

(22) Then, while subsiding into sleep, let all visible and audible things subside into thyself.

(23) Then, let thyself subside into the four-petalled lotus.

(24) Then, when sleep is overpowering thee, let all these experiences subside into the front  $\check{A}H$ ; then that into the right  $N\check{U}$ ; then that into the rear  $T\check{A}$ ; then that into the left  $R\check{A}$ ; then that into the  $H\check{U}M$  at the centre; then the vowel-sign of the  $H\check{U}M$  into the  $H\check{A}$  parts of the  $H\check{U}M$ ; then these into the surmounting crescent-sign of the  $H\check{U}M$ ; then that into the circle [or dot] above it; and then that into the flame-like flourish above the circle [or dot].<sup>1</sup>

(25) When cognition of this visualization is fading, then think that thou art profoundly sleeping in the state of the Clear Light. By so doing one entereth into the state of the *yoga* of the retrospective analysis [or meditation].<sup>2</sup>

(26) Or one may concentrate the mind upon the series of syllables taken together— $\check{A}H$ ,  $N\check{U}$ ,  $T\check{A}$ ,  $R\check{A}$ ,  $H\check{U}M$ —which is called the Complete Cognition.

(27) While thus meditating, in the interval between the face the North. Thus the  $H\check{U}M$  will be at the Centre; the  $\check{A}H$ , to the North; the  $N\check{U}$ , to the East; the  $T\check{A}$ , to the South; and the  $R\check{A}$  to the West.

<sup>1</sup> In order to understand these directions, an analysis should be made of the syllable  $H\check{U}M$ , written in Tibetan in its long form as above, or as depicted, greatly enlarged, in the Illustration facing p. 334. The vowel-sign, resembling a numeral 6 slightly tilted to the left, is at the bottom. The  $Ha$  parts are those between the vowel-sign and the surmounting crescent-sign. Above the crescent-sign is the small circle (or dot) with its flame-like flourish, whence the visualization dissolves into the Voidness. Each of these divisions of the syllable symbolize different esoteric principles and teachings, as Book VI, following, makes clear. This practice is intended to attune the *yogin* to an exalted state of mind in which to enter into the dream-state.

Should the Occidental student in the application of these *yogic* teachings prefer to employ the transliterated, or anglicized, forms, of the syllabic visualizations prescribed, he may here visualize the three letters of the  $H\check{U}M$  as being arranged in a perpendicular line, the  $H$  uppermost, the  $\check{U}$  underneath the  $H$ , and the  $M$  at the bottom, and above the  $H$  a crescent, and above the crescent an acuminate circle (or dot) tapering into flame. Then he is to apply the textual directions accordingly, so that the  $M$  is absorbed into the  $\check{U}$ , then that into the  $H$ , then that into the crescent, then that into the circle (or dot), and then that into the flame-like flourish. (See p. 340<sup>3</sup>.)

<sup>2</sup> The *yogin's* aim is to be able to pass from the waking-state to the sleeping-state, or vice versa, with unbroken continuity of consciousness, so that he will be fully self-conscious and enjoy complete memory of everything seen and experienced in both states while in either state.

waking-state and the sleeping-state, one experienceth the Light.<sup>1</sup>

(28) The state of being overcome with sleep is known as the Ignition.

(29) The state of falling asleep is known as the Attainment.<sup>2</sup>

(30) The dawning of the Clear Light in deep sleep is the Mother Clear Light.

(31) By making the process of the gradual subsidence into sleep the basis [of the practice], while keeping the mind free of thought (in which mental condition the gradual subsidence appeareth as the Voidness), the Offspring Clear Light dawneth.<sup>3</sup>

(32) The recognizing of the Fundamental [or Mother] Clear Light by that method, being like the recognizing of a person whom one had previously known, is called 'Blending of the Clear Light of the Mother and Son'.<sup>4</sup>

#### [PRACTICE 3: BLENDING THE NATURE OF THE CLEAR LIGHT WITH THE PATH DURING THE AFTER-DEATH STATE]

(33) The third practice, Blending the Nature of the Clear Light with the Path during the After-Death State, is ex-

<sup>1</sup> Here, again, a literal rendering (e.g. 'In that way, the non-sleeping-state [is] the Light,') would be for English readers, unacquainted with the *guru's* amplifications of the text, ambiguous, if not meaningless. This non-sleeping-state is that state which demarcates the world of waking-experiences from that of sleeping- (or dream)-experiences, wherein, if the meditation be successful, the *yogin* realizes an ecstatic clearness of perception called the Light. It dawns only when the *yogin* has succeeded in maintaining continuity of consciousness throughout the waking- and sleeping-states and the state intervening between them.

<sup>2</sup> The Light is the dawning of the dream-state; the Ignition, the continuance of the dream-state; and the Attainment, the result, or dream, attained.

<sup>3</sup> Here, as compared with the passage above, the psychic process is reversed, and the dawning of the Offspring Clear Light precedes that of the Mother Clear Light. It is in the condition when one is gradually passing into the sleep-state that the Offspring Light is realized, and the Mother Clear Light dawns as one is merging into deep sleep as stated in the preceding paragraph.

<sup>4</sup> This recognizing is the third stage in the *yogic* results to be attained; and in the *Bardo* Doctrine, which follows, in the next Chapter, it is classified as the Fourth Clear Light, because it normally dawns after death in a fourth condition, or dimension.

pounded in the Doctrine of the After-Death State, which followeth.

