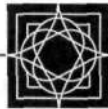


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Longchenpa and the Possession of the Dakinis

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Lay communities of itinerant yogins and yoginis have been a vital dimension of Tibetan Buddhist culture from at least the ninth century onward. These communities were almost always irreducibly Tantric in character, in their ritual and contemplative practices, their textual traditions, and the very structure of their communal life. Although much of our information about early Tantric Buddhist communities in India and Tibet is fragmentary and heavily mythologized, detailed biographical and historical narratives that emerged in later centuries in Tibet give a fuller portrayal of the nature of these communities, and afford us a glimpse of actual male-female relationships. We have chosen to translate a depiction of the fourteenth-century Tibetan saint Longchenpa's (Klong chen pa, 1308-1363) ritual empowerment of a group of Tibetan yogins and yoginis into esoteric Tantric practices. The action portrayed here occurred in the spring of 1339. The work is signed by Longchenpa himself in the colophon and is specifically referred to as his composition in his own catalogue to *The Seminal Quintessence of the Dakinis*, which is the larger cycle of his texts in which it is found. It refers to him throughout in the third person, however, usually calling him "the lama"; it is possible that the text was actually recorded by a disciple on the basis of Longchenpa's oral autobiographical account, or that Longchenpa actually wrote it in the third person, a practice not unknown in this period of Tibetan autobiographical writing; or, finally, that the text was recorded by a disciple some time after the events reported in it. Whatever the case, it seems fair to conclude that the basic sequence of events reported, at least in their bare outer appearance, in fact occurred, and that the interpretations offered were current in the early community of Longchenpa's followers. This exceptional narrative offers much to ponder with regard to the social dynamics of an esoteric Tantric community, to claims that were made regarding the production of sacred Tantric scriptures, and to the transic practices in which members of the community engaged, and which yielded extraordinary performances that were then interpreted within the context of an elaborate system of Tantric beliefs.

The broader Tibetan Tantric Buddhist movements within in which Longchenpa and his disciples participated are at least three in number. One consists of what was by then the standard set of Indian and Tibetan scriptures and practices surrounding the Tantric practice of deity yoga: the procedures in which people visualized themselves as Tantric deity/buddha figures and participated in what was thought to be those figures' experience. Another is the Seminal Heart or Nyingthik (*snying thig*) form of the Great Perfection (*rdzogs-chen*) movement, which is a Tibetan syncretic Tantric tradition consisting of Chan-like practices of formless meditation combined with exercises that cultivated spontaneous visions of buddhas. The third salient tradition that informs the account translated below is called Treasure (*gter ma*). A few comments concerning this uniquely Tibetan Tantric tradition of scriptural revelation will aid in understanding the distinctive conceptions about personal identity, time, and sacred scripture that lie at the heart of the activities in which Longchenpa engages in the narrative to follow.

The Tibetan "Treasure discoverers" (*gter ston*) were part of a movement in Tibet that had its origins in the tenth to eleventh century in Tibet, alongside other movements centered on the figure of the *lotsawa*, or translator. The discoverers were often exceptional yogins and teachers who revealed special texts and other objects that, they maintained, had mainly been concealed in the eighth- and ninth-century imperial period of Tibetan history for the express purpose of being revealed at the "right time" in the future. Furthermore, a distinction was made between "Earth Treasures" (*sa gter*) and "Mind Treasures" (*dgongs gter*), the former being actual material manuscripts recovered from the earth and the latter being visionary revelations with no physical substrate. Regardless of the modality, however, Treasures usually consist of collections of works, most of which contain instructions for special forms of Tantric practice. As discussed below, Longchenpa, in addition to being a renowned academic scholar, was also intimately involved in the revelation of Treasure. He inherited the two main streams of Treasure scriptures of the Seminal Heart - among the most important products of early Treasure revelations, which derived from the eighth-century Indic saints Vimalamitra and Padmasambhava, respectively - and went on to produce new revelations that extended both and integrated them into a single stream. In essence, the events that Longchenpa describes here trace out the process of how he first came into possession of new Padmasambhava revelations entitled *The Seminal Heart of the Dakinis*, and then gradually came to reveal - in a very distinctive manner - his own exegetical revelations, entitled *The Seminal Quintessence of the Dakinis*. This process most notably involved a series of encounters with women who were understood to be possessed by certain Indic and Tibetan deities and humans, all of whom play critical roles in authorizing Longchenpa's involvement with these past and future revelations of the dakinis.

Treasure discoverers typically display doubts about whether they are the person who has been prophesied to reveal the Treasures that they have found, and Longchenpa is no exception. He repeatedly checks the identity of his spiritual informants to determine if they are indeed the rightful "protectors" of the Trea-

sure. Most centrally, he asks questions about his own identity and prophesied destiny. One of the main reasons why Treasure revealers like Longchenpa talk about their self-doubt is precisely to demonstrate their care and caution in assuming the exalted role of scripture revealer. Many sectors of Tibetan Tantric society had grave concerns about the validity of the Treasure tradition as a whole, to say nothing of the authenticity of any particular individual's claim to have found such ancient materials. Even in Tibetan society, in which most persons firmly believed in reincarnation, many were skeptical of the claim that someone could recall a special teaching that they had been entrusted - by a master such as Vimalamitra, or more often, the "Precious Guru" Padmasambhava (circa 800 C.E.) - to bring to light five hundred years hence, in a future lifetime. Padmasambhava is the Indian Tantric master who introduced Tantric Buddhism to Tibet, and who is the source credited with most of the Treasure texts in Tibet. Critics went so far as to doubt that figures such as Padmasambhava and Vimalamitra would have ever designated and then concealed special materials for future revelation in the first place. It is important to remember that such critics of the Treasure tradition were in many ways acting to protect the claims to legitimacy of their own Tantric corpora. The Treasures were probably often formulated precisely as an alternative to the more mainstream Tibetan Tantric materials that were transmitted in the large monastic institutions of central Tibet. In many ways, then, we can understand that the situation in Tibetan Tantric religion in which Longchenpa was participating was a conflict between Tantric corpora - between the mainstream canonical Tantric texts and their commentaries and ritual cycles and those introduced through the more unconventional modes of the Treasure tradition.

The Visionary Autobiography

It is because of the Treasures' controversial claims of origins that their discoverers often wrote detailed accounts, like the one by Longchenpa translated here, of their individual odysseys to revelation. Often written as glorified diaries with precisely recorded dates, the detailed events reported in such autobiographical works served to "engender confidence" in the authenticity of the revelatory process, and to convince their readers that the protagonists were in fact not the charlatans that everyone, even the Treasure proponents themselves, believed many so-called Treasure discoverers to be. Among the principal events that such autobiographical accounts report - and again, we see many examples in the present account - are the visions of the original concealers of the Treasure, including Padmasambhava, his Tibetan consort Yeshe Tsogyel (Ye shes mtsho rgyal), and other masters. Many of Longchenpa's encounters with local deities such as Remati and Vajra Turquoise Lamp (rDo rje g.yu sgron ma) also attest to the authenticity of the discoverer and the Treasure he is purporting to introduce, for such deities are said to have been appointed to protect the Treasure during the period of its

interment, and to assist the appointed discoverer in locating it at the proper moment. It is in this context that we are to understand the many passages in which such deities speak directly to Longchenpa and give him information concerning the history of *The Seminal Heart of the Dakinis* as well as his own relationship to that history in the past, present, and future.

Another type of experience that is typically reported in Treasure "autobiographies" such as this is the attainment of special Tantric meditative states. This connected with one of the other principal Tantric founts of Longchenpa's experience, the Great Perfection tradition. States of Great Perfection insight might be reported in any work of the "secret autobiography" genre; but the relevance of these experiences to the Treasure narrative lies in the fact that Treasure discovery is in fact closely related to those states themselves. Experiences akin to "the rainbow colored visions of radiant light" frequently referred to here are often singled out as having been salient in that past moment in which the discoverer-to-be originally had the Treasure implanted in this deep level of consciousness. That initial concealment was made in a highly encoded form, which would have been both covert and durable enough to remain in deep memory over many lifetimes until the time for revelation was at hand. In order, then, to bring out the Treasure in its fully unfolded form in that future moment, the discoverer needs to gain access to that deep state of consciousness again; hence, his ability to realize such states of consciousness serves to demonstrate that he is a person capable of revealing a Treasure.

