

5. THE MANTRA OF CHENRAZEE (Avalokiteshvara)

facing p. 167

In *Ranju* or *Lantsa* Indian characters of about the seventh century A.D. *Lantsa* characters, slightly modified, are used in Tibetan manuscripts, commonly on title-pages. In Tibetan characters the sacred Mantra is ཨོཾ་མ་ཎི་པ་དྲེ་འོ་, which means literally: 'Om! The Jewel in the Lotus! Hūṃ!' (Cf. pp. 134², 149¹, 206.)

THE TIBETAN BOOK OF THE DEAD

PSYCHOLOGICAL COMMENTARY

By Dr. C. G. Jung⁽¹⁾Translated by R. F. C. Hull from *Das Tibetische Totenbuch*

Before embarking upon the psychological commentary, I should like to say a few words about the text itself. *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, or the *Bardo Thödol*, is a book of instructions for the dead and dying. Like *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*, it is meant to be a guide for the dead man during the period of his *Bardo* existence, symbolically described as an intermediate state of forty-nine days' duration between death and rebirth. The text

¹ To one of Dr. Jung's most successful disciples, Dr. James Kirsch, Analytical Psychologist, of Los Angeles, California, who has discussed this Psychological Commentary with Dr. Jung in Zürich and aided in its English translation, the Editor is indebted for the important prefatory admonition which follows, addressed to the Oriental reader:—

'This book addresses itself, primarily, to the Occidental reader, and attempts to describe important Oriental experiences and conceptions in Occidental terms. Dr. Jung seeks to facilitate this difficult undertaking by his Psychological Commentary. It is, therefore, unavoidable that, in so doing, he employs terms which are familiar to the Occidental mind but which are, in some instances, objectionable to the Oriental mind.

'One such objectionable term is "soul". According to Buddhist belief, the "soul" is ephemeral, is an illusion, and, therefore, has no real existence. The Germanic word "*Seele*", as employed in the original German version of this Psychological Commentary, is not synonymous with the English word "Soul", although commonly so translated. "*Seele*" is an ancient word, sanctioned by Germanic tradition and used, by outstanding German mystics like Eckhart and great German poets like Goethe, to signify the Ultimate Reality, symbolized in feminine, or *shakti*, aspect. Herein, Dr. Jung uses it poetically with reference to the "Psyche", as the Collective Psyche. In psychological language it represents the Collective Unconscious, as being the matrix of everything. It is the womb of everything, even of the *Dharma-Kāya*; it is the *Dharma-Kāya* itself.

'Accordingly, Oriental readers are invited to put aside, for the time being, their understanding of "soul" and to accept Dr. Jung's use of the word, in order to be able to follow him with an open mind into the depths where he seeks to build a bridge from the Shore of the Orient to the Shore of the Occident, and to tell of the various paths leading to the Great Liberation, the *Una Salus*.'

falls into three parts. The first part, called *Chikhai Bardo*, describes the psychic happenings at the moment of death. The second part, or *Chönyid Bardo*, deals with the dream-state which supervenes immediately after death, and with what are called 'karmic illusions'. The third part, or *Sidpa Bardo*, concerns the onset of the birth-instinct and of prenatal events. It is characteristic that supreme insight and illumination, and hence the greatest possibility of attaining liberation, are vouchsafed during the actual process of dying. Soon afterward, the 'illusions' begin which lead eventually to reincarnation, the illuminative lights growing ever fainter and more multifarious, and the visions more and more terrifying. This descent illustrates the estrangement of consciousness from the liberating truth as it approaches nearer and nearer to physical rebirth. The purpose of the instruction is to fix the attention of the dead man, at each successive stage of delusion and entanglement, on the ever-present possibility of liberation, and to explain to him the nature of his visions. The text of the *Bardo Thödol* is recited by the *lāma* in the presence of the corpse.

I do not think I could better discharge my debt of thanks to the two previous translators of the *Bardo Thödol*, the late *Lāma Kazi Dawa-Samdup* and *Dr. Evans-Wentz*, than by attempting, with the aid of a psychological commentary, to make the magnificent world of ideas and the problems contained in this treatise a little more intelligible to the Western mind. I am sure that all who read this book with open eyes, and who allow it to impress itself upon them without prejudice, will reap a rich reward.

The *Bardo Thödol*, fitly named by its editor, *Dr. W. Y. Evans-Wentz*, 'The Tibetan Book of the Dead', caused a considerable stir in English-speaking countries at the time of its first appearance in 1927. It belongs to that class of writings which are not only of interest to specialists in *Mahāyāna Buddhism*, but which also, because of their deep humanity and their still deeper insight into the secrets of the human psyche, make an especial appeal to the layman who is seeking to broaden his knowledge of life. For years, ever since it was first published, the *Bardo Thödol* has been my constant companion, and to it I owe not only many stimulating ideas and discoveries, but also many fundamental insights. Unlike *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*, which always prompts one

to say too much or too little, the *Bardo Thödol* offers one an intelligible philosophy addressed to human beings rather than to gods or primitive savages. Its philosophy contains the quintessence of Buddhist psychological criticism; and, as such, one can truly say that it is of an unexampled superiority. Not only the 'wrathful' but also the 'peaceful' deities are conceived as *sangsāric* projections of the human psyche, an idea that seems all too obvious to the enlightened European, because it reminds him of his own banal simplifications. But though the European can easily explain away these deities as projections, he would be quite incapable of positing them at the same time as real. The *Bardo Thödol* can do that, because, in certain of its most essential metaphysical premises, it has the enlightened as well as the unenlightened European at a disadvantage. The ever-present, unspoken assumption of the *Bardo Thödol* is the antinomial character of all metaphysical assertions, and also the idea of the qualitative difference of the various levels of consciousness and of the metaphysical realities conditioned by them. The background of this unusual book is not the niggardly European 'either-or', but a magnificently affirmative 'both-and'. This statement may appear objectionable to the Western philosopher, for the West loves clarity and unambiguity; consequently, one philosopher clings to the position, 'God is', while another clings equally fervently to the negation, 'God is not'. What would these hostile brethren make of an assertion like the following:

'Recognizing the voidness of thine own intellect to be Buddhahood, and knowing it at the same time to be thine own consciousness, thou shalt abide in the state of the divine mind of the Buddha.'

Such an assertion is, I fear, as unwelcome to our Western philosophy as it is to our theology. The *Bardo Thödol* is in the highest degree psychological in its outlook; but, with us, philosophy and theology are still in the mediaeval, pre-psychological stage where only the assertions are listened to, explained, defended, criticized and disputed, while the authority that makes them has, by general consent, been deposed as outside the scope of discussion.

Metaphysical assertions, however, are *statements of the psyche*, and are therefore psychological. To the Western mind, which compensates its well-known feelings of resentment by a slavish

regard for 'rational' explanations, this obvious truth seems all too obvious, or else it is seen as an inadmissible negation of metaphysical 'truth'. Whenever the Westerner hears the word 'psychological', it always sounds to him like 'only psychological'. For him the 'soul' is something pitifully small, unworthy, personal, subjective, and a lot more besides. He therefore prefers to use the word 'mind' instead, though he likes to pretend at the same time that a statement which may in fact be very subjective indeed is made by the 'mind', naturally by the 'Universal Mind', or even—at a pinch—by the 'Absolute' itself. This rather ridiculous presumption is probably a compensation for the regrettable smallness of the soul. It almost seems as if Anatole France had uttered a truth which were valid for the whole Western world when, in his *Penguin Island*, Cathérine d'Alexandrie offers this advice to God: '*Donnez leur une ame, mais une petite*'! ['Give them a soul, but a little one!']

It is the soul which, by the divine creative power inherent in it, makes the metaphysical assertion; it posits the distinctions between metaphysical entities. Not only is it the condition of all metaphysical reality, it is that reality.¹

With this great psychological truth the *Bardo Thödol* opens. The book is not a ceremonial of burial, but a set of instructions for the dead, a guide through the changing phenomena of the *Bardo* realm, that state of existence which continues for 49 days after death until the next incarnation. If we disregard for the moment the supra-temporality of the soul—which the East accepts as a self-evident fact—we, as readers of the *Bardo Thödol*, shall be able to put ourselves without difficulty in the position of the dead man, and shall consider attentively the teaching set forth in the opening section, which is outlined in the quotation above. At this point, the following words are spoken, not presumptuously, but in a courteous manner:—

'O nobly-born (so and so), listen. Now thou art experiencing the Radiance of the Clear Light of Pure Reality. Recognize it.

O nobly-born, thy present intellect, in real nature void, not

¹This paragraph makes apparent the interpretative importance of the annotation set forth above, page xxxv, concerning the difference in meaning of the term 'soul' of the English rendering and of the term 'Seele' of the original German; and, at this point, readers would benefit by re-reading the annotation.

formed into anything as regards characteristics or colour, naturally void, is the very Reality, the All-Good.

'Thine own intellect, which is now voidness, yet not to be regarded as of the voidness of nothingness, but as being the intellect itself, unobstruced, shining, thrilling, and blissful, is the very consciousness, the All-good Buddha.'

This realization is the *Dharma-Kāya* state of perfect enlightenment; or, as we should express it in our own language, the creative ground of all metaphysical assertion is consciousness, as the invisible, intangible manifestation of the soul. The 'Voidness' is the state transcendent over all assertion and all predication. The fulness of its discriminative manifestations still lies latent in the soul.

The text continues:—

'Thine own consciousness, shining, void, and inseparable from the Great Body of Radiance, hath no birth, nor death, and is the Immutable Light—Buddha Amitābha.'

The soul [or, as here, one's own consciousness] is assuredly not small, but the radiant Godhead itself. The West finds this statement either very dangerous, if not downright blasphemous, or else accepts it unthinkingly and then suffers from a theosophical inflation. Somehow we always have a wrong attitude to these things. But if we can master ourselves far enough to refrain from our chief error of always wanting to *do* something with things and put them to practical use, we may perhaps succeed in learning an important lesson from these teachings, or at least in appreciating the greatness of the *Bardo Thödol*, which vouchsafes to the dead man the ultimate and highest truth, that even the gods are the radiance and reflection of our own souls. No sun is thereby eclipsed for the Oriental as it would be for the Christian, who would feel robbed of his God; on the contrary, his soul is the light of the Godhead, and the Godhead is the soul. The East can sustain this paradox better than the unfortunate Angelus Silesius, who even today would be psychologically far in advance of his time.

It is highly sensible of the *Bardo Thödol* to make clear to the dead man the primacy of the soul, for that is the one thing which

life does not make clear to us. We are so hemmed in by things which jostle and oppress that we never get a chance, in the midst of all these 'given' things, to wonder by whom they are 'given'. It is from this world of 'given' things that the dead man liberates himself; and the purpose of the instruction is to help him towards this liberation. We, if we put ourselves in his place, shall derive no lesser reward from it, since we learn from the very first paragraphs that the 'giver' of all 'given' things dwells within us. This is a truth which in the face of all evidence, in the greatest things as in the smallest, is never known, although it is often so very necessary, indeed vital, for us to know it. Such knowledge, to be sure, is suitable only for contemplatives who are minded to understand the purpose of existence, for those who are Gnostics by temperament and therefore believe in a saviour who, like the saviour of the Mandaeans, calls himself 'gnosis of life' (*manda d'hajie*). Perhaps it is not granted to many of us to see the world as something 'given'. A great reversal of standpoint, calling for much sacrifice, is needed before we can see the world as 'given' by the very nature of the soul. It is so much more straight-forward, more dramatic, impressive, and therefore more convincing, to see that all the things happen to me than to observe how I make them happen. Indeed, the animal nature of man makes him resist seeing himself as the maker of his circumstances. That is why attempts of this kind were always the object of secret initiations, culminating as a rule in a figurative death which symbolized the total character of this reversal. And, in point of fact, the instruction given in the *Bardo Thödol* serves to recall to the dead man the experiences of his initiation and the teachings of his *guru*, for the instruction is, at bottom, nothing less than an initiation of the dead into the *Bardo* life, just as the initiation of the living was a preparation for the Beyond. Such was the case, at least, with all the mystery cults in ancient civilizations from the time of the Egyptian and Eleusinian mysteries. In the initiation of the living, however, this 'Beyond' is not a world beyond death, but a reversal of the mind's intentions and outlook, a psychological 'Beyond' or, in Christian terms, a 'redemption' from the trammels of the world and of sin. Redemption is a separation and deliverance from an earlier condition of darkness and unconsciousness, and leads to a condition

of illumination and releasedness, to victory and transcendence over everything 'given'.

Thus far the *Bardo Thödol* is, as Dr. Evans-Wentz also feels, an initiation process whose purpose it is to restore to the soul the divinity it lost at birth. Now it is a characteristic of Oriental religious literature that the teaching invariably begins with the most important item, with the ultimate and highest principles which, with us, would come last—as for instance in Apuleius, where Lucius is worshipped as Helios only right at the end. Accordingly, in the *Bardo Thödol*, the initiation is a series of diminishing climaxes ending with rebirth in the womb. The only 'initiation process' that is still alive and practised today in the West is the analysis of the unconscious as used by doctors for therapeutic purposes. This penetration into the ground-layers of consciousness is a kind of rational maieutics in the Socratic sense, a bringing forth of psychic contents that are still germinal, subliminal, and as yet unborn. Originally, this therapy took the form of Freudian psychoanalysis and was mainly concerned with sexual fantasies. This is the realm that corresponds to the last and lowest region of the *Bardo*, known as the *Sidpa Bardo*, where the dead man, unable to profit by the teachings of the *Chikhai* and *Chönyid Bardo*, begins to fall a prey to sexual fantasies and is attracted by the vision of mating couples. Eventually he is caught by a womb and born into the earthly world again. Meanwhile, as one might expect, the Oedipus complex starts functioning. If his *karma* destines him to be reborn as a man, he will fall in love with his mother-to-be and will find his father hateful and disgusting. Conversely, the future daughter will be highly attracted by her father-to-be and repelled by her mother. The European passes through this specifically Freudian domain when his unconscious contents are brought to light under analysis, but he goes in the reverse direction. He journeys back through the world of infantile-sexual fantasy to the womb. It has even been suggested in psychoanalytical circles that the trauma par excellence is the birth-experience itself—nay more, psychoanalysts even claim to have probed back to memories of intra-uterine origin. Here Western reason reaches its limit, unfortunately. I say 'unfortunately', because one rather wishes that Freudian psychoanalysis could have happily pursued these so-

called intra-uterine experiences still further back; had it succeeded in this bold undertaking, it would surely have come out beyond the *Sidpa Bardo* and penetrated from behind into the lower reaches of the *Chönyid Bardo*. It is true that with the equipment of our existing biological ideas such a venture would not have been crowned with success; it would have needed a wholly different kind of philosophical preparation from that based on current scientific assumptions. But, had the journey back been consistently pursued, it would undoubtedly have led to the postulate of a pre-uterine existence, a true *Bardo* life, if only it had been possible to find at least some trace of an experiencing subject. As it was, the psychoanalysts never got beyond purely conjectural traces of intra-uterine experiences, and even the famous 'birth trauma' has remained such an obvious truism that it can no longer explain anything, any more than can the hypothesis that life is a disease with a bad prognosis because its outcome is always fatal.

Freudian psychoanalysis, in all essential aspects, never went beyond the experiences of the *Sidpa Bardo*; that is, it was unable to extricate itself from sexual fantasies and similar 'incompatible' tendencies which cause anxiety and other affective states. Nevertheless, Freud's theory is the first attempt made by the West to investigate, as if from below, from the animal sphere of instinct, the psychic territory that corresponds in Tantric Lāmaism to the *Sidpa Bardo*. A very justifiable fear of metaphysics prevented Freud from penetrating into the sphere of the 'occult'. In addition to this, the *Sidpa* state, if we are to accept the psychology of the *Sidpa Bardo*, is characterized by the fierce wind of *karma*, which whirls the dead man along until he comes to the 'womb-door'. In other words, the *Sidpa* state permits of no going back, because it is sealed off against the *Chönyid* state by an intense striving downwards, towards the animal sphere of instinct and physical rebirth. That is to say, anyone who penetrates into the unconscious with purely biological assumptions will become stuck in the instinctual sphere and be unable to advance beyond it, for he will be pulled back again and again into physical existence. It is therefore not possible for Freudian theory to reach anything except an essentially negative valuation of the unconscious. It is a 'nothing

but'. At the same time, it must be admitted that this view of the psyche is typically Western, only it is expressed more blatantly, more plainly, and more ruthlessly than others would have dared to express it, though at bottom they think no differently. As to what 'mind' means in this connection, we can only cherish the hope that it will carry conviction. But, as even Max Scheler noted with regret, the power of this 'mind' is, to say the least of it, doubtful.

I think, then, we can state it as a fact that with the aid of psychoanalysis the rationalizing mind of the West has pushed forward into what one might call the neuroticism of the *Sidpa* state, and has there been brought to an inevitable standstill by the uncritical assumption that everything psychological is subjective and personal. Even so, this advance has been a great gain, inasmuch as it has enabled us to take one more step behind our conscious lives. This knowledge also gives us a hint of how we ought to read the *Bardo Thödol*—that is, backwards. If, with the help of our Western science, we have to some extent succeeded in understanding the psychological character of the *Sidpa Bardo*, our next task is to see if we can make anything of the preceding *Chönyid Bardo*.

The *Chönyid* state is one of *karmic* illusion—that is to say, illusions which result from the psychic residua of previous existences. According to the Eastern view, *karma* implies a sort of psychic theory of heredity based on the hypothesis of reincarnation, which in the last resort is an hypothesis of the supratemporality of the soul. Neither our scientific knowledge nor our reason can keep in step with this idea. There are too many if's and but's. Above all, we know desperately little about the possibilities of continued existence of the individual soul after death, so little that we cannot even conceive how anyone could prove anything at all in this respect. Moreover, we know only too well, on epistemological grounds, that such a proof would be just as impossible as the proof of God. Hence we may cautiously accept the idea of *karma* only if we understand it as *psychic heredity* in the very widest sense of the word. Psychic heredity does exist—that is to say, there is inheritance of psychic characteristics such as predisposition to disease, traits of character, special gifts, and so forth. It does no violence to the psychic

nature of these complex facts if natural science reduces them to what appear to be physical aspects (nuclear structures in cells, and so on). They are essential phenomena of life which express themselves, in the main, psychically, just as there are other inherited characteristics which express themselves, in the main, physiologically, on the physical level. Among these inherited psychic factors there is a special class which is not confined either to family or to race. These are the universal dispositions of the mind, and they are to be understood as analogous to Plato's forms (*eidola*), in accordance with which the mind organizes its contents. One could also describe these forms as *categories* analogous to the logical categories which are always and everywhere present as the basic postulates of reason. Only, in the case of our 'forms', we are not dealing with categories of reason but with categories of the *imagination*. As the products of imagination are always in essence visual, their forms must, from the outset, have the character of images and moreover of *typical* images, which is why, following St. Augustine, I call them 'archetypes'. Comparative religion and mythology are rich mines of archetypes, and so is the psychology of dreams and psychoses. The astonishing parallelism between these images and the ideas they serve to express has frequently given rise to the wildest migration theories, although it would have been far more natural to think of the remarkable similarity of the human psyche at all times and in all places. Archetypal fantasy-forms are, in fact, reproduced spontaneously anytime and anywhere, without there being any conceivable trace of direct transmission. The original structural components of the psyche are of no less surprising a uniformity than are those of the visible body. The archetypes are, so to speak, organs of the pre-rational psyche. They are eternally inherited forms and ideas which have at first no specific content. Their specific content only appears in the course of the individual's life, when personal experience is taken up in precisely these forms. If the archetypes were not pre-existent in identical form everywhere, how could one explain the fact, postulated at almost every turn by the *Bardo Thödol*, that the dead do not know that they are dead, and that this assertion is to be met with just as often in the dreary, half-baked literature of European and American Spiritualism? Although we find the same

assertion in Swedenborg, knowledge of his writings can hardly be sufficiently widespread for this little bit of information to have been picked up by every small-town 'medium'. And a connection between Swedenborg's and the *Bardo Thödol* is completely unthinkable. It is a primordial, universal idea that the dead simply continue their earthly existence and do not know that they are disembodied spirits—an archetypal idea which enters into immediate, visible manifestation whenever anyone sees a ghost. It is significant, too, that ghosts all over the world have certain features in common. I am naturally aware of the unverifiable spiritualistic hypothesis, though I have no wish to make it my own. I must content myself with the hypothesis of an omnipresent, but differentiated, psychic structure which is inherited and which necessarily gives a certain form and direction to all experience. For, just as the organs of the body are not mere lumps of indifferent, passive matter, but are dynamic, functional complexes which assert themselves with imperious urgency, so also the archetypes, as organs of the psyche, are dynamic, instinctual complexes which determine psychic life to an extraordinary degree. That is why I also call them *dominants* of the unconscious. The layer of unconscious psyche which is made up of these universal dynamic forms I have termed the *collective unconscious*.

So far as I know, there is no inheritance of individual prenatal, or pre-uterine, memories, but there are undoubtedly inherited archetypes which are, however, devoid of content, because, to begin with, they contain no personal experiences. They only emerge into consciousness when personal experiences have rendered them visible. As we have seen, *Sidpa* psychology consists in wanting to live and to be born. (The *Sidpa Bardo* is the 'Bardo of Seeking Rebirth'.) Such a state, therefore, precludes any experience of transsubjective psychic realities, unless the individual refuses categorically to be born back again into the world of consciousness. According to the teachings of the *Bardo Thödol*, it is still possible for him, in each of the *Bardo* states, to reach the *Dharma-Kāya* by transcending the four-faced Mountain Meru, provided that he does not yield to his desire to follow the 'dim lights'. This is as much as to say that the dead man must desperately resist the dictates of reason, as we understand it,

and give up the supremacy of egohood, regarded by reason as sacrosanct. What this means in practice is complete capitulation to the objective powers of the psyche, with all that this entails; a kind of symbolical death, corresponding to the Judgement of the Dead in the *Sidpa Bardo*. It means the end of all conscious, rational, morally responsible conduct of life, and a voluntary surrender to what the *Bardo Thödol* calls 'karmic illusion'. Karmic illusion springs from belief in a visionary world of an extremely irrational nature, which neither accords with nor derives from our rational judgements but is the exclusive product of uninhibited imagination. It is sheer dream or 'fantasy', and every well-meaning person will instantly caution us against it; nor indeed can one see at first sight what is the difference between fantasies of this kind and the phantasmagoria of a lunatic. Very often only a slight *abaissement du niveau mental* is needed to unleash this world of illusion. The terror and darkness of this moment has its equivalent in the experiences described in the opening sections of the *Sidpa Bardo*. But the contents of this *Bardo* also reveal the archetypes, the karmic images which appear first in their terrifying form. The *Chönyid* state is equivalent to a deliberately induced psychosis.

One often hears and reads about the dangers of *yoga*, particularly of the ill-reputed *Kundalinī yoga*. The deliberately induced psychotic state, which in certain unstable individuals might easily lead to a real psychosis, is a danger that needs to be taken very seriously indeed. These things really are dangerous and ought not to be meddled with in our typically Western way. It is a meddling with fate, which strikes at the very roots of human existence and can let loose a flood of sufferings of which no sane person ever dreamed. These sufferings correspond to the hellish torments of the *Chönyid* state, described in the text as follows:—

'Then the Lord of Death will place round thy neck a rope and drag thee along; he will cut off thy head, tear out thy heart, pull out thy intestines, lick up thy brain, drink thy blood, eat thy flesh, and gnaw thy bones; but thou wilt be incapable of dying. Even when thy body is hacked to pieces, it will revive again. The repeated hacking will cause intense pain and torture.'

These tortures aptly describe the real nature of the danger: it is a disintegration of the wholeness of the *Bardo* body, which is a kind of 'subtle body' constituting the visible envelope of the psychic self in the after-death state. The psychological equivalent of this dismemberment is psychic dissociation. In its deleterious form it would be schizophrenia (split mind). This most common of all mental illnesses consists essentially in a marked *abaissement du niveau mental* which abolishes the normal checks imposed by the conscious mind and thus gives unlimited scope to the play of the unconscious 'dominants'.

The transition, then, from the *Sidpa* state to the *Chönyid* state is a dangerous reversal of the aims and intentions of the conscious mind. It is a sacrifice of the ego's stability and a surrender to the extreme uncertainty of what must seem like a chaotic riot of phantasmal forms. When Freud coined the phrase that the ego was 'the true seat of anxiety', he was giving voice to a very true and profound intuition. Fear of self-sacrifice lurks deep in every ego, and this fear is often only the precariously controlled demand of the unconscious forces to burst out in full strength. No one who strives for selfhood (individuation) is spared this dangerous passage, for that which is feared also belongs to the wholeness of the self—the sub-human, or supra-human, world of psychic 'dominants' from which the ego originally emancipated itself with enormous effort, and then only partially, for the sake of a more or less illusory freedom. This liberation is certainly a very necessary and very heroic undertaking, but it represents nothing final: it is merely the creation of a *subject*, who, in order to find fulfilment, has still to be confronted by an *object*. This, at first sight, would appear to be the world, which is swelled out with projections for that very purpose. Here we seek and find our difficulties, here we seek and find our enemy, here we seek and find what is dear and precious to us; and it is comforting to know that all evil and all good is to be found out there, in the visible object, where it can be conquered, punished, destroyed or enjoyed. But nature herself does not allow this paradisaical state of innocence to continue for ever. There are, and always have been, those who cannot help but see that the world and its experiences are in the nature of a symbol, and that it really reflects something that lies hidden in the subject himself, in his own transjective

reality. It is from this profound intuition, according to *lāmaist* doctrine, that the *Chōnyid* state derives its true meaning, which is why the *Chōnyid Bardo* is entitled 'The Bardo of the Experiencing of Reality'.

The reality experienced in the *Chōnyid* state is, as the last section of the corresponding *Bardo* teaches, the reality of thought. The 'thought-forms' appear as realities, fantasy takes on real form, and the terrifying dream evoked by *karma* and played out by the unconscious 'dominants' begins. The first to appear (if we read the text backwards) is the all-destroying God of Death, the epitome of all terrors; he is followed by the 28 'power-holding' and sinister goddesses and the 58 'blood-drinking' goddesses. In spite of their daemonic aspect, which appears as a confusing chaos of terrifying attributes and monstrosities, a certain order is already discernible. We find that there are companies of gods and goddesses who are arranged according to the four directions and are distinguished by typical mystic colours. It gradually becomes clearer that all these deities are organized into *mandalas*, or circles, containing a cross of the four colours. The colours are co-ordinated with the four aspects of wisdom:

- (1) White=the light-path of the mirror-like wisdom;
- (2) Yellow=the light-path of the wisdom of equality;
- (3) Red=the light-path of the discriminative wisdom;
- (4) Green=the light-path of the all-performing wisdom.

On a higher level of insight, the dead man knows that the real thought-forms all emanate from himself, and that the four light-paths of wisdom which appear before him are the radiations of his own psychic faculties. This takes us straight to the psychology of the *lāmaistic mandala*, which I have already discussed in the book I brought out with the late Richard Wilhelm, *The Secret of the Golden Flower*.

Continuing our ascent backwards through the region of the *Chōnyid Bardo*, we come finally to the vision of the Four Great Ones: the green Amogha-Siddhi, the red Amitābha, the yellow Ratna-Sambhava, and the white Vajra-Sattva. The ascent ends with the effulgent blue light of the *Dharma-Dhātu*, the Buddha-body, which glows in the midst of the *mandala* from the heart of Vairochana.

With this final vision the *karmic* illusions cease; consciousness,

weaned away from all form and from all attachment to objects, returns to the timeless, inchoate state of the *Dharma-Kāya*. Thus (reading backwards) the *Chikhai* state, which appeared at the moment of death, is reached.

I think these few hints will suffice to give the attentive reader some idea of the psychology of the *Bardo Thödol*. The book describes a way of initiation in reverse, which, unlike the eschatological expectations of Christianity, prepares the soul for a descent into physical being. The thoroughly intellectualistic and rationalistic worldly-mindedness of the European makes it advisable for us to reverse the sequence of the *Bardo Thödol* and to regard it as an account of Eastern initiation experiences, though one is perfectly free, if one chooses, to substitute Christian symbols for the gods of the *Chōnyid Bardo*. At any rate, the sequence of events as I have described it offers a close parallel to the phenomenology of the European unconscious when it is undergoing an 'initiation process', that is to say, when it is being analyzed. The transformation of the unconscious that occurs under analysis makes it the natural analogue of the religious initiation ceremonies, which do, however, differ in principle from the natural process in that they forestall the natural course of development and substitute for the spontaneous production of symbols a deliberately selected set of symbols prescribed by tradition. We can see this in the *Exercitia* of Ignatius Loyola, or in the *yoga* meditations of the Buddhists and Tantrists.