[PART III: THE RESULTANT CLEAR LIGHT]

(34) Of the third part, the Resultant Clear Light, it hath been said :

‘The pure illusory body,<sup>1</sup> endowed with the knowledge of the Clear Light, which springeth forth from the State of the Clear Light like unto a fish leaping forth from water, or the Form of Vajra-Dhāra,<sup>2</sup> which riseth up as one doth upon awakening from sleep, symbolizeth the blending of the Clear Light of the Mother and Son, resulting from training, which hath as foundation the teachings and the student who studieth the teachings’.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This pure illusory body is that of the *yogin*'s tutelary deity. The number of deities from which the *yogin* may make choice in selecting his protecting deity is very great. But, as a rule, he will have chosen one belonging to the sect or school in which he has been reared, very much after the manner of one of the early Christian *yogins* who dwelt in the deserts of Egypt and looked to some saint renowned for sanctity to serve as the tutelary, or spiritual protector, like unto a guardian angel.

<sup>2</sup> Vajra-Dhāra, the Divine *Guru*, the Celestial Buddha, in Whom the Esoteric Lore contained in these Six Doctrines is believed to have had origin, is sometimes chosen as the tutelary, especially by a *yogin* who aspires to the Highest Goal.

<sup>3</sup> A parallel passage, which helps to elucidate our own passage, occurs in the very occult Tibetan treatise entitled *Bsre-hpho* (pron. *Se-pho*), on the second half of folio 60, which belonged to the late Lāma Kazi Dawa-Samdup, as follows :

‘Even as from the surface of a clear pool  
There suddenly springeth forth a fish,  
So also from the All-Voidness and Clearness  
Cometh forth the Web of Miraculous Illusion,  
The comprehending of which is *Nirvāna* ;  
And to attain this comprehension the disciple hath striven.’

In some of the esoteric lore of Tibet the human body is likened to an earthen-pot ; and the Ray of the Eternal within, that innate consciousness of Reality, ‘the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world’, the Light on the Path, is called the Clear Light. And the *guru*'s efforts are said to be directed to the one end of shattering the earthen-pot so that there shall remain only the Clear Light shining in the Voidness.

The conscious realization of the Mother and Son Clear Lights, as here referred to in our text, results from the state of *dhyāna* having been rightly attained, in accordance with the *yogic* instructions given. The perceiving in-

(35) This realization marketh the degree of spiritual perfection attained, called, among the Twelve Degrees, the Greatly Rejoicing<sup>1</sup> Degree, of which it hath been said :

‘When illusory forms contact the Formless, Knowledge dawneth,<sup>2</sup>

And one gaineth understanding of the Pervading and of the Real,<sup>3</sup>

And mastery of the Very Bright and of the Enduring,<sup>4</sup> and of the *Siddhi* of Transformation ;<sup>5</sup>

tellekt, the awakened ‘Knower’, which thereby springs forth, symbolizes the amalgamation of the two Lights, and is the result of having trodden this part of the Path successfully.

<sup>1</sup> Text : *Sa-rab-tu-dgah-va* (pron. *Sa-rab-tu-ga-wa*) : Skt. *Pramudita* : ‘Greatly Rejoicing’, referring to a state of blissfulness resulting from mental illumination as to the nature of Reality ; and from it no relapse into the unenlightened view concerning man and the Universe is possible. It is thus the ‘Greatly Rejoicing’, because all wrong knowledge about mind and matter has been for ever transcended. According to the Buddhist *Sūtras*, there are ten degrees of perfection, and the Buddha Shākya Muni has gone beyond all of them. According to the Buddhist *Tantras*, there are sixteen degrees, or six more, and the Buddha Shākya Muni is now in the sixteenth. Samanta Bhadra (Tib. *Kiinto-zang-po*), the Ādi-Buddha of the Nīngmapas (otherwise known as the ‘Red Caps’) is also in the sixteenth ; and the Buddha Vajra-Dhāra, in the thirteenth. The first ten of these degrees of perfection, or stages attained on the Path, have been enumerated by the late Csoma de Körös (in his Sanskrit-Tibetan-English Vocabulary, i. 11) as follows : (1) the Greatly Rejoicing [of Great Joy] : Skt. *Pramudita* ; (2) the Immaculate : Skt. *Vimala* ; (3) Making [or Causing] Light : Skt. *Prabhākara* ; (4) Light [or Ray] Diffusing : Skt. *Archishmati* ; (5) Very Difficult to Practise [or conquer] : Skt. *Sudurjaya* ; (6) Eminent [or Excellent] : Skt. *Abhimukhin* ; (7) Far Advanced : Skt. *Dūrangama* ; (8) Immovable : Skt. *Achala* ; (9) Upright Understanding [or Fine Discerning Mind] : Skt. *Sādhumati* ; and (10) Cloud of Virtue : Skt. *Dharmamegha*.

<sup>2</sup> This contacting of the Formless by illusory forms implies that they themselves become the Formless ; Form (Skt. *Rūpa*) becomes Non-Form (Skt. *Arūpa*), and the *yogin* attains to the first degree of Right Knowledge, in virtue of actually realizing the unsubstantiality of all things shaped and formed.

<sup>3</sup> The Pervading is *Karma*, which is so called because it pervades, or governs, each of the Six States of Existence. The Real is Real Knowledge, or *Nirvāna* ; It emancipates from all states of *sangsaric* existence and from all *karmic* propensities and attachments, which are the causes of rebirth.

<sup>4</sup> The Very Bright is the Clear Light ; and the Enduring is the Eternal, or Mind.

<sup>5</sup> *Siddhi* literally means ‘accomplishment’ or ‘fruition of *yogic* meditation’ ; but here it more particularly refers to the *yogically*-acquired supernormal powers of assuming any shape or form, large or small, visible or invisible.

And these are known as the Eight Supreme Endowments.<sup>1</sup>

(36) Of such is the state of the perfect Buddhahood of the Great Dorje-Chang [or Vajra-Dhāra], which resulteth from the Untaught Wisdom, wherein the teaching and the taught end [the Goal having been attained].

