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༄༅ བར་དོའི་རྩ་ཚིག་བཞུགས་སོ།

## The Root Verses of the Bardos

རྒྱལ་བ་ཞི་ཁྲོའི་ལྷ་ལ་ཕྱག་འཚལ་ལོ། བར་དོ་རྣམ་པ་རྒྱལ་གི་རྩ་ཚིག་ནི།

Salutation to the peaceful and wrathful jinas. This is a summary of the six bardos.

ཀྱེ་མ་བདག་ལ་སྐྱེ་གནས་བར་དོ་འཆར་དུས་འདིར།

**KYE MA**                      **DAG LA**      **KYE NAE**      **BAR DO**      **CHAR DU**      **DIR**  
*alas! (how sad to be*      *me*      *to,*      *birthplace*      *intermediate*      *arising time*      *here\**  
*trapped in ignorance)*      *for*      *(i.e. life time from birth or*  
*the moment of conception*

*\* i.e. when it happens to me*      *until death)*

Alas! Now when the bardo of life is arising for me,

ཚོལ་ལོང་མེད་ལོ་སྤང་བྱས་ནས།

**TSHE LA**      **LONG**      **ME**      **LE LO**      **PANG**      **JAE NE**  
*life*      *in*      *leisure*      *without*      *laziness*      *abandon, stop*      *do*      *then*  
*(i.e. life is very short, and we do not know when it will end)*

I must abandon all laziness during my span which is too short for leisure.

ཐོས་བསམ་སྒྲོམ་གསུམ་མ་ཡིངས་ལམ་དུ་འདུག།

THO SAM GOM SUM MA YENG LAM DU JUG  
*hearing, reflecting meditating three unwavering, path in, on enter, studying keep to*

Keeping to the path of undistracted listening, reflecting and meditating,

སྣང་སེམས་ལམ་སྒྲོང་སྐྱུ་གསུམ་མངོན་འགྱུར་སྤྱད་སེ།

NANG SEM LAM LONG KU SUM NGON GYUR JANG  
*appearances, mind, path go well modes three # become manifest, practise ideas \* citta develop clearly*

\* seeing both in sunyata

# Dharmakaya, Sambhogakaya, Nirmanakaya

I must progress on the path of understanding the nature of appearances and mind, and practise making the three modes of enlightenment manifest.

མི་ལུས་ལན་གཅིག་ཐོབ་པའི་དུས་ཚོད་འདིར།

MI LU LAN CHIG THOB PAI DU TSHOD DIR  
*human body time one get time here*

(To gain a human birth, especially one with the 18 freedoms and opportunities, uses up so much good karma that it is very difficult to get one again.)

Now at this time when I have gained my sole chance of a human birth

ཡིངས་པ་ལམ་ལ་སྒྲོང་པའི་དུས་མ་ཡིན།

YENG PA LAM LA TONG PAI DU MA YIN  
*vacillating, path to, on leisure time not have uncertain, hazy*

I have no time to waste on the path of vacillation.

*Alas. Now when the bardo of life is arising for me I must abandon all laziness during my span which is too short for leisure. Keeping to the path of undistracted listening, reflecting and meditating, I must progress on the path of understanding the nature of appearances and mind, and practise making the three modes of enlightenment manifest. Now at this time when I have gained my sole chance of a human birth, I have no time to waste on the path of vacillation.*

**(Alternative reading)**

[Note: There is also a tradition of the six lines of these verses being read in the line order 1, 5, 6, 2, 3, 4 as below.]

*Alas! Now when the bardo of life is arising for me, now at this time when I have gained my sole chance of a human birth, I have no time to waste on the path of vacillation. I must abandon all laziness during my span which is too short for leisure, and keeping to the path of undistracted listening,*

reflecting and meditating, I must progress on the path of understanding the nature of appearances and mind, and practise making the three modes of enlightenment manifest.