The reversal of the order of the chapters, which I have suggested here as an aid to understanding, in no way accords with the original intention of the *Bardo Thödol*. Nor is the psychological use we make of it anything but a secondary intention, though one that is possibly sanctioned by *lāmaist* custom. The real purpose of this singular book is the attempt, which must seem very strange to the educated European of the twentieth century, to enlighten the dead on their journey through the regions of the *Bardo*. The Catholic Church is the only place in the world of the white man where any provision is made for the souls of the departed. Inside the Protestant camp, with its world-affirming optimism, we only find a few mediumistic 'rescue circles', whose main concern is to make the dead aware of the fact that they are dead. But, generally speaking, we

have nothing in the West that is in any way comparable to the *Bardo Thödol*, except for certain secret writings which are inaccessible to the wider public and to the ordinary scientist. According to tradition, the *Bardo Thödol*, too, seems to have been included among the 'hidden' books, as Dr. Evans-Wentz makes clear in his Introduction. As such, it forms a special chapter in the magical 'cure of the soul' which extends even beyond death. This cult of the dead is rationally based on the belief in the supratemporality of the soul, but its irrational basis is to be found in the psychological need of the living to do something for the departed. This is an elementary need which forces itself upon even the most 'enlightened' individuals when faced by the death of relatives and friends. That is why, enlightenment or no enlightenment, we still have all manner of ceremonies for the dead. If Lenin had to submit to being embalmed and put on show in a sumptuous mausoleum like an Egyptian pharaoh, we may be quite sure it was not because his followers believed in the resurrection of the body. Apart, however, from the Masses said for the soul in the Catholic Church, the provisions we make for the dead are rudimentary and on the lowest level, not because we cannot convince ourselves of the soul's immortality, but because we have rationalized the above-mentioned psychological need out of existence. We behave as if we did not have this need, and because we cannot believe in a life after death we prefer to do nothing about it. Simpler-minded people follow their own feelings, and, as in Italy, build themselves funeral monuments of gruesome beauty. The Catholic Masses for the soul are on a level considerably above this, because they are expressly intended for the psychic welfare of the deceased and are not a mere gratification of lachrymose sentiments. But the highest application of spiritual effort on behalf of the departed is surely to be found in the instructions of the *Bardo Thödol*. They are so detailed and thoroughly adapted to the apparent changes in the dead man's condition that every serious-minded reader must ask himself whether these wise old *lāmas* might not, after all, have caught a glimpse of the fourth dimension and twitched the veil from the greatest of life's secrets.

If the truth is always doomed to be a disappointment, one almost feels tempted to concede at least that much reality to the

vision of life in the *Bardo*. At any rate, it is unexpectedly original, if nothing else, to find the after-death state, of which our religious imagination has formed the most grandiose conceptions, painted in lurid colours as a terrifying dream-state of a progressively degenerative character. The supreme vision comes not at the end of the *Bardo*, but right at the beginning, in the moment of death; what happens afterward is an ever-deepening descent into illusion and obscurity, down to the ultimate degradation of new physical birth. The spiritual climax is reached at the moment when life ends. Human life, therefore, is the vehicle of the highest perfection it is possible to attain; it alone generates the *karma* that makes it possible for the dead man to abide in the perpetual light of the Voidness without clinging to any object, and thus to rest on the hub of the wheel of rebirth, freed from all illusion of genesis and decay. Life in the *Bardo* brings no eternal rewards or punishments, but merely a descent into a new life which shall bear the individual nearer to his final goal. But this eschatological goal is what he himself brings to birth as the last and highest fruit of the labours and aspirations of earthly existence. This view is not only lofty, it is manly and heroic.

The degenerative character of *Bardo* life is corroborated by the spiritualistic literature of the West, which again and again gives one a sickening impression of the utter inanity and banality of communications from the 'spirit world'. The scientific mind does not hesitate to explain these reports as emanations from the unconscious of the 'mediums' and of those taking part in the séance, and even to extend this explanation to the description of the Hereafter given in *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*. And it is an undeniable fact that the whole book is created out of the archetypal contents of the unconscious. Behind these there lie—and in this our Western reason is quite right—no physical or metaphysical realities, but 'merely' the reality of psychic facts, the data of psychic experience. Now whether a thing is 'given' subjectively or objectively, the fact remains that it is. The *Bardo Thödol* says no more than this, for its five Dhyāni Buddhas are themselves no more than psychic data. That is just what the dead man has to recognize, if it has not already become clear to him during life that his own psychic self and the giver of all data are one and the same. The world of gods and spirits is truly

'nothing but' the collective unconscious inside me. To turn this sentence round so that it reads: The collective unconscious is the world of gods and spirits outside me, no intellectual acrobatics are needed, but a whole human lifetime, perhaps even many lifetimes of increasing *completeness*. Notice that I do not say 'of increasing perfection', because those who are 'perfect' make another kind of discovery altogether.

* * *

The *Bardo Thödol* began by being a 'closed' book, and so it has remained, no matter what kind of commentaries may be written upon it. For it is a book that will only open itself to spiritual understanding, and this is a capacity which no man is born with, but which he can only acquire through special training and special experience. It is good that such to all intents and purposes 'useless' books exist. They are meant for those 'queer folk' who no longer set much store by the uses, aims, and meaning of present-day 'civilisation'.

INTRODUCTORY FOREWORD

By Lāma Anagarika Govinda

It may be argued that nobody can talk about death with authority who has not died; and since nobody, apparently, has ever returned from death, how can anybody know what death is, or what happens after it?

The Tibetan will answer: 'There is not *one* person, indeed, not *one* living being, that has *not* returned from death. In fact, we all have died many deaths, before we came into this incarnation. And what we call birth is merely the reverse side of death, like one of the two sides of a coin, or like a door which we call "entrance" from outside and "exit" from inside a room.'

It is much more astonishing that not everybody remembers his or her previous death; and, because of this lack of remembering, most persons do not believe there was a previous death. But, likewise, they do not remember their recent birth—and yet they do not doubt that they were recently born. They forget that active memory is only a small part of our normal consciousness, and that our subconscious memory registers and preserves every past impression and experience which our waking mind fails to recall.

There are those who, in virtue of concentration and other *yogic* practices, are able to bring the subconscious into the realm of discriminative consciousness and, thereby, to draw upon the unrestricted treasury of subconscious memory, wherein are stored the records not only of our past lives but the records of the past of our race, the past of humanity, and of all pre-human forms of life, if not of the very consciousness that makes life possible in this universe.

If, through some trick of nature, the gates of an individual's subconsciousness were suddenly to spring open, the unprepared mind would be overwhelmed and crushed. Therefore, the gates of the subconscious are guarded, by all initiates, and hidden behind the veil of mysteries and symbols.

For this reason, the *Bardo Thödol*, the Tibetan book vouch-

Such an attitude is not only the hall-mark of spiritual understanding and true scholarship, but it makes even the reader feel that he is treading on sacred ground. This explains the deep impression which *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, as well as the other complementary volumes of the Oxford Tibetan Series, have made upon thoughtful readers all over the world. The outstanding success of these works was due to their convincing sincerity and seriousness of purpose. Indeed, the world owes a great debt of gratitude to these two devoted scholars. 'Sabbadānam dhammadānam jināti': 'The best of all gifts is the gift of Truth.'¹

THE BUDDHA'S REMEMBERING

'In recollection all former births passed before His eyes. Born in such a place, of such a name, and downwards to His present birth, so through hundreds, thousands, myriads, all His births and deaths He knew.'

Ashvaghosha's *Life of the Buddha*
(Samuel Beal's Translation).

¹Cf. *Dhammapāda*, xxiv, 21.

FOREWORD

BY SIR JOHN WOODROFFE

THE SCIENCE OF DEATH¹

'Strive after the Good before thou art in danger, before pain masters thee and thy mind loses its keenness.'—*Kulārnava Tantra*, I. 27.

THE thought of death suggests two questions. The first is: 'How may one avoid death, except when death is desired as in "Death-at-will" (*Ichchhāmṛityu*)?' The avoidance of death is the aim when *Hathayoga* is used to prolong present life in the flesh. This is not, in the Western sense, a 'yea-saying' to 'life', but, for the time being, to a particular form of life. Dr. Evans-Wentz tells us that according to popular Tibetan belief no death is natural. This is the notion of most, if not of all, primitive peoples. Moreover, physiology also questions whether there is any 'natural death', in the sense of death through mere age without lesion or malady. This Text, however, in the language of the renouncer of fleshly life the world over, tells the nobly-born that Death comes to all, that human kind are not to cling to life on earth with its ceaseless wandering in the Worlds of birth and death (*Saṃsāra*). Rather should they implore the aid of the Divine Mother for a safe passing through the fearful state following the body's dissolution, and that they may at length attain all-perfect Buddhahood.

The second question then is: 'How to accept Death and die?' It is with this that we are now concerned. Here the technique of dying makes Death the entrance to good future lives, at first out of, and then again in, the flesh, unless and until liberation (*Nirvāṇa*) from the wandering (*Saṃsāra*) is attained.

¹ As to the title of this Foreword, 'The Science of Death', see *Thanatology*, by Dr. Roswell Parks, in *The Journal of the American Medical Association* April 27, 1912.

This Book, which is of extraordinary interest, both as regards Text and Introduction, deals with the period (longer or shorter according to the circumstances) which, commencing immediately after death, ends with 'rebirth'. In the Buddhists' view, Life consists of a series of successive states of consciousness. The first state is the Birth-Consciousness; the last is the consciousness existing at the moment of death, or the Death-Consciousness. The interval between the two states of Consciousness, during which the transformation from the 'old' to a 'new' being is effected, is called the *Bardo* or intermediate state (*Antarābhāva*), divided into three stages, called the *Chikhai*, *Chönyid*, and *Sidpa Bardo* respectively.

This Manual, common in various versions throughout Tibet, is one of a class amongst which Dr. Evans-Wentz includes the Egyptian Book of the Dead, a guide for the use of the *Ka* or so-called 'Double', the *De Arte Moriendi* and other similar medieval treatises on the craft of dying, to which may be added the Orphic Manual called *The Descent into Hades* (cf. 'He descended into Hell') and other like guide-books for the use of the dead, the *Pretakhanda* of the Hindu *Garuda Purāna*, Swedenborg's *De Coelo et de Inferno*, Rusca's *De Inferno*, and several other eschatological works both ancient and modern. Thus, the *Garuda Purāna* deals with the rites used over the dying, the death-moment, the funeral ceremonies, the building up, by means of the *Pretashrāddha* rite, of a new body for the *Preta* or deceased in lieu of that destroyed by fire, the Judgement, and thereafter (ch. V) the various states through which the deceased passes until he is reborn again on earth.

Both the original text and Dr. Evans-Wentz's Introduction form a very valuable contribution to the Science of Death from the standpoint of the Tibetan Mahāyāna Buddhism of the so-called 'Tantrik' type. The book is welcome not merely in virtue of its particular subject-matter, but because the ritual works of any religion enable us more fully to comprehend the philosophy and psychology of the system to which they belong.

The Text has three characteristics. It is, firstly, a work on

the Art of Dying; for Death, as well as Life, is an Art, though both are often enough muddled through. There is a Bengali saying, 'Of what use are *Japa* and *Tapas* (two forms of devotion) if one knoweth not how to die?' Secondly, it is a manual of religious therapeutic for the last moments, and a psychurgy exorcising, instructing, consoling, and fortifying by the rites of the dying, him who is about to pass on to another life. Thirdly, it describes the experiences of the deceased during the intermediate period, and instructs him in regard thereto. It is thus also a Traveller's Guide to Other Worlds.

The doctrine of 'Reincarnation' on the one hand and of 'Resurrection' on the other is the chief difference between the four leading Religions—Brahmanism, Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam. Christianity, in its orthodox form, rejects the most ancient and widespread belief of the *Kúklos geneseōn*, or *Sangsāra*, or 'Reincarnation', and admits one universe only—this, the first and last—and two lives, one here in the natural body and one hereafter in the body of Resurrection.

It has been succinctly said that as Metempsychosis makes the same soul, so Resurrection makes the same body serve for more than one Life. But the latter doctrine limits man's lives to two in number, of which the first or present determines for ever the character of the second or future.

Brahmanism and Buddhism would accept the doctrine that 'as a tree falls so shall it lie', but they deny that it so lies for ever. To the adherents of these two kindred beliefs this present universe is not the first and last. It is but one of an infinite series, without absolute beginning or end, though each universe of the series appears and disappears. They also teach a series of successive existences therein until morality, devotion, and knowledge produce that high form of detachment which is the cause of Liberation from the cycle of birth and death called 'The Wandering' (or *Sangsāra*). Freedom is the attainment of the Supreme State called the Void, *Nirvāṇa*, and by other names. They deny that there is only one universe, with one life for each of its human units, and then a division of men for all eternity into those who are saved in Heaven or are in Limbo and those who are lost in

Hell. Whilst they agree in holding that there is a suitable body for enjoyment or suffering in Heaven and Hell, it is not a resurrected body, for the fleshly body on death is dissolved for ever.

The need of some body always exists, except for the non-dualist who believes in a bodiless (*Videha*) Liberation (*Mukti*); and each of the four religions affirms that there is a subtle and death-surviving element—vital and psychical—in the physical body of flesh and blood, whether it be a permanent entity or Self, such as the Brahmanic *Ātmā*, the Moslem *Ruh*, and the Christian 'Soul', or whether it be only a complex of activities (or *Skandha*), psychical and physical, with life as their function—a complex in continual change, and, therefore, a series of physical and psychical momentary states, successively generated the one from the other, a continuous transformation, as the Buddhists are said to hold. Thus to none of these Faiths is death an absolute ending, but to all it is only the separation of the *Psyche* from the gross body. The former then enters on a new life, whilst the latter, having lost its principle of animation, decays. As Dr. Evans-Wentz so concisely says, Death disincarnates the 'soul-complex', as Birth incarnates it. In other words, Death is itself only an initiation into another form of life than that of which it is the ending.

On the subject of the physical aspect of Death, the attention of the reader is drawn to the remarkable analysis here given of symptoms which precede it. These are stated because it is necessary for the dying man and his helpers to be prepared for the final and decisive moment when it comes.¹ Noteworthy, too, is the description of sounds heard as (to use Dr. Evans-Wentz's language) 'the psychic resultants of the disintegrating process called death'. They call to mind the humming, rolling, and crackling noises heard before and up to fifteen hours after death, which, recognized by Greunwaldi in 1618 and referred to by later writers, were in 1862 made the subject of special study by Dr. Collingues.

¹ Cf. *Tantrarāja*, ch. xxvii, vv. 83-100, dealing with signs of approaching death, *Tantrik Texts*, edited by Arthur Avalon, vol. xii.

But it is said that the chain of conscious states is not always broken by death, since there is *Phowa*, or power to project consciousness and enter the body of another.¹ Indian occultism speaks of the same power of leaving one's body (*Svechchhotkrānti*), which, according to the *Tantrarāja* (ch. xxvii, vv. 45-7, 72-80), is accomplished through the operation (*Vāyudhāraṇa*) of the vital activity (or *Vāyu*) in thirty-eight points, or junctions (*Marma*), of the body. How, it may be asked, does this practice work in with the general doctrine or 'reincarnation'? We should have been glad if Dr. Evans-Wentz had elucidated this point. On principle, it would seem that in the case of entry into an unborn body such entry may be made into the *Matrix* in the same way as if it had occurred after a break of consciousness in death. But in the case of entry into beings already born the operation of the power or *Siddhi* would appear to be by the way of possession (*Āvesha*) by one consciousness of the consciousness and body of another, differing from the more ordinary case by the fact that the possessing consciousness does not return to its body, which *ex hypothesi* is about to die when the consciousness leaves it.

If transference of consciousness is effected, there is, of course, no *Bardo*, which involves the break of consciousness by death. Otherwise, the Text is read.

Then, as the breathing is about to cease, instruction is given and the arteries are pressed. This is done to keep the dying person conscious with a consciousness rightly directed. For the nature of the Death-consciousness determines the future state of the 'soul-complex', existence being the continuous transformation of one conscious state into another. Both in Catholic and Hindu ritual for the dying there is constant prayer and repetition of the sacred names.

The pressing of the arteries regulates the path to be taken by the outgoing vital current (*Prāṇa*). The proper path is that which passes through the *Brāhmarandhra*, or Foramen of Monro. This notion appears to have been widely held (to quote an instance) even in so remote and primitive a spot as San Cristoval in the Solomon Islands (see *Threshold of the*

¹ Cf. *Tantrik Texts*, vol. vii, p. 23, the Buddhist *Śrīchakra-sambhāra Tantra*.

Pacific, by C. E. Fox). The function of a holed-stone in a Dolmen found there (reminiscent of the Dolmen *à dalle percée* common in the Marne district of Western Europe, in South Russia, and in Southern India) is 'to allow the free passage to its natural seat, the head, of the dead man's *adaro*, or "double"'.¹

According to Hindu belief (see *Pretakhanda* of *Garuda Purāna*) there are nine apertures of the body which are the means of experience, and which, in the divine aspect, are the Lords (*Nātha*) or *Gurus*.² A good exit is one which is above the navel. Of such exits the best is through the fissure on the top of the cranium called *Brāhmarandhra*. This is above the physical *cerebrum* and the *Yoga* centre called 'Lotus of the Thousand Petals' (*Sahasrāra Padma*), wherein Spirit is most manifest, since it is the seat of Consciousness. Because of this, the orthodox Hindu wears a crest-lock (*Shikhā*) at this spot; not, as some have absurdly supposed, so that he may thereby be gripped and taken to Heaven or Hell, but because the *Shikhā* is, as it were, a flag and its staff, raised before and in honour of the abode of the Supreme Lord, Who is Pure Consciousness itself. (The fancy-picture in a recent work by C. Lancelin, *La Vie posthume*, p. 96, does not show the aperture of exit, which is given in Plate 8 of the second edition of Arthur Avalon's *Serpent Power*, p. 93.)

Whatever be the ground for the belief and practice of primitive peoples, according to *Yoga* doctrine, the head is the chief centre of consciousness, regulating other subordinate centres in the spinal column. By withdrawal of the vital current through the central or *Sushumnā* 'nerve' (*nāḍī*), the lower parts of the body are devitalized, and there is vivid concentrated functioning at the cerebral centre.

Exotericism speaks of the 'Book of Judgement'. This is an objective symbol of the 'Book' of Memory. The 'reading' of that 'Book' is the recalling to mind by the dying man of the whole of his past life on earth before he passes from it.³

¹ Cf. A. Avalon's *Tantrik Texts*, vol. viii, p. 2.

² That such a review of earth-life is experienced by the dying has been frequently attested by persons who had begun to die, as, for example, in drowning, and then been resuscitated.—W. Y. E-W.

The vital current at length escapes from the place where it last functioned. In *Yoga*, thought and breathing being inter-dependent, exit through the *Brāhmarandhra* connotes previous activity at the highest centre. Before such exit, and whilst self-consciousness lasts, the mental contents are supplied by the ritual, which is so designed as to secure a good death, and, therefore (later on), birth-consciousness.

At the moment of death the empiric consciousness, or consciousness of objects, is lost. There is what is popularly called a 'swoon', which is, however, the corollary of super-consciousness itself, or the Clear Light of the Void; for the swoon is, in, and of, the Consciousness as knower of objects (*Vijñāna Skandha*). This empiric consciousness disappears, unveiling Pure Consciousness, which is ever ready to be 'discovered' by those who have the will to seek and the power to find It.

That clear, colourless Light is a sense-symbol of the formless Void, 'beyond the Light of Sun, Moon, and Fire', to use the words of the Indian *Gītā*. It is clear and colourless, but *māyik* (or 'form') bodies are coloured in various ways. For colour implies and denotes form. The Formless is colourless. The use of psycho-physical chromatism is common to the Hindu and Buddhist *Tantras*, and may be found in some Islamic mystical systems also.

What then is this Void? It is not absolutely 'nothingness'. It is the Alogical, to which no categories drawn from the world of name and form apply. But whatever may have been held by the Mādhyamika Buddha, a Vedāntist would say that 'Being', or 'Is-ness', is applicable even in the case of the Void, which is experienced as 'is' (*asti*). The Void is thus, in this view, the negation of all determinations, but not of 'Is-ness' as such, as has been supposed in accounts given of Buddhist 'Nihilism'; but it is nothing known to finite experience in form, and, therefore, for those who have had no other experience, it is no-thing.

A description of Buddhist *Mahāyāna* teaching which is at once more succinct and clear than, to my knowledge, any other, is given in the Tibetan work, *The Path of Good Wishes of Samanta Bhadra*, which I have published in the seventh

volume of *Tantrik Texts* (p. xxi *et seq.*) and here summarize and explain.

All is either *Saṃsāra* or *Nirvāṇa*. The first is finite experience in the 'Six Worlds' or *Loka*—a word which means 'that which is experienced' (*Lokyaṇte*). The second, or *Nirvāṇa*, is, negatively speaking, release from such experience, that is from the worlds of Birth and Death and their pains. The Void cannot even be strictly called *Nirvāṇa*, for this is a term relative to the world, and the Void is beyond all relations. Positively, and concomitantly with such release, it is the Perfect Experience which is Buddhahood, which, again, from the cognitive aspect, is Consciousness unobscured by the darkness of Unconsciousness, that is to say, Consciousness freed of all limitation. From the emotional aspect, it is pure Bliss unaffected by sorrow; and from the volitional aspect, it is freedom of action and almighty power (*Amogha-Siddhi*). Perfect Experience is an eternal or, more strictly speaking, a timeless state. Imperfect Experience is also eternal in the sense that the series of universes in which it is undergone is infinite. The religious, that is practical, problem is then how from the lesser experience to pass into that which is complete, called by the *Upanishads* 'the Whole' or *Pūrṇa*. This is done by the removal of obscurations. At base, the two are one—the Void, uncreated, independent, uncompounded, and beyond mind and speech. If this were not so, Liberation would not be possible. Man is in fact liberated, but does not know it. When he realizes it, he is freed. The great saying of the Buddhist work the *Prajñā-Pāramitā* runs thus: 'Form (*Rūpa*) is the Void and the Void is Form.'¹ Realization of the Void is to be a Buddha, or 'Knower', and not to realize it is to be an 'ignorant being' in the *Saṃsāra*. The two paths, then, are Knowledge and Ignorance. The first path leads to—and, as actual realization, is—*Nirvāṇa*. The second means continuance of fleshly life as man or brute, or as a denizen of the other four *Lokas*. Ignorance in the individual is in its cosmic aspect *Māyā*, which in Tibetan (*sGyuma*) means a magical show. In its most generic form,

¹ See *Tantrik Texts*, vol. vii, p. 33.

the former is that which produces the pragmatic, but, in a transcendental sense, the 'unreal' notion of self and otherness. This is the root cause of error (whether in knowing, feeling, or action) which becomes manifest as the 'Six Poisons' (which Hindus call the 'Six Enemies') of the Six *Lokas* of *Saṃsāra* (of which the Text gives five only)—pride, jealousy, sloth (or ignorance), anger, greed, and lust. The Text constantly urges upon the dying or 'dead' man to recognize in the apparitions, which he is about to see or sees, the creatures of his own *māyā*-governed mind, veiling from him the Clear Light of the Void. If he does so, he is liberated at any stage.

This philosophical scheme has so obvious a resemblance to the Indian *Māyāvāda Vedānta* that the Vaishnava *Padma Purāṇa* dubs that system 'a bad scripture and covert Buddhism' (*māyāvādam asachchāstram prachchhannam bauddham*). Nevertheless, its great scholastic, 'the incomparable Shāṅkarācāryya', as Sir William Jones calls him, combated the Buddhists in their denial of a permanent Self (*Ātmā*), as also their subjectivism, at the same time holding that the notion of an individual self and that of a world of objects were pragmatic truths only, superseded by and on the attainment of a state of Liberation which has little, if anything, to distinguish it from the Buddhist Void. The difference between the two systems, though real, is less than is generally supposed. This is a matter, however, which it would be out of place to discuss further here.

However this may be, the after-death apparitions are 'real' enough for the deceased who does not, as and when they appear, recognize their unsubstantiality and cleave his way through them to the Void. The Clear Light is spoken of in the *Bardo Thödol* as such a Dazzlement as is produced by an infinitely vibrant landscape in the springtide. This joyous picture is not, of course, a statement of what It is in itself, for It is not an object, but is a translation in terms of objective vision of a great, but, in itself, indescribable joyful inner experience. My attention was drawn, in this connexion, to a passage in a paper on the *Avatamsaka Sūtra* (ch. xv), by Mr. Hsu, a Chinese scholar, which says, 'The

Bodhisattva emits the light called "Seeing the Buddha" in order to make the dying think about the Tathāgata and so enable them to go to the pure realms of the latter after death'.

The dying or deceased man is adjured to recognize the Clear Light and thus liberate himself. If he does so, it is because he is himself ripe for the liberated state which is thus presented to him. If he does not (as is commonly the case), it is because the pull of worldly tendency (*Saṃskāra*) draws him away. He is then presented with the secondary Clear Light, which is the first, somewhat dimmed to him by the general *Māyā*. If the mind does not find its resting-place here, the first or *Chikhai Bardo*, which may last for several days, or 'for the time that it takes to snap a finger' (according to the state of the deceased), comes to an end.

In the next stage (*Chönyid Bardo*) there is a recovery of the Death-Consciousness of objects. In one sense, that is compared with a swoon, it is a reawakening. But it is not a waking-state such as existed before death. The 'soul-complex' emerges from its experience of the Void into a state like that of dream. This continues until it attains a new fleshly body and thus really awakes to earth-life again. For this world-experience is life in such a body.

When I first read the account of the fifteen days following recovery from the 'swoon', I thought it was meant to be a scheme of gradual arising of limited consciousness, analogous to that described in the thirty-six *Tattvas* by the Northern *Śaivāgama* and its *Tantras*, a process which is given in its ritual form in the Tantrik *Bhūtaśuddhi* rite and in *Laya* or *Kuṇḍalinī Yoga*. But on closer examination I found that this was not so. After the ending of the first *Bardo* the scheme commences with the complete recovery, without intermediate stages, of the Death-Consciousness. The psychic life is taken up and continued from that point, that is from the stage immediately prior to the 'swoon'.¹ Life immediately after death is, according to this view, as Spiritists assert, similar to, and a continuation of, the life preceding it.

¹ Cf. *Yogavāṣiṣṭha*, CLX, v. 41.

As in Swedenborg's account, and in the recent play *Outward Bound*, the deceased does not at first know that he is 'dead'. Swedenborg, who also speaks of an intermediate state, says that, except for those immediately translated to Heaven or Hell, the first state of man after death is like his state in the world, so that he knows no other, believing that he is still in the world notwithstanding his death.¹

Two illustrations may be given of the doctrine of the continuity and the similarity of experience before and immediately after death. In India, on the one hand, there are reports of hauntings by unhappy ghosts or *Pretas*, which hauntings are said to be allayed by the performance of the *Preta Shrāddha* rite at the sacred town of Gaya. On the other hand, I have heard of a case in England where it was alleged that a haunting ceased on the saying of a *Requiem Mass*. In this case, it was supposed that a Catholic soul in Purgatory felt in need of a rite which in its earth-life it had been taught to regard as bringing peace to the dead. The Hindu ghost craves for the Hindu rite which gives to it a new body in lieu of that destroyed on the funeral pyre. These souls do not (in an Indian view) cease to be Hindu or Catholic, or lose their respective beliefs because of their death. Nor (in this view) do those who have passed on necessarily and at once lose any habit, even though it be drinking and smoking. But in the after-death state the 'whisky and cigars' of which we have heard are not gross, material things. Just as a dream reproduces waking experiences, so in the after-death state a man who was wont to drink and smoke imagines that he still does so. We have here to deal with 'dream-whisky' and 'dream-cigars' which, though imaginary, are, for the dreamer, as real as the substances he drank and smoked in his waking state.²

¹ *De Coslo*, ed. 1868, 493-7.

² The editor has heard of a European planter who, having died in the jungles of the Malabar country of South-west India, was buried there by the people. Some years afterwards, a friend of the planter found the grave carefully fenced in and covered with empty whisky and beer bottles. At a loss to understand such an unusual sight, he asked for an explanation, and was told that the dead *sahib's* ghost had caused much trouble and that no way had been

Subsequently, the deceased becomes aware that he is 'dead'. But as he carries over with him the recollection of his past life, he, at first, still thinks that he has such a physical body as he had before. It is, in fact, a dream-body, such as that of persons seen in dreams. It is an imagined body, which, as the Text says, is neither reflected in a mirror nor casts a shadow, and which can do such wonders as passing through mountains and the like, since Imagination is the greatest of magicians. Even in life on earth a man may imagine that he has a limb where he has none. Long after a man's leg has been amputated above the knee he can 'feel his toes', or is convinced that the soles of his feet (buried days before) are tickling. In the after-death state the deceased imagines that he has a physical body, though he has been severed therefrom by the high surgery of death. In such a body the deceased goes through the experiences next described.

