* channel in the [exact] place of the channel knot. As the *Vajra Rosary* says: “Little by little, free of effort”—and what is meant there is that you should not make a strenuous effort [to force] the wind-energies to enter and exit [the heart center]. [171a]

The *Personal Instruction* also says that when you cause the energy to abide within, you should hold it very gently. The vajra recitation [should be] performed gently with the three, exhaling inhaling, and abiding wind-energies, as it is highly critical that, when the wind-energies begin slightly to stop, the elements of the body are not disturbed and remain balanced. The production of those excellent virtues which must be produced [only] through penetrating the vital points in the body is different from other [kinds of] productions.¹⁰²

Thus [penetrating the vital points precisely] is extremely necessary for extreme power in developing the voids, for ease of gaining greatly increasing impact from the moment of the first time of developing the voids, and for the great stability of your bliss and [furor] heat, and so on. Therefore, when you have had a whiff of the experience of the blaze of bliss and heat and have become enthusiastic and see the need for the ability etc. to cultivate positive practice, even if you practice even the system of cultivating forcefully, you must keep at it until you have achieved the

¹⁰¹ So there is a way of dissolving the energies into the *dhūti* channel under or above the very central part of the heart center where the indestructible is, without them dissolving right into the indestructible, because that is still sealed off by the knot.

¹⁰² To be able to inject the energy and make it enter into the central channel in the navel or heart center, you have first to have a clear visualization of exactly where that center is and put your focus right on the spot in the various strategic places. Doing that is “penetrating the vital point,” and energy-pressure focused there produces the true dissolution experiences. Pressure aimed vaguely nearby can seriously disrupt the nervous system.

purpose [of penetrating the vital point precisely]; and if you follow the teaching of the treatises, it is [even more of] a joy.

Here also, though there is a bit of intensity [used in practicing] the wind-energy yoga of vajra recitation and in cultivating by aiming your visualization at the drop etc., if you use the forceful yoga for such as meditating energy compression, it is said to cause untimely death. And though it seems to have the benefit of slightly greater speed, you should be careful to keep it within bounds.¹⁰³ I previously quoted Kukuripa saying that the signs arise from meditating on the heart center drop, intending the signs of the vajra recitation, so here the signs such as mirage will arise.

Until you have well released the heart-center channel knot, [171b] you will not attain the actual voids of mind isolation. Nevertheless, it seems that those on lower stages will definitely experience voids conforming to [those of the] mind isolation; so you should carefully differentiate these [two kinds, actual and conformative]. If you do not distinguish between them, you might hold the three voids developed by vajra recitation on the lower stages to be the actual mind isolation, the fourth void to be the fourth stage clear light, and the two arisals in deity bodies after those two to be, [respectively,] the third stage magic body and the fifth stage communion body. Thus you will become excessively proud of such attainments when you have not really attained any of their excellent qualities, and you will lose your drive to attain the higher excellences not already attained. Then, since you have none of the distinctive transformations coming from them, some of you might generate a false view and think, “I attained a path such as this, but did not experience any sort of benefit of that attainment such as light rays; so these teachings are just words!” And some of you might think, “Relying on the fact that, in the literal texts of the treatises of the [Noble] father and sons, not much is taught about the arisal of the voids of the path until the attainment of mind isolation, so until then the voids of the path will not arise [for me]”; and so you will not make effort in the methods of producing those and you will lose out on the great purpose.

¹⁰³ He emphasizes the gentleness of this practice with this warning, that if you do energy compression with a power yoga, it can be fatal; so even though it might be quicker, you should be skillful about knowing the limits.

Therefore, by meditating the perfection stage and dissolving the wind-energies into the *dhūti* channel, you generate the four joys and the four voids, without having to consider this a very advanced path. So you strive in order to generate them as already explained. [172a] When the energy dissolves and the three voids together with the metaphoric clear light arise, if you remember your [realistic] view and set yourself in that as long as it lasts, then when the wind-energies move and you arise from that again, you do vajra recitation again; and so you should increase your meditation on the method of compressing the wind-energies.

