

over four centuries to accomplish the historic task of translating them into Tibetan. Most of these books were later lost in their Sanskrit originals, and relatively few were translated into Chinese. Therefore, the Tengyur is truly one of Tibet's most precious treasures, a mine of understanding that we have preserved in Tibet for the benefit of the whole world.

Keeping all this in mind I am very happy to encourage a long-term project of the American Institute of Buddhist Studies, originally established by the late Venerable Mongolian Geshe Wangyal and now at the Columbia University Center for Buddhist Studies, and Tibet House US, to translate the Tengyur into English and other modern languages, and to publish the many works in a collection called *The Treasury of the Buddhist Sciences*. When I recently visited Columbia University, I joked that it would take those currently working at the Institute at least three "reincarnations" to complete the task; it surely will require the intelligent and creative efforts of generations of translators from every tradition of Tibetan Buddhism, in the spirit of the scholars of Nālandā, although we may hope that using computers may help complete the work more quickly. As it grows, the *Treasury* series will serve as an invaluable reference library of the Buddhist Sciences and Arts. This collection of literature has been of immeasurable benefit to us Tibetans over the centuries, so we are very happy to share it with all the people of the world. As someone who has been personally inspired by the works it contains, I firmly believe that the methods for cultivating wisdom and compassion originally developed in India and described in these books preserved in Tibetan translation will be of great benefit to many scholars, philosophers, and scientists, as well as ordinary people.

I wish the American Institute of Buddhist Studies at the Columbia Center for Buddhist Studies and Tibet House US every success and pray that this ambitious and far-reaching project to create *The Treasury of the Buddhist Sciences* will be accomplished according to plan. I also request others, who may be interested, to extend whatever assistance they can, financial or otherwise, to help ensure the success of this historic project.



May 15, 2007

# *The Adamantine Songs*

*(Vajragīti)*

By Saraha

Study, Translation,  
and Tibetan Critical Edition

By  
Lara Braitstein

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*A Body Treasury*  
*Called the Immortal Adamantine Song*

Homage to Mañjuśrī!

1. Hey! Wearing matted-locks, grasping at self and agent,  
Brahmins, Jains, hedonists,<sup>356</sup>  
Materialists accepting a real basis for things  
Claim omniscience but don't even know themselves. [5]  
They are deluded and far from the path of liberation.
  
2. Vaibhāṣikas and Sautrāntikas,  
Yogācārins and Mādhyamikas, etc.  
Criticize each other and argue;  
Ignorant of the space-like equality of appearance and  
emptiness itself, [10]  
They turn their backs on the innate.<sup>357</sup>

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<sup>356</sup> This is an attempt to translate the Tibetan term "Dagapa." While it could be a corruption of a *Carvaka*, the materialist school referred to on the next line, it could be a reference to people who believe in and for the moment (*da ga* means "this very moment") —in other words, hedonists. P and N provide the alternative reading "*sang ga pa*," but that has no meanings at all.

<sup>357</sup> In the same vein as the opening stanzas of his *People Dohā*, Saraha begins the *Body Treasury* with a thorough dismissal of the practices and beliefs of all those who surrounded him in his circa ninth century CE context. Not limiting his critique to followers of non-Buddhist schools, he is equally harsh on the four schools of Buddhist thought laid out in Siddhānta literature: Vaibhāṣikas and Sautrāntikas who, described in broad strokes, believe in the existence of *dharmas* as the basic building blocks of phenomena and in the existence of objects outside of and relation to the experiencing self; and the Yogācārins and Mādhyamikas, whose principal debates revolve around what, if anything, can be said to exist, how it appears, how it is perceived, and the nature of emptiness. See, for example, Napper 1989.

3. Body, speech, and mind are resplendent like cotton and oil in a lamp,  
Endowed with just that, they are radiant like a lamp that is self-illuminating.  
Because illuminating reflexive awareness pervades all beings  
Indivisibly, that is the unborn nature. [15]
4. Self-grasping mind causes a constellation of recognition;  
In this nature, diverse appearances dawn.  
Although all beings abide in a state like darkness  
The lamp of yoga blazes when it finds just that.
5. The essential meaning is beyond the scope of reason;  
It is not evident and is obscured by recognition's power.  
It is the path of bliss, nonconceptual, unconditioned  
decognition.  
Beyond any path, how does a result appear beyond the  
intellect? [20]
6. From the treasury of innate mind  
Pure and impure arise as saṃsāra and nirvāna.  
Although arising, in the unborn nature they are one,  
Free of self-nature, that itself is labeled "immutable." [25]
7. The Great Seal is unchangeable great bliss and,  
Not dependent on a cause, the result is beyond the scope of the  
intellect.  
The Great Seal is the complete result.  
Conventionally, it is illustrated as the goal of the path. [30]
8. The essential meaning is without expressed and expressing,  
The sphere of awareness is decognition, the expression of  
everything.
9. *Through attention, conceptual thought cognizes difference.*  
There can be no falsity in this decognition!  
*Through diligence on the path, distinct results arise.*  
There can be no truth in this recognition! [35]

*Through the power of equanimity, rest—at times—in  
meditation.*

There can be no duality in this unborn nature!  
*Apply the labels "bring to mind" and "don't bring to mind."*<sup>358</sup> [40]  
There is no effort in this beyond-the-intellect!

