



Bardo Thödol
Book of Natural Liberation by Hearing
In the Intermediate State
Tibetan Book of the Dead

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PART TWO
**An Elucidation of the Appearance
of the Wrathful Deities
in the Intermediate State of Reality**

INTRODUCTION

Now, the way in which the intermediate state of the wrathful deities arises should be presented.

In the previous intermediate state of the peaceful deities there were seven successive critical or dangerous pathways.

**By receiving introduction to these sequentially,
even though one might not have attained
recognition at one critical pathway,
one should have attained recognition at
another.**

**Those who have achieved liberation in this way
are countless.**

**Yet,
although many have been liberated through
such introductions to the nature of reality,
sentient beings are numerous.
Evil past actions are very potent.**

Negative obscurations are dense:

'Habitual tendencies are long lasting. The cycle of ignorance and bewilderment is inexhaustible and undiminishing

**Despite having received introduction in such detail,
there are still a large number who roam downwards,
not having achieved liberation.**

**Now,
after the invitation of the assembly of the
peaceful deities, and the divine assembly of the
awareness holders and dakinis, has passed,**

**the blazing assembly of the fifty-eight wrathful
blood-drinking deities,
who are a natural transformation of the above
assembly of peaceful deities,
will arise.**

These deities will be very dissimilar in appearance to the peaceful deities.

This is the intermediate state of the wrathful deities,

**and consequently,
as the deceased will be overpowered by fear,
terror or awe,
recognition also becomes more difficult.**

**Uncontrollably,
the awareness continuously faints.**

**But, nevertheless,
if there is even the slightest recognition,
liberation is easy.**

**Should you ask why this is so –
it is because once the awesome, terrifying and
fearful appearances arise,
the awareness does not have the luxury of
distraction.**

The awareness is one-pointedly concentrated.

**If, at this stage,
oral instructions such as those which follow
have not been previously introduced,
or are not now introduced,
even though one's studies may have been
ocean-like,
they will be of no benefit here.**

**Even the preceptors (highest teachers) of monasteries
who uphold the monastic disciplines
and great teachers of dialectics (logic) who have
not been previously introduced (to the teachings)**

**will be bewildered on this occasion,
and fail to attain recognition.**

**Consequently,
they will continue to roam in cyclic existence.**

**This is even more so for ordinary persons:
fleeing in awe, terror and fear,
they will fall into the abyss of lower existences
and suffer miserably.**

**However,
even the most inferior of yogins who has
practiced the way of secret mantra,
will immediately, upon seeing the assembled
blood-drinking deities,**

**recognize them to be meditational deities,
as if meeting old acquaintances.**

**Trusting in them,
the yogin will dissolve indivisibly into the
meditational deities
and attain buddhahood.**

The crucial point is indeed that those in this world who have, prior to death, meditated on the formal description of these blood-drinking buddha-bodies, and also made offerings and praises to them,

**or, at the very least,
have simply seen their painted and sculpted
images,
may recognize the forms that arise here and
attain liberation.**

**Moreover,
when those preceptors who uphold the
monastic disciplines and the teachers of
dialectics who have not been introduced die,**

however great their perseverance was in
religious conduct

or however learned they were in their exegetical
(clarifying) doctrines within the human world,
no auspicious signs, such as major or minor
bone relics or rainbow light, will appear.

**Since they did not take, the way of secret
mantra to heart while they were alive,
but instead depreciated the secret mantra,**

and failed to become acquainted in life with the assembled deities of the way of secret mantra, they will not recognize the luminosities and deities when they arise in the intermediate state.

Suddenly seeing something they had not previously seen, they will develop an attitude of aversion and become hostile.

Consequently they will proceed into lower, existences.

This lack of familiarity and the arousal of aversion

is the reason why auspicious signs, such as major or minor bone relics, and rainbow light,

**do not occur in the case of those upholders of
monastic discipline and dialectical
philosophers,
however excellent they may have been,
who have not taken to heart and experientially
cultivated the way of secret mantra.**

**On the other hand,
practitioners of the way of secret mantra even
if they are the lowest of the low,
however coarsely they behaved in the world,
or however unrefined and uncultured they were,**

**and however unseemly and inelegant their
conduct,
even if they have not been able,
to experientially cultivate the way of secret
mantra successfully,**

**will attain liberation in this instance,
simply because they have not embraced a
mistaken view, and are without doubt,
and are devoted to the secret mantra.**

**Even if such an individual's conduct in,
the human world was inelegant,
at least one auspicious indication,
such as major and minor relics, images or
rainbow light,
will occur at the moment of death.**

**This is because the way of secret mantra carries
an extremely great blessing.**

**Yogins of the way of secret mantra who are
above average capacity,
who have experientially cultivated the
meditations of both the generation and
perfection stages...**

...and practiced the recitation of the heart-mantras, and so on,

do not need to roam downwards this far into the intermediate state of reality.