[VLB.3.b.ii.C'3'd'i'B''6''c''ii''C'''] – How to make the furor-fire ignite]

Now here someone says “well, even if we allow that the vajra recitation is able to inject the energy into the *dhūti* channel and to cause that injected energy to dissolve there, this vajra recitation is not able to make the spirit of enlightenment melt by stimulating the furor, and it thus becomes unable to unify bliss and void; or, if it is able to do that, then please tell how it does it.”

Already, the *Vajra Rosary* taught how this [vajra recitation] develops great bliss. And that great bliss is the bliss of the melting of the spirit of enlightenment of the crown center. And it is very true that melting that requires the navel furor-fire to blaze. As for how that is done, the *Vajra Rosary* says:

Since the *ḍākinī* compresses,
 She is the “pressure *ḍākinī*.”
 She always stays in the navel center,
 And has a light like a thousand suns.
 Emitting the fire of great wisdom
 She conquers all instinctual thoughts.
 By her arisal aggregate-notions burn,
 And the body becomes unobstructed.
 After that the element-notions
 Are compressed, and again, naturally,
 The subject and object notions
 Afterward, are again compressed.
 Thus, when like a moth [by flames]
 All bondages are consumed,
 By the yoga of the reality of wind-energy,

And by knowledge of the reality of mantra,
 The mere instinctual notions
 Are doubtless [172b] just consumed.

Now the first four feet of that [verse] show the actuality of the navel furor-fire, which is said to be the actuality of the union of all *ḍākinīs*. This is just like the statements of the *Samputa [Tantra]* calling it “Nairātmya” and the *Spring Drop* calling it “the actuality of Varāhī,” since those two are the actuality that unites all yoginīs such as Gaurī and Pracandī; so mentioning any [particular goddess] is by way of example. Showing that the blood of the reddish furor is the actuality of the union of all *ḍākinīs* means that the activity of the science consorts is to develop the great bliss in the yogī/nī, and that is achieved by the blazing of the furor-fire.

Thereupon two feet [of the verse] show in general the burning of the conceptual notions by the blazing of the furor-fire. And then two feet, one and a half feet, and two and a half feet, respectively, discuss the suppression of the conceptual notions about the aggregates, the elements, and subject-object [dichotomy]. Here “suppression” means burning or conquering. “Unobstructed” here has the meaning of again and again or continuous. And “body” here means burning in the body. Now again two feet unite the metaphor and the import of the burning of the conceptual notions. Then again two feet refer to that burning of conceptual notions by the blazing of furor-fire, and then again two feet explain how the knowledge of the union of the reality of mantra, the three or the two letters, with the reality of wind-energy, the three, exhalation, inhalation and abiding, or the two, inhalation and exhalation, is what accomplishes the burning of the notions by the blazing of furor-fire. [All this] thus means that the vajra recitation accomplishes [the furor-fire] just like that. Again the last two feet state that even the subtlest conceptual notions are consumed without any doubt.

Again [173a] the same text [the *Vajra Rosary*], saying:

Depending truly on the reality of energy,
 Exhorted by the syllable *HŪM*,
 The wheel of fire is very much awakened...

thus states that furor is made to awaken by the reality of mantra depending upon the reality of energy. And *HŪM* here expresses a single aspect of the vajra recitation of either two or of three syllables. Other translations

have the phrase “by the yoga of the body of mantra,” and in the commentary the meaning of that is explained as being a meditation on the creation stage. In the Indian texts also it is clear that there were two discordant readings, and so Darma Tsöndru’s translation, like the previous reading, is better.

The furor blazes moved by what sort of energy? The *Personal Instruction [of Mañjuśhrī]* says:

Vowed effort, by moving the bow-shaped,
The wisdom fire blazes in the triangle,
And the element melts....

The bow-shaped located in a triangle is the wind-energy, which is stated to ignite the furor-fire, and it is the evacuative energy. Also the *Great Seal Drop* states:

The way being located in the navel,
The limit of the way is the secret lotus;
There the self-blazing energy
Circulates and so refreshes.
By the union of the two organs
The energy ignites the fire.

declaring that the energy located in the lotus of the secret place ignites the furor-fire.

You might wonder, “If the furor-fire is ignited by a particular motion of the evacuative energy, how does that movement function?”

