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# The Emergence of the Ego/Self Complementarity and Its Beyond

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This study traces the emergence of the ego/self idea in Buddhist experience-based and process-oriented thinking (rDzogs-chen). This is thinking that is primarily concerned with understanding and less so with establishing and being satisfied with a theoretical system, one that inevitably remains reductionist and, for this reason, fails to explain or make sense of what matters most to any living system—such as a human being. Because of its dynamic character, rDzogs-chen thinking avoids the pitfall of concretizing the cognitive aspect of the living, variously called a mind, consciousness, ego or self, into some homuncular entity, and of assuming this entity to reside in one's head as a kind of passive spectator. Not only did Buddhist thinking in general, and rDzogs-chen thinking in particular, conceive of "mind" or "consciousness" as a complexity of functions reacting and responding to each other and forming together the idea of an ego/self, but also, in this respect, it anticipated and antedated the findings of modern phenomenology with its differentiation into an ego/self (in small letters) as a limitation of the Self (with a capital letter) that is neither egocentric nor egological nor logocentric. In rDzogs-chen thought even the Self is a barrier that has to be overcome in order to become ek-statically open.

*You haf too much Ego in your Cosmos.*

—Rudyard Kipling,  
*(Life's Handicap. Bertran and Bimi)*

*...to thine own self be true,  
And it must follow, as the night the day,  
Thou canst not then be false to any man.*

—William Shakespeare (*Hamlet* I.iii.58)

**B**OTH "EGO" and "self" conceptualize the central core around which all psychic activities revolve. Of these two, the ego, the Latin word for the English word "I," denotes the foundational meaning, neutral as regards evaluative connotations, of theories of personality. In addition, it is used as a summary term for psychological processes connected with the notion of "self," such that in semitechnical, and even

more so in some popular writings, this is the meaning commonly intended. However, its most widely used meaning derives from its being one of the components in the Freudian tripartite model of the psychic apparatus consisting of the id, the superego, and the ego. According to Sigmund Freud (1858-1939), the inventor of the notorious disciplines of psychoanalysis and psychotherapy,<sup>1</sup> the ego has been differentiated from the id through the influence of the external world, to whose demands it adapts. In so doing, it attempts to reconcile the forces of the id and the superego in such a way as to maximize pleasure and to minimize unpleasure. On the whole, it is a cluster of cognitive and perceptual processes that includes such various functions as memory, problem-solving, reality-testing, and others that are conscious and in touch with reality (whatever reality may mean). While its overall trend is in the direction of an equilibrium state, it cannot

but exclude excellence and creativity and ultimately results in spiritual death. By contrast, the super-ego manifests itself in conscience, shame, and guilt, and as such is the agency by which the influence of parents and others is prolonged in such a way that their judgments and prohibitions are internalized by a process of introjection in early childhood long before the child is able to question them. It was the third component, the id, representing the instincts and other innate needs, with sexuality as the most prominent feature, that fascinated Freud to an extraordinary degree.<sup>2</sup> The impact of Freud's ideas on the contemporary intellectual climate in the English-speaking world is best expressed and summed up by the British poet and man of letters Wystan Hugh Auden (1907-1973) on the occasion of Freud's death:

if often he was wrong and, at times, absurd  
to us he is no more a person  
now but a whole climate of opinion  
under whom we conduct our different lives...  
("In Memory of Sigmund Freud," 1940).

While the idea of the ego as the center of what we tend to call a human being's psychic dimension, in all its limited and yet overevaluated scope, is ineluctably linked to Sigmund Freud's blinkered and reductionist view of it and of the psyche<sup>3</sup> in general, the idea of a "self" (with or without a capital letter) is no less confusing. Broadly speaking, it is conceived of as the dominant aspect of a human being's experience that carries with it the compelling sense of his or her unique existence. However, the diversity of its uses is disconcertingly wide-flung, and the intended meaning is often confounded by the fact that the term may be used in ways that interact with grammatical forms, as when, for instance, it is used as a reflexive prefix that may itself be interpreted or understood in different senses. Examples would be such expressions as "self-control" (the self controlling the self); "self-actualization" (the self becoming actualized); "self-consistency" (the self acting consistently); "self-evident" (the whole compound serving as an adjective modifying some other proposition); to which many more expressions could be added.

The traditional primary intentions of the users of the term "self" refer to existing or presumed aspects of the users' personhood, only too often

confused with the postulate of an "ego." It is therefore safe to say that these so-called aspects are mostly speculative and do not come to grips with what lies at the very bottom of these spurious constructs. Following Alfred North Whitehead's suggestion, we can even go so far as to speak of them as "entities in misplaced concreteness."

The above picture changed radically with the late Carl Gustav Jung's (1875-1961) distinction and relationship between the ego and the Self, of which he has spoken repeatedly and which Barbara Hannah (1997) has so admirably summed up in the words "the eternal Self needs the limited ego *in order to experience itself in outer reality*" (p. 171, italics in original). As is well known, Jung took the term "Self" from the use of its Sanskrit equivalent (*ātman*) in the Vedic Brihadaranyaka-Upanishad:<sup>4</sup>

[He] is your Self (*ātman*) that is in charge of everything from within, immortal.  
He can't be seen, but he is the one who sees;  
he can't be heard, but he is the one who hears;  
he can't be thought of (as a thing), but he is the one who thinks of (things); he can't be perceived (sensuously), but he is the one who perceives (sensuously). There is no other who sees, but he; there is no other who hears, but he; there is no other who perceives, but he; there is no other who thinks, but he.  
He is the one who is in charge of everything, immortal.  
Everything else is frustrating and perishable.

It is against and from this, on the one hand, almost fanatical reductionist and, on the other hand, semidynamic background of what is deemed to be any human being's psychic make-up, that we can (and even feel compelled to) move into the as yet uncharted and so alluring dimension of sheer dynamics; a dimension whose salient feature is the intertwining of the ideas of emergence, complementarity, and self-organization.

The term "emergence" has come from philosophy. It differs from "appearance" in that any "emergent phenomenon" transcends anything that can be found in its components. In other words, where the whole seems to be greater than the sum of its parts, the implication is that it can never be fully understood by reductionist methods. There are two major kinds of reductionism: the downward one, ending in the Theory of Everything that does not explain

anything; and the upward one, ending in an equally silly Creationism that offers idolatrous pseudoanswers to what are supposed to be Deep Questions. These, on closer inspection, are not deep at all. The flaw in both kinds of reductionism is their neglect of the incontestable presence of the individual who, as it were, calls the whole to show itself and, upon the latter's doing so, interprets its lighting-up in the light of a personal understanding (or lack thereof).<sup>5</sup>

The idea that the ego or I as a subject's essence, (which Plato and Descartes believed could exist disembodied), is an "emergent phenomenon" and that it emerges in complicity with the dynamic of Being (that like the ego or I or even the self/Self is not a thing), seems to have been anticipated in the following passage:<sup>6</sup>

In the Before in which there was (as yet) no ego/"I,"<sup>7</sup> there (also) were (as yet) no (examples illustrating the) process of evolution (*de-bzhin gshegs-pa*).