**As soon as respiration ceases,
they will certainly be invited to the pure realm
of the sky-farers by the awareness holders,
heroes and dakinis.**

As an indication of this, one or more of the following signs will occur:

the sky, will become cloudless;

the body will merge into rainbows and lights;

a shower of flowers will fall;

there will be the fragrance of perfume in the air
and the sound of music in the sky;
while rays of light,
major and minor relics,
images, rainbow lights,
and so forth will appear in the funeral pyre.

**So it is that,
for the upholders of the monastic disciplines
and teachers of dialectics who have not been
previously introduced...**

...and for practitioners of the way of secret
mantra whose commitments have degenerated,
and for all ordinary persons,
**this Great Liberation by Hearing is
indispensable.**

Those serious meditators who have meditated on the practices of the **Great Perfection** and the **Great Seal**

will recognize the inner radiance that dawns during the intermediate state of the time of death and will attain the Buddha-body of Reality.

For these meditators there is absolutely no need to read this **Liberation by Hearing.**

In summary,
if individuals recognize the inner radiance
during the intermediate state of the time of
death,
they will attain the **Buddha-body of Reality.**

If they achieve recognition during this
intermediate state of reality,
when the visions of the Peaceful and Wrathful
Deities arise,
they will attain the **Buddha-body of Perfect
Resource.**

If they achieve recognition during the intermediate state of rebirth, they will attain the **Buddha-body of Emanation.**

**Alternatively, at the very least,
individuals who have heard this teaching
will be born into the higher existences,
where, based on the residual potency of their
past actions,**

**they will again meet with,
and be able to practice, this sacred teaching in
the next life.**

Since this sacred teaching is based on recognition in the intermediate states this **Great Liberation by Hearing** is the teaching whereby buddhahood can be attained without meditation.

**It is the teaching whereby liberation can be attained just by its being heard,
it is the teaching whereby those that are the most negative are led onto the secret path,
it is the teaching whereby essential points of discrimination are instantly grasped,**

and it is the profound teaching whereby perfect buddhahood is instantaneously attained.

Thus, it is impossible for those sentient beings who have been engaged by this teaching to fall into lower existences.

This Liberation by Hearing and the related
Liberation by Wearing should be read aloud
together,

since their conjunction is like a mandala of
gold, inlaid with turquoise ornaments.

MAIN SUBJECT MATTER

Having outlined in this way the essential purpose of the **Liberation by Hearing**, the deceased should now be introduced to the arising of the intermediate state of the wrathful deities.

Again,
you should call the deceased by name, three
times, and say the following words:

*O, Child of Buddha Nature, listen without
distraction.*

Although the intermediate state of the peaceful deities did previously arise within you, you did not recognize it.

So now you have wandered, through the succession of pathways, to here.

*Now, on this eighth day,
the assembly of **wrathful blood-drinking deities**
will arise.*

Recognize them and do not be distracted!

*0, Child of Buddha Nature,
he who is called **Great Glorious Buddha Heruka**
will now arise,
vividly manifesting before you from within your
own brain.*

*His body, blazing in a mass of light,
is dark brown in color,
having three heads,
six arms and four legs, which are firmly set
apart.*

His right face is white, the left red and the central face dark brown.

His nine eyes are fixed in a fearsome wrathful gaze, his eyebrows are quivering like lightning,

*his fangs are bared and gleaming,
and he is laughing loudly, uttering the sounds
of A-lala and Ha-ha, and Shoo 00 –
like whistles, in loud piercing cries.*

*The golden-auburn hair of his head blazes and
rears upward,
sun and moon-discs, black serpents and dry
skulls adorn each of his heads,
and black snakes and fresh skulls form a
garland around his body.*

*In his six hands he holds:
on the right in the first hand, a wheel;
in the middle one, an axe;
and in the last hand a sword;
and to the left, in his first hand, he holds a bell;
in the middle one a ploughshare;
and in the last a skull.*

*The female consort **Buddha-Krodhesvari** is embracing his body,
her right hand clasped around his neck
and her left offering a skull-cup filled with
blood to his mouth.*

*Amidst loud pounding palatal sounds of
'Thuk-chom',
and an echoing roar like the reverberation of
thunder,*

*the fire of pristine cognition blazes from the
fiery indestructible pores of their bodies,
and thus they stand together,
with one leg extended and the other]drawn in,
on a throne supported by garudas.*

Do not be afraid!