The reader should also bear in mind the extent to which the Treasure tradition is dependent upon the more general Tibetan belief that humans can be emanations, or even reincarnations (tulkus; *sprul sku*), of past Buddhist masters. In general, the buddhas' and bodhisattvas' mastery of the Buddhist principle of emptiness is thought to allow them self-consciously to manifest "emanations" (*sprul pa*) to different parts of the cosmos, in the service of the Buddha's teachings. In the Tibetan Buddhist world, there is a more specialized belief that historical figures who were religious masters could also reincarnate deliberately in the right place and time to accomplish particular compassionate goals. These ideas underlie the Tibetan institution of the tulkus, a word that literally means "the emanated body of a buddha," but which in practice refers to the person who is discovered through the distinctive practice of seeking out the young reincarnation of a recently deceased saint, in order that that child be "reinstalled" in the religious community that the old master had left behind. Alternately - and this is the case in the selection translated here - adults can claim such a mantle for themselves later in life. Thus we witness Longchenpa reincarnationally recreate himself before our eyes, or at least before the eyes of the dakini.

It is usually said that other "secondary conditions," beyond the discoverer's mastery of the succession of his or her lives and memory of the one in which the Treasure was first received, also contribute to the discovery of Treasure scriptures. The discoverer will often be granted certain props, such as a fragment of a text buried in the ground, or even a fascicle of writing handed to him in a dream.

Once such materials are in hand, the discoverer is often unable to understand them or decode them from their encrypted form. Advanced Tantric teachings and practice are said to be necessary for one to be fully qualified to codify the main Treasure scriptures, compose the necessary commentary texts, transmit the codified scriptures in a ritual Tantric empowerment, and finally teach their content in detail. At an even more esoteric level, discoverers are often said to engage in a form of sexual consort yoga as a means of accessing the necessary states of mind for Treasure revelation and decoding. Although such practices are not referred to explicitly in this text, it is quite possible that Longchenpa engaged in them during the period he is reporting. In this context we should also understand the active role of yoginis, who are possessed by female deities. These members of the larger Tantric retreat community in which Longchenpa wrote and taught during the years reported here seemed especially gifted for channeling the spirits of the Treasure protectors and communicating their intimate messages, in esoteric form, to the discoverer. In the account we read here, Longchenpa shows a certain disdain for the revelation of Treasures out of the ground, and instead eventually identifies his own authorial voice with the voice of his dakini-mediated Treasure inspiration. In other words, his extension of *The Seminal Heart of the Dakinis*, rather than being a revelatory core of other-voiced texts fleshed out by his own compositions, reflects an inseparable unity of personal intention and transcendent inspiration, a subject to which we shall return.

The Seminal Heart of the Dakinis

Beyond the general role of the feminine in Treasure revelation, *The Seminal Heart of the Dakinis*, the tradition that Longchenpa is engaged with here, has much to do with the particular feminine roles. This is patent in the work's title: dakini is an Indic term, translated by the Tibetan term Kandroma (mkha' 'gro ma), which means "one who goes in space." It signifies a female spirit who can either be a transcendent buddha or a vengeful demoness; in addition, the word can also signify an historical female saint in Tibet. Seminal Heart is the name for a syncretic Tantric tradition that came to be the most normative variant of the Great Perfection. What *The Seminal Heart of the Dakinis* Treasure did, in fact, was to bring a greater focus, in its meditative practices, on the distinctively Tantric practice of sexual yoga as integrated with the Seminal Heart. The latter include the belief in dynamically active buddhas within the ordinary body which, when cultivated, flow spontaneously out through the eyes and into the surrounding visual field. As the rainbow-colored light gradually shapes itself of its own accord into mandates, the practice culminates in visions of pure lands.

The Seminal Heart literature prior to Longchenpa consisted of three major collections, all of which emerged, between the eleventh and fourteenth centuries and through the revelatory processes of the Treasure movement, as Tibetan-language literature. They are *The Seventeen Tantras*, *The Seminal Heart of Vimalamitra*,

and the very *The Seminal Heart of the Dakinis* that is of principal concern in the material translated below. The *Seventeen Tantras* are largely Tibetan syntheses, and function as the primary texts upon which the other two collections are based. *The Seminal Heart of Vimalamitra* is a three-volume collection that also contains a few Tantras, but consists mostly of ritual, contemplative, and philosophical texts attributed to Vimalamitra and other Indian teachers. Vimalamitra and his disciples are said to have buried both *The Seventeen Tantras* and *The Seminal Heart of Vimalamitra* as Treasure, where they remained until the late tenth or early eleventh century, at which time their excavation began, a process that culminated in the mid-twelfth century. It appears, however, that these texts were in fact largely composed by their Tibetan discoverers themselves.

In any event, the Seminal Heart tradition had little to do with Padmasambhava until the early fourteenth century, when against the backdrop of the increasing predominance of a larger revelatory cult organized around Padmasambhava, an obscure Tibetan by the name of Tsultrim Dorje (Tshul khrim s rdo rje, 1291-1315/1317) produced a two-volume collection known as *The Seminal Heart of the Dakinis*. Although clearly indebted to its predecessors, its narrative frames claimed that the collection had been authored by Padmasambhava in eighth-century Tibet and concealed as Treasure by Padmasambhava's Tibetan consort Yeshe Tsogyel. The important role of the Tibetan queen Yeshe Tsogyel in the burial of Treasure is one of the reasons for which female consorts, not to mention female epiphanies, play such an important role in the revelatory processes of the Treasure discoverers. In particular, emanations of this supreme Tantric female consort are believed to be essential in helping the discoverer decode the Treasure, since it was Yeshe Tsogyel herself who encoded the Treasure in special "dakini sign-language" at the moment of the Treasure's burial. Yeshe Tsogyel receives special attention in *The Seminal Heart of the Dakinis* Treasure, inasmuch as it is she who originally requested Padmasambhava to grant the many texts and teachings contained in this Treasure.

Another female figure in *The Seminal Heart of the Dakinis* is of paramount significance for Longchenpa. This is the eighth-century Tibetan princess Lhacam Pemasel (Lha lcam pad ma gsal) who, according to the story, died suddenly at the tender age of eight in Samye Chimphu (bSam yas mchims phu), in the presence of both her father, the Tibetan Emperor Trisong Detsen (Khri srong lde'u btsan, 742-c. 798) and Padmasambhava. Padmasambhava explains to the grieving emperor the karmic reasons for this sudden death - namely, her transgressions of past lives - but then discloses that he has decided that the princess will reveal his own Seminal Heart teachings in a future life. He proceeds to bring her back to life in order to give her an initial transmission of those teachings: this is *The Seminal Heart of the Dakinis*. Padmasambhava anoints her as Pema Ledretsel (Pad ma las 'brel rtsal), "The one with the Dynamism of a Karmic Connection to Padma," That is, Padmasambhava.

These events are central to the the fourteenth-century narratives of Tsultrim Dorje, who claimed to be the prophesied reincarnation of the princess and thereby

the inheritor of the mantle of Pema Ledreltsel. However, following his stunning revelations of 1313, when he was in his early twenties, Tshultrim Dorje himself abruptly died under mysterious circumstances, in which an ill-fated sexual liaison with a woman and an inability to keep his Treasure revelations secret while he mastered his own contemplative practice of their teachings were rumored to have played a part. He left behind no institutional basis for the perpetuation of his revelations, the first new Seminal Heart cycle in over a century. However, Longchenpa, following his reception of the older traditions of *The Seminal Heart of Vimalamitra* in his early thirties, came into possession of this major Seminal Heart work. How he came into possession of this cycle, the concomitant possession of his female disciples by the dakinis who redacted, concealed, and guarded the cycle, and Longchenpa's own eventual visionary extension of the tradition lie at the heart of our story.

Overview of the Translation

The passages excerpted here mark Longchenpa's emergence as a teacher, transmitter, and revealer of the Seminal Heart. When Longchenpa was in his late twenties, Kumaraja, his principal lama, gave him an array of teachings that highlighted *The Seventeen Tantras* and *The Seminal Heart of Vimalamitra*. Longchenpa followed these transmissions with a three-year period of retreat. At the opening of our translated passage we find him emerging as a teacher of the Seminal Heart in his own right, as he takes on a circle of disciples of his own. Not surprisingly, he chooses the famous Chimphu Valley to inaugurate this new identity. Chimphu is a retreat center in the mountains above Samye, the first Buddhist monastery in Tibet, which also bears strong associations with Padmasambhava, who is believed to have been instrumental in its construction. Samye was also the site of important events relating to *The Seminal Heart of the Dakinis*, including the death and resurrection of Princess Pemasel. Here Longchenpa began ritually to initiate a non-monastic group of eight yogins and yoginis into the tradition of *The Seminal Heart of the Dakinis*, after which he gave them detailed contemplative instructions on the tradition's esoteric meditative system.

Against the backdrop of these rituals, transmissions, and celebrations, Longchenpa and his disciples enter a spiritually excited state, which gives rise to a stream of visions and states of possession in the group. The visions are often seen by everyone present, but the possessions are performed exclusively by the women. We can also note that the overwhelming majority of the visionary apparitions and possessing spirits that enter into this exceptional milieu are female, whether they be Buddhist goddesses, Dharma protectresses, or historical Tibetan women. The possessions are characterized as the "descent" (*babs*) of the spirit into the yogini, after which the latter begins to "perform" (*khra*) in the identity and voice of the former.

