

Paradigm Change in Meditation on Selflessness in Tibetan Buddhism: The Progression from Space-Like Meditative Equipoise to Deity Yoga

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INTRODUCTION

ACROSS THE VAST REACHES of the Tibetan cultural region in Inner Asia—stretching from Kalmuck Mongolian areas near the Volga River (in Europe) by the Caspian Sea, Outer Mongolia, Inner Mongolia, the Buriat Republic of Siberia, Bhutan, Sikkim, Ladakh, parts of Nepal, and what is currently called the “Tibetan Autonomous Region” but also most of Qinghai Province, and parts of the Gansu, Sichuan, and Yunnan Provinces that were included in greater Tibet before the Chinese Communists remapped the area—Buddhism is practiced in many forms by a plethora of sects and sub-sects. Though their systems vary widely, they agree on dividing their practices into basically two styles of meditation, Sutra and Mantra (also called Tantra), and all schools put forth reasons why the Mantra system is superior. Based on Indian expositions of the greatness of Mantra, many scholar-practitioners catalogued and creatively developed these explanations, which came to be the means through which they perceived and ordered the otherwise overwhelmingly diverse forms of practice inherited from Buddhist India and elsewhere.

Most of the presentations of the distinctiveness of Mantra employ multiple formats for demonstrating its greatness, but one Tibetan scholar boils these down into a single central distinguishing feature—deity yoga, the meditative practice of imagining oneself to be an ideal being fully endowed with compassion and wisdom and their resultant altruistic activities. Whether or not one accepts that deity yoga is *the* central distinctive feature of Mantra, it is an important feature, and since meditation on emptiness is said to be the “life” of the Sutra and Mantra paths and thus also of deity yoga, this essay initially presents how Sutra and Mantra describe the practice of reflecting on emptiness and then how this understanding is related to appearances. As a basic theme of Great Vehicle Buddhism, the compatibility of emptiness and appearance offers a window through

which Sutra and Mantra can be not just glimpsed but felt in imagination. Using a meditation manual by the Fifth Dalai Lama, "I" explore the process of this central meditation with an emphasis on its implications with regard to the relation with appearances after realizing emptiness. Then, "I" present a tantric model of meditating on oneself as an ideal being, a deity, through the example of a particular Action Tantra.

These two models—Sutra and Mantra—are viewed by some Tibetan scholars as progressively more profound techniques of spiritual development in what, by the style of presentation, seems to be a *harmonious* development, much as histories of science often present developments as rational, step-by-step acquisitions of wider perspectives rather than a shifting of perspective. The gradualistic, harmonious approach, while being valuable in showing the continuity between the two traditions, tends to obscure the innovative profundity of tantric meditation that may find one of its *raison d'être* in personal crisis. It strikes me as likely that the Sutra model of meditation on emptiness, when it is implemented in effective practice, induces a problem-situation that is resolved in the tantric model of meditation.

In order to discuss this possibility, "I" explore the Sutra and Mantra models of meditation in considerable detail so that the discussion does not become an exercise in mere abstraction, for my points are founded not in abstract conceptualization but in practical implementation. Therefore, after the Sutra model of meditation on selflessness and subsequent experience of appearances is given, "I" present in detail the tantric model of meditating on oneself as an ideal being, a deity, through the example of a particular Action Tantra.

For comprehending the distinctiveness of the tantric practice of deity yoga, the theory of paradigm change—as enunciated by Thomas Kuhn in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*¹ and adapted by Hans Küng for theology²—offers insights that help to distinguish Sutra and Mantra models of meditation by calling attention to a possible personal crisis to which the Sutra model may lead. My aim is not to use the data of this Asian tradition to support Kuhn's model but to use his model to make more accessible facets of the tradition that could easily be missed. The Sutra and Mantra models of meditation are investigated with the aim of exposing a possible crisis that *requires* an individual to move to the Tantric model; the analysis is "historical," not in the sense of charting and reflecting on centuries of development in schools of Buddhism, though undoubtedly such happened, but of an *individual's* progress in one life or over many lives.

The Ge-luk-ba (*dge lugs pa*) order of Tibetan Buddhism, founded in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, views these two models as progressively more profound techniques of spiritual development rather than as alternative ways. "I" shall attempt to show that this profundity may

remain obscure (despite extensive explanation) until an individual meditator passes through the crisis induced by the “lower” model when experiencing its implementation in practice.

The essay is based, to a large extent, on the writings of the Tibetan scholar and yogi, Ḍzong-ka-ba (*tsong kha pa blo bzang grags pa*, 1357–1419) and those in his lineage. Specifically, for exposition of the Sutra model of meditation on selflessness “I” synopsizes the concise and lucid explanation of the perfection of wisdom in the Fifth Dalai Lama’s *Sacred Word of Mañjushri*.³ For exposition of the procedure of meditation on selflessness and on appearance in tantra “I” shall use short explanations of Action Tantra yoga by two of Ḍzong-ka-ba’s students:

- Dül-dzin-drak-ba-gyel-tsen (*‘dul ‘dzin grags pa rgyal mtshan*, 1374–1434) in his *Presentation of the General Rites of Action and Performance Tantra and Their Application to the Three Lineages, Set down by Dül-dzin According to the Foremost [Ḍzong-ka-ba’s] Practice*⁴
- and Ke-drup Ge-lek-bel-sang (*mkhas grub dge legs dpal bzang*, 1385–1438) in his *Extensive Expression of the Presentation of the General Tantra Sets*.⁵

Ḍzong-ka-ba’s own exposition of the difference between Sutra and Tantra in general and the procedure of Action Tantra in particular—found in his *Great Exposition of Secret Mantra*⁶—are very much the foundation of these works, even if not cited.

SUTRA MODEL OF MEDITATION ON SELFLESSNESS AND SUBSEQUENT ILLUSORY-LIKE APPEARANCE

The Fifth Dalai Lama presents the process of cultivating the perfection of wisdom in two parts: “the practice of the selflessness of persons and the practice of the selflessness of [other] phenomena.” He frames both practices around four essential steps:

1. ascertaining what is being negated
2. ascertaining the entailment of emptiness
3. ascertaining that the object designated and its basis of designation are not inherently one
4. ascertaining that the object designated and its basis of designation are not inherently different.

First Essential: Ascertaining What Is Being Negated

The first step in this meditation is to gain a clear sense of the reified status of the "I" as inherently existent. Even though such a misconception is subliminally always present, a condition of its obvious manifestation is required. Therefore, the meditator remembers a situation of false accusation that elicited a strong response or a situation of happiness that did the same, trying to watch the type of "I" that manifested and how the mind assented to its ever so concrete appearance. Since watchfulness itself tends to cause this gross level of misconception to disappear, the first essential is said to be very difficult to achieve. One has to learn how to let the mind operate in its usual egoistic way and at the same time watch it, keeping watchfulness at a minimum such that the usual conception of a concrete and pointable "I" is generated. The Fifth Dalai Lama compares this dual functioning of the mind to simultaneously watching the path and your companion when walking. The demand for watchfulness is mitigated by the need to allow what is usually unanalyzed to operate of its own accord; thus, the activity of introspection must be done subtly.