(37) Of this it hath been said :

‘The enjoyment of the full power of the Principles of the Divine Body, of the Divine Speech, And of the Divine Mind, and of the *Siddhi* of Transformation, As they, all alike, manifest themselves in the “Moving” and the “Non-Moving”, Satisfying every desire, and endowed with all virtues, Constitute the Eight Almighty Powers, which are the Fruit of *Yoga*.’<sup>2</sup>

[Here endeth The Doctrine of the Clear Light.]

#### [CHAPTER V: THE DOCTRINE OF THE AFTER-DEATH STATE]

(1) The fifth doctrine, the *Bardo*, consisteth of these three parts : first, Realizing<sup>3</sup> the State of the Clear Light of the

<sup>1</sup> Upon analysis of these four abstruse verses, we find that the Eight Supreme Endowments are : (1) the Merging of Form into Non-Form, by illusory forms contacting the Formless ; (2) the resultant Knowledge of the non-reality of objectivity ; (3) Understanding of the Pervading, or *Karma*, thereby attaining freedom from worldly existence ; (4) Understanding of the Real, or *Nirvāna* ; (5) Realization of the Very Bright, or Clear Light ; (6) Realization of the Enduring, or Eternal, as Mind ; (7) the mastery over this state of realization ; and (8) the *Siddhi* of Transformation.

<sup>2</sup> The matter of these five verses in the original Tibetan is so excessively elliptical and enigmatical that a very free rendering was found necessary. The Tibetan of the parallel stanza of paragraph 35 is similarly abstruse. To aid in producing an intelligible rendering of them, similar passages were consulted in the *Se-pho*.

Here, again, analysis of the verses shows the Eight Almighty Powers, which are the Fruit of *Yoga*, to be : (1) the Power of the Divine, or *Bodhic*, Body, (2) of the Divine Speech and (3) Mind, (4) of the *Siddhi* of Transformation, (5) of the manifestation of these in the ‘Moving’ as the moving force of the *Sangsāra*, and (6) of their manifestation in the ‘Non-Moving’, or *Nirvāna*, as the antithesis of the *Sangsāra* ; (7) the satisfying, or quenching, of every *sangsāric* desire ; and (8) the endowment with all divine virtues.

<sup>3</sup> In this context ‘realizing’ implies, in addition to its ordinary meaning, the

*Dharma-Kāya* [or Divine Body of Truth] while in the *Bardo* ; second, Realizing the State of the *Sambhoga-Kāya* [or Divine Body of Perfect Endowment] while in the *Bardo* ; third, Realizing the State of the *Nirmāṇa-Kāya* [or Divine Body of Incarnation] while in the *Bardo*,<sup>1</sup> [or the Taking Birth as a *Tulku*].<sup>2</sup>

#### [PART I: REALIZING THE STATE OF THE CLEAR LIGHT OF THE DHARMA-KĀYA WHILE IN THE BARDO]

(2) The first, Realizing the State of the Clear Light of the *Dharma-Kāya* while in the *Bardo*, hath been spoken of as followeth :

‘Light subside and the Gross subside,<sup>3</sup>  
Thoughts subside and the Subtle<sup>4</sup> subside ;  
After the subsidence cometh the at-homeness.

making right use of such *yogic* training as the deceased may have had in the human world prior to death.

<sup>1</sup> For the ordinary, not fully enlightened *yogin*, the first of these after-death realizations consists of an ecstatic glimpse of the Ultimate Truth ; the second, of a limited experiencing of *Bodhisattvic* blissfulness ; the third, of the attaining of a divinely endowed rebirth on Earth.

<sup>2</sup> Text : *Bsprul-shu* (pron. *Tul-ku*), i.e. one divinely incarnated, like the Dalai Lāma, who is the *Tulku* of Chenrāzi (Skt. *Avalokiteshvara*, ‘The One Looking Down [in Pity]’, the embodiment of mercy, or compassion, known as ‘The Great Pitier’) ; or like the Tashi Lāma, who is the *Tulku* of Wodpagmed (Skt. *Amitābha*, ‘He of Boundless Light’), the Buddha Who Illuminates, or Enlightens. The esoteric interpretation of the word *Avalokiteshvara*, as given by my friend Mr. E. T. Sturdy (see Preface, p. ix), is as follows : ‘*Avalokita* = seen, and *Īshvara* = Lord ; so that *Avalokiteshvara* is the Lord Who is seen [within]. This rendering is more in keeping with what the Sanskrit implies than the more popular rendering given above’. *Avalokiteshvara* is, in this sense, synonymous with the *Christos* within.

<sup>3</sup> The Light here is the ordinary light of the world which fades from perception at the time of death. The Gross is the physical body and its breathing.

<sup>4</sup> The Subtle is the human consciousness which temporarily ceases to function, there being in the case of the normal person, or of one who has not been *yogically* developed before dying, a period of unconsciousness, lasting for about three and one-half (or four) days, immediately after the completion of the death-process. When the deceased recovers consciousness, at the expiration of this period, he begins to feel at home in the *Bardo*, having passed through, while unconscious, the state preceding birth into the after-death world, which parallels the embryonic state preceding birth from the *Bardo* into the human world.

Then the Primal Clear Light dawneth,  
And after that dawn the Two Bodies as One.<sup>1</sup>

'Of the Taught and Untaught Knowledge,  
The Merging of the Taught into the Untaught  
Hath been called the Attaining of the Fruit.'

(3) Death precedeth the *Bardo*.

(4) An unclouded sky of autumn symbolizeth the *Bardo*.

(5) The Light, the Ignition, and the Attainment at the moment of death define the bounds of the *Bardo*.<sup>2</sup>

(6) The recognizing of the Clear Light is to be accomplished in the interval between the cessation of consciousness in this world and the arising of consciousness in the after-death state; and the Clear Light to be utilized on the Path by applying the select teachings for combining into one the Path and the True State of the mind.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Mother and Offspring Clear Light merge as One, in the Divine Body of Perfect Endowment, the *Sambhoga-Kāya*, which symbolizes their at-onement.