Do not be terrified!

And do not be awed!

*Recognize this to be the buddha-body of your
own intrinsic awareness.*

*These are your own meditational deities,
so do not be terrified.*

*This, in reality,
is the **transcendent lord Vairocana and his
consort**, so do not be afraid.*

*Recognition and liberation will occur
simultaneously!*

If, upon hearing these words,
the deceased recognizes the meditational
deities,

he or she will dissolve indivisibly within them
and thereby attain buddhahood in the
Buddha-body of Perfect Resource.

Again, calling the deceased by name,
the introduction should be given with the
following words:

*O, Child of Buddha Nature, listen without
distraction.*

(on the ninth day)

*He who is called the
transcendent lord Vajra Heruka,
of the Vajra family of blood-drinking deities,
will arise from the eastern direction of your
brain and appear before you.*

*His body is dark blue in color,
with three faces,
six arms and four legs, firmly set apart.*

*His body is dark blue in color,
with three faces,
six arms and four legs, firmly set apart.*

*His right face is white,
the left red and the central face is blue.*

*In his six hands he holds:
on the right in the first hand, a vajra;
in the middle one, a skull-cup;
and in the last hand an axe;
and to the left in his first hand, he holds a bell;
in the middle one a skull-cup;
and in the last a ploughshare.*

*The female consort **Vajra-Krodhesvari** is embracing his body, her right hand clasped around his neck and her left offering a skull-cup filled with blood to his mouth.*

Do not be afraid!

Do not be terrified!

And do not be awed!

*Recognize this to be the buddha-body of your
own awareness.*

*These are your own meditational deities,
so do not be terrified.*

*This, in reality,
is the **transcendent lord Vajrasattva and his
consort**, so do not fear them.*

Be devoted to them!

*Recognition and liberation will occur
simultaneously!*

If, upon hearing these words,
the deceased recognizes the meditational
deities,

he or she will dissolve indivisibly with them
and thereby attain buddha hood in the
Buddha-body of Perfect Resource.

**Yet, if those individuals who are greatly
obscured by past actions,
again flee in awe and terror and thereby do not
attain recognition,
then on the tenth day,
the Ratna family of blood-drinking deities will
come to escort them.**

Again, calling the deceased by name, the introduction should be given with the following words:

O, Child of Buddha Nature, Listen without distraction.

*On the tenth day,
he who is called **Ratna Heruka**,
of the Ratna family of blood-drinking deities,
will arise from the southern direction of your
brain and appear before you.*

*His body is dark yellow in color,
with three faces,
six arms and four legs, firmly set apart.*

*His right face is white, the left red
and the central face is a burning dark yellow.*

*In his six hands he holds:
on the right in the first hand, a jewel;
in the middle one, a khatvanga;
and in the last hand a club;
and to the left, in his first hand, he holds a bell;
in the middle one, a skull cup;
and in the last a trident.*

*The female consort **Ratna-Krodhesvari** is embracing his body, her right hand clasped around his neck and her left offering a skull-cup filled with blood to his mouth.*

Do not be afraid!

Do not be terrified!

And do not be awed!

*Recognize this to be the buddha-body of your
own awareness.*

*These are your own meditational deities,
so do not be terrified.*

*This, in reality,
is the **transcendent lord Ratnasambhava and his
consort,**
so be devoted to them!
Recognition and liberation will occur
simultaneously!*

If, upon hearing these words,
the deceased recognizes the meditational
deities,
he or she will dissolve indivisibly with them
and thereby attain buddhahood in the
Buddha-body of Perfect Resource.

**Yet, even after receiving this introduction,
there are those who,
owing to their negative habitual tendencies,
will nevertheless flee in awe and terror.**

**Not recognizing their own meditational deities,
they will perceive them as Yama and thereby the
recognition will not occur.**

**So it is that, on the eleventh day,
the assembled deities of the Padma family of
blood-drinking deities will come to escort the
deceased.**

Again, calling the deceased by name,
the introduction should be given with the
following words:

*O, Child of Buddha Nature; listen without
distraction.*

On the eleventh day, he who is called the transcendent lord Padma Heruka, of the Padma family of blood-drinking deities, will arise from the western direction of your brain, in union with his consort, and appear vividly before you.