When success is gained, the meditator has found a sense of an inherently existent "I" that, far from seeming to be non-existent, is totally convincing in its trueness. As the present Dalai Lama said while lecturing to Tibetan scholars in Dharamsala, India in 1972, one has such strong belief in this reified "I" that upon identifying it, one has the feeling that if it is not true, nothing is. It would seem, therefore, that the first step in developing the view of the Middle Way is the stark and intimate recognition that for the meditator the opposite of that view is true.

In the face of this particular consciousness, mind and body are not differentiated and the "I" is not differentiated from mind and body. However, the "I" is seen to be self-established, self-instituting, under its own power, existing in its own right. It is not that one has the sense that mind, body, and "I" *cannot* be differentiated; rather, for *that* consciousness, mind, body, and "I" simply are not differentiated. For instance, for a consciousness merely apprehending a particular city, say, Taipei, the ground, buildings, and people of that city are not differentiated. These are the bases of designation of Taipei, which seems inextricably blended with these and yet has its own thing.

Recognition of such an appearance with respect to the "I" and recognition of your assent to this appearance constitute the first essential step in realizing selflessness, emptiness. With this identification, analysis can work on that object; without it, analysis is undirected. From the viewpoint of the scholar-practitioners of the Ge-luk-ba tradition of Tibetan Buddhism, most attempts to penetrate emptiness fail at this initial step, tending either to assume that the phenomenon itself is being refuted or that a

superficial, philosophically constructed quality of the phenomenon, rather than one innately misconceived, is being refuted.

Second Essential: Ascertaining Entailment of Emptiness

Whereas in the first step the meditator allows an ordinary attitude to operate and attempts to watch it without interfering with it, in the second step the meditator makes a non-ordinary, intellectual decision that must be brought gradually to the level of feeling. Here, one considers the number of possible relationships between a phenomenon designated and its basis of designation.

Phenomena designated are things such as a table, a body, a person, and a house. Their respective bases of designation are four legs and a top, five limbs (two arms, two legs, and a head)⁷ and a trunk, mind and body, and a number of rooms arranged in a certain shape. The meditator considers whether within the framework of inherent existence these two—phenomenon designated and basis of designation—must be either inherently the same or inherently different, or whether there are other possibilities. If there seem to be other possibilities, can these be collapsed into the original two—being inherently the same or being inherently different?

Nāgārjuna lists five possibilities:

1. inherently the same
2. inherently different
3. the object designated (the I) inherently depends on the basis of designation (mind and body)
4. the basis of designation inherently depends on the object designated (the I)
5. the object designated (the I) possesses the basis of designation either as a different entity in the way a person owns a cow or as one entity in the way a tree possesses its core

Chandrakīrti adds two more:

6. the object designated (the I) is the special shape of the basis of designation
7. the object designated (the I) is the collection of the bases of designation.

The last five can be collapsed into the first two as refinements of them: the third and fourth are forms of difference; the first aspect of the fifth is a form of difference; the second, a form of sameness of entity; the sixth and seventh

are variations of sameness. Hence, it is held that all possibilities of inherent existence can be collapsed into the original two.

Conventionally, however, it is said that the “I” and its basis of designation are different but not different entities and that they are the same entity but not the same. This is technically called being one entity and different isolates⁸—essentially meaning that conceptuality can isolate the two within their being one entity. Why not consider this an eighth possibility?

The answer is that if the relationship of being one entity and different conceptually isolatable factors is within the context of inherent existence, then this possibility is internally contradictory since within the context of inherent existence whatever is inherently the same is the same in all respects, making different isolates impossible. However, if the relationship of being one entity and different conceptually isolatable factors is within the context of conventional existence, then there is no need to include it here in this list of possibilities within inherent existence.

The list, therefore, does not include all possibilities for the mere existence of a phenomenon designated—such as an I—and its bases of designation—such as mind and body—because the examination here is concerned only with whether the “I” exists in the *concrete* manner it was seen to have during the first essential. If it does exist so concretely, one should be able to point concretely to it when examining it with respect to its basis of designation. Since this decision—that inherent existence involves the necessity of the phenomenon designated being either one or different from the basis of designation—is the anvil on which the sense of an inherently existent “I” will be pounded by the hammer of the subsequent reasoning, the second essential is not an airy decision to be taken lightly, despite its intellectual character. It must be brought to the level of feeling, this being done through considering that anything existent is either one or different. A chair is one; a chair and a table are different; a chair and its parts are different; tables are different, and so forth. The yogi must set standards that limit the possibilities so that the subsequent analysis can work, eventually causing disbelief in such an inherently existent I.

Upon coming to this decision of logical limitations, one begins to question a little the existence of the self-instituting “I” identified in the first essential. The late Geshe Rabten, a Ge-luk-ba scholar who served as abbot of a monastery in Switzerland,⁹ compared the effect of this step to having doubts about an old friend for the first time. The emotionally harrowing experience of challenging one’s own long believed status has begun.

Third Essential: Ascertaining that the “I” and the Aggregates Are Not One

The next step is to use reasoning to determine whether the “I” and the mental and physical aggregates could be inherently the same or inherently

different. In this context, reasoning is a matter not of cold deliberation or superficial summation but of using various approaches to find one that can shake yourself to your being. The seeming simple-mindedness and rigidity of the reasonings suggested must be transcended through gaining intimate experience with them.

The Fifth Dalai Lama lays out a *series* of approaches through reasoning, rather than just one, on the principle that certain reasonings would not work for some people. The first is a challenge from common experience: If “I” were one with body, how could “I” speak of “my body”? If “I” were inherently one with mind, how could “I” speak of “my mind”? Should we also speak of body’s body? Or my I?

If the “I” inherently exists, then oneness with its basis of designation would be one of two exhaustive possibilities. The reference is not to ordinary misconception but to a *consequence* of inherent existence, such concreteness requiring a pointable identification under analysis.

The rules for inherent existence, therefore, are not the rules for mere existence. Within the context of inherent existence, sameness of entity requires utter oneness in all respects. Thus, the issue that is central to evaluating the soundness of this reasoning is not whether beings ordinarily conceive of such oneness (since it is not claimed that we do), but whether the logical rules that have been formulated for concrete, pointable existence are appropriate.

More Reasonings

The mere presence of the reasoning is clearly not expected to be convincing, and thus the Fifth Dalai Lama continues with permutations of the same reasoning. For these further reasonings to work, the meditator must have gained belief in rebirth. They are: If the “I” and the body are one, after death when the body is burned, so the “I” also would absurdly be burned. Or, just as the “I” transmigrates to the next life, so the body also would absurdly have to transmigrate. Or, just as the body does not transmigrate, so the “I” also would absurdly not transmigrate.

