

PRACTICES SUPPORTING DZOGCHEN – THE GREAT PERFECTION OF TIBETAN BUDDHISM

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Abstract:

Dzogchen, the Tibetan Buddhist teaching, translated as the Great Perfection, claims to provide a means to reach enlightenment in one's present lifetime. This is much faster than that claimed by basic Vajrayana (Tibetan Buddhist) teachings or by other forms of Buddhist practice. This paper provides background and descriptions on Dzogchen teachings, certain practices, and Western parallels. Western mythological and Kabbalistic counterparts are primarily in the endnotes.

La Pratique du Dzogchen - La Grande Perfection du Bouddhisme Tibétain

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Abstrait:

Il est dit de l'enseignement tibétain dénommé Dzogchen, traduit par La Grande Perfection, qu'il permet d'atteindre l'illumination en l'espace d'une seule vie. Ceci est beaucoup plus rapide que ce que proclament les enseignements du Vajrayana de base (Bouddhisme tibétain) ou les autres formes de pratiques Bouddhistes. Cette étude comprend les bases de ce type d'enseignements, certaines pratiques ainsi que les ressemblances aux pratiques occidentales. Les équivalents en mythologie occidentale et en Kabbale sont surtout présentées en notes finales.

Prácticas Respaldando el Dzogchen - La Gran Perfección del Budismo Tibetano

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Extracto: Dzogchen, la enseñanza Budista Tibetana, traducida como "La Gran Perfección", afirma que provee un medio para atener la iluminación en nuestra presente vida. Ésto es mucho más rápido que lo que es afirmado por la enseñanza Vajrayana (Budista Tibetana), o por otras formas de prácticas Budistas. Este escrito proporciona información y descripciones sobre enseñanzas Dzogchen, ciertas prácticas, y paralelos Occidentales. Los equivalentes Kabalísticos y mitológicos Occidentales se encuentran principalmente en las notas finales.

Práticas que apóiam Dzogchen A Grande Perfeição do Budismo Tibetano

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Sumário:

Dzogchen, o ensino do budismo tibetano, traduzido como a Grande Perfeição, reivindica fornecer meios para atingir a iluminação nesta vida. Isto é muito mais rápido do que aquele reivindicado pelos ensinamentos básicos de Vajrayana (budista tibetano) ou por qualquer outra forma de prática budista. Este artigo fornece um fundo e descrições dos ensinamentos Dzogchen, algumas técnicas e paralelos ocidentais. A contraparte mitológica ocidental e Kabalística estão principalmente nas notas de rodapé.

Brauchtuemer die Dzogchen unterstuetzen - Die Grosse Vollkommenheit des Tibetanischen Buddhismus

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Zusammenfassung:

Dzogchen, die Lehre des tibetanischen Buddhismus, uebersetzt als die „Grosse Vollkommenheit“, behauptet, dass es moeglich ist Erleuchtung in diesem Leben zu erfahren. Das ist viel schneller als was vom Vajrayana (tibetanischem Buddhismus), sowie von anderen buddhistischen Lehren versprochen wird. Diese Schrift bietet Werdegang und Beschreibung der Dzogchenlehren, gewisse Brauchtuemer, und westliche Parallelen. Westliche mythologische und kabalistische Gegenstuecke sind hauptsaechlich in den Fussnoten zu finden.

PRACTICES SUPPORTING DZOGCHEN – THE GREAT PERFECTION OF TIBETAN BUDDHISM

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BACKGROUND

Dzogchen¹, the Great Perfection or Great Completion is the highest teaching of the Nyingma school of Tibetan Buddhism. Nyingma is the oldest of the four contemporary schools of Vajrayana or Tibetan Buddhism² (also referred to as Mantrayana, Tantrayana, and Secret Mantra). It began in the 9th century when Padmasambhava came to Tibet from the former country of Oddiyana whose location is somewhat problematic. Centuries later, a later (Sarma) translation of Indian texts resulted in the formation of the Kagyu and Sakya traditions or schools. Another school, Kadampa (which is no longer extant), evolved into the present Gelug School, considered the most recent. The Dalai Lama heads the Gelug School, which became so politically dominant such that the Dalai Lama became the religious as well as political ruler of Tibet prior to the Chinese takeover. The present Dalai Lama is the fourteenth. Each school has different courses of instruction from beginner to advanced. The highest Kagyu teaching is called Mahamudra or the Great Seal.³ In many ways, this method is quite similar to Dzogchen. Indeed, these may be studied together. One of the greatest medieval Tibetan masters, Karma Chagme, wrote *The Union of Mahamudra and Dzogchen* now translated (portions with commentary) into English (including Chokyi Nyima Rinpoche's⁴ short work of the same name as well as a set of two entitled: *Naked Awareness*⁵ and *A Spacious Path to Freedom*⁶).

Indeed, in recent decades an ecumenical movement called Rime, led by some of the greatest contemporary masters (e.g. Dudjom Rinpoche and Dilgo Kyentse Rinpoche) encouraged cross-studies between and among the four schools.⁷ Rinpoche is a title meaning “Precious One” given to high lamas—a lama is the Tibetan equivalent of a guru. Thus, the Dalai Lama, the leader of the Gelug or Geluk School, has published books on Dzogchen⁸ and Mahamudra⁹. Tibetan Buddhism itself is a form of Mahayana (Great Vehicle) Buddhism, which emphasizes Bodhichitta or Universal Compassion—the Bodhisattva¹⁰ path to Buddhahood. The nature of the Bodhisattva is apparent from a teaching story in which three people are walking through a desert. Parched and thirsty, they spy a high wall ahead. They approach and circumnavigate it, but it has no entrance or doorway. One climbs upon the shoulders of the others, looks inside, yells “Eureka” and jumps inside. The second then climbs up and repeats the actions of the first. The third laboriously climbs the wall without assistance and sees a lush garden inside the wall. It has cooling water, trees, fruit, etc. But, instead of jumping into the garden, the third person jumps back out into the desert and seeks out desert wanderers to tell them about the garden and how to find it. The third person is the Bodhisattva.¹¹

RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN TEACHINGS¹²

Thus, Mahayana Buddhism differs from the so-called Hinayana (Lesser Vehicle) in which the participant seeks personal salvation or Nirvana through the Four Noble Truths via right action, thought, etc.. Mahayanists consider their own vehicle selfless such that Hinayana is a pejorative term. Thus, it is preferable to differentiate Mahayana as Northern Buddhism (geographically) and Hinayana as Southern Buddhism. For example, Buddhists in Thailand are Southern Buddhists in practice as well as in location. Of course, Southern Buddhists may deny the legitimacy of some Northern Buddhist scriptures, and some Northern Buddhists may deny the legitimacy of Tibetan Tantras (vs. the Buddha’s well-known Sutras—a different form of discourse). Furthermore, some Tibetans claim legitimacy for discovered ancient texts said to have been hidden by Buddha Padmasambhava (Guru Rinpoche) and his disciples. While it may seem implausible to give credence to these documents, discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls and other ancient writings supports assertions of their legitimacy. Furthermore, some claim to receive these Termas¹³ (discovered texts or teachings¹⁴) directly from the ancient master (i.e. psychically). Prior to the introduction of Buddhism into Tibet, there was another religion, presumably native to Tibet, called Bön. Allegedly animistic in nature, Bön includes Dzogchen teachings remarkably similar to Nyingma Dzogchen¹⁵. Contemporary Vajrayana masters (including the Dalai Lama) are now accepting the legitimacy of Bön Dzogchen¹⁶ and its masters. Indeed, some have referred to it as another Buddhist school or teaching!¹⁷

