



Clarifying the Profound Meaning

A Concise Commentary on the Final Testament in Four Lines

by Minling Khenchen Ngawang Khyentse Norbu

*Bowing to the guru who reveals the basic space
Of innate, indestructible luminosity, just as it is,
Here I shall elucidate the essence of profound
And secret instructions in but a few words.*

That supreme refuge who is renowned by the name of Venerable Guru, the Sublime Dharma King Orgyen Terdak Lingpa, imparted four lines in the form of an entrusted final testament. These lines contain the refined essence of pith instructions for his personal disciples. The meaning that they convey can be divided into three sections:

1. The explanation of the ground, the innate nature.
2. The explanation of the path, the practice.
3. The explanation of the fruition, ripening as the dharmakaya.

1. Explanation of the Ground

*May appearance, sound, and awareness, in the state of deity, mantra,
and dharmakaya,
Vast and infinite as the play of the kayas and wisdoms,*

This refers to the final, secret, essential point expressed in all presentations of whatever vast and profound Dharma cycles have been taught by the Victorious Ones. That is, luminous wisdom—the essence of the causal vajra, the innate ground for accomplishing the kayas and utterly pure wisdoms of the Victorious Ones, the immediate, indestructible vajra of intrinsically pure, fundamental energy and mind—primordially and inherently abides in the mindstreams of all wandering beings.

Manifold phenomena can be succinctly classified as **appearance, sound, and awareness** of objects. Given that these phenomena arise interdependently, it is taught that their essence is emptiness. As this is so, all phenomena that exist for perceiving subjects are pure in terms of the extremely subtle aspect of energy and mind. On an essential level, they are **in a state of deity, mantra, and dharmakaya**, with luminous wisdom abiding as their basic nature.

When that wisdom is sullied by the adventitious stains of obscurations and faults, the five lights are perceived as material phenomena due to the superficial differentiation of energy and consciousness.

In an ultimate sense, however, fundamental energy and mind are indivisible from suchness, or the innate mind, which is like the **kayas and wisdoms** at the time of fruition. Their **play** is **vast and infinite**, allowing for anything and everything to manifest.

2. Explanation of the Path

In the profound, secret practice of the great yoga,

Disciples following this kind of path need to actualize such luminosity, and in order to do so, it will not do simply to adhere to the five perfect circumstances of the time of fruition, which are considered central to the path of the three lower tantras. Nor will it suffice to train on the path of the two stages through simply cultivating the subtler yogas of emptiness and energy.

Once we have entered the mandala of the unsurpassable great yoga, the profound Secret Mantra, we must, as a preliminary, become suitable vessels for this practice through receiving the correct empowerments that are specific to each stage of development and completion.

Next, we endeavour in the practice of the two authentic stages of the path. The yoga of the fabricated development stage takes birth, death, and the bardo as the ground of purification. The corresponding purifying practices are all maṇḍalas, subtle and gross, consisting of the support and the supported. Here, those with superlative realization of the path described above cultivate themselves as powerful beings. The yoga of the unfabricated completion stage is the cultivation of the unique yoga of the extraordinary three isolations. Here, we concentrate upon the channels, energies, and bindus in our own bodies. Then, the movement of karmic energy enters the central channel, abides there, and dissolves. The impression left over after having done so is the wisdom of empty bliss, from which the two divine kayas arise.

3. Explanation of the Fruition

Be inseparable, of one taste within the awakened mind bindu.

Through the profound and swift path of these two stages, we no longer rely on practices that involve only the coarse contemplation of objects. Within our own mindstreams, our natural abode—the extremely subtle innate wisdom, the state of the vajra of unmoving mind—becomes familiar. As this familiarity grows ever more stable, it becomes the actual, definitive antidote by which the hosts of adventitious faults and veils that obscure luminosity gradually subside, and even

the final obscuration—the hindrance of the three experiences of transference^[1]—is abolished.

Everything we perceive and experience, being **inseparable** from the kayas and wisdoms, thus becomes **of one taste within** the essence of the great, indestructible **bindu**, the innate luminosity that is suchness—**the awakened mind** of the victorious ones.

In effect, we have the power to rest within the self-appearance of wisdom itself, in which, on the level of fruition, an infinite display of pure retinues, buddhahelds, sensory pleasures, and offering clouds are completely assembled. We have an awakened understanding of all that can be perceived, down to the smallest leaves on the trees in our surroundings.

“**May**,” means that these true, undeceiving words were given accompanied by the promise of an aspiration.

Written by Gyurme Dorje.

In conclusion:

*By this struggle, made in hopes of fitting
The unfathomable depths of the ocean of the meaning of the tantras,
Into the vase of a few words, I have made a childish fool of myself.*

At the request of both Domtsön Sangyé Tenzin and Tsering Palden, and by the command of Jetsün Lama Dampa, these words composed by the idiotic invalid who is comparable to an ox and parades around as the monk known as Khyentse Norbu were transcribed by Lobsang Yeshe Gyatso.

And to conclude again:

*This untrampled ornament of excellent words brings together
The profound scriptures of our own tradition on the inseparable two truths, which are
The magical emanation of the primordial awakening of appearance and existence,
And the tantras and scriptures of the new schools, which were bestowed by noble
emanations.
I offer it before the host of those learned in the five sciences.
This was uttered by the Lord Guru. May there be virtue!*



Translation Origin

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Bibliography

Tibetan Source

smin gling mkhan chen ngag dbang mkhyen brtse'i nor bu. *'das chems tshig rkang bzhi pa'i bsdus 'grel zab don gsal byed*. dbu med manuscript published on Buddhist Digital Resource Center (MW8LS19715).