10. Although recognition originates conditioned by appearances,  
It does not transcend the condition which is the decognition of  
emptiness.  
In this nonconceptual goal there is no activity and no view.  
How deluded! To search for oneself in others! [45]
11. Hey! That itself is difficult to realize as adamantine,  
Not understanding this, mind chases after words.  
It is difficult to meet that goal which is free of activity.  
When the nature of activity, which is nonaction, is understood,  
You will have found the sole intention of the Buddhas,  
beyond all objects. [50]
12. The Conqueror's body is the unchanging, noncorporeal  
*dharmatā*.<sup>359</sup>  
It does not reside in the body and is free from action and  
agency.  
On a contaminated path, a result cannot be seen,  
In the sphere of the unborn nature, his mind does not  
discriminate.
13. In the sphere of decognition, meditative equipoise is great bliss;  
In the sphere of great bliss, one abides in continuous  
nonconceptuality.<sup>360</sup> [55]

<sup>358</sup> In this verse Saraha is either in conversation with himself, or responding to four statements that he considers inaccurate. I have indicated this process by italicizing the statements he is responding to.

<sup>359</sup> The truth nature, the true nature of things as they are.

<sup>360</sup> P and N have an alternative rendering of this line that translates as: Abide in the self, in the blissful continuity of nonconceptuality.

Not engaging the mind, appearance is purified spontaneously.  
The condition is unobstructed recognition, illuminating  
awareness.

14. As the faultless lotus expands from one root,  
It abides as the innate nature within sentient beings. (60)  
Even when one is tainted by the power of wrongly seeing the  
existence of "other,"  
Just like the lotus flower,  
By the power of seeing rightly, it is the immutable Great Seal.
15. Even tainted by the mud of subject and object, (65)  
The root is the great selfhood, unchangeable in the three times.  
Primordially free from activities of consciousness, subtle  
wind,<sup>361</sup> the lower doors,<sup>362</sup> mantra, etc.,  
Free from self and other, accepting and rejecting.
16. Don't think of saṃsāra, don't be concerned with nirvāna,  
The three times and three worlds<sup>363</sup> are contained in body,  
speech, and mind. (70)  
No effort in anything, no views, nothing to accept and reject,  
Not differentiating center and perimeter, the middle way is the  
straight path.
17. When free of artificiality, it is the supreme path for the mind.  
The Perfection of Wisdom path, which is passage,  
engagement, stages,<sup>364</sup> etc.

<sup>361</sup> That is, *vāyu*, the energy that moves through the subtle body in Tantric practice.

<sup>362</sup> The "lower doors" is a reference to practices that entail using the generative organs (i.e. union practice) or substances that emerge from them.

<sup>363</sup> The three times are past, present, and future; the three worlds usually refer to the human world, *nāga* world (located below the human world), and world of the gods (located above the human world).

<sup>364</sup> This a reference to the Mahāyāna path that entails the five paths and ten (or fourteen) *bhūmis*, etc.

Is the cause for the duration of saṃsāra by discarding the quick  
path.

The innate and the remedy are without rival. (75)

18. In just that, the four *kāyas*, the five wisdoms, the afflictions,  
etc. are gathered.  
Therefore, on the path which is saṃsāra,  
Do not engage with whatever arises as the object, the object is  
not seen.  
There is no joy or non-joy in the true nature.
19. Grasping and conceptualization are the uncontrived truth body, (80)  
The sense faculties do not apprehend on their own, they abide  
in emptiness.  
Inexpressible experience is uninterrupted.  
You should understand how to apply it to your own mental  
continuum.
20. In this faultless point, the Great Seal (85)  
Will be experienced like ocean and space.  
When the senses are free of objects, there is no abyss to fall  
into;  
One becomes attached by reifying recognition.
21. By leaving objects in their natural place, elaborations are again  
cast away. (90)  
Without rising and setting, the darkness of conceptuality will  
cease.  
*Dharmatā* has one taste, the same as flowers for bees;  
The faults and virtues are equal in the indivisible nature.  
Amazing though it is, the experience cannot be expressed.