There are several categories of practices utilized by Dzogchen practitioners. Some practices (especially methods of meditation), common among most Buddhist schools and teachings – Southern and Northern sects – are also employed by Dzogchen practitioners. Others are practices common to regular Mahayana or Vajrayana teachings are optional for Dzogchen practitioners and are considered supporting practices. These types are not

the main Dzogchen teachings. Finally, there are those practices unique to Dzogchen (or common only to Mahamudra).¹⁸

COMMON PRACTICES (BUDDHISM, SOUTH AND NORTH)

Buddhist meditation consists of two main types: Shamatha and Vipashyana. Shamatha (Calm or Tranquil Abiding) is a type of passive meditation. There are many variants:

1. Using an external, physical focal point (e.g. a statue of the Buddha)
2. Using an external, non-physical focal point (e.g. visualizing Buddha Padmasambhava)
3. Using an internal physical focal point (e.g. mentally following the breath)
4. Using an internal non-physical focal point (e.g. mentally following one's thoughts).

These are described in numerous Dzogchen books now in print.¹⁹ The easiest to read are frequently those composed recently by Western teachers and masters²⁰ as opposed to translations of ancient texts. Some translated lectures or notes from retreats given by Tibetan masters who are acclimated to Western society are also easier to read and absorb. There is a general progression, however, from external, physical meditation techniques “with support” to internal, non-physical meditation techniques “without support.” But, if one can successfully meditate via the last category, the others are extraneous. They are provided for practitioners who cannot immediately employ the more advanced methods. Authors commonly categorize students into those of high, middle, and lower capability and provide particular techniques or teachings in three different forms – appropriate to the three levels of students.²¹

Pema Chödrön, Westerner, Buddhist nun²², and Chief Teacher of a monastery (Gampo Abbey) in Nova Scotia, Canada, describes a very concise and useful Shamatha technique (see item 4 immediately above). Its simplicity belies its value. In this version of Shamatha, one prepares a place in the usual way for meditation (preferably solitary, quiet, back straight, etc. – some recommend lotus or half lotus, but that is not required). As you gently quiet your mind, without attempting to stop your thinking, you merely observe the thoughts as they appear in your mind.²³ As one arises, you merely think “thought” or “thinking” and watch the thought disappear on its own. You do not look into the content of the thoughts whether they are positive, negative, neutral, spiritual, or anything else. The content is immaterial, the process is paramount. After doing this for some time, one finds that one's thoughts slow down, that the “space” or time between thoughts increases, and that one becomes calm or tranquil. Of course, this practice also includes emotional feelings as well as physical perceptions. Our recognition of these has a mental component or precedent that can be identified as thought. Buddhists say that you cannot, however, reach enlightenment solely through Shamatha, but that Shamatha is a necessary support to additional practices. One finds that a deeper type of communication or knowledge develops rapidly whereby one acquires knowledge directly

without thought. Jungians might say that by calming the ego (self), one can establish communications with the Self, the archetype of self-integration.²⁴

A more active type of meditation, building upon the calm or tranquil abiding effects of Shamatha, is called Vipashyana (or Vipassana²⁵). In English, it is referred to as Insight Meditation. This is both an experiential and metaphysical technique. It is essentially a personal, experiential or empirical practice of enquiry. It is recommended to perform Shamatha first, then ease into Vipashyana while still tranquil. This is not necessarily easy to do. In Vipashyana, one explores the nature of thought itself by investigating, mentally, where thoughts originate and where they terminate. By establishing this independently, personally verifying the metaphysical precepts of Buddhist philosophy, one develops true conviction--vastly different from mere intellectual understanding and/or acceptance. By extension, the results of this enquiry reframe one's understanding of the nature of self and of mind.²⁶ This technique is highly supportive of the Dzogchen View (see **Unique Practices** below).

Of course, once one establishes that he or she is not his or her thoughts, emotions, or perceptions, the question becomes, "what am I?" or "who am I?" Thus, Buddhism may be antithetical to normative Western philosophy and religions since it does not recognize the existence of a personal soul. Nonetheless, there must be a "continuity" around which one's karma is attached. This resembles the Kabbalistic doctrine of divine sparks entrapped within the kelipot (evil shells)²⁷, which block them from the light. It is also reminiscent of Buddha Nature with which all sentient beings are endowed. Its coating of karma, obscures its nature, resulting in the world of Samsara (suffering) described by the Buddha in the Four Noble Truths. Thus, there are many parallels between Eastern and Western models or myths despite terminological differences. The findings of Vipashyana support the Buddhist view that the perceived world is illusory. There is a remarkable parallel between the Rosicrucian concept of "Reality" and the world of Samsara (Relative Truth) on the one hand and the Rosicrucian concept of "Actuality" and the world of Nirvana (Ultimate Truth) on the other hand.²⁸

The Dzogchen metaphor is of someone awakening in the mountains by a still lake on a moonlit night.²⁹ Looking first at the lake, the person believes he or she sees the moon. But upon investigation, it becomes obvious that what the person saw was a mere reflection – not the moon itself. The reflection has a type of reality (Relative Truth) but it is an illusion in that it is not what it appears to be. Similarly, our thoughts and our selves are not what they appear to be.

In addition to and supporting meditation practices, there are philosophical views brought into everyday life by both Southern and Northern Buddhists. These include the Oneness of Subject and Object. This is reminiscent of the Rosicrucian view that there is only one soul manifesting in a multiplicative way in many bodies simultaneously. Dzogchen extrapolates upon this commonly held Buddhist view (see **Unique Practices** below). It also supports the Vajrayana practices of Guru Yoga and Yidam Yoga (see **Supporting Practices** below).

SUPPORTING PRACTICES (MAHAYANA, VAJRAYANA, AND DZOGCHEN)

In addition to such meditative techniques, there are concepts with corresponding practices that pervade Mahayana and Vajrayana that are also performed by Dzogchen practitioners. Some are considered necessary while others are completely optional. Choice is dependent upon the needs of the student – especially considering the three student levels³⁰ mentioned above. Indeed, some Tibetan approaches are described as gradual while others are immediate. There is considerable disagreement concerning efficacy, choice, etc.