In the Before in which there was (as yet) no ego/"I," there (also) were (absolutely [*ye-nas*] as yet) none of the five elemental forces.

In the Before in which there were (as yet) none of the five elemental forces, there (also) were, in terms of primordially (*gdod-ma-nas*), no (examples illustrating the) status of a sentient being (*sems-can*).

In the Before in which there was (as yet) no ego/"I," there (also) was no maker-of-the-Before (*sngon-pa-po*).

The forefather (*mes-po*)<sup>8</sup> of the evolutionary process is nobody else than the very ego/"I."

This passage, on the one hand, "contrasts" any one who illustrates the process of evolution (taking place "individually") with any one who (as a sentient being) has a mind, and, on the other hand, deals with the implied dynamics in terms of phase space. Literally speaking, the term for "any one who illustrates the process of evolution" (*de-bzhin gshegs-pa*) means "just-so going." This implies that evolution (or the one who is just-so going) has no goal. If it had, it would come to a dead end. As a matter of fact, we are told over and over again in the original text that Being in its dynamic (amounting to "evolution") has no goal (and, by implication, no beginning or starting point). But this is only one side of Being's (the whole's) play; the other side is that it has a goal (and, by implication, a beginning or starting point). This, on the one end, may be the one who

is just-so going; and, on the other end, the one who (as a sentient being) has a mind (*sems-can*). And while, from the perspective of the ever-present experiencer in Being's play, the "just-so going" may be felt as an opening-up with no limits in sight, the "having a mind" may be felt as a closing-in that becomes ever more narrow, oppressive, and suffocating. In brief, Being's dynamic creates (though not in the creationist's sense) its own context as the precondition for its play to continue. And it may go "upward" in the direction of becoming spiritually alight, *erlichtet*, and radiating this light,<sup>9</sup> or "downward" into the direction of becoming spiritually clouded over, both phases being "emergent phenomena." Since in Being's "playing with itself" the presence of the experiencer as a participant in this play was not only never forgotten, but emphatically insisted upon, the experiencer's surrounding space-of-the-possible gives evolution its specific twist of running "downhill" through its phase spaces, intimated by the almost untranslatable terms *ye-nas* and *gdod-ma-nas*.<sup>10</sup>

In this context one other point must be briefly noted. This is the emphasis on the *med*, "the nothingness-that-is," the "No" that in rDzogs-chen thought, as primarily developed by Padmasambhava, is akin to the gnostic thinker Basilides' No and the discussion of Spirit in the *Apocryphon of John*.<sup>11</sup> When spoken of as *gzhi-med*, the "ground-that-is-not" recalls to mind the German mystic Jakob Böhme's *Ungrund*. This "No" (*med*), the "nothing-that-is" (*med-pa*), the "ground-that-is-not" (*gzhi-med*), is charged with possibilities that carry with them this No's energy, as Padmasambhava never tires of telling us.

It may now be asked, from where do the "emergent phenomena" emerge, and how and why do they emerge? The answer to the "wherefrom" is that they emerge from the nothing-that-is (*med-pa*):<sup>12</sup>

From the nothing-that-is diversities originate.

More elaborately stated is the following answer:<sup>13</sup>

- From the dimension of the ground-that-is-not the ground of all that is emerges;
- From the dimension of that which is itself not a particular existent the totality of particular existents emerges;
- From the dimension of that which is itself not a lighting-up the diversity of that which lights-up emerges;

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From the dimension of that which is itself not a particular existent the totality of particular existents emerges;

From the dimension of that which is itself not a lighting-up the diversity of that which lights-up emerges;

From the dimension of that which is both existence and non-existence samsara and nirvana emerge;

From the dimension of non-duality unexcitability (*ma-rig*) and originary awareness (*ye-shes*) emerge;

From the dimension that is itself not something given (as something postulationaly verifiable)

The (uni)trinity of (the whole's) eigenstate (*rang-bzhin*), stuff (*ngo-bo* "the nothingness of sheer possibilities"), and suprasensual responsiveness and concern (*thugs-rje*) emerges;

From (this [uni]trinity) the duality of (an individual's) three existential fore-structures (of his concrete being)<sup>14</sup> and three poisoning forces emerge;<sup>15</sup>

(From it) the three supramundane realms<sup>16</sup> emerge, by way of their inner transformative dynamics, as the three rotating stops.<sup>17</sup>

From this ability to dissolve (into Being's nothingness) or inability to do so,

(The evolutionary process) emerges as the duality of a passageway (into higher dimensions) and a passageway (into an ever-deepening) going astray.

From the dimension of the nothing whatsoever (the welter of) anything whatsoever has emerged.

The duality of becoming/being an (exceptionally) *erlichtet* one (*sangs-rgyas*) through understanding and of becoming/being an (ordinary) sentient being (*sems-can*) through one's lack of understanding

(Reflects Being's) depth and width (in its) creativity having emerged as the dynamic of the ego/"I."

The answer to the second question of why there should be anything is implicitly present in the original premise. By whichever terms we may refer to Being, be they the "ground" (*gzhi*) in the sense of "the-ground-that-is-not" (*gzhi-med*) or the "*Ungrund*," "the nothing-that-is" (*med/med-pa*), the "dimensionality that is consistent with itself and everything else" (*mnyam-pa'i ngang*) or, in mathematical terms, a bland uniformity to which the word "symmetry" is applied, this "nothingness" is—to use this fateful word in our language—*no thing whatsoever*, rather it is "something" forever on the brink of breaking up.<sup>18</sup> The disturbance that breaks the symmetry lies within Being's nothingness, by virtue of which Being is unstable and its nice description as "everywhere the same"

is rudely defaulted. rDzogs-chen thinkers had a word for this disturbance (somehow felt as a kind of turbulence): it was *gzhi-rlung* and, literally rendered, means "Being-*qua*-tempest." Thus we are told in a passage that in its terseness is made up of mostly experientially descriptive terms:<sup>19</sup>

From out of the center of the vortex of (one's) Dasein (as which Being's) space-like vortex as (a dimension of) noematic-symbolic profiles (has constituted itself), There ceaselessly emerge dynamic patterns (as expressions of Being's) radiance. The disturbance that is Being (in the sense of being both Being-in-its-beingness and one's Dasein) emerges as the dynamic of the ego/"I," (Being's) radiance emerges as the dynamic of the play (staged) by the ego/"I," (and) The (fluctuations between) the ground state and the excited state (of Being's "intelligence") in their ceaselessness are the dynamic of (this) play.