The first such spirit appears abruptly during an empowerment ritual. She iden-

tifies herself as the Dharma protectress Ekajati, a famous wrathful female figure particularly associated with the Seminal Heart tradition. Dharma protectresses are generally depicted as indigenous spirits wrathfully subjugated by Padmasambhava or other masters, both to prevent them from hindering Buddhist activities and to bind them into the ongoing service and defense of Buddhism. They therefore have a hybrid nature that retains traces of their origins in the violent and unpredictable nature of certain older, non-Buddhist spirits, now reinterpreted in Buddhist ethical terms. Indeed, such protectresses are often viewed as emanations of buddhas or bodhisattvas, with their ferocity sublimated into a kind of playful creativity, as we see here repeatedly. Ekajati chides Longchenpa on the quality of his performance of the ritual, imparting nuanced revisions of the master's teachings and actions. The other disciples present are skeptical and taken aback by the yogini's daring actions before their respected guru, but he reassures them that she is indeed possessed by an authentic and enlightened spirit, and also that he himself has the knowledge and charisma to keep the performance under control. The episode marks an important breakthrough for the small community, as its members begin to recognize the special insights and information that these possessed women are able to offer their teacher. These positive results reinforce the value of what might otherwise have been viewed as dangerous - or inauthentic - trance states.

The next possession episode provides even more crucial information. A yogini is taken over by Vajra Sow (rDo rje phag mo, in Tibetan, Vajravarahl in Sanskrit), one of the most famous Buddhist Tantric buddhas and Longchenpa's own personal deity. Vajra Sow tells him about the other Tibetan spirits bound into the service of Longchenpa's teachings who have come to visit him as well, and also reassures him about the current state of health of his teacher Kumaraja. She then settles into an extended dialogue with him concerning his true identity. She begins by revealing that Longchenpa's teacher, Kumaraja, is one of the prophesied centennial emanations of Vimalamitra in Tibet, which implies that Longchenpa had received *The Seminal Heart of Vimalamitra* from Vimalamitra himself, in reincarnate form, just a few years earlier. Still more dramatically, she goes on to disclose that Longchenpa is none other than the contemporary reincarnation of Tsultrim Dorje, who was in turn the reincarnation of Princess Lhacam Pemasel, who had originally received, from Padmasambhava, the very Seminal Heart teachings Longchenpa now is transmitting. She thus identifies him as the principal heir and, in fact, the original revealer of *The Seminal Heart of the Dakinis*, the second great stream of the Seminal Heart. As a consequence, she gives him the prophesied names Drime Ozer (Dri med 'od zer) and, by extension, Pema Ledreltsel (Pad ma las 'brel rtsal). The former, literally "Stainless Light Rays," comes to be one of Longchenpa's most important authorial names invoked in colophons, while the latter, literally "The One with the Dynamism of a Karmic Connection to Padma(sambhava)," is employed throughout Longchenpa's own subsequent commentary, entitled *The Seminal Quintessence of the Dakinis*.

Vajra Sow then discusses his present lifespan and his future lifetimes and Tre-

sure revelations, and gives critical instructions on when, where, and by what means the revelations would transpire. This passage thus works to accomplish a momentous feat, namely, the recreation of Longchenpa into a authorized revealer and teacher of the esoteric *Seminal Heart of the Dakini*, who in a future life would attain buddhahood in the sacred land of Oddiyana to the west of Tibet. It should be recalled that all of this self-transformation takes place in the very valley where, in a distant past life, the subject in question had already been resurrected and blessed as a dakini him/herself by Padmasabmhava.

These grand claims, however, are undermined by two seeming contradictions, which actually are noted by Longchenpa himself: Tshultrim Dorje's death date (1315/1317) seems to have come after Longchenpa's birth date (1308), and the prophecies in the Treasure cycle itself indicate that Tsultrim Dorje's next rebirth will be in Bhutan, whereas Longchenpa was born in southern Tibet. As the passage proceeds, we see the dakini ingeniously solving these problems. Her strategy turns on a skillful interpretation of a seemingly irrelevant detail in the prophecy, namely, that Tsultrim Dorje would, prior to rebirth, spend a "brief sojourn in a pure land." This would seem to indicate that the few years' gap separating the saint's death and rebirth would have been passed in a buddha's pure land outside of the ordinary world system. The dakini, however, interprets the statement as referring to Longchenpa's own life, in which he is immersed in visions of Buddhist pure lands through his contemplative practice of the Seminal Heart. This renders the prophesied Bhutanese rebirth as one yet to come. As for the incongruous death date of Tsultrim Dorje, she exploits the obscurity of his life to push his death date back by eight or ten years to 1307, just in time to coincide with the conception of Longchenpa. This passage ends with Longchenpa in a state of inspiration, singing a Tantric song about the interior reality of the five Tantric buddhas.

The next major episode of possession involves a distinctively Tibetan Dharma Protectress by the name of Vajra Turquoise Lamp (rDo rje g.yu sgron) who, again, descends into a female disciple of Longchenpa. She first invites him to her domain, which refers to the retreat place of White Skull Snow Mountain (Gangs ri thod dkar) to which he would eventually repair and compose most of his major works. The two then discuss various doctrinal and meditational points, reiterating the nonconceptual, immediate, and even "nonmeditational" nature of the kind of enlightened realization most valued in the Seminal Heart tradition. They also review a range of pedagogical problems that relate to the transmission of certain esoteric Tantric empowerments. She further reminds Longchenpa of a former vision he had had of her, revealing that in reality she is Vajra Sow who has only temporarily taken the form of Vajra Turquoise Lamp; in this way, this local Tibetan deity becomes identified with the famed Indic Buddhist goddess.

In the course of their conversation, Longchenpa critically displays anxieties about his own qualifications and about the necessity of teaching the Seminal Heart at all: the teaching had already been transmitted by one of the most famous talkers of the time, the third Karmapa Rangjung Dorje (Rang byung rdo rje, 1284-

1339), as well as by a well-known Treasure finder Rinchen Lingpa (Rin chen gling pa, 1295-1373). The deity again bolsters Longchenpa's sense of confidence. She immediately dismisses his doubts, making a clever pun based on the dual sense of *lung* as both "handle" of a vessel and "verbal transmission" in which a teaching is ritually read out loud to disciples prior to its study. She thus implies that Longchenpa's two perceived rivals are simply mouthing the words of the texts without real comprehension - they are mere "handles" of a reality that only Longchenpa fully "owns." Thus does the yogini, speaking in the voice of the dakini, play a crucial role in reinforcing Longchenpa's sense of legitimacy and self-worth for the throne of Seminal Heart transmission.

Soon after this self-empowering exchange, Longchenpa commissions his most trusted disciple, Ozer Gocha ('Od zer go cha), to retrieve the actual manuscript of *The Seminal Heart of the Dakinis* Treasure. Upon his return with the text, we have another extensive possession episode that endures for several days, this time by none other than Yeshe Tsogyel, the queen of Treasure concealment and the principal dakini of the Treasure tradition. As on the previous possession, the yogini-as-dakini intervenes in some of the ritual proceedings, at one point even granting teachings and empowerments to the teacher, and engages in mysterious symbolic actions and performances that are meant to impart an esoteric message to her audience. She also reiterates the essential importance of nonattachment and openness, pronouncing *phat*, a mantric utterance designed to cut off obsessive thinking whenever such small-mindedness occurs. Again, the more cautious disciples are not sure how to take these strange and supremely self-confident female performances, but the lama Longchenpa assures the doubting disciples of the performances' worth.

The inspired yogini proves her prescient powers in the next episode when she is able to give a nuanced assessment of a deep meditative experience that Longchenpa has just had. She approves heartily of his perception - classic for this school of Tantra - that beholds the apparitions of samsara and the visions of nirvana simultaneously. Nonetheless, she is critical of a previous moment in his experience when he had momentarily swooned. With its insistence on the necessity of engaging with all appearance, the Great Perfection tradition repeatedly resists the temptation to retreat into a near-unconscious cocoon of formless meditation. Rather, the meditator is advised to perfect the skill of "emanation" in order to work most effectively in *samsara* and aid sentient beings.