In the First *Bardo* the deceased glimpses the Clear Light, as the *Dharma-Kāya*, called by Professor Sylvain Lévy the 'Essential Body'. This, which is beyond form (*Arūpa*), is the *Dharma-Dhātu*, or *Matrix* of *Dharma*-substance, whence all the Blessed Ones, or *Tathāgatas*, issue. This is the body of a Buddha in *Nirvāṇa*. The second body, or *Sambhoga-Kāya*, has such subtle form (*Rūpavān*) as is visible to the *Bodhisattvas*, and is an intermediate manifestation of the *Dharma-Dhātu*. In the third body, or *Nirmāṇa-Kāya*, the Void, or State of Buddhahood, is exteriorized into multiple individual appearances, more material, and, therefore, visible to the gross senses of men, such as the forms in which the manifested Buddhas (for there are many and not, as some think, only one, or Gautama) have appeared on earth. If the deceased recognizes the Clear Light of the First *Bardo*, he is liberated in the

discovered to lay the ghost until an old witch-doctor declared that the ghost craved whisky and beer, to which it had long been habituated when in the flesh and which were the real cause of its separation from the fleshly body. The people, although religiously opposed to intoxicants, began purchasing bottled whisky and beer of the same brands which the *sahib* was well known to have used, and, with a regular ritual for the dead, began sacrificing them to the ghost by pouring them out upon the grave. Finding that this kept the ghost quiet they kept up the practice in self-defence.—W. Y. F.-W.

Dharma-Kāya. In the Second *Bardo* Liberation is into the *Sambhoga-Kāya* (the passage touching the Paradise Realms is not, I think, meant to conflict with this); and in the Third *Bardo* Liberation is experienced in the *Nirmāṇa-Kāya*.

During the Second and Third *Bardo* the deceased is in the *Māyik*-world (or world of forms), and if Liberation is then attained it is with form (*Rūpavān*). The deceased being thus in the world of duality, we find that from this point onwards there is a double parallel presentation to his consciousness. There is firstly a *Nirvāṇic* line, comprising the Five Dhyāni Buddhas of the *Sambhoga-Kāya*, symbolized by various dazzling colours, with certain Divinities, peaceful and wrathful, emanating from them; and, secondly, a *Saṃsāric* line, consisting of the Six *Lokas*. These latter, with one exception (if it be one and not due to corruption of text, viz. the association of the smoky or black light of Hell with the blue *Vajra-Sattva*), have the same colour as their *Nirvāṇic* counterparts, but of a dull hue. With the *Lokas* are given their 'Poisons', or the sinful characteristics of their inhabitants. The 'soul-complex' is then adjured, on the one hand, to seek Liberation through the compassionate grace of the *Nirvāṇic* line of Buddhas and *Devatās* (Divinities), and, on the other hand, to shun the particular *Loka* (World) which is concomitantly presented to his mental vision. With these Buddhas, *Devatās*, and *Lokas* are associated certain *Nidānas* (Causal Connexions), *Skandhas* (Constituent Factors), material elements, and the colours of the latter. This account appears to have suffered from corruption of the Text. Thus the *Nidānas* and *Skandhas* are not complete. Logically, *Vijñāna Skandha* should go first with *Vairochana*, and *Nāma-rūpa* with *Vajra-Sattva*. Only four out of the five elements are mentioned. Ether, which is omitted, should be associated with *Vairochana* and *Vijñāna*. The colours of the elements accord with those given in the Hindu *Tantras* except as regards 'air', to which is assigned a green colour, appropriate for *Asuric* jealousy, though it is not that of the Hindu colouration, which is smoky grey. Again, the order of the Six *Lokas* is not the usual one, viz. first the better *Lokas*, of *Devas*, *Asuras*,

and Men, and then the *Lokas* of Ghosts (*Pretas*), Brutes, and Hell. Each *Loka* is characterized by its 'poison' or besetting sin, but, of these, five only are mentioned. The editor has, however, referred to corruption in the Text in some of these matters, and others I have noted on a careful analysis of the translated Text.

The peaceful *Devatās* follow on the sixth and seventh day, and the wrathful *Devatās* on the eighth and subsequent days. The latter are of the terrific type, characteristic both of the Buddhist and Hindu *Shākta Tantras*, with their *Blairavas*, *Bhairavs*, *Dākinis*, *Yoginīs*, and so on. Hinduism also makes this distinction in the nature of Divinities and interprets the wrathful orders as representative of the so-called 'destructive' power of the Supreme Lord and of his lesser manifestations; though, in truth, 'God never destroys' (*na devo nāshakali kvachit*), but withdraws the Universe to Himself.

But Power, which thus dissolves the world, is ever terrible to those who are attached to the world. All bad action (*Adharma*), too, is dissolvent; and, according to the Text, the deceased's evil *Karma* in the *Saṅgāra* is reflected in the *Nirvāṇic* line in its forms as Divinities of the Lower *Bardo*, who so terrify the deceased that he flees from them and sinks therefore more and more into such a state as will eventually bring him birth in one or other of the *Lokas*.

The Peaceful *Devatās* are said to issue from the heart, and the Wrathful from the head. I do not, however, think that this statement necessarily lets in the *Yoga* doctrine of the 'Serpent Power' and the Six Centres, which the editor has shortly set out in Part II of the Addenda, assuming (a matter of which I have no personal knowledge) that the Tibetans both practise this *Yoga* and teach it in its Indian form. I myself think that the mention of the heart and head does not refer to these places as *Yoga*-centres, but possibly to the fact that the Peaceful Deities reflect, as stated in the Text, the love of the deceased which springs from his heart.

I make a reservation also as regards the subject of *Mantras*, dealt with in Part III of the Addenda. No doubt the Tibetans employ Sanskrit *Mantras*, but such *Mantras* are often found in

a sadly corrupt form in their books—a fact which suggests that the Tibetans feel little appreciation of the supposed sound-value of *Mantras*. But whether their theory on this subject is the same in all respects as that of the Hindus I cannot say.¹ The Hindu theory, which I have elsewhere endeavoured to elucidate (cf. *Garland of Letters*), is still on several points obscure; the subject being perhaps the most difficult of any in Hinduism. Even though Tibetan Buddhism may have *Mantra-Sādhanā*, the presentment of it is likely to differ as much as does the general substance of these two Faiths.

About the fifteenth day, passage is made into the Third *Bardo*, in which the deceased, if not previously liberated, seeks 'Rebirth'. His past life has now become dim. That of the future is indicated by certain premonitory signs which represent the first movements of desire towards fulfilment. The 'soul-complex' takes on the colour of the *Loka* in which it is destined to be born. If the deceased's *Karma* leads him to Hell, thither he goes after the Judgement, in a subtle body which cannot be injured or destroyed, but in which he may suffer atrocious pain. Or he may go to the Heaven-world or other *Loka*, to return at length and in all cases (for neither punishment nor reward are eternal) to earth, whereon only can new *Karma* be made. Such return takes place after expiation of his sins in Hell, or the expiration of the term of enjoyment in Heaven which his *Karma* has gained for him. If, however, the lot of the deceased is immediate rebirth on earth, he sees visions of mating men and women. He, at this final stage towards the awakening to earth-life, now knows that he has not a gross

¹ Just as the Tibetans took over *Tantricism* from India, so, as the well-known Tibetan *Biography of Jetsün Milarepa* (Tibet's most famous *Yogi* and Saint), for example, makes clear, they appear also to have derived various systems of *Yoga* from India, including *Laya* or *Kundalini Yoga*. While it is undoubtedly true that many *Mantras* likewise derived from India have grown hopelessly corrupt in the Tibetan language itself, the practice of *Laya* or *Kundalini Yoga* by Tibetans seems to have been kept fairly pure, largely through oral transmission from *guru* to *guru* rather than through written records, except for Tibetanized terminologies and methods of application. Certain Tibetan treatises on *Yoga* which the editor possesses, both in the original and in English translation, suggest this. —W. Y. E-W.

body of flesh and blood. He urgently desires to have one, in order that he may again enjoy physical life on the earth-world.

The Freudian psycho-analyst will find herein a remarkable passage supporting his doctrine of the aversion of the son for the father. The passage says that, if the deceased is to be born as a male, the feeling of its being a male comes upon the knower, and a feeling of intense aversion for the father and attraction for the mother is begotten, and vice versa as regards birth as a female. This is, however, an old Buddhist doctrine found elsewhere. Professor De la Vallée Poussin cites the following passage: 'L'esprit troublé par désir d'amour, il va au lieu de sa destinée. Même très éloigné, il voit, par l'œil né de la force de l'acte, le lieu de sa naissance; voyant là son père et sa mère unis, il conçoit désir pour la mère quand il est mâle, désir pour le père quand il est femelle, et, inversement, haine' (*Bouddhisme: Études et Matériaux, Abhidharmakosha*, iii. 15, p. 25). The work cited also contains other interesting details concerning the embryo. (See, too, the same author's *La Théorie de douze causes*.)

At length the deceased passes out of the *Bardo* dream-world into a womb of flesh and blood, issuing thence once more into the waking state of earth-experience. This is what in English is called Re-incarnation, or Re-birth in the flesh. The Sanskrit term is *Saṃsāra*, that is, 'rising and rising again' (*Punarutpatti*) in the worlds of birth and death. Nothing is permanent, but all is transitory. In life, the 'soul-complex' is never for two consecutive moments the same, but is, like the body, in constant change. There is thus a series (*Santāna*) of successive, and, in one sense, different states, which are in themselves but momentary. There is still a unifying bond in that each momentary state is a present transformation representative of all those which are past, as it will be the generator of all future transformations potentially involved in it.

This process is not interrupted by death. Change continues in the *Skandhas* (or constituents of the organism) other than

the gross body which has been cast off and which undergoes changes of its own. But there is this difference: the after-death change is merely the result of the action of accumulated past *Karma* and does not, as in earthly life, create new *Karma*, for which a physical body is necessary. (Buddhism, Hinduism, and Christianity are in agreement in holding that man's destiny is decided on Earth, though the last differs from the first two, as explained above, on the question whether there is more than one life on Earth.) There is no breach (*Uchchheda*) of consciousness, but a continuity of transformation. The Death-Consciousness is the starting-point, followed by the other states of consciousness already described. *Karma* at length generates a fully-formed desire or mental action. This last is followed by the consciousness taking up its abode in a suitable *matrix*, whence it is born again as a Birth-Consciousness. What is so born is not altogether different from what has gone before, because it is the present transformation of it; and has no other independent existence.

There are thus successive births of (to use Professor de la Vallée Poussin's term) a 'fluid soul-complex', because the series of psychic states continues at intervals of time to enter the physical womb of living beings. It has been said by the authority cited (*Way to Nirvāṇa*, p. 85) that the birth-consciousness of a new celestial or infernal being makes for itself and by itself, out of unorganized matter, the body it is to inhabit. Therefore the birth of such beings will follow immediately after the death of the being which is to be reborn as an infernal or celestial being. But the case is said to be different, as a rule, where there is to be 'reincarnation', that is 'rebirth' in the flesh. Conception and birth then presuppose physical circumstances that may not be realized at the moment of the death of the being to be 're-incarnated'. In these cases and others it is alleged that the dying consciousness cannot be continued at once into the birth-consciousness of a new being. The Professor says that this difficulty is solved by those Schools which, maintaining the intermediary existence (*Antarābhāva*), hold that the dying consciousness is continued into a short-lived

being called *Gandharva*, which lasts for seven days, or seven times seven days (cf. the forty-nine days of the *Bardo*). This *Gandharva* creates, with the help of the conceptional elements, an embryo as soon as it can find opportunity. This doctrine, if it has been rightly understood, is apparently another and cruder version of the *Bardo* doctrine. There cannot, in any philosophic view of the doctrine of *Karma*, be any 'hold up' of what is a continuous life-process. Such process does not consist of independent sections waiting upon one another. And so a 'soul-complex' cannot be ready to reincarnate before the circumstances are fit for it. The law which determines that a being shall incarnate is the same as that which provides the means and conditions by, and under, which the incarnation is to take place. Nor is the body of the infernal or celestial being gross matter. This is clear from the present Text.

Dr. Evans-Wentz raises again the debated question of the transmigration of human 'souls' into sub-human bodies, a process which this Text, exoterically viewed, seems to assume, and which is, as he points out, the general Hindu and Buddhist belief. It seems to be an irrational, though it may be a popular, belief that a human 'soul' can permanently inhabit a sub-human body as its own. For the body cannot exist in such disagreement with its occupant. The right doctrine appears to be that, as man has evolved through the lowest forms of being (Hinduism speaks of 8,400,000 graded kinds of births culminating in man),¹ so by misconduct and neglect to use the opportunity of manhood there can, equally, be a descent along the 'downward path' to the same low forms of being from which humanity has, with difficulty, emerged. The Sanskrit term *Durlabham*, meaning 'difficult to get', refers to this difficulty of securing human birth. But such descent involves (as Dr. Evans-Wentz says) the loss of the human nature and the enormous lengths of time of a creation epoch.

If the series (*Santāna*) of conscious states are determined

¹ As plants, aquatic animals, reptiles, birds, quadrupeds, simian forms, and man. See *Bṛihad Vishnu Purāna*.

by the past *Karma*, it may be asked how that liberty of choice exists which the whole Text assumes by its injunctions to the deceased to do this or to avoid that. No doubt even in one individual there are diverse tendencies (*Saṅskāra*). But the question still remains. If the *Karma* ready to ripen determines the action, then advice to the accused is useless. If the 'soul' is free to choose, there is no determination by *Karma*. Hinduism holds that, notwithstanding the influence of *Karma*, the *Ātmā* is essentially free. Here the answer appears to be twofold. Apart from what is next stated, the instructions given may, by their suggestions, call up that one of several latent tendencies which tends towards the action counselled. Further, this system allows that one 'soul' can help another. And so there are prayers for, and application of merits to, the deceased, just as we find in Hinduism the *Pretashrāddha*, in Catholicism the *Requiem* Mass, and in Islam the Moslem's *Fatiha*. In this and other matters one mind can, it is alleged, influence another otherwise than through the ordinary sense channels whether before or after death. There is also a tendency to overlook collective *Karma* and its effects. An individual is not only affected by his own *Karma*, but by that of the community to which he belongs. A wider question arises as to the meaning of the Re-incarnation Doctrine itself, but this is not the place to discuss it.

There are many other points of interest in this remarkable Book, but I must now stop and let the reader discover them for himself. I would like, however, to add a word as to the manner of its making. The Text has been fortunate in finding as its editor Dr. Evans-Wentz, whose knowledge of, and sympathy with, his subject has enabled him to give us a very comprehensible account of it. He, in his turn, was fortunate in his teacher, the translator, the late Lāma Kazi Dawa-Samdup (Tib. *Zla-va-bsam-lgrub*), who, when I first met him, was Chief Interpreter on the staff of His Excellency Lonchen Satra, the Tibetan Plenipotentiary to the Government of India. He was also attached to the Political Staff of His Holiness the Dalai Lāma on the latter's visit to India. At the time of

his premature and greatly regretted death Lāma Kazi Dawa-Samdup was Lecturer in Tibetan to the University of Calcutta. These, and the other appointments which the translator held, and to which Dr. Evans-Wentz has referred, sufficiently establish his high competency both in Tibetan and English. He had also, I may add, some knowledge of Sanskrit, which I found of much use in discussing with him the meaning of terms used in Tibetan-Buddhist doctrine and ritual. I can, then, speak personally of his attainments, for I saw a good deal of him when he was preparing for me a translation of the Tibetan *Shrīchakrasambhāra Tantra*, which I have published as the seventh volume of the series of *Tantrik Texts* (Luzac & Co.). I can, likewise, from my own knowledge, associate myself with what Dr. Evans-Wentz has said as to this remarkable man. May their joint work have the success it deserves, and so encourage Dr. Evans-Wentz to publish some at least of the other Texts which he tells me he has in store.

JOHN WOODROFFE.

OXFORD,
October 3, 1925.

INTRODUCTION¹

'The phenomena of life may be likened unto a dream, a phantasm, a bubble, a shadow, the glistening dew, or lightning flash; and thus they ought to be contemplated.'—The Buddha, in *The Immutable Sūtra*.

I. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE *BARDO THÖDOL*

AS a contribution to the science of death and of the existence after death, and of rebirth, *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*,

¹ This Introduction is—for the most part—based upon and suggested by explanatory notes which the late Lāma Kazi Dawa-Samdup, the translator of the *Bardo Thödol*, dictated to the editor while the translation was taking shape, in Gangtok, Sikkim. The Lāma was of opinion that his English rendering of the *Bardo Thödol* ought not to be published without his exegetical comments on the more abstruse and figurative parts of the text. This, he thought, would not only help to justify his translation, but, moreover, would accord with the wishes of his late *guru* (see p. 80) with respect to all translations into a European tongue of works expository of the esoteric lore of the Great Perfectionist School into which that *guru* had initiated him. To this end, the translator's exegesis, based upon that of the translator's *guru*, was transmitted to the editor and recorded by the editor herein.

The editor's task is to correlate and systematize and sometimes to expand the notes thus dictated, by incorporating such congenial matter, from widely separated sources, as in his judgement tends to make the exegesis more intelligible to the Occidental, for whom this part of the book is chiefly intended.

The translator felt, too, that, without such safeguarding as this Introduction is intended to afford, the *Bardo Thödol* translation would be peculiarly liable to misinterpretation and consequent misuse, more especially by those who are inclined to be, for one reason or another, inimical to Buddhistic doctrines, or to the doctrines of his particular Sect of Northern Buddhism. He also realized how such an Introduction as is here presented might itself be subject to adverse criticism, perhaps on the ground that it appears to be the outcome of a philosophical eclecticism. However this may be, the editor can do no more than state here, as he has stated in other words in the Preface, that his aim, both herein and in the closely related annotations to the text itself, has been to present the psychology and the teachings peculiar to and related to the *Bardo Thödol* as he has been taught them by qualified initiated exponents of them, who alone have the unquestioned right to explain them.

If it should be said by critics that the editor has expounded the *Bardo Thödol* doctrines from the standpoint of the Northern Buddhist who believes in them rather than from the standpoint of the Christian who perhaps would disbelieve at least some of them, the editor has no apology to offer; for he holds that there is no sound reason adducible why he should expound them in any other manner. Anthropology is concerned with things as they are; and the hope of

[THE PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF THIS *THÖDOL* BY THE OFFICIANT]

Now for the explaining of the *Thödol* itself:

If thou canst gather together a grand offering, offer it in worship of the Trinity. If such cannot be done, then arrange whatever can be gathered together as objects on which thou canst concentrate thy thoughts and mentally create as illimitable an offering as possible and worship.

Then the 'Path of Good Wishes Invoking the Aid of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas'¹ should be recited seven times or thrice.

After that, the 'Path of Good Wishes Giving Protection from Fear in the *Bardo*'¹ and the 'Path of Good Wishes for Safe Delivery from the Dangerous Pitfalls of the *Bardo*'¹ together with the 'Root Words of the *Bardo*'¹ are to be read distinctly and with the proper intonation.²

Then this Great *Thödol* is to be read either seven times or thrice,³ according to the occasion. [First cometh] the setting-face-to-face [to the symptoms of death] as they occur during the moments of death; [second] the application of the great vivid reminder, the setting-face-to-face to Reality while in the

¹ See the Appendix, pp. 197-208, where each of these chief *Bardo* prayers (or 'Paths of Good Wishes') is translated.

² Cf. the two following passages, the first from *The Book of the Craft of Dying*, chap. VI, in *Bodleian MS. 423* (circa fifteenth century), Comper's ed. (p. 39), the second from *The Craft to Know Well to Die* (fifteenth century), chap. IV, Comper's ed. (p. 74):

'Last of all, it is to be known that the prayers that follow may be conveniently said upon a sick man that laboureth to his end. And if it is a religious person, then when the covent [i. e. convent] is gathered together with smiting of the table, as the manner is, then shall be said first the litany, with the psalms and orisons that he used therewith. Afterward, if he live yet, let some man that is about him say the orisons that follow hereafter, as the time and opportunity will suffer. And they may be often rehearsed again to excite the devotion of the sick man—if he have reason and understanding with him.'

'And if the sick man or woman may, nor can not, say the orisons and prayers beforesaid, some of the assistants [i. e. bystanders] ought to say them before him with a loud voice, in changing the words there as they ought to be changed.'

³ Cf. the following from *The Craft to Know Well to Die*, chap. IV, Comper's ed. (p. 73): 'After all these things he [the person dying] ought to say three times, if he may, these words that follow.'

Intermediate State; and third, the methods of closing the doors of the womb while in the Intermediate State when seeking rebirth.¹

[PART I]

[THE *BARDO* OF THE MOMENTS OF DEATH][INSTRUCTIONS ON THE SYMPTOMS OF DEATH, OR THE FIRST STAGE OF THE *CHIKHAI BARDO*: THE PRIMARY CLEAR LIGHT SEEN AT THE MOMENT OF DEATH]

The first, the setting-face-to-face with the Clear Light, during the Intermediate State of the Moments of Death, is:

Here [some there may be] who have listened much [to religious instructions] yet not recognized; and [some] who, though recognizing, are, nevertheless, weak in familiarity. But all classes of individuals who have received the practical teachings [calléd] *Guides*² will, if this be applied to them, be set face to face with the fundamental Clear Light; and, without any Intermediate State, they will obtain the Unborn *Dharma-Kāya*, by the Great Perpendicular Path.³

¹ The first *Bardo* is the *Chikhai Bardo*; the second, the *Chönyi Bardo*; the third, the *Sidpa Bardo*. (See p. 102⁴⁻⁵.)

² See p. 85⁴.

³ Text: *Yar-gyi-sang-thal-chen-po*: the 'Great Straight Upward Path'. One of the Doctrines peculiar to Northern Buddhism is that spiritual emancipation, even Buddhahood, may be won instantaneously, without entering upon the *Bardo* Plane and without further suffering on the age-long pathway of normal evolution which traverses the various worlds of *samsāric* existence. The doctrine underlies the whole of the *Bardo Thödol*. Faith is the first step on the Secret Pathway. Then comes Illumination; and, with it, Certainty; and, when the Goal is won, Emancipation. But here again success implies very unusual proficiency in *yoga*, as well as much accumulated merit, or good *harma*, on the part of the devotee. If the disciple can be made to see and to grasp the Truth as soon as the *guru* reveals it, that is to say, if he has the power to die consciously, and at the supreme moment of quitting the body can recognize the Clear Light which will dawn upon him then, and become one with it, all *samsāric* bonds of illusion are broken asunder immediately: the

The manner of application is:

It is best if the *guru* from whom the deceased received guiding instructions can be had; but if the *guru* cannot be obtained, then a brother of the Faith; or if the latter is also unobtainable, then a learned man of the same Faith; or, should all these be unobtainable, then a person who can read correctly and distinctly ought to read this many times over. Thereby [the deceased] will be put in mind of what he had [previously] heard of the setting-face-to-face and will at once come to recognize that Fundamental Light and undoubtedly obtain Liberation.

As regards the time for the application [of these instructions]:

When the expiration hath ceased, the vital-force will have sunk into the nerve-centre of Wisdom¹ and the Knower² will be experiencing the Clear Light of the natural condition.³ Then, the vital-force,⁴ being thrown backwards and flying downwards through the right and left nerves,⁵ the Intermediate State momentarily dawns.

The above [directions] should be applied before [the vital-force hath] rushed into the left nerve [after first having traversed the navel nerve-centre].

The time [ordinarily necessary for this motion of the vital-

Dreamer is awakened into Reality simultaneously with the mighty achievement of recognition.

¹ Here, as elsewhere in our text, 'nerve-centre' refers to a psychic nerve-centre. The psychic nerve-centre of Wisdom is located in the heart. (Cf. pp. 217 ff.)

² Text: *Shespa* (pron. *Shepa*): 'Mind', 'Knower'; i.e. the mind in its knowing, or cognizing, functions.

³ Text: *Sprobral* (pron. *Todal*): 'devoid of formative activity'; i.e. the mind in its natural, or primal, state. The mind in its unnatural state, that is to say, when incarnate in a human body, is, because of the driving force of the five senses, continuously in thought-formation activity. Its natural, or disincarnate, state is a state of quiescence, comparable to its condition in the highest of *dhyāna* (or deep meditation) when still united to a human body. The conscious recognition of the Clear Light induces an ecstatic condition of consciousness such as saints and mystics of the West have called Illumination.

⁴ Text: *rlung* (pron. *lung*): 'vital-air', or 'vital-force', or 'psychic-force'.

⁵ Text: *ritsa-gyas-gyon* (pron. *tsa-yay-yōn*): 'right and left [psychic] nerves'; Skt. *Pingāla-nāḍī* (right [psychic] nerve) and *Idā-nāḍī* (left [psychic] nerve). (Cf. p. 215.)

force] is as long as the inspiration is still present, or about the time required for eating a meal.¹

Then the manner of the application [of the instructions] is:

When the breathing is about to cease, it is best if the Transference hath been applied efficiently; if [the application] hath been inefficient, then [address the deceased] thus:

O nobly-born (so and so by name), the time hath now come for thee to seek the Path [in reality]. Thy breathing is about to cease. Thy *guru* hath set thee face to face before with the Clear Light; and now thou art about to experience it in its Reality in the *Bardo* state, wherein all things are like the void and cloudless sky, and the naked spotless intellect is like unto a transparent vacuum without circumference or centre. At this moment, know thou thyself, and abide in that state. I, too, at this time, am setting thee face to face.

Having read this, repeat it many times in the ear of the person dying, even before the expiration hath ceased, so as to impress it on the mind [of the dying one].

If the expiration is about to cease, turn the dying one over on the right side, which posture is called the 'Lying Posture of a Lion'. The throbbing of the arteries [on the right and left side of the throat] is to be pressed.

If the person dying be disposed to sleep, or if the sleeping state advances, that should be arrested, and the arteries pressed gently but firmly.² Thereby the vital-force will not be able to return from the median-nerve³ and will be sure to pass out

¹ When this text first took form the reckoning of time was, apparently, yet primitive, mechanical time-keeping appliances being unknown. A similar condition still prevails in many parts of Tibet, where the period of a meal-time is frequently mentioned in old religious books—a period of from twenty minutes to half an hour in duration.

² The dying person should die fully awake and keenly conscious of the process of death; hence the pressing of the arteries. (Cf. p. xxix.)

³ 'Skt. of text: *dhutīh* (pron. *dutī*), meaning "median-nerve", but lit. "tri-junction". V. S. Apte's *Sanskrit-English Dictionary* (Poona, 1890) gives *dhāt* as the only similar word, defined as "shaking" or "moving", which, if applied to our text, may refer to the vibratory motion of the psychic force traversing the median-nerve as its channel.—Lama Kazi Dawa-Samdup.

⁴ *Dutī* may also mean "throwing away", or "throwing out", with reference

through the Brahmanic aperture.¹ Now the real setting-face-to-face is to be applied.

At this moment, the first [glimpsing] of the *Bardo* of the Clear Light of Reality, which is the Infallible Mind of the *Dharma-Kāya*, is experienced by all sentient beings.

The interval between the cessation of the expiration and the cessation of the inspiration is the time during which the vital-force remaineth in the median-nerve.²

The common people call this the state wherein the consciousness-principle³ hath fainted away. The duration of this state is uncertain. [It dependeth] upon the constitution, good or bad, and [the state of] the nerves and vital-force. In those who have had even a little practical experience of the firm, tranquil state of *dhyāna*, and in those who have sound nerves, this state continueth for a long time.⁴

to the outgoing of the consciousness in the process of death.'—Sj. Atal Bihari Ghosh.

¹ See pp. 18, 87², 215. If non-distracted, and alertly conscious, at this psychological moment, the dying person will realize, through the power conferred by the reading of the *Thōdol*, the importance of holding the vital-force in the median-nerve till it passes out thence through the Aperture of Brāhma.

² After the expiration has ceased, the vital-force (lit. 'inner-breath') is thought to remain in the median-nerve so long as the heart continues to throb.

³ Text: *nam-shes* (pron. *nam-she*): Skt. *vijñāna* or, preferably, *chaitanya*: 'conscious-principle' or 'object-knowing principle'.

⁴ Sometimes it may continue for seven days, but usually only for four or five days. The consciousness-principle, however, save in certain conditions of trance, such as a *yogī*, for example, can induce, is not necessarily resident in the body all the while; normally it quits the body at the moment called death, holding a subtle magnetic-like relationship with the body until the state referred to in the text comes to an end. Only for adepts in *yoga* would the departure of the consciousness-principle be accomplished without break in the continuity of the stream of consciousness, that is to say, without the swoon state referred to.

The death process is the reverse of the birth process, birth being the incarnating, death the discarnating of the consciousness-principle; but, in both alike, there is a passing from one state of consciousness into another. And, just as a babe must wake up in this world and learn by experience the nature of this world, so, likewise, a person at death must wake up in the *Bardo* world and become familiar with its own peculiar conditions. The *Bardo* body, formed of matter in an invisible or ethereal-like state, is an exact duplicate of the human body, from which it is separated in the process of death. Retained in the *Bardo* body are the consciousness-principle and the psychic nerve-system (the counterpart, for the psychic or *Bardo* body, of the physical nerve-system of the human body). (Cf. p. 161².)

In the setting-face-to-face, the repetition [of the above address to the deceased] is to be persisted in until a yellowish liquid beginneth to appear from the various apertures of the bodily organs [of the deceased].*

In those who have led an evil life, and in those of unsound nerves, the above state endureth only so long as would take to snap a finger. Again, in some, it endureth as long as the time taken for the eating of a meal.