<sup>2</sup> The Light symbolizes the super-normal clearness of visual power which comes as the first conscious experience of the after-death state; the duration of this initial experience is called the Ignition, for it symbolizes the igniting, or arousing, of the innate divine consciousness by the Light; and the Attainment refers to the spiritual benefit attained by experiencing death. The degree of the Attainment depends wholly upon the *karma* of the deceased. The serious reader should not fail to refer to *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, which contains a comprehensive and authoritative commentary on our present text.

<sup>3</sup> The spiritual development of the *yogin* should have been so directed by the *guru's* select teachings that at the moment of death he will possess the *yogic* power to pass from this world to the after-death state without break in the continuity of his consciousness. By this means, escaping the unconsciousness experienced by the person who dies without such *yogic* training, he will be enabled to combine the True State of the mind, as experienced in the *samādhi* quiescence (to which he had become accustomed while in the body and in which he abides as he is dying) with the True State of the mind as it is likewise ecstatically experienced by the master of *yoga* in the condition of realizing the Clear Light in the *Bardo*. In virtue of this great accomplishment, he will be able to know, as a matter of actual super-normal realization, that both the state of incarnate existence in the human world and the state of discarnate existence in the *Bardo* world are essentially alike, both being transitory and illusory; and that the True State of the mind, being independent of both the two *sangsa* states, is, unlike them, neither transitory nor illusory, and that it is the State of the Abiding, the Real, the Unmade *Nirvāṇa*. To attain to this supreme realization is to attain to Buddhahood.

[THE *BARDO* OF THE MOMENTS OF DEATH]

(7) In other words, when the vital-force of the five senses, including sight, sinketh inwards, concomitantly the cognition of form and all of objective things sinketh inwards. This is known as the Sinking of the Light<sup>1</sup> [or of the Perception of Things seen in the Light of this World].

(8) Then earth sinketh into water: the body loseth its prop [or power of coherence as a unit of organic matter].

(9) Then water sinketh into fire: the mouth and nose become dry and parched.

(10) Then fire sinketh into air [as vital-force]: warmth disappeareth [from the body].

(11) Then air [as vital-force] sinketh into consciousness [or ether].<sup>2</sup>

(12) Thereupon, those of evil *karma* experience the pangs of the moment of death.

(13) And those who have performed good deeds, the *devas* and *gurus* and the *dākinīs* come to welcome.<sup>3</sup>

(14) With the cessation of the last expiration cometh the subsidence of the Gross.

(15) Then during the first part of the time of the duration [i.e. between the cessation of the breathing and the passing out of the consciousness] of the internal breath [or vitality] cometh the stages of the subsidence of cognition. The signs

<sup>1</sup> Text: *snang-va* (pron. *nang-wa*) = 'light', also 'that seen in the light'. In Tibetan there is but this one word to express similar yet different concepts, such as (a) light in its ordinary aspect, (b) things seen by means of the light, and (c) things mentally seen by the mind's eye. The atmosphere, too, as the medium of the transmission of light, is known as *nangwa*. For the Clear Light itself there is the technical term *Hod-gsal* (*Öd-sal*).

<sup>2</sup> These passages further illustrate the well-known philosophical conception common to India, as to classical Greece, that the human body is a combination of the five elements, as named. In our present text, earth represents the fleshy parts of the body and the bones; water, the blood and other fluids; fire, the animal heat; air, the vital-forces; and ether, the consciousness. (Cf. pp. 126<sup>t</sup>, 347.)

<sup>3</sup> The divine, or superhuman, *gurus* have the power of so directing the after-death progression of the disciple, who happens not to be sufficiently developed spiritually to direct it himself, that he is enabled to take birth without undue delay in a family which will afford him the conditions suitable for continuing his treading of the Path from the point where it was stopped by death.

externally perceived [by the dying person] resemble the shining of the Moon; those internally perceived resemble [mentally obscuring] smokiness. This is the time of the dawning of the light [of the moment of death].<sup>1</sup>

(16) These signs merge into the Ignition [i.e. the period of the duration of the experiences of the moment of death]. The thirty-three impulses of anger<sup>2</sup> cease; the external sign of this being like the shining of the Sun, the internal sign being like apparitional fire-flies. This is the time of the Ignition.

(17) The time of the Ignition sinketh into the time of the Immediate Attainment. The forty impulses of desire cease; the external sign of this being like a streak of darkness or *Rāhu*<sup>3</sup> [eclipsing the Sun], the internal sign being like the light of a lamp enclosed in a semi-opaque vessel. These apparitional appearances signify the [stage of the moment of death known as the] Immediate Attainment.

(18) The state of the Immediate Attainment mergeth into the state of the Clear Light. The seven impulses of Ignorance<sup>4</sup> cease. Then cometh the subsiding of the Subtle. The external signs resemble the glimmer of twilight; the internal signs resemble an autumn sky without a cloud. This is the fourth period of the Clear Light.<sup>5</sup>

(19) The initial experiences coincident with the process of

<sup>1</sup> The dying person perceives the external signs as a white moonlight-like radiance round about him. Some Europeans of more than average spirituality are recorded as having uttered before the final consummation of the death-process such ecstatic exclamations as, 'Light!' 'More Light!', 'Now the Light dawns!' and some, as a consequence, not knowing the nature of the Light, have thought themselves entering into Heaven. This phenomenon arises from the psycho-physical changes in the faculty of sight brought about by the death-process. Similarly, the internal signs, the mentally beclouding or smoky apparitional appearances, are produced by the same psycho-physical changes affecting the mentality.