From meditating on such reasonings, one might come to think that probably the “I” is not the same as the body but is perhaps one with the mind; then, one is instructed to consider the following fallacies: Since it is obvious that the suffering of cold arises when the “I” is without clothes and it is obvious that the sufferings of hunger and thirst arise when the “I” lacks food and drink, these would—if the “I” were merely mental—be mental in origin, in which case one could not posit a reason why the same suffering would not be experienced in a life in a Formless Realm. Also, since the mind would be one with the “I,” it would absurdly still have to make use of gross forms such as food and clothing which do not exist in the Formless Realm.

These absurd permutations of oneness will have prepared the mind for reaching a conclusion upon reflecting on a few more reasonings. First, the selves would have to be as many as mind and body, that is to say, two; or, put another way, the selves would have to be as many as the five aggregates (forms, feelings, discriminations, compositional factors, and consciousnesses), five. This reasoning may seem extraordinarily simple-minded, but the requirements of such pointable, analytically findable existence—not the requirements of mere existence—are the anvil. The meditator is attempting through this analysis, not to describe how he or she ordinarily conceives such an inherently existent “I,” but to subject it to the hammering of reasoning based on *consequences* of such inherent existence. Because the ordinary sense of concrete selfhood is the object on which the analysis is working, the experience is fraught with emotion.

The second additional reasoning revolves around the entailment that the “I” would have inherently existent production and disintegration, in which case it would be discontinuous. The third additional reasoning also depends upon a belief in rebirth; for me, it reflects the type of reasoning, in reverse, that many use against rebirth. Its concern is not explicitly with the “I” and the mental and physical aggregates that are its bases of designation but the relationship between the “I” of this life and the “I” of the last life. It is: If they were one, then the sufferings of the former life would absurdly have to be present in this life.

The last additional reasoning expands on the fault of discontinuity between lives, suggested earlier in the second reasoning but not pursued. If they were different, which by the rules of inherent existence would make them totally, unrelatly different, (1) remembrance of former lives would become impossible; (2) moral retribution would be impossible; and (3) undeserved suffering would be experienced. Such difference would make a mere-I, the agent that travels from lifetime to lifetime, engaging in actions and experiencing their effects, impossible. Oneness of the “I” and its bases of designation—the mental and physical aggregates—is impossible.

Fourth Essential: Ascertaining that the “I” and the Aggregates Are Not Inherently Different

The meditator has been so disturbed by the analysis of oneness that he or she is ready to assume difference. However, the rules of inherent existence call for the different to be unrelatly different, again the assumption being not that persons ordinarily consider the “I” and its bases of designation to be unrelatly different but that within the context of inherent existence, that is, of such pointable, solid existence, difference necessitates unrelatly. If something seems to be found separate from

mind and body, would this be the “I” that goes to the store? Would this be the “I” that desires? Hates?

Still, the question is not easy to settle, and it does not appear that easy answers are wanted. Rather, the Fifth Dalai Lama emphasizes that deeply felt conviction is needed:

It is not sufficient that the mode of non-finding be just a repetition of the impoverished phrase, “Not found.” For example, when an ox is lost, one does not take as true the mere phrase, “It is not in such and such an area.” Rather, it is through searching for it in the highland, midland, and lowland of the area that one firmly decides that it cannot be found. Here also, through meditating until a decision is reached, you gain conviction (see n. 3).

Realization of Selflessness

With such conviction, the decision reached is that the “I” cannot be found under analysis. The decision is not superficially intellectual but a startling discovery of a vacuity when such an “I” is sought. This vacuity shows, not that the “I” does not exist, but that it does not inherently exist as it was identified as seeming to in the first essential. This unfindability is emptiness itself, and realization of it is realization of emptiness, selflessness.

Incontrovertible inferential understanding, though not of the level of direct perception or even of special insight,¹⁰ has great impact. For a beginner it generates a sense of deprivation, but for an experienced meditator it generates a sense of discovery, or recovery, of what was lost. The Fifth Dalai Lama conveys this with examples:

If you have no predispositions for emptiness from a former life, it seems that a thing that was in the hand has suddenly been lost. If you have predispositions, it seems that a lost jewel that had been in the hand has suddenly been found (see n. 3).

The perception of this vacuousness, the absence of inherent existence, carries emotional force—first of loss, since our emotions are built on a false sense of concreteness, and then of discovery of a lost treasure that makes everything possible. From a similar point of view, the emptiness of the mind is called the Buddha nature, or Buddha lineage, since it is what allows for development of the marvelous qualities of Buddhahood. However, unless the meditator has predispositions from practice in a former life, the first experience of emptiness is one of loss; later, its fecundity and dynamism become apparent.

Space-Like Meditative Equipoise

The realization of the absence of inherent existence needs to be increased through a process of alternating analytical meditation and stabilizing meditation. If the meditator has developed the power of concentration of the level of calm abiding, the analysis of the status of the "I" can be done within the context of this highly stable mind. However, too much analysis will induce excitement, reducing stabilization, and too much stabilization will induce an inability to analyze. Thus, analytical and stabilizing meditation must be alternated until the two are in such harmony that analysis itself induces even greater stabilization which, in turn, enhances analysis.

At the point when meditators have not yet reached the level of special insight but are close to it, they attain a similitude of special insight and a space-like meditative equipoise. This meditative equipoise is called "space-like" because just as un compounded space¹¹ is a mere absence—a mere negative—of obstructive contact, so emptiness is a mere absence, a mere negative, of inherent existence. Such steady reflection on emptiness, therefore, is called space-like meditative equipoise. At the point of harmony and mutual support between analysis and stabilization, special insight, which necessarily also involves a union of calm abiding and special insight, is achieved. Brought to the level of direct perception, it gradually serves as the antidote to both the artificially acquired and innate afflictive emotions.

The Fourth Paṅ-chen Lama, Lō-sang-bel-den-den-bay-nyi-ma,¹² describes the mind of space-like meditative equipoise from two points of view—in terms of appearance and in terms of ascertainment. To that consciousness only an immaculate vacuity—an absence of inherent existence—*appears*, and that consciousness *ascertains*, understands, comprehends, and realizes the absence of inherent existence of the I. Although reasoning has led to this state, the mind is not now reasoning; it is experiencing the fruit of reasoning in a state of continuous, one-pointed ascertainment of emptiness; the only thing appearing is an utter vacuity—an absence—of inherent existence. In space-like meditative equipoise only an immaculate vacuity that is a negative of inherent existence appears—nothing else. What is ascertained, understood, is also an absence of inherent existence. The same is also true for direct realization of emptiness, though any sense of duality, knower and known, has vanished.

Appearances Subsequent to Meditative Equipoise

When the state of one-pointed concentration on selflessness is left, that is, when the meditator takes to mind any object other than emptiness, the object is viewed as *like* an illusion, appearing one way but existing another.

Just as a magician's illusory elephant appears to be an elephant but in fact is not, so forms, sounds, and so forth appear to exist inherently but are understood as not existing inherently. The meaning of being like an illusion is not that the "I" or forms, sounds, and so forth appear to exist but actually do not; rather, their mode of existence appears to be concrete but is understood not to be so. The same is true for the I. Mere realization that a magician's illusions or dream objects are not real does not constitute realizing phenomena to be like a magician's illusions, nor does realization of phenomena as like illusions mean that one merely desists from identifying appearances. The essential point is that the meditator first must realize that these objects do not inherently exist; there is no other method for inducing realization that phenomena are like illusions. Realization of the emptiness of inherent existence is said, in this system, to be the *only* method for gaining the subsequent realization that phenomena are like illusions.