ཀྱེ་མ་བདག་ལ་མྱི་ལམ་བར་དོ་འཆར་དུས་འདིར་ཅུ།

<b>KYE MA</b>	<b>DAG LA</b>	<b>MI LAM</b>	<b>BAR DO</b>	<b>CHAR DU</b>	<b>DIR</b>
las!	me to	dream	intermediate period	arising time	here, now (i.e. when it happens for me)

Alas! Now when the bardo of dreams is arising for me,

གཉི་མུག་རོ་ཉལ་བག་མེད་སྐངས་བྱས་ནས་ཅུ།

<b>TI MUG</b>	<b>RO NYAL</b>	<b>BAG ME</b>	<b>PANG</b>	<b>JAE</b>	<b>NE</b>
stupidity, mental dullness	sleeping like a corpse	careless, unheeding	abandon	do	then

I must abandon the unheeding, corpse-like sleep of stupidity and

བློ་པ་ཡིངས་མེད་གནས་ལུགས་ངང་ལ་འཇོག་ཅུ།

<b>DRAN PA</b>	<b>YENG ME</b>	<b>NAE LUG</b>	<b>NGANG</b>	<b>LA</b>	<b>JOG</b>
attention, recollection of awareness	unwavering	natural mode, original condition	openness	in	enter and keep

Keep to the openness of my original situation with unwavering recollection.

མྱི་ལམ་བབྱུང་ལ་སྐྱལ་བསྐྱུར་འོད་གསལ་སྐྱུངས་ཅུ།

<b>MI LAM</b>	<b>ZUNG</b>	<b>LA</b>	<b>TRUL GYUR</b>	<b>OD SAL</b>	<b>JANG</b>
dream	hold	with, thus	transform it with the understanding of its illusoriness	clear illumination, natural clarity, self-luminous quality	practice

Being aware of my dreams as they come, I must transform them into the practice of natural radiance.

དུད་འདྲོ་བཞིན་དུ་ཉལ་བར་མི་བྱ་བར་ཅུ།

<b>DUD DRO</b>	<b>ZHIN DU</b>	<b>NYAL WAR</b>	<b>MI</b>	<b>JA WAR</b>
animal	as	sleep	not	doing

(i.e. with a dull mind)

Not sleeping like an animal

གཉིད་དང་མངོན་སྲུང་འབྲེས་པའི་ཉལ་ལེན་གཅེས་ཅུ།

<b>NYI</b>	<b>DANG</b>	<b>NGON</b>	<b>SUM</b>	<b>DRE PAI</b>	<b>NYAM LEN</b>	<b>CHE</b>
sleep	and	direct knowledge	mix, merge	practice		very important, precious

I will follow this very important practice of merging sleep with the direct experience of my true nature.

*Alas! Now when the bardo of dreams is arising for me, I must abandon the unheeding corpse-like sleep of stupidity and keep to the openness of my original situation with unwavering recollection. Being aware of my dreams as they come, I must transform them into the practice of clear radiance. Not sleeping like an animal I will follow this very important practice of merging sleep with the direct experience my true nature.*

**(Alternative reading)**

*Alas! Now when the bardo of dreams is arising for me, without sleeping like an animal I will follow this very important practice of merging sleep with the direct experience of my true nature. I must abandon the unheeding corpse-like sleep of stupidity and keep to the openness of my original situation with unwavering recollection. Being aware of my dreams as they come, I must transform them into the practice of clear radiance.*

ཀྱེ་མ་བདག་ལ་བསམ་གཏན་བར་དོ་འཆར་དུས་འདིར་མུམ་།

<b>KYE MA</b>	<b>DAG LA</b>	<b>SAM TAN</b>	<b>BAR DO</b>	<b>CHAR</b>	<b>DU</b>	<b>DIR</b>
<i>alas!</i>	<i>me to</i>	<i>mental stability, meditation</i>	<i>intermediate period</i>	<i>arising</i>	<i>time</i>	<i>here, now (i.e. when it happens for me)</i>

Alas! Now when the bardo of mental stability is arising for me,

རྣམ་ཡེངས་འབྱུང་བའི་ཚོགས་རྣམས་སྤངས་བྱས་ནས་།

<b>NAM YENG</b>	<b>TRUL WAI</b>	<b>TSHOG NAM</b>	<b>PANG JAE</b>	<b>NE</b>
<i>very wavering</i>	<i>confusion</i>	<i>many different kinds</i>	<i>abandon</i>	<i>then</i>