This esoteric guidance is followed by further ritual interventions and attempts to bolster Longchenpa's self-confidence. There are a number of explicit references to the dakini authorizing and announcing his enthronement or investiture as the regal inheritor of Padmasambhava's legacy. She offers him the texts of *The Seminal Heart of the Ddkinis* (evidently the copy that Ozer Gocha has just procured), along with its transmission, though presumably in a somewhat condensed manner. In addition, she is portrayed as guiding his hand, with help of Vajra Turquoise Lamp, as he composes some explanatory notes associated with the Treasure, which would appear to be an allusion to the seminal inspiration which at the end of the

text yields his own masterly extension of the Treasure entitled *The Seminal Quintessence of the Dakinis*.

In the next episode of possession, we witness the kind of repartee that often ensues between the sometimes unruly protector deities and the Tantric lama. Remati is another female guardian deity who descends, yet again, into an unspecified yogini disciple, this time with a retinue of other female deities. She begins by rebuking Longchenpa for his supposed lapses in devotion to her. However, he eventually responds with a defiant dismissal of any need to be fully dependent upon her. It appears that he is beginning to assimilate the messages of encouragement he has been receiving, and is no longer willing to value every channeled message sent to him, especially those sent by less than fully trustworthy local protector deities. Particularly interesting in this light is his explicit criticism of the unqualified valorization of Treasures - particularly the material Treasures pulled out "of the cracks of rock mountains" - and his claim to transcend any concern for their revelation by himself, since he has "revealed the gateway to the Treasure of radiant light within myself." This is a critical moment in which we witness not only his own growing self-confidence in the face of these imposing dakinis who descend suddenly into his world (and depart just as abruptly) but also his assertion of his own authorial voice and its intrinsic value amidst the dramatic landscape of Treasure revelation and the channeling of sacred voices of the past.

The final episode translated here shows the Tantric community engaged in the celebratory rituals that are appropriate to the conclusion of a profoundly meaningful retreat period. With the playfully magical assistance of Longchenpa, they produce the customary pints of beer out of their meager resources and proceed to become inebriated. In the midst of the festivities, Turquoise Lamp returns to invite Longchenpa to her residence on White Skull Snow Mountain, and he has to hold off the jealous intervention of Remati, who also reappears to take issue with his impending move to that mountain retreat. Her dangerous nature is revealed when she admits to taking a toll on the livestock of the northern Tibetan pasturelands as her deserved tithe, but this unpredictable spirit nonetheless remains part of the protective organization of Longchenpa's Treasure pantheon.

The community begins to part company, many fulfilling Longchenpa's wishes by promising to go into meditative retreat. The narrative also refers to certain violations and disturbances caused by at least one member of the lama's circle from eastern Tibet, but provides no detail on their nature. Longchenpa proceeds to White Skull Snow Mountain located in the headlands of Shukseb, on the col of which he builds his small hermitage, named Oddiyana Fortress (U rgyan rdzong). This is to become his most favored hermitage, and he retreats there continually over the final two and half decades of his life to write many of his greatest masterpieces. Shortly after establishing the hermitage, at the urging of the devoted Ozer Gocha, Longchenpa composes his own textual extension of *The Seminal Heart of the Dakinis*, which brings to fruition the fragmentary inspirations and multiple allusions to his own impending Treasure revelation that one finds woven through his dialogues with dakinis at Chimphu. The seminal insights of

Chimphu thus become the three volumes of *The Seminal Quintessence of the Dakinis* at White Skull Snow Mountain.

Although the text's composition takes place amid a continuing flow of visions and omens stemming from the dakinis, and represents the culmination of the dakinis' and Padmasambhava's inspirations conveyed in the numinous headlands of Chimphu, Longchenpa's account leaves no doubt that it is his own composition. Indeed, colophon after colophon of *The Seminal Quintessence of the Dakinis* uses the language of Treasure revelation, but ultimately clearly ascribe its composition to Longchenpa himself, albeit in his reincarnational identity as Pema Ledreltsel, "the one with the dynamic karmic connection to Padmasambhava." Unlike his previous life's revelations, which involved earth Treasures attributed repeatedly in framing narrative and colophon to the literal authorial agency of Padmasambhava and Yeshe Tsogyel, Longchenpa in his present life discloses the same bravado and self-assertion he had increasingly exhibited in the headlands of Chimphu, in a literary form. He is the Treasure revealer and the author, thereby incarnating a moment in which revelation and inspiration, reincarnation and incarnation, Treasures and compositions coincide on shifting registers. Never before, and perhaps never again, was the Tibetan Treasure tradition of channeled authorial voices so exquisitely invoked and deconstructed, simultaneously, in the same voice and the same texts. This multivalent identity, on authorial grounds, of the possessed and the possessor constitutes the textual landscape on which Longchenpa perhaps most adequately responds to the enigmatic possessions of the dakinis, the result being a text of intertwined voices, human and dakini, past and present, Tibetan and Indian, which mirrors the intertwining of dakini and yogini at Chimphu.

The translation below is an abridgment of *The Luminous Web of Precious Visions* (mThong *snang rin po che 'od kyi drva ba*) by Padma Ledreltsel (Longchenpa). The text is located in *sNying thig ya bzhi* [A-'dzom Chos-sgar edition] (Delhi: Sherab Gyaltzen Lama, 1975-1979), vol. 9 [Mkha' 'groyang thig, Part III], pp. 203-66. The passages translated here are on pp. 209-11, 215-25, 237-48, 250-52, 256-60, and 265-66.

Further Reading

For further details on Longchenpa's life, as well as other important figures in the Treasure tradition, see Dudjom Rimpoche, *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism: Its Fundamentals and History*, translated by Gyurme Dorje and Matthew Kapstein (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1991), vol. 1. Tulku Thondup's *Buddha Mind* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Snow Lion Publications, 1989) provides an excellent anthology of Longchenpa's doctrinal writings. His *Hidden Teachings of Tibet: An Explanation of the Terma Tradition of the Nyingma School of Buddhism* (London: Wisdom Publications, 1986) is an in-depth study of the phenomenon of revelation itself

in Treasure tradition. Janet Gyatso's *Apparitions of the Self: The Secret Autobiographies of a Tibetan Visionary* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998) provides analysis of the significance of the Treasure cult, especially within the context of autobiographical writing in Tibet. David Germano's *Prophetic Histories of Buddhas, Dakinis and Saints in Tibet* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, forthcoming) offers a detailed study of the events surrounding the revelation of both *The Seminal Heart of the Dakinis* and *The Seminal Quintessence of the Dakinis*, and their broader social and philosophical significance.

All but one of the literary collections referred to in the introduction are found in *The Seminal Heart in Four Parts (sNying thig ya bzhi)* by miscellaneous authors in eleven volumes (New Delhi: Trulku Tsewang, Jamyang and L. Tashi, 1971). *The Seminal Heart of the Dakinis (mKha' 'gro snying thig)* by Padmasambhava constitutes volumes 2-3; *The Seminal Quintessence of the Dakinis (mKha' 'groyang thig)* by Longchenpa constitutes volumes 4-6; and *The Seminal Heart of Vimalamitra (Bi ma snying thig)* by Vimalamitra and other early Great Perfection Masters, volumes 7-9. Finally, *The Seventeen Tantras (rGyud bcu bdun)* has been published in a three-volume edition based on the Adzom Drukpa blocks (New Delhi: Sanje Dorje, 1973).

The Luminous Web of Precious Visions

At the age of twenty-seven, [Longchenpa] encountered the glorious lord of religion Kumaraja, from whom he obtained the empowerments, guidances, and instructions for the esoteric Seminal Heart of the Great Perfection. The next year [Kumaraja] gave him the seal of entrustment for the higher empowerments, along with their Tantras, scriptures, and esoteric precepts. [Longchenpa] then practiced contemplation for three years. At the age of thirty-one he decided to leave at the conclusion [of the retreat]. At that time a traveler to Nyiphu Shukseb (sNyi phu shug gseb) came to see him, and he was supplicated by many disciples with the right fortune. Hence he gave them guidance on the Seminal Heart of the Great Perfection. At that time the yogin Ozer Gocha offered the lama a totally intact manuscript of *The Seminal Heart of the Dakinis*, which he had obtained after great hardships from Loro (*Lo ro*). [Longchenpa] dreamt at the same time that the goddess Vitality Accomplishing Mistress (*Srog sgrub ma*) hand-delivered the manuscript [to him].

Then at the age of thirty-two in the following year, in the middle spring month of the year of the earth female hare [1339], [Longchenpa] began giving instruction in the esoteric Seminal Heart of the Great Perfection to eight male yogins and female yoginis with the right fortune in the forest of Rimocen (Ri mo can) at Chimphu valley. Upon the descent of blessings during his performance of the nonelaborate empowerment, the glorious and great Mantra Protectress [Ekajatl] descended into on&of the yoginis, and she began to perform. When everyone else became full of doubt, the lama said, "Because a dakini has

actually descended here [in her], get over your worries! I am a yogin who has realized the single flavor of appearances and mind, and thus no obstacles will ensue!"