While in this passage the emergence of the ego/"I" (*nga*) as a relative latecomer is emphasized, in another passage the same is said about the self/Self (*bdag*) as a figment of mentation (*sems*):<sup>20</sup>

The disturbance (inherent in) Being and the dynamic (inherent in) (Being's) excitability (constitute the whole's) Cognitive (disposition, resulting in one's) mentation that takes it as its self/Self.<sup>21</sup>

This disturbance is already itself a pattern—"it's patterns all the way down"—that comes-to-light as the complexity called "mind/mentation" (*sems*). In a lengthy passage whose beginning is relevant to the present context, we are told:<sup>22</sup>

The quincunx of disturbances (*rlung*) in Being is the mind/mentation's lighting-up mode;

The quincunx of the elemental forces (as concretizations of Being's) quincunx of luminescences (*'od*) is the mind/mentation's lighting-up mode;

The quincunx of rays of light (*zer*) (as concretizations of Being's) quincunx of luminescences is the mind/mentation's lighting-up mode.

Before going into the details of the ego/self syndrome and mutual complicity, rather than complementarity, two passages may be quoted because they contain (and elucidate) terms that occur over and over again in the probing of this

problem, and the question of why and how things go wrong (for which the technical term is *'khrul-pa* “errancy”). The first one states:<sup>23</sup>

Indeed, although there is nothing wrong  
(*'khrul-med*) with the ego/“I”  
It is because of the dynamic in the ego/“I” that  
something seems to go wrong.  
To give an example: although in the bright sky  
There may be no clouds and no mist,  
Clouds and mist arise incidentally.  
(Similarly), although there may be no  
unexcitability (as such) in Being,  
It is when (Being’s latent) suprasensual  
responsiveness and concern emerges as its  
(manifest) dynamic  
That that which is called “unexcitability” (*ma-  
rig-pa*) comes about incidentally.

Restated in contemporary language, “unexcitedness” (*ma-rig-pa*), the hallmark of an ordinary sentient being (*sems-can*), and a “supraconscious ecstatic intensity” (*rig-pa*), the characteristic of an exceptional being, of one who is *erlichtet* (alight, *sangs-rgyas*), are homologous “phenomena” since they derive (“emerge”) from the same source that is Being, the whole, in its suprasensual responsiveness to and concern with (*thugs-rje*) the whole. Prosaically expressed, this means that the universe is a gigantic fluctuation that may be experienced as the whole’s play with itself through us as its participants.

The second passage, as far it allows itself to be translated in the strict sense of the word<sup>24</sup> has this to say:<sup>25</sup>

When the *sems-nyid* (that is) all-cognizance  
(and) all-ecstasy<sup>26</sup> (and also is) without any  
flaws,<sup>27</sup>  
Has established itself, in its radiance-  
nothingness,<sup>28</sup> like the [clear and wide-open]  
sky, as  
The radiance (of the) directly experienceable  
originary awareness modes<sup>29</sup> that have been  
self-originated since their incipience,  
This is (what is meant by) *chos-nyid*.

While *sems-nyid* and *chos-nyid* admit of multiple interpretations because they are basically experiential and, strictly speaking, preontological concepts, for brevity’s sake we may render *sems-nyid* by “in-tensity” and *chos-nyid* by “ex-tensity.” Their complementarity—the one cannot be without the other—reflects a symmetry transformation. Thus, the *chos-nyid* is the *sems-nyid*’s displacement transformation and, since the

*sems-nyid* is not a container, but open, infinite, flawless—any closure or finiteness being, quite literally, a flaw—the *chos-nyid* is also the *sems-nyid*’s dilation symmetry.

This idea of a dilation symmetry is clearly recognizable by this *ex-tensity*’s (*chos-nyid*) longer and shorter qualifications as “ever expanding in depth and width” (*gting-mtha’yangs-pa*) and “ever expanding in depth” (*gting yangs*). It is in this dilation symmetry that “self” (*bdag*) and “ego” are its emergent phenomena. Thus:<sup>30</sup>

The self (*bdag*) of the totality of the material  
and immaterial is  
The *ex-tensity*’s ever expanding depth and  
width

and similarly:<sup>31</sup>

The immaterial, self-originated, and radiant  
self  
Is the (experiencer’s) real Dasein in its  
expanding depth.

These quotations may intimate the cosmic reality of the self. The anthropic reality as the duality and/or fluctuation between what is the status of an ordinary being and what is that of an *erlichtet* being is expressed in the following stanza:<sup>32</sup>

The duality of an *erlichtet* being and an  
ordinary being resulting from (the  
experiencer’s) understanding or lack  
thereof,  
Is the *ex-tensity* in its expanding depth as it  
has emerged into the dynamic of the ego  
(*nga*).

Here it may not be out of place to say a few words about what we call “self/Self”—a concept lacking precision. In the Tibetan context, the term *bdag*, corresponding to our “self” (written with a small s-), usually occurs as one component in the compound *nga-bdag*, referring to the ego/“I”-self syndrome, and differs from the “Self” (written with a capital s-). Again, in the Tibetan context, in order to leave no doubt about what is intended and meant, namely, the selfhood of the topic under consideration, the term *bdag-nyid* and/or *bdag-nyid chen-po* is used.<sup>33</sup> But now things get complicated, because this *bdag-nyid chen-po* is further qualified as being *rtag-pa*, usually and not incorrectly rendered as “permanent.” However, this qualification flies in the face of what Buddhism has insisted upon all the time, namely,

that everything is impermanent (*mi-rtag-pa*). How are we to resolve this apparent contradiction? The answer is provided by a simple but fundamental principle: symmetry. As we know, symmetry offers a simple and convincing explanation of regular patterns. An example is crystal lattices, because their patterns are themselves highly symmetric. But if symmetry is fundamental, the same through all time and in all places, how can that which is called a wholeness (*gzhi*), based on “perfect symmetry,” evolve into a diversity of different patterns such as the ego/“I”-self syndrome and Self/Selfhood? The answer again is symmetry, this time understood in its specific sense of being a bland uniformity as the very source of interesting patterns, through a process known as “symmetry-breaking.” This is brought about by a disturbance that may be deliberate, as when I throw a pebble into a still pond, or it may be spontaneous, as when the disturbance comes about by itself within the very system that is going to be disturbed. Since in rDzogs-chen thinking wholeness or Being cannot admit of anything outside itself without losing its character of wholeness, this disturbance occurs within it and, as we have noticed, this feature of wholeness is so aptly called “Being’s turbulence” (*gzhi-rlung*). The seemingly resultant instability of Being does not contradict its stability. As an argument for this claim and an example to illustrate it, the words of Ian Stewart (1998) may be quoted:

The surface of a duneless desert is flat and featureless—a highly symmetric state in which every position is exactly the same as any other. When that symmetry breaks—and it takes little more than a breath of wind to achieve this—the symmetric state becomes unstable. A little bit of sand piles up here, a shallow hole appears there. These changes to the surface affect the flow of air, and the disturbances are reinforced. Soon, huge dunes build up. However, because the original system, the hypothetical flat desert, is highly symmetric, some of that symmetry remains in the dunes. That’s what gives them their striking patterns. (p. 39)

In view of the fact that in rDzogs-chen thinking the self/Self in-its-being-itself (*bdag-nyid chen-po*) is the whole (*gzhi*) and yet only an emergent phenomenon of it (*snang*), its stability (*rtag-pa*) is described in terms that are equally applicable to the whole. This means that the self/Self is,

strictly speaking, an approximation symmetry and as such can and must be cultivated (*bsgom*) in order to become the experiencer’s enlivening experience. It should not come as a surprise that as an experience it shares the features of the whole, imaged as a bland symmetry likened to the frozen surface of a lake with no elevations or depressions in it, a fertile field, a king’s treasury, and pure gold—the latter image serving to highlight the whole’s value.

The technical term for what I have called cultivation (*sgom / bsgom*), is usually rendered as “meditation.” Like most such loose renderings, it completely fails to convey what is actually meant. First of all, it should be clearly noted and constantly borne in mind that what we refer to as “meditation” varies in its Indo-Tibetan context from person to person, both with respect to that person’s intellectual acumen and his sociocultural milieu.<sup>34</sup> Secondly, there is a further distinction between *something* that can be described as “meditation” and *something* (if this designation is still applicable) that is not some such thing called “meditation.” It is more of the nature of a pointer to an experience that is best described as “non-meditation” (*mi-bsgom* having a verbal character, and *bsgom-med* having an ontological character). It would far exceed the scope of this study to go into all the details. Suffice it to highlight the salient features of this “cultivation of the *bdag-nyid chen-po*.”

As a process it is, in many respects, comparable to what Carl Gustav Jung has called a person’s “individuation process”—a process in which he himself was involved throughout his life and which made him a kind of seer. But there are also far-reaching differences, because the Buddhist rDzogs-chen thinkers were not preconditioned and constrained by theistic postulates that, on closer inspection, undermine the person’s being-truly-himself/herself. Being-truly-oneself means that one stands free of what one believes to be one’s ego/“I” and of what is commonly referred to as a self (that in one way or another remains egologically tainted).

To the extent that the “cultivation of the *bdag-nyid chen-po*” relates to *something* deemed to be something existent, it may be conceived of as an interiorization process. Its three phases, described as being of an external (*phyi*), an internal (*nang*), and an arcane (*gsang*) nature, may be explicated by making use<sup>35</sup> of the mathematical concept of



phase space—a geometric image in which every aspect that emerges is surrounded by a halo of aspects that didn’t—but could have been present. Phase spaces are vast—they contain all possibilities, not just a few. Phase spaces have a dynamic that prepares the system, such as a living being, for exploring the space or dimension of the adjacent possible. Thus, the first phase space, the “external,” described as a relaxing in body, speech, and mind, and a persevering in a mood of *laissez-faire-ism*, prepares the experiencer for the exploration of the second phase space, the “internal.” This is described as an imaginative recapitulation of the experiencer’s physico-psychic origin. As a kind of inner landscape it is, on the physical side, made up of the inner organs such as the intestines, heart, and lungs and so on, and of the complexity of the neural network. And on the psychic side it is a kind of moving from a static structure-oriented perspective to a more dynamic process-oriented one, including aspects (that become refined through learning) such as seeing in perspective or the continuity of areas and spaces. It also makes use of creative features such as emphasizing and preferring certain forms and colors, and suppressing certain details and “turbulences” that might disturb the chosen model of “reality.” It is here that the experiencer’s critically appreciative acumen (*shes-rab*) and efficacy in dealing with the emergent situation (*thabs*) are of utmost importance. Though still limited in scope, this phase space may, for all practical purposes, be associated with “one’s self” (*bdag*). But this “one’s self” is not the same as the “Self,” the *bdag-nyid chen-po*.

It is in the third phase space, called “the arcane,” that this “one’s self” (*bdag*) is superseded by the self-reflexive mind (*rang-rig*).<sup>36</sup> Here, as Erich Jantsch (1980) has succinctly pointed out:

...the processing and organization of information become independent not only of metabolic processes, but also of direct sensory impact. The self-reflexive mind may now become totally emancipated and set out on its own course of evolution. It is not “we” who think, but “it” thinks in us. (p. 164)

In other words, information becomes *in*-formation in the true sense of the word, and corresponds to a specific dynamic régime of a self-

organizing system such as a human being. No extraneous baggage is needed.<sup>37</sup>

In more evocative language this phase space is described as involving three concurrent operations:

- (1) Having the king firmly seated on his throne,
- (2) Having the minister imprisoned, and
- (3) Keeping the populace in check.

The “king” is explicated as the self-reflexive mind (*rang-rig*) and the “throne” as the dimensionality of meanings stored and/or *in statu nascendi*, accessible to and at the disposal of the king’s originary awareness modes, the “minister” as the mind (*sems*),<sup>38</sup> and the “populace” as the five senses.<sup>39</sup> Despite its political imagery we should be wary of misconstruing it as a political manifesto and, in so doing, displaying our ignorance about our own and any other group’s sociocultural background, and in our hubris imposing our ignorance on whosoever or whatever we want to control.