In various *Tantras* it is said that this state of swoon endureth for about three and one-half days. Most other [religious treatises] say for four days; and that this setting-face-to-face with the Clear Light ought to be persevered in [during the whole time].*

The manner of applying [these directions] is:

If [when dying] one be by one's own self capable [of diagnosing the symptoms of death], use [of the knowledge] should have been made ere this.¹ If [the dying person be] unable to do so, then either the *guru*, or a *śiṣya*, or a brother in the Faith with whom the one [dying] was very intimate, should be kept at hand, who will vividly impress upon the one [dying] the symptoms [of death] as they appear in due order [repeatedly saying, at first] thus:²

Now the symptoms of earth sinking into water are come.³ *

¹ The full meaning implied is that not only should the person about to die diagnose the symptoms of death as they come, one by one, but that he should also, if able, recognize the Clear Light without being set face to face with it by some second person.

² Cf. the following instructions, from *Ars Moriendi* (fifteenth century), Comper's ed. (p. 93): 'When any of likelihood shall die [i.e. is likely to die], then it is most necessary to have a special friend, the which will heartily help and pray for him, and therewith counsel the sick for the weal [i.e. health] of his soul.'

³ The three chief symptoms of death (which the text merely suggests by naming the first of them, it being taken for granted that the reader officiating will know the others and name them as they occur), with their symbolical counterpart, are as follows: (1) a bodily sensation of pressure, 'earth sinking into water'; (2) a bodily sensation of clammy coldness as though the body were immersed in water, which gradually merges into that of feverish heat, 'water sinking into fire'; (3) a feeling as though the body were being blown to atoms, 'fire sinking into air'. Each symptom is accompanied by visible external changes in the body, such as loss of control over facial muscles, loss of hearing, loss of sight, *

When all the symptoms [of death] are about to be completed, then enjoin upon [the one dying] this resolution, speaking in a low tone of voice in the ear:

O nobly-born (or, if it be a priest, O Venerable Sir); let not thy mind be distracted.

If it be a brother [in the Faith], or some other person, then call him by name, and [say] thus:

O nobly-born, that which is called death being come to thee now, resolve thus: 'O this now is the hour of death. By taking advantage of this death, I will so act, for the good of all sentient beings, peopling the illimitable expanse of the heavens, as to obtain the Perfect Buddhahood, by resolving on love and compassion towards [them, and by directing my entire effort to] the Sole Perfection.'

Shaping the thoughts thus, especially at this time when the *Dharma-Kāya* of Clear Light [in the state] after death can be realized for the benefit of all sentient beings, know that thou art in that state; [and resolve] that thou wilt obtain the best boon of the State of the Great Symbol,¹ in which thou art, [as follows]:

'Even if I cannot realize it, yet will I know this *Bardo*, and, mastering the Great Body of Union in *Bardo*, will appear in whatever [shape] will benefit [all beings] whomsoever:²

the breath coming in gasps just before the loss of consciousness, whereby *lāmas* trained in the science of death detect, one by one, the interdependent psychic phenomena culminating in the release of the *Bardo* body from its human-plane envelope. The translator held that the science of death, as expounded in this treatise, has been arrived at through the actual experiencing of death on the part of learned *lāmas*, who, when dying, have explained to their pupils the very process of death itself, in analytical and elaborate detail. (See p. 162¹.)

¹ In this state, realization of the Ultimate Truth is possible, providing sufficient advance on the Path has been made by the deceased before death. Otherwise, he cannot benefit now, and must wander on into lower and lower conditions of the *Bardo*, as determined by *karma*, until rebirth. (See p. 135¹.)

² The Tibetan of the text is here unusually concise. Literally rendered it is, 'will appear in whatever will subdue [for beneficial ends] whomsoever'. To subdue in this sense any sentient being of the human world, a form which will appeal religiously to that being is assumed. Thus, to appeal to a Shaivite devotee, the form of Shiva is assumed; to a Buddhist, the form of the Buddha Shakyamuni; to a Christian, the form of Jesus; to a Moslem, the form of the Prophet; and so on for other religious devotees; and for all manners and conditions of mankind a form appropriate to the occasion—for example, for subduing

I will serve all sentient beings, infinite in number as are the limits of the sky.'

Keeping thyself unseparated from this resolution, thou shouldst try to remember whatever devotional practices thou wert accustomed to perform during thy lifetime.¹

In saying this, the reader shall put his lips close to the ear, and shall repeat it distinctly, clearly impressing it upon the dying person so as to prevent his mind from wandering even for a moment.

After the expiration hath completely ceased, press the nerve of sleep firmly; and, a *lāma*, or a person higher or more learned than thyself, impress in these words, thus:

Reverend Sir, now that thou art experiencing the Fundamental Clear Light, try to abide in that state which now thou art experiencing.

And also in the case of any other person the reader shall set him face-to-face thus:

O nobly-born (so-and-so), listen. Now thou art experiencing the Radiance of the Clear Light of Pure Reality. Recognize it. O nobly-born, thy present intellect,² in real nature void, not formed into anything as regards characteristics or colour, naturally void, is the very Reality, the All-Good.³

Thine own intellect, which is now voidness, yet not to be children, parents, and vice versa; for *śiṣhyas*, *gurus*, and vice versa; for common people, kings or rulers; and for kings, ministers of state.

¹ Cf. the following, from *The Book of the Craft of Dying*, chap. V, in *Bodleian MS. 421* (circa fifteenth century), Comper's ed. (p. 35): 'Also, if he that shall die have long time and space to be-think himself, and be not taken with hasty death, then may be read afore him, of them that be about him, devout histories and devout prayers, in the which he most delighted in when he was in heal [i.e. health].'

² Text: *Shes-rig* (pron. *She-rig*) is the intellect, the knowing or cognizing faculty.

³ Text: *Chōs-nyid Kūn-tu-bsang-po* (pron. *Chō-nyid Kūn-tu-bsang-po*), Skt. *Dharma-Dhātu Samantā-Bhadra*, the embodiment of the *Dharma-Kāya*, the first state of Buddhahood. Our Block-Print text, in error here, gives for the All-Good (*Kūn-tu-Zang-po*, meaning 'All-Good Father') *Kūn-tu-Zang-mo*, which means 'All-Good Mother'. According to the Great Perfectionist School, the Father is that which appears, or phenomena, the Mother is that which is conscious of the phenomena. Again, Bliss is the Father, and the Voidness perceiving it, the Mother; the Radiance is the Father, and the Voidness perceiving it, the Mother; and, as in our text here, the intellect is the Father, the Voidness the Mother. The repetition of 'void' is to emphasize the importance of knowing the intellect to be in reality void (or of the nature of voidness), i.e. of the unborn, uncreated, unshaped Primordial.

regarded as of the voidness of nothingness, but as being the intellect itself, unobstructed, shining, thrilling, and blissful, is the very consciousness,¹ the All-good Buddha.²

Thine own consciousness, not formed into anything, in reality void, and the intellect, shining and blissful,—these two,—are inseparable. The union of them is the *Dharma-Kāya* state of Perfect Enlightenment.³

Thine own consciousness, shining, void, and inseparable from the Great Body of Radiance, hath no birth, nor death, and is the Immutable Light—Buddha Amitābha.⁴

Knowing this is sufficient. Recognizing the voidness of thine own intellect to be Buddhahood, and looking upon it as being thine own consciousness, is to keep thyself in the [state of the] divine mind⁵ of the Buddha.⁶

¹ Text: *Rig-pa*, meaning 'consciousness' as distinct from the knowing faculty by which it cognizes or knows itself to be. Ordinarily, *rig-pa* and *shes-rig* are synonymous; but in an abstruse philosophical treatise, as herein, *rig-pa* refers to the consciousness in its purest and most spiritual (i. e. supramundane) aspect, and *shes-rig* to the consciousness in that grosser aspect, not purely spiritual, whereby cognizance of phenomena is present.

In this part of the *Bardo Thödol* the psychological analysis of consciousness or mind is particularly abstruse. Wherever the text contains the word *rig-pa* we have rendered it as 'consciousness', and the word *shes-rig* as 'intellect'; or else, to suit the context, *rig-pa* as 'consciousness' and *shes-rig* as 'consciousness of phenomena', which is 'intellect'.

² Text: *Kun-tu-bzang-po*: Skt. *Samanta* ('All' or 'Universal' or 'Complete') *Bhadra* ('Good' or 'Beneficent'). In this state, the experiencer and the thing experienced are inseparably one and the same, as, for example, the yellowness of gold cannot be separated from gold, nor saltiness from salt. For the normal human intellect this transcendental state is beyond comprehension.

³ From the union of the two states of mind, or consciousness, implied by the two terms *rig-pa* and *shes-rig*, and symbolized by the All-Good Father and the All-Good Mother, is born the state of the *Dharma-Kāya*, the state of Perfect Enlightenment, Buddhahood. The *Dharma-Kāya* ('Body of Truth') symbolizes the purest and the highest state of being, a state of supramundane consciousness, devoid of all mental limitations or obscurations which arise from the contact of the primordial consciousness with matter.

⁴ As the Buddha-Samanta-Bhadra state is the state of the All-Good, so the Buddha-Amitābha state is the state of the Boundless Light; and, as the text implies, both are, in the last analysis, the same state, merely regarded from two viewpoints. In the first, is emphasized the mind of the All-Good, in the second, the enlightening *Bodhi* power, symbolized as Buddha Amitābha (the personification of the Wisdom faculty), Source of Life and Light.

⁵ Text: *dgongs-pa* (pron. *gong-pa*): 'thoughts' or 'mind', and, being in the honorific form, 'divine mind'.

⁶ Realization of the Non-Samsara, which is the Voidness, the Unbecome, the

Repeat this distinctly and clearly three or [even] seven times. That will recall to the mind [of the dying one] the former [i. e. when living] setting-face-to-face by the *guru*. Secondly, it will cause the naked consciousness to be recognized as the Clear Light; and, thirdly, recognizing one's own self [thus], one becometh permanently united with the *Dharma-Kāya* and Liberation will be certain.¹

[INSTRUCTIONS CONCERNING THE SECOND STAGE OF THE *CHIKHAI* BARDO: THE SECONDARY CLEAR LIGHT SEEN IMMEDIATELY AFTER DEATH]

Thus the primary Clear Light is recognized and Liberation attained. But if it be feared that the primary Clear Light hath not been recognized, then [it can certainly be assumed] there is dawning [upon the deceased] that called the secondary

Unborn, the Unmade, the Unformed, implies Buddhahood, Perfect Enlightenment—the state of the Divine Mind of the Buddha. Compare the following passage, from *The Diamond* [or Imutable] *Sūtra*, with its Chinese commentary (trans. by W. Gemmell, London, 1912, pp. 17-18): 'Every form or quality of phenomena is transient and illusive. When the mind realizes that the phenomena of life are not real phenomena, the Lord Buddha may then be clearly perceived.'—(*Chinese Annotation*: 'The spiritual Buddha must be realized within the mind, otherwise there can be no true perception of the Lord Buddha.')

¹ If, when dying, one be familiar with this state, in virtue of previous spiritual (or *yogic*) training in the human world, and have power to win Buddhahood at this all-determining moment, the Wheel of Rebirth is stopped, and Liberation instantaneously achieved. But such spiritual efficiency is so very rare that the normal mental condition of the person dying is unequal to the supreme feat of holding on to the state in which the Clear Light shines; and there follows a progressive descent into lower and lower states of the *Bardo* existence, and then rebirth. The simile of a needle balanced and set rolling on a thread is used by the *lāmas* to elucidate this condition. So long as the needle retains its balance, it remains on the thread. Eventually, however, the law of gravitation affects it, and it falls. In the realm of the Clear Light, similarly, the mentality of a person dying momentarily enjoys a condition of balance, or perfect equilibrium, and of oneness. Owing to unfamiliarity with such a state, which is an ecstatic state of non-ego, of subliminal consciousness, the consciousness-principle of the average human being lacks the power to function in it; *karmic* propensities becloud the consciousness-principle with thoughts of personality, of individualized being, of dualism, and, losing equilibrium, the consciousness-principle falls away from the Clear Light. It is ideation of ego, of self, which prevents the realization of *Nirvāṇa* (which is the 'blowing out of the flame of selfish longing'); and so the Wheel of Life continues to turn.

Clear Light, which dawneth in somewhat more than a meal-time period after that the expiration hath ceased.¹

According to one's good or bad *karma*, the vital-force floweth down into either the right or left nerve and goeth out through any of the apertures [of the body].² Then cometh a lucid condition of the mind.³

To say that the state [of the primary Clear Light] endureth for a meal-time period [would depend upon] the good or bad condition of the nerves and also whether there hath been previous practice or not [in the setting-face-to-face].

When the consciousness-principle getteth outside [the body, it sayeth to itself], 'Am I dead, or am I not dead?' It cannot determine. It seeth its relatives and connexions as it had been used to seeing them before. It even heareth the wailings. The terrifying *karmic* illusions have not yet dawned. Nor have the frightful apparitions or experiences caused by the Lords of Death⁴ yet come.

During this interval, the directions are to be applied [by the *lāma* or reader]:

There are those [devotees] of the perfected stage and of the

¹ Immediately after the passing of the vital-force into the median-nerve, the person dying experiences the Clear Light in its primitive purity, the *Dharma-Kāya* unobscured; and, if unable to hold fast to that experience, next experiences the secondary Clear Light, having fallen to a lower state of the *Bardo*, wherein the *Dharma-Kāya* is dimmed by *karmic* obscurations.

² Cf. p. xxx.

³ Text: *shes-pa*, rendered here as 'mind'. The translator has added the following comment: 'The vital-force, passing from the navel psychic-nerve centre, and the principle of consciousness, passing from the brain psychic-nerve centre, unite in the heart psychic-nerve centre, and in departing thence from the body, normally through the Aperture of Brāhma, produce in the dying person a state of ecstasy of the greatest intensity. The succeeding stage is less intense. In the first, or primary, stage, is experienced the Primary Clear Light, in the second stage, the Secondary Clear Light. A ball set bounding reaches its greatest height at the first bound; the second bound is lower, and each succeeding bound is still lower until the ball comes to rest. Similarly is it with the consciousness-principle at the death of a human body. Its first spiritual bound, directly upon quitting the earth-plane body, is the highest; the next is lower. Finally, the force of *karma* having spent itself in the after-death state, the consciousness-principle comes to rest, a womb is entered, and then comes rebirth in this world.'

⁴ Text: *Gshin-rje* (pron. *Shin-je*): 'Lord of Death'; but the plural form is allowable and preferable here.

visualizing stage. If it be one who was in the perfected stage, then call him thrice by name and repeat over and over again the above instructions of setting-face-to-face with the Clear Light. If it be one who was in the visualizing stage, then read out to him the introductory descriptions and the text of the Meditation on his tutelary deity,¹ and then say,

O thou of noble-birth, meditate upon thine own tutelary deity.—[Here the deity's name is to be mentioned by the reader.²] Do not be distracted. Earnestly concentrate thy mind upon thy tutelary deity. Meditate upon him as if he were the reflection of the moon in water, apparent yet in-existent [in itself]. Meditate upon him as if he were a being with a physical body.

So saying, [the reader will] impress it.

If [the deceased be] of the common folk, say,

Meditate upon the Great Compassionate Lord.³

By thus being set-face-to-face even those who would not be expected to recognize the *Bardo* [unaided] are undoubtedly certain to recognize it.

Persons who while living had been set face to face [with the Reality] by a *guru*, yet who have not made themselves familiar with it, will not be able to recognize the *Bardo* clearly by themselves. Either a *guru* or a brother in the Faith will have to impress vividly such persons.⁴

¹ Cf. the following, from *The Craft to Know Well to Die*, chap. IV, Comper's ed. (p. 73): 'And after he [the person dying] ought to require the apostles, the martyrs, the confessors and the virgins, and in special all the saints that he most loved ever.'

² The favourite deity of the deceased is the tutelary (Tib. *yi-dam*), usually one of the Buddhas or Bodhisattvas, of whom Chenraze is the most popular.

³ Text: *Jo-vo-thugs-rje-chen-po* (pron. *Jo-wo-thu-ji-chen-po*): 'Great Compassionate Lord', synonymous with Tib. *Spyan-ras-gangs* (pron. *Chen-rā-ni*): Skt. *Avalokiteshvara*.

⁴ A person may have heard a detailed description of the art of swimming and yet never have tried to swim. Suddenly thrown into water he finds himself unable to swim. So with those who have been taught the theory of how to act in the time of death and have not applied, through *yogic* practices, the theory: they cannot maintain unbroken continuity of consciousness; they grow bewildered at the changed conditions; and fail to progress or to take advantage of the opportunity offered by death, unless upheld and directed by a living *guru*. Even with all that a *guru* can do, they ordinarily, because of bad *karma*, fail to recognize the *Bardo* as such.

There may be even those who have made themselves familiar with the teachings, yet who, because of the violence of the disease causing death, may be mentally unable to withstand illusions. For such, also, this instruction is absolutely necessary.

Again [there are those] who, although previously familiar with the teachings, have become liable to pass into the miserable states of existence, owing to breach of vows or failure to perform essential obligations honestly. To them, this [instruction] is indispensable.

If the first stage of the *Bardo* hath been taken by the forelock, that is best. But if not, by application of this distinct recalling [to the deceased], while in the second stage of the *Bardo*, his intellect is awakened and attaineth liberation.

While on the second stage of the *Bardo*, one's body is of the nature of that called the shining illusory-body.¹

Not knowing whether [he be] dead or not, [a state of] lucidity cometh [to the deceased].² If the instructions be successfully applied to the deceased while he is in that state, then, by the meeting of the Mother-Reality and the Offspring-Reality,³ *karma* controlleth not.⁴ Like the sun's rays, for example, dispelling the darkness, the Clear Light on the Path dispelleth the power of *karma*.

¹ Text: *dag-pahi-sgyu-lus* (pron. *tag-pay-gyu-lü*): 'pure (or shining) illusory body': Skt. *māyā-rūpa*. This is the ethereal counterpart of the physical body of the earth-plane, the 'astral-body' of Theosophy.

² With the departure of the consciousness-principle from the human body there comes a psychic thrill which gives way to a state of lucidity.

³ Text: *Chös-nyid-ma-bu*: Skt. *Dharma Mātri Putra*: 'Mother and Offspring Reality (or Truth)'. The Offspring-Truth is that realized in this world through practising deep meditation (Skt. *dhyāna*). The Mother-Truth is the Primal or Fundamental Truth, experienced only after death whilst the Knower is in the *Bardo* state of equilibrium, ere *karmic* propensities have erupted into activity. What a photograph is compared to the object photographed, the Offspring-Reality is to the Mother-Reality.

⁴ Lit., '*karma* is unable to turn the mouth or head', the figure implied being that of a rider controlling a horse with a bridle and bit. In the *Tantra of the Great Liberation*, there is this similar passage: 'The man blinded by the darkness of ignorance, the fool caught in the meshes of his actions, and the illiterate man, by listening to this Great Tantra, are released from the bonds of *karma*' (cf. *Tantra of the Great Liberation*, line 205, as edited by Arthur Avalon, London, 1913, p. 359).

That which is called the second stage of the *Bardo* dawneth upon the thought-body.¹ The Knower² hovereth within those places to which its activities had been limited. If at this time this special teaching be applied efficiently, then the purpose will be fulfilled; for the *karmic* illusions will not have come yet, and, therefore, he [the deceased] cannot be turned hither and thither [from his aim of achieving Enlightenment].

[PART II]

[THE BARDO OF THE EXPERIENCING OF REALITY]

[INTRODUCTORY INSTRUCTIONS CONCERNING THE EXPERIENCING OF REALITY DURING THE THIRD STAGE OF THE BARDO, CALLED THE CHÖNYID BARDO, WHEN THE KARMIC APPARITIONS APPEAR]

But even though the Primary Clear Light be not recognized, the Clear Light of the second *Bardo* being recognized, Liberation will be attained. If not liberated even by that, then that called the third *Bardo* or the *Chönyid Bardo* dawneth.

In this third stage of the *Bardo*, the *karmic* illusions come to shine. It is very important that this Great Setting-face-to-face of the *Chönyid Bardo* be read: it hath much power and can do much good.

About this time [the deceased] can see that the share of food is being set aside, that the body is being stripped of its garments, that the place of the sleeping-rug is being swept;³

¹ Text: *nyid-hyi-lüs* (pron. *nyid-hyi-lü*), 'mental-body', 'desire-body', or 'thought-body'.

² Cf. pp. 92¹, 95¹, 96¹.

³ The references are (1) to the share of food being set aside for the deceased during the funeral rites; (2) to his corpse being prepared for the shroud; (3) to his bed or sleeping-place.

can hear all the weeping and wailing of his friends and relatives, and, although he can see them and can hear them calling upon him, they cannot hear him calling upon them, so he goeth away displeased.

At that time, sounds, lights, and rays—all three—are experienced. These awe, frighten, and terrify, and cause much fatigue. At this moment, this setting-face-to-face with the *Bardo* [during the experiencing] of Reality is to be applied. Call the deceased by name, and correctly and distinctly explain to him, as follows:

O nobly-born, listen with full attention, without being distracted: There are six states of *Bardo*, namely: the natural state of *Bardo* while in the womb;¹ the *Bardo* of the dream-state;² the *Bardo* of ecstatic equilibrium, while in deep meditation;³ the *Bardo* of the moment of death;⁴ the *Bardo* [during the experiencing] of Reality;⁵ the *Bardo* of the inverse process of *sangsāric* existence.⁶ These are the six.

O nobly-born, thou wilt experience three *Bardos*, the *Bardo* of the moment of death, the *Bardo* [during the experiencing] of Reality, and the *Bardo* while seeking rebirth. Of these three, up to yesterday, thou hadst experienced the *Bardo* of the moment of death. Although the Clear Light of Reality dawned upon thee, thou wert unable to hold on, and so thou hast to wander here. Now henceforth thou art going to experience the [other] two, the *Chönyid Bardo* and the *Sidpa Bardo*.

¹ Text: *Skye-gnas Bardo* (pron. *Kyu-nay Bardo*): 'Intermediate State', or 'State of Uncertainty, of the place of birth (or while in the womb)'.

² Text: *Rmi-lam Bardo* (pron. *Mi-lam Bardo*): 'Intermediate State', or 'State of Uncertainty, [during the experiencing] of the dream-state'.

³ Text: *Ting-ngs-hsin Bsam-glām Bardo* (pron. *Tin-gs-sin Sam-lam Bardo*): 'Intermediate State', or 'State of Uncertainty, [during the experiencing] of *Dyāna* (Meditation) in *Samādhi* (Ecstatic equilibrium)'.

⁴ Text: *Hchi-khahi Bardo* (pron. *Chi-khai Bardo*): 'Intermediate State', or 'State of Uncertainty, of the dying moment (or moment of death)'.

⁵ Text: *Chö-s-nyid Bardo* (pron. *Chö-nyid Bardo*): 'Intermediate State', or 'State of Uncertainty, [during the experiencing] of Reality'.

⁶ Text: *Lugs-hbyung Srid-pahi Bardo* (pron. *Lu-jung Sid-pai Bardo*): 'Intermediate State', or 'State of Uncertainty, in the inverse process of *sangsāric* (worldly) existence'—the state wherein the Knower is seeking rebirth.

Thou wilt pay undistracted attention to that with which I am about to set thee face to face, and hold on:

O nobly-born, that which is called death hath now come. Thou art departing from this world, but thou art not the only one; [death] cometh to all. Do not cling, in fondness and weakness, to this life. Even though thou clingest out of weakness, thou hast not the power to remain here. Thou wilt gain nothing more than wandering in this *Sangsāra*.¹ Be not attached [to this world]; be not weak. Remember the Precious Trinity.²

O nobly-born, whatever fear and terror may come to thee in the *Chönyid Bardo*, forget not these words; and, bearing their meaning at heart, go forwards: in them lieth the vital secret of recognition:

'Alas! when the Uncertain Experiencing of Reality is dawning upon me here,³

With every thought of fear or terror or awe for all [apparitional appearances] set aside,

May I recognize whatever [visions] appear, as the reflections of mine own consciousness;

May I know them to be of the nature of apparitions in the *Bardo*:

When at this all-important moment [of opportunity] of achieving a great end,

May I not fear the bands of Peaceful and Wrathful [Deities], mine own thought-forms.⁴

Repeat thou these [verses] clearly, and remembering their significance as thou repeatest them, go forwards, [O nobly-born]. Thereby, whatever visions of awe or terror appear,

¹ Text: *Hkhor-wa* (pron. *Khor-wa*): 'a thing whirling round'; 'whirligig': Skt. *Sangsāra* (or *Samsāra*).

² That is, the Buddha, the Dharma, the Saṅgha.

³ Reality is experienced or glimpsed in a state of uncertainty, because the Knower experiences it through the *Bardo* counterpart of the illusory perceptive faculties of the earth-plane body and not through the unobscured supramundane consciousness of the pure *Dharma-Kāya* state, wherein there can be no *Bardo* (i.e. 'Uncertain', or 'Intermediate State').

⁴ Text: *rang-srang* (pron. *rang-rang*): 'one's own [mental] visions (or thought-forms)'.

recognition is certain; and forget not this vital secret art lying therein.

O nobly-born, when thy body and mind were separating, thou must have experienced a glimpse of the Pure Truth, subtle, sparkling, bright, dazzling, glorious, and radiantly awesome, in appearance like a mirage moving across a landscape in spring-time in one continuous stream of vibrations. Be not daunted thereby, nor terrified, nor awed. That is the radiance of thine own true nature. Recognize it.

From the midst of that radiance, the natural sound of Reality, reverberating like a thousand thunders simultaneously sounding, will come. That is the natural sound of thine own real self. Be not daunted thereby, nor terrified, nor awed.

The body which thou hast now is called the thought-body of propensities.¹ Since thou hast not a material body of flesh and blood, whatever may come,—sounds, lights, or rays,—are, all three, unable to harm thee: thou art incapable of dying. It is quite sufficient for thee to know that these apparitions are thine own thought-forms. Recognize this to be the *Bardo*.

O nobly-born, if thou dost not now recognize thine own thought-forms, whatever of meditation or of devotion thou mayst have performed while in the human world—if thou hast not met with this present teaching—the lights will daunt thee, the sounds will awe thee, and the rays will terrify thee. Shouldst thou not know this all-important key to the teachings,—not being able to recognize the sounds, lights, and rays,—thou wilt have to wander in the *Sangsāra*.

[THE DAWNING OF THE PEACEFUL DEITIES, FROM THE FIRST TO THE SEVENTH DAY]

[Assuming that the deceased is *karmically* bound—as the average departed one is—to pass through the forty-nine days of the *Bardo* existence, despite the very frequent settings-face-to-face, the daily trials and dangers which he must meet and

¹ Text: *bag-chags yid-lās* (pron. *bag-chah yid-lā*). *yid-lās*: 'mind-body' or 'thought-body'; *bag-chags*: 'habit', 'propensities' (born of *sangsāric* or worldly existence).

attempt to triumph over, during the first seven days, wherein dawn the Peaceful Deities, are next explained to him in detail; the first day, judging from the text, being reckoned from the time in which normally he would be expected to wake up to the fact that he is dead and on the way back to rebirth, or about three and one-half to four days after death.]

[THE FIRST DAY]

O nobly-born, thou hast been in a swoon during the last three and one-half days. As soon as thou art recovered from this swoon, thou wilt have the thought, 'What hath happened!'

Act so that thou wilt recognize the *Bardo*. At that time, all the *Sangsāra* will be in revolution;¹ and the phenomenal appearances that thou wilt see then will be the radiances and deities.² The whole heavens will appear deep blue.

Then, from the Central Realm, called the Spreading Forth of the Seed,³ the Bhagavān Vairochana,⁴ white in colour, and

¹ That is to say, phenomena, or phenomenal experiences as experienced when in the human world, will be experienced in quite another way in the *Bardo* world, so that to one just dead they will seem to be in revolution or confusion; hence the warning to the deceased, who must accustom himself to the after-death state as a babe must accustom itself after birth to our world.

² At this point, where the marvellous *Bardo* visions begin to dawn, the student in attempting to rationalize them should ever keep in mind that this treatise is essentially esoteric, being in most parts, especially from here onwards, allegorical and symbolical of psychic experiences in the after-death state.

³ Text: *Thigle-Brdalwa* (pron. *Thigle-Dalwa*): 'Spreading forth the Seed [of all Things]'. Esoterically, this is the *Dharma-Dhātu*.

⁴ Text: *Rnam-par-Snang-mtsad* (pron. *Nam-par-Nang-sad*); Skt. *Vairochana*, the Dhyāni Buddha of the Centre (or Central Realm). *Vairochana* literally means, 'in shapes making visible'; hence he is the Manifest of Phenomena, or the Noumena. The wheel he holds symbolizes sovereign power. His title Bhagavān (applied to many other of the deities to follow hereinafter), meaning 'One Possessed of Dominion' (or 'of the Six Powers'), or 'The Victorious', qualifies him as being a Buddha, i.e. One who has conquered, or has dominion over, *sangsāric*, or worldly, existence.