*His body is dark red in color, with three faces,
six arms and four legs, firmly set apart.*

*His right face is white,
the left blue, and the central face is dark red.*

*In his six hands he holds:
on the right in the first hand, a lotus;
in the middle one, a khatvanga;
and in the-last hand a mace;

and to the left, in his first hand he holds a bell;
in the middle one, a blood-filled skull;
and in the last a small drum.*

*The female consort **Padma-Krodhesvari** is embracing his body, her right hand clasped around his neck and her left offering a skull-cup filled with blood to his mouth.*

Do not be afraid!

Do not be terrified!

And do not be awed!

Contemplate them with joy.

Recognize this to be the buddha-body of your own awareness.

These are your own meditational deities, so do not be terrified.

*This, in reality, is the transcendent lord
Amitabha and his consort, so be devoted to
them!*

*Recognition and liberation will occur
simultaneously!*

If, upon hearing these words,
the deceased recognizes the meditational
deities,
he or she will dissolve indivisibly with them
and thereby attain buddhahood in the
Buddha-body of Perfect Resource.

**Yet even after receiving this introduction,
there are those who are held back by their
negative habitual tendencies
and there are those who will not recognize their
meditational deities because they have fled in
awe and terror.**

The recognition not having been attained, so it is that, on the twelfth day, the assembled deities of the Karma family of blood-drinking deities, followed by the Gauri, the Pisaci, the Female Gatekeepers, and the Isvari, will come to escort the deceased.

Since an even greater fear and terror will arise if these are not recognized, again, call the deceased by name, and offer the introduction in the following words:

*0, Child of Buddha Nature, listen without distraction. When the twelfth day comes, he who is called the **transcendent lord Karma Heruka**, of the Karma family of blood-drinking deities will arise from the northern direction of your brain, in union with his consort, and appear vividly before you.*

*His body is dark green in color,
with three faces, six arms and four legs, firmly
set apart.*

*His right face is white, the left red,
and the central face is an awesome dark green.*

*In his six hands he holds:
on the right in the first hand a sword;
in the middle one, a khatvanga;
and in the last hand a mace;
and to the left in his first hand he holds a bell;
in the middle one a skull;
and in the last a plough-share.*

*The female consort **Karma-Krodhesvari** is embracing his body,
her right hand clasped around his neck
and her left offering a skull cup filled with
blood to his mouth.*

Do not be afraid!

Do not be terrified!

And do not be awed!

*Recognize this to be the buddha-body of your
own awareness.*

*These are your own meditational deities, so do
not be terrified.*

*This, in reality is the transcendent lord
Amoghasiddhi and his consort, so regard them
with intense devotion!*

*Recognition and liberation will occur
simultaneously!*

If, upon hearing these words,
the deceased recognizes the meditational
deities,
he or she will dissolve indivisibly with them
and thereby attain buddhahood in the
Buddha-body of Perfect Resource.

Based on the spiritual teacher's former oral instruction,

as one recognizes these visionary appearances as the natural expressive power of awareness, naturally manifesting, liberation will occur.

This is like one who recognizes a stuffed lion-skin to be a stuffed lion.

The nature of the stuffed lion is such that if its actual nature is not recognized it will generate awe and terror.

**But, as soon as someone points out what this really is,
the facade is penetrated, and the fear dissolves.**

**Similarly, here,
when the assembly of blood-drinking deities
arises,
with their huge bodies and thick limbs, filling
the whole of space,
the deceased undoubtedly becomes awed and
terrified.**

But, immediately upon hearing this introduction,

the deceased will recognize the appearances to be natural manifestations of actual reality, or to be their own meditational deities.

As this recognition occurs,
the two aspects of inner radiance, **the 'mother
inner radiance'**,
which was formerly introduced through the
spiritual teacher's guidance,

and the **'naturally arising child inner radiance'**,
the experience of which emerges subsequently
as the result of practice, meet together -

**in other words, like meeting an old friend,
the inner radiance that dawns face to face with
oneself does so in a naturally liberating
manner...**

...and one will be naturally freed within the
expanse of **naturally radiant intrinsic
awareness.**

**If this introduction is not received,
even good persons may turn away at this point
and continue to roam within cyclic existence.**

As this occurs then,
the **female wrathful deities**, the **eight Gauri**, and
the **eight Pisaci**,
the **Pisaci** having diverse animal heads,
will emerge from within the brain of the
deceased, and appear before him or her.

Again, calling the deceased by name, the introduction should be given in the following words:

O, Child of Buddha Nature, listen without distraction!

*The **eight Gauri** will now be emerging from within your own brain and appearing before you.*

Do not be afraid!