<sup>2</sup> These, and the forty impulses mentioned below, represent the various aspects into which anger and desire are divided by the philosophy of the Great Perfectionist School of Padma Sambhava.

<sup>3</sup> *Rāhu* (or the Dragon's Head) is a mythological representation of the Moon when causing an eclipse of the Sun.

<sup>4</sup> That is, mentally obscuring ignorance, known in Sanskrit as *Avidyā*.

<sup>5</sup> Little by little, through four stages, the Clear Light has been approached; and this makes our present *Bardo* Doctrine a continuation of the Doctrine of the Clear Light.

death being the foremost experiences at the beginning of the *Bardo*, those who have practised the select teachings call the stage now reached the First *Bardo* [otherwise known as the *Chikhai Bardo*, or the *Bardo* of the Moments of Death].

[THE *YOGIC* ART OF DYING]

(20) The practices at this stage are those which follow.

(21) When about to die, cut off all entangling attachments [to the world and to worldly possessions], along with hatred [for any enemy or other person left behind].

(22) By allowing the mind to rest free of thought-forming during the stages of the subsiding-process, the experiences of the subsiding-process accordingly merge into the natural state of quiescence as soon as they have dawned. Thereby dawneth the Offspring Clear Light.

(23) Then, as a secondary result, there dawneth the Mother Clear Light, the fourth Clear Light.<sup>1</sup>

(24) The intellectual recognition of these two aspects of the Clear Light, being like the recognition resulting from meeting an old acquaintance [since death hath been previously experienced many times], is known as the Blending of the Mother and Son Clear Light.

(25) By abiding in the state of the Clear Light as long as desired and then rising out of it in the body of the Divine United Clear Lights, in virtue of the threefold reversive process,<sup>2</sup> and transferring the consciousness through the Aperture

<sup>1</sup> As a mother is not a mother until she has given birth to a child, so the Mother Clear Light logically dawns after that of the Offspring. It is otherwise known as the fourth degree of the Voidness of the Clear Light.

<sup>2</sup> This very difficult *yogic* process may be described as follows: At the moment immediately preceding death, as the text has explained, there shines a white light like moonlight, then a [red] light like sunlight, then darkness comes. In the reverse order of their appearing, the *yogin* must mentally dispel one after the other—darkness, the red light, and the white light. Concomitantly there must be traced backwards by conscious effort, in a post-mortem panoramic review of the process of death, each of the states experienced during the subsidence. These are: (1) the fourth Clear Light state; (2) the subsiding of the Subtle, and (3) of the Gross. While in each of these states, as reviewed in this reverse order, the *yogin* is to hold a corresponding thought. Thus, in the first, the thought should be, 'Where am I?'; in the second, 'What am I?'; in the third, 'What is this condition in which I am?' Then, having mastered this

of Brahmā, on the crown of the head, one who is adept [in the *yoga* of consciousness-transference] passeth into the Buddha State [of Complete Enlightenment]. One who is weaker in the practice becometh a Holder of the *Dorje* in some one of the tenth-degree states<sup>1</sup> [of the highest celestial *Bodhisattvas*].

[PART II: REALIZING THE STATE OF THE  
SAMBHOGA-KĀYA WHILE IN THE BARDO]

(26) The second part, Realizing the State of the Divine Body of Perfect Endowment while in the *Bardo*, hath been spoken of thus:

‘Visibly produced [is the Body], with shape like that of the physical existence [on Earth],  
Possessed of all sense-faculties, yet endowed with [power of] unimpeded motion,  
And *karmic* miraculous powers of transformation and illusion.’<sup>2</sup>

*yogic* process, he proceeds to employ the *yoga* of consciousness-transference, called in Tibetan *Pho-wa*, which is the subject of our next Book. If he be an adept in *Pho-wa*, the consciousness departs from the body through the Aperture of Brahma (Skt. *Brahmarandhra*), which forms the exit of the median-nerve, rather than through one of the nine external apertures of the body, described in the annotation to paragraph 30 following. By this means the master of *yoga* attains to Buddhahood.

<sup>1</sup> Text: *Chōs-kyi-sprin* (pron. *Chō-kyi-tin*): Skt. *Dharma-Megha*: ‘Cloud of Truth’, the name given to the tenth-degree states of the highest *sangsāric* heaven known in Tibetan as ‘*Og-min*, meaning ‘No-down’, the realm whence there is no fall. (See p. 250.) The term ‘Holder of the *Dorje*’, the mystic symbol of super-normal power, has reference primarily, as here, to a Spiritual Originator, or Divine Inspirer, of a Tantric doctrine teaching the way to Emancipation.

<sup>2</sup> Another version of this quotation, from a Tantric work, is given in *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, on p. 156. The miraculous powers are the *siddhi* of shape-shifting and producing illusory forms and phenomena, which can be exercised by the master of *yoga* in the after-death state as in this world. In the *Sidpa Bardo*, as contained in *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, p. 159, there is this warning concerning them, addressed to the deceased: ‘These various powers of illusion and of shape-shifting desire not, desire not.’ Undisciplined use of such powers impedes true spiritual progress, just as does attachment to worldly pleasures. Being the result of one’s having come into existence in the *Bardo* world, where they are as natural as walking is in the human world, these powers are called *karmic*. As a caterpillar after having made for itself

[KARMIC RESULTS OF INABILITY TO RECOGNIZE THE  
CLEAR LIGHT]

(27) Through inability to recognize the Clear Light, the seven impulses which come from Ignorance arise; the resultant light<sup>1</sup> dawneth; the Greatly Void [or vastness of the Voidness] is experienced.

(28) Then arise the forty impulses born of Avarice [or Attachment]; the Ignition stage dawneth; the Very Void [or intensity of the Voidness] is experienced.

(29) Then arise the thirty-three impulses born of Hatred [or Anger]; the stage called the Light dawneth; the Voidness [itself] is experienced.