The *Samputa [Tantra]* says:

In the mandala of the navel furnace,
Agitated by the evolutionary energy,
The brahma-fire burns in the triangle.

Concerning that statement, the *Sheaf of Instructions* explains that [173b] [the furor-fire] is ignited by the energy impelled by the evolutionary force of the action of the union of the two organs and the action of the meditative entrancement. The first [action] refers to the meditation [either] on the energy or the drop and so on that have been injected into the vital point in the body. The second [action] is explained by the [union of the] two organs. As for the blood, the actuality of the fire-atom to be ignited, though it abides in many parts of the body, the main ones are the blood

of the navel symbolized by the short *A* and the “brahma-fire” symbolized by the syllable *KṢHA*, both dwelling below the navel in the secret place; and further they abide within the *dhūti* channel. As for the evacuative wind-energies that ignite them, one kind enters within the *dhūti* channel and one kind does not, and the former is the main one. As the *Vajra Rosary* says:

In the left descends the moon, enlightenment spirit,
In the right, blood and sun descend.
Knowable in the center, the energy moves,
And you should know that wakens up the fire.

Thus it states that when the wind-energies move through the central channel, they make furor fire awaken. From the threshold when the vajra recitation injects wind-energies into the central channel, a slightly heated special furor-fire burns. When it increases, it melts the crown enlightenment spirit. As the *Great Seal Drop* says:

By the true burning of that fire,
The great bliss wheel will melt.
By melting, all the channels
Will drip with the supreme nectar.

As for the meditation of blazing and dripping, it happens that there are many meltings of the spirit of enlightenment by the burning of furor-fire even without injecting energy into the central channel. And even if you meditate wind-energies and drops etc., without meditating in such a way [as by penetrating the vital points], furor-fire can blaze and enlightenment spirit can melt before the energy has been injected into the *dhūti* channel and dissolved there. [174a] For example, it happens even in ordinary sexual union of the two organs. In those [experiences], as the enlightenment spirit melts, just due to its intensity it is hard to hold it without emission, whereas when this occurs from the [wind-energies] dissolving into the *dhūti* channel, it is very easy to hold it.

Again, as for the blazing of warmth, there are two kinds, with and without the ability to melt the spirit of enlightenment. As for the warmth which is able to melt the spirit of enlightenment, there are kinds arising from the wind-energies being and not being injected into the *dhūti* channel. As for those when [wind-energies are] injected, there are kinds where they dissolve and do not dissolve therein. And even bliss has a

kind where bliss happens from the wind-energies merely becoming serviceable, which does not turn into melting bliss. And melting bliss also comes in many stages. Therefore, you should be very skillful in distinguishing well these [various types of experiences].

When the evacuative energy first ignites the main furor-fire, it ignites the two fires of secret place and navel, and as evacuative energy in the two lower doors goes in and out like [wind-energies do] in the two upper nostrils, those winds must be injected into the *dhūti* channel. Just as the injected life-energy dissolves [therein] without going in and out of the upper nostrils, when the [evacuative energy] dissolves and does not go in and out of the lower doors, the powerful blazing of furor-fire increases the power of the melting of the spirit of enlightenment.¹⁰⁴ Even if such a thing should happen once, it frequently happens in alternation that the energy arises again and starts to go in and out; it is not the case that once it dissolves it does not arise again, as is the case when you eliminate seeds by transcendent paths.

As the *Vajra Rosary* teaches that the vajra recitation binds the wind-energies within all the nine doors of the senses, not only does it terminate the entry and exit of the upper nostril doors but it also terminates [174b] the lower nostril door entry and exit. When you do this by pulling up with a fierce physical effort, although there is some slight speeding up of the blocking of the energy, it tends not to go to the vital point. It is better if you stop the [wind-energies'] movement by gentle exertions such as vajra recitation; so you should know that [fact], even about holding the wind-energies in a compression lock.

You might wonder, “since the evacuative energy enters and exits the two lower doors, is it proper to use vajra recitation in relation with that entry and exit as you do in the two upper doors?”