22. *Indivisible bliss*,<sup>365</sup> like water into water,  
The innate and that yoga are inseparable.  
One discerns a single essence in many thoughts,  
Decognition is one, decognition is manifold.  
Whoever wishes to engage in the primordial goal, the path of  
desire,  
Practice the yoga—the simultaneous arising of bliss  
And emptiness—in a manner beyond the intellect.
23. There is no inner or outer, self or other.  
Knowing the object as it is, is taught as natural liberation.  
Although in the truth body the three *kāyas* are inseparable,  
If one practices, distinct results arise.
24. Hey! When inseparability is realized, wrong views are quickly  
destroyed.  
When it is understood that unborn emptiness is indivisible  
from the goal of direct contact,  
The forest and leaves have no basis.
25. Not understanding direct contact, conceptual compassion  
Is a cause for pollution, leading to the experience of *samsāra*,  
Emptiness and compassion are inseparable and devoid of  
arising.  
Whoever is free from hope and fear of *nirvāṇa* and *samsāra*,  
Not finding body and mind, rests freely in decognition.  
That itself is not found by the intellect; it is self-arising.
26. That defined calm abiding, meditative equipoise and post-  
meditation,  
Is not ultimate, it is not practiced by a mind in meditation.  
Form, etc.,<sup>366</sup> is illumined effortlessly by body, speech, and  
mind.

<sup>365</sup> If we follow the P and N versions, this would read “Indivisible truth....”

<sup>366</sup> This indicates that the list of the aggregates follows. Awareness consisting of merely these five aggregates is part of the intended outcome of “regular” calm-abiding meditation.

- Without the use of “tip of the nose,” etc., shape and space,  
Channel and contact, abide in the natural state.
27. All appearances are indestructible bliss,  
Simply understanding the appearance of mere thoughts as  
illusion illuminates.  
The reflection of the moon is devoid of parts and objectivity;  
Even when searched for, it does not exist. Even when looked  
at, it is not seen.
28. Call to mind that recognition which appeared as illusion,  
Nothing is seen apart from this decognition.  
Although appearing as recognition, there is no grasping.  
Although touched by recognition, it is free from the thought of  
contact.
29. Since, being beyond conceptualization, it is free, it is devoid of  
arising.  
Although recognition arises, there is no engagement with the  
object.  
Leave it in its original empty state where nothing is established.  
Whatever you may do, the Seal is uninterrupted.
30. The four Great Seals have four branches:  
The branch of realization of the unborn meaning; and  
The branch of nondistinction of the two truths, and  
Realization of contact of the unborn nature and appearance  
Is the branch of nongrasping recognition and  
Emptiness devoid of conditions and thought, beyond the  
intellect  
Is the branch of not accepting or rejecting things.
31. With just that as the basis, “freedom from attachment,” and  
“Possessing investigation and analysis,”  
“Joy and bliss,” and “residing in the wilderness,” etc.  
Are taught as the objects illustrating this convention.

<sup>367</sup> i.e. the four branches.

32. It is said that beings have high, middling, and low capacities.  
For the benefit of the weak-minded, the learned ones  
thoroughly explained:  
“The Great Seal does not abide anywhere at all.”  
It is explained like this in order to be free from moral  
structures.  
Whatever appears, don’t separate pure and impure, accept it all  
as *siddhis*.<sup>368</sup>
33. Cultivating the innate and the blazing of inner fire on an  
object, etc.  
Commitment, nature of self, and yoga...  
In the Great Seal, the sameness of all phenomena, how could  
Conceptualization be abandoned and nonconceptualization be  
practiced?
34. In your reverence to the Guru, the discipline of the secret  
vehicle is complete.  
The very expression of the outer, inner, and secret initiations,  
and  
The vase, secret, wisdom,  
Essential direct word initiations, etc.  
The mundane *siddhis* arising from all these things cannot touch  
the Great Seal.
35. Hey! In the Great Seal are present body, speech, and mind, the  
nature of fruition.  
The fruition of the Great Seal is only suitable for the essential  
meaning, but not for provisional and definitive.  
It is the unsurpassed secret vehicle, the essence of all.  
The essentials of path and fruition are distilled there,  
The authentic highest Mahāyāna and the distinctness of the  
vehicles.

<sup>368</sup> i.e. accomplishments, evidence of attainment or awakening.

36. The characteristics by which one ascertains the Great Seal are: [160] [210]  
Recognition and decognition are unborn, nondual,  
Why would it not remain like space, beyond the intellect?
37. The map that is the action seal, and the path of the Dharma  
seal,  
And the Great Seal that is the result, and the Commitment Seal  
that is the altruistic act— [215]  
By relying on seals below the Dharma Seal, one will not reach [165]  
the end,  
One falls into extremes of hope and fear, and becomes  
damaged by engaging in frivolous activities.
38. In that itself, there is no distinction of antidotes, one leaves it  
in its natural place.  
Whatever concepts arise, they arise in true freedom. [220]  
From the natural liberation of recognition, decognition arises  
freely.  
Recognize whatever is experienced as mere appearances, and  
decognition is restored. [170]
39. Possessing the natural state itself, unborn and pure,  
Pervading all, it abides like moisture in water, [225]  
Uninterrupted, it flows like a stream of water,  
Like a lamp, it illuminates: reflexive awareness, bodhicitta,<sup>369</sup>  
While not ceasing, mindful awareness is naturally empty. [175]
40. What is this perfect reality?  
If it exists elsewhere, it should be seen by all.  
Even though you possess it yourself, it is concealed like the  
face of a guru.  
Mind itself is Buddha, [230]  
But contaminated by recognition, suchness is imputed to be  
something else. [180]

<sup>369</sup> The mind of awakening, generated on the basis of great compassion.