The Fourth Paṅ-chen Lama speaks similarly but also addresses the issue of the substance of those appearances that are left over. He calls for viewing them as the sport¹³ of emptiness.¹⁴ Since the emptiness of inherent existence makes appearance possible, phenomena are, in a sense, the sport of emptiness. It even may be said that their basic substance is emptiness. However, emptiness is a non-affirming negative, a mere absence or mere elimination of inherent existence, which does not imply anything in place of inherent existence even though it is compatible with dependently arisen phenomena. Hence, emptiness is not a positive substance giving rise to phenomena, even if it is their ground. Emptiness is what makes cause and effect possible; the emptiness of the mind is called the Buddha nature, the causal lineage of Buddhahood, even though it is not itself an actual cause. As a mere negative of inherent existence, it makes enlightenment possible.

Summation of the Sutra Model of Meditation on Selflessness and Appearance

Including the steps of setting the basic motivation for meditation on the selflessness of the person as well as the subsequent state of realizing appearances to be like illusions, we can distinguish seven steps in the Sutra process of meditating on the selflessness of the person:

1. adjustment of motivation: taking refuge and developing an altruistic intention to become enlightened
2. ascertaining what is being negated—inherent existence
3. ascertaining entailment of emptiness
4. ascertaining that the "I" and the aggregates are not inherently the same

5. ascertaining that the "I" and the aggregates are not inherently different
6. realizing the absence of inherent existence of the "I" in space-like meditative equipoise
7. emerging from space-like meditative equipoise and viewing all phenomena as like a magician's illusions.

All activities are to be done within realization that phenomena are like illusions, understanding that space-like meditative equipoise negates only a false sense of *inherent* existence and not the very existence of objects.

The Sutra model of meditation on selflessness and subsequent relation with appearance is built around an analytical search for the seemingly concrete existence of an object, such as oneself, the existence of which has hitherto been uncontested. Though the mode of search is analytical, the examination of the object is intensely emotional since emotions such as desire and hatred are built on a perceived status of objects that is now being challenged. Thus, the analysis is neither cold nor superficially intellectual but an expression of the intellect in the midst of the clatter of emotional rearrangement and unreasoned re-assertion of the concrete findability of the object. The analysis is by no means a rote run-through of a prescribed ritual, nor is it merely aimed at refuting other philosophical systems; rather, it is aimed at the heart of one's emotional and intellectual life, at the ideational underpinnings of our self-conceptions, our relations with others, our conceptions of subject and object, and our ideologies.

At the end of successful analysis, what is experienced is merely a non-finding—a void, a vacuity—of the object in which one originally so intensely believed. That very object, in all of its seeming concreteness, has literally disappeared from mind; the very type of mind that believed in it has now sought for it according to rules of analysis that have been seen to be not just appropriate but binding. It has not found that object, even though so many emotions have been built in dependence on its seemingly verifiable status. The experience of not finding this previously reliable object is earth-shattering.

The meditator does not immediately rush back to perception of appearances but remains with this vacuity, a mere absence of such an inherently existent object, appreciating its implications, letting the ramifications of the analytical unfindability of the object affect his/her mind, letting it undermine the emotional frameworks of countless lives in a round of suffering induced by ignorance of this fact. After such immersion, the meditator again returns to the world of appearance, at which point objects dawn as like a magician's illusions, seeming to exist in their own right but being empty of such concrete existence. The world—oneself, others, and objects such as chairs and tables—is seen in a new way,

falsely seeming to have a status that it actually does not have, but now unmasked.

But what do objects appear from? What is their substance? What is its relation with one's own mind? These are issues that the tantric model of meditation goes on to face, not so much through conceptual presentation but through a mode of experiencing objects, after realizing emptiness, that bridges the gap between emptiness and appearance in an even more vivid way. Let us turn to the Mantra model of meditating on emptiness and subsequent relation with appearance.

The Tantric Mode of Meditation

Deity yoga, according to D̄zong-ka-ba's lengthy treatment of the difference between Sutra and Tantra in his *Great Exposition of Secret Mantra*,¹⁵ is the distinctive essence of tantric meditation.¹⁶ It provides a unique combination of method (compassion) and wisdom (realization of selflessness) in one consciousness and thus an additional mode of meditating on selflessness. Let us consider the process of cultivating deity yoga in meditation through the example of Action Tantra as explained by D̄zong-ka-ba's students, D̄ül-dzin-drak-ba-gyel-tsen and Ke-drup-gay-lek-bel-sang. The process is structured around successively more profound stages of meditative stabilizations of exalted body, speech, and mind. Our concern here is with the first.

In Action Tantra the process of imagining, or generating, oneself as a deity is structured in six steps called six deities, which supply a basic tantric paradigm for meditation on selflessness and subsequent relation with appearance. This process is referred to but not described in the *Concentration Continuation Tantra* and is known from the *Extensive Vidāraṇa Tantra*,¹⁷ available only in citation in Buddhaguhya's commentary, which is extant only in Tibetan. The *Extensive Vidāraṇa Tantra* says:

Having first bathed, a yogi
Sits on the vajra cushion
And having offered and made petition
Cultivates the six deities.
Emptiness, sound, letter, form,
Seal, and sign are the six.

The six deities are:

1. ultimate deity (also called emptiness deity or suchness deity)
2. sound deity (also called tone deity)

3. letter deity
4. form deity
5. seal deity
6. sign deity.

Let us consider these six steps in detail, using the commentaries mentioned above.

Ultimate Deity

Dül-dzin-drak-ba-gyel-tsen describes the ultimate deity very briefly:¹⁸

The ultimate deity is meditation on emptiness:

Oṃ svabhāva-śuddhāḥ sarva-dharmāḥ svabhāva-śuddho 'haṃ (*Oṃ* naturally pure are all phenomena; naturally pure am I). Just as my own suchness is ultimately free from all the elaborations [of inherent existence], so is the deity's suchness also. Therefore, in terms of non-conceptual perception [of the final mode of subsistence of phenomena] the suchness of myself and of the deity are undifferentiable like a mixture of water and milk.

The brevity of his description of this initial and crucial step of meditation on emptiness is due to the fact that although realization of emptiness is obviously integral to Tantra, descriptions of how to do it, though present in tantras such as the *Concentration Continuation Tantra*,¹⁹ are found in far more detail in the Sutra systems.²⁰ The meditator is expected to bring such knowledge to this practice.