(30) Then, by a concentrated effort of the all-pervading vital-force, the consciousness is transferred from the old body through any of the nine ‘doors’,<sup>2</sup> and shapeth the new body of the *Bardo* existence.<sup>3</sup>

a cocoon emerges from it as a free-flying butterfly, so by the breaking of the cocoon of the human body its maker comes forth possessed of unimpeded motion.

<sup>1</sup> This resultant light symbolizes a visual condition much inferior to that symbolized by the Clear Light; the Clear Light itself being obscured, as by a heavy cloud, because of the lack of spiritual enlightenment.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 200<sup>1</sup>. In the case of a person dying *yogically* untrained, the departure of the consciousness ordinarily takes place through some one of these ‘doors’, each ‘door’ leading to birth in that non-human state to which it corresponds, as paragraph 31, following, suggests. For instance, the departure through the ‘door’ of one of the ears leads to birth in the world of the Gandharvas (fairy-like celestial musicians), wherein musical sound is the prevailing quality of existence. It is through the Aperture of Brahmā that the consciousness of a Great *Yogin* quits the human form and passes on to the highest of the paradises or attains the state of the Supreme Awakening.

<sup>3</sup> Herein, from paragraph 26 to 30, is contained the exposition of the reverse process mentioned in paragraph 25. Thus, paragraph 27 refers to a third degree of the *Shūnyatā*, or Voidness, the Greatly Void, which is experienced first; paragraph 28, to the Very Void, which corresponds to a second degree; and paragraph 29, to the Voidness in its first degree. Then comes the consciousness-transference as the culmination of the reverse process of the dawning of the three lights, which the three degrees of the Voidness symbolize. The dawning of the various impulses corresponds to the panoramic after-death review of life’s experiences such as persons who have died through drowning and then been resuscitated have commonly reported. The impulses are those of the Three Vices: Ignorance (Skt. *Moha*, or *Avidyā*); Avarice (Skt. *Lobha*); and Hatred (Skt. *Dvesha*). The lights are the psychic resultants of the arising

## [DESCRIPTION OF THE AFTER-DEATH EXISTENCE]

(31) The *Bardo* body is a desire-body, endowed with all sense faculties, and possessed of the form appropriate to the plane of existence whereon one is to take birth.<sup>1</sup>

(32) It is unimpeded in its movements everywhere, except that it cannot enter into the mother's womb.

(33) It hath the miraculous power of traversing the Third-Void Universe<sup>2</sup> as quickly as thought.

(34) Those on the *Bardo* plane of the same level of knowledge or spiritual development see each other.<sup>3</sup>

(35) Thus those who are destined to be born in the world of the *devas*<sup>4</sup> see each other with *deva* vision.

of these impulses. Ignorance leads to a state of mental obscuration or deep sleep (Skt. *sūṣupti*) with respect to the True State of Knowledge; and in this state of sleep, resulting from Ignorance, there dawns the Greatly Void, consciously perceivable for a moment by all human beings at the all-determining time of death. In the body, while in deep *samādhi*, a similar but less vivid experience of it is possible. And likewise is it with respect to the other impulses and their psychic resultants.

<sup>1</sup> This taking birth refers to passing on to that state of after-death existence to which *karma* destines the deceased. Such birth may take place in some paradise realm, or in the world of unhappy ghosts, or in a state of purgation. No such state is of eternal duration; and thence the deceased passes on to the womb-state and to rebirth on Earth.

<sup>2</sup> The first degree of the Voidness of the Cosmic Whole corresponds to one system of nebulae and suns and planets, such as astronomers see through their telescopes, even to the most distant star; the second degree consists of one thousand, and the third degree consists of one million such systems. Even then, so the Lāmas declare, the Voidness is but partially classified, there being Third Voids upon Third Voids, without conceivable end.

<sup>3</sup> Beings of like nature, development, inclination, and destination exist together consciously on the *Bardo* plane, just as human beings do in this world. Other orders of beings exist there, in that fourth dimension, invisibly to dissimilar orders, just as invisible races, like fairies, exist invisibly to man.

<sup>4</sup> Mrs. Rhys Davids rightly objects to the ordinary translation of the word *devas* as 'gods', because gods, for the most part unlike *devas*, are conceived as having 'if not perhaps creative power, at least informing influence, controlling force, some sort of cult and votaries, some power to bestow or withhold, aid or harm, reward or punish'. She distinguishes, too, between *devas* and *devatās*, the latter being the lower divinities of the common folk; and of *devas* she says: 'The *devas* who now and then pay or receive visits, on earth, at home, are nothing more than so many ladies and gentlemen, pleasant, courteous, respectful to great earth-teachers or earnest disciples. They have, it is true, their governors, but these, too, are not immortal, but have been, and will probably

(36) The dwellers on the *Bardo* plane feed on odours [or the essences of material things].<sup>1</sup>

(37) The radiance of the Sun and Moon not being visible on the *Bardo* plane, there is neither light nor darkness there; the light of the *Bardo* world is light-darkness [or a twilight].

(38) The principle of consciousness remaineth in a state of unconsciousness [or swoon] for a period of three and one-half days [after death on the Earth plane].

(39) Thereafter, the deceased coming to know that he is dead, feeleth great sadness [or regret at having died].

(40) And at that time, one can know the *Bardo* world as it really is.

(41) Ordinarily, however, one fainteth off [into another state of consciousness] before being able thus to know the *Bardo* world.

(42) Misleading ideas becoming very powerful after that time [for recognizing the *Bardo*], that time is called 'the Stage of the Time' [i.e. the psychological moment for action], because of the need of remembering then the teachings concerning the *Bardo* [which one received while in the human world].