After this excursion into the experiencer’s individuation process as a way of becoming authentically himself (*bdag-nyid / bdag-nyid chen-po*) let us return to the ego/“I” (*nga*) and self (*bdag*) syndrome and mutual complicity, if not to say near-identity, as the greatest obstacle on this way. This obstacle is variously referred to as an “adversary/enemy” (*dgra*) or as a “demon/sorcerer” (*’gong-po*), the former, though basically presenting the blindly instinctual, having something human about him, the latter, though still presenting the instinctual with an admixture of cunningness, being thoroughly demonic. In any case, the expression *’gong-po nga-bdag* is a recurrent locution. In particular, whether understood as an adversary or as a demon, this ego/“I”-self syndrome is tied to the instinctual-affective, conceived of as something polluting that, quite literally and figuratively, poisons the whole system and the atmosphere in which it lives. The genesis of the enemy-demon complicity is due to the dynamic aspect (*rtsal*) gaining the upper hand in the otherwise quiet dimensionality of Being’s (creative) *ex*-tensity (*chos-nyid*). Thus we are told:<sup>40</sup>

Although in the primordial vortex, (Being’s) *ex*-tensity (that is) the mother (of all that is to be) there is no separability, (it so happens that)

With the lighting-up of its (inner) dynamic with its “feelers” (as) its children, (these children) appearing as enemies, are (mis)taken as enemies (such that)  
 The source of these enemies is a demon (who perpetuates) the ego/“I”-self (syndrome).  
 The “stuff” of which these enemies are made, are the three pollutants (or) poisons<sup>41</sup>  
 The associates of these enemies are the five pollutants (or) poisons,<sup>42</sup> and  
 The supporters of these enemies are the eighty-(four) thousand pollutants.

In more modern terms, it is the instinctual-affective that militates against the spiritual. In the mythopoeic rDzogs-chen context, this aspect of ours was envisioned as both a hostile army that has to be repelled and a virulent poison that has to be eliminated from the system. Since rDzogs-chen thinking was experience-oriented, emphasis was placed on intrapsychic process, for which the idea of poison as a directly felt impact on the system was an apt illustration. So the question of how this poison is made ineffectual is repeatedly asked and answered. As an example the following passage from one of Padmasambhava’s writings is highly instructive:<sup>43</sup>

The three poisons are overcome [and realized to be an individual’s triune forestructure<sup>44</sup> that is experienced as his] corporeality, voice, and spirituality.  
 How are (the three poisons) overcome?  
 The poison that is the dullness-darkness (of his ego/“I”-self syndrome) is overcome by the elixir that is the bodily felt forestructure of his being sheer meaning (*chos-sku*),<sup>45</sup>  
 The poison that is the irritation-aversion (of his ego/“I”-self syndrome) is overcome by the elixir that is the felt forestructure and pattern of his being a-world-of-possibilities (that are to be voiced and communicated, *long-sku*),  
 The poison that is the cupidity-attachment (of his ego/“I”-self syndrome) is overcome by the elixir that is the forestructure and pattern of his being a guiding image (*sprul-sku*).

The three poisons are a chronic disease (that) Is overcome by the elixir that is (the individual’s triune forestructure experienced as his) corporeality, voice, and spirituality.

Strictly speaking, there is more to this passage than meets the eye. There are at least three complementarities involved. The one is the complementarity of the ego/“I” syndrome (*nga-bdag*) and the Self (*bdag-nyid*/*bdag-nyid chen-po*).<sup>46</sup> The other is the complementarity of the life-threatening poison (*dug*) and the life-enhancing elixir (*bdud-rtsi*).

The third complementarity is the one of the instinctual-affective-emotional (*nyon-mongs*) and the forestructures of the individual’s mental-spiritual existentiality (*sku*), with its implied functionality of their originary awareness modes.

Figure 1

The Complexity of the Concrete Individual

The ego/“I” syndrome (*nga-bdag*) <—> The Self (*bdag-nyid*)

The poisons (*dug*) <—> The elixirs (*bdud-rtsi*)

The instinctual (*nyon-mongs*) <—> The forestructures (*sku*)

(Here <—> means complementarity)

The above can be diagrammed as in Figure 1.

While in the above-quoted passage the emphasis has been on the three poisons, in their giving rise to the instinctual, constituting the experiencer’s chronic disease that affects him “from deep within,” there is another passage, also by Padmasambhava, that explicates this nefarious working of the three poisons in a more “personalistic” manner and, as may be expected, assumes a more violent character:<sup>47</sup>

The executioner who is the self-originated originary awareness mode(s)  
 Tears out the very substance of the demon who is the ego/“I”-self syndrome (so that)  
 It abides in and as the self-originated awareness mode(s) as such.  
 After the great hero who is the unitrinity of the forestructures (of the experiencer’s existentiality)  
 Has torn out the very stuff that is (the experiencer’s) three poisons as the instinctual (in him),  
 He forces his way into the castle (from which) the unitrinity of three forestructures will rule:  
 Having killed dullness-darkness he sees (himself as) the *chos-sku*,

Having killed irritability-aversion he sees  
 (himself as) the *longs-sku*,  
 Having killed cupidity-attachment he sees  
 (himself as) the *sprul-sku*.  
 (This means that) by killing/eliminating the  
 three poisons one sees the three fore-  
 structures (in their unitrinity).

There is still another way of seeing the poisons,  
 now augmented to five, as a hostile army with  
 which one must do battle, not only in order to  
 avert its onslaught but, more importantly, to crush  
 the enemies. There is no better introduction to  
 this topic than the German poet Friedrich  
 Hölderlin's (1770-1843) dictum,

Wo aber Gefahr ist, wächst  
 Das Rettende auch  
 (But where there is danger, there also grows  
 That which will help).

—Patmos (1803, printed 1808)

The “actual” situation, though still “located” in  
 the imaginal realm of the psyche, is presented in  
 the form of a question-answer dialogue between  
 two femininities (*mkha'-gro-ma*). Of these, the one  
 asking questions, the *Rin-chen mkha'-gro-ma*,  
 presents the restfulness of this dimensionality, and  
 the one answering the questions, the *Las-kyi*  
*mkha'-gro-ma*, presents the dynamic of this  
 dimensionality.<sup>48</sup>

The executioner who cuts these enemies' vein  
 of life  
 Is a butcher, self-originated and self-dissolving.  
 Having chosen as his companion the dimension  
 that is utterly free from conceptual  
 limitations,  
 He has enlisted as his helpers (the whole's)  
 nonbirth and symbolic pregnancy.  
 With his sword that is his appreciative-  
 discerning acumen (*shes-rab*)  
 He destroyed, in the no-man's-land between  
 light and darkness,  
 The three *culs-de-sac*.<sup>49</sup> (Then) inside the  
 entrance to the fortress,  
 In a room (harboring) the egological mind with  
 its three functions,<sup>50</sup> (he found)  
 The (main) enemy, the ego/"I"-self syndrome  
 sitting.  
 The butcher, self-originated and shining in his  
 own luminosity,  
 Cut this enemy's throat with his sword that is  
 his appreciative-discerning acumen (and)  
 With the adamantine hook [that is his efficacy,  
*thabs*] he tore out the (enemy's) heart.  
 Having cut the enemy's (vein of) life that is

(the system's) state of unexcitedness (and  
 unexcitability), the ego/"I"-self syndrome,  
 He submerged (himself) in the dimensionality  
 in which birth and death had been  
 completely eradicated (and now)

Resided in the vortex of (the whole's) radiant  
 light that is its symbolic pregnancy. (In  
 other words)

This great hero, (in whom) the three fore-  
 structures (of his authentic existentiality)  
 are present of their own accord,

Has cut the veins of life of (the enemies') leader,  
 which are (dullness-darkness,) irritability-  
 aversion, and cupidity-attachment.