The yogini prostrated to the lama, and having gazed at the offering cakes, she inquired, "Why haven't you included the peacock [feather?]" He replied, "I have conjured it mentally!" She in turn said, "What use is doing it mentally in the symbolic doctrine? [that is, one needs the actual object to function as a symbol in these teachings]. [Also] this [basin] isn't necessary." She then put aside the basin from the platform atop the vases, and placed there three vases linked together. Then when the lama performed the ritual in full detail, she joined her palms together, said "excellent!" and kept nodding her head [in approval]. But when [Longchenpa] left off the final letters in pronouncing the word *rigs*, she said, "No, no! You should say rigs!" When he was reciting the [mantra] letters - *Om* and so forth - she said, "Imitate me!" and proceeded to sing the mantras in a sweet melody in Dakini language, connecting them without mixing them up.

During the eight words in the context of the main phase [of the ritual], she made restitution for the omission of no-meditation, singing it as a song: "When the intellect is free from meditation, joy! When meditation is free from the intellect, how happy!" Saying that the offerings were of poor quality, and moreover that nothing would ensue by means of them, she again sang a sweet melody as an offering. When a large bowlful of ambrosia was presented to the lama at the time of the ritual communion (*ganacakra*), she said, "This is the sacrament of the dakinis, and thus must be relied upon no matter what!" She thus invited him to consume all of it without remainder.

At this time the yogin Rinchen Otro (Rin chen 'od 'phro) also saw the blue-black Glorious Savior (dPal mgon po) with his complete set of ornaments. Then special blessings of the dakinis occurred right up until daybreak. Thereupon, until [Longchenpa began] the guidance [in the morning], the yogins and yoginis sang and danced in a state of intense exhilaration. Their experiences blazed with cognitive experiences of bliss, clarity, and nonconceptuality, all day and night. They entered a special visionary state that was neither asleep nor awake.

[The intervening passages describe further visions of various dakinis and other figures who appear on the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth of the lunar month.]

After a while [still on the twenty-fifth], one yogini also saw gathering cloud banks of dakinis showering all over the land and space. Therefore [we] dedicated the cakes of the feast offering to them. Then after a while, that yogini was shaking her long tresses and had the experience of Vajra Sow with a dark blue-colored body filling up the sky and then dissolving into [her]. Then she began to perform [as the goddess].

She said: "Its coming, its coming." [We] asked: "What is coming?" She re-

plied "Tomorrow morning obstacles are coming; if not then there will be many high guests." [We] asked, "Who has come?" She replied: "The seven medicinal goddess (sman *mo*) sisters have come. They are white, youthful in complexion, wearing multicolored silk garments adorned with various gold, turquoise, and jeweled ornaments, and are surrounded by immeasurable medical goddesses as retinue. There are still more to come. Ode Gungyel ('0 de gung rgyal) has come surrounded by many retainers similar in appearance - a black man with a black horse, black cloak, black spear, and with his long hair forming a turban wrapped around his head. There are still more to come. Nyenchen Thanglha (gNyan chen thang lha) - a white man with white horse, and surrounded by many similar retainers is here. Offer them tormas!" [We] offered them tormas.

Then the yogini said, "I have come here newly - why don't you offer me a tormas?" [The lama] asked, "Who are you?" She replied, "I am the lama's personal deity, Vajra Sow." At that time [the lama] asked everyone, "What do you see her as?" The yogin Ozer Thaye explained that he saw a dark blue woman larger than the others, adorned with bone, and adorned by nets of jewels and bones.

Then the lama asked her, "Why have you come here? Is [my] holy lama [Kumaraja] healthy?" The yogini replied, "Since tonight is a wild night, I have come to spy on these karmically worthy disciples. Your lama is in excellent health." [Longchenpa] then asked, "Well, if that's the case, since this year is a dangerous point in his life, should we be worried?" She responded, "What obstacles could there be to an emanation of the Buddha? It merely depends on his perception of the needs of disciples. Don't you understand that [in him] Vimalamitra has come to Tibet?" He then asked, "Then how long will he live?" She replied, "He will live until the next year of the sheep. After that it is uncertain, since [his life span] depends upon his disciples."

[Longchenpa] then asked, "Well, if that's the case, are you now urging me [to act] for the welfare of others as the lama himself urged me to do [previously]?" She replied, "Yes, precisely!" He then inquired, "Should I stay in solitude to accomplish the body of light, or bring benefit to sentient beings through acting for the welfare of others? How much longer have I to live?" She replied, "Though you could accomplish the body of light, you must benefit sentient beings - much welfare to others will ensue. You will be able to live for thirty more years beyond the present." At that point, the yogin Ozer Gocha said, "Please stay for a long life!" The lama responded, "This dakini has no obsessive fixations - it may be that [my life span] can be calculated in terms of days, months, and years, but I have no idea what that would be."

Again, the lama questioned her, "How many Word Protectors (*bka' srung*) do I have?" She replied, "Many! You have all of those of your lama, and in particular Goddess Vajra Turquoise Lamp." He then inquired, "Where will I benefit other beings?" She answered, "That will be in the southwest. To expand on that, it will be in the areas of Dra(Grwa), Drachi (Grwa phyi), and Trengpo ('Phreng po)." He asked, "Well, is it definite that I will benefit others?" She

replied, "From this point onward much [benefit] will ensue. In your next life, [you will bring] even vaster benefit than that to beings." [Longchenpa] asked, "Where will my future life [transpire]?" She replied, "[Your activities] will be very vast in the Lhodrak (Lho brag) region, and in the border areas between Mon, Tibet, and India." He asked, "Will that be Mon Bumthang?" She replied, "Precisely! The Guru is named Drimay Ozer." He then asked, "Is that [the rebirth of Tshultrim Dorje] explained in *The Seminal Heart of the Dakinis*?" She replied, "Yes, precisely! You're not mistaken at all!"

He asked, "Well, if that's the case, am I now allowed to give the empowerments and guidance just as explained from *The Seminal Heart of the Dakinis*?" She replied, "Since [these teachings] are yours, certainly!" He asked, "Won't people come to see me as a charlatan?" She replied, "What's the point in those people's gossip? The fortunate ones will gather [around you] out of faith, while those without the fortune wouldn't show up even if no one at all slandered you. They would slander even the Buddha himself."

I asked, "Well then, where should I disclose these sacred precepts of the Seminal Heart? Should I disclose them at the site of the Goddess Vajra Turquoise Lamp?" She replied, "Since this is a place where dakinis naturally gather, you should disclose them up here." I asked, "Will I extract the Treasure at Bumthang in this life?" She replied, "If you have three or four disciples with exceedingly immaculate commitments, you will extract it." I asked, "Do I have such disciples now?" She replied, "No. A Tantric practitioner named Karsang who is slender and exceedingly beautiful will come. At that time you will extract it."

I asked, "And the Treasure letters?" She replied, "At that time a prophet will manifest - you needn't ask." I asked, "And the rock mountains where the Treasure is located?" She replied, "There are rock mountains on the eastern side near the end of the valley where the central river in Bumthang flows to the southwest. At their edge, at the border of the neck [of the mountains] running up to its head [top], projecting outward like a sitar standing upright, there is some swamp water coming hither. Atop that is [an outcropping] resembling a leaf of a rhododendron flower. If you tie a rope to it and go twelve fathoms [upward], you'll find a square rock in the manner of a vessel. It has a triangular crevice in its lower center, which is where [the Treasure] is."

[Longchenpa] asked, "When will I meet the Great Master [Padmasambhava]?" She replied, "In the uplands of three valleys, in the lowlands of three mountains, is a small rock formation facing southwest. Beneath the right corner of the third rock mountain, you will meet him and he will give prophecies." [He] asked, "When will I meet Vimalamitra?" She replied, "You have already met him [i.e., Kumaraja]. [He] asked, "Does my realization reach the ultimate meaning of the Seminal Heart?" She replied, "It is the ultimate."

[He] asked, "What about other Treasures?" She replied, "In the northwest border from here is an exceedingly high rock mountain - from its side resembling spears' tips pointing upward in disarray, you will extract [Treasures]. But

don't go there [now]." [He] asked, "Well, if that's the case, should or should I not take out the Treasures of Tramo Rock Mountain in the east at present?" She replied, "You have already taken them out [that is, The *Seminal Heart of the Dakinis*, extracted in his previous incarnation]." The yogini Ozer Gocha asked, "Where is Pagang Rinchen Dorje (sPa sgang pa rin chen rdo rje, another name of Tshultrim Dorje)?" Saying "Pagang Rinchen," she was unclear for a while. [He again] asked, "Master Rindor?" (sLob dpon rin rdor, a contraction of Rinchen Dorje), and she replied: "Yes, yes. He is that one, he is sitting right here." And she pointed her finger [at Longchenpa].