Concerning this, Tibetan mentors give a personal instruction about the yoga of closing and opening the lower door as a way of generating bliss. Although this is not called “entry-exit recitation,” if you know how

¹⁰⁴ Just as the upper wind-energies dissolve in the *dhūti* without the upper energy breathing in and out, this lower energy dissolves so there is no more going in and out of the lower doors. It thus becomes stronger in melting the enlightenment spirit.

to discern its meaning, it is like performing [the vajra recitation] in the upper door. About this way, from Atīśha's *Dharma Song*:¹⁰⁵

Conquer the progress of sun and moon—
 Otherwise in the door of the great sky,
 Berampa¹⁰⁶ will not enter.
 By the yoga of opening and closing,
 You should compel that fierce goddess.
 The five buddhas and the four goddesses—
 You should burn them again and again.
 The ten directions' heroes and yogī/nīs
 Gather and dissolve into Jalandhara.¹⁰⁷
 The four drops in the four lotuses
 Will generate the sixteen blisses.
 The self-luminous wisdom dwells
 In the center of the formful lotus navel.
 When enlightenment dwells in the jewel tip,
 You gain nirvana like a butter lamp.
 When you win nirvana there
 In the tip of the jewel,
 The host of notions such as self and other,

¹⁰⁵ This quote has not yet been identified in an original. Perhaps it is from an older version of Atīśha: **Dīpaṃkaraśrījñāna-dharma-gītikā* (*d'i paṃ ka'a ra shr'i dznya' na'i chos kyi glu*) (Tōh 2374; rGyud 'Grel, ZI, 10a–10b); or *Caryāgīti* (*spyod pa'i glu*) (Tōh. 1496; rGyud 'Grel, ZHA, 215a–216b), wherein it was not found.

¹⁰⁶ *Berampa* (*be raṃ pa*) = *Vairambha[ka]* = *Berambha* (*be raṃ bha*) = *Bairambha* (*bai rambha*). Tōh. 1413 (*Indrabhūti, Cakrasaṃvara-vṛtti*, fol. 115a.3–.4); Tōh. 1427 (*Lūyipa, Bhagavad-abhisamaya*, fol. 187a.4–.6); Tōh. 1449 (*Vanaratna, Vasantatilaka-tika*, fol. 336a.7–b.4). These texts identify this term as referring to the bow-shaped wind-energy-disc that forms the base of the mandala universes of various Tantras, which can only be visualized or projected by the yogī/nī after having dissolved the ordinary universe by melting all energies into the central channel via its lower door, either navel or genital wheel. I am indebted to Paul Hackett for these references.

¹⁰⁷ Jalandhara is one of the twenty-four holy places of the *Chakrasaṃvara Tantra* and also is the crown center of the yogic nervous center; the idea here being that the fire from the wind energy at the closing of the lower door of the central channel causes the furor fire from the navel center to blaze up and melt all heroes and yoginīs into the moon disc of bindu drops at the crown center.

I no longer see them at all.
When the planet [Rāhu] seizes sun and moon,
The mind and the Bera[m]pa do not proceed.
When all notions fully melt and dissolve,
The mind becomes pure experience of the [reality] realm.

[175a] Here he declares the distinctive art of injecting the energy into the *dhūti* channel. This same meaning is also expressed in the *Great Seal Drop*:

By closing and opening [the lower doors],
The energy encompasses the fire.
With the wood of the organ of the truth,
Thereby the furor-fire burns,
Consuming the body entirely,
And all materials of the heap of notions.
And by the true burning of that fire...

So it declares just as before.

This enables you to understand that there is a [vajra-]recitation of the exit and entry [of the wind-energy] through the path of water, and although the upper [body] vajra recitation accomplishes both these purposes, if you want to take it in terms of singling out the evacuative wind energy of the lower parts, you should perform it relying on your attainment of the already present base of personal instructions. If you perform the reversal of the evacuative energy by forceful methods, there are great hindrances such as the blocking of excrement and urine. But if you perform the gentle yoga with the skill in the vital points taught in the oral instruction and reverse the movement [of the energy], you need not lessen excrement and urine and have to eliminate them time and again. You will not experience the slightest discomfort, your furor fire will burn with much greater power, you will have a superlative bliss, and however intense your melting of the element, you will have no need of caution about emission, and so on—such are the signs that will occur.