The description of the ultimate deity by Ke-drup in his *General Presentation of the Tantra Sets* speaks to this point directly:²¹

Meditation within settling well—in dependence upon a Middle Way reasoning such as the lack of [being] one or many and so forth—that one's mind is empty of inherent existence is the suchness of self. Then, meditation [on the fact] that the suchness of whatever deity is being meditated and the suchness of oneself are undifferentiably without inherent existence is the suchness of the deity. That twofold suchness is the suchness deity from among the six deities. It is the equivalent of meditating on emptiness within saying *svabhāva* [that is, *oṃ svabhāva-śuddhāḥ sarva-dharmāḥ svabhāva-śuddho 'haṃ*: “*Oṃ* naturally pure are all phenomena; naturally pure am I”] or *śūnyatā* [that is, *oṃ śūnyatājñānavajrasvabhāvātmake 'haṃ*: “I have a nature of indivisible emptiness and wisdom”] in higher tantra sets.

A Middle Way reasoning such as the lack of being an inherently existent one or an inherently existent plurality is used for the sake of realizing first that oneself (or, alternately, one's own mind) does not inherently exist. Thus, this first step in imagining oneself as a deity incorporates the Sutra style meditation described in the previous section as steps two through six. Since Dzong-ka-ba and his followers emphasize over and over again that the view of emptiness in Sutra²² and in Tantra is the same,²³ these five steps are to be brought into the Tantric meditation *in toto*.

The difference is that in tantra, after meditating on their own lack of inherent existence, practitioners proceed to reflect on the emptiness of the deity as whom they will appear and then reflect on the sameness of themselves and the deity in terms of their own and the deity's ultimate mode of subsistence, an absence of inherent existence. The ultimate reality of oneself and the deity are viewed as like "water and milk" which mix so completely that they cannot be distinguished. Thus, the first step in meditating on oneself as a deity is to realize that, from the viewpoint of the perception of suchness, oneself and the deity are the same; this realization serves to break down the conception that either oneself or the deity inherently exists.

Dzong-ka-ba refers to the conception of sameness of ultimate nature as "pride."²⁴ That the meditator takes *pride* in ultimately having the same nature as the deity suggests that the meditator develops a conscious *willingness* to identify himself or herself with the deity in terms of their final nature. The word "pride" suggests the boldness of making the identification—a force of will being required to overcome the reluctance to make such a grand identification in the face of the analytical unfindability that is commonly associated with diminution in a beginning stage, since the initial experience of unfindability is of losing something (see above).

This additional step of conscious identification that the final nature of oneself and the final nature of the deity are the same drastically alters the space-like meditative equipoise, which is a state of concentration solely on a non-affirming negative, a mere absence of inherent existence. Here in Tantra one comes to meditate on an affirming negative²⁵—that is, on the *sameness* in final nature of oneself and the deity as being without inherent existence. Even though this is done through the route of an initial space-like meditative equipoise meditating on the non-affirming negative of first one's own and then the deity's inherent existence, the conclusion of the first step in self-generation is a positive affirmation of the *sameness* of oneself and the deity in terms of a pure final nature, itself a mere absence of inherent existence.

The relation between the emptiness realized and the being who appears subsequent to space-like meditative equipoise is made more explicit through this conscious identification. The passage from space-like meditative equipoise to taking cognizance of other objects is now no longer, as in

the Sutra system, a matter of merely letting other objects appear to the mind. The meditator now consciously takes the ultimate deity as the basic stuff of the appearances yet to come. A bridge is made between emptiness and appearance—going beyond mere realization of their compatibility as in the Sutra systems. Appearances are no longer just *allowed* to re-appear; instead, the meditator deliberately reflects on his/her own final nature as being the stuff out of which they will appear.

The fact that emptiness (and the mind fused with it in realization) is called a deity is similar to calling the emptiness of the mind the Buddha nature, Buddha lineage, or naturally abiding lineage²⁶ in that it is all-powerful in the sense of being that which makes everything possible. As Nāgārjuna's *Treatise on the Middle*²⁷ says:

For whom emptiness is possible
For that [person] all is possible.

Due to the emptiness of inherent existence, change and transformation are possible, whereas, without it, everything is frozen in substantial existence. Here in this first step of deity yoga the meditator identifies himself or herself, in terms of ultimate nature, with this basic stuff.

Sound Deity

In the second through fifth steps the wisdom consciousness, fused with and realizing emptiness, is used as a basis of emanation—the mind itself appearing in form. Rather than merely letting phenomena appear as is done after space-like meditative equipoise in the Sutra system, the yogi uses the wisdom consciousness as the stuff out of which and within which first sounds and then visible forms and so forth will appear. Within continuously realizing the emptiness of inherent existence, the wisdom consciousness itself first appears as the sounds of the mantra of the deity as whom the meditator will become, resounding in space. Ke-drup indicates that the sounds of the mantra are, in entity, the deity. Out of emptiness comes mantra—word—which itself is the deity. One is clearly not to think of the deity as only appearing when the god with a face, arms, legs, and so forth manifests. Everything that appears from this point on is made from the ultimate deity and is essentially the deity.

Letter Deity

The meditator's mind realizing the sameness of ultimate nature of oneself and the deity transforms into a white, flat moon disc shining in space on which the letters of the mantra appear standing around its edge (facing inward, according to oral explanations). Ye-shay-gyel-tsen²⁸ com-

compares the sounds of the *mantra* to mercury that mixes with grains of the gold, the written letters. Hence, in his stimulating exposition, the upright letters are not just color and shape but are fused with their respective sounds. This mixture of sound and visible form strikes me as an important connecting link in the gradual controlled evolution from emptiness to sound, to visible form.

Form Deity

The next step is the transformation of this moon disc with upright letters into the usual physical form of the deity with a face, arms, legs, and so forth. Prior to that, however, there is an intermediary step of emitting from the moon a multitude of compassionately beneficent forms of the deity, through which active compassion is established as the precursor of one's own bodily appearance. The moon and mantra letters transform such that a hand-symbol—a *vajra* or wheel, for instance—also appears on the moon. Then, from all of these emanate rays of light from which myriad forms of the deity emerge. These deities, in turn, emanate great clouds piled with offerings that they offer to already enlightened beings. The deities also emanate great clouds from which a rain-stream of ambrosia descends, cleansing and satisfying all other beings. The Dalai Lama movingly describes this phase of the meditation:²⁹

Imagine that from the moon and the mantra letters light rays are emitted, from the points of which emerge forms of the deity to be meditated. These deities emanate clouds of offerings to the Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, and so forth, as well as clouds with a rain of nectar. It falls on the beings in cyclic existence and purifies them, giving a good body to those who need it, coolness to those suffering from heat, the warmth of the sun to those suffering from cold, food and drink to the hungry and thirsty—emanating to each just what he or she needs, affording beings the basis for practicing the path as well as teachers to instruct them in the essential paths of the four truths, the two truths, and so forth. They are caused to ascend the paths and attain the final happiness of Buddhahood.

The activity of offering to high beings fortifies the basic motivation toward enlightenment by associating the purpose of worthwhile material things and pleasures with buddhahood. The activity of cleansing those trapped in suffering makes the very essence of physical appearance be compassionate activity for the welfare of the world. Psychologically, the meditator must confront and transform many untamed contents of mind which appear as the deprived and depraved beings who receive the bountiful blessings of the rain of ambrosia. One can speculate that a prime reason for the vivid

descriptions of the hells and other unfortunate existences found in other texts³⁰ is to make manifest to oneself unconscious tendencies of mind and spirit so that such meditative confrontation and transformation can be enacted.