41. *Since it is the Buddha, what are its qualities?*  
The qualities are like the whiteness and the cotton cloth.  
The qualities that are just that *are* the Great Seal;  
The nature and its qualities are not distinct and various.
42. The Great Seal and the fourth, etc., [185]  
The qualities are not distinct, are not various.  
In the qualities of decognition, the unstirring ocean,  
There is no recognition, just as there are no waves in still water.
43. The qualities of the unborn are unchanging, like a rock, [190]  
They do not follow after, the way echoes arise.  
Beyond the intellect and not an object for the senses,  
The qualities of the Great Seal are like the sky.
44. Recognition arises from the minds of beings, [195]  
Therefore, emptiness need not be sought elsewhere.  
Although appearing as four, it is of one quality:  
So why is it expressed as appearing as four seals?
45. The aforementioned attributes arose as four. [200]  
The Great Seal should not be conceived as three.  
Do not abide in anything and practice without attachment,  
Like a bee drinking nectar from a flower.
46. The wisdom of discriminating awareness is skillful means. [205]  
When one encounters a flavor, there is no clinging to it.  
This, however, will not be known by all.  
Although the essential point pervades all six realms of beings  
in an instant,  
Sentient beings are fettered by recognition like the threads of  
an endless knot.
47. Since recognition arises from mind, it is the cause of delusion,  
But *knowing* without mental engagement is Buddhahood.  
In that delusion there is not wisdom and methods.  
Hey! When you know their inseparability, that alone is the  
supreme method.

48. All Buddhas, sentient beings and phenomena, [210]  
Arise simultaneously with mind itself—  
When the absence of engagement is merely born in your mind,  
Appearance as recognition disappears, there is no truth and  
falsehood;  
Therefore it is not the object of just that alone.
49. Just as sound does not manifest as an object to the eye, [215]  
Nonconceptuality is not an object of investigation.  
When, due to emptiness, recognition is merely illuminated,  
From the disappearance of appearance as recognition, nothing  
to be seen.
50. Pristine cognition cannot become deaf, blind, and mute;  
In that which is devoid of recognition, there is no ground for  
deafness, blindness, or muteness. [220]  
It is free of all such conventions as “matter.”  
As for the expression, “cessation of dualistic appearances,”  
It refers to the sweeping away of recognition and the gathering  
of decognition as nourishment.
51. In just that, unborn, beyond the intellect, [225]  
Subject and object are burned and purified  
By the fire of decognition and unborn wisdom.  
By offering that which is beyond the intellect and  
By the power of wishing prayers, subsequent births do not  
continue.
52. Because of that, the Great Seal is primary, [230]  
It is not dependent on someone, it does not rely on anything,  
Most unlike entering into water, joining an assembly, sharing a  
feast,  
The Vedas, or disturbing a town.
53. Since the Great Seal is nothing other than oneself,  
By receiving offerings, thoughts, guests, and objects of  
veneration as oneself,

- Make the offering to one's own freedom from thought  
[And] partake in the unborn assembly that is beyond the intellect. [235]
54. Since the Great Seal is not dependent on an "other,"  
The object of meditation is oneself and the meditator one's  
own mind.  
Beyond the intellect, it is devoid of focusing on oneself.  
Because just that is the fruition, it is not dependent on other  
factors.
55. The practice of meditation and recitation of mantras are but  
one's mind, [240]  
Even meditational deities are one's own mind.  
Due to that, *ḍākinīs*, making prophecies, etc., are one's own  
mind:  
Mind displays itself in whatever thoughts appear.
56. Where there is no recognition, no-thing can be observed.  
Since the Great Seal is from nothing other than oneself, [245]  
Offering to and relying upon Buddha, Dharma, Sangha, etc.  
Parents, precious ones, own-nature and bodhicitta  
Is the cause of recognition.
57. If there are no distinctions, the unborn is liberated in its own  
place;  
If you transcend the intellect, then there is no action or non-  
action. [250]  
Although the manner of illustrating Buddhas and sentient  
beings is different,  
They arise simultaneously — it is a question of knowledge and  
ignorance.
58. Even though something appears, if it is not conceptualized  
with recognition, [255]  
Sentient beings themselves are the unborn result.  
If something does not appear, but it is conceptualized in  
recognition,  
Even the Buddhas themselves cause the cycle of three realms.

