

Excerpt from “*The Words of My Perfect Teacher*” by Patrul Rinpoche translated by Padmakara Translation Group

The instructions are in two parts: first the training, and then the actual practice.

1. Training for transference

Using the explanations on transference that you have received, train yourself over and over again with diligence until the signs of success appear.

At the moment, while all your body’s channels, energies and essences are intact and vigorous, you will find that actually to perform the transference is quite difficult. But once you arrive at your final hour, or in extreme old age, it becomes much easier. It is like fruit on a tree, hard to pluck in summer while it is still growing. But once it is ripe and already to fall in autumn, the hem of your clothes only has to brush against it for it to fall from the branch.

2 Actual transference

The time to put transference into actual practice is after the signs of approaching death have already appeared, when you are sure that there is no turning back and that the process of dissolution has already begun. Do not do it at any other time. As it says in the tantras:

Perform transference when the right time comes.
Otherwise you will kill the deities.*

There are many states in the process of dissolution, but to make it easy to understand, it can be divided into the dissolution of the five sense faculties, the dissolution of the four elements, and the phases of clarity, increase and attainment.

Dissolution of the five sense faculties has started when, for instance, the recitation of the monks gathered around your death-bed only sounds like a confused murmur. You can no longer distinguish the syllables. Or when you hear the sound of people’s voices as though coming from very far away, and can no longer make out the words. That is your auditory consciousness coming to an end. Your visual consciousness is coming to an end when, instead of seeing forms as they are, you can only see a blur. As the experiences of smell, taste, and touch likewise come to an end and reach their final dissolution, that is the moment that the introducing instructions should be given. IF there is someone present

* According to the Vajrayāna, the body is considered a sacred mandala of deities. In this sense, to shorten one’s life by performing transference prematurely would be to destroy that mandala.

who is able to perform the transference of consciousness, that is definitely the right moment to do it.

Then as the inner element of flesh dissolves into the outer element of earth,³¹⁵ you experience a sensation like falling down a hole. You feel heavy, as though being crushed under the weight of a mountain. Sometimes, the dying person asks to be pulled up or for his pillow to be raised. As the blood dissolves into the outer water element, you salivate and your nose runs. As the body's heat element dissolves into the fire element, your mouth and nostrils feel dry and, starting with the extremities, your body starts to lose its heat. In some cases vapour emerges from the top of the head at this stage. As the inner breath, or energy, element dissolves into the outer air element, your different energies—the ascending energy, the energy of evacuation, the fiery energy and the all-pervading energy—all dissolve into the life-supporting energy. Breathing in becomes difficult. Breathing out is a panting, pouring out of the lungs through the throat. Then all the blood in your body gathers together in the life-channel and three drops trickle into the centre of your heart, one after the other. With three long sighs, your outer breath suddenly stops.

At that moment the white element or “semen” that you received from your father moves swiftly downward from the top of your head. As the outward sign, you perceive a whiteness something like a cloudless sky lit up by moonlight. As the inward sign, you experience clarity in your consciousness and the thirty-three kinds of hostile thought cease. This state is called “clarity.”

The red element or “blood” that you received from your mother moves swiftly upward from the region of your navel. As the outward sign, you perceive a redness like that of a clear sky lit up by the sun's glow. As the inward sign, you experience predominantly bliss in your consciousness and the forty kinds of lustful thought cease. This state is called “increase.”

As the red and white elements meet in your heart, your consciousness enters between them. The outward sign is a perception of blackness like that of a clear sky in complete darkness. The inward sign is that your consciousness experiences a state without any thoughts and you faint away into utter darkness. This is called “attainment.”

You then emerge for a short while from that swoon into an experience like that of a sky unaffected by any of those three previous conditions. This is the “clear light of the time of the ground”³¹⁶ appearing. To recognize it as your own nature and rest in it is what is called “superior transference to the dharmakāya.” It is Buddhahood without passing through any intermediate state.

After that point the intermediate state of absolute reality and the intermediate state of becoming progressively unfold, but those states will not be described here because they are related to the instructions on the main practice.

For those without adequate experience of the page,³¹⁷ the best moment to apply the transference is at the beginning of the dissolution process. At that time, completely cut through all attachment to this life and give yourself courage by thinking, “Now that I am dying, I will rely on the instructions of my teacher and fly to the pure lands like an arrow shot by a giant. What a joy this is!”