According to Tibetan explanations, imitating the deeds of buddhahood through raining down this ambrosia establishes patterns and predispositions to be fulfilled after one's own enlightenment. In addition, an internal transformation is enacted in a process that begins with a step much like Jung's description of assimilation of unconscious complexes, not through identification, but through confrontation. Jung says:³¹

The supreme aim of the *opus psychologicum* is conscious realization, and the first step is to make oneself conscious of contents that have hitherto been projected.

Recognition of the needy and unpleasant beings to be helped by the beneficent rain constitutes confrontation with one's own tendencies and predispositions. It is interesting to note that the transformation is not an instantaneous transmutation into divinity but begins with first *satisfying* the needs of the deprived and depraved contents.³² Also, oral explanations from lamas indicate that the rain of ambrosia *gradually* leads these beings (psychological contents) to higher and higher levels through providing opportunities for practice, teachings, and so forth. The sense of quasi-otherness under the guise of which this practice is done has, as its basis, the same wisdom as Jung's warning to assimilate unconscious contents through confrontation, not through identification, in order to avoid being taken over by them. The step of healingly transforming these contents after recognizing them proceeds a step beyond Jung's confrontational assimilation in that these forces, once confronted, not only lose much of their autonomous power but also are transformed.

Although it is said that only Highest Yoga Tantra mirrors in its deity yoga the afflicted processes³³ of (1) death, (2) intermediate state, and (3) rebirth by (1) mimicking the eight signs of death,³⁴ appearing (2) as a seed syllable, and then (3) as a deity with a physical body, it strikes me that these stages of gradual appearance as a deity in Action Tantra mirror in pure form an ordinary, uncontrolled process of appearance—the imitation being for the sake of gaining control over it. Given the selfishness of ordinary life, there must be a phase in the process of awakening after sleep corresponding but opposite to the compassionate emanation of myriad helpful forms. In ordinary, selfish life, the corresponding psychological structuring of one's relation to the environment would be the emanation of forms similar to ourselves for the sake of warding off anyone who would interrupt our pleasure, making sure that disease visits others and not ourselves, wreaking havoc on others for the sake of control, and so forth.

It also may be that this process, in ordinary life, is so out of control that one emanates forms that destroy one's own welfare much like a paranoiac's attackers or dream beings that pursue us.

In this transmutory practice, after the enactment of such compassionate activity the rays and deities return with actualized (not just potential) compassion to dissolve with all their power and experience into the moon, letters, and hand-symbol which turn into the deity. The meditator now could not view the deity as just a neutral appearance of light in a certain form but must see and feel it as an active expression of compassion and wisdom. The rays of light emitted from the moon, which itself is a manifestation of the mind realizing the ultimate deity, are endowed with compassionate potential for appearance in forms that work the weal of sentient beings. One has appeared in divine form, the essence of which is the wisdom of emptiness and active compassion

Seal Deity

Still, self-generation is not complete. The imagined deity must be further enhanced, this being accomplished through uttering mantra at the same time as physically touching important places on one's imagined divine body with a hand gesture called a seal.³⁵ The one pledge seal of the particular lineage may be used or individual seals for each of the places may be used. Ke-drup speaks of touching not five (counting the shoulders as two) but nine places (crown protrusion, hair-treasury [one coiled hair in the middle of the brow], eyes, the two shoulders, neck, heart, and navel). With each mantra and touch the meditator imagines a heightening of the particular area of the divine body in terms of its brilliance and magnificence. This is a further sanctifying of an appearance already sacred through being a manifestation of wisdom and compassion.

Sign Deity

Now that all the signs of a full-fledged deity are present, the meditator, based on clear appearance of pure mind and body, can gain a sense of divine personhood or selfhood. Two types of meditation are used, *analytical* which involves particular attention to details or brightening of the object and *stabilizing* which is one-pointed attention on just one aspect.

For deity yoga to succeed, two prime factors are needed—clear appearance of a divine body and pride in being that deity. With success in visualizing the deity, both mind and body appear to be pure; hence, the sense of self that the meditator has in dependence upon purely appearing mind and body is of a *pure self*, a *divine self*. Divine pride itself is said to harm or weaken the conception of inherent existence, which is at the root of all other afflictions in cyclic existence including afflicted pride. Due to

the initial and then continuous practice of realizing the emptiness of inherent existence, the meditator realizes that the person is merely designated in dependence upon pure mind and body and is not analytically findable among or separate from those bases of designation. Thereby, divine pride itself serves as a means for eliminating exaggerated conceptions of the status of phenomena including the person; this is how it prevents afflicted ego-inflation.

With success at deity yoga, the practitioner has the factors of wisdom and compassionate method in one consciousness at one time. The “ascertainment factor”³⁶ of this consciousness realizes the emptiness of inherent existence at the same time as the “appearance factor”³⁷ appears in ideal, compassionate form acting to help beings. This is said to be superior to the Sutra version of the union of method and wisdom in which method (cultivation of compassion) merely *affects* wisdom with its force and in which wisdom (realization of emptiness) merely *affects* compassionate activities with its force, the two not actually being manifest at one time. In tantra the presence of compassionate method and wisdom in one consciousness is said to quicken progress toward Buddhahood—a state of non-dual realization of the nature of phenomena within spontaneous dualistic appearance for the benefit of others.

A profound development has occurred when a practitioner becomes capable of deity yoga. After realizing emptiness, appearances are no longer just *allowed* to re-emerge within understanding that there is a conflict between how they appear to exist in their own right and their actual lack of such concreteness; rather, one’s own mind realizing emptiness and understanding that one’s own and a deity’s final nature are the same becomes the stuff out of which phenomena appear. The relation between emptiness and appearance, the gap between an experience of unfindability and re-emergence, is bridged.

THE PARADIGM CHANGE: PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

Is the progression from the Sutra to the Mantra model of relation with appearance a smooth transition, a harmonious, incremental putting together of two models, or could it also be fraught with tension? Dzong-kabā and his followers present the Perfection and Mantra Vehicles as an integrated progression; the very foundations of Perfection Vehicle practice, altruism and wisdom, are reformulated in the Mantra Vehicle in the practice of deity yoga. He stresses the *continuity* between the two vehicles, two models or paradigms of the relation of the fundamental emptiness (or the wisdom realizing emptiness) with appearance.

In preparing for a Buddhist-Christian Encounter conference in Hawaii in 1984 in which Hans Küng’s adaptation of theology of Thomas Kuhn’s

theory of paradigm change in the sciences was used as the focus, I was struck by Kuhn's and Küng's emphasis on *crisis* in the development and movement from one paradigm to another. For me, Küng's description of a critical period during which inadequacies and discrepancies of the old paradigm lead to uncertainty such that conviction in the adequacy of the old paradigm is shaken rang true with my own experience of the transition from sutra practice to tantric practice. I have found it helpful to use the language of paradigm change—of an initial period of crisis, then a new formation, and finally a sense of continuity with the old paradigm—to appreciate the distinctiveness of tantric deity yoga and the issues remaining from the Sutra model of meditation that it resolves.