59. What can be upheld in the mind free of recognition?  
Sentient beings may appear, they are the same as Buddhas.  
If one desires to cognize recognition as Buddha,  
Even though Buddhas appear, they are not distinct from  
sentient beings. [260]
60. Therefore the duality of appearance and examination should be  
discarded as it is beyond analysis,  
Once discarded, [since] it is not other than self, the continuum  
of being is severed.  
It is tainted by the conceptual thought, "It comes from  
something other than self."  
In luminous appearances, mind is nonconceptual and non-  
grasping.
61. Therefore, freed of dualistic notions of existence and  
non-existence, [265]  
When you abide in this natural state, whatever you do is  
blissful.  
One who sustains the essence, apprehending the clear light of  
recognition,  
[And] free of the two clingings,<sup>370</sup> will always abide in the  
authentic state.
62. Therefore, the Great Seal is the highest union:<sup>371</sup>  
Recognition, decognition and the unborn are united. [270]  
Decognition, which is the nature of nonconceptuality, and  
Recognition, which is dependently arisen and adventitious,  
These two have one taste in the unborn nature.  
The arisen and arising are beyond the intellect.
63. The union of emptiness and clear light etc., [275]  
Uncontrived, uncreated, unborn and naturally self-liberated,

<sup>370</sup> Existence (eternalism) and non-existence (nihilism).

<sup>371</sup> As opposed to the action seal (union practice).



- That is explained as the three *kāyas*: truth body, enjoyment body and  
The diverse appearances of the transformation body;  
The authentic nature is the essence body,  
Compassion and emptiness, indivisible and unborn.
64. The experience based on the action seal is contrived.  
As such, it arises through the power of conditions;  
Since it depends on something else, it is not suchness.
65. Although the Dharma Seal is uncontrived,  
Even if experienced, its non-establishment will not be seen.  
If the Great Seal is experienced,  
The diversity of thoughts will be recognized as the unborn nature.
66. That which appears as an entity is empty of own-nature,  
Sentient beings and the unborn are the indivisible meaning,  
Characterized by compassion and means and presented by metaphors.
67. Though appearances are diverse, do not swerve from the object  
that is beyond the intellect,  
Constantly observe the essential yoga,  
Abide in the Great Seal in all activities,  
Leave the mode of being of things in the unborn sphere.
68. With the condition of wind, from a clear ocean  
Ripples of water and waves temporarily arise.  
However, they are indivisible from the ocean.  
Conditioned by recognition, conceptualization temporarily  
arises,  
Decognition of the above is suchness.  
Unborn and beyond the intellect, these they are equally  
wondrous.
69. Thus, just as there is no origination in the Great Seal in the  
past,  
It is absent in the future, too.  
Although origination may occur due to the force of conditions,  
They are indivisible from the unborn nature.  
Formless, it pervades everything,  
Is unchanging, and present at all times.
70. Like space, it is devoid of origination and cessation.  
Just as the rope that is grasped as a snake is devoid of snake,  
The truth body, enjoyment body and the transformation body  
are indivisible.  
The essential nature is beyond the sphere of the intellect.
71. The Great Seal is instantaneous full awakening,  
Just that arises as the form body<sup>372</sup> for the sake of sentient  
beings.  
Results correspond to their cause, and results ripen,  
And the pure result is that you will engage in altruistic acts.  
The state is said to be especially beyond expression.
72. Hey! The uncontrived Seal is great bliss.  
In the expanse of decognition, it is self-illuminating.  
It is unborn and pervasive like space.  
It abides in the realm beyond the intellect.
73. Appearance free of elaboration is great bliss,  
Decognition does not conceptualize anything.  
The variety of recognition appears as mind,  
But when examined and sought, it cannot be found.
74. The unborn nature is free from grasping.  
As it is free of grasping, it is without activity.

<sup>372</sup> When the *kāyas* are simply divided into two categories, they are form body (*rūpakāya*), which could be said to include both the transformation body and the enjoyment body) and truth body (*dharmakāya*).

- Recognition is illusory, a mere reflexive event.  
It shines free of illusion, free of liberation and free of  
recognition.
75. Unborn and ultimate, it illuminates completely,  
Therefore, everything appears beyond the intellect.  
That wisdom which is beyond the intellect in the three realms,  
Is the innate nature itself.  
Determine this to be the root of all recognition without  
exception.
76. Place decognition in the realm of the unborn nature.  
Uncontrived, just that is beyond the domain of the intellect,  
It arises as the self-blazing of wakefulness.  
Through this arising, concepts, as complements of saṃsāra,  
arise.
77. Having understood that the path of liberation is suchness,  
As though self-arisen, one abides in the sphere which is free  
from thought.  
Recognition, which is self-illuminating, is not established as  
entities.
78. This unborn great bliss is the uncontrived awakened intention.  
Since it appears directly to the senses, there is nothing to be  
grasped.  
In the domain of decognition there is nothing to be seen.  
Since it is devoid of basis, there is nothing to train in.
79. In one whose mind is free from occupation, that is the Great  
Seal;  
Whatever diverse wakeful cognitions are there, are of signs.  
In just that, the Great Seal, there are no distinctions.  
Realization and nonrealization—the two are not distinct.
80. Not abiding in the extremes of eternalism and nihilism, it is  
free of faults.  
When one's own nature is realized, it is not from elsewhere.