The lama asked her: "It is said that after that birth he was to be reborn in Bumthang. So how could that [rebirth] be me [since I was born instead in southern Tibet]?" She replied, "[The prophecies say] that following that incarnation, he will be reborn in Bumthang after a brief sojourn in an Enjoyment Body pure land, rather than being reborn directly there [in Bumthang]. Now you [represent] that sojourn in an Enjoyment Body pure land." [He] responded, "Why do [you say] I now [represent] the sojourn in an Enjoyment Body pure land?" She answered, "When Master Rindor took out the Treasures, if he had kept them secret for several years and practiced, he would have refined his skill [during that life] during a sojourn in a luminous Enjoyment Body land for his own welfare, while benefit to others would have ensued through the Seminal Heart teachings. Since in fact he didn't keep them secret, he wasn't able to live out his full life span. Thus now in this birth your meditation and practice of the rainbow-colored visions of radiant light should be understood as that period of 'a brief sojourn in an Enjoyment Body pure land.' Others don't understand how to interpret the intention of that statement, but in fact your life right now is the intent of that prophecy."

[Longchenpa] then asked, "At what point will I achieve [liberation] without any remaining residue?" She replied, "If you meditate in solitude you will achieve it in this current [life], whereas if you act for the welfare of others you will be liberated within the [postdeath] intermediate state. Your emanation will take rebirth in Bumthang, display many magical powers, and act for the welfare of others. Then that emanation - surrounded by the five types of dakinis - will also depart to the land of Oddiyana, to the northwest of the Vajra Seat (*rDo rje gdan* in Tibetan; *vajrasana* in Sanskrit) in Magadha, where he will act as if becoming awakened into buddhahood."

[He] asked, "Where did the Master Rindor die and how many years have gone by?" She replied, "He died in Kek, since which thirty-two years have passed [that is, 1307]." [He] asked: "Which Seminal Heart tradition will be most beneficial for me to teach - *The Seminal Heart of Vimalamitra* or *The Seminal Heart of the Dakinis*? And how long will each last?" She replied, "Both will be beneficial, but the *Vimalamitra* will be more vast. The *Vimalamitra* will last one hundred years, and the *Dakini Seminal Heart* will last five hundred years, beginning from this year."

At that time, she made prophecies concerning the lifespan and beneficial

actions of the [gathered] yogins and yoginis as well. After a while, the yogin Ozer Thaye ('Od zer mtha' yas) had a vision of a white woman with multicolored silk clothes, a silk turban, and adorned with gold and turquoises. He saw her dissolve into the lama, who then stood up and said, "I will sing a previously unknown vajra song." [Longchenpa] then "sang the following:

I prostrate to and praise the Blissful One [Buddha] All Good consort
pair,
Spontaneity which is primordially empty and originally pure!

1. As the condition of reality which is Mind as such beyond all elaboration,
The very essence of the purity of ignorance right where it stands,
[Buddha] Vairocana exists internally, not externally -
I supplicate the buddha affinity of the Blissful Ones:
Inspire me with blessings to self-recognize as self-manifestations
The abiding reality of the unborn beyond all mental objects!
2. As the mirror of the unceasing ground for the shining of awareness's dynamism,
The very essence of anger's liberation right where it stands,
[Buddha] Aksobhya exists internally, not externally -
I supplicate the vajra affinity of the Blissful Ones:
Inspire me with blessings to self-recognize as self-manifestations
The abiding reality of mentation in its empty radiance devoid of grasping!
3. As the sameness devoid of acceptance and rejection as well as affirmation and negation,
The very essence of the purity of pride right where it stands,
[Buddha] Ratnasambhava exists internally, not externally -
I supplicate the jewel affinity of the Blissful Ones:
Inspire me with blessings to self-recognize as self-manifestations
The sameness of abiding reality evenly pervading everything!
4. As the complete realization of [all] subsiding in the expanse of bliss and emptiness,
The very essence of the purity of desire right where it stands,
[Buddha] Amitabha exists internally, not externally -
I supplicate the lotus affinity of the Blissful Ones:
Inspire me with blessings to self-recognize as self-manifestations
The abiding reality of dualistic apprehension subsiding in bliss and emptiness.
5. As the efficacious action of awareness's penetrating emergence and self-liberation,
The very essence of the purity of jealousy right where it stands,

[Buddha] Amoghasiddhi exists internally, not externally -
 I supplicate the action affinity of the Blissful Ones:
 Inspire me with blessings to self-recognize as self-manifestations
 The abiding reality of whatever manifests in its unceasing dynamic
 flow.

When dakinis deliver prophecies tonight
 On the tenth day of the waning half of the lunar month
 [A day in which the dakinis' influence is believed to be very strong],
 This is a sign of the internal conjunction of auspicious factors
 A sign of pure commitments among the faithful,
 A sign of the nonbiased emergence of welfare for the living,
 And a sign of traversing the ocean of cyclic existence!

Joy! Happiness! A pure field,
 This world realm in its external environment of radiant light,
 Is like arriving at the site of the Highest Heaven {*Og min*, in Tibetan;
Akanistha, in Sanskrit)
 With everything having the identity of gods and goddesses:
 I feel self-awareness transcends misery,
 I feel acceptance and rejection as well as affirmation and negation are
 destroyed,
 I feel delivered from the treacherous path of hopes and fears,
 And I feel primordially free from the three fictive states of existence.

Conceptuality in its projections and contractions subsides within the
 five lights,
 And the visions of five lights subside into the primordial.
 Appearances and mind having the identity of the groundless Reality
 Body,
 Even this life is blissful, the next life will be blissful,
 And through self-recognition, bliss will also be in the intermediate
 state -
 Now I go from bliss to bliss.

I offer this song as worship, O Three Jewels!
 Rejoice, O host of Dakinis!

[Longchenpa] performed a dance, and then, after a while, up in the sky
 opening, a red woman with jeweled ornaments manifested three times. Several
 saw her and greeted her, after which she dissolved into the lama. When a white
 woman also came in similar fashion and dissolved [into him], the entire land-
 scape and space was seen to be filled with dakinis. . . .

*[Omitted sections describe the ensuing rituals and visions from the twenty-fifth through
 the twenty-ninth of the lunar month, including many more dakinis as well as Padma-*

sambhava himself. This culminates in a yogim's vision of Padmasambhava and many dakinis dissolving into Longchenpa, at which point he again sings a lengthy vajra song.]

. . . The next day [the thirtieth] the yogins and yoginis in general saw immeasurably many dakinis all over the sky. At twilight, the yogin Ozer Thaye saw a woman with braided hair filling the sky, who said, "Present an offering cake to me!" Then, after a while, everyone heard "kiki soso" ("hail," used in addressing deities), roaring sounds, the sound of cymbals, thudding sounds, and so forth, from all directions. After a while, [we] presented feast-offering cakes, upon which the guests, who had previously manifested during the day-time on the twenty-eighth, arrived.

Rinchen Otro thus saw a dark blue woman dissolve into the crown of a yogini, who then began to perform. The yogini [herself] saw the trio of the Master Padmasambhava, Vimalamitra, and Yeshe Tsogyel arrive. At this time, the seven white Turquoise Lamp goddess sisters arrived, wavering and modest. Prostrating to the lama, each dissolved into the yogini, who then said, "I am Vajra Turquoise Lamp, and I request you come to my place!" The lama responded, "I want to stay forever in your place." She replied, "I would be happy if you stayed [there] forever, but you won't even be able to stay beyond the first winter month." He then asked, "What do you want with me?" She replied, "Guru [Padmasambhava] bound me to an oath of allegiance, and hence I have come to look after his Treasure precepts." He inquired further, "[But] the precepts are yonder, and their revealer has passed away. So what are you doing here?" She responded, "Though the precepts are yonder, their meaning is here. Since your good fortune didn't pass away even after you passed away [in your former incarnation], I have come."

[Longchenpa asked], "How many Word Protectors do [these Treasures] have?" She replied, "They have many. In particular, there is glorious Vajra Sow, Black Vitality Accomplishing Mistress, Dark Red Harm Giver (gNod sbyin dmar), and Vajra Turquoise Lamp. In addition, there are the Nine Divine Generation Siblings (*lha rabs mched dgu*), the Twelve Teaching Guardian goddesses (*bstan ma bcu gnyis*), and the Dang deities (*Idang lha*)." [Longchenpa] followed by asking, "How many people should be introduced to the guidance? How many guidances are there to give?" She replied, "There are eleven [guidances; she then specifies a total of twelve]. Since the first three are fraught with danger, you should sequentially introduce three, four, and then five individuals to them. The remaining nine [guidances] should be done for groups of seven [disciples]. Since in general [these Treasures] are fraught with danger, they could pose obstacles to your lifespan. If you give guidance on them only a little, I would be happier." [Longchenpa] asked, "Do you have my Treasure scrolls?" She replied, "They'll come slowly - we'll make sure to remind you!"