My suggestion is that an individual practitioner's change from the Sutra to the Mantra model may not be mere harmonious and gradual acquisition of a new technique but may be fraught with psychological crisis. Despite the structural harmony that Dzong-ka-ba presents with such brilliance and clarity, the history of a particular practitioner's personal incorporation of this paradigm change may not be a smooth transition. I recognize the autobiographical nature of these reflections and offer them only as a stimulus to appreciation of the profundity of deity yoga.

From One Model to Another

In that the content to be understood through the meditations of both the Sutra and Tantra models is the nature and basis of appearance, we are dealing with two macro models, for they are both experientially oriented explanations of the very phenomena of life. Despite being taught by the same school (in this case, the Ge-luk-ba order of Tibetan Buddhism), they are purposely kept distinct, not just to preserve schools of teachings from India, but, I would contend, to induce—through initial practice of the Sutra model of meditation on selflessness—the crisis that will lead to appreciation of the Tantric. Some Ge-luk-ba scholar-practitioners choose only to follow the Sutra model, resisting the change to the Tantric model. This can occur (1) by refusing to engage in tantric practice, (2) by engaging in tantric ritual but not believing it, or (3) by incorporating an external show of the practice of both Sutra and Tantra but actually not penetrating either.

The change, or evolution, from the Sutra to the Tantra model cannot actually be made until one learns in meditative *experience* to use the mind understanding emptiness and the emptiness—with which it is fused—as a basis of imaginative appearance, in imitation of a Buddha's ability to do this in fact. Thus, the change cannot be made superficially merely through using the tantric descriptions or through sitting through a ritual that incorporates this process.

However, a somewhat successful Sutra practitioner, who is able to experience at least something resembling space-like meditative equipoise, may arrive at a point of hiatus during which he/she is not satisfied with merely letting objects re-appear after reflecting on emptiness. The question, the crisis, of comprehending the stuff of appearances may be sufficiently pressing that he or she becomes increasingly dissatisfied with the break between the space-like realization and the subsequent plethora of appearances, despite their being marked with realization of the emptiness of inherent existence through the force of the earlier cognition. For there is a retraction of mind when moving from space-like meditative equipoise—in which the mind is fused with the emptiness of inherent existence of all phenomena—to a condition in which the meditator's mind only affects those appearances in the sense of marking or sealing them with this realization.

The problem of the relation of one's own mind to those appearances can assume crisis proportions, creating openness to drastic change. There can be a period of transitional uncertainty during which the sūtra model is challenged for its inability to address the problem of the relation of this deep mind realizing emptiness to appearances. The breakdown of the Sutra model at this point and the crisis, induced not only by this breakdown but also by the difficulty of comprehending the Tantric model despite its availability, leads to new thinking seeking a way to solve the puzzle, a withdrawal of sole commitment to the Sutra model even though the practitioner might not express it this way. The crisis—the breakdown of the available rules—cracks and softens the rigidity of the devotion to the old model.

The new paradigm candidate, the Tantric model, was in a sense always at hand in the form of lectures and ceremonies but was hardly available since only through considerable experience with (1) searching for objects, (2) not finding them, and then (3) practicing illusory-like appearance can the additional technique of using that mind realizing emptiness as the basis that itself appears in physical form be appreciated. This is partially due to the general Buddhist analytic tendency, breaking things down to basic parts and those, in turn, to smaller and smaller units since, in the face of this basic perspective, such a grandly synthetic view as is presented in the Tantric model seems even non-Buddhist. A version of the synthetic view is present in the Sutra system in that all appearances are viewed as the sport of emptiness in the sense that the emptiness of inherent existence makes them possible; however, this does not take account of the relation of mind to those appearances as the Tantric system does.

The change to the new paradigm constitutes a revolution in outlook, lending an entirely new sense to the meaning of mind-only³⁸ beyond the one rejected earlier, as a "lower view," in the progress toward the view of the Middle Way School. The practitioner's orientation toward the world of

appearances has undergone a fundamental re-organization; the model of understanding appearance has changed. As I have suggested, this is not done without opposition and struggle both from within and from without, the latter being from concern with teachers and members of the monastic community in the old camp. A period of doubt, loss of faith, and uncertainty due to the pressing inadequacy of the old model is passed beyond through conversion to a model that copes better with the relation between mind and appearance on an experiential, practical level. The conversion could be prompted by attending a rite where the Tantric model is used or by one's own daily rehearsal of a rite that previously did not have much meaning.

The new Tantric model absorbs the old, preserving in its procedures an important place for the space-like meditative equipoise in the first phase of cultivation of deity yoga, the ultimate deity. Hence, the meditator experiences, after the conversion, a continuity with his or her earlier practice through enactment (which is usually done at least six times daily) of a ritual that also incorporates the old model. Due to the continuing, and even essential, importance of realization of the absence of inherent existence and of altruism, a *fundamental continuity* is experienced; the very structure of the old model, wisdom and compassion, is literally reshaped to appear in ideal form, wise and compassionate.

CONCLUSION

Tantra, in this light, can be seen as a *new formation* of the Buddhist tradition, not a new invention of a tradition; the primordial importance of wisdom and compassion remains the basis. The process of moving from one model to the other, at least for some persons, may not be a simple matter of the incorporation of a new technique, deity yoga, as the Ge-luk-*ba* tradition in its emphasis on the integration of two vehicles gives the impression that it is. Crisis and shift may better describe the person's progression from the Sutra vehicle to the Tantra vehicle; nevertheless, from the new perspective the continuity can be seen. Perhaps, the deity yoga that constitutes the difference between the two vehicles according to Dzong-ka-*ba* and his followers is not merely a distinctive, important factor of the tantric path not found in *sūtra* but also a difficult one, the comprehension of which is fraught with developmental crisis.