*From the eastern direction of your brain the
white Gauri,
holding a human corpse as a cudgel in her right
hand and a blood-filled skull in her left hand,
will arise before you. Do not be afraid!*

*From the southern direction, the yellow Cauri,
shooting an arrow from a bow;
from the west, the red Pramoha, holding a
crocodile victory-banner;
and from the north, the black Vetali, holding a
vajra and a blood-filled skull, will arise.*

*From the south-east, the red-yellow Pukkasi,
holding entrails in her right hand and eating
them with her left;*

*from the south-west, the green-black Ghasmari,
holding a blood-filled skull in her left hand,
stirring this with a vajra in her right hand and
drinking awesomely;*

*from the north-west, the white-yellow Candali,
tearing apart the head and body of a bloated
corpse,*

*holding the heart in her right hand and eating
the body with her left;*

*and from the north-east, the blue-black
Smasani,
tearing a head and body apart and eating, will
arise.*

*These eight Gauri,
who are indicative of the eight classes of
consciousness,
will emerge from within your own brain,
and surround the five blood-drinking deities
and their consorts.
Do not be afraid!*

O, Child of Buddha Nature, listen without distraction!

*The **eight Pisaci**, who are indicative of **the sense objects**,*

will emerge, and appear before you, encircling this array.

*From the east, the dark brown Simhamukhi,
lion-headed,*

*her two arms crossed on her breast, carrying a
corpse in her mouth and shaking her mane;*

*from the south, tiger-headed, the red
Vyaghrimukhi,*

*her two arms crossed, snarling and staring with
bulging eyes;*

*from the west, fox-headed, the black
Srgalamukhi,*

*holding a razor in her right hand, and entrails in
her left,*

eating the entrails and licking the blood;

*from the north, wolf-headed, the black-blue
Svanamukhi,*

*tearing apart a corpse with her two arms and
staring with bulging eyes;*

from the south-east, vulture-headed, the white-yellow Grdhramukhi,

carrying a large human corpse over her shoulder and holding a skeleton in both hands;

*from the south-west, kite-headed, the black-red
Kankamukhi,
carrying a large corpse over her shoulders;*

*from the north-west, crow-headed, the black
Kakamukhi,*

*holding a skull in her left hand, a sword in her
right, and eating a human heart and lungs;*

*and from the north-east, owl-headed the blue-black Ulukamukhi,
holding a vajra in her right hand, wielding a sword in her left and eating flesh.*

*These, the **eight Pisaci**,
indicative of **the sense objects**,
will emerge from within your brain and arise
before you,
encircling the five blood-drinking deities and
their consorts.
Do not be afraid!*

*Recognize all that arises as the
natural expressive power of awareness
manifesting naturally.*

*O, Child of Buddha Nature,
the **four Female Gatekeepers** will also emerge
from within your brain and appear before you.
Recognize them!*

*From the eastern direction of your brain the
white horse-headed Ankusa,
a blood-filled skull in her left hand;
from the south, the yellow sow-headed Pasa
holding a noose;*

*from the west, the red lion-headed Sphota,
holding an iron chain;
and from the north, the green snake-headed
Ghanta,
holding a bell, will instantaneously arise.*

*These, the **four Female Gatekeepers**,
will indeed emerge from within your brain and
appear before you.*

*Recognize them, as they are your own
meditational deities!*

*O Child of Buddha Nature,
on the periphery of these thirty deities,
who are the **wrathful Herukas** and their
retinues,*

*the **twenty-eight Isvari** will emerge from within
your brain and appear before you.*

They will have diverse animal heads and bear diverse weapons.

But, do not be afraid!

*Recognize all that arises as the **natural expressive power of awareness**, manifesting naturally.*

*Now, at this most critical point,
remember your spiritual teacher's oral
instructions.*

*O, Child of Buddha Nature, from the east,
the six yogini of the east will emerge from
within your brain and appear before you:*

*the brownish white yak-headed Manuraksasi,
holding a vajra and a skull;*

*the yellowish-white snake-headed Brahmani,
holding a lotus;*

*the greenish white leopard-headed Raudri,
holding a trident;*

*the bluish-white weasel-headed Vaisnavi,
holding a wheel;*

*the reddish-white brown-bear-headed Kaumari,
holding a pike;*

*And the white black-bear-headed Indrani
holding a noose of entrails in her hand.*

Do not be afraid!

O, Child of Buddha Nature!