*(i.e. all the thoughts that arise from uncertainty about the true nature)*

I must abandon all the different forms of vacillating confusion and

ཡེངས་མེད་འཛིན་མེད་མཐའ་བྱལ་ངང་དུ་འཇུག་།

<b>YENG ME</b>	<b>DZIN ME</b>	<b>THA DRAL</b>	<b>NGANG DU</b>	<b>JUG</b>
<i>unwavering (always in mNyam-bZhag, meditation)</i>	<i>without grasping (always in rJe-Thob, post-meditation)</i>	<i>free of all limits, no reifying conceptualisation</i>	<i>openness in</i>	<i>keep, enter and stay</i>

Keep to the unwavering, ungrasping openness free of all limits.

བསྐྱེད་ཚོགས་གཉིས་ལ་བཏན་པ་ཐོབ་པར་བྱེད་།

<b>KYED</b>	<b>DZOG</b>	<b>NYI</b>	<b>LA</b>	<b>TAN PA</b>	<b>TOB PA</b>	<b>JA</b>
<i>developing system</i>	<i>perfecting system</i>	<i>two</i>	<i>to, in</i>	<i>stability</i>	<i>get, keep</i>	<i>do</i>

I must gain stability in both the developing and perfecting systems.

བྱ་བ་སྤངས་ནས་རྩེ་གཅིག་སྐྱབ་དུས་འདིར།

**JA WA PANG NE TSE CHIG DRUB DU DIR**  
*activity (dualistic and worldly) abandon then one-pointedly practise time here, now*

Abandoning all worldly activities I will practise one-pointedly here and now.

ཉོན་མོངས་འབྲུལ་པའི་དབང་དུ་མ་བཏང་ཞིག།

**NYON MONG TRUL PAI WANG DU MA TANG ZHIG**  
*afflictions (anger, desire, etc.) confusion power under not go, send myself must*

I must not go under the bewildering power of the afflictions.

*Alas! Now when the bardo of mental stability is arising for me, I must abandon all the different forms of vacillating confusion and keep to the unwavering, ungrasping openness free of all limits. I must gain stability in both the developing and perfecting systems. Abandoning all worldly activities, I will practise one-pointedly here and now. I must not go under the bewildering power of the afflictions.*

**(Alternative reading)**

*Alas! Now when the bardo of mental stability is arising for me, I will abandon all worldly activity and practise one-pointedly here and now. I must not go under the bewildering power of the afflictions. I must abandon all the different forms of vacillating confusion and keep to the unwavering, ungrasping openness free of all limits. I must gain stability in both the developing and perfecting systems.*

ཀྱེ་མ་བདག་ལ་འཆི་ཁ་བར་དོ་འཆར་དུས་འདིར།

**KYE MA DAG LA CHI KHA BAR DO CHAR DU DIR**  
*alas! me to death time period arising time here, now (i.e. when it happens for me)*

Alas! Now when the bardo of dying is arising for me,

ཀུན་ལ་ཆགས་སེམས་ཞེན་འཛིན་སྤངས་བྱས་ལ།

**KUN LA CHAG SEM ZHEN DZIN PANG JAE LA**  
*all to desireful mind hopes, grasping abandon do then (worldly things) expectations*

I must abandon all hopes, desires and grasping.

གདམས་ངག་གསལ་བའི་ལམ་ལ་མ་ཡིངས་འདུག།

**DAM NGAG SAL WAI LAM LA MA YENG JUG**  
*instructions, doctrines clear path on unwavering enter; keep (i.e. keeping them clearly in mind)*

Keeping unwaveringly on the clear path of the dharma instructions,

རང་རིག་སྐྱེ་མེད་ནམ་མཁའ་འི་དབྱིངས་སུ་འཕོ།

**RANG RIG**      **KYE ME**      **NAM KHAI**      **YING SU**      **PHO**  
*own awareness, unborn sky's depth in send, merge*  
*mind (sunnyata) (like a bubble rising in boiling water)*

I must integrate my awareness in the unborn sky-like space.