NOTES

1. Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970).
2. See "Paradigm Change in Theology and Science," in *Theology for the Third Millennium: An Ecumenical View* (New York: Doubleday, 1988), pp. 123–169.
3. Nga-wang-ġo-sang-gya-tso (*ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho*, 1617–1682), Dalai Lama V, *Instruction on the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment, Sacred Word of Mañjushri* (*byang chub lam gyi rim pa'i khrid yig 'jam pa'i dbyangs kyi zhal lung*) (Thimphu: kun-bzang-stobs-rgyal, 1976), pp. 182.5–210.6. For an English translation, see Jeffrey Hopkins, "Practice of Emptiness" (Dharamsala: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, 1974). ġong-ka-ba's five main texts on the Sutra realization of emptiness form the background of the discussion even though not cited. In order of composition these are his *Great Exposition of the Stages of the Path* (*lam rim chen mo*); *The Essence of the Good Explanations* (*legs bshad snying po*); *Explanation of (Nāgārjuna's) "Treatise on the Middle": Ocean of Reasoning* (*dbu ma rtsa ba'i tshig le'ur byas pa shes rab ces bya ba'i rnam bshad rigs pa'i rgya mtsho*), *Medium Length Exposition of the Stages of the Path* (*lam rim 'bring*); and *Extensive Explanation of (Chandrakirti's) "Supplement to (Nāgārjuna's) 'Treatise on the Middle'": Illumination of the Thought* (*dbu ma la 'jug pa'i rgya cher bshad pa dgongs pa rab gsal*).
4. *bya spyod kyi spyi'i cho ga'i rnam par bzhag pa rigs gsum la sbyor tshul rje'i phyag bzhes bzhin 'dul ba 'dzin pas bkod pa*, *Collected Works of Rje Tsoñ-kha-pa Blo-bzañ-grags-pa*, vol. 17 (*na*), pp. 437–449.6.
5. *rgyud sde spyi'i rnam par gzhag pa rgyas par brjod pa*; Ferdinand D. Lessing and Alex Wayman, *Mkhas Grub Rje's Fundamentals of the Buddhist Tantras* (The Hague: Mouton, 1968), pp. 158–163; see the same range of pages for their translation.
6. I have translated these respectively in H.H. the Dalai Lama, Tsong-ka-pa, and Jeffrey Hopkins, *Tantra in Tibet* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1977; reprint Ithaca, N.Y.: Snow Lion, 1987), and in H.H. the Dalai Lama, Tsong-ka-pa, and Jeffrey Hopkins, *The Yoga of Tibet* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1981; reprinted as *Deity Yoga* with minor changes, Ithaca: Snow Lion, 1987).
7. In a culture, such as that of pre-modern Tibet, where people think in their chests, the head is a limb and not an integral part of the trunk as it is often depicted elsewhere. Thus, here in this exposition there are *five* limbs and a trunk.
8. *ngo bo gcig la ldog pa tha dad*.

9. For an account of his life and a sample of his teachings, see *The Life and Teachings of Geshe Rabten*, trans. and ed. by Alan Wallace (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1982).
10. *lhag mthong, vipaśyanā*.
11. 'dus ma byas kyi nam mkha', *asaṃskṛtākāśa*.
12. *blo bzang dpal ldan bstan pa'i nyi ma*, 1781–1852/4. See Geshe Lhundup Sopa and Jeffrey Hopkins, *Cutting Through Appearances: The Practice and Theory of Tibetan Buddhism* (Ithaca: Snow Lion, 1990), p. 98.
13. *rnam rol, lila*.
14. Sopa and Jeffrey Hopkins, *Cutting Through Appearances*, p. 98.
15. See H.H. the Dalai Lama, Tsong-ka-pa, and Jeffrey Hopkins, *Tantra in Tibet*, pp. 81–169.
16. There are basically two types of deity yoga, generation in front and self-generation—imagining a deity as a visitor in front of oneself and imagining oneself as a deity. The practice of visualizing an ideal being in front of oneself and making offerings and so forth, although a form of deity yoga, is not the deity yoga that distinguishes Sutra from Tantra. The distinctively tantric practice is *self-generation*, imagining oneself as a deity.
17. *rdo rje rnam 'joms kyi rgyud rgyas pa, *vajravidāraṇāvaiṇavya*. For the citation, see Dalai Lama, Tsong-ka-pa, and Hopkins, *Deity Yoga*, p. 109.
18. Collected Works of Rje Tsoṅ-kha-pa Blo-bzan-grags-pa, vol. 17 (*na*), 447.2–447.3.
19. Dalai Lama, Tsong-ka-pa, and Hopkins, *Deity Yoga*, pp. 104–106, 168–171.
20. See Gung-tang (*gung thang dkon mchog bstan pa'i sgron me*, 1762–1823), *Beginnings of a Commentary on the Difficult Points of (Dzong-ka-ba's) "Differentiating the Interpretable and the Definitive": Quintessence of "The Essence of Eloquence"* (*drang nges rnam 'byed kyi dga' 'grel rtsom 'phro legs bshad snying po'i yang snying*) (Guru Deva: Sarnath, India, no date), 21.7–21.11.
21. The text is Lessing and Wayman, *Fundamentals of the Buddhist Tantras*, pp. 158.16ff; for their translation, see the same.
22. Preferably as described in the Middle Way Consequence school (*dbu ma thal 'gyur pa, prāsaṅgikamādhyaṃika*).
23. See Dalai Lama, Tsong-ka-pa, and Hopkins, *Tantra in Tibet*, p. 110.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 106.
25. *ma yin dgag, paryudāsapratīṣedha*.
26. *rang bzhin gnas rigs, prakṛtiṣṭhagoṭra*.
27. XXIV.14ab.
28. Ye-ṣhay-gyel-tsen (*ye shes rgyal mtshan*, 1713–1793), *Illumination of the*

Meaning of Action Tantra (bya rgyud don gsal), Collected Works, vol. 9 (New Delhi: Tibet House, 1976), p. 487.3.

29. Dalai Lama, Tsong-ka-pa, and Hopkins, *Deity Yoga*, p. 23.

30. See, for example, Khetsun Sangpo, *Tantric Practice in Nyingma*, trans. and ed. Jeffrey Hopkins (London: Rider, 1982; reprint, Ithaca: Snow Lion, 1983).

31. *The Collected Works of C.G. Jung* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971, second printing 1974), vol. 16, p. 471 (the reference is to the paragraph number, which is used for coordination between editions).

32. See the description of a similar practice done in the Vajrasattva meditation and repetition of mantra in Khetsun Sangpo, *Tantric Practice in Nyingma*, pp. 149–150.

33. Dzong-ka-ba gives this opinion in his explication of Yoga Tantra in the *Great Exposition of the Stages of Secret Mantra (sngags rim chen mo)*, Collected Works (Guru Deva edition), vol. *ga*, 177.2:

Cultivation of deity yoga in the pattern of the stages of production of [a life in] cyclic existence [mimicking the process of death, intermediate state, and rebirth]—the thoroughly afflicted class [of phenomena]—is not set forth in any reliable text of the three lower tantra sets; thus, such is a distinguishing feature of Highest Yoga Tantra. However, [in the three lower tantras] there is cultivation of deity yoga in the pattern of the very pure class [of phenomena], for the cultivation of the five clear enlightenments [in Yoga Tantra, for instance,] is said to be meditation within assuming the pride of the particular [stage] in accordance with the stages of full purification [i.e., enlightenment] of Bodhisattvas in their last lifetimes.

34. Mirage, smoke, fireflies, burning butter lamp, mind of vivid white appearance, mind of vivid red or orange increase, mind of vivid black near attainment, and mind of clear light. See Lati Rinbochay and Jeffrey Hopkins, *Death, Intermediate State, and Rebirth in Tibetan Buddhism* (London: Rider, 1979; reprint, Ithaca: Snow Lion, 1980), pp. 15–19 and 32–46.

35. *phyag rgya, mudrā*.

36. *nges cha*.

37. *snang cha*.

38. *sems tsam, cittamātra*.