It will be difficult to remember clearly all the visualizations and other important points of transference, so if you have a companion able to remind you, ask him or her to do so. But in any case, at that moment, drawing on your previous training and applying the instructions of this profound path, the time has come when you really have to put the transference into effect.

Here, the, are the steps of the main practice of transference, which are the same whether you are training yourself in it or using it at the actual moment of death.

3 The steps of the meditation on transference

Sit comfortably on a cushion, with your legs crossed in the vajra-posture, keeping your back completely straight.

3.1 THE PRELIMINARIES

First, go completely through all the preliminaries, clearly and in detail, starting with the *Calling the Teacher from Afar* and continuing up to the moment of dissolution in the Guru Yoga.

3.2 THE MAIN VISUALIZATION

Visualize that your ordinary body,³¹⁸ in an instant, becomes that of Vajra Yoginī. She is red, with one face and two arms, standing with her two legs together, her right foot raised in the “walking posture.” Her three eyes are looking up toward the sky. For the purposes of these instructions on transference, visualize her with an attractive expression, at once peaceful and slightly wrathful. With her right hand high in the air, she rattles the small skull-drum that awakens beings from the sleep of ignorance and confusion. With her left she holds at her hip the curved knife that severs the three poisons at the root. She is naked except for a garland of flowers and ornaments of bone. Like a tent of red silk, she appears but has no substance or reality. All this is the *outer empty enclosure* of the body.

Running down the centre of your erect body, visualize the central channel, like a pillar in an empty house. It is called the “central” channel because it stands in the very axis of the body, without leaning to the left or the right. It has four characteristics. It is blue like a film of indigo, symbolizing the unchanging dharmakāya. Its fabric is as fine as a lotus petal, symbolizing the tenuousness of the obscuring veils arising from habitual tendencies. It is as bright as the flame of a sesame-oil lamp, symbolizing the dispelling of the darkness of ignorance. And it is as straight as a segment of bamboo, indicating that it never leads to lower or wrong paths. Its upper end opens straight out into the aperture of Brahmā on the top of the head, like an open skylight, to symbolize that it is the pathway to liberation and higher rebirths, while its lower end is closed off four fingers below the navel without any opening, to symbolize that all access to samsāra and lower rebirths is sealed. All this is the *inner empty enclosure* of the central channel.

Now visualize a swelling in the central channel at the level of the heart, like a knot in a bamboo stem. Above this knot, visualize the bindu of energy, light green in colour, active and vibrant. Just above it is the essence of your mind-consciousness, the red syllable *hrīh*, with the long vowel sign and two dots for the *visarga*,* fluttering and vibrating like a flag in the wind. This represents your mind awareness.³¹⁹

In the air a cubit above your head visualize a jeweled throne, held up by eight great peacocks. Upon it is a multicoloured lotus and the discs of the sun and moon, one upon the other, making a three-layered cushion. Seated on the cushion is your glorious root teacher, incomparable treasure of compassion, in essence embodying all the Buddhas of the past, present and future, and in form the bhagavān Buddha and Protector, Amitābha. He is red, like a mountain of rubies embraced by a thousand suns. He has one face. His two hands rest in the gesture of meditation, holding a begging bowl filled with wisdom nectar of immortality. Clad in the three monastic robes, the attire of a supreme *nirmānakāya*³²⁰ observing pure conduct, his body bears the thirty-two major and eighty minor marks, such as the *usnīsa* on the crown of his head and wheel marked on the soles of his feet, and is bathed in a brilliant radiance from which immeasurable rays of light shine forth.

To Amitābha’s right is the noble Lord Avalokiteśvara, embodiment of all the Buddhas’ compassion, white, with one face and four arms. The hands of his two upper arms are touching together, palm to palm, at this heart. His lower right hand moves the beads of a white crystal rosary and his lower left hand is hold-

* A Sanskrit sign pronounced as a hard “h.” In Tibetan usage it simply lengthens the syllable, and is written as two small circles one above the other, which symbolize wisdom and means.

ing the long stem of a white lotus whose flower, near his ear, has all its petals open.

To Amitābha's left is Vajrapāni, Lord of Secrets, embodiment of all the Buddhas' power and strength. He is blue, and in his two hands, crossed over at his heart, he is holding a vajra and bell.

Both of these deities are wearing the thirteen sambhogakāya ornaments.* Amitābha is seated, his legs crossed in the vajra posture. This symbolizes that he dwells in the extremes of neither samsāra nor nirvāna. The two Bodhisattvas are standing, which symbolizes that they never tire of working for the benefit of beings.