འདུས་བྱས་ཤིག་བྲག་ལུས་དང་གྲུལ་ལ་ཁད།

**DU JAE**      **SHA TRAG**      **LU DANG**      **DRAL**      **LA KHAD**  
*compounded flesh blood body free of almost to, almost, on the*  
*point of*

Now, as I am becoming free of this compounded body of flesh and blood,

མི་རྟག་སྐྱེ་མ་ཡིན་པར་ཤེས་པར་བྱ།

**MI TAG**      **GYU MA**      **YIN PAR**      **SHE PAR**      **JA**  
*impermanent illusory is as know do*

I must know it to be impermanent and illusory.

*Alas! Now when the bardo of dying is arising for me, I must abandon all hopes, desires, and grasping. Keeping unwaveringly on the clear path of the dharma instructions, I must integrate my awareness in the unborn sky-like space. Now, as I am becoming free of this compounded body of flesh and blood, I must know it to be impermanent and illusory.*

**(Alternative reading)**

*Alas! Now when the bardo of dying is arising for me, now as I am becoming free of this compounded body of flesh and blood, I must know it to be impermanent and illusory. I must abandon all hopes, desires, and grasping and keep unwaveringly to the clear path of the dharma instructions. I must integrate my awareness in the unborn sky-like space.*

ཀྱེ་མ་བདག་ལ་ཚོས་ཉིད་བར་དོ་འཆར་དུས་འདིར།

**KYE MA**      **DAG LA**      **CHO NYID**      **BAR DO**      **CHAR**      **DU**      **DIR**  
*alas! me to dharmata, actuality period arising time here*  
*original situation (it starts to appear just after death)*

Alas! Now when the bardo of actuality is arising for me,

ཀུན་ལ་དངངས་སྐྱེག་འཛིགས་སྣང་སྣངས་བྱས་ནས།

**KUN LA**      **NGANG**      **TRAG**      **JIG**      **NANG**      **PANG JAE**      **NE**  
*all to fear fear terror ideas abandon then*  
*(that appears)*

I must abandon all fearful and terrified notions about all that is occurring, and

གང་ཤར་རང་སྣང་རིག་པར་ངོ་ཤེས་བྱེད།

**GANG SHAR RANG NANG RIG PAR NGO SHE JA**  
*whatever arises own idea awareness, as recognise do*

Recognise that whatever arises is the natural radiance of my own awareness.

བར་དོའི་སྣང་ཚུལ་ཡིན་པར་ཤེས་པར་བྱེད།

**BAR DOI NANG TSHUL YIN PAR SHE PAR JA**  
*bardo's form of arising is, as know do*

I must know that this is the mode of appearance of this bardo.

དོན་ཆེན་འགགས་ལ་ལུགས་པའི་དུས་གཅིག་འོང།

**DON CHEN GAG LA THUG PAI DU CHIG ONG**  
*great meaning, stop to impatient time one come*  
*the important point (i.e. very pressing and urgent and necessary to use)*

Now when this very important and crucial time is coming

རང་སྣང་ནི་སྲོའི་ཚོགས་ལ་མ་འཇིགས་ཞིག།

**RANG NANG ZHI TROI TSHOG LA MA JIG ZHIG**  
*own ideas, peaceful wrathful hosts to not afraid must be*  
*my own notions*

I must not be afraid of the hosts of peaceful and wrathful forms that are my own luminosity.

*Alas! Now when the bardo of the actuality is arising for me, I must abandon all fearful and terrified notions about whatever occurs, and recognise that whatever arises is the natural radiance of my own awareness. I must know that this is the mode of appearance of this bardo. Now when this very important and crucial time is coming I must not be afraid of the hosts of peaceful and wrathful forms that are my own luminosity.*

**(Alternative reading)**

*Alas! Now when the bardo of actuality is arising for me, now when this very important and crucial time is coming, I must not be afraid of the hosts of peaceful and wrathful forms that are my own luminosity. I must abandon all fearful and terrified notions about all that is occurring and recognise that whatever arises is the natural radiance of my own awareness. I must know that this is the mode of appearance of this bardo.*