- When dependent origination, the path of nirvāṇa, is taught and  
realized as unborn, that is the Great Seal.
81. Those ignorant of just that are attached to the Action Seal,  
Commitment Seal, Dharma Seal, etc.<sup>373</sup>  
These are mere examples that signify that but cannot capture  
the meaning.  
Relying on the Great Seal, which is free of subject and object,  
Cognition arises naturally and freshly.
82. Free of desire, it abides in the authentic nature settled into  
itself.  
The cognition of ordinary appearances is itself the intellect,  
Its natural state in the thoughts that recollect “is” and “is not.”  
Precious devotion is the wish-granting jewel of instruction,  
Place it free of mental engagement and non-engagement.
83. Since reflexive awareness is itself the Great Seal,  
It is taught in and by the Great Seal itself.  
Do not allow mind to engage in the diverse objects of  
recognition.
84. Free of “inner” and “outer,” the seal is undisputed, and  
One who is endowed with the life of the Great Seal is free of  
desire—  
For when desire arises, this too is the cause of recognition.
85. In the Great Seal which is one's own mind,  
Distinctions between “recognition” and “absence of  
recognition” do not arise.

<sup>373</sup> Here, Saraha is altering the order of the four seals—previously (verse 38) he has the commitment seal following the great seal as the altruistic re-engagement with the world. In this case, he reverts to the ordering of the seals with the Great as the fourth. This is consistent with the ordering of the seals in the *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra* (Gray 2007) and the *Hevajra Tantra* (Farrow 1992).

Delusion and nondelusion are beyond the domain of the intellect.  
Proliferation of fixed concepts about recognition is the cause of saṃsāra.

86. Clear light, which is the Great Seal, is the authentic nature. Unchanging in any way, it is one in the mind of awakening. In just that, subject and object are free of essence. Meaningful appearance is seen in wisdom itself.
87. The arising of appearances is seen by the power of distortion, Because in the assembly of recognition, they are examined by thoughts.  
The engagement of mind in the domain of recognition and decognition  
Is free of thought, even when body, speech, and mind are exerted.
88. When there is no duality, there is no nature of saṃsāra. This is the nature of ever-fluctuating various recognitions. It does not exist at all in the tip of the nose seal, Therefore, settle into the thought-free ethics of the Great Seal.
89. Hey! The stages of generation—inner and outer, deep and not deep, and  
The nature of ultimate reality, inhalation and exhalation, Sealing by action and dharma seals,  
Are the whole yoga of the completion stage.
90. The Great Seal is the stage of the essential nature,  
The Commitment Seal is the stage of complete accomplishment,  
The stage of the thorough accomplishment of all,  
The Action Seal is the essence of empowerment, and

[370]

[375]

[380]

[385]

[390]

That which is endowed with the four joys,<sup>374</sup> and has the nature of method,  
The Dharma Seal is diverse appearance;  
Among the four joys, it is “the innate.”

91. As for the Great Seal, the unborn nature,  
It is free of dualistic thought, and its nature is beyond the intellect.  
The unstained result is complete Buddhahood.
92. The Commitment Seal is a yoga of characteristics.  
The result—gods, meditational deities and the maṇḍala—is for the benefit of sentient beings,  
The noble parents<sup>375</sup> symbolize skillful means and wisdom.
93. Endowed with the four joys, the Commitment Seal is great.  
Accordingly, although the application of skillful means may be harnessed,  
The profound is established by means of the Dharma Seal,  
And mind itself is revealed on its own as the Great Seal.
94. By singling out thoughts that are flavored by joy, and  
By distinguishing thoughts flavored by great joy, and  
By singling out thoughts that are the innate joy,  
The appearance of no-joy reveals thoughts as the unborn.  
Thus the profound Dharma seal is shown.
95. Where knowledge which is the four joys arises,  
Is undifferentiated and abides in the manner of total absorption,

[395]

[400]

[405]

[410]

<sup>374</sup> The four joys are: joy (*ānanda—dga' ba*); great joy (*paramānanda—mchog dga'*); joylessness (*vilaksana—dga' bral*); and innate joy (*sahajānanda—lhan cig skyes pa'i dga' ba*). They describe stages of bliss experienced in Tantric practice.

<sup>375</sup> *pha ma*: this refers to the union of awakened Buddha aspects, and symbolizes every possible form of (awakened) union: wisdom and compassion, wisdom and means, left and right channels, etc. The union of all these elements indicates full awakening.