(When) in this manner the (other) enemies'  
 vein of life had been cut, (what was left)

Turned into the (dimensionality of) no-birth,  
 symbolic pregnancy, and dynamic  
 nothingness;

In this dimension in which there is nothing to  
 do (on purpose) and which lies beyond the  
 scope of the (purposing) intellect, he  
 submerged (himself) (and as a consequence)

He (stood) free of the notions (*chos-can*) that  
 are the constraints of his supraconscious  
 ecstatic intensity (and what prevailed) as

The ever expanding depth and width of  
 (Being's creative) *ex-tensity* (*chos-nyid*)<sup>51</sup>—

(Everything) had turned into the vortex of that  
 for which there is no name and in which  
 (all the intellect's) limitations had been  
 voided.

Two points are to be noted. The one is that the  
 cutting of the vein of life of the (inner) demon (*gong-  
 po*) and his associates (*dgra*) is done by the  
 appreciative discriminative acumen of the  
 (authentic) Self (*bdag-nyid*), which means coming  
 to face with this inner demon and recognizing him  
 to be a fake. This “coming face to face”<sup>52</sup> with the  
 demon, in whom the instinctual manifests itself  
 in a more humanly tangible form, involves his  
 undoing by means of the experiencer-*qua*-Self's  
 appreciative-discerning acumen (*shes-rab*), (that  
 recognizes him for what he is), and efficacy (*thabs*)  
 (that deals him the death-stroke). It leads, if  
 this is still the right word, to a deeply felt  
 understanding, if not to say, *innerstanding* (*rtogs*)  
 of wholeness, making utterly futile any ego/"I"-self  
 motivated endeavors to reject something in the  
 vain hope of gaining something. It is through this  
 understanding/innerstanding that the experiencer-  
*qua*-Self stands free from (*grol*) the instinctual and  
 what is its misplaced concreteness. And so the  
 “Teacher” tells his audience:<sup>53</sup>

The manner in which the experiencer-qua-Self stands free from the instinctual without having rejected it is as follows:  
 Without having rejected dullness-darkness (he) stands free as the *chos-sku*,  
 Without having rejected irritability-aversion (he) stands free as the *longs-sku*,  
 Without having rejected cupidity-attachment (he) stands free as the *sprul-sku*,  
 Without having rejected arrogance-hubris (he) stands free as the indivisibility (that is Being),  
 Without having rejected envy-grudge (he) stands free as bliss supreme.

The intent of this quotation is clear: the individuated person, to use a Jungian term, lives simultaneously in two worlds: the world of his everyday life that, whether he likes it or not, is very much dominated by the instinctual; and the world of the spirit/spiritual, of which in rare moments he catches a glimpse that makes his everyday life liveable.

The second point to note is the reference to “that for which there is no name” (*ming-med*)—an expression frequently used by Padmasambhava. Due to the thingifying tendency of the egological mind, the ego/“I”-self syndrome, it may be misunderstood as being “some thing,” which it is not. Rather, this misunderstanding, like all other misunderstandings on which one’s commonly accepted “reality” rests and thrives, is a formidable barrier to one’s individuation process, and, like an arduous mountain pass, has to be crossed (*la zla*). Thus we are told and admonished:<sup>54</sup>

Since the facets of the play staged by the “feelers” (extended) by the self-originated self-(emergent) dynamic  
 From the primordial *ex-tensity* (of Being) for which there is no name and which has nothing to do with birth  
 Is the (dimension of the whole) having gone astray due to the impact of the intellect’s postulates, cross this mountain pass.

### Notes

1. For a trenchant critique see Dineen (1996), Szasz (1988, 1997), and Webster (1995), to mention only a few outstanding works.

2. As a matter of fact Freud was so obsessed with his sexual theory that in this respect he was in no way different from any religious fanatic. This fanaticism cost him many friendships. For details see Hannah (1997, pp. 88-91, 101, 133).

3. The oldest and most general use of this term goes back to ancient Greek philosophy. For Plato it is the principle of life, a distinguishing feature of organisms, the animator of any animated (thing) or “ensouled” thing (*empsychon*). Aristotle, in his *De anima*, counts self-nutrition, reproduction, movement, perception, and, maybe as an afterthought, thinking as “psychical” powers, and goes on to speculate that the rational part of the psyche may be separable from the body. Aristotle’s pseudo-scientific thinking lingers on in the modern body-mind problem. The corresponding adjective “psychic” is generally and loosely used as pertaining to the mind and that which is mental. In this sense it is more or less synonymous with psychological. In a narrower sense, it pertains to various aspects of psychology, foremost among them “spiritualism.” Another use pertains to psychogenic or functional disorders. The ancient Greeks’ materialistic conception of the psyche and the psychic/psychological has not been very conducive to a clear understanding.

4. There are two related passages: III 4.2 and III 7.1-23. The above quotation is taken from III 7.23. I have paraphrased the Sanskrit word *antaryāmin* by: “he who is in charge of everything from within,” where “everything” sums up the detailed entities over which he (the Self) is in charge. The usual rendering of this term by “controller” seems to reflect a kind of Western dominance psychology read into the Sanskrit text.

5. The technical Tibetan term for this “lighting-up and its interpretation” is *snang-srid*. The lighting-up and its interpretation are commensurate with each other. This is indicated by the term *kha-sbyor* which, literally rendered, means “joining (one’s) mouths,” and experientially speaking, describes the felt intimacy of a kiss. A lengthy disquisition in three installments of this theme is given by Padmasambhava in his *sNang-srid kha-sbyor bdud-rtsi bcud-'thigs 'khor-ba thog-mtha' gcod-pa'i rgyud* (“The eradication of samsara from A to Z by a drop of the quintessence of the elixir of immortality—[the whole’s] lighting-up and its interpretation in joining each other in the intimacy of a kiss”). There are several recorded editions of this text. None of them has been studied in itself or in comparison with the others to this very day.