ཀྱི་མ་བདག་ལ་སྲིད་པ་བར་དོ་འཆར་དུས་འདིར་།

**KYE MA DAG LA SID PA BAR DO CHAR DU DIR**  
*alas! me to possible worldly period arising time now (i.e. when this is happening to me)*

Alas! Now when the bardo of rebirth is arising for me,

འདུན་པ་ཚུ་གཅིག་སེམས་ལ་བརྒྱུད་བྱས་ནས་།

**DUN PA TSE CHIG SEM LA ZUNG JAE NE**  
*devotion, longing one-pointed mind in, as hold then*  
*(keeping one-pointedly on pure dharma thoughts and the understanding of non-duality)*

I must keep my mind in one-pointed devotion and

བབས་པོ་ལས་ཀྱི་འཕྲོ་ལ་ནམ་གྱིས་འཇུག་།

**ZANG PO LAE KYI TRO LA NAN GYI THUD**  
*good karma of arising to urgent, pressing extend, assist encourage*

*(This is the moment to strive for a good rebirth and for that, much good karma is necessary, so we must make only good thoughts arise.)*

Strongly encourage the maturing of my good karma.

མངལ་སློ་དགགས་ནས་རུ་ལོག་བྲན་པར་བྱེ།

**NGAL GO GAG NE RU LOG DRAN PAR JA**  
*womb door stop, close then reverse remember do*  
*(the entrance into the six realms)*  
*(go back through the stages of dependent origination, right up to ignorance<sup>1</sup>, and then transcend it)*

Closing the womb door I must remember to reverse the process that leads to existence.

སྲིད་རུས་དག་སྣང་དགོས་པའི་དུས་གཅིག་ཡིན་།

**NYING RU DAG NANG GO PAI DU CHIG YIN**  
*strong, genuine faith, pure view need time one is*  
 This is the one time when authentic pure vision is required, so

མིག་སེར་སྦྲངས་ནས་སྤྲོ་མ་ཡབ་ཡུམ་སྦྲོམ་།

**MIG SER PANG NE LA MA YAB YUM GOM**  
*jealousy abandon then guru with his consort meditate on this*

*(As one approaches and is about to be born into the womb of a woman making love one very strongly meditates that the couple is in fact one's guru with his or her consort and in this way all desirous attachments are destroyed and the impulse to enter will be overcome. If we do enter, it will be by merging with their nectar.)*

Abandoning all jealousy, I will meditate on my guru with his consort.



དྲིན་ཅན་སློམ་མའི་ཞལ་ནས་འདི་སྐད་གསུངས།

DRIN CHEN LA MAI ZHAL NE DI KAD SUNG  
kind guru's mouth from these words spoken

Bear in mind the instructions that I have received

སློམ་མའི་གདམས་ངག་སེམས་ལ་མ་བཞག་ན།

LA MAI DAM NGAG SEM LA MA ZHAG NA  
guru's instructions mind in not put if

From my very kind guru's own mouth,

རང་གིས་རང་ཉིད་བསྐྱུས་པར་མི་འགྱུར་རམ།

RANG GI RANG NYID LU PAR MI GYUR RAM  
self by self deceived, cheated not become or

Will I not be my own deceiver?

*Thoughtlessly never believing that death will come I have passed this life in the constant practice of meaningless activity, and now if I go from it empty-handed, that will be a great loss and failure. I must remember that the one certain necessity is the holy dharma. Therefore if now, at this moment, I do not meditate on the divine forms or bear in mind the instructions that I have received from my very kind guru's own mouth, will I not be my own deceiver?*

བར་དོ་རྣམ་པ་རྒྱལ་གི་ཕྱི་ཚིག་རྣམས་སོ།

This concludes *THE ROOT VERSES OF THE SIX BARDOS*, from the terma of Karma Lingpa.

Translated by C.R. Lama and James Low at Santiniketan, Bengal, India 1978

Revised by James Low, June 2013

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Refer to Page 11 of Chapter 1, the section entitled 'Cutting through, or Indirect Experience'.