*From the south, **the six yogini of the south** will emerge from within your brain and appear before you:*

the yellow bat-headed Pingala, holding a razor;
the reddish yellow crocodile-headed Santi,
holding a vase;
the reddish yellow scorpion-headed Amrta,
holding a lotus;

*the whitish yellow hawk-headed Saumi, holding
a vajra;*

*the greenish yellow fox-headed Danti, holding a
cudgel;*

*and the blackish yellow tiger-headed Raksasi
holding a blood-filled skull in her hand.*

Do not be afraid!

*O, Child of Buddha Nature,
from the west, **the six yogini of the west** will
emerge from within your brain and appear
before you:*

*the greenish red vulture-headed Bhaksasi,
holding a club;*

*the red horse-headed Rati, holding a large
torso;*

*the pale red garudas-headed mighty one
Rudhiramadi, consort of Mahabala, holding a
cudgel;*

*the red dog-headed Ekacarini Raksasi, wielding
a vajra-razor in her hand;*

*the red hoopoe-headed Manoharika, firing an
arrow from a bow;*

*and the greenish red deer-headed protectress of
wealth, Siddhikari, consort of Vasuraksita,
holding a vase in her hand.*

Do not be afraid!

*O, Child of Buddha Nature,
from the north, **the six yogini of the north** will
emerge from within your brain and appear
before you:*

*the bluish green snake-headed Vayudevi,
brandishing an ensign;*

*the reddish green ibex-headed Agnayi, holding
a glowing fire-brand;*

*the blackish green sow-headed Varahi, holding
a noose of fangs;*

*the reddish green crow-headed Vajra Camundi,
holding an infant human corpse;
the blackish green elephant-headed Bhujana,
holding a club and drinking blood from a skull;
and the bluish green snake-headed Varunani,
holding a noose of snakes in her hand.*

Do not be afraid!

*O, Child of Buddha Nature,
the four yogini who are the four female
gatekeepers
will emerge from within your brain and appear
before you:*

*from the east, the white cuckoo-headed Vajra
Mahakali, holding an iron hook;*

*from the south, the yellow goat-headed Vajra
Mahachagala, holding a noose;*

from the west, the red lion-headed Vajra Mahakumbhakarni, holding an iron chain; and from the north, the black-green snake-headed Vajra Lambodara, holding a bell in her hand.

*These four yogini, the female gatekeepers,
will indeed emerge from within your brain and
appear before you.*

Do not be afraid!

*Since these **twenty-eight Isvari** emanate naturally from the **expressive power of the naturally arising deities,** which are the **wrathful Herukas** - recognize them now!*

*O, Child of Buddha Nature,
through the **expressive power of emptiness**,
the **Buddha-body of Reality** has arisen as the
peaceful deities, recognize this!*

*Through the expressive power of radiance,
the Buddha-body of Perfect Resource
has arisen as the wrathful deities.
Recognize this!*

*At this time,
when the assembly of the **fifty-eight blood-
drinking deities** manifests from within your
brain,
you should recognize all that arises as the
**naturally arising luminosity of your own
awareness.***

*Then, if recognition occurs,
you will immediately attain **buddhahood,**
inseparable from the blood-drinking deities.*

*O, Child of Buddha Nature,
if even now you do not recognize this reality,
and become afraid and turn away from the
visionary appearances,
you will go on to experience yet further
suffering.*

*If recognition does not occur,
all the blood-drinking deities will be perceived
as **Yama**.*

*You will be overwhelmed by fear, by awe and by
terror at the sight of all the blood-drinking
deities;
and you will faint.*

*Those visionary appearances,
which are natural manifestations of actual
reality,
will seem to have become demons and you will
continue to roam in cyclic existence.*

*But even now, if you are not awed and not terrified,
you will avoid the continued wandering within cyclic existence.*

*O, Child of Buddha Nature,
the largest of the buddha-bodies of the
peaceful and Wrathful Deities will be as vast as
the sky;*

the medium ones will be the size of Mount Sumeru;

and even the smallest will be the size of eighteen of our bodies standing one above the other.

Do not be afraid! All phenomenal existence is now arising as luminosities and buddha-bodies.