As the Central Dhyāni Buddha, Vairochana is the highest path to Enlightenment of the Esoteric School. Like a Central Sun, surrounded by the four Dhyāni Buddhas of the four cardinal directions, who dawn on the four succeeding days, he symbolizes the One Truth surrounded by its four constituents or elements. As the source of all organic life, in him all things visible and invisible have their consummation and absorption.

For general references to the deities of the *Bardo Thödol*, see L. A. Waddell, *The Buddhism of Tibet or Lamaism* (London, 1895); and A. Getty, *The Gods of Northern Buddhism* (Oxford, 1914).

seated upon a lion-throne, bearing an eight-spoked wheel in his hand, and embraced by the Mother of the Space of Heaven,¹ will manifest himself to thee.

It is the aggregate of matter resolved into its primordial state which is the blue light.²

The Wisdom of the *Dharma-Dhātu*, blue in colour, shining, transparent, glorious, dazzling, from the heart of Vairochana as the Father-Mother,³ will shoot forth and strike against thee with a light so radiant that thou wilt scarcely be able to look at it.

Along with it, there will also shine a dull white light from the *devas*, which will strike against thee in thy front.

Thereupon, because of the power of bad *karma*, the glorious blue light of the Wisdom of the *Dharma-Dhātu* will produce in thee fear and terror, and thou wilt [wish to] flee from it. Thou wilt beget a fondness for the dull white light of the *devas*.

At this stage, thou must not be awed by the divine blue light which will appear shining, dazzling, and glorious; and be not startled by it. That is the light of the Tathāgata⁴ called the Light of the Wisdom of the *Dharma-Dhātu*. Put thy faith in it, believe in it firmly, and pray unto it, thinking in thy mind that it is the light proceeding from the heart of the Bhagavān Vairochana coming to receive thee while in the

¹ Text: *Nam-mkh-ah-dvying-kyi-duang-phyug-ma* (pron. *Nam-kha-ing-kyi-wang-diug-ma*): 'Sovereign Lady of the Space of Heaven': Skt. *Ākāśa Dhātu Ishvari*. The Mother is the female principle of the universe; the Father, Vairochana, the seed of all that is.

² Here the Block-Print reads: 'It is the aggregate of consciousness (*Rnam-par Shes-jahi*—pro. *Nam-par She-pay*—Skt. *Vijñāna Skandha*) resolved into its primordial state which is the blue light.' In our MS. the aggregate of consciousness shines as a white light in relationship with Vajra-Sattva, on the Second Day (see p. 109).

³ Here, as in parallel passages following, the chief deity personifies in himself the female as well as the male principle of nature, and hence is called the Father-Mother—depicted, as described by the text, in appropriate symbolic colours, on the corresponding illuminated folio of our MS., as the Divine Father and the Divine Mother in union (i.e. in divine at-one-ment).

⁴ Text: *De-bahing-shes-pa* (pron. *De-shing-shes-pa*): Skt. *Tathāgata*, meaning '[He] who hath gone that same way', i.e. One who hath reached the Goal (*Nirvāṇa*)—a Buddha.

dangerous ambuscade¹ of the *Bardo*. That light is the light of the grace of Vairochana.

Be not fond of the dull white light of the *devas*. Be not attached [to it]; be not weak. If thou be attached to it, thou wilt wander into the abodes of the *devas* and be drawn into the whirl of the Six *Lokas*. That is an interruption to obstruct thee on the Path of Liberation. Look not at it. Look at the bright blue light in deep faith. Put thy whole thought earnestly upon Vairochana and repeat after me this prayer:

'Alas! when wandering in the *Sangsāra*, because of intense stupidity,

On the radiant light-path of the *Dharma-Dhātu* Wisdom May [I] be led by the Bhagavān Vairochana, May the Divine Mother of Infinite Space be [my] rear-guard;

May [I] be led safely across the fearful ambush of the *Bardo*;

May [I] be placed in the state of the All-Perfect Buddhahood.'²

Praying thus, in intense humble faith, [thou] wilt merge, in halo of rainbow light, into the heart of Vairochana, and obtain Buddhahood in the *Sambhoga-Kāya*, in the Central Realm of the Densely-Packed.³

¹ Text: *hphrang* (pron. *htang*): 'narrow passage', 'ambush'.

² Cf. the following instructions to the dying person and the prayer from *The Craft to Know Well to Die*, chap. IV, Comper's ed. (p. 73): 'He ought afterwards, if he may, to call on the holy angels, in saying: "Ye spirits of Heaven, Angels much glorious, I beseech you that ye will be assistant [i.e. present] with me that now beginneth to depart, and that ye deliver me mightily from the awaits and fallacies of mine adversaries; and that it please you to receive my soul into your company. The principal, my leader and my good angel, which by our Lord art deputed to be my warder and keeper, I pray and require thee that thou now aid and help me."'

³ Text: *Stug-po-bhod-pahi shing-khams* (pron. *Tug-po-bod-pai shing-kham*): 'Thickly-formed' or 'Densely-packed Realm', i.e. the seed of all universal forces and things are densely packed together therein; also called in Tibetan 'Og-min': lit. 'No-down', the realm whence there is no fall, the state leading into *Nirvāṇa*; it is pre-eminently the realm of the Buddhas.

[THE SECOND DAY]

But if, notwithstanding this setting-face-to-face, through power of anger or obscuring *karma* one should be startled at the glorious light and flee, or be overcome by illusions, despite the prayer, on the Second Day, Vajra-Sattva and his attendant deities, as well as one's evil deeds [meriting] Hell, will come to receive one.

Thereupon the setting-face-to-face is, calling the deceased by name, thus:

O nobly-born, listen undistractedly. On the Second Day the pure form of water will shine as a white light. At that time, from the deep blue Eastern Realm of Pre-eminent Happiness, the Bhagavān Akṣobhya [as] Vajra-Sattva,¹ blue in colour, holding in his hand a five-pronged *dorje*,² seated upon an elephant-throne, and embraced by the Mother Māmaki³, will appear to thee, attended by the Bodhisattvas Kṣitigarbha⁴ and Maitreya,⁵ with the female Bodhisattvas, Lasema and Pushpema.⁶ These six *Bodhic* deities will appear to thee.

¹ Text: *Rdorje-sem-dpah Mi-bskyod-pa* (pron. *Dorje-sem-pa Mi-kyod-pa*): Skt. *Vajra-Sattva Akṣobhya*. Akṣobhya (the 'Unagitated' or 'Immovable'), the Dhyanī Buddha of the Eastern Direction, here, as throughout the text, appears as Vajra-Sattva ('The Divine Heroic-Minded', or 'Indestructible-Minded'), his *Sambhoga-Kāya*, or adorned active reflex. Vajra-Dhāra ('The Indestructible or Steadfast Holder' [see p. 13]) is, also, a reflex of Akṣobhya; and both reflexes are very important deities of the Esoteric School.

² The *dorje* is the *lāmaic* sceptre, a type of the thunderbolt of Indra (Jupiter).

³ This is the Sanskrit form as incorporated in our Tibetan text. Here the Block-Print, evidently in error, contains, in Tibetan, *Sangs-rgyas-spyan-ma* (pron. *Sang-yay Chan-ma*), meaning 'She of the Buddha Eye', who, in our manuscript text, comes with Ratna-Sambhava on the Third Day. Māmaki is also one of the 108 names given to Dölma (Skt. *Tārā*), the national goddess of Tibet. (See p. 116.) In the *Dharma Samgraha* it is said that there are four Devils, namely, Rochani, Māmaki, Pāndurā, and Tārā.

⁴ Text: *Sahi-snying-po* (pron. *Say-nying-po*): Skt. *Kṣitigarbha*: 'Womb (or Matrix) of the Earth.'

⁵ Text: *Byams-pa* (pron. *Cham-pa*): Skt. *Maitreya*: 'Love'; the Buddha to come, who will reform mankind through the power of divine love.

⁶ *Lasema* and *Pushpema* are corrupt Sanskrit forms incorporated in our manuscript. Their Tibetan equivalents are, respectively, *Sgeg-mo-ma* (Skt. *Lāsya*), meaning 'Belle' (or 'Dallying One'), and *Me-log-ma* (Skt. *Pushpā*), 'She who offers (or holds) Blossoms'. *Pushpā*, depicted holding a blossom in her hand, is a personification of blossoms. *Lāsya*, the Belle, depicted holding a mirror in a coquettish attitude, personifies beauty.

The aggregate of thy principle of consciousness,¹ being in its pure form—which is the Mirror-like Wisdom—will shine as a bright, radiant white light, from the heart of Vajra-Sattva, the Father-Mother,² with such dazzling brilliancy and transparency that thou wilt scarcely be able to look at it, [and] will strike against thee. And a dull, smoke-coloured light from Hell will shine alongside the light of the Mirror-like Wisdom and will [also] strike against thee.

Thereupon, through the power of anger, thou wilt beget fear and be startled at the dazzling white light and wilt [wish to] flee from it; thou wilt beget a feeling of fondness for the dull smoke-coloured light from Hell. Act then so that thou wilt not fear that bright, dazzling, transparent white light. Know it to be Wisdom. Put thy humble and earnest faith in it. That is the light of the grace of the Bhagavān Vajra-Sattva. Think, with faith, 'I will take refuge in it'; and pray.

That is the Bhagavān Vajra-Sattva coming to receive thee and to save thee from the fear and terror of the *Bardo*. Believe in it; for it is the hook of the rays of grace of Vajra-Sattva.³

Be not fond of the dull, smoke-coloured light from Hell. That is the path which openeth out to receive thee because of the power of accumulated evil *karma* from violent anger. If thou be attracted by it, thou wilt fall into the Hell-Worlds; and, falling therein, thou wilt have to endure unbearable misery, whence there is no certain time of getting out. That being an interruption to obstruct thee on the Path of Liberation, look not at it; and avoid anger.⁴ Be not attracted by

¹ Text: *Rnam-par-shes-pahi-phung-po* (pron. *Nam-par-shu-pay-phung-po*), 'aggregate of consciousness-principle', the Knower. The Block-Print contains, in place of this, *Gangs-kyi-phung-po* (pron. *Zu-kyi-phung-po*), 'aggregate of the body' or 'Bodily-aggregate'.

² See p. 106.

³ The rays of divine grace are a hook of salvation to catch hold of the deceased and drag him away from the dangers of the *Bardo*. Sometimes each ray is thought of as ending in a hook, just as each ray emanating from the sun-god Ra, and descending as a grace ray upon a devotee, is depicted in ancient temples of Egypt as ending in a hand. Similarly, the Christian thinks of the saving grace of God.

⁴ The deceased is here thought of, perhaps, as being able to see his people

it; be not weak. Believe in the dazzling bright white light; [and] putting thy whole heart earnestly upon the Bhagavān Vajra-Sattva, pray thus:

'Alas! when wandering in the *Sangsāra* because of the power of violent anger,

On the radiant light-path of the Mirror-like Wisdom,

May [I] be led by the Bhagavān Vajra-Sattva,

May the Divine Mother Māmaki be [my] rear-guard;

May [I] be led safely across the fearful ambush of the *Bardo*;

And may [I] be placed in the state of the All-perfect Buddhahood.'

Praying thus, in intense humble faith, thou wilt merge, in rainbow light, into the heart of the Bhagavān Vajra-Sattva and obtain Buddhahood in the *Sambhoga-Kāya*, in the Eastern Realm called Pre-eminently Happy.

[THE THIRD DAY]

Yet, even when set face to face in this way, some persons, because of obscurations from bad *karma*, and from pride, although the hook of the rays of grace [strieth against them], flee from it. [If one be one of them], then, on the Third Day, the Bhagavān Ratna-Sambhava¹ and his accompanying deities, along with the light-path from the human world, will come to receive one simultaneously.

Again, calling the deceased by name, the setting-face-to-face is thus:

O nobly-born, listen undistractedly. On the Third Day the primal form of the element earth will shine forth as a yellow light. At that time, from the Southern Realm Endowed with

on earth and as liable to anger should he see them disputing over the division of his property, or if he perceives avarice on the part of the *lāma* conducting the funeral rites. But the prohibition touching anger is essentially *yogic*, *yogis* of all religions recognizing that anger prevents spiritual progress; and it parallels the moral teaching against giving way to anger contained in the ancient Egyptian *Precepts of Ptah-hotep*.

¹ Text: *Rinchen-hbyung-dan* (pron. *Rinchen-Jung-dan*): Skt. *Ratna-Sambhava*, i.e. 'Born of a Jewel'. He is the Beautifier, whence comes all that is precious; a personified attribute of the Buddha.

Glory, the Bhagavān Ratna-Sambhava, yellow in colour, bearing a jewel in his hand, seated upon a horse-throne and embraced by the Divine Mother Sangyay-Chanma,¹ will shine upon thee.

The two Bodhisattvas, Ākāsha-Garbha² and Samanta-Bhadra,³ attended by the two female Bodhisattvas, Mahlaima and Dhupema,⁴—in all, six Bodhic forms,—will come to shine from amidst a rainbow halo of light. The aggregate of touch in its primal form, as the yellow light of the Wisdom of Equality, dazzlingly yellow, glorified with orbs having satellite orbs of radiance, so clear and bright that the eye can scarcely look upon it, will strike against thee. Side by side with it, the dull bluish-yellow light from the human [world] will also strike against thy heart, along with the Wisdom light.

Thereupon, through the power of egotism, thou wilt beget a fear for the dazzling yellow light and wilt [wish to] flee from it. Thou wilt be fondly attracted towards the dull bluish-yellow light from the human [world].

At that time do not fear that bright, dazzling-yellow, transparent light, but know it to be Wisdom; in that state, keeping thy mind resigned, trust in it earnestly and humbly. If thou knowest it to be the radiance of thine own intellect—although thou exertest not thy humility and faith and prayer to it—the Divine Body and Light will merge into thee inseparably and thou wilt obtain Buddhahood.

If thou dost not recognize the radiance of thine own intellect, think, with faith, 'It is the radiance of the grace of the

¹ Text: *Sangs-rgyas-spyan-ma* (pron. *Sang-yay Chan-ma*): 'She of the Buddha Eye (or Eyes).'

² Text: *Nam-mkhahi-snying-po* (pron. *Nam-khai-nying-po*): Skt. *Ākāsha-Garbha*, 'Womb (or Matrix) of the Sky'.

³ Text: *Kuntu-bsang-po* (pron. *Kuntu-sang-po*): Skt. *Samanta-Bhadra*, 'All-Good'. This is not the Ādi-Buddha Samanta-Bhadra (cf. p. 95), but the spiritual son of the Dhyāni Buddha Vairocana.

⁴ Text: *Mahlaima*, 'She Who Holds (or Bears) the Rosary'; and *Dhupema*, 'She Who Holds (or Bears) the Incense'. These are corrupt forms, hybrids of Sanskrit and Tibetan, their Sanskrit equivalents being *Mālā* and *Dhūpa*, and their Tibetan equivalents *Hphrang-ba-ma* (pron. *Phrang-ba-ma*) and *Bdug-spō-ma* (pron. *Dug-pō-ma*). The colour of these goddesses, corresponding to that of the earth-light, is yellow.

Bhagavān Ratna-Sambhava; I will take refuge in it'; and pray. It is the hook of the grace-rays of the Bhagavān Ratna-Sambhava; believe in it.

Be not fond of that dull bluish-yellow light from the human [world]. That is the path of thine accumulated propensities of violent egotism come to receive thee. If thou art attracted by it, thou wilt be born in the human world and have to suffer birth, age, sickness, and death; and thou wilt have no chance of getting out of the quagmire of worldly existence. That is an interruption to obstruct thy path of liberation. Therefore, look not upon it, and abandon egotism, abandon propensities; be not attracted towards it; be not weak. Act so as to trust in that bright dazzling light. Put thine earnest thought, one-pointedly, upon the Bhagavān Ratna-Sambhava; and pray thus:

'Alas! when wandering in the *Sangsāra* because of the power of violent egotism,
On the radiant light-path of the Wisdom of Equality,
May [I] be led by the Bhagavān Ratna-Sambhava;
May the Divine Mother, She-of-the-Buddha-Eye, be [my] rear-guard;
May [I] be led safely across the fearful ambush of the *Bardo*;
And may [I] be placed in the state of the All-Perfect Buddhahood.'

By praying thus, with deep humility and faith, thou wilt merge into the heart of the Bhagavān Ratna-Sambhava, the Divine Father-Mother, in halo of rainbow light, and attain Buddhahood in the *Sambhoga-Kāya*, in the Southern Realm Endowed with Glory.

[THE FOURTH DAY]

By thus being set face to face, however weak the mental faculties may be, there is no doubt of one's gaining Liberation. Yet, though so often set face to face, there are classes of men who, having created much bad *karma*, or having failed in observance of vows, or, their lot [for higher development] being altogether lacking, prove unable to recognize: their obscurations

and evil *karma* from covetousness and miserliness produce awe of the sounds and radiances, and they flee. [If one be of these classes], then, on the Fourth Day, the Bhagavān Amitābha¹ and his attendant deities, together with the light-path from the *Preta-loka*, proceeding from miserliness and attachment, will come to receive one simultaneously.

Again the setting-face-to-face is, calling the deceased by name, thus:

O nobly-born, listen undistractedly. On the Fourth Day the red light, which is the primal form of the element fire, will shine. At that time, from the Red Western Realm of Happiness,² the Bhagavān Buddha Amitābha, red in colour, bearing a lotus in his hand, seated upon a peacock-throne and embraced by the Divine Mother Gökarmo,³ will shine upon thee, [together with] the Bodhisattvas Chenrazee⁴ and Jampal,⁵ attended by the female Bodhisattvas Ghirdhima⁶ and Āloke.⁷ The six bodies of Enlightenment will shine upon thee from amidst a halo of rainbow light.

¹ Text: *Suang-va-mthah-yas* (pron. *Nang-wa-tha-yay*): Skt. *Amitābha*, 'Boundless (or Incomprehensible) Light'. As an embodiment of one of the Buddha-attributes or Wisdoms, the All-discriminating Wisdom, Amitābha personifies life eternal.

² Text: *Gös-dkar-mo* (pron. *Gö-kar-mo*), 'She-in-White-Raiment'.

³ Text: *Spyan-ras-geigs* (pron. *Chen-rā-si*): Skt. *Avalokiteshvara*, 'Down-Looking One', the embodiment of mercy or compassion. The Dalai Lāmas are believed to be his incarnations; Amitābha, with whom he here dawns, is his spiritual father, whose incarnate representatives are the Tashi Lāmas. He is often depicted with eleven heads and a thousand arms, each with an eye in the palm—as 'The Great Pitier'—his thousand arms and eyes appropriately representing him as ever on the outlook to discover distress and to succour the troubled. In China, Avalokiteshvara becomes the Great Goddess of Mercy Kwanyin, represented by a female figure bearing a child in her arms.

⁴ Text: *Hjam-dpal* (pron. *Jam-pal*): Skt. *Mahjishat*, 'Of Gentle Glory'. A fuller Tibetan form is *Hjam-dpal-dzyang* (pron. *Jam-pal-yang*): Skt. *Mah-jughosha*, 'Glorious Gentle-Voiced One'. He is 'The God of Mystic Wisdom', the Buddhist Apollo, commonly depicted with the flaming sword of light held aloft in his right hand and the lotus-supported Book of Wisdom, the *Prajñā-Pāramitā*, held in his left.

⁵ Text: *Ghir-dhi-ma* and *Āloke*, corrupted from Skt. *Gītā*, 'Song', and *Āloka*, 'Light': Tib. *Glu-ma* (pron. *Lu-ma*) and *Suang-gsal-ma* (pron. *Nang-sal-ma*). *Gītā*, commonly represented holding a lyre, personifies (or symbolizes) music and song, and *Āloka*, holding a lamp, personifies (or symbolizes) light. Related to the element fire, as herein, their colour is red.

The primal form of the aggregate of feelings as the red light of the All-Discriminating Wisdom, glitteringly red, glorified with orbs and satellite orbs, bright, transparent, glorious and dazzling, proceeding from the heart of the Divine Father-Mother Amitābha, will strike against thy heart [so radiantly] that thou wilt scarcely be able to look upon it. Fear it not.

Along with it, a dull red light from the *Preta-loka*, coming side by side with the Light of Wisdom, will also shine upon thee. Act so that thou shalt not be fond of it. Abandon attachment [and] weakness [for it].

At that time, through the influence of intense attachment, thou wilt become terrified by the dazzling red light, and wilt [wish to] flee from it. And thou wilt beget a fondness for that dull red light of the *Preta-loka*.

At that time, be not afraid of the glorious, dazzling, transparent, radiant red light. Recognizing it as Wisdom, keeping thine intellect in the state of resignation, thou wilt merge [into it] inseparably and attain Buddhahood.

If thou dost not recognize it, think, 'It is the rays of the grace of the Bhagavān Amitābha, and I will take refuge in it'; and, trusting humbly in it, pray unto it. That is the hook-rays of the grace of the Bhagavān Amitābha. Trust in it humbly; flee not. Even if thou fleest, it will follow thee inseparably [from thyself]. Fear it not. Be not attracted towards the dull red light of the *Preta-loka*. That is the light-path proceeding from the accumulations of thine intense attachment [to *sangsāric* existence] which hath come to receive thee. If thou be attached thereto, thou wilt fall into the World of Unhappy Spirits and suffer unbearable misery from hunger and thirst. Thou wilt have no chance of gaining Liberation [therein].¹ That dull red light is an interruption to obstruct thee on the Path of Liberation. Be not attached to it, and abandon habitual propensities. Be not weak. Trust in the bright dazzling red light. In the Bhagavān Amitābha,

¹ Lit. 'Of Liberation there will be no time.' Once the deceased becomes a *preta*, or unhappy ghost, the after-death attainment of *Nirvāṇa* is, normally, no longer possible; he must then wait for the opportunity afforded by rebirth in the human world, when his *Preta-loka* existence has ended.

the Father-Mother, put thy trust one-pointedly and pray thus:

'Alas! when wandering in the *Sangsāra* because of the power of intense attachment,
On the radiant light-path of the Discriminating Wisdom
May [I] be led by the Bhagavān Amitābha;
May the Divine Mother, She-of-White-Raiment, be [my] rear-guard;
May [I] be safely led across the dangerous ambush of the *Bardo*;
And may [I] be placed in the state of the All-Perfect Buddhahood.'

By praying thus, humbly and earnestly, thou wilt merge into the heart of the Divine Father-Mother, the Bhagavān Amitābha, in halo of rainbow-light, and attain Buddhahood in the *Sambhoga-Kāya*, in the Western Realm named Happy.

[THE FIFTH DAY]

It is impossible that one should not be liberated thereby. Yet, though thus set face to face, sentient beings, unable through long association with propensities to abandon propensities, and, through bad *karma* and jealousy, awe and terror being produced by the sounds and radiances—the hook-rays of grace failing to catch hold of them—wander down also to the Fifth Day. [If one be such a sentient being], thereupon the Bhagavān Amogha-Siddhi,¹ with his attendant deities and the light and rays of his grace, will come to receive one. A light proceeding from the *Asura-loka*, produced by the evil passion of jealousy, will also come to receive one.

The setting-face-to-face at that time is, calling the deceased by name, thus:

O nobly-born, listen undistractedly. On the Fifth Day, the green light of the primal form of the element air will shine upon thee. At that time, from the Green Northern Realm of Successful Performance of Best Actions, the Bhagavān Buddha Amogha-Siddhi, green in colour, bearing a crossed-*dorje* in

¹ Text: *Don-yod-grub-pa* (pron. *Don-yōd-tub-pa*): Skt. *Amogha-Siddhi*: 'Almighty Conqueror.'

hand,¹ seated upon a sky-traversing Harpy-throne,² embraced by the Divine Mother, the Faithful Dölma,³ will shine upon thee, with his attendants,—the two Bodhisattvas Chag-na-Dorje⁴ and Dīpnam-sel,⁵ attended by two female Bodhisattvas, Gandhema⁶ and Nidhema.⁷ These six *Bodhic* forms, from amidst a halo of rainbow light, will come to shine.

The primal form of the aggregate of volition, shining as the green light of the All-Performing Wisdom, dazzlingly green, transparent and radiant, glorious and terrifying, beautified with orbs surrounded by satellite orbs of radiance, issuing from the heart of the Divine Father-Mother Amogha-Siddhi, green in colour, will strike against thy heart [so wondrously

¹ That is, a dorje with four heads. It symbolizes equilibrium, immutability, and almighty power.

² Text: *shang-shang*, refers to an order of creatures like the fabulous harpies of classical mythology, having human form from the waist upwards, and from the waist downwards the form of a bird; but whereas the Greek harpies were female, these are of both sexes. That a race of such harpies exists in the world somewhere is a popular belief among Tibetans.

³ Text: *Sgröl-ma* (pron. *Döl-ma*): *Dölma* (Skt. *Tārā*) = 'Saviouress'. She is the divine consort of Avalokiteshvara. There are now two recognized forms of this goddess: the Green Dölma, as worshipped in Tibet, and the White Dölma, as worshipped chiefly in China and Mongolia. The royal Nepalese princess who became the wife of the first Buddhist king of Tibet is believed to have been an incarnation of the Green Dölma, and his wife from the Imperial House of China an incarnation of the White Dölma. (See p. 74.) The late Lāma Kazi Dawa-Samdup told me that, because Tibetans saw the likeness of Queen Victoria on English coins and recognized it as being that of Dölma, there developed throughout Tibet during the Victorian Era a belief that Dölma had come back to birth again to rule the world in the person of the Great Queen of England; and that, owing to this belief, the British representatives of the Queen then met with an unusually friendly reception in their negotiations with Lhasa, although probably unaware of the origin of the friendship.

⁴ Text: *Phyag-na-rdorje* (pron. *Chag-na-dorje*): 'Bearing the *Dorje* in hand': Skt. *Vajra-pāṇi*.

⁵ Text: *Sgrīb-pa-rnam-sel* (pron. *Dīb-pa-nam-sel*): 'Clearer of Obscurations': Skt. *Dīpani*, also *Dīpikā*.

⁶ Skt.-Tib. hybrid of text. Corresponding Tib., *Dri-chha-ma* (Skt. *Gandha*), 'She Spraying Perfume', one of the eight mother goddesses (*Mātrīs*) of the Hindu pantheon. She is depicted holding a shell-vase of perfume (*dri*).

⁷ Skt.-Tib. hybrid of text. Corresponding Tib., *Zhal-sas-ma* (pron. *Shal-sa-ma*), 'She Holding Sweetmeats'. Although a goddess like Gandhema, Nidhema (Skt. *Naivedya*) cannot be included in the formal list of eight *Mātrīs*, the eight already having been named in our text. Both goddesses are green in colour, like the light of the All-Performing Wisdom.

bright] that thou wilt scarcely be able to look at it. Fear it not. That is the natural power of the wisdom of thine own intellect. Abide in the state of great resignation of impartiality.

Along with it [i.e. the green light of the All-Performing Wisdom], a light of dull green colour from the *Asura-loka*, produced from the cause of the feeling of jealousy, coming side by side with the Wisdom Rays, will shine upon thee. Meditate upon it with impartiality,—with neither repulsion nor attraction. Be not fond of it: if thou art of low mental capacity, be not fond of it.

Thereupon, through the influence of intense jealousy,¹ thou wilt be terrified at the dazzling radiance of the green light and wilt [wish to] flee from it; and thou wilt beget a fondness for that dull green light of the *Asura-loka*. At that time fear not the glorious and transparent, radiant and dazzling green light, but know it to be Wisdom; and in that state allow thine intellect to rest in resignation. Or else [think], 'It is the hook-rays of the light of grace of the Bhagavān Amogha-Siddhi, which is the All-Performing Wisdom'. Believe [thus] on it. Flee not from it.

Even though thou shouldst flee from it, it will follow thee inseparably [from thyself]. Fear it not. Be not fond of that dull green light of the *Asura-loka*. That is the *karmic* path of acquired intense jealousy, which hath come to receive thee. If thou art attracted by it, thou wilt fall into the *Asura-loka* and have to engage in unbearable miseries of quarrelling and warfare.² [That is an] interruption to obstruct thy path of liberation. Be not attracted by it. Abandon thy propensities. Be not weak. Trust in the dazzling green radiance, and putting thy whole thought one-pointedly upon the Divine Father-Mother, the Bhagavān Amogha-Siddhi, pray thus:

¹ Here, as in the previous and following paragraph, the jealousy referred to is the *karmic* propensities of jealousy existing as part of the content of the consciousness (or subconsciousness) of the deceased; and, erupting on this the Fifth Day of the *Bardo* existence, they produce their corresponding 'astral' hallucinations.

² Quarrelling and warfare are the chief passions of a being born as an *asura* in the *Asura-loka*.

'Alas! when wandering in the *Sangsāra* because of the power of intense jealousy,
 On the radiant light-path of the All-Performing Wisdom
 May [I] be led by the Bhagavān Amogha-Siddhi;
 May the Divine Mother, the Faithful Tārā, be [my] rear-guard;
 May [I] be led safely across the dangerous ambush of the *Bardo*;
 And may [I] be placed in the state of the All-Perfect Buddhahood.'