Since Vajrayana is presented as a form of Mahayana Buddhism, which considers the Bodhisattva an heroic figure to be emulated, development of the Bodhisattva mindset of universal compassion (Bodhichitta for the seeker of Buddhahood) is required of Mahayana practitioners. Since Dzogchen and Mahamudra³¹ are considered (at least by most masters) to be part of Vajrayana, the same application is required for Dzogchen and Mahamudra practitioners. Similar to the relative and ultimate truths described above, Bodhichitta or Universal Compassion has its relative and ultimate views. The relative view involves what we would normally call compassion; this is transitive in nature. In other words, there is an object for the compassion; one has compassion for a particular person (familial perspective), all people (humanitarian perspective), for all living beings (including animals, Mahayana perspective), or all sentient beings (including mythical beings e.g. hell beings, deities, and asuras or demigods, Vajrayana perspective). But, Ultimate Bodhichitta is intransitive; it has no object. It is *becoming* compassion--radiating it and exemplifying it through your being – with no one, not even beings in general, as the object of compassion. Tonglen is an advanced technique for developing compassion³². In this technique, while one breathes in, one visualizes all the suffering³³ in the world entering one's body as blackness.³⁴ While when one breathes out, one visualizes all the merit (good deeds and positive actions) one has accumulated over one's life leaving one's body and going out to all the sentient beings of the world as whiteness.³⁵ This is not an easy task for some to do. Indeed, the female embodiment of Mahayana Compassion (Tara in Tibet, Kwan Yin in China, and Kannon in Japan) is depicted as having infinite compassion, which she broadcasts to everyone like the sun sending out its rays of light without exception or judgment of the recipients.³⁶ Tonglen is a very powerful and effective reframing technique with efficacious psychological effects for its practitioners³⁷ and possibly for its recipients as well.³⁸

Vajrayana also includes the “Four Immeasurables”³⁹: compassion, equanimity, love, and joy.⁴⁰ As with compassion in Tonglen,⁴¹ the other three can be approached in a similar intransitive, ultimate manner as well as in the more common, transitive, relative way. Love in this context is described as Loving Kindness⁴², which is referred to as Maitri⁴³. It is the other side of the coin of compassion--though ultimate compassion is more active than Westerners might view compassion. Similarly, Joy here refers to taking joy in another's accomplishments, not being envious or jealous, but celebrating the pure joy of another's achievement. Furthermore, when accomplishing any activity purported to accumulate merit, the practitioner must dedicate the merit (usually to all sentient beings). Vajrayana and Dzogchen books almost invariably include such dedications. Equanimity implies that one is unmoved by praise or criticism. This maps

onto both the stage and practice of One Taste (see **Unique Practices** below), the Oneness of Subject and Object (see **Common Practices** above), and the Dzogchen View (see **Unique Practices** below). Similarly, the West has the story of the seeker who approached a master asking for teachings. The master inquired if the student was indifferent to praise and ridicule. When the student admitted he/she was not so indifferent, the master directed him/her to go back out into the world and develop this ability. Only afterwards would the master accept the student for further training.

Humility⁴⁴ would appear to be an essential part of developing some, if not all, of the Four Immeasurables. There are several Vajrayana techniques to enhance one's humility. The practice of Chöd was developed by the great female yogi and master, Machig Labdron. There are now several books in English about her and her famous technique⁴⁵. The basic technique assumes the existence of numerous Buddhist deities⁴⁶ and mythical beings that crave human flesh. The practitioner, after meditation-like preparations, visualizes consciousness existing outside the physical body. Practitioner then invites⁴⁷ various groups of these beings to enjoy his or her body. The visualizations often include the person preparing the body for consumption⁴⁸ via varying culinary methods – chopping, cooking, etc. There is an obvious parallel to Western Shamanism⁴⁹ wherein the Shaman in training offers his body to the spirits who kill and eat it⁵⁰. The Shaman is then resurrected – giving him or her access to the spirit world. Certainly, this practice provides extraordinary emotional experiences in the separateness of consciousness and body, but it also strongly invokes the humility of giving away what is most cherished by most people⁵¹ and supports equanimity, love, and compassion.⁵² The Western practitioner could easily substitute other recipients for the Tibetan-specific panoply of deities et al⁵³. This is a powerful technique, which its devotees preferred to practice in charnel grounds. The Western “equivalent” of cemeteries⁵⁴ is actually not very similar since charnel grounds usually had dead, chopped up bodies readily apparent.⁵⁵

Vajrayana incorporates three similar types of yoga – Guru, Yidam, and Deity Yoga. The performance of each is similar to the others though there are many variants regarding specific visualizations and the components of those visualizations. Firstly, the visualizations can be performed in a stepwise fashion: adding detail after detail until the “picture” is complete. These “pictures” can be incredibly complex. Alternatively, the entire picture can be visualized all at once. Guru Yoga assumes that the practitioner has a Master or Lama or Guru with whom he or she is studying. This involves an extensive search for a reputable Master to whom the student completely submits. Vajrayana includes considerable advice on how to choose one's master since, once the choice is made and accepted by the master, the student had made a considerable commitment. Nonetheless, the student still needs to observe the master's activities to ascertain that they are not disreputable or in conflict with the Buddhist scriptures or the Guru's tradition. This is rendered more difficult due to the existence (at least in Dzogchen) of the tradition of “Crazy Wisdom” in which some of the most advanced and profound teachers⁵⁶ act in strange, non-rational ways to impart their teachings and wisdom⁵⁷ – especially to greatly accelerate the student's development or advancement beyond what would ordinarily be achieved in the standard step-by-step (gradual) approach. Once, however, the Guru and

student have accepted each other, the Guru will ritualistically empower the student to perform certain rituals, exercises, meditations, etc.⁵⁸

One of these is Guru Yoga for that specific Guru. In this visualization technique, the student visualizes his or her specific Guru in different sizes, colors, positions, surrounded by other Gurus, deities, protectors with various symbols, mudras (positions of body, especially the hands and feet), visual vowels, etc. Specific visualizations are almost numberless and depend upon the specific school, teaching tradition, level of student, point in the practice, etc.⁵⁹. Many Vajrayana and Dzogchen books include examples of such visualizations. However, indubitably, the technique includes the merging of the student and the Guru – thus, envisioning the oneness of subject and object as well as the absorption of the qualities of the archetype of the Guru⁶⁰ (similar to Carl Jung’s psychological archetypes).⁶¹ Alternately, especially if one lacks a personal Guru, one can visualize an historical Guru. The head of the lineage of the branch of Vajrayana one aspires to practice would be a good choice. Thus, a Dzogchen practitioner could utilize Padmasambhava who brought Buddhism to Tibet (for whom Nyingma and Dzogchen have the very highest regard) as an object of the visualization. Or, the student could utilize one of the great Dzogchen masters such as Karma Chagme or Longchenpa⁶² who thrived in the Middle Ages. English translations of some of their works are now in print. Of course, a Westerner could utilize a Western image instead.⁶³

Vajrayana has a huge number of deities, resembling the Egyptian Netjers⁶⁴, which Westerners have translated into “gods.”⁶⁵ This translation is, however, suspect. These might be better viewed as forces of nature or psychological archetypes (à la Jung).⁶⁶ Like the Egyptian Book of the Dead, the Tibetan Book of the Dead includes activities of these “deities.” Some of these beings are peaceful and some are wrathful. Some have two forms, one of each. Deity Yoga is similar to Guru Yoga except for the object and the specifics of the visualization. There is one main deity with which the practitioner melds though there may be others in the visualization as well. Again, the beings involved depend upon the lineage with which the student and Guru are associated.⁶⁷ Also, the practitioner might choose an appropriate target based upon a specific trait with which the student is working at the time, since specific entities embody specific qualities. For example, Manjushri embodies wisdom; Avalokiteshwara embodies compassion (as does his female counterpart Tara). Frequently, a student will identify with a particular entity (lama or deity) in an intuitive way – indicating a good target for this type of Yoga. Whichever method of choice used, the practitioner chooses a particular entity as his/her personal meditation object or Yidam (meditation deity). Many of these entities are referred to as Bodhisattvas or Buddhas and may have been actual people in the distant past.⁶⁸

UNIQUE PRACTICES (DZOGCHEN SPECIFIC)

Formerly Kabbalah was restricted to males over forty years of age. But, times have changed and Kabbalah is no longer so restricted by most Kabbalists.⁶⁹ Similarly, the teaching of Dzogchen was restricted to accomplished Vajrayana adepts. Now, however, books on Dzogchen are easily purchased in English. These books, while usually

including some of the auxiliary or preliminary practices described above, mostly involve discussions of one of the two main Dzogchen-specific practices called Trekchö with, perhaps, some oblique references (and very occasionally some actual specifics) to the other one, Tögal.