You might say, “Well, by meditating the heart indestructible and the vajra recitation etc., and the spirit of enlightenment melts by the blazing of furor-fire, as is explained by the Yoginī Tantras, and falls down to the jewel—relying on that, are the four joys developed? Or else

do you generate the four voids compressing [all wind-energies and drops] into the heart center from above and below?”

This I am going to explain [175b] in the section on mind isolation.

Here, many [yogī/nīs] have performed the yoga of blocking the energy etc. with intense force, seeing that to be a bit quicker and not knowing how to discern well the differences of how the immediate and long term advantages are generated from gentle and rough yogas. Once they perform the arts of penetrating the vital points in the body, they meditate considering that they must practice with very intense force. Now, some of them experience extremely great hindrances, and they then stop meditating those [methods]. Others, although their hindrances are also very great, accept the need to meditate with skill in the methods of dispelling them.

As for the way of dispelling hindrances, some might say “Well, when you compress the energy and it generates shooting pains before it becomes peaceful, you should meditate the yoga of many holes and thus expell them outside. And many others alleviate the shooting pains of energy compression with other methods.”

To that someone says, “When striving in order to compress the wind-energies, if you then quiet them without performing the method of entering them into the central channel, your efforts will be pointless, as you lack the personal instruction.” But our own system is that you enter the [wind-energies] into the central channel by the yoga of the art of squeezing the two waves of enjoyment;¹⁰⁸ and this is recommended also for pacifying shooting pains. Everyone seems to agree about using a forceful yoga at the beginning of meditation.

Once you have meditated combining channels and wind-energies etc., it is not certain that a great hindrance will arise which either will deprive one’s life-energy or come close to doing so. Such would the fault of not knowing decisively well how to cultivate at first, because if you do know [well the key points], [such dangers] will just not occur. Thus if you know well how to practice, [176a] and how to avoid great hindrances through meditating, you are an expert. If you stubbornly produce great

¹⁰⁸ I have not previously encountered this expression *longs spyod kyi rlabs gnyis 'tshir bai thabs kyi sbyor bas*, and cannot quite yet figure it out.

hindrances, even though you know ways of getting rid of them, you are not expert.

When you compress the wind-energies with gentle yoga, in general, hindrances are less. And if at first you compress the wind-energies without having first purified them, there is a way of clearing away slight shooting pains that may arise—I will explain this elsewhere.¹⁰⁹ Do not think that [these concerns] just have to do with pacifying the shooting pains. Rather they are to make sure that you know how not to let the compression of the wind-energies become difficult somewhat later, and moreover how to dispel any failure to inject the previously compressed wind-energies into the central *dhūti* channel—this is then to be an expert.

Therefore if you practice according to the two former systems, it seems that while it might happen that you might alleviate the shooting pains of compressing wind-energies, it will not benefit your injecting the previously compressed energies into the *dhūti* channel.

The third method of dispelling [obstructions] can still work well with the forceful yoga, but our own system is that you must perform [the practice] with the gentle yogas as the [best] method of dispelling [obstructions], not using the forceful yogas at all.

Thus, as for [my composing] this detailed explanation of the vital points of the vajra recitation: though there seem to be very many ways to perform vajra recitation given in the oral instructions, nevertheless, since the literature of the *Esoteric Community* explains vajra recitation exhaustively in ways which are not present in other Tantras or treatises, since it seems that good explanations of the system of the *Esoteric Community* are rare, and since the Noble father and son do not explain the other wind-energy yogas but explain this one quite a lot, [I have written this] in order to interpret decisively [their explanations].

¹⁰⁹ One place in Tsong Khapa's Collected Works where this is somewhat explained is in the *Zhu Lan bDud rTsis Snying po*, a text recording the 1399 CE conversations between Tsong Khapa and Lhodrak Namkha Gyaltzen, wherein the dispersal of the neuralgic pains that can come from some kinds of wind-energy meditations is extensively discussed. I translated this long ago and published in the *Life and Teachings of Tsong Khapa*, LTWA, Dharamsala, 1982.