6. *sKu'i rgyud Padma 'khyil-ba*, 4: 302a; Taipei ed., vol. 55, p. 442, column 7.

7. The Tibetan phrase *nga med-pa'i sngon-rol-na* is usually rendered as “before I existed.” However, philosophically speaking, this rendering fails to take into account the ontological character of the “Before.” Mathematically speaking, it fails to recognize its character of “symmetry.” What does symmetry mean? As I. Stewart and J. Cohen (1997, p. 170) have pointed out:

The word “symmetry” is used rather loosely in ordinary speech, to mean some kind of repetitive pattern or even just “elegance of form.” Mathematicians use the term in a much more specific way: a symmetry of an object is transformation that leaves it looking exactly the same.

For the benefit of a reader not familiar with mathematicians' jargon it may be pointed out that by "object" the authors understand any subject matter under consideration.

As we shall see, rDzogs-chen thinkers developed the idea of their "Before" in terms of what nowadays we would call "symmetry-breaking" and "phase space."

8. On the significance of this idea see Guenther (1996, p. 94 n. 50).

9. This term, *sangs-rgyas* in Tibetan, describes the experience of one's mental-spiritual darkness dissipating and, with this dissipation, the light-that-we-are spreading. It is unfortunate that a deeply moving experience has been misplaced and misconstrued into a dull Buddha-thing and commercially exploited idol.

10. Both *ye* and *gdod-ma* are nouns and suggest a beginning as a no-beginning. The phrases *ye-nas* and *gdod-nas* might be clumsily rendered as "from the perspective of the *ye*" and "from the perspective of the *gdod-ma*," the *ye* antedating, as it were, the *gdod-ma*.

11. For details see Guenther (1996), p. 73.

12. *Sangs-rgyas kun-gyi dgongs-pa'i bcud-bsdus ri-bo brtsegs-pa*, 3: 9a.

13. *rGyud thams-cad-kyi rgyal-po Nyi-zla'i snying-po 'od-'bar-ba bdud-rtsi rgya-mtsho 'khyil-ba*, 3: 21b. This work will henceforth be quoted under the short title *Nyi-zla'i snying-po 'od-'bar-ba*.

14. These are the *chos-sku*, *longs-sku*, and *sprul-sku*. A detailed "explanation" would require lengthy chapters concerning each of these forestructures.

15. These are the more or less well-known "pollutants" (*nyon-mongs*): "(mental-spiritual) dullness-darkness" (*gti-mug*), "irritability-aversion-hatred" (*zhe-sdang*), and "passionate attachment," "cupidity-addiction" (*dod-chags*).

16. Tib. *zhing-khams*. The best explanation of this compound (*zhing* and *khams*) is found in Khrag-'thung rol-pa'i rdo-rje's *Dag-snang ye-shes dra-ba-las gnas-lugs rang-byung-gi rgyud rdo-rje snying-po*, p. 266:

One speaks of *zhing*, because it is like a field in the sense that it is the source from which Being's lighting-up as samsara and/or nirvana spreads, as well as in the sense that it has become the universe of man's cognitive domain. One speaks of *khams*, because in whatever sensuous mode samsara and nirvana manifest themselves, they have the same flavor by virtue of being the expression of man's potential as his optimization thrust.

Specifically these supramundane realms are, each in its own way, related to man's three existential forestructures (on which see above n. 14). In this sense we might conceive of these forestructures as excitations of their environing fields from which they cannot be separated as monolithic entities.

17. Tib. *'khor-lo gsum*. Padmasambhava's *bDud-rtsi bcud-thigs sgron-ma brtsegs-pa*, 2: 325, explains this technical phrase to the effect that the *rig-pa*, "the supraconscious ecstatic intensity," the *yid*, "the egological mind," and the *sems*, "mentation/mentality as the individual's ontic foundation," fail to hold to their legitimate place, that is, the ground-that-is-not (*gzhi/gzhi-med*). It is easy to see in this *'khor-lo gsum* what a mathematician calls "rotational symmetry." What this means may be illustrated by the rotation of a square whose position in space cannot (and must not) be altered. To preserve this position the axis must pass through the center. If the axis is perpendicular to the plane of the square, any rotation will leave the square in its original plane. Three rotations by 90°, 180° or 270° leave the square indistinguishable from its original state.

In mythopoeic imagery the "environment" or "realm" of which the *chos-sku* is, so to say, the "excitation," is a sheer radiance (*'od-gsal rdo-rje snying-po*). Its "environment" or "realm," of which the *longs-sku* is its excitation, is the "sound waves issuing from the drum that is being beaten by Being's personification as Brahma" (*tshangs-pa'i rnga-sgra*), and the "environment" or "realm" (of which the *sprul-sku* is its excitation) is Mahabrahma (*tshangs-pa chen-po*) in whom we can easily recognize the *Brahmā sahaṃpati* of the Pali tradition. These images reflect the Indian contribution to the evolution of rDzogs-chen thought.

18. It is interesting to note that the illustrative images for this bland uniformity or symmetry, carrying with it the idea of being something static, are thoroughly dynamic in rDzogs-chen thinking: *mkha'-klong* "the sky/space vortex" and *rgya-mtsho-klong* "the ocean vortex."

19. *Nyi-zla 'od-'bar mkha'-klong rnam-dag rgya-mtsho gsal-ba*, 1: 123a.

20. *Kun-tu-bzang-mo klong-gsal 'bar-ma nyi-ma'i gsang-rgyud*, 25: 367a.

21. The text continues stating that this self/Self is a quincunx of originary awareness modes that tend to condense into the five elemental forces and, in so doing, undergo a symmetry break into an original radiance and a set of phonemes resulting in dichotomic thought processes.

22. *Nam-mkha''bar-ba'i rgyud*, 1: 95b.

23. *Kun-tu-bzang-mo klong-gsal 'bar-ma nyi-ma'i gsang-rgyud*, 25: 366a.

24. By "translation" I understand the conveyance of the meaning in one language into that of another language, not a mechanical transposition of a word in one language into that of another language, reflecting the mechanic's total lack of context awareness.