By praying thus with intense faith and humility, thou wilt merge into the heart of the Divine Father-Mother, the Bhagavān Amogha-Siddhi, in halo of rainbow light, and attain Buddhahood in the *Sambhoga-Kāya*, in the Northern Realm of Heaped-up Good Deeds.¹

[THE SIXTH DAY]

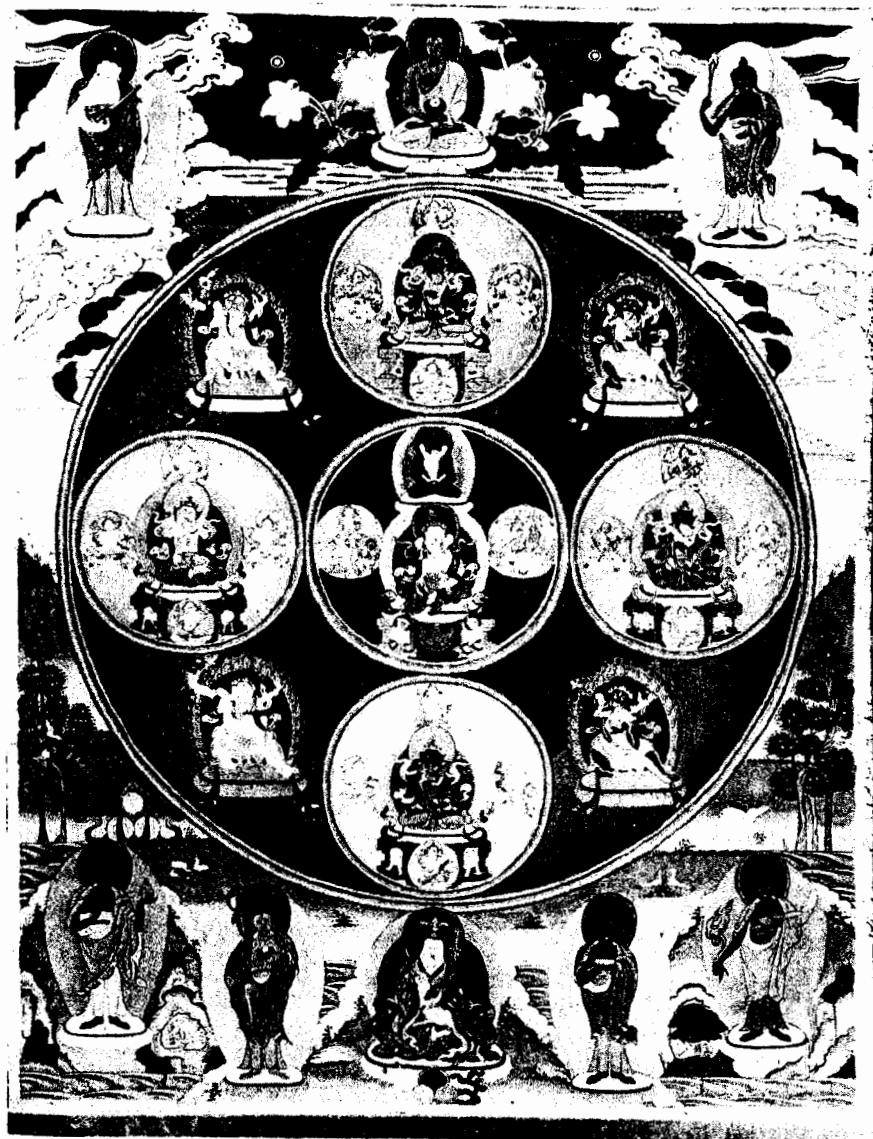
Being thus set face to face at various stages, however weak one's *karmic* connexions may be, one should have recognized in one or the other of them; and where one has recognized in any of them it is impossible not to be liberated. Yet, although set face to face so very often in that manner, one long habituated to strong propensities and lacking in familiarity with, and pure affection for, Wisdom, may be led backwards by the power of one's own evil inclinations despite these many introductions. The hook-rays of the light of grace may not be able to catch hold of one: one may still wander downwards because of one's begetting the feeling of awe and terror of the lights and rays.

Thereupon all the Divine Fathers-Mothers of the Five Orders [of Dhyāni Buddhas] with their attendants will come to shine upon one simultaneously. At the same time, the lights proceeding from the Six *Lokas* will likewise come to shine upon one simultaneously.

The setting-face-to-face for that is, calling the deceased by name, thus:

O nobly-born, until yesterday each of the Five Orders of

¹ The Block-Print has 'Realm of Perfected Good Deeds (or "Actions")'; and this is the more correct form.



THE GREAT MANDALA OF THE PEACEFUL DEITIES

Described on pages xxviii-xxix, 118-22, 217-220



THE TIBETAN WHEEL OF THE LAW

Described on page xxxiii

Deities had shone upon thee, one by one; and thou hadst been set face to face, but, owing to the influence of thine evil propensities, thou wert awed and terrified by them and hast remained here till now.

If thou hadst recognized the radiances of the Five Orders of Wisdom to be the emanations from thine own thought-forms, ere this thou wouldst have obtained Buddhahood in the *Sambhoga-Kāya*, through having been absorbed into the halo of rainbow light in one or another of the Five Orders of Buddhas. But now look on undistractedly. Now the lights of all Five Orders, called the Lights of the Union of Four Wisdoms,¹ will come to receive thee. Act so as to know them.

O nobly-born, on this the Sixth Day, the four colours of the primal states of the four elements [water, earth, fire, air] will shine upon thee simultaneously. At that time, from the Central Realm of the Spreading Forth of Seed, the Buddha² Vairochana, the Divine Father-Mother, with the attendant

¹ The philosophically descriptive Tibetan terms (which are not contained in our text) for these Four Wisdoms are: (1) *Snang-Stong* (pron. *Nang-Tong*), 'Phenomena and Voidness'; (2) *Gsal-Stong* (pron. *Sal-Tong*), 'Radiance and Voidness'; (3) *Bde-Stong* (pron. *De-Tong*), 'Bliss and Voidness'; (4) *Rig-Stong* (pron. *Rig-Tong*), 'Consciousness and Voidness'.

They correspond to the four stages of *dhyāna* which arise in the same order. They probably also correspond, but in a less exact manner, to the Four Wisdoms: the Mirror-like Wisdom, the Wisdom of Equality, the All-Discriminating Wisdom, and the All-Performing Wisdom.

² *Dhyāna* consists of progressive mental states: analysis (Skt. *vitarka*), reflection (Skt. *vichāra*), fondness (Skt. *prīti*), bliss (Skt. *ānanda*), and concentration (Skt. *ekāgratā*). In the first stage of *dhyāna*, the devotee asks himself, "What is this body? Is it lasting; is it the thing to be saved?" and decides that to cling to an impermanent, corruptible bodily form, such as he thereby realizes it to be, is not desirable. Similarly, having gained knowledge of the nature of Form, he analyses and reflects upon Touch, Feeling, Volition, Cognition, and Desire; and, finding that Mind is the apparent reality, arrives at ordinary concentration.

In the second stage of *dhyāna*, reflection only is employed; in other words, reflection transcends the lower mental process called analysis. In the third stage, reflection gives way to a blissful state of consciousness; and this bliss, being at first apparently a physical sensation, merges into pure ecstasy, in the fourth stage. In the fifth stage, the sensation of ecstasy, although always present in a suppressed or secondary condition, gives way to complete concentration.—Lāma Kazi Dawa-Samdup.

³ Heretofore each of the chief deities has been called Bhagavān ('The Victorious'), but, herein, Buddha ('The Enlightened') is the designation. The text contains Tib. *Sangs-rgyas* (pron. *Sang-yay*) = Skt. Buddha: *Sangs* =

[deities], will come to shine upon thee. From the Eastern Realm of Pre-eminent Happiness, the Buddha Vajra-Sattva, the Divine Father-Mother, with the attendant [deities] will come to shine upon thee. From the Southern Realm endowed with Glory, the Buddha Ratna-Sambhava, the Divine Father-Mother, with the attendant [deities] will come to shine upon thee. From the Happy Western Realm |¹ of Heaped-up Lotuses, the Buddha Amitābha, the Divine Father-Mother, along with the attendant [deities] will come to shine upon thee. From the Northern Realm of Perfected Good Deeds, the Buddha Amogha-Siddhi, the Divine Father-Mother, along with the attendants will come, amidst a halo of rainbow light, to shine upon | thee at this very moment.

O nobly-born, on the outer circle of these five pair of Dhyānī Buddhas, the [four] Door-Keepers, the Wrathful [Ones]: the Victorious One,² the Destroyer of the Lord of Death,³ the Horse-necked King,⁴ the Urn of Nectar;⁵ with the four female Door-keepers: the Goad-Bearer,⁶ the Noose-Bearer,⁷ the Chain-Bearer,⁸ and the Bell-Bearer;⁹ 'awakened [from sleep of stupidity]' + *rgyas* = 'developed fully [in all attributes of perfection (or moral virtues)]'.

¹ Between this bar and the bar in the sentence following is contained the translation of the Tibetan text on the upper folio (35a) of our Frontispiece.

² Text: *Rñan-par-rgyal-wa* (pron. *Nam-par-gyal-wa*): Skt. *Vijaya*: 'Victorious [One]', the Door-keeper of the East.

³ Text: *Gahin-rje-gshed-po* (pron. *Shin-je-shed-po*): Skt. *Yamāntaka*: 'Destroyer of Yama (Death)', the Door-keeper of the South, a form of Shiva, and the wrathful aspect of Avalokiteshvara. He, as a Wrathful Deity, personifies one of the ten forms of Anger (Tib. *K'ro-bo*—pron. *T'o-wo*: Skt. *Krodha*).

⁴ Text: *Rta-mgrin-rgyal-po* (pron. *Tam din-gyal-po*): Skt. *Hayagrīva*: 'Horse-necked King', the Door-keeper of the West.

⁵ Text: *Bdud-rtsi-hkhyil-wa* (pron. *Dā-tsi-hkhyil-wa*): Skt. *Amṛita-Dhāra*: '[He who is the] Urn of Nectar', whose divine function is to transmute all things into nectar (in the esoteric sense of Tantric Yoga), *amṛita* meaning 'nectar' exoterically, and, esoterically, 'voidness'. He is the Door-keeper of the North.

⁶ Text: *Chags-hyu-ma* (pron. *Chak-yu-ma*): Skt. *Ankushā*: 'She holding the Goad', the *shakti*, or female counterpart, of Vijaya.

⁷ Text: *Zhags-pa-ma* (pron. *Zhag-pa-ma*): Skt. *Pāśadhari*: 'She holding the Noose', the *shakti* of Yamāntaka.

⁸ Text: *Lghags-sgrog-ma* (pron. *Cha-dog-ma*): Skt. *Vajra-shṛiṅghalā*: 'She holding the Chain', the *shakti* of Hayagrīva.

⁹ Text: *Dril-bu-ma* (pron. *Til-bu-ma*): Skt. *Kinkini-Dhart*: 'She holding the Bell', the *shakti* of Amṛita-Dhāra.

All the Door-keepers and their *shaktis* possess occult significance in relation

along with the Buddha of the *Devas*, named the One of Supreme Power,¹ the Buddha of the *Asuras*, named [He of] Strong Texture,² the Buddha of Mankind, named the Lion of the Shākyas, the Buddha of the brute kingdom, named the Unshakable Lion, the Buddha of the *Pretas*, named the One of Flaming Mouth, and the Buddha of the Lower World, named the King of Truth:³—[these], the Eight Father-Mother Door-keepers and the Six Teachers, the Victorious Ones—will come to shine, too.

The All-Good Father, and the All-Good Mother,⁴ the Great Ancestors of all the Buddhas: Samanta-Bhadra [and Samanta-Bhadrā], the Divine Father and the Divine Mother—these two, also will come to shine.

These forty-two perfectly endowed deities, issuing from within thy heart, being the product of thine own pure love, will come to shine. Know them.

O nobly-born, these realms are not come from somewhere outside [thyself]. They come from within the four divisions of thy heart, which, including its centre, make the five directions. They issue from within there, and shine upon thee. The

to the four directions and to the *maṇḍala* (or conclave of deities) to which they belong. As Tantric faith-guarding deities (Tib. *Ch'os-shyon*: Skt. *Dharmapāla*) they rank with Bodhisattvas. They symbolize, too, the four tranquil or peaceful methods employed by Divine Beings for the salvation of sentient creatures (of whom mankind are the highest), which are: Compassion, Fondness, Love, and Stern Justice.

¹ Text: *Dvang-po-rgya-byin* (pron. *Wang-po-gya-jin*): 'Powerful One of a Hundred Sacrifices': Skt. *Shata-Kratu*, a name of *Indra* ('[One of] Supreme Power').

² Text: *Thag-bsang-ris* (pron. *Thag-sang-ree*): '[He of] Strong Texture' (Skt. *Vṛdchāra*): a name referring either to the bodily strength of, or else to the coat of mail worn by, this Lord of the *Asura-loka*, the world wherein warfare is the predominant passion of existence.

³ Text: *Chōs-kyi-rgyal-po* (pron. *Chō-kyi-gyal-po*): Skt. *Dharma-Rāja*.

⁴ Text: *Küntu-bsang-mo* (pron. *Küntu-bsang-mo*): 'All-Good Mother'; Skt. *Samanta-Bhadrā*. The Tantric School holds that every deity, even the Supreme, has its *shakti*. A few deities are, however, commonly depicted *shakti*-less—for example, Mañjuśrī, or Mañjughoṣha (see p. 113⁴); though there may be, as in the instance of the *Prajñā-Pāramitā* (often called the Mother) which this deity holds, some symbolic representation of a *shakti*. This is, apparently, a doctrine of universal dualism. In the final analysis, however, all pairs of opposites being viewed as having a Single Source—in the Voidness of the *Dharma-Kāya*—the apparent dualism becomes monism.

deities, too, are not come from somewhere else: they exist from eternity within the faculties of thine own intellect.¹ Know them to be of that nature.

O nobly-born, the size of all these deities is not large, not small, [but] proportionate. [They have] their ornaments, their colours, their sitting postures, their thrones, and the emblems that each holds.

These deities are formed into groups of five pairs, each group of five being surrounded by a fivefold circle of radiances, the male Bodhisattvas partaking of the nature of the Divine Fathers, and the female Bodhisattvas partaking of the nature of the Divine Mothers. All these divine conclaves will come to shine upon thee in one complete conclave.² They are thine own tutelary deities.³ Know them to be such.

O nobly-born, from the hearts of the Divine Fathers and Mothers of the Five Orders, the rays of light of the Four Wisdoms united, extremely clear and fine, like the rays of the sun spun into threads, will come and shine upon thee and strike against thy heart.

On that path of radiance there will come to shine glorious orbs of light, blue in colour, emitting rays, the *Dharma-Dhātu* Wisdom [itself], each appearing like an inverted turquoise cup, surrounded by similar orbs, smaller in size, glorious and dazzling, radiant and transparent, each made more glorious with five yet smaller [satellite] orbs dotted round about with five starry spots of light of the same nature, leaving neither the centre nor the borders [of the blue light-path] unglorified by the orbs and the smaller [satellite] orbs.

¹ According to the esotericism of Northern Buddhism, man is, in the sense implied by the mystical philosophies of ancient Egypt and Greece, the microcosm of the macrocosm.

² Text: *dkyil-khor* (pron. *kyil-khor*): Skt. *maṇḍala*, i. e. conclave of deities.

³ The Tutelary Deities, too, in the last analysis, are the visualizations of the person believing in them. *The Demchok Tantra* says that the 'Devatās are but symbols representing the various things which occur on the Path, such as the helpful impulses and the stages attained by their means'; and that 'should doubts arise as to the divinity of these Devatās, one should say "The Dākinī is only the recollection of the body" and remember that the deities constitute the Path' (cf. A. Avalon, *Tantrik Texts*, London, 1919, vii. 41).

From the heart of Vajra-Sattva, the white light-path of the Mirror-like Wisdom, white and transparent, glorious and dazzling, glorious and terrifying, made more glorious with orbs surrounded by smaller orbs of transparent and radiant light upon it, each like an inverted mirror, will come to shine.

From the heart of Ratna-Sambhava, the yellow light-path of the Wisdom of Equality, [glorified] with yellow orbs [of radiance], each like an inverted gold cup, surrounded by smaller orbs, and these with yet smaller orbs, will come to shine.

From the heart of Amitābha, the transparent, bright red light-path of the Discriminating Wisdom, upon which are orbs, like inverted coral cups, emitting rays of Wisdom, extremely bright and dazzling, each glorified with five [satellite] orbs of the same nature,—leaving neither the centre nor the borders [of the red light-path] unglorified with orbs and smaller satellite orbs,—will come to shine.

These will come to shine against thy heart simultaneously.¹

O nobly-born, all those are the radiances of thine own intellectual faculties come to shine. They have not come from any other place. Be not attracted towards them; be not weak; be not terrified; but abide in the mood of non-thought-formation.² In that state all the forms and radiances will merge into thyself, and Buddhahood will be obtained.

The green light-path of the Wisdom of Perfected Actions will not shine upon thee, because the Wisdom-faculty of thine intellect hath not been perfectly developed.

O nobly-born, those are called the Lights of the Four

¹ Each of these mystical radiances symbolizes the particular *Bodhic*, or Wisdom, quality of the Buddha whence it shines. In the Tibetan of our text there is here such fervency in the poetical description of the light-paths that the translator, in order to render something of the beauty of the original language, essayed several renderings, of which the actual rendering is the outcome.

² 'The mood of non-thought-formation' is attained in *śamādhi-yoga*. This state, regarded as the primordial state of Mind, is illustrated by the following figure: So long as a man afloat on a river passively submits to the current, he is carried along smoothly; but if he attempts to grasp an object fixed in the water the tranquillity of his motion is broken. Similarly, thought-formation arrests the natural flow of the mind.

Wisdoms United, [whence proceeds that] which is called the Inner Path through Vajra-Sattva.¹

At that time, thou must remember the teachings of the setting-face-to-face which thou hast had from thy *guru*. If thou hast remembered the purport of the settings-face-to-face, thou wilt have recognized all these lights which have shone upon thee, as being the reflection of thine own inner light, and, having recognized them as intimate friends, thou wilt have believed in them and have understood [them at] the meeting, as a son understandeth his mother.

And believing in the unchanging nature of the pure and holy Truth, thou wilt have had produced in thee the tranquil-flowing *Samādhi*; and, having merged into the body of the perfectly evolved intellect, thou wilt have obtained Buddhahood in the *Sambhoga-Kāya*, whence there is no return.

O nobly-born, along with the radiances of Wisdom, the impure illusory lights of the Six *Lokas* will also come to shine. If it be asked, 'What are they?' [they are] a dull white light from the *devas*, a dull green light from the *asuras*, a dull yellow light from human beings, a dull blue light from the brutes, a dull reddish light from the *pretas*, and a dull smoke-coloured light from Hell.² These six thus will come to shine, along with the six radiances of Wisdom; whereupon, be not afraid of nor be attracted towards any, but allow thyself to rest in the non-thought condition.

¹ In the transcendental state of the Illumination of Buddhahood, on the Inner, or Secret, Path, into Vajra-Sattva merge, in at-one-ment, all the Peaceful and Wrathful Deities of the greater *maṇḍala* described by our text; in all, one-hundred and ten,—forty-two in the heart-centre, ten in the throat-centre, and fifty-eight in the brain-centre. (Cf. pp. 217-8.)

² There are irreconcilable differences between the colours assigned to these light-paths in the Block-Print (asb) and in our MS. The Block-Print gives them as follows: white, from the *devas*; red, from the *asuras*; blue, from human beings; green, from the brutes; yellow, from the *pretas*; smoke-coloured from Hell. According to the translator, the colours should correspond to the colour of the Buddha of each *loka*, thus: *deva*, white; *asura*, green; human, yellow; brute, blue; *preta*, red; Hell, smoke-coloured or black. Therefore, the Block-Print is wrong in all save the first and last; and the MS. is wrong in assigning dull blue to the human and black or smoke-coloured to the animal world. On folio 23, the MS. correctly assigns yellow to the human world light-path. The necessary corrections have been made in the translation herein and in the corresponding passages in folio 46 following.

If thou art frightened by the pure radiances of Wisdom and attracted by the impure lights of the Six *Lokas*, then thou wilt assume a body in any of the Six *Lokas* and suffer *sang-sāric* miseries; and thou wilt never be emancipated from the Ocean of *Sangsāra*, wherein thou wilt be whirled round and round and made to taste of the sufferings thereof.

O nobly-born, if thou art one who hath not obtained the select words of the *guru*, thou wilt have fear of the pure radiances of Wisdom and of the deities thereof. Being thus frightened, thou wilt be attracted towards the impure *sangsāric* objects. Act not so. Humbly trust in the dazzling pure radiances of Wisdom. Frame thy mind to faith, and think, 'The compassionate radiances of Wisdom of the Five Orders of Buddhas¹ have come to take hold of me out of compassion; I take refuge in them.'

Not yielding to attraction towards the illusory lights of the Six *Lokas*, but devoting thy whole mind one-pointedly towards the Divine Fathers and Mothers, the Buddhas of the Five Orders, pray thus:

'Alas! when wandering in the *Sangsāra* through the power of the five virulent poisons,²

On the bright radiance-path of the Four Wisdoms united,
May [I] be led by the Five Victorious Conquerors,
May the Five Orders of Divine Mothers be [my] rear-guard;

May [I] be rescued from the impure light-paths of the Six *Lokas*;

And, being saved from the ambuscades of the dread *Bardo*,
May [I] be placed within the five pure Divine Realms.'

By thus praying, one recognizeth one's own inner light;³

¹ Text: *Bde-var-gshegs-pa* (pron. *De-war-sheg-pa*): Skt. *Sugata*: literally meaning 'Those who have passed into Happiness (or attained *Nirvāṇa*)'—i.e. Buddhas.

² The five virulent poisons, which, like drugs, enslave and bind mankind to the sufferings of existence within the confines of the Six *Lokas*, are: lust, hatred, stupidity, pride or egoism, and jealousy.

³ Text: *rang* ('self') + *śNang* ('light'): 'self-light' or 'inner-light', i.e. thoughts or ideas appearing in the radiance of the consciousness-principle. The *Bardo* state is the after-death dream state following the waking or living-on-earth state, as explained in our Introduction (pp. 28ff.); and the whole

and, merging one's self therein, in at-one-ment, Buddhahood is attained: through humble faith, the ordinary devotee cometh to know himself, and obtaineth Liberation; even the most lowly, by the power of the pure prayer, can close the doors of the Six *Lokas*, and, in understanding the real meaning of the Four Wisdoms united, obtain Buddhahood by the hollow pathway through Vajra-Sattva.¹

Thus by being set face to face in that detailed manner, those who are destined to be liberated will come to recognize [the Truth];² thereby many will attain Liberation.

The worst of the worst, [those] of heavy evil *karma*, having not the least predilection for any religion—and some who have failed in their vows—through the power of *karmic* illusions, not recognizing, although set face to face [with Truth], will stray downwards.

[THE SEVENTH DAY]

On the Seventh Day, the Knowledge-Holding Deities, from the holy paradise realms, come to receive one. Simultaneously, the pathway to the brute world, produced by the obscuring passion, stupidity, also cometh to receive one.³ The setting-face-to-face at that time is, calling the deceased by name, thus:

aim of the *Bardo Thödol* teaching is to awaken the Dreamer to Reality—to a supramundane state of consciousness, to an annihilation of all bonds of *samsāric* existence, to Perfect Enlightenment, Buddhahood.

¹ Vajra-Sattva, as a symbolic deity, the reflex of Akṣobhya, is visualized, in Tibetan occult rituals, as being internally vacuous. As such, he represents the Void, concerning which there are many treatises with elaborate commentaries, essentially esoteric. Through Vajra-Sattva there lies a certain pathway to Liberation, he being the embodiment of all the one-hundred and ten deities constituting the *maṇḍala* of the Peaceful and Wrathful Ones (see p. 124¹). To tread this Path successfully, the Neophyte must be instructed by the Hierophant.

² This Truth is that there is no reality behind any of the phenomena of the *Bardo* plane, save the illusions stored up in one's own mind as accretions from *samsāric* experience. Recognition of this automatically gives Liberation.

³ As the gross physical atoms of a life-deserted human-plane body gradually separate and go to their appropriate places, some as gases, some as fluids, some as solids, so on the after-death plane there comes about a gradual dispersion of the psychic or mental atoms of the *Bardo* thought-body, each propensity—directed by *karmic* affinity—inevitably going to that environment most congenial to it. Hence, as our text suggests, the brute-passion stupidity has a natural tendency to gravitate to the brute kingdom and become embodied therein as a disintegrated part of the mentality of the deceased. (See pp. 44 ff.)

O nobly-born, listen undistractedly. On the Seventh Day the vari-coloured radiance of the purified propensities will come to shine. Simultaneously, the Knowledge-Holding Deities,¹ from the holy paradise realms, will come to receive one.

From the centre of the Circle [or *Maṇḍala*], enshrouded in radiance of rainbow light, the supreme Knowledge-Holding [Deity], the Lotus Lord of Dance, the Supreme Knowledge-Holder Who Ripens *Karmic* Fruits, radiant with all the five colours, embraced by the [Divine] Mother, the Red *Ḍākinī*,² [he] holding a crescent knife and a skull [filled] with blood,³ dancing and making the *mudrā* of fascination,⁴ [with his right hand held] aloft, will come to shine.

To the east of that Circle, the deity called the Earth-Abiding Knowledge-Holder, white of colour, with radiant smiling countenance, embraced by the White *Ḍākinī*, the [Divine] Mother, [he] holding a crescent knife and a skull [filled] with blood, dancing and making the *mudrā* of fascination, [with his right hand held] aloft, will come to shine.

To the south of that Circle, the Knowledge-Holding Deity called [He] Having Power Over Duration of Life, yellow in colour, smiling and radiant, embraced by the Yellow *Ḍākinī*, the [Divine] Mother, [he] holding a crescent knife and a skull

¹ Text: *Rig-hsain* (pron. *Rig-sin*): 'possessing (or holding) knowledge'. These deities are purely Tantric. (See p. 73¹.)

² The *Ḍākinīs* (Tib. *Mkhah-hgro-ma* [or 'Sky-goer']): Skt. *Ḍākinī*, fairy-like goddesses possessing peculiar occult powers for good or for evil, are, also, purely Tantric; and, as such, they are invoked in most of the chief rituals of Northern Buddhism. (See p. 122¹.)

³ Esoterically, the skull (which is human), and the blood (also human) filling it, signify, in one sense, renunciation of human life, the giving up of the *Saṃsāra*, self-immolation on the cross of the world; and in the mass-ritual of Lāmaism there are resemblances between the blood (symbolized by a red fluid) in the skull and the wine (as blood) in the chalice of the Christian Communion.

⁴ A *mudrā* is a mystic sign made by posturing the hand and fingers or the body. Some *mudrās* are used as signs of recognition by members of occult fraternities, after the manner of the Masonic hand-clasp. Others, chiefly employed by *yogīs* as bodily postures, short-circuit or otherwise change the magnetic currents of the body. Placing the tip of one finger against the tip of another in *mudrā* controls, likewise, the bodily forces, or life-currents. The *mudrā* of fascination is of this last sort, being made (with the right hand) by the second finger touching the thumb, the index-finger and the little finger held upright, and the third finger folded in the palm of the hand.

[filled] with blood, dancing and making the *mudrā* of fascination, [with his right hand held] aloft, will come to shine.

To the west of that Circle, the deity called the Knowledge-Holding Deity of the Great Symbol,¹ red of colour, smiling and radiant, embraced by the Red *Dākinī*, the [Divine] Mother, [he] holding a crescent-knife and a skull [filled] with blood, dancing and making the *mudrā* of fascination, [with his right hand held] aloft, will come to shine.

To the north of that Circle, the deity called the Self-Evolved Knowledge-Holder, green of colour, with a half-angry, half-smiling radiant countenance, embraced by the Green *Dākinī*, the [Divine] Mother, [he] holding a crescent-knife and a skull [filled] with blood, dancing and making the *mudrā* of fascination, [with his right hand held] aloft, will come to shine.

In the Outer Circle, round about these Knowledge-Holders, innumerable bands of *dākinīs*,—*dākinīs* of the eight places of cremation, *dākinīs* of the four classes, *dākinīs* of the three abodes, *dākinīs* of the thirty holy-places and of the twenty-four places of pilgrimage,²—heroes, heroines, celestial warriors, and faith-protecting deities, male and female, each bedecked with the six bone-ornaments, having drums and thigh-bone trumpets, skull-timbrels, banners of gigantic human[like] hides,³ human-hide canopies, human-hide bannerettes, fumes of human-fat incense, and innumerable [other] kinds of musical instruments, filling [with music] the whole world-systems and causing them to vibrate, to quake and tremble with sounds so mighty as to daze one's brain, and dancing various measures, will come to receive the faithful and punish the unfaithful.⁴

¹ See p. 135³.