*By recognizing all the present visionary
appearances to be the natural luminosity of
your own intrinsic awareness,
manifesting as lights and buddha-bodies,*

*you will dissolve inseparably within the lights
and Buddha- bodies and buddhahood will be
attained.*

*O, Child of Buddha Nature,
whatever fearsome and terrifying apparitions
appear to you now,
recognize them to be natural manifestations of
actual reality.
Do not be afraid!*

*Recognize these appearance as inner radiance,
your own natural luminosity.*

*Upon recognition,
you will undoubtedly attain buddhahood,
right now.*

*That which is called 'instantaneous perfect buddhahood' will occur at this very moment.
Remember this, and hold it in your mind!*

*O, Child of Buddha Nature,
if you do not recognize the visionary
appearances now, and continue to be afraid,
then all the **Buddha-bodies of the peaceful
deities**
will arise in the form of **Mahakala;***

*all the **buddha-bodies of the wrathful deities**
will arise in the form of **Yama Dharmaraja**;
and then all of your perceptions will turn into
malevolent forces.*

*In this way,
you will continue to wander in cyclic existence.*

*O, Child of Buddha Nature,
if you do not recognize the present appearances
as natural manifestations of actual reality,
even though you may have been learned in all
the sutras and tantras, which form the
Buddha's transmitted precepts,*

*and even though you may have practiced these
doctrines for an aeon,
buddhahood will not be attained.*

Yet, if you recognize now the visionary appearances that are manifesting naturally, then, through the understanding of a single essential point, and through the understanding of a single word, you will attain buddhahood.

*If, immediately after death,
you do not recognize the appearances which
manifest naturally,
these appearances will eventually arise during
the intermediate state of reality,
in the forms of **Yama Dharmaraja**.*

*The largest form assumed by **Yama Dharmaraja**
is as vast as space; t
he medium form,
the size of **Mount Sumeru**,
filling this world-system.*

*The largest form assumed by **Yama Dharmaraja**
is as vast as space;*

*the medium form, the size of **Mount Sumeru**,
filling this world-system.*

*Thus, **Yama Dharmaraja** will appear,
his upper teeth biting into his lower lip,
his eyes glassy, his hair tied up on the crown of
his head,
his belly bulging and his neck thin,
brandishing in his hand the wooden slate
documenting past actions -*

*his mouth echoing with the cries of 'strike!', and
'kill!' –*

he is drinking brains,

severing heads and ripping out internal organs.

In this way,

it will appear as if his form fills the entire world.

*O, Child of Buddha Nature,
when such visions arise, do not be afraid or
terrified.*

*Your body is a mental body, formed of habitual
tendencies.*

*Therefore, even if you are slain and cut into
pieces, you will not die.*

*You are, in reality, a natural form of emptiness,
so there is no need to be afraid.*

*The forms of **Yama Dharmaraja** arise, too,
from the natural luminosity of your own
intrinsic awareness.*

They have no material substance.

Emptiness cannot be harmed by emptiness.

*Clearly determine now that,
other than arising from the natural expressive
power of your own awareness,
whatever seems to appear to you externally -*

*the Peaceful and Wrathful Deities,
the blood-drinking Herukas,
the diverse animal-headed deities,
the rainbow lights,
the frightening forms of Yama, etc. –
these are all without substantial existence.*

*If this is successfully determined,
fear and terror will be liberated naturally, just
where it is.*

*You will dissolve inseparably with the visionary
appearances
and buddhahood will be attained.*

Upon recognizing the visionary appearances in this way, be fervently devoted, and think:

'These are my meditational deities.

They have come to escort me on the dangerous pathway of the intermediate state.

I take refuge in them.'

Remember the Three Precious Jewels!

Remember your meditational deity, whichever it may be!

Call to your meditational deity by name and pray with the following words:

'I am roaming in the intermediate state - come quickly to rescue me!

Hold me in your compassion,

O precious meditational deity!'

*Call to your spiritual teacher, by name,
and pray with the following words:*

*'I am roaming in the intermediate state.
Rescue me!*

Do not let your compassion forsake me!'

*Pray devotedly, yet again,
to the assembled blood-drinking deities and
recite this aspirational prayer:*

*O, as roam in cyclic existence,
driven by deep-seated habitual tendencies,
May the assembly of male Peaceful and
Wrathful Deities transcendent lords,
draw me forward,*

*Leading me on the path of radiant light,
Through which all awesome and terrifying
perceptions are left behind.*

*May the assembly of the wrathful female deities,
Dhatvisvari and so forth,
support me from behind,
And, thus encircled, may I be rescued
From the fearsome passageway of the
intermediate state
And be escorted to the level of an utterly perfect
buddha.*

*Now, when I roam alone,
separated from my loved ones,
And myriad images of emptiness arise, naturally
manifesting*

*May the buddhas quickly release the power of
their compassion,
And may the fear of the awesome and terrifying
intermediate state be annulled.*

*When the five radiant lights of pristine cognition
dawn,*

*May I recognize them as my own nature,
without awe and without terror,*

And as the manifold forms of the Peaceful and Wrathful Deities arise,

May I be fearlessly confident and recognize the characteristics of the intermediate state.