Then, after a while, she asked, "Do you remember my granting you a spiritual attainment on your head?" The lama responded, "When I was practicing meditation at Cokla (ICog la), at daybreak one day a dakini with golden mail came. She put a diadem on my head, thereby engendering a wonderful experiential

realization in me. Was that you?" She answered, "Yes!" He asked, "Are you Turquoise Lamp?" She replied, "No, no! I am Vajra Sow! Don't you recognize me?"

[Longchenpa] asked, "When the seminal nuclei (*thig le* in Tibetan; *bindu* in Sanskrit) are explained as primary in this [system], the third empowerment is conferred to one with a sexual partner - how is this?" She replied, "That is intended for engaging those given to desire. It is conferred only mentally for those without desire." He further inquired, "In the context of the introduction [ritual], what is 'settling concepts into the unborn,' and 'settling mentality beyond into the incalculable' all about?" She answered, "What can antidotes do to conceptuality? Introduce them to the intention of the extremely expansive matrix, which is primordially free!"

Longchenpa asked, "Well, then, there are many explaining these Seminal Heart [teachings] - what is the point of myself explaining them as well?" She replied, "It is said that there are such figures as the Karmapa and Rinchen Lingpa giving verbal transmissions (*lung*), but I don't like their explanations. Even a clay pot has a handle (*lung*); how could that be sufficient? Because each [pot] also has an owner, these [teachings] need one [as well]!" Longchenpa further inquired, "How are the Treasures of Rinchen Lingpa?" She replied, "Of course they exist, but they aren't pure or authentic." He then asked, "How is it that I have actualized you without meditating upon you?" She answered, "Am I simply a deity who must be meditated upon, a mantra to be recited, an object of offerings? Don't you understand that I am always present for all yogins and yoginis with intact commitments and realization? I have been in seamless union with you in all your rebirths."

Then [Longchenpa] inquired, "What does the location of Princess [Pemasel]'s wealth that is concealed in Chimphu look like?" She replied, "It is in a flat area in a rock mountain that resembles an offering of divine foods. But the time has not come for it yet." He then asked, "How long will it be until that Treasure of Vimalamitra is extracted?" She answered, "Fifteen years from now, it will be extracted by a white Tantric adept, who will translate them and spread them. In it will be the four profound volumes, which will come into your hands."

Then on the first of the next month, he sent the yogin Ozer Gocha to get the text [of *The Seminal Heart of the Dakinis*]. When he was on the road back, the tip of a rainbow touched and encircled the text. In particular, all the male and female yogins saw it linked to Rimocen by a five-colored rainbow on the night that he arrived at Chukpo ('Phyug po) rock mountain. In a dream of Geshe Lorin (dGe bshes blo rin), a woman told him, "Though he is considering departing to the border area, I must not allow it." On the ninth [Ozer Gocha] escorted the texts [back]. That evening when [Longchenpa] was enjoying the communal feast offerings after performing ritual confessions as part of fulfillment rituals, a dakini descended. Saying, "The lama and disciples have congregated for instruction," she performed many dances.

Then on the tenth, many yogins and yoginis saw an even vaster gathering

of dakinis than before. During the day of the eleventh, when the earlier guidance finished and the yogins and yoginis who were senior students were dispersing, Yeshey Tsogyel descended into one yogini. She gave voice to a lot of dakini sounds. When a grand fire ceremony was done at twilight, she gave a little siddhi [substance] one by one to some people, and then told them, "Don't talk at all [and stay] to one side." [She] opened all the vessels and prepared auspicious connections for the siddhi to descend, and [she] sequentially directed all the siddhi substances to the lama. He said, "Great benefit to living beings and sublime prosperity will ensue [from this]." The siddhi substances were then carried to the lama's quarters, and dawn broke. When the sun rose, and a yogin and yogini went outside to demarcate borders for a strict retreat, she [again] gave voice to various dakini sounds and danced.

Then on the twilight of the twelfth, she was contemplating opening the gateway for these teachings, and performed all the dakini-empowerment symbols with a skull cup, mirror, and vase. At that time, she taught the instructions on the manifestation of all appearances and beings as luminous visions by means of an introduction to the space of the female consort (*yum mkha'*). That night the introduction to the fourth [empowerment] was born in the Lama's heart for the first time. At that time, he asked, "What are these - the stars in the sky and so forth?" She replied, "They are lamas who think they are gods, and so forth." One person thought to himself that she was lying, but that [despite this] whatever she did was permitted [by Longchenpa]. She acted in the same way for all five senses [which were being evoked in this ritual introduction] - in the context of sound, she strung a bell on her staff and beat it on the ground, questioning insistently, "What do you hear it as? What is being said?" Some voiced their doubts [about her] as before. [However], at that time the lama himself obtained the introduction to [the realization that] all phenomena are impossible to pinpoint as such; they appear in the manner that they are imputed.

During this, the yogini was able to read [everyone's] mind, and when they became attached to mental states of faith and so forth, she said, *Phat* to the demon of exultation! *Phat* to the demon of arrogance! *Phat* to the demon of dualistic grasping!" and raised a great commotion. Everyone thus became frightened and panicky. The Lama [however] understood all phenomena as serving to refine his skill in being divested of presumptions and objectification, and knew it as the mirror of realization. That night [he transmitted] the ritual introduction into the way of gazing for the empowerment to primordial gnosis and so forth. Similarly, she danced the next day and gave voice to a lot of dakini sounds. At daybreak the next day, as the lama was sleeping, his mind spaced out into radiant light: upward was the vision of original purity, in between were clusters of Enjoyment Bodies, downward the modes of manifestation of the six types of living beings; and he heard a variety of sounds and languages. He was aware of all of this with his mind, yet it appeared devoid of any coarse [substantiality]. The continuity of his ordinary memory and thought

had become broken in the preceding moment, and he spaced out as if fainting in a state of intense red vision with a blue tinge. Then his awareness projected out into the coarser manifestations of spontaneity, and he spaced out within the upper original purity, the intermediate Enjoyment Bodies, and the lower Emanational Bodies. After a while, the yoginl came, and said, "That previous [experience] was an introduction to remaining without ignorance [as everything] dissolves into internal radiance within primeval original purity. The so-called 'fainting' was a fainting within the state of reality, and hence you must raise [yourself out of it.] The subsequent [experience] was an introduction to the external radiance of emission of Emanational Bodies along with the manner of gradually straying." Then many rainbow colors previously absent manifested all over the sky in forms resembling the individual Word Protectors. When he asked what they were, she replied, "It is those [Word Protectors themselves]." When the sun rose, she gave an introduction to many different symbols and their meanings.

At noon, as the lama was sitting on the throne, [Yeshe] Tsogyel put three layers of garments [on him], and said, "Everyone offer donations and prostrate! Today [you] sons must be diligent!" When each [of the disciples] prostrated and made offerings, she made prayers for immeasurable auspiciousness, and the sky was filled with rainbow colors. At that point she said, "This type of sky appears when a lama who is a spiritual guide who will accomplish vast benefit for others is appointed to his religious seat of authority." When she gave the lama some siddhi [substance], he asked, "What is this?" She replied by saying such things as, "It is an ocean of glorious wealth! It is the spontaneous accomplishment of others' welfare!" He asked, "How many if they are counted?" to which she responded by saying, "innumerable hundreds of thousands." Because of these answers, [Longchenpa] said, "Sublime benefit will come to living beings!" In the afternoon, holding [it] to the five clusters of guests [miniature images of the five buddhas?], she hung a diadem of blue and red silk on the lama's head as a crown, and performed an investiture of him with many auspicious verses. At twilight he made auspicious connections for the emergence of sublime benefit for others. There was an intense commotion of dakinis after the introduction, and so he asked, "Would such [manifestations] accompany the opening up of any other dharma Treasure?"

Just as the sun was about to arise during the subsequent introduction, he saw in the sky above the facing mountain to the west a lion throne with a soft seat of the finest silk, adorned with a backing curtain of delicate lattice designs, decorated with a variety of jewels, and topped by a peacock canopy. The yoginl said, "This is the throne of the great knowledge-holder Master [Padmasambhava]. It is a sign that you should sit on it. Look at it further!" And when he looked, he saw in all directions a great vision of the nature of the five [-colored] lights adorned by seminal nuclei. "It is an apparition of the field of buddha bodies and primordial gnosis," he said.