² Herein the *dākinīs* are represented like various orders of fairy-like beings, some dwelling in one place, some in another. The eight places of cremation are the eight known to Hindu mythology; the three abodes are the heart-centre, the throat-centre, and the brain-centre, over which, esoterically speaking, certain *dākinīs* (as the personification of the psychic forces resident in each centre) preside, just as other *dākinīs* preside over the holy-places and places of pilgrimage.

³ That is, hides of *rākṣasas*, an order of giant demoniacal beings having human form and possessed of certain *siddhis* (i. e. supernormal powers).

⁴ Tibetan *lāmas*, in chanting their rituals, employ seven (or eight) sorts of

O nobly-born, five-coloured radiances, of the Wisdom of the Simultaneously-Born,¹ which are the purified propensities, vibrating and dazzling like coloured threads, flashing, radiant, and transparent, glorious and awe-inspiring, will issue from the hearts of the five chief Knowledge-Holding Deities and strike against thy heart, so bright that the eye cannot bear to look upon them.

At the same time, a dull blue light from the brute world will come to shine along with the Radiances of Wisdom. Then, through the influence of the illusions of thy propensities, thou wilt feel afraid of the radiance of the five colours; and [wishing to] flee from it, thou wilt feel attracted towards the dull light from the brute-world. Thereupon, be not afraid of that brilliant radiance of five colours, nor terrified; but know the Wisdom to be thine own.

Within those radiances, the natural sound of the Truth will reverberate like a thousand thunders. The sound will come with a rolling reverberation, [amidst which] will be heard, 'Slay! Slay!' and awe-inspiring *mantras*.² Fear not. Flee not. Be not terrified. Know them [i. e. these sounds] to be [of] the intellectual faculties of thine own [inner] light.

musical instruments: big drums, cymbals (commonly of brass), conch-shells, bells (like the handbells used in the Christian Mass Service), timbrels, small clarionets (sounding like Highland bagpipes), big trumpets, and human thigh-bone trumpets. Although the combined sounds of these instruments are far from being melodious, the *lāmas* maintain that they psychically produce in the devotee an attitude of deep veneration and faith, because they are the counterparts of the natural sounds which one's own body is heard producing when the fingers are put in the ears to shut out external sounds. Stopping the ears thus, there are heard a thudding sound, like that of a big drum being beaten; a clashing sound, as of cymbals; a sighing sound, as of a wind moving through a forest—as when a conch-shell is blown; a ringing as of bells; a sharp tapping sound, as when a timbrel is used; a moaning sound, like that of a clarionet; a bass moaning sound, as if made with a big trumpet; and a shriller sound, as of a thigh-bone trumpet.

Not only is this interesting as a theory of Tibetan sacred music, but it gives the clue to the esoteric interpretation of the symbolical natural sounds of Truth (referred to in the second paragraph following, and elsewhere in our text), which are said to be, or to proceed from, the intellectual faculties within the human mentality.

¹ That is, the Wisdom which is born simultaneously with the achievement of Recognition: the Simultaneously-Born Wisdom.

² See Addenda, pp. 220-2.

Be not attracted towards the dull blue light of the brute-world; be not weak. If thou art attracted, thou wilt fall into the brute-world, wherein stupidity predominates, and suffer the illimitable miseries of slavery and dumbness and stupidity;¹ and it will be a very long time ere thou canst get out. Be not attracted towards it. Put thy faith in the bright, dazzling, five-coloured radiance. Direct thy mind one-pointedly towards the deities, the Knowledge-Holding Conquerors. Think, one-pointedly, thus: 'These Knowledge-Holding Deities, the Heroes, and the *Dākinīs* have come from the holy paradise realms to receive me; I supplicate them all: up to this day, although the Five Orders of the Buddhas of the Three Times have all exerted the rays of their grace and compassion, yet have I not been rescued by them. Alas, for a being like me! May the Knowledge-Holding Deities not let me go downwards further than this, but hold me with the hook of their compassion, and lead me to the holy paradises.'

Thinking in that manner, one-pointedly, pray thus:

'O ye Knowledge-Holding Deities, pray hearken unto me:
Lead me on the Path, out of your great love.

When [I am] wandering in the *Saṃsāra*, because of intensified propensities,

On the bright light-path of the Simultaneously-born Wisdom

May the bands of Heroes, the Knowledge-Holders, lead me;
May the bands of the Mothers, the *Dākinīs*, be [my] rear-guard;

May they save me from the fearful ambushes of the *Bardo*,
And place me in the pure Paradise Realms.'

Praying thus, in deep faith and humility, there is no doubt that one will be born within the pure Paradise Realms,² after

¹ Cf. p. 126.

² The deceased, having by now fallen to lower and lower stages of the *Bardo*, looks to the heaven-worlds (which are worlds of embodiment within the *Saṃsāra*) rather than to *Nirvāṇa* (which is non-*Saṃsāric*) as a place of refuge. Although, theoretically, *Nirvāṇa* is ever realizable from any stage of the *Bardo*, practically, for the ordinary devotee, it is not, meritorious *karma* being inadequate; hence the *lāma* or reader officiating aims at making the best of the situation in which, it is assumed, the deceased inevitably finds himself.

being merged, in rainbow-light, into the heart of the Knowledge-Holding Deities.

All the pandit classes, too, coming to recognize at this stage, obtain liberation; even those of evil propensities being sure to be liberated here.

Here endeth the part of the Great *Thödol* concerned with the setting-face-to-face of the Peaceful [Deities] of the *Chönyid Bardo* and the setting-face-to-face of the Clear Light of the *Chikhai Bardo*.

[THE DAWNING OF THE WRATHFUL DEITIES, FROM THE EIGHTH TO THE FOURTEENTH DAY]

[INTRODUCTION]

Now the manner of the dawning of the Wrathful Deities is to be shown.

In the above *Bardo* of the Peaceful [Deities] there were seven stages of ambushade. The setting-face-to-face at each stage should have [caused the deceased] to recognize either at one or another [stage] and to have been liberated.

Multitudes will be liberated by that recognition; [and] although multitudes obtain liberation in that manner, the number of sentient beings being great, evil *karma* powerful, obscurations dense, propensities of too long standing, the Wheel of Ignorance and Illusion becometh neither exhausted nor accelerated. Although [all be] set face-to-face in such detail, there is a vast preponderance of those who wander downwards unliberated.

Therefore, after the cessation [of the dawning] of the Peaceful and the Knowledge-Holding Deities, who come to welcome one, the fifty-eight flame-enhaloed, wrathful, blood-drinking deities come to dawn, who are only the former Peaceful Deities in changed aspect—according to the place [or psychic-centre of the *Bardo*-body of the deceased whence they proceed]; nevertheless, they will not resemble them.¹

¹ Up to this time, the fifty-two Peaceful and Knowledge-Holding Deities, emanations from the heart and throat psychic-centres of the *Bardo*-body of the deceased, have dawned. The Wrathful Deities now about to dawn issue from

This is the *Bardo* of the Wrathful Deities; and, they being influenced by fear, terror, and awe,¹ recognition becometh more difficult. The intellect, gaining not in independence, passeth from one fainting state to a round of fainting states. [Yet], if one but recognize a little, it is easier to be liberated [at this stage]. If it be asked why? [the answer is]: Because of the dawning of the radiances—[which produce] fear, terror, and awe—the intellect is undistractedly alert in one-pointedness; that is why.²

If at this stage one do not meet with this kind of teaching, one's hearing [of religious lore]—although it be like an ocean [in its vastness]—is of no avail. There are even discipline-holding abbots [or *bhikkhus*] and doctors in metaphysical discourses who err at this stage, and, not recognizing, wander into the *Sangsāra*.

As for the common worldly folk, what need is there to mention them! By fleeing, through fear, terror, and awe, they fall over the precipices into the unhappy worlds and suffer. But the least of the least of the devotees of the mystic *mantrayāna* doctrines, as soon as he sees these blood-drinking deities, will recognize them to be his tutelary deities, and the meeting will be like that of human acquaintances. He will trust them; and becoming merged into them, in at-onement, will obtain Buddhahood.³

the brain psychic-centre; they are the excited, or wrathful, reflex forms of the Peaceful Deities (who, when contrasted with their wrathful aspects, include the Knowledge-Holding Deities). (See p. 85⁸ and Addenda, pp. 217-9.)

¹ The fear, terror, and awe (or fascination)—on the part of the deceased on beholding the deities—arise only in the case of the ordinary devotee, who, as the text explains, has not had adequate *yogic* training, ere death, to enable him to recognize the *Bardo* as such, immediately upon dying, and pass beyond it. For the adept in *yoga*, who can take the *Bardo* 'by the forelock', as the text puts it (p. 100), mastering Death, and who knows that all apparitional appearances are unreal and powerless, both in this world and in all other worlds, there is no *Bardo* to experience; his goal is either an immediate and conscious rebirth among men or in one of the paradise realms, or, if he be really ripened—which would be an exceedingly rare circumstance—*Nirvāṇa*.

² No sooner does one radiance cease than another dawns; the deceased not having a moment of distraction, his intellect becomes concentratedly (i.e. one-pointedly) alert.

³ The blood symbolizes *sangsāric* existence; the blood-drinking, the thirsting for, the drinking of, and the quenching of the thirst for, *sangsāric* existence.

By having meditated on the description of these blood-drinking deities, while in the human world, and by having performed some worship or praise of them; or, at least, by having seen their painted likenesses and their images, upon witnessing the dawning of the deities at this stage, recognition of them will result, and liberation. In this lieth the art.

Again, at the death of those discipline-holding abbots and doctors in metaphysical discourses [who remain uninstructed in these *Bardo* teachings], however assiduously they may have devoted themselves to religious practices, and however clever they may have been in expounding doctrines while in the human world, there will not come any phenomenal signs such as rainbow-halo [at the funeral-pyre] nor bone-reliques [from the ashes]. This is because when they lived the mystic [or esoteric] doctrines were never held within their heart, and because they had spoken contemptuously of them, and because they were never acquainted [through initiation] with the deities of the mystic [or esoteric] doctrines; thus, when these dawn on the *Bardo*, they do not recognize them. Suddenly [seeing] what they had never seen before, they view it as inimical; and, an antagonistic feeling being engendered, they pass into the miserable states because of that. Therefore, if the observers of the disciplines, and the metaphysicians, have not in them the practices of the mystic [or esoteric] doctrines, such signs as the rainbow-halo come not, nor are bone-reliques and seed-like bones ever produced [from the bones of their funeral-pyre]:¹ these are the reasons for it.

For the devotee who—even at this stage—can be made to realize that these deities are thus but the *karmic* personifications of his own propensities, born from having lived and drunken life, and who has, in addition, the supreme power to face them unwaveringly (as in Bulwer Lytton's *Zanoni* the Neophyte to succeed must face the 'Dweller on the Threshold'), meeting them like old acquaintances, and then losing his personality in them, enlightenment as to the true nature of *sangsāric* existence dawns, and, with it, the All-Perfect Illumination called Buddhahood.

¹ The belief, prevalent among almost all peoples since immemorial time, that unusual phenomena commonly mark the death (as the birth) and funeral of a great hero or saint, also prevails among the Tibetans; and the *lāmas* hold that such phenomena have a purely rational explanation, such as our text herein suggests. Furthermore, the *lāmas* maintain that, if a reputed saint be

The least of the least of *mantrayānic* [devotees],—who may seem to be of very unrefined manners, unindustrious, untactful, and who may not live in accordance with his vows, and who in every way may be inelegant in his habits, and even unable, perhaps, to carry the practices of his teachings to a successful issue,—let no one feel disrespect for nor doubt him, but pay reverence to the esoteric [or mystic] doctrines [which he holdeth]. By that, alone, one obtaineth liberation at this stage.

Even though the deeds [of one paying such reverence] may not have been very elegant while in the human world, at his death there will come at least one kind of sign, such as rainbow-radiance, bone-images, and bone-reliquies. This is because the esoteric [or mystic] doctrines possess great gift-waves.¹

[Those of, and] above, the mystic *mantrayānic* devotees of ordinary [psychic development], who have meditated upon the visualization and perfection processes and practised the essences [or essence *mantras*],² need not wander down this far on the *Chönyid Bardo*. As soon as they cease to breathe, they will be led into the pure paradise realms by the Heroes and Heroines and the Knowledge-Holders.³ As a sign of

really a saint, among the charred bones from his funeral pyre there will be found some shaped into beautiful forms like images, and that small pearl-like (or, as the text has it, seed-like) nodules will appear in the ashes of the bones cremated.

¹ That is to say, the esoteric doctrines being realizable—because based on Truth itself—one who follows or even reverences them is, thereby, automatically brought into rapport with very definite psychic forces.

² That is to say, those devotees who have practised, in a thoroughly scientific manner, under a competent *guru*, the intonation of certain sacred *mantras* called essence *mantras*. Examples of such *mantras* are: *Om Mañi Padme Hūm* ('Hail to the Jewel in the Lotus!') or 'Hail to Him Who is the Jewel in the Lotus!'; *Om Wagi Short Mūm* ('Hail to the Lord of Speech! Mūm'); *Om Vajra Pāni Hūm* ('Hail to the Holder of the Dorje!'): the three essence *mantras* of 'The Three Protectors' of Lāmaism; the first being the essence *mantra* of the Bodhisattva Chenrazee (Skt. *Avalokita*), 'The Seer with keen eyes', The Great Pitier; the second, that of the Bodhisattva Jampalyang (Skt. *Mañjuśhosha*), 'The God of Mystic Wisdom'; and the third, that of the Bodhisattva Chakdor (Skt. *Vajra-Pāni*), 'The Wielder of the Thunderbolt'.

³ Cf. the following passage, from a prayer on behalf of the dying person, in *The Book of the Craft of Dying*, Chap. VI, Comper's ed. (p. 45): 'When thy soul passeth out of thy body, [may] glorious companies of angels come against thee: the victorious host, worthy judges, and senators of the holy apostles meet

this, the sky will be cloudless; they will merge into rainbow radiance; there will be sun-showers, sweet scent of incense [in the air], music in the skies, radiances; bone-reliquies and images [from their funeral-pyre].

Therefore, to the abbots [or discipline-holders], to the doctors, and to those mystics who have failed in their vows, and to all the common people, this *Thödol* is indispensable.¹ But those who have meditated upon the Great Perfection and the Great Symbol² will recognize the Clear Light at the moment of death; and, obtaining the *Dharma-Kāya*, all of them will be such as not to need the reading of this *Thödol*. By recognizing the Clear Light at the moment of death, they also will recognize the visions of the Peaceful and the Wrathful during the *Chönyid Bardo*, and obtain the *Sambhoga-Kāya*; or, recognizing during the *Sidpa Bardo*, obtain the *Nirmāṇa-Kāya*; and, taking birth on the higher planes, will, in the next rebirth, meet with this Doctrine, and then enjoy the continuity of *karma*.³

with thee: the fair, white, shining company of holy confessors, with the victorious number of glorious martyrs, come about thee: the joyful company of holy virgins receive thee: and the worthy fellowship of holy patriarchs open to thee the place of rest and joy, and deem thee to be among them that they be among, everlastingly.'

¹ The *lāmas* maintain that, while mere goodness and book knowledge are desirable in devotees seeking Liberation, spiritual wisdom coupled with unshakable faith, and the setting aside of all intellectualisms, are indispensable. One of the precepts of the great Tibetan *yogis*, taught to all neophytes, is: 'Difficult indeed is it to obtain Liberation through intellectual knowledge alone; through faith, Liberation is easily obtained.'

² 'The Great Perfection' refers to the fundamental doctrine concerning the gaining of Perfection or Buddhahood as taught by the School of *Guru Padma Sambhava*. 'The Great Symbol (Tib. *Chhag-chen*: Skt. *Mahā Mudrā*)' refers to an ancient Indian system of *yoga*, related to the same School, but more especially practised nowadays by the followers of the semi-reformed Kargyutpa sect, founded in the latter half of the eleventh century A. D. by the learned Tibetan *yogi* Marpa, who, having sojourned in India as the disciple of the *pandit* Atiśa and of Naropa, Atiśa's disciple, introduced the Great Symbol into Tibet. Milarepa, the most beloved of all Tibetan *yogis*, who was Marpa's successor, developed the practice of the Great Symbol and made it the foundation teaching of the Sect. (See pp. 78-9.)

³ If there be recognition of Reality when it first dawns, i. e. if the Dreamer in *samsāric* existence be awakened into the divine state of the *Sambhoga-Kāya* during the *Chönyid Bardo*, the normal cycle of rebirth is broken; and the Awakened One returns voluntarily and fully conscious to the human world as

Therefore, this *Thödol* is the doctrine by which Buddhahood may be attained without meditation; the doctrine liberating by the hearing [of it] alone; the doctrine which leadeth beings of great evil *karma* on the Secret Path; the doctrine which produceth differentiation instantaneously [between those who are initiated into it and those who are not]; being the profound doctrine which conferreth Perfect Enlightenment instantaneously. Those sentient beings who have been reached by it cannot go to the unhappy states.

This [doctrine] and the *Tahdol* [doctrine]¹, when joined together being like unto a *maṇḍala* of gold inset with turquoise, combine them.

Thus, the indispensable nature of the *Thödol* being shown, there now cometh the setting-face-to-face with the dawning of the Wrathful [Deities] in the *Bardo*.

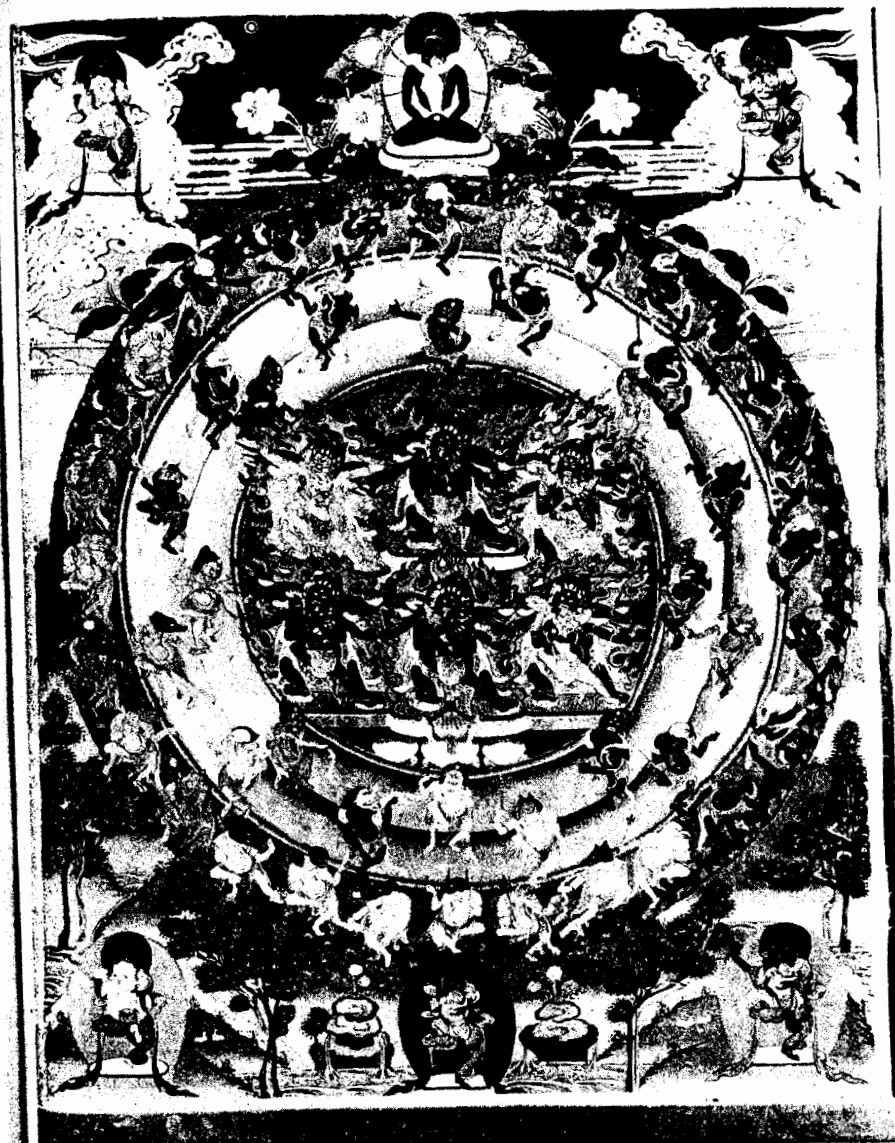
[THE EIGHTH DAY]

Again, calling the deceased by name, [address him] thus:

O nobly-born, listen undistractedly. Not having been able to recognize when the Peaceful [Deities] shone upon thee in the *Bardo* above, thou hast come wandering thus far. Now, on the Eighth Day, the blood-drinking Wrathful Deities will come to shine. Act so as to recognize them without being distracted.

a Divine Incarnation, to work for the uplifting of mankind. If recognition be delayed till the *Sidpa Bardo*, and the *Nirmāṇa-Kāya* be attained, that is but a partial awakening, not an unclouded realization of Reality, the *Sidpa Bardo* being a much lower plane than the *Chönyid Bardo*; but even then there will be won the great boon of spiritually enlightened birth on one of the higher planes—*deva-loka*, *asura-loka*, or the human-*loka*—and, upon being born anew in the human world, the devotee will take up, in virtue of acquired propensities gained in the previous earth-life, the study of the mystic *mantrayāna* doctrines and *yogic* practices from the point where it was broken off by death—this being the continuity of *karma*.

¹ Text: *Blags-grol* (pron. *Tah-dol*), a small Tibetan work, consisting wholly of *mantras*, used as an accompaniment to the *Bardo Thödol*. If the deceased dies knowing the *Tahdol mantras*, they, being powerful talismans, give him safe passage through the *Bardo* and a happy rebirth. Very often a copy of the *Tahdol* (or perhaps merely some of its *mantras* copied on small strips of paper and wound together in a tiny roll) is tied to the corpse and burned or buried with it—just as a copy of the Egyptian *Book of the Dead* was ordinarily interred with a mummy.



THE GREAT MANDALA OF THE KNOWLEDGE-HOLDING
AND WRATHFUL DEITIES

Described on pages xxix-xxx, 127-8, 217-20



THE DORJE
THE LĀMAIC SCEPTRE
Described on page xxxiii

O nobly-born, the Great Glorious Buddha-Heruka,¹ dark-brown of colour; with three heads, six hands, and four feet firmly postured; the right [face] being white, the left, red, the central, dark-brown; the body emitting flames of radiance; the nine eyes widely opened, in terrifying gaze; the eyebrows quivering like lightning; the protruding teeth glistening and set over one another; giving vent to sonorous utterances of 'a-la-la' and 'ha-ha', and piercing whistling sounds; the hair of a reddish-yellow colour, standing on end, and emitting radiance; the heads adorned with dried [human] skulls, and the [symbols of the] sun and moon; black serpents and raw [human] heads forming a garland for the body; the first of the right hands holding a wheel, the middle one, a sword, the last one, a battle-axe; the first of the left hands, a bell, the middle one, a skull-bowl, the last one, a plough-share; his body embraced by the Mother, Buddha-Kroti-shaurima,² her right hand clinging to his neck and her left putting to his mouth a red shell [filled with blood], [making] a palatal sound like a crackling [and] a clashing sound, and a rumbling sound as loud as thunder; [emanating from the two deities] radiant flames of wisdom, blazing from every hair-pore [of the body] and each containing a flaming *dorje*; [the two deities together thus], standing with [one] leg bent and [the other] straight and tense, on a dais supported by horned eagles,³ will come forth from within thine own brain and shine vividly upon thee. Fear that not. Be not averted. Know it to be the embodiment of thine own intellect. As it is thine own tutelary deity, be not terrified. Be not afraid, for in reality it is the Bhagavān Vairochana, the Father-Mother. Simultaneously with the recognition, liberation will be obtained: if they be recognized, merging [thyself], in at-onc-

¹ Text: *Dpal-chen-po Bud-dha Heruka* (pron. *Pal-chen-po Bud-dha Heruka*): 'Great Glorious Buddha-Heruka.'

² Text: *Bud-dha Kro-ti-shva-ri-ma* (pron. *Buddha Kroti-shau-ri-ma*), i. e. the [female] Buddha, the Mighty Wrathful Mother.

³ These are the *Garudas* of Indian and Tibetan mythology. They are depicted with eagle head, and human-bird body, having two human-like arms, two eagle wings, and two eagle feet. Symbolically, they personify energy and aspiration. (Cf. p. 116⁴.)

ment, into the tutelary deity, Buddhahood in the *Sambhoga-Kāya* will be won.

[THE NINTH DAY]

But if one flee from them, through awe and terror being begotten, then, on the Ninth Day, the blood-drinking [deities] of the Vajra Order will come to receive one. Thereupon, the setting-face-to-face is, calling the deceased by name, thus:

O nobly-born, listen undistractedly. [He] of the blood-drinking Vajra Order named the Bhagavān Vajra-Heruka, dark-blue in colour; with three faces, six hands, and four feet firmly postured; in the first right hand [holding] a *dorje*, in the middle [one], a skull-bowl, in the last [one], a battle-axe; in the first of the left, a bell, in the middle [one], a skull-bowl, in the last [one], a ploughshare: his body embraced by the Mother Vajra-Krotishaurima, her right [hand] clinging to his neck, her left offering to his mouth a red shell [filled with blood], will issue from the eastern quarter of thy brain and come to shine upon thee. Fear it not. Be not terrified. Be not awed. Know it to be the embodiment of thine own intellect. As it is thine own tutelary deity, be not terrified. In reality [they are] the Bhagavān Vajra-Sattva, the Father and Mother. Believe in them. Recognizing them, liberation will be obtained at once. By so proclaiming [them], knowing them to be tutelary deities, merging [in them] in at-one-ment, Buddhahood will be obtained.

[THE TENTH DAY]

Yet, if one do not recognize them, the obscurations of evil deeds being too great, and flee from them through terror and awe, then, on the Tenth Day, the blood-drinking [deities] of the [Precious]-Gem Order will come to receive one. Thereupon the setting-face-to-face is, calling the deceased by name, thus:

O nobly-born, listen. On the Tenth Day, the blood-drinking [deity] of the [Precious]-Gem Order named Ratna-Heruka, yellow of colour; [having] three faces, six hands, four feet firmly postured; the right [face] white, the left, red, the central, darkish yellow; enhaloed in flames; in the first of

the six hands holding a gem, in the middle [one], a trident-staff, in the last [one], a baton; in the first of the left [hands], a bell, in the middle [one], a skull-bowl, in the last [one], a trident-staff; his body embraced by the Mother Ratna-Krotishaurima, her right [hand] clinging to his neck, her left offering to his mouth a red shell [filled with blood], will issue from the southern quarter of thy brain and come to shine upon thee. Fear not. Be not terrified. Be not awed. Know them to be the embodiment of thine own intellect. [They] being thine own tutelary deity, be not terrified. In reality [they are] the Father-Mother Bhagavān Ratna-Sambhava. Believe in them. Recognition [of them] and the obtaining of liberation will be simultaneous.

By so proclaiming [them], knowing them to be tutelary deities, merging in them in at-one-ment, Buddhahood will be obtained.

[THE ELEVENTH DAY]

Yet, though set face-to-face thus, if, through power of evil propensities, terror and awe being produced, not recognizing them to be tutelary deities, one flee from them, then, on the Eleventh Day, the blood-drinking Lotus Order will come to receive one. Thereupon the setting-face-to-face is, calling the deceased by name, thus:

O nobly-born, on the Eleventh Day, the blood-drinking [deity] of the Lotus Order, called the Bhagavān Padma-Heruka, of reddish-black colour; [having] three faces, six hands, and four feet firmly postured; the right [face] white, the left, blue, the central, darkish red; in the first of the right of the six hands holding a lotus, in the middle [one], a trident-staff, in the last, a club; in the first of the left [hands], a bell, in the middle [one], a skull-bowl filled with blood¹, in the last, a small drum; his body embraced by the Mother Padma-Krotishaurima, her right hand clinging to his neck, her left offering to his mouth a red shell [full of blood]; the Father

¹ Lit., 'filled with red substance'; and likewise for parallel passages following. In *lāmaic* rituals a fluid red pigment is commonly used to represent blood (symbolical of renunciation of life, or of *samsāric* existence), as red wine is by Christians in the Eucharist.

and Mother in union ; will issue from the western quarter of thy brain and come to shine upon thee. Fear that not. Be not terrified. Be not awed. Rejoice. Recognize [them] to be the product of thine own intellect ; as [they are] thine own tutelary deity, be not afraid. In reality they are the Father-Mother Bhagavān Amitābha. Believe in them. Concomitantly with recognition, liberation will come. Through such acknowledging, recognizing them to be tutelary deities, in at-onement thou wilt merge [into them], and obtain Buddhahood.