Dzogchen is broken down in several ways. One of these is ground, path, and fruit or, overall, as the View. Trekchö⁷⁰ is the establishment of the view and the resulting practice. It means “cutting through” in English. This implies cutting through the normal or relative view in which there is a separation of subject and object with each considered as a separate entity. In Vajrayana, they are, of course, not separate at all. But Dzogchen goes much farther. The Ground is the ultimate reality equal to “the ground of being” which itself is identified with the highest reality called Dharmakaya (the wisdom body⁷¹ or highest manifestation of the Buddha). One cannot adequately describe this phenomenon except for a few limited characteristics, but the experience of it is called Rigpa. It is luminous⁷² and radiates⁷³. While everything one perceives is considered to be empty,⁷⁴ empty does not mean unfilled; it means dependently arising. In other words, everything one perceives is dependent upon a multiplicity of causes, none of which are independent, unchanging, or eternal. Eternalism is considered one of the two extremes.⁷⁵ Antithetically, one might extrapolate emptiness to mean that nothing exists – the nihilist position.⁷⁶ This too is considered an extreme position by Vajrayana (if not all) Buddhists. Vajrayana now follows the Middle Way doctrine of Madhyamaka, which lies between the two extremes of Eternalism and Nihilism. The metaphor of the moon’s reflection in the mountain lake epitomizes the Buddhist Middle Way view. The reflection does exist (thus, Nihilism is avoided) as a relative truth, but it is not actually the moon (not ultimate truth and not Eternal). Another metaphor has resulted in a specific Dzogchen exercise, the Sky Exercise, in which one gazes at the sky, an analogy of the ground of being. Like the reflection, the sky has no ultimate existence, yet it is there. The clouds, like one’s thoughts, drift by and disappear, and the sun (like the ground of being or Tara) radiates equally to everything and everyone.⁷⁷

Nonetheless, there is a tendency amongst practitioners to devalue the relative in favor of the ultimate, leading to a devaluation of people etc. This is countered by Dzogchen’s⁷⁸ insistence on the “unity of emptiness and compassion.”⁷⁹ Compassion here is Tara’s universal, intransitive compassion, selfless compassion with no selfish component (e.g. compassion for one’s loved ones).⁸⁰ In addition, it is stated that the ground of being is cognitive. This explains the existence of cognition, knowledge, wisdom, etc. Thus, there is considerable reference to “the union of emptiness and cognition.” Otherwise, we would not have *sentient* beings dependently arising from the ground of being. Of course, there are parallels to the Ein Sof of the Kabbalah⁸¹ and to the Brahman⁸² of the Upanishads. This could be seen as a transcendent God⁸³ with all the usual descriptions, assumptions, conclusions, preconceptions, and interpretations⁸⁴ stripped away. It’s no wonder that Buddhists reject the word God⁸⁵ because it includes so many anthropomorphic and rationalistic attributes inappropriate to the Dharmakaya.⁸⁶

Thus, the Trekchö practitioner greatly values equanimity (since everything is empty/dependent and subject equals object)⁸⁷ and compassion (unity of compassion and

emptiness). In fact, the utter dependence of the world and all it contains matches the Kabbalistic doctrine of shefa whereby God creates the world continually or it would immediately dissolve of itself—it does NOT have an independent existence at all. Such a view tends towards the acquisition and demonstration of patience and acceptance. It is not, however, passive since the response to compassion is service, accumulation and dedication of merit. The goal of a Bodhisattva is to serve sentient beings wisely; however, only a Buddha is supposed to know what each person needs, non-Buddhas do not—making service and helping somewhat problematic. Since the Mahayana ideal of the Bodhisattva is one of ultimate service to sentient beings, even to the point of sacrificing Nirvana and Buddhahood itself in order to aid others (as did Avalokiteshvara), attainment of Buddhahood can also be a way to help others.

But, since the future is dependent upon the present, recognizing the law of cause and effect or Karma, we can only act in the present. This technique is called Tögal, the leap-over. It is a way to vastly accelerate the effects of the View, Trekchö. Tögal entails living authentically in the Present. In other words, the practitioner is cognizant of everything about him or her and especially in what he or she is doing at the moment. One isn't pondering the past or the future, though one can be in the present while planning a trip, for example. Even though the actual event would take place in the future, the planning is taking place in the present. There is even a contemporary, non-Buddhist book that advocates living completely in the present!⁸⁸ Concentrating upon the smallest detail in a gentle vs. intense manner is a form of meditation similar to the more-pervasive technique of mindfulness used in calm abiding meditation. One of the challenges is to integrate one's formal meditation practice with one's post-meditation practice such that part of one's mind (some estimate it at 25%) continues to be mindful while one is engaged in the many actions and experiences of daily life. Furthermore, the Tögal practitioner is very much into Maitri as well as joy.⁸⁹ He or she takes joy in doing the tiniest things (very Zen-like) and shares this joy with others as well.⁹⁰

CONCLUSIONS

From a Dzogchen perspective, the various types of Buddhism are a progression or layering. As the Dalai Lama stated, “Each Tibetan tradition presents a spiritual path that combines into the practice for one individual the essence of the three vehicles of Hinayana, Mahayana, and Tantrayana. Thus, no matter who we are, we uphold the three-fold teachings of the complete path of Hinayana, Mahayana, and Tantrayana.”⁹¹ Mahayana (Northern) Buddhism builds upon the Four Noble Truths espoused by Theravada (Southern) Buddhism, but adds the Bodhisattva conception and practices. Similarly, Vajrayana Buddhism builds upon Mahayana by adding visualization techniques, the Four Immeasurables, etc. to accelerate experiences and realizations. Dzogchen builds upon Vajrayana by emphasizing the integration of the ultimate and conventional views—through thought, meditation, experiential observations, and realizations—to achieve its stated ultimate goal of Buddhahood within one lifetime. But they all depend upon the individual practitioner to provide the impetus for overall human realization of the Buddhahood with which we are all endowed. The point is not essentially which one is the best technique or view per se, but rather which is best for a

particular practitioner right now. Actions speak louder than words. Per the advertising slogan of the Philadelphia Saving Funds Society, “Wishing won’t do it; saving will.” As opposed to some theistic religions, in Buddhism no one (not even one’s Guru or the Buddha himself) can save one from the sufferings of Samsara but him or herself.⁹²

The Vajrayana perspective of “cleansing” the drosses obscuring one’s essential Buddha nature and of one’s personal responsibility for the world (a la the Bodhisattva ideal) has innumerable parallels in Kabbalah. In the latter, the dark kelipot (shells) obscure the inner light of beings in the world and the Kabbalistic attempts to “raise the sparks” to a higher (divine) level.⁹³ In Dzogchen the practitioner meditates on the View and translates resulting realizations into the post-meditation period (active life). This View appears quite similar to the Kabbalistic Ein Sof—both of which are conceived as the very highest state or dimension. In both systems the universe is an emanation or luminescence from this higher realm. Similarly, many Dzogchen practices find parallels in the Western tradition, as illustrated by references (see the endnotes) to contemporary Rosicrucian techniques. Of course, Rosicrucians do study Kabbalah as a matter of course. Investigations of similarities between Tibetan Buddhism and Western traditions have begun⁹⁴ and fruitful cross-pollination is anticipated.⁹⁵ Such efforts support not only for mutual understanding and tolerance, but also increased comprehension of one’s own beliefs, conclusions, and traditions in light of pervading human and archetypal concepts, experiences, and realizations. Such an open perspective facilitates increased comprehension, appreciation, and implementation of humanity’s heritage of spiritual wisdom.⁹⁶