*When I experience suffering as the result of
negative past actions,*

*May the meditational deities dispel all such
misery,*

*And as the natural sound of reality reverberates
like a thousand peals of thunder,*

*May all sounds be heard as the resonance of the
Six Syllables;*

OM MA NI PAD ME HUM

*When I am driven on by past actions,
unable to find a refuge,
May the Great Compassionate One,
Mahakarunika, protect me,*

*And as I experience the suffering of habitual
tendencies and past actions,
May the meditative stabilities of inner radiance
and bliss naturally arise.*

*May the fields of the five elements not rise up as
a hostile force,*

*And may I see them as the fields of the five
enlightened families!*

Recite this aspirational prayer with deep devotion. It is very important.

*As all fear and terror dissolve,
you will assuredly attain buddhahood in the
Buddha-body of Perfect Resource –
so do not be distracted!*

The above introduction should be given three or up to seven times.

Even if the negativity of the deceased is very great

and even if the inheritance of past actions is very bad,

it is impossible for liberation not to occur - if there is recognition.

Yet, regardless of how often these teachings are given,

if recognition does not occur,

the deceased will necessarily roam into the intermediate state of rebirth.

The introduction to that state is presented below, in detail.

**CONCLUSION of the
INTRODUCTION to the
INTERMEDIATE STATE of the
TIME OF DEATH
and
THE INTERMEDIATE STATE OF REALITY**

Since it is generally the case that one will experience bewilderment at the time of death, this Liberation by Hearing is indispensable, whatever one's degree of familiarity with meditative practices.

In the case of those who have considerable familiarity with meditative experience, the recognition of the nature of reality can arise instantly, as soon as awareness separates from the material body.

**Therefore,
it is essential to cultivate this experience of
reality during one's lifetime**

**Those who have been introduced to the nature
of awareness, directly,
and who have cultivated this aspect of
meditative experience during their lifetime,**

**will have the greatest ability
during the intermediate state of the time of
death
when the inner radiance arises.**

**Additionally,
those who during their lifetime emphasized
meditation on the deity,
according to the generation and perfection
stages of the way of secret mantra,**

**will have the greatest ability during the
intermediate state of reality,
when the visions of the Peaceful and Wrathful
Deities arise.**

**Given the above,
it is extremely important to train the mind
particularly in this Liberation by Hearing,
while one is alive.
It should be embraced.
It should be read aloud.**

**It should be thoroughly comprehended.
It should be taken to heart perfectly.
It should be read aloud three times a day,
without fail.**

**Its words and meaning should be so clearly
impressed on the mind that,
even were one to be pursued by a hundred
assassins,
its text and meaning would not be forgotten.**

This being called the **Great Liberation by Hearing,**
even those who have committed the five
inexpiable crimes will attain liberation upon
hearing a recitation of its words.

**Therefore,
it should be read aloud in public places.
It should be propagated.**

Since the awareness becomes many times clearer during the intermediate state, even if this teaching is sensed, as now, only once,

**and even if its meaning is not understood,
it will be remembered at the time of death,
without a single word being forgotten.**

Therefore it should be read aloud to the ears of all during their lifetime.

It should be read aloud across the pillows of all who are sick.

It should be read aloud in the presence of all the bodies of the dead.

It should be propagated, far and wide.

To meet with this teaching is a great good fortune.

Except for those who have gathered the accumulations of merit and pristine cognition, and purified their obscurations, it is difficult to encounter.

**Yet, once it is heard,
liberation can be achieved just by avoiding a
mistaken view.**

Therefore it should be greatly cherished.

It is the essence of all teachings.

This completes the introduction to the intermediate state of reality, which forms part of **the Great Liberation by Hearing in the Intermediate States**, the teaching on the intermediate states which liberates just by being heard, or just by being seen.

COLOPHON

This teaching was brought forth in secret by the accomplished master **Karma Lingpa**, the eldest son of the accomplished master Nyinda Sangye, from the sacred place of Mount Gampodar, which resembles a dancing god, and is located on the banks of the river Serden.

The master **Karma Lingpa** entrusted its transmitted precepts and authorization to his son, Choje Lingpa.

The succession fell in turn to his son Guru Suryacandra, (Lama Nyinda), and in his presence, I Gaganadharmasamudra (Namka Chokyi Gyatso) received it with devotion.