[THE TWELFTH DAY]

Despite such setting-face-to-face, being still led backwards by evil propensities, terror and awe arising, it may be that one recognize not and flee. Thereupon, on the Twelfth Day, the blood-drinking deities of the Karmic Order, accompanied by the Kerima, Htamenma, and Wang-chugma,¹ will come to receive one. Not recognizing, terror may be produced. Whereupon, the setting-face-to-face is, calling the deceased by name, thus :

O nobly-born, on the Twelfth Day, the blood-drinking deity of the Karmic Order, named Karma-Heruka, dark green of colour ; [having] three faces, six hands, [and] four feet firmly postured ; the right [face] white, the left, red, the middle, dark green ; majestic [of appearance] ; in the first of the right of the six hands, holding a sword, in the middle [one], a trident-staff, in the last, a club ; in the first of the left [hands], a bell, in the middle [one], a skull-bowl, in the last, a plough-share ; his body embraced by the Mother Karma-Kroti-

¹ These three orders of deities are goddesses, Indian and Tibetan in origin, the *Kerima* having human shape, the *Htamenma* and the *Wang-chugma*, like Egyptian deities (more or less totemistic), having human-like bodies and animal heads ; and each deity symbolizes some particular *karmic* impulse or propensity appearing as a hallucination in the *Bardo* consciousness of the deceased. *Kerima* seems to be a hybrid Sanskrit-Tibetan word (from Skt. *Kṛyārt*), which, having become current in Tibet—like so many similar words—was incorporated into our text unchanged. *Htamenma* (as pronounced from Tib. *Phra-men-ma*) is probably the name of an order of pre-Buddhistic deities belonging to the ancient Bön religion of Tibet. *Wang-chugma* (as pronounced from Tib. *Dwang-phyang-ma*) is the Tibetan rendering of the Sanskrit *Īshvart*, meaning 'Mighty Goddesses'.

shaurima, her right [hand] clinging to his neck, the left offering to his mouth a red shell ; the Father and Mother in union, issuing from the northern quarter of thy brain, will come to shine upon thee. Fear that not. Be not terrified. Be not awed. Recognize them to be the embodiment of thine own intellect. [They] being thine own tutelary deity, be not afraid. In reality they are the Father-Mother Bhagavān Amogha-Siddhi. Believe ; and be humble ; and be fond [of them]. Concomitantly with recognition, liberation will come. Through such acknowledging, recognizing them to be tutelary deities, in at-onement thou wilt merge [into them], and obtain Buddhahood. Through the *guru's* select teaching, one cometh to recognize them to be the thought-forms issuing from one's own intellectual faculties. For instance, a person, upon recognizing a lion-skin [to be a lion-skin], is freed [from fear] ; for though it be only a stuffed lion-skin, if one do not know it to be so actually, fear ariseth, but, upon being told by some person that it is a lion-skin only, one is freed from fear. Similarly here, too, when the bands of blood-drinking deities, huge of proportions, with very thick-set limbs, dawn as big as the skies, awe and terror are naturally produced in one. [But] as soon as the setting-face-to-face is heard [one] recognizeth them to be one's own tutelary deities and one's own thought-forms. Then, when upon the Mother Clear-Light—which one had been accustomed to formerly—a secondary Clear-Light, the Offspring Clear-Light, is produced, and the Mother and Offspring Clear-Light, coming together like two intimate acquaintances, blend inseparably, and [therefrom] a self-emanating radiance dawneth upon one, through self-enlightenment and self-knowledge one is liberated.

[THE THIRTEENTH DAY]

If this setting-face-to-face be not obtained, good persons on the Path,¹ too, fall back from here and wander into the *Sang-sāra*. Then the Eight Wrathful Ones, the Kerimas, and the Htamenmas, having various [animal] heads, issue from within

¹ Or 'undergoing psychical development'.

one's own brain and come to shine upon one's self. There¹ upon the setting-face-to-face is, calling the deceased by name, thus:

O nobly-born, listen undistractedly. On the Thirteenth Day, from the eastern quarter of thy brain, the Eight Kerimas will emanate and come to shine upon thee. Fear that not.

From the east of thy brain, the White Kerima,¹ holding a human corpse, as a club, in the right [hand]; in the left, holding a skull-bowl filled with blood, will come to shine upon thee. Fear not.

From the south, the Yellow Tseurima,² holding a bow and arrow, ready to shoot; from the west, the Red Pramoha,³ holding a *makara*⁴-banner; from the north, the Black Petali,⁵ holding a *dorje* and a blood-filled skull-bowl; from the south-east, the Red Pukkase,⁶ holding intestines in the right [hand] and [with] the left putting them to her mouth; from the south-west, the Dark-Green Ghasmarī,⁷ the left [hand] holding a blood-filled skull-bowl, [with] the right stirring it with a *dorje*, and [she then] drinking it with majestic relish; from the north-west, the Yellowish-White Tsandhalī,⁸ tearing asunder a head from a corpse, the right [hand] holding a heart, the left putting the corpse to the mouth and [she then] eating [thereof]; from the north-east, the Dark-Blue Smasha,⁹ tearing asunder a head from a corpse and eating [thereof]: these,

¹ Text: *Kerima*, corrupted from Skt. *Keyūrt*, name of an Indian cemetery goddess.

² The corrupted Skt. form in text, name of another Indian cemetery goddess.

³ Tib.-Skt. of text.

⁴ Text: *chu-srin* (pron. *chu-sin*): 'water-lion', or 'leviathan' (Skt. *Makara*), a mythological monster.

⁵, ⁶, ⁷ Tib.-Skt. of text.

⁸ Textual form, from Skt. *Chandālī*, referring, apparently, to the spirit of a female of low caste (i.e. *Chandālī*), who, like each of the goddesses of our text herein, haunts cemeteries or cremation grounds. All such goddesses, here appearing, seem intended as symbols—each in its own way—to impress upon the deceased, as in an initiatory drama, the nature of *sangsaric* existence—its impermanence, its unsatisfactoriness—and the need to rise above it, conquering it through world-renunciation: all the goddesses emanating, as the text repeatedly teaches, from the mental content which the percipient's *sangsaric* existence has bequeathed to him.

⁹ In place of this Tib.-Skt. form of our text, the Block-Print gives *Smashali*, which is a more correct form.

the Eight Kerimas of the Abodes [or Eight Directions], also come to shine upon thee, surrounding the Five Blood-drinking Fathers. Yet be not afraid.

O nobly-born, from the Circle outside of them, the Eight Htamenmas of the [eight] regions [of the brain] will come to shine upon thee: from the east, the Dark-Brown Lion-Headed One, the hands crossed on the breast, and in the mouth holding a corpse, and shaking the mane; from the south, the Red Tiger-Headed One, the hands crossed downwards, grinning and showing the fangs and looking on with protruding eyes; from the west, the Black Fox-Headed One, the right [hand] holding a shaving-knife, the left holding an intestine, and [she] eating and licking the blood [therefrom]; from the north, the Dark-Blue Wolf-Headed One, the two hands tearing open a corpse and looking on with protruding eyes; from the south-east, the Yellowish-White Vulture-Headed One, bearing a gigantic [human-shaped] corpse on the shoulder and holding a skeleton in the hand; from the south-west, the Dark-Red Cemetery-Bird-Headed One, carrying a gigantic corpse on the shoulder; from the north-west, the Black Crow-Headed One, the left [hand] holding a skull-bowl, the right holding a sword, and [she] eating heart and lungs; from the north-east, the Dark-Blue Owl-Headed One, holding a *dorje* in the right [hand], and holding a skull-bowl in the left, and eating.

These Eight Htamenmas of the [eight] regions, likewise surrounding the Blood-Drinking Fathers, and issuing from within thy brain, come to shine upon thee. Fear that not. Know them to be the thought-forms of thine own intellectual faculties.

[THE FOURTEENTH DAY]

O nobly-born on the Fourteenth Day, the Four Female Door-Keepers, also issuing from within thine own brain, will come to shine upon thee. Again recognize. From the east [quarter] of thy brain will come to shine the White Tiger-Headed Goad-Holding Goddess, bearing a blood-filled skull-bowl in her left [hand]; from the south, the Yellow Sow-Headed Noose-Holding Goddess; from the west, the Red

Lion-Headed Iron-Chain-Holding Goddess; and from the north, the Green Serpent-Headed Bell-Holding Goddess. Thus issue the Four Female Door-Keepers also from within thine own brain and come to shine upon thee; as tutelary deities, recognize them.

O nobly-born, on the outer Circle of these thirty wrathful deities, Herukas, the twenty-eight various-headed mighty goddesses, bearing various weapons, issuing from within thine own brain, will come to shine upon thee. Fear that not. Recognize whatever shineth to be the thought-forms of thine own intellectual faculties. At this vitally important time, recollect the select teachings of the *guru*.

O nobly-born, [there will dawn] from the east the Dark-Brown Yak-Headed Rākṣaṣa-Goddess, holding a *dorje* and a skull; and the Reddish-Yellow Serpent-Headed Brāhma-Goddess, holding a lotus in her hand; and the Greenish-Black Leopard-Headed Great-Goddess, holding a trident in her hand; and the Blue Monkey-Headed Goddess of Inquisitiveness, holding a wheel; and the Red Snow-Bear-Headed Virgin-Goddess, bearing a short spear in the hand; and the White Bear-Headed Indra-Goddess, holding an intestine-noose in the hand: [these], the Six Yoginīs of the East, issuing from within the [eastern quarter of thine own]¹ brain, will come to shine upon thee; | ² fear that not.

O nobly-born, from the south [will dawn] the Yellow Bat-Headed Delight-Goddess, holding a shaving-knife in the hand; and the Red Makara-Headed Peaceful-[Goddess], holding an urn in the hand; and the Red Scorpion-Headed Amṛitā-Goddess, holding a lotus in the hand; and the White Kite-Headed Moon-Goddess, | holding a *dorje* in the hand; and the Dark-Green Fox-Headed Baton-Goddess, flourishing a club in the hand; and the Yellowish-Black Tiger-Headed Rākṣaṣī, holding a blood-filled skull-bowl in the hand: [these] the Six

¹ This bracketed phrase here (and in the three corresponding passages following in this section) is incorporated from the text of the Block-Print, our MS. text omitting it.

² Between this bar and the bar after 'Moon-goddess' in the sentence following is contained the translation of the Tibetan text of the lower folio (67^a) of our Frontispiece.

Yoginīs of the South, issuing from within the [southern quarter of thine own] brain, will come to shine upon thee; fear that not.

O nobly-born, from the west [will dawn] the Greenish-Black Vulture-Headed Eater-Goddess, holding a baton in the hand; and the Red Horse-Headed Delight-Goddess, holding a huge trunk of a corpse; and the White Eagle-Headed Mighty-Goddess, holding a club in the hand; and the Yellow Dog-Headed Rākṣaṣī, holding a *dorje* in the hand and a shaving-knife and cutting [with this]; and the Red Hoopoo-Headed Desire-Goddess, holding a bow and arrow in the hand aimed; and the Green Stag-Headed Wealth-Guardian Goddess, holding an urn in the hand: [these], the Six Yoginīs of the West, issuing from within the [western quarter of thine own] brain, will come to shine upon thee; fear that not.

O nobly-born, from the north [will dawn] the Blue Wolf-Headed Wind-Goddess, waving a pennant in the hand; and the Red Ibex-Headed Woman-Goddess, holding a pointed stake in the hand; and the Black Sow-Headed Sow-Goddess, holding a noose of fangs in the hand; and the Red Crow-Headed Thunderbolt-Goddess, holding an infant corpse in the hand; and the Greenish-Black Elephant-Headed Big-Nosed Goddess,¹ holding in the hand a big corpse and drinking blood from a skull; and the Blue Serpent-Headed Water-Goddess, holding in the hand a serpent noose: [these], the Six Yoginīs of the North, issuing from within [the northern quarter of] thine own brain, will come to shine upon thee; fear that not. *

O nobly-born, the Four Yoginīs of the Door, issuing from within the brain, will come to shine upon thee: from the east, the Black Cuckoo-Headed Mystic Goddess,² holding an iron hook in the hand; from the south, the Yellow Goat-Headed Mystic Goddess, holding a noose in the hand; from the west, the Red Lion-Headed Mystic Goddess, holding an iron chain

¹ Here the Block-Print gives only 'the Big Elephant-Headed Goddess'.

² Text: *Rdor-ye-ma* (pron. *Dor-ye-ma*): 'She [called] the Dorje', or 'She [called] the Mystic One'; hence 'Mystic Goddess'. The Block-Print gives 'White Cuckoo-Headed Mystic Goddess'.

in the hand; and from the north, the Greenish-Black Serpent-Headed Mystic Goddess: [these], the Four Door-Keeping Yoginis, issuing from within the brain, will come to shine upon thee.

Since these Twenty-eight Mighty Goddesses emanate from the bodily powers of Ratna-Sambhava, [He] of the Six Heruka Deities, recognize them.¹

O nobly-born, the Peaceful Deities emanate from the Voidness of the *Dharma-Kāya*; ² recognize them. From the Radiance of the *Dharma-Kāya* ³ emanate the Wrathful Deities; recognize them.

At this time when the Fifty-eight Blood-Drinking Deities ⁴ emanating from thine own brain come to shine upon thee, if thou knowest them to be the radiances of thine own intellect, thou wilt merge, in the state of at-one-ment, into the body of the Blood-Drinking Ones there and then, and obtain Buddhahood.

O nobly-born, by not recognizing now, and by fleeing from the deities out of fear, again sufferings will come to overpower thee. If this be not known, fear being begotten of the Blood-Drinking Deities, [one is] awed and terrified and fainteth away: one's own thought-forms turn into illusory appearances, and one wandereth into the *Sangsāra*; if one be not awed and terrified, one will not wander into the *Sangsāra*.

Furthermore, the bodies of the largest of the Peaceful and Wrathful Deities are equal [in vastness] to the limits of the heavens; the intermediate, as big as Mt. Meru; ⁵ the smallest,

¹ In place of this, the Block-Print gives the following synonymous sentence: 'Since these Twenty-eight Mighty Goddesses also are emanations from the power of the self-produced Wrathful Deities, recognize them.'

² They are the emanations from the void, or primordial, tranquil, unshaped aspect of the *Dharma-Kāya* state, viewing man as the microcosm of the macrocosm.

³ They are the emanations from the active radiant aspect of the *Dharma-Kāya* state,—the Clear Light shining in the primordial Voidness,—man, as the microcosm of the macrocosm, being inseparable therefrom.

⁴ The symbolism of the blood-drinking should here be kept in mind. (See p. 132³.)

⁵ Mt. Meru (Tib. *Ri-rab*) is the central mystical mountain of Buddhist cosmography. (See pp. 6a ff.) The spinal column, the central support of the human bodily structure, is, analogously, symbolized in the *Tantras* and in works on *Yoga* as the Mt. Meru of man the microcosm.

equal to eighteen bodies such as thine own body, set one upon another. Be not terrified at that; be not awed. If all existing phenomena shining forth as divine shapes and radiances be recognized to be the emanations of one's own intellect, Buddhahood will be obtained at that very instant of recognition. The saying, 'Buddhahood will be obtained in a moment [of time]' is that which applieth now. Bearing this in mind, one will obtain Buddhahood by merging, in at-one-ment, into the Radiances and the *Kāyas*.

O nobly-born, whatever fearful and terrifying visions thou mayst see, recognize them to be thine own thought-forms.

O nobly-born, if thou recognize not, and be frightened, then all the Peaceful Deities will shine forth in the shape of Mahā-Kāla; ¹ and all the Wrathful Deities will shine [forth] in the form of Dharma-Rāja, the Lord of Death; ² and thine own thought-forms becoming Illusions [or *Māras*], thou wilt wander into the *Sangsāra*.

O nobly-born, if one recognize not one's own thought-forms, however learned one may be in the Scriptures—both *Sūtras* and *Tantras*—although practising religion for a *kalpa*, one obtaineth not Buddhahood. If one recognize one's own thought-forms, by one important art and by one word, Buddhahood is obtained.

If one's thought-forms be not recognized as soon as one dieth, the shapes of Dharma-Rāja, the Lord of Death, will shine forth on the *Chönyid Bardo*. The largest of the bodies of Dharma-Rāja, the Lord of Death, equalling the heavens [in vastness]; the intermediate, Mt. Meru; the smallest, eighteen times one's own body, will come filling the world-systems. They will come having their upper teeth biting the nether lip; their eyes glassy; their hairs tied up on the top of the head; big-bellied, narrow-waisted; holding a [*karmic*] record-

¹ Text: *Mgon-po-Nag-po* (pron. *Gon-po-Nag-po*): Skt. *Kāla-Nāth*, commonly known in India as Mahā-Kāla. At this stage, all the illusory forms of the Peaceful Deities blend and appear as this one deity.

² Text: *Gshin-rje-hi-chūs-hyi-rgyal-po* (pron. *Shin-jai-chū-hyi-gyal-po*): Skt. *Dharma-Rāja + Yama-Rāja*. As described here and in the Second Book of the *Bardo Thödol* (see p. 167¹) this illusory deity commonly assumes many and varied forms capable of merging into a single form.

board¹ in the hand; giving utterance from their mouth to sounds of 'Strike! Slay!', licking [human] brain, drinking blood, tearing heads from corpses, tearing out [the] hearts: thus will [they] come, filling the worlds.

O nobly-born, when such thought-forms emanate, be thou not afraid, nor terrified; the body which now thou possessest being a mental-body of [karmic] propensities, though slain and chopped [to bits], cannot die. Because thy body is, in reality, one of voidness, thou needest not fear. The [bodies of the] Lord of Death, too, are emanations from the radiances of thine own intellect; they are not constituted of matter; voidness cannot injure voidness. Beyond the emanations of thine own intellectual faculties, externally, the Peaceful and the Wrathful Ones, the Blood-Drinking Ones, the Various-Headed Ones, the rainbow lights, the terrifying forms of the Lord of Death, exist not in reality: of this, there is no doubt. Thus, knowing this, all the fear and terror is self-dissipated; and, merging in the state of at-one-ment, Buddhahood is obtained.

If thou recognizest in that manner, exerting thy faith and affection towards the tutelary deities and believing that they have come to receive thee amidst the ambuscades of the *Bardo*, think, '[I] take refuge [in them]'; and remember the Precious Trinity, exerting towards them [the Trinity] fondness and faith. Whosoever thine own tutelary deity may be, recollect now; [and] calling him by name, pray thus:

¹ Text: *khram-shing* (pron. *hiam-shing*), referring to a board—either a flogging-board such as that on which culprits are stretched and flogged in Tibet, or else, as here, a board written over with *karmic* records of the deceased's life. *Khram* is the name given to a scroll of records or an inventory like a rent-roll; *shing* alone means 'wood'. Hence we may render the two words as 'wood-register' or 'record-board'. In the great Tibetan Arthurian-like saga called in Tibetan *Ge-sar-bagwungs* (pron. *Ke-sar-doong*), or Kesar Saga (of unknown author, but probably dating from the eighth or ninth century A.D.), which is so much the popular saga of Tibet that many Tibetans know it by heart, a boy, thirteen years of age, who, when wishing to join in a battle, is held back by fond relatives, brushes them aside, saying, 'The place of illness, the place of death, and the place of cremation are in accordance with the [karmic] register of the Lords of Death'; and here the Tibetan word for register is *khram*.

The verification of our rendering of this passage is important because, like other passages in the *Bardo Thödol*, particularly the closely-related passage describing the Judgement, coming in the Second Book (pp. 165-9), it has striking correspondence with parts of the Egyptian *Book of the Dead*.

'[Alas!], wandering am I in the *Bardo*; run to my rescue;
Uphold me by thy grace, O Precious Tutelary!'

Calling upon the name of thine own *guru*, pray thus:

'[Alas!] wandering am I in the *Bardo*; rescue me!
[O] let not thy grace forsake me!'

Have faith in the Blood-Drinking Deities, too, and offer up this prayer:

'Alas! when [I am] wandering in the *Sangsāra*, through
force of overpowering illusions,
On the light-path of the abandonment of fright, fear, and awe,
May the bands of the Bhagavāns, the Peaceful and Wrathful
Ones, lead [me];

May the bands of the Wrathful Goddesses Rich in Space
be [my] rear-guard,
And save me from the fearful ambuscades of the *Bardo*,
And place me in the state of the Perfectly-Enlightened
Buddhas.

When wandering alone, separated from dear friends,
When the void forms of one's own thoughts are shining here,
May the Buddhas, exerting the force of their grace,
Cause not to come the fear, awe, and terror in the *Bardo*.
When the five bright Wisdom-Lights are shining here,
May recognition come without dread and without awe;
When the divine bodies of the Peaceful and the Wrathful
are shining here,

May the assurance of fearlessness be obtained and the
Bardo be recognized.

When, by the power of evil *karma*, misery is being tasted,
May the tutelary deities dissipate the misery;
When the natural sound of Reality is reverberating [like]
a thousand thunders,

May they be transmuted into the sounds of the Six
Syllables.¹

¹ These are of the essence *mantra* of Chenraze (Avalokiteshvara), being *Om-Ma-ñi-Pad-me-Hūṃ* (pron. *Om-Mā-ñi-Pā-mi-Hāṃ*). (See p. 134².) Chenraze being the patron-god, or national tutelary deity, of Tibet, and this being his *mantra*, its repetition, both in the human world and on the *Bardo* plane, is credited with bringing to an end the cycle of rebirth and thereby giving entrance

When unprotected, *karma* having to be followed here,
I beseech the Gracious Compassionate [One]¹ to protect me;
When suffering miseries of *karmic* propensities here,
May the blissfulness of the Clear Light dawn;
May the Five Elements² not rise up as enemies;
But may I behold the realms of the Five Orders of the
Enlightened Ones.'

Thus, in earnest faith and humility, offer up the prayer;
whereby all fears will vanish and Buddhahood in the *Sambhoga-
Kāya* will undoubtedly be won: important is this. Being un-
distracted, repeat it in that manner, three or [even] seven times.

into *Nirvāṇa*; hence its importance in the *Bardo* prayer. In the Tibetan work called *Mani-bhāḥ-hbum* (pron. *Ma-ni-kah-boom*), i. e. 'History of the *Māṇi* or *Mantra* of Chenrazee' this *mantra* is said to be 'the essence of all happiness, prosperity, and knowledge, and the great means of liberation'; also it is said that the *ōm* closes the door of rebirth among the gods, *mā*, among the *asuras* (or titans), *ṇi*, among mankind, *pāy*, among sub-human creatures, *mē*, among *pretas* (or unhappy ghosts), and *hūng*, among the inhabitants of Hell. Accordingly, each of the six syllables is given the colour of the light-path corresponding to the six states of existence, thus: *ōm*, the white light-path of the *deva-loka* (or world of the gods); *mā*, the green light-path of the *asura-loka* (or world of the titans); *ṇi*, the yellow light-path of the *manaka-loka* (or human world); *pāy*, the blue light-path of the *āryaka-loka* (or brute world); *mē*, the red light-path of the *preta-loka* (or ghost world); and *hūng*, the smoke-coloured or black light-path of the *naraka-loka* (or Hell world).

There is an old Tibetan folk-tale concerning a religious devotee who tried to incline his irreligious mother to devotional observances and merely succeeded in habituating her to the recitation of this *mantra*. Her bad *karma* predominating over her good *karma*, at death she passed into the Hell-world, whereupon her son, being proficient in *yoga*, went to her rescue; and she, upon seeing him, was able, in virtue of having recited the *mantra* on earth, to recite it in Hell, and instantaneously she and all who heard it were liberated from Hell: for, as the tale at its end teaches, 'Such is the power of the *mantra*'.

The origin of this *mantra* is traceable through *tertön* works concerning the introduction (during the eighth century) of Tantric Buddhism into Tibet. Dr. Waddell is inclined to doubt that these *tertön* works were hidden away then (i. e. in the time of Padma Sambhava) and in later centuries recovered, as the *tertöns* (i. e. 'takers-out' of such lost books) claim, and suggests that their compilation dates from the fourteenth to the sixteenth century—a tentative and possibly unsound theory (cf. L. A. Waddell, *Lamaism in Sikkim*, in the *Gazetteer of Sikkim*, ed. by H. H. Risley, Calcutta, 1894, p. 289; also our Introduction, pp. 73-7). In any case, the *mantra*, at least by tradition (which ordinarily is as reliable as recorded history), seems to have come into, or been originated in, Tibet contemporaneously with the introduction of Buddhism into Tibet.

¹ That is, Chenrazee.

² These are: Earth, Air, Water, Fire, and Ether.

However heavy the evil *karma* may be and however weak the remaining *karma* may be, it is not possible that liberation will not be obtained [if one but recognize]. If, nevertheless, despite everything done in these [stages of the *Bardo*], recognition is still not brought about, then—there being danger of one's wandering further, into the third *Bardo*, called the *Sidpa Bardo*—the setting-face-to-face for that will be shown in detail hereinafter.

[THE CONCLUSION, SHOWING THE FUNDAMENTAL IMPORTANCE OF THE *BARDO* TEACHINGS]

Whatever the religious practices of any one may have been,—whether extensive or limited,—during the moments of death various misleading illusions occur; and hence this *Thödol* is indispensable. To those who have meditated much, the real Truth dawneth as soon as the body and consciousness-principle part. The acquiring of experience while living is important: they who have [then] recognized [the true nature of] their own being,¹ and thus have had some experience, obtain great power during the *Bardo* of the Moments of Death, when the Clear Light dawneth.

Again, the meditation on the deities of the Mystic Path of the *Mantra*, [both in the] visualizing and the perfecting stages, while living, will be of great influence when the peaceful and wrathful visions dawn on the *Chönyid Bardo*. Thus the training in this *Bardo* being of particular importance even while living,² hold to it, read it, commit it to memory, bear it in mind properly, read it regularly thrice; let the words and the meanings be very clear; it should be so that the words and the meanings will not be forgotten even though a hundred executioners were pursuing [thee].

¹ Lit., 'intellect' or 'consciousness-principle'.

² Cf. the following passage from *The Book of the Craft of Dying*, chap. V, Comper's ed. (p. 37): 'That what man that lusteth, and will gladly die well and surely and meritorily, without peril, he must take heed visibly, and study and learn diligently this craft of dying, and the dispositions thereof abovesaid, while he is in heal [i. e. health]; and not abide till the death entereth in him.'

It is called the Great Liberation by Hearing, because even those who have committed the five boundless sins¹ are sure to be liberated if they hear it by the path of the ear. Therefore read it in the midst of vast congregations. Disseminate it. Through having heard it once, even though one do not comprehend it, it will be remembered in the Intermediate State without a word being omitted, for the intellect becometh ninefold more lucid [there]. Hence it should be proclaimed in the ears of all living persons; it should be read over the pillows of all persons who are ill; it should be read at the side of all corpses: it should be spread broadcast.

Those who meet with this [doctrine] are indeed fortunate. Save for them who have accumulated much merit and absolved many obscurations, difficult is it to meet with it. Even when met with, difficult is it to comprehend it. Liberation will be won through simply not disbelieving it upon hearing it. Therefore treat this [doctrine] very dearly: it is the essence of all doctrines.²

The Setting-Face-to-Face while experiencing Reality in the Intermediate State, called 'The Teaching Which Liberateth By Merely Being Heard And That Which Liberateth By Merely Being Attached',³ is finished.⁴

¹ These are: patricide, matricide, setting two religious bodies at war, killing a saint, and causing blood to flow from the body of a Tathāgata (i. e. a Buddha).

² Here the Block-Print has: 'This is the *Tantra* of all doctrines.'

³ This refers to the *Thadol*. (See p. 192⁴.)

⁴ The Block-Print text, corresponding in all essentials, and in almost every important detail, word for word with the text of our Manuscript, contains (on folio 48b), as the parallel concluding sentence of the *Chōnyid Bardo*, the following, which differs from our own: 'The Teaching for the Intermediate State, the Setting-Face-to-Face while experiencing Reality, from *The Great Liberation by Hearing While in the Intermediate State, Liberating by Merely Being Heard, And Liberating By Merely Being Seen*, is finished.'

[BOOK II]

[THE *SIDPA BARDO*]

THIS IS KNOWN AS THE GOOD HEAD-PART OF THAT CALLED 'THE PROFOUND ESSENCE OF THE LIBERATION BY HEARING',—THE REMINDER, THE CLEAR SETTING-FACE-TO-FACE IN THE INTERMEDIATE STATE WHEN SEEKING REBIRTH¹

¹ Text: SRID-PA BAR-DOHI NGO-SPRÖD GSAL-HDEBS THÖSGROL ZHES-BYA-VA ZAB-PAHI NYING-KHU ZHES-BYA-VAHI DVU-PHYOGS LEGS (pronounced: SID-PA BAR-DOI NGO-TÖD SAL-DEB THÖ-DOL SHAY-CHA-WA ZAB-PAI NYING-KHU SHAY-CHA-WAI U-CHÖ LAY).

In the Block-Print, the *Bardo Thödol* being divided into two distinctly separate books—whereas in our MS. Book II is an unbroken continuation of Book I—the first four folios of its second book contain—unlike our MS.—a summary of the introductory parts of the first book; and the title of Book II of the Block-Print is as follows: *Bar-do Thös-grol Chen-mo Las Srid-pa Bar-dohi Ngo-Spröd Bahugs-so* (pronounced: *Bar-do Thö-dol Chen-mo Lay Sid-pa Bar-doi Ngo-Töd Zhu-so*), which means, 'Herein Lieth the Setting-Face-to-Face in the Intermediate State of [or when seeking] Worldly Existence (i. e. Rebirth), from "The Great Liberation by Hearing on the After-Death Plane"'.