REFERENCES

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- ¹ Dzogchen (in Tibetan) is also known as Ati Yoga and Mahasandhi (Sanskrit).
 - ² However, there is also a Vajrayana sect in Japan called Shingon.
 - ³ Or Chakgya Chenpo. The several names are in different languages—Sanskrit, Tibetan, & English.
 - ⁴ (Hong Kong: Rangjung Yeshe Publications, 1989) ISBN 9627341215.
 - ⁵ Karma Chags-Med, with commentary by Gyatrul Rinpoche, translated by Allan B. Wallace (Ithaca: Snow Lion Publications, 2000) ISBN 1559391464.
 - ⁶ Karma Chags-Med, with commentary by Gyatrul Rinpoche, translated by Allan B. Wallace (Ithaca: Snow Lion Publications, 2000) ISBN 1559390719.
 - ⁷ “The paramount concern of a popular religion cannot be and never has been, ‘Truth,’ but the maintenance of a certain type of society the inculcation in the young and refreshment in the old of an approved ‘system of sentiments’ upon which the local institutions and government depends.” Joseph Campbell, *Occidental Mythology*, vol. III of *The Masks of God* tetralogy (New York: Penguin Books, 1964), p. 378.

⁸ Tenzin Gyatso, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, *Dzogchen—The Heart Essence of the Great Perfection* (Ithaca: Snow Lion, 2000).

⁹ H. H. The Dalai Lama & Alexander Berzin, *The Gelug/Kagyu Tradition of Mahamudra* (Ithaca: Snow Lion, 1997).

¹⁰ See Kelsang Gyatso's *Meaningful to Behold: The Bodhisattva's Way of Life*, (London: Tharpa Publications, 1994). A commentary on Shantideva's 8th century *Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life*.

¹¹ "A Bodhisattva must always think: Today I will accumulate Merits and spiritual awareness and bring merits to all beings." SGAM.PO.PA, *The Jewel Ornament of Liberation*, translated by Herbert V. Guenther (Boston: Shambhala Press, 1959) p.144; Gampopa was Milarepa's main disciple.

¹² For a general overview of Buddhism including Vajrayana see John Snelling's *The Buddhist Handbook* (Rochester, Vermont: Inner Traditions, 1991).

¹³ James Low has translated the Terma, treasure text, of Nuden Dorje entitled *The Mirror of Clear Meaning in Being Right Here* (Ithaca: Snow Lion Publications, 2004). Also, see Sam van Schaik, *Approaching the Great Perfection* (Boston: Wisdom, 2004) in which he translates and comments upon some of the most famed termas of Jigme Lingpa.

¹⁴ "Modern scholars, conditioned by our literate civilization and our text-illuminated educational system, tend to overlook the importance of oral tradition...It would seem obvious that the appearance of a text at a particular time in history does not prove that the ideas the text contains first came into existence when these were written down in that text. Quite the contrary." John Myrdhin Reynolds, *The Golden Letters* (Ithaca: Snow Lion Publications, 1996) p. 202.

¹⁵ See *The Philosophical View of the Great Perfection in the Tibetan Bon Religion* by Donatella Rossi (Ithaca: Snow Lion Publications, 1999) and Lopon Tenzin Namdak's *Heart Drops of Dharmakaya*, (Ithaca: Snow Lion Publications, 2002).

¹⁶ "There is nothing wrong with Bön, it is almost identical to Buddhism." Tai Situ Rinpoche, *The Third Karmapa's Mahamudra Prayer* (Ithaca: Snow Lion, 2002) p. 102.

¹⁷ "If language is incapable of communicating the essence of a revelatory experience, then how can a tradition based on revelation have any authority? Tradition is merely conventional and artificial ...it cannot transmit divine truth. On the contrary, Buber held that tradition actually stands in the way of revelation." David Biale, *Gershom Scholem: Kabbalah and Counter-History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982) p.118.

¹⁸ For a good breakdown of Dzogchen and Mahamudra, see Tulku Urgyen Rinpoche's *Rainbow Painting*, (Hong Kong: Rangjung Publications, North Atlantic Publications, 1996).

¹⁹ Notably those of Namkhai Norbu such as *Dzogchen: The Self-Perfected State* (Ithaca: Snow Lion Publications, 1996) and others as well as the works of Tulku Urgyen and his sons Drubwang Tsoknyi and Chokyi Nyima cited elsewhere in this paper.

²⁰ Especially the wonderful *Awakening the Buddha Within* by Lama Surya Das (Broadway Publishing, 1998) ISBN 0767901576 or the delightful works of Pema Chödrön such as *The Places that Scare You* (Boston: Shambhala Press, 2002).

²¹ "Certain beliefs are correct, but...their meaning and interpretation may vary in accordance with your stage of journey, making them seem contradictory to those who are not on the Path." Bahaudin quoted by Idries Shah in *Thinkers of the East* (New York: Arkana, Penguin, 1971) p.188.

²² "The refuge vow is basically about making a commitment to become a refugee." Pema Chödrön, *Start Where You Are* (Boston: Shambhala, 1994) page 105.

²³ "Inner silence means having the ability to perceive the feathers weight of the subtlest thoughts that can arise in the mind." R. David A. Cooper, *God is a Verb—Kabbalah and the Practice of Mystical Judaism*, (New York: Riverhead Books, 1997) p. 217.

²⁴ "The mandala appears spontaneously as a compensatory archetype, bringing a center which is not coincident with the ego, but with the wholeness which I call the self—this is the term for wholeness. I am not whole in my ego, my ego is a fragment of my personality. The center of the mandala is not the ego, it is the whole personality, the center of the whole personality." C. G. Jung *Speaking—Interviews & Encounters*, eds. William McGuire & R. F. C. Hull, Bollingen Series 97 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977) p. 328. Note: Mandalas are key objects in Vajrayana.

²⁵ Many Buddhist terms are given in several languages (Pali in Southern Buddhism, Sanskrit in general Mahayana, and Sanskrit or Tibetan in Vajrayana) in different texts.

²⁶ "Recognition of the movement of mind as its play." Shabkar Lama Jotang Tsokdruk Rangdrol "The Flight of the Garuda" in Keith Dowman, *The Flight of the Garuda* (Boston: Wisdom Pubs., 1994) p. 114.

²⁷ See the many works of Gershom Scholem such as the famous *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (New York: Schocken Press, 1995).

²⁸ “There is an inner point which makes all creation one within and makes every individual different and unlike any other without.” Carlyle; quoted by Herbert Weiner in *9 1/2 Mystics* (New York: Collier Books, 1969) p.269.

²⁹ See Longchenpa’s Trilogy *Kindly Bent to Ease Us*, translated by Herbert Guenther (Berkeley: Dharma Publishing, 1975) the first volume *Mind* has ISBN 0913546402.