Then when the lama was sitting on the throne at noon, [she] offered to him

the volumes of *The Seminal Heart of the Dakinis*, a scroll painting of the peaceful and wrathful [buddhas], a Vajrasattva mirror, a [long-] life vase, and a skullcup [filled] with ambrosia. She also had each of the others offer a gift [to Longchenpa]. Having then prostrated and invoked [prayers] of auspiciousness, she implored [him], "I request that you act for the welfare of others." So he performed a permission [ceremony]. That afternoon, the lama said, "I need to compile a guidance course," and opened up the text. One yogini saw the Guru [Padmasambhava] come in the fashion [described in] his mind-evocation [ritual] and dissolve into the lama, while [Yeshe] Tsogyel [appeared] on his right and Turquoise Lamp on his left, dictating the words of the guidance. At that time, he separated out the texts of two guidance courses, and composed them as notes.

In this way, Yeshe Tsogyel descended in actuality for six days, from the first to the thirteenth, and she gave to the holy lama [Longchenpa] Drime Ozer Pema Ledreltsel (Pad ma las 'brel rtsal) the complete threefold introduction to the symbols, meaning, and analogies of *The Seminal Heart of the Dakinis*, along with the seal of entrustment. She then departed to Oddiyana. . . .

[Over the next sixteen days there are further visions of Padmasambhava and other figures. Various women appear who assist in some of the ritual performances, and there are signs of meditative success among several of Longchenpa's disciples.]

At midnight on the twenty-ninth, Namdru Remati descended and said, "Why haven't you given me an offering cake? I've endured hardship for a long time!" Everyone was panic stricken, and [Longchenpa] asked, "Who are you?" She replied, "I am in all phenomena! I am present right up to the top of your head!" He asked again, and she said, "I am Namdru Remati. Since I have been guarding your Treasure, [I] am going to give it to you." He inquired, "What do you have?" and she responded, "I have some clothes along with the Master [Padmasambhava's] religious robe and skull cup. I have come [here] with the intention of conferring these upon you. I showed you a miracle before, but you didn't recognize me. The other day you gave everyone else an excellent communal feast of offering cakes, but there was nothing for me. I was thus ashamed, and felt like stealing everything!" As she said this, she seemed to become quite reduced in presence. He asked, "How many are you?" and she replied, "We are five [in number]." He further inquired, "What are your body color and hand-held accoutrements?" She replied, "I, Namdru Remati, am black and ride on a four-footed mule. My right [hand] holds a sword and my left [hand] holds a bag of disease. Red Mistress of the Desire Realm (Dod khams dbang phyug) rides a three-legged mule, green Vajra Creature-Headed Goddess (rDo rje phra men ma) rides a bear while waving her hand, yellow Vajra Mistress (rDo rje dbang phyug) [rides] a three-legged mule, and white Vajra Action Lamp (rDo rje las sgron ma) [rides] a three-legged mule - all of them hold skulls and

ritual daggers as hand-held accoutrements. I am the Mistress of the Desire Realm holding a saber and bag of disease."

Then for three days she performed many miracles relating to Treasures and caused an intense commotion. Then she descended again on the night [that Longchenpa was transmitting] [teachings on] breakthrough, and displayed miracles. At that point, the lama said,

Having revealed the gateway to the Treasure of radiant light within myself,
 I have no need for Treasures in the cracks of rock mountains.
 If I have Treasures, that's fine; if I don't that's fine, too.
 If I have the right fortune, it's fine; fine, if not.
 There is no point in bartering your boasts of guarding Treasure
 With me, a yogin who has exhausted phenomena, exhausted intellect.

They each responded, and conversed back and forth a few times. Then the time came, and [he] accepted [the duty to] extract [the Treasure], so [that they] were pleased. . . .

[The text proceeds to describe Longchenpa's transmission of further empowerments relating to the Great Perfection visionary techniques, which causes some of these abstract visions to be seen by all in the sky. The figure of Yeshe Tsogyel is sighted again, and predictions are made about Longchenpa's successors.]

Then after a while, when the sun was setting, the lama said, "Since the empowerments and guidances of *The Seminal Heart of the Dakinis* have all been completed [and it is time for the communal feast], be careful tonight!" When he said that, [someone replied], "There is no beer." [The lama said], "The other day the dakinis gave us *siddhis*. Let's call them tonight and see if they come. Pour water in the malt dregs jug and collect [the beer that is thereby produced]. I will bless it." By thus straining out the beer, they obtained one jugful and asked, "Isn't this enough?" He replied, "Since this won't even suffice for what is needed tonight, collect [more]!" They strained more, yet all of it came out as fresh as a first straining of beer from malt. When all the yogins and yoginis were intoxicated, [Longchenpa] said in a playful manner, "This represents my activity of emanating and transforming material things!"

Then Turquoise Lamp requested, "I entreat you to come to my place [that is, White Skull Snow Mountain]." [Longchenpa] pleased her by assenting, saying, "Let me go first," and she departed. Then the Mantra Protectress descended, and when leaving, said, "Something that you will find upsetting is approaching." Namdruma came down after a while, and said "I request that you not depart." The lama refused her, saying "I explain such profound teachings to all of you nonhuman spirits but you don't understand. Being pleased or displeased are [both] a miraculous show of mind. You can come to wherever

I am." He then performed the conferral of an empowerment for meditative contemplation. She said, "That was amazing; I am bound to [your] heart-mind."

He asked her, "Where did you go since the other day?" "I went to the pasture lands to collect a first-fruit tithe offering" she said. In fact, at that time there had occurred considerable disease among the cattle.

Then all the yogins and yoginis offered a mandala of their own clothes, ornaments, and jewels, and made vows to practice [the teachings he had transmitted]. The lama rejoiced, saying "Many will emerge who will strive to be generous and to practice in these teachings of mine." He then taught very profound instructions on entering into the sheath of radiant light. At that time he said, "Since my instructions are very rare in this world, you will be able to accomplish rapidly a body of light."

Then on the thirteenth, when performing the higher empowerment, a previous disciple from eastern Tibet (Khams) upset [Longchenpa] with inappropriate behavior. [Longchenpa] said "Some disciples in these teachings will have impaired religious commitments." He thus performed ritual confessions as part of fulfillment rituals, and departed [for Shukseb]. [Turquoise Lamp's] previous statement that someone would come to upset him just as he was leaving referred to that [situation].

Then, on the road by which he was coming, he performed a communal feast offering at Chukpo (Thyug po) rock, and there were many rainbow-colored lights and portents of the dakinis. Then, on the road along which he was going it was sunny without clouds, and he suffered from the heat. He prayed and at once clouds gathered and a wind, not too strong, arose and he also had a vision of Turquoise Lamp welcoming him. When doing a communal feast at Chilmo (mChil mo), again there were many omens of the dakinis. Then, when he was invited to Shukseb, a dakini descended into one yogini and for six days she gave voice to dakini sounds, and said, "I beseech the lama to come to Oddiyana." During this period, rainbows continuously appeared every day.

Then he built a hermitage on White Skull Snow Mountain [above Shukseb] which he named Oddiyana Fortress, and stayed there. He gave empowerments, guidances, and instructions, and again dakinis spontaneously descended. There were many omens and the sky was filled with rainbows. Periodically his residence was linked to five-colored rainbows in the sky, which everyone witnessed.

Then the one with the deepest spiritual attainments from the empowerment crowd, the yogin Ozer Gocha, requested that he compose a text on the empowerment, guidance, introduction, and so forth for the instructions of *The Seminal Heart of the Dakinis* that had been previously [transmitted], and sponsored a communal feast offering with tormas [for that purpose]. [Longchenpa then] stayed in retreat from the eighth of the first autumn month, and from the tenth began the [composition] of the text. The sky was filled with rainbows and expressions of the dakinis. In his dream, many crowds of supplicating men and women were prostrating [to] and circumambulating [him]. They be-

seeched him, "We are bound to your heart-mind! Please look after us compassionately!" At night there was the sound of dakinis in all directions. Also many unprecedented miraculous displays manifested to the great meditators in the area. The first [autumn] month was like that, and up until the second autumn month the lama spent his time supplicating dakinis and composing the text day and night. Throughout this period, there occurred immeasurably many auspicious connections that would benefit others, dreams, and visionary experiences. Every day, rainbow-colored light swirled above his residence on the col of White Skull Snow Mountain, and many amazing visions of light occurred. Then, on the first of the third autumn month, he performed a celebration for the full completion [of the text entitled *The Seminal Quintessence of the Dakinis*]. All the yogins made prayers of auspiciousness, at which point the sky was filled with rainbows, and inconceivably many auspicious signs occurred. . . .

[The text then concludes with lengthy celebratory verses].

The Luminous Web of Precious Visions is set forth here by Yogi Pema Ledreltsel - the one illuminated by the light rays of the sun, who is the glorious Oddiyana Master [Padmasambhava] - through summarizing a portion of the chronicle of the manifest emergence of the profound Treasures. It is completed.