## [THE AFTER-DEATH ATTAINING OF ENLIGHTENMENT]

(43) The carrying on to the Path after death the consciousness of having died, and of being in the *Bardo* state, hath been spoken of thus:

'After that stage, while in the *Bardo* of taking rebirth [or the *Sidḥa Bardo*],

By assuming the *māyā*-like form of the United Divine Bodies,  
One attaineth the Body of Perfect Endowment [or the  
*Sambhoga-Kāya*].'<sup>2</sup>

again be, denizens of earth. No, Buddhist *devas* are not gods. And one way to understand Buddhist doctrine is to cease calling them so.' (Cf. C. A. F. Rhys Davids, *Buddhist Psychology*, Supplementary Chapters, London, 1924, pp. 251-2.)

<sup>1</sup> See p. 219<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> This great attainment implies, of course, that the deceased died *yogically*, and that he is able to exercise the power of adeptship in *yoga* in the after-death state.

(44) Upon becoming conscious of having died, visualize thy body as being the body of a deity;<sup>1</sup> then, by the retrospective observation process, or by the Complete Comprehension,<sup>2</sup> place thyself in the state of the Clear Light.

(45) Then, with the practice of the three lights [or radiances] in their reverse order serving as the cause, there is obtained, as the result, the rising up into the United State of Dorje-Chang,<sup>3</sup> whereby one attaineth Perfect Enlightenment.

[PART III: REALIZING THE STATE OF THE  
NIRMĀṆA-KĀYA WHILE IN THE BARDO]

(46) The third part consisteth of realizing the State of the *Nirmāṇa-Kāya* [or the taking rebirth as a divine incarnation] while in the *Bardo*.

[THE *BARDO* OF SEEKING REBIRTH]

(47) If one findeth not the Path during the Second *Bardo* [i.e. during the *Chönyid Bardo*],<sup>4</sup> the four sounds called 'awe-inspiring sounds' are heard: from the vital-force of the earth-element, a sound like the crumbling down of a mountain; from the vital-force of the water-element, a sound like the breaking of ocean-waves; from the vital-force of the fire-

<sup>1</sup> As a result of this *yogic* practice there is rapid advancement in the after-death state; whereas without the guidance afforded by means of this visualization the dweller on the *Bardo* plane is quite likely to fall into the common error of assuming the ghost body of a *preta* and thus be retarded indefinitely, especially if he be called up in spirit evocations by his relatives or friends still on Earth. (See *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, p. 170.)

<sup>2</sup> This refers to the visualization-process touching both the external and internal principles of personality, as the Complete Comprehension of the *ĀH-NÜ-TĀ-RĀ-HÜM* Mantra. (See p. 228, § 26.)

<sup>3</sup> This state of Dorje-Chang (Skt. Vajra-Dhāra), the Supreme Divine *Guru* of the White Dynasty of *Gurus* of the Kargyūtpa School, is called United, because in it are united Compassion and the Voidness.

<sup>4</sup> In other words, if the deceased has failed to attain to the divine state of Dorje-Chang—and none save masters of *yoga* do attain to it—he must wander on in the after-death state from the Second *Bardo*, or the *Bardo* of the Experiencing of Reality, called in Tibetan the *Chönyid Bardo*, into the *Bardo* of Seeking Rebirth, called the *Sidpa Bardo*. In *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, wherein the full text of the *Bardo* teachings are contained, the *Bardo* of the Moments of Death, the First *Bardo*, called the *Chikhai Bardo*, is divided into two stages, so that the *Chönyid Bardo* is classified as the Third *Bardo*.

element, a sound as of a jungle afire; from the vital-force of the air-element, a sound like a thousand thunders reverberating simultaneously.<sup>1</sup>

(48) The place one getteth into, in fleeing from these sounds, is the womb.

(49) The three terrifying Precipices [which obstruct the way of one fleeing from the sounds] are the White, Red, and Black Deep Precipices; to fall over any one of them is to fall into a womb.<sup>2</sup>

(50) The Five Radiant Paths, including the Path of White Radiance, are for the well-taught ones to understand. To tread any of them is to re-enter into *sangsāric* existence.<sup>3</sup>

(51) Other phenomena, too, appear, such as globular masses of dazzling light, along with radiant sparks; the being pursued by a terrific downpour of rain; the coming of wrathful male and female figures to menace one; the being led by the Executioner [of Dharma Rāja's judgement, after the testing by the Mirror of *Karma*]; and the being placed in a house of iron, which symbolizeth the Hell-state.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> These phenomena are the psychic resultants of the disintegrating process called death, as affecting the four grosser elements of which the human body aggregate is composed. The ether-element is not named, because in that element alone—i.e. in the ethereal, or *Bardo*-body—the principle of consciousness continues to exist. (Cf. p. 337.)

<sup>2</sup> Any sort of *sangsāric* birth is regarded as undesirable, especially for one who has set out on the *Nirvāṇic* Path; and such birth is herein symbolized by the falling over one of the three Precipices. To fall over the White Precipice is to take birth as a *deva*; or over the Red, as a *preta*; or over the Black, as a dweller in Hell-like conditions of purgation. In *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, p. 162, it is explained that the Precipices are Anger, Lust, and Stupidity, the three evil passions which cause rebirth.

<sup>3</sup> These paths are the white light-path leading to the worlds of the *devas*, the smoke-coloured light-path leading to the hell worlds of purgation, the yellow light-path leading to the human world, the red light-path leading to the world of the *pretas* (or unhappy ghosts), and the green light-path leading to the world of the *asuras* (or titans). They also have esoteric significance in relation to the Five Radiances of Wisdom. (See *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, pp. 127-9.) It is for the well-taught ones, i.e. adepts in *yoga*, not to tread any of these paths, if they wish to avoid return to *sangsāric* existence.