³⁰ “All mankind is divided into three classes: those that are immovable, those that are movable, and those that move.” Benjamin Franklin; quoted by Jacob Braude in *New Treasury of Stories for Every Speaking and Writing Occasion* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall Inc, June 1961) p. 15.

³¹ See Khenchen Thrangu Rinpoche’s *Essentials of Mahamudra* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2004) for an exposition of Mahamudra.

³² “What is faith worth if it is not translated into action?” Gandhi, quoted by M. Scott Peck in *Further Along the Road Less Traveled* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993) p.209.

³³ “Suffering is the golden cross upon which the rose of the Soul unfoldeth.” Sri Ramatherio, *Unto Thee I Grant* (San Jose: Supreme Grand Lodge of AMORC, 1971) p.91.

³⁴ “Satyagraha—The willingness to endure great personal suffering in order to do what’s right... What matters is that you do not hide from the consequences. You bear what must be borne.” Orson Scott Card, *Shadow of the Hegemon* (New York: Tom Doherty Assoc, 2000) page 322.

³⁵ “I was huddled in my hiding place under an overhanging cliff
I was tired; I was weak; I was naked.
I felt helpless and I was full of fear, for the Devil stood laughing at me.
He was as tall as a tree, full of strength and energy,
With a powerful voice and his great muscles rippled in the sunlight.
He was black and he was beautiful.
In a great voice he said: “Why do you try to hide from me, little one?”
“I am here to fight you.”
“Why don’t you come out and fight?”
But I could not, for I was afraid.
He continued to taunt me, saying that I must come out and fight him, and he would go away.
Finally, I went out and fought him, and he smote me a thousand blows
and cut me a thousand cuts, and I lay dead.
But I arose and fought him a thousand times,
And each time he smote me a thousand blows and cut me a thousand cuts,
and I again lay dead.

But each time I arose, I had a new body and each new body was bigger, stronger, and more beautiful than the old.

Until at last, I was as big as he, as strong as he, and as beautiful as he.

Then he took me into his arms and said: “I love you!”

And he bore me into the sky, around the Earth, and under the Moon, and into the Sun, And I had come home.” “Going Home” based upon Edward Carpenter’s “The Secret of Time and Satan,” quoted by Maryann Miller in “Beyond Good and Evil—Reconciling the Pairs of Opposites,” *The Rosicrucian Digest* 3 (2001): 24-27.

³⁶ “People unhesitatingly project their own assumptions about others on to the persons concerned and hate or love them accordingly.” C. G. Jung, *The Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche*, Collected Works vol. 8 (New York: Pantheon Books, 1960) p. 308.

³⁷ “Reciprocity--kinship with everyone and everything.” Stewart Edward White, *The Road I Know* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1942) p.114.

³⁸ “We may yet comfort ourselves with the saying of the Chinese Master: ‘when the enlightened man is alone and thinks rightly, it can be heard a thousand miles away.’” Carl Gustav Jung, *The Practice of Psychotherapy*, Collected Works vol. 16 (New York: Pantheon Books, 1954) p. 110.

³⁹ There is considerable similarity between The Four Immeasurables and the Rosicrucian sending technique which transmits Peace, Love, Harmony, Kindliness, and Health. One could map the five Rosicrucian elements onto the Four Immeasurables without too much difficulty.

⁴⁰ “If we could finally grasp how rich we are, our sense of heavy burden would diminish and our sense of curiosity would increase.” Pema Chödrön, *Start Where You Are* (Boston: Shambhala, 1994) p. 11.

⁴¹ See Pema Chödrön’s *Tonglen—The Path of Transformation* (Halifax, Nova Scotia: Vajradhatu Publications, 2001) for a book devoted to Tonglen.

⁴² “If God were to choose, Hosea 6:6 tells us, He prefers *hesed* (acts of loving kindness) over Temple sacrifices. Isaiah 1...has God denouncing Israel’s sacrifices and festivals as meaningless unless we cease to do evil, devote ourselves to justice, aid the wronged, uphold the orphan, and defend the widow.” Neil Gillman, *Sacred Fragments* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1990) p.223.

⁴³ See the works of Pema Chödrön, especially *The Wisdom of No Escape: And the Path of Lovingkindness* (Boston: Shambhala, 2001).

⁴⁴ “Torah can only be studied properly by people who have mastered the virtue of humility ...The words of the Torah are found only among people who are humble in spirit and who sit in the dust of the feet of sages.” Adin Steinsaltz, *The Talmud* Vol. XIII, Tractate Taanit Part I (New York: Random House, 1989) p.83 [Halakhah section].

⁴⁵ Perhaps the best is Jerome Edou's *Machig Labdrön and the Foundations of Chöd* (Ithaca: Snow Lion Publications, 1996).

⁴⁶ "The Tsaddikim make God, if one may phrase it thus, their unconscious." Rabbi Dov Baer of Mezhirech (the Great Maggid, successor to the Baal Shem Tov), *Or Torah* (Korets 1804) f. 115b & Jerusalem 1956, quoted by Gershom Scholem, *On the Mystical Shape of the Godhead* (New York: Schocken, 1991) p. 139.

⁴⁷ "Since it is the animal in man that causes him to sin, an animal must be sacrificed as an atonement. The slaughtering and sacrifice of the animal represents the destruction of the animal spirit in the individual...A person vicariously identifies with the animal being sacrificed (Ramban). Then by 'following the animals,' he can enter the spiritual realm." Aryeh Kaplan, *Rabbi Nachman's Stories* (Jerusalem: Breslov Research Institute, 1983) p. 247.

⁴⁸ "Against the background of the widespread Kabbalistic concept of elevation by ritualistic eating; as the vegetable and animal entities are elevated through their consumption by a human being, so is the latter elevated through being swallowed by the Divine. In all these cases, the spiritual cores or the holy particles are liberated and thereby achieve their return to a pristine status. And second, from both the R. Isaac of Acre and Schneur Zalman passages, we can gather that, in spite of the imagery used, the experience it reflects does not seem to be considered a final one." Moshe Idel, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988) p.72.

⁴⁹ See Mircea Eliade's seminal work *Shamanism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972).

⁵⁰ "Consistent with the view of R. Levi Yizhaq, namely that by annihilation one expands his capacity to receive the influx even more than before he "annihilates himself." Moshe Idel, *Hasidism, Between Ecstasy and Magic* (Albany: SUNY, 1991) p.317, n.106.

⁵¹ "Purification through creative emotional efflorescence." Shabkar Lama Jotang Tsokdruk Rangdrol, "The Flight of the Garuda" in Keith Dowman, *The Flight of the Garuda* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1994) p. 111.

⁵² "The earth hath many flowers; in all the fields and bowers
Their radiant blossoms open 'neath the glory of the sun.--
But their leaves are scarce unfurl'd to the summer of the world,
When they perish in their beauty, every one.
Brief in their fair delight; 'tis ended ere the night.
Sad emblems are they all of the sadder lives of men!
Better be a rose, the wildest one that blows,
and safe in the shelter of the King's Garde'n!
The lofty laurels stand, at a conqueror's right hand,
To deck the feasts of triumph and the revellings of mirth,

Lillies and bays are bound for the brows of heroes crowned,
As symbols of the evanescent earth,--
But beauty, pride, and power, are the blossoms of an hour,
Bringing sorrow more than safety to the weary souls of men;
Better be a rose, the wildest one that blows,
and safe in the shelter of the King's Garde'n!" Marie Corelli, "The King's Garden" from *Barabbas--A Dream of the World's Tragedy* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1895, c/w 1893), pp. 272-3.