It abides in the pure experience of conceptualization, and  
 Within the mind, non-recognition and cognition are  
 undifferentiated.  
 Examples and the path are taught in order to tame  
 designations.

96. The arising of the Great Seal, the mind itself,  
 Manifests everything: the miraculous display, the arising of the  
 unborn.  
 Since it is beyond the intellect, it is shown to be the unborn  
 nature.  
 Both the unborn and entities which are born,  
 Are not different when they are left in the authentic nature.

97. Wherever this movement of diverse recognition takes place,  
 By engaging decognition, conceptualization will be  
 unobstructed.  
 If the cognition is left in its own place, it will abide.  
 The cause of birth is grasping at appearance and emptiness as  
 two;  
 But when it is understood that they are not distinct, that is the  
 great bliss.

98. Because the experience has dawned, one will be free of  
 discordant grasping.  
 There is no recognition; there are no such objects.  
 Decognition and the unity of appearance and emptiness are not  
 different.

99. In the unborn yoga of signlessness,<sup>376</sup>  
 In the daily yoga, where there is no meditative equipoise and  
 subsequent states,  
 Whatever thoughts of appearance and arising come into being,

<sup>376</sup> For an excellent detailed discussion of the generation and completion stages, I refer readers to Powers (1995) and Beyer (1978).

Because you abide free of recognition, which is empty, just  
 that,  
 Appearance and emptiness are indivisible; there are no  
 thoughts to be taken into the mind.

[430]

100. In the direct encounter with just that, the experience of the  
 unborn,  
 The empty nature of appearance dawns as great bliss.  
 Just as melted ice can be drunk as water,<sup>377</sup>  
 So, whatever appears, does so richly as unborn great bliss.

[435]

<sup>377</sup> Water in its diverse states appears often in the *Body Treasury*: verse 22 describes the experience of the innate as: "Bliss indivisible, like water [mixing] into water"; and verse 40 tells us that the innate, pervading all sentient beings, "abides like moisture in water, / In continuity which is like the uninterruptedness of the water of a flowing stream." The image of waves and the ocean as the demonstration of thoughts as neither separate from nor identical to mind was discussed above in verse 69. Here it is appropriate to mention that water appears as the principal metaphor in his *King Dohā* (*Dohakoṣa nāma Caryā gṛti / do ha mdzod ces bya ba spyod pa'i glu*), fulfilling the same multiple functions as it does in the *Adamantine Songs*. From the opening verse, water is key: "Just as when unmoving water struck by the wind, / Becomes stirred by waves, / So Saraha appears to the King / In many ways, although he is one man." (*ji ltar rlung gis brgyab pas mi g.yo ba'i / chu la g.yo pas rba rlabs rnam su 'gyur / de ltar rgyal pos mda' snun snang ba yang / gcig nyid na yang rnam pa sna tshogs byed*). Continuing with analogies like, "Although there are many rivers they become one in the ocean / And though there are many lies, [they will be] conquered by one truth" (*chu bo sna tshogs pa yang rgya mtsho gcig nyid dang / brdzun pa dum dag kyang bden pa gcig gis 'joms*; verse 4). The *King Dohā* has another "water" verse worth quoting in full: "Just as a cloud comes from the ocean, and / However much rain the earth accepts, / They stay the same, like the sky, / Without increasing or decreasing." (*ji ltar chu 'dzin gyis ni rgya mtsho las / chu blangs nas ni sa gzhi gang byas kyang / de ni mnyams nam mkha' dag dang mnyam / 'phel ba med cing 'grib pa dag kyang med*; verse 5) That the same chemical composition can appear as a solid, a liquid and as vapor (clouds, for example), demonstrates how one cannot trust form to indicate the nature of something; in fact, it points to the absence of one natural form of anything. Saraha uses water to demonstrate how flowing, existing as waves, rain, or stillness are not characteristics of water but instead products of the conditions surrounding it. The analogous states of peace and agitation experienced as mind should therefore similarly be understood as products of ambient conditions and not indicative of the nature of mind itself.

101. Equanimity is free of recognition although conceptualization is not obstructed;  
By being beyond the intellect, it is free of deluded meditation.  
When one rests in that, the experience of great bliss occurs.  
First the experience of appearance and emptiness occurs,  
Like recognizing water even when it appears as ice. [440]
102. Second, without obstructing the appearance of recognition,  
Emptiness and bliss arise undifferentiated.  
Just as ice melts into water,  
Recognition and decognition dissolve in the unborn.
103. Since everything is undifferentiated, it is one in the great bliss. [445]  
This is like ice melting into water.  
If one knows whatever is encountered to be the nature of everything,  
One will not be held by bondage and freedom and will not chase after recognition.
104. The mind will not be obstructed as though tightly tied,  
When the knot is undone, one is freed and mind itself is directed at will. [450]  
As the crow returns to the ship,<sup>378</sup>  
When just that is known, appearance is enjoyment.
105. Just like an elephant tamed by using the hook,  
Remaining free of action, it is like an elephant mastered.<sup>379</sup>  
Acquaintance with recognition and decognition is harmless. [455]  
By knowing appearance and emptiness, one is free of conceptualization.