Around these three principal deities all the lineage teachers of the profound path of transference are gathered like a mass of clouds in a clear sky. They turn their faces with love towards you and all other beings. They gaze at you with smiling eyes, thinking of you with joy. Think of them as the great guides who liberate you and all other beings from the sufferings of samsāra and the lower realms, leading you to the pure land of great bliss. Visualize according to the text, starting from:

My ordinary body³¹⁸ becomes that of Vajra Yoginī ...

down to:

... Gazing skyward with her three eyes.

Then from:

In the centre of her body runs the central channel ...

as far as the words:

... Her body perfect with all the major and minor marks.

Then, with total faith and trust, your whole body tingling and tears streaming from your eyes, repeat as many times as possible the prayer:

Bhagavān, Tathāgata, Arhat, utterly perfect Buddha, protector Amitābha, I prostrate before you. I make offerings to you. In you I take my refuge.

* See page 267

Then recite the next prayer three times in full, starting from :

*Emaho ! In this place, the spontaneously appearing absolute
Akanistha ...*

as far as:

... May I capture the stronghold of the expanse of dharmakāya!

Next, recite three times the last part, starting from:

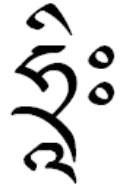
With devotion in my mind...

Finally, recite three times the last line alone:

May I capture the stronghold of the expanse of dharmakāya!

While you pray, concentrate solely upon the syllable *hrīh*, the representation of your mind-awareness, with such devotion for your teacher and protector, Amitābha, that your eyes fill with tears.

Now comes the ritual for ejecting consciousness. As you recite “Hrīh, Hrīh” five times from the back of your palate, the red syllable *hrīh*, representing your mind-awareness, is lifted upward by the vibrant light-green bindu of energy,³²¹ which rises higher and higher, vibrating all the while. As it emerges from the aperture of Brahmā at the top of your head, call out “Hik!” and visualize the bindu shooting up, like an arrow shot by a giant, and dissolving into Buddha Amitābha’s heart.



Go through the process seven, twenty-one or more times, visualizing the *hrīh* in your heart and repeating “Hik!” as before. In other traditions one says “Hik!” as the consciousness shoots up and “Ka” as it comes back down, but in this tradition we do not say “Ka” for the descent.

Then go through the ritual as before as many times as suits you, starting with:

Bhagavān ... protector Amitābha ...

reciting the prayers and practicing the technique of ejection and the rest. Then once again, recite three or seven times from:

Bhagavān ... protector Amitābha ...

down as far as:

... I make offerings to you. In you I take my refuge.

Follow this with the condensed transference prayer called Inserting the Grass-stalk, written by the treasure-discoverer Nyi Da Sangye³²² and transmitted through the lineage of Dzogchen Monastery:

*Buddha Amitābha, I prostrate before you;
Padmasambhava of Oddiyāna, I pray to you;
Gracious root teacher, hold me with your compassion!
Root and lineage teachers, guide me on the path.
Bless me that I may master the profound path of transference.
Bless me that this short path of transference may take me to the realm of
celestial enjoyment.³²³
Bless me and others that as soon as this life is over,
We may be reborn in the Land of Great Bliss!*

Recite this prayer three times, and then repeat the last line three times. Continue practising the technique of ejection for as long as it suits you, as before. Then start again from:

Bhagavān, Tathāgata ...

and recite the transference prayer from the Sky Doctrines, transmitted through the lineage of Palyul monastery:³²⁴

*Emaho! Most marvellous protector Amitābha,
Great Compassionate One and powerful Vajrapāni,
With one-pointed mind, for myself and others I beseech you:
Bless us that we may master the profound path of transference.
Bless us that, when the time comes for us to die,
Our consciousness may be transferred to the state of great bliss!*

Say this prayer three times, repeating the last two lines again three more times. Then practise the technique of ejection as before.

These last two prayers are not part of the texts of instruction on the *Heart-essence of the Vast Expanse* and were not transmitted by Rigdzin Jigme Lingpa, but came down through Dzogchen Rinpoche, via Gochen Monastery, and through other intermediaries. They form part of the transmissions received by Kaybjé Dodrup Chen Rinpoche, who united them into a single stream. He used them himself, as did my own venerable teacher. Dodrup Chen Rinpoche also

inherited the Kagyü lineage of instructions on transference going back to Gampopa. In the transference prayer-book he compiled, some prayers by Gampopa are therefore to