⁵³ "Every mystical experience is partially a product of our social and intellectual environment. No experience which we have is unrelated to our customs, beliefs, and training. Every experience is framed in our ideas and within the limitations of our comprehension." Ralph M. Lewis, *Mental Alchemy* (Crawfordsville, IN: R. R. Donnelley & Sons, 1978) p.141.

⁵⁴ The Kabbalists of Safed, Israel in the 14th century practiced a type of meditation by physically prostrating over the graves of departed Masters. I believe this is mentioned by Zvi Werblowsky in his *Joseph Karo: Lawyer and Mystic* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1977).

⁵⁵ It must be noted that Machig also devised more esoteric, symbolic, and impersonal practices such that her entire system has been referred to as "The Chöd of Mahamudra" in Jerome Edou's *Machig Labdrön and the Foundations of Chöd* (Ithaca: Snow Lion Publications, 1996).

⁵⁶ A good example was the acclaimed Patrul Rinpoche, author of *The Words of My Perfect Teacher* (Boston: Shambhala, 1998).

⁵⁷ "The Hindus tell a story of a woman ascetic who once visited a particular temple in southern India. Exhausted from a long walk, she decided to rest beneath a tree near the entrance to the temple. As she was resting, one of the priests inside was shocked to observe the woman lying with her feet facing the temple, an act he considered highly disrespectful to the deity. When he pointed out her sacrilege, she replied, 'Good Sir, please inform me where God is not to be found, and I shall gladly place my feet in that direction.'" Clive Johnson, *Vedanta* (New York: Bantam, 1974) p.5.

⁵⁸ "The main theme in ritual is the linking of the individual to a larger morphological structure than that of his own physical body." Joseph Campbell, *The Power of Myth* (New York: Doubleday, 1988), p.72.

⁵⁹ "Mystical experience, like experience in general, is contextual. If that is the case, it follows that mystical visions will always be shaped, informed, and determined by one's institutional affiliations. The claim that vision is conditioned by pre-experiential criteria renders the very notion of an immediate visionary experience of God or things divine problematic, if not possible." Elliot R. Wolfson, *Through a Speculum that Shines* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994) p. 326.

⁶⁰ “One went to the door of the Beloved and knocked. A voice asked, ‘Who is there?’ He answered, ‘It is I.’ The voice said, ‘There is no room for Me and Thee.’ The door was shut. After a year of solitude and deprivation he returned and knocked. A voice from within asked, ‘Who is there?’ The man said, ‘It is thee.’ The door was opened for him.” Jalaluddin Rumi, quoted by Idries Shah, *The Sufis* (Garden City: Anchor Books, Doubleday & Co., 1971) p.357.

⁶¹ “Often the symbols of different religions may have more in common than have the abstractly formulated official doctrines...The true symbol...awakens our consciousness to a new awareness of the inner meaning of life and of reality itself.” Thomas Merton, "Symbolism: Communication or Communion?" *New Directions* 20, (New York: New Directions, 1968) pp. 11-12, quoted by Joseph Campbell, *Myths to Live By* (New York: Bantam Books, 1972) p. 265.

⁶² “To hold that one cannot realize the inexpressible without relying on specific means to characterize it is a fool’s attitude.” Longchen Rabjam [Longchenpa] (1308-63), *The Precious Treasury of the Basic Space of Phenomena* (Junction City, CA: Padma Publishing, 2001) p. 69.

⁶³ “No one has yet reported of a Buddhist arhat surprised by a vision of Christ, or a Christian nun by the Buddha. The image of the vehicle of Grace, arriving in vision from untold depths, puts on the guise of the local mythic symbol of the spirit, and as long as such symbols work there can be no quarrel with their retention.” Joseph Campbell, *Creative Mythology*, vol. 4 of *The Masks of God* tetralogy (New York: Penguin Books, 1987) and Viking Press 1968.

⁶⁴ See E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, in two volumes (New York: Dover Publications, 1969).

⁶⁵ “One shouldn’t think that deities are totally non-existent and nothing other than one’s projection. It is not like that either. The deity definitely exists, although not necessarily in a way that is separate from one’s own perception...The blessing of Manjushri may involve giving yourself the answer.” Drubwang Tsoknyi Rinpoche, *Carefree Dignity* (Hong Kong: Rangjung Yeshe Publishing, 1998) p. 177.

⁶⁶ “Essentially the same mythological motifs are to be found throughout the world. There are myths and legends of the Virgin Birth, of Incarnations, Deaths, and Resurrections; Second Comings, Judgments, and the rest, in all the great traditions. And since such images stem from the psyche, they refer to the psyche.” Joseph Campbell, *Myths to Live By* (New York: Bantam Books, 1972) p.261.

⁶⁷ “God is experienced relative to the recipient of the experience.” Rabbi Judah Lowe ben Beazley of Prague, *Derek ha Hayyim* (Avot 18), quoted by Ben Zion Bokser, *The Jewish Mystical Tradition* (New York: Pilgrim Press, 1981) p.164.

⁶⁸ “It is only human nature to overlay the history or the biography of a charismatic figure—whether religious, military, or political—with myth, so that this figure comes to approximate a preexisting archetype. Thus, in later times, what we find in tradition, both written and oral, is not biography in the modern sense but hagiography...But this fact does not in itself disprove the real historical existence of these masters.” John Myrdhin Reynolds, *The Golden Letters* (Ithaca: Snow Lion Pubs, 1996) p. 199.

⁶⁹ See the works of Z’ev ben Shimon Halevi such as *Introduction to Cabala* [sic] (York Beach, ME: Weiser, 1991).

⁷⁰ “The samayas for the Dzogchen teachings have two aspects: primordial purity and spontaneous presence—*kadag* and *lhündrub*. Primordial purity refers to the view of Trekchö, the ‘thorough cut’. Spontaneous presence refers to the meditation training called Tögal. Each of these has two samayas. The samayas for Trekchö practice are called nonexistence and all-pervasiveness. The two samayas for Tögal training are oneness and spontaneous perfection. So, there are four samayas, nonexistence, all-pervasiveness, oneness and spontaneous perfection. Because everything is included within these four, these are known as the king-like samayas.” Tulku Urgyen Rinpoche, *Vajra Speech* (Hong Kong: Rangjung Reshe, 2001) p. 140.

⁷¹ While “body” is the standard translation, at least one Tibetan author (Kyabgon) has stated that it can also be translated as “dimension.” This parallels P. D. Ouspensky’s *Tertium Organum*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1982) in which he describes a higher dimensional object penetrating into a lower dimension. There are parallels here with both the three or four kayas/dimensions of Vajrayana as well as the four worlds of the Kabbalah.

⁷² “Dynamic, empty, and unobstructed luminosity...empty, clear, and unimpeded nature of the mind itself.” Kalu Rinpoche, *Gently Whispered* (Barrytown, NY: Station Hill Press, 1994) p. 22.

⁷³ “The moment you recognize Rigpa, there’s a sense of being wide open. Awake. Free of subject and object, free of thoughts, free of the future, with no dwelling on the present either. It’s like pouring water in a crystal bowl – totally clear. With the cognizance comes some clarity, some brightness. Not the brightness from the electric bulb or daylight but an internal sense of being lucid.” Drubwang Tsoknyi Rinpoche, p. 86.