<sup>378</sup> This is a reference to the practice of bringing a crow on board a seafaring ship: when searching for land (for the purposes of our metaphor, this implies searching for something solid to grasp) the crow is released. If it finds land, it will not return; if there is no land, however, the crow will return to the ship. The same metaphor appears in *Dohākośa*, verse 70.

<sup>379</sup> The elephant and the hook is a metaphor for methods that need only be used to train the mind, but not to maintain discipline afterwards; although the elephant may be tamed with a hook (the *ankus*, an ancient implement for assisting in training elephants that certainly predates *Saraha*), once it is tame the hook is unnecessary.

106. By resting in origination, without differentiation, recognition is not caused.  
That itself, the all-pervasive Lord, is like knowing all enemies.<sup>380</sup>  
Dissolving of appearance into emptiness is like dissolving salt into water;  
Dissolving recognition and decognition is just that. [460]
107. In the two types of arising there is no cause for arising.  
When the wisdom that is the encounter with the unborn dawns,  
Recognition manifests wisdom without bias and without mental objects,  
It blazes like fire spreads through tinder,  
Or like the experience of the unutterable bliss of a youth.<sup>381</sup> [465]
108. Though diversity appears, it does not become recognition;  
A gently flowing stream does not become waves.  
Since it illuminates its own nature, recognition is a lamp.
109. Just as the Great Seal is not revealed anywhere,  
It is like a *sarkone* bird abiding in the sky. [470]  
The conduct of realization is not determined by discrimination,  
Like *patari* animals, you will be free from longing and attachment.  
When the result that is beyond the intellect is desired, it is not attained.  
Among the best medicines, it is the *beta* itself.<sup>382</sup>

<sup>380</sup> Just as the Lord who presides over a maṇḍala has a full view of all enemies who may wish to disrupt the sacred kingdom, suchness is wakefulness, vigilance, and skill.

<sup>381</sup> The unutterable bliss of a youth is presumably the exquisite desire and passion experienced by one who has fallen in love for the first time—a desire that pervades each thought and action.

<sup>382</sup> The *sarkone* bird and *patari* animals defy explanation. I consulted numerous experts whose skills in Tibetan greatly exceed my own, and these remain a mystery. Birds, nonetheless, are a pervasive metaphor for non-abiding, as they move through the sky without leaving any traces. The “ri” in *patari* may be—if the word is Tibetan—indicating that this is a reference to animals that live in isolation on mountains. Animals who roam mountain

110. Hey! Thus the wise who are accomplished in skillful methods [475]  
 Will seal decognition with the unborn:  
 Because it is free of recognition, it is sealed by decognition;  
 With appearance, emptiness is sealed;  
 With emptiness, appearance is sealed.
111. When recognition and appearance arise as the taste of bliss, [480]  
 They are sealed by emptiness and decognition.  
 When appearance and recognition and the seal of emptiness  
 Are sealed by abiding in decognition,  
 Appearance and recognition, dawning as the taste of bliss  
 Will not be analyzed by the contemplation of signs, and will  
 remain beyond the characterizing intellect. [485]
112. Recognition and appearance are sealed by the unborn;  
 The unborn is sealed by the beyond the intellect.  
 Because recognition is the seal of the bliss that is decognition,  
 It has not become nothing, and has not fallen into the extreme  
 of nihilism. [490]
113. As the abiding and arising are sealed,  
 They are not reified and do not fall into the extreme of  
 eternalism.  
 Everything is unborn and beyond the intellect;  
 Everything possesses the continuum of great bliss;  
 Knowing this, one does not fall into the extreme of  
 indifference. [495]
114. Recognition is the substance of saṃsāra;  
 In the realization of decognition,  
 Take equanimity as the path:  
 Probed by awareness, emptiness is equanimity, and  
 Reflexive awareness, free of subject and object, is equanimity.  
 Free of the two truths, meditation on equanimity is nondual. [500]

- Meditative absorption without recognition of anything  
 whatsoever is the best equanimity.  
 Equanimity which is neutral is not meditation.
115. Cognition in its natural place emanates from the experience of  
 decognition;  
 Characteristics of recognition are taken as the path of  
 decognition.
116. Carried on the path of bliss, it is unobservable, it is beyond the  
 intellect; [505]  
 Not conceptualized as dual, the bliss is uninterrupted.
117. Hey! Free of experience, one is released from subject and  
 object,  
 Then that itself will be seen, the meaning of the Great Seal.  
 In the great treasury of jewels which is the ultimate result,  
 May whoever desires to abide in the Great Seal, [510]  
 Realize the unsullied result!

This was sung by Saraha.  
 The *Body Treasury* called the *Immortal Adamantine Song* is  
 complete!