25. *rDzogs-pa-chen-po'i cig-chod kun-grol chen-po*, 25: 389a. Because of the intricacy of both the original text and its translation, the original is here quoted in full:

*sems-nyid kun-shes kun-rig dri-med 'di*  
*gsal stong nam-mkha' lta-bur gdod-ma-nas*  
*rang-byung ye-shes mngon-sum gsal-ba-ru*  
*gtan-la phebs-na de-ka chos-nyid yin*

26. The compound *shes-rig* is split into its two components *shes* and *rig*, each of which is qualified by *kun* meaning “all” in the sense of “through and through.” *shes* can be likened to the “ground state” of *sems-nyid* and *rig* to its “excited state.” In their coherence these two “states” describe what we would call a fluctuation.

27. This qualifying term describes the bland uniformity of the mathematician’s idea of symmetry as a dynamic concept, and links up with the image of the clear and open sky that, in rDzogs-chen thought, is far from being a static entity.

28. In the compound *gsal-stong* both components have a verbal character. While we have no difficulty in expressing this verbal character of *gsal*, when necessary, as “radiating,” we have considerable difficulties in rendering *stong* adequately. A. N. Whitehead’s “not allowing permanent structures to persist” comes closest to what the Tibetan term intends. The rendering of this term by “empty” (because its Sanskrit corresponding term *śūnya* is an adjective, not a verb) is plain nonsense. “Empty,” as well as its noun form “emptiness” (*śūnyatā*) are container metaphors. And *sems-nyid* as an epistemological-ontological concept is certainly not a container.

29. There is a close connection between *ye-shes* “originary awareness mode(s)” and *gdod-ma* “incipience.” Both *ye* and *gdod-ma* refer to a beginning such that *ye* antedates, as it were, the *gdod-ma*. This would imply that (any) *ye-shes* is a kind of *Ur-wissen* as a potentiality, that in its becoming actual reminds us of the famous dictum by the German poet Novalis (Friedrich Leopold, Freiherr von Hardenberg):

Aller Anfang ist schon ein zweiter Anfang  
 (Every beginning is already a second beginning).

30. *Nyi-zla'i snying-po 'od-'bar-ba*, 3: 20b.

31. Ibid.

32. Ibid., fol. 21b.

33. The qualifying adjective *chen-po* is, grammatically speaking, an elative: “there could be nothing greater,” hence the expression *bdag-nyid chen-po* means: “there could be nothing greater than this Self.”

34. *Bang-mdzod 'phrul-gyi lde'u-mig*, 6: 162a.

35. I avoid the current rendering of this term by “secret,” because it is a mystery-monger’s commercial ploy. The word *gsang* is an experiential term: what is so referred to must be experienced in order to be known.

36. To be very precise, the Tibetan term *rang-rig* corresponds to the Sanskrit word *svasamvitti*, a key concept of the Indian *Mīmāṃsāka* system of philosophy. It means that the individual’s cognitive capacity/quality (*rig*, *samvit*) is autonomous (*rang*, *sva*) and does not depend on something other than itself.

37. In order to avoid any misunderstanding and rash conclusions regarding the use of “we” and “it” by Erich Jantsch in the above quotation, it may be pointed out that, though this use seems to be similar to Carl Gustav Jung’s use of “personality No. 1” and “personality No. 2,” the difference is enormous. Jantsch speaks from the perspective of a system as a whole; Jung speaks from the perspective of what may be said to be aspects of the whole. Certainly, a psychopathic condition is not the same as being an individuated person: it is the very opposite, if not to say, the negation of it.

38. The term “mind” (*sems*) is here used in a rather sweeping manner. In itself it comprises a variety of presensory functions and in this sense can be said to be an individual’s ontic foundation as the basis of his intellectual (mental/spiritual) horizon. Within the hierarchical organization of the individual’s psyche it ranks lower than what is referred to by *rig-pa* and/or *rang-rig* with its functions as probes of its depth.

39. *sPros-bral don-gsal*, 1: 48ab.

40. *sNang-srid kha-sbyor bdud-rtsi bcud-thigs*, 2: 234b.

41. These are dullness-darkness in the sense of spiritual unexcitedness and unexcitability, irritation-aversion-hatred, and passionate attachment/cupidity-addiction.

42. These are the same as those listed in note 41, augmented by arrogance and envy.

43. *Nyi-zla'i snying-po 'od-'bar-ba*, 3: 22ab.

44. This triad of *sku gsung thugs* differs markedly from the triad *lus ngag sems*. Both triads are usually rendered as “body,” “speech,” and “mind.” The former triad belongs to the level of experiential thinking that does not allow of clear-cut demarcations. Hence, this unitrinity has been rendered slightly unconventionally, though it is phenomenologically precise. The latter triad belongs to the level of representational thinking with all its fragmentizing features.

45. The contrast between and/or the complementarity of dullness-darkness (*gti-mug*) and the light that is the *chos-sku* is clearly stated by Padmasambhava in his *sPros-bral don-gsal*, 1: 55a:

When the *chos-sku* radiates, organismic  
 thinking comes to nought,

And 1: 55b:

With the *chos-sku* radiating, dichotomic  
 thinking diminishes.

46. Linguistically speaking, the *nyid* in the *bdag-nyid* points beyond itself to wholeness (or Being-qua-being) that makes it possible for a/the Self to be.

47. *Nyi-zla'i snying-po 'od-'bar-ba*, 3: 25b.

48. Ibid., fol. 26b. In this quote only the answer has been translated.

49. These are the three hierarchically organized levels of the individual's psychophysical dimension: the level of sensuality, the level of aesthetic patterns, and the level of no patterns whatsoever.

50. These are its "overall searching," its "determining the object of its search," and its "settling on it." The implication is that the egological mind deals with *idées fixes*.

51. Though not explicitly stated, a triad of phase space is understood: *chos-nyid* → *chos-can* → *chos*, where *chos-nyid* (Being's *ex-tensity* as the dimension where meanings are stored or *in statu nascendi*) is what we tend to call the creative vacuum; *chos-can* (that which is of the nature of *chos-nyid*) is, in phenomenological diction, Being's openness closing-in onto itself; and *chos* is this closure in misplaced concreteness.

52. A detailed account of this "coming face to face" (*ngosprod*), found in several works by Padmasambhava, would go beyond the scope of this essay.

53. *Nyi-zla'i snying-po 'od-'bar-ba*, 3: 25a.

54. *Ibid.*, fol. 30b.

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### B. Works in Tibetan

Unless stated otherwise all works are quoted from the Derge (sDe-dge) edition of the *rNying-ma'i rgyud-'bum* by volume and folio number, as well as from the Taipei edition of the Tibetan Tripitaka, by volume, page, and column number.