⁷⁴ “In seeing that all appearance (not only one’s mind and emotions) is luminous, unimpeded suchness, one recognizes that all internal appearance, which is also arising from the mind, is only mental projection.” Kalu Rinpoche, 14.

⁷⁵ “Freedom lies in the transcendence of extremes...in the transcendence of conceptual frameworks...in the transcendence of conceptual bias.” Longchen Rabjam [Longchenpa] (1308-63), *The Precious Treasury of the Basic Space of Phenomena* (Junction City, CA: Padma Publishing, 2001) pp. 115-7.

⁷⁶ “Emptiness is not to be equated with mere nothingness; it is simply the absence of inherent, independent existence.” (Quoting Nagarjuna on page 146). “If you approach emptiness through the meaning of dependent origination, your path to the conclusion will be much more successful.” The Dalai Lama (Tenzin Gyatso), *Illuminating the Path to Enlightenment* (Long Beach, CA: Thubten Dhargye Ling Publishing, 2002) p. 148.

⁷⁷ “The inner world of man's imagination took precedence over the external world. The latter owed its very existence to the external projection of thought by means of words.” Yehuda Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar* (Albany: State University of NY Press, 1993) p.56.

⁷⁸ The view of Dzogchen is very similar to (if not identical with) that of Kagyu Mahamudra.

⁷⁹ “Indivisibility of emptiness and compassion means they should be a unity.” Drubwang Tsoknyi Rinpoche, 151.

⁸⁰ “Compassion free from concepts is an expression of self-existing wakefulness... There is a way also to be conceptually compassionate, which is different.” Drubwang Tsoknyi Rinpoche, 157.

⁸¹ See Gershom Scholem's *On the Mystical Shape of the Godhead* and other works op. cit. as well as Idel, op. cit.

⁸² “Brahman, Existence--Knowledge--Bliss Absolute is like a shoreless ocean. In the ocean visible blocks of ice are formed here and there by intense cold. Similarly, under the cooling influence, so to speak, of the devotion [bhakti] of its worshipers, the Infinite transforms Itself into the finite and appears before the worshipers as God with form, that is to say, God reveals Himself to His devotees as an embodied Person. Again, as on the rising of the sun, the ice in the ocean melts away, so on the awakening of Knowledge [jnana], the embodied God melts back into the infinite and formless Brahman... Therefore people compare the love of God to the cooling light of the moon, and knowledge to the burning rays of the sun.” Ramakrishna, quoted by Swami Nikhilananda, *The Gospels of Sri Ramakrishna* (New York: Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center, 1942) p.859; quoted by Joseph Campbell, *The Inner Reaches of Outer Space* (Toronto: Alfred Van der March-St. James Press, 1986) p. 69.

⁸³ “Too many of our best scholars, themselves indoctrinated from infancy in a religion of one kind or another based upon the Bible, are so locked into the idea of their own god, as a supernatural fact--something final, not symbolic of transcendence, but a personage with a character and will of *his* own--that they are unable to grasp the idea of a worship that is not of the symbol but of its reference, which is of a mystery of much greater age and of more immediate inward reality than the name--and--form of any historical ethnic idea of a deity, whatsoever.” Joseph Campbell, *Historical Atlas of World Mythology, vol. II The Way of the Seeded Earth, Part 3: Mythologies of the Primitive Planters: the Middle & Southern Americas* (New York: Harper & Row, 1989) p.381.

⁸⁴ “My favorite definition of religion is: a misinterpretation of mythology. And the misinterpreting consists precisely in attributing historical references to symbols which properly are spiritual in their reference.” Joseph Campbell (with Michael Toms), *An Open Life* (Burdett, NY: Larson Publications, 1988) p.78.

⁸⁵ “The divers paths of religion are fingers of the loving hand of one Supreme Being, a hand extended to all, offering completeness of spirit to all, eager to receive all.” “Brotherhood” *Words of the Master, A Second Treasury of Kahlil Gibran* (New York: Citadel Press, 1962) p.69.

⁸⁶ “People are attached to their own way of looking at things. As soon as you say something that in any way threatens it, they become defensive. So the way is not to threaten, just to be the way you are, letting the Dharma unfold. A peaceful mind has its effect on its surroundings. It takes time and it takes patience, and a lot of love.” Joseph Goldstein, *The Experience of Insight (A Simple and Direct Guide to Buddhist Meditation)* (Boston: Shambhala, 1987) p.15.

⁸⁷ “Train in the state of naked awareness, free of concepts. ‘Concept’ here means perceiver and perceived, subject and object. That’s how it really is.” Drubwang Tsoknyi Rinpoche, 85.

⁸⁸ Eckhart Tolle, *The Power of Now* (Novato, CA: New World Library, 1999).

⁸⁹ “I want to travel as far as I can go, I want to reach the joy that's in my soul, And change the limitations that I know, And feel my mind and spirit grow; I want to live, exist ‘to be,’ And hear the truths inside of me.” Doris Warshay, "New Directions," from *Your Erroneous Zones* by Dr. Wayne Dyer (New York: Avon Books, 1976).

⁹⁰ Tögal also includes high-level, seldom described in print, visualization-like practices.

⁹¹ H. H. The Dalai Lama & Alexander Berzin, *The Gelug/Kagyü Tradition of Mahamudra* (Ithaca: Snow Lion Publications, 1997) p. 191.

⁹² “One action is worth more than a thousand sighs.” Jacob Immanuel Schochet, *Chassidic Dimensions* vol. 3 of *The Mystical Dimension* trilogy (Brooklyn: Kehot Publication Society, 1990) p.207.

⁹³ "Nature and Its Sparks: Said the Medzibozer: The Lord placed sparks of holiness within everything in nature, whether composed of organic or inorganic matter. It is His will that man bring forth these holy sparks by his holy deeds and elevate them to their Source. It is for this reason that man may eat the flesh of living beings as well as the food of growing plants. By reciting Grace over them, he raises them upwards. But how can holy sparks be brought forth from bitter and inedible matter in nature? This is done by their use as medicine for the sick. If the ill man is worthy, he accomplishes this purpose, and is cured of his ailment.” Rabbi Baruch of Medziboz, grandson of the Besht

(Baal Shem Tov) in *Butzino De-Nehorah* (Lemberg, 1880) p. 22; quoted by Louis I. Newman in *The Hasidic Anthology (Tales and Teachings of the Hasidim)* (Northvale, NJ: Charles Scribners Sons, 1934) p.173.

⁹⁴ Rodger Kamenetz, *The Jew in the Lotus* (San Francisco: Harper, 1995) is an account of a team of Jewish theologians' visit to the Dalai Lama in Dharamsala, India.

⁹⁵ Comparisons of Tibetan and other forms of Buddhism to Western psychology have now been published; for example, see Radmilla Moacanin, *The Essence of Jung's Psychology and Tibetan Buddhism* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2003).

⁹⁶ "Nothing is more destructive to inquiry and the knowledge inquiry brings than to carry about with one a standard way of how everything should be done ... there is no foreign custom, however absurd it may seem to us, that cannot be paralleled by a custom of our own." Lord Dunsany, "Seeing the World," *The Ghosts of the Heavside Layer* (Philadelphia: Owlswick Press, 1980) p. 220.