<sup>4</sup> Here, again, a voluminous and detailed commentary is afforded by *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*. Dharma Rāja, the King of Truth, and Lord of Death, before whom the dead come for the Great Judgement, personifies the conscience in its stern aspect of impartiality, and love of righteousness; and the Mirror,

(52) The taking shelter in the hollows of trees and in cavities and crevices of the earth is to enter into the world of unhappy ghosts or into the brute world.<sup>1</sup>

(53) The sinking into a lake adorned with swans floating thereon is to be born in the Eastern Continent.<sup>2</sup>

(54) The sinking into a lake adorned with cattle grazing on its shores is to be born in the Western Continent.<sup>3</sup>

into which the Judge looks in order to pronounce judgement, is memory, wherein every good and evil deed done in the human world is vividly reflected. The good is balanced against the evil in the scale of justice; and, in accordance therewith, the deceased is sentenced to meet his just *karmic* deserts. As, in *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, p. 167, the *Bardo Thödol* makes it clear that 'Apart from one's own hallucinations, in reality there are no such things existing outside oneself as Lord of Death, or god, or demon'.

<sup>1</sup> The popular, but not the right, doctrine of rebirth, supports the erroneous theory, arising from Ignorance and false analogies, that the human principle of consciousness can take embodiment in sub-human forms. The esoteric rather than the vulgar, or exoteric, interpretation should be followed in studying the *Bardo Thödol*, upon which our present text is based. There must, too, be taken into account a certain amount of corruption, due to the influence of this vulgar interpretation, which has crept into the text. Mrs. Rhys Davids, with her vast knowledge of the Pāli canon, says, 'Outside folk-lore and the garrulous Commentaries, no actual cases of a rebirth as animal recognized by a teacher's supernormal insight have I as yet met with. The Buddha is made to affirm in a few *Suttas* (e.g. *Majjhima*, iii. 167) that some classes of wrongdoers will meet with such a fate, but the *Suttas*, so far as I know, contain no other special illustrations of it.' (Cf. Mrs. Rhys Davids, *op. cit.*, p. 256.) As we have made clear in *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* (pp. 49-60) all such references to rebirth of the human into sub-human forms need not necessarily be interpreted literally. On the contrary, there is overwhelming evidence in support of interpreting them symbolically. In this context, too, one should remember that the Buddha had no part in the writing down of any of the scriptural teachings attributed to Him. It was only long after He had departed from the human world that they were placed on record. His advice to accept nothing not *yogically* proved to be true, even though it be found recorded in Scriptures, is as applicable now in this age of science as it was when uttered. The Buddhist, or Hindu, or even Christian who departs from this sound standpoint of the Enlightened One appears to prefer untested theories rather than scientific fact.

<sup>2</sup> Text: *Shar-gling* (pron. *Shar-ling*) 'Eastern "Continent".' The fuller form, *Shar-lüs-hpags-po* (pron. *Shar-lü-pa-po*), means, 'Eastern ["Continent"] of Great Size'. Though endowed with bliss and ease, it being a world wherein religion does not predominate, the deceased is warned not to take birth in it. (See p. 303<sup>5</sup>.)

<sup>3</sup> Text: *Nub-ba-glang-spyöd* (pron. *Nub-ba-lang-chöd*) 'Western "Continent",' a human-like world to the west of Mt. Meru, wherein there are said to be vast herds of beautiful cattle. For one desirous of Liberation from all *sangsañic* states, it also is undesirable as a place in which to be born. (See p. 304<sup>5</sup>.)

(55) The sinking into a lake adorned with horses grazing on its shores is to be born in the Northern Continent.<sup>1</sup>

(56) The seeing of grand mansions and parents therein in the sexual act is to be born in the Southern Continent of Jambudvīpa.<sup>2</sup>

(57) The seeing of celestial mansions of vast dimensions and entering any of them is the sign of taking birth as a *deva*.

(58) The misleading ideas [due to *karmic* propensities] being very influential [at this stage], one seeketh a womb; and, therefore, this period is called 'the time wherein the odour-eater [i.e. the dweller on the after-death plane] seeketh a womb for rebirth'.

#### [THE *YOGIC* ART OF CHOOSING A WOMB]

(59) Of the practical application [of the select teachings concerning the art of choosing a womb for rebirth] it hath been said:

'Abandoning all feelings of attraction or repulsion,<sup>3</sup>

With memory's heedfulness restraining the roving tendency of the mind:<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Text: *Byang-sgra-mi-snyan* (pron. *Chang-da-mi-nyan*), 'Northern "Continent"', the world to the north of Mt. Meru, wherein there are vast herds of beautiful horses. It, too, like all the non-human states, is undesirable as a place for rebirth. (See p. 305<sup>2</sup>.)

<sup>2</sup> Text: *Ndzam-bu-gling* (pron. *Jam-bu-ling*) 'Southern "Continent"', which is our Planet Earth. (See p. 304<sup>3</sup>.)

<sup>3</sup> In other words, the aim must be to attain to a state of quiescence dominated by supreme indifference to all *karmic* predilections for likes and dislikes. As stated in *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, p. 191, 'Even though a womb may appear good, do not be attracted; if it appear bad, have no repulsion towards it. To be free from repulsion and attraction, or from the wish to take or to avoid—to enter in the mood of complete impartiality—is the most profound of arts. Excepting only for the few who have had some practical experience [in psychic development], it is difficult to get rid of the remnants of the disease of evil propensities.'

<sup>4</sup> The mind must be kept under strict control by exercising its memory of *yogic* disciplining acquired while in the human state, with the result that there is thereby bridged, by unbroken continuity of consciousness, the disembodied state preceding birth, including the embryonic state, while in the womb, and that to follow birth. Thus one is born fully aware of the process of choosing the womb and of birth therefrom, in the same way as one should be aware of the process of death, retaining continuity of consciousness from the pre-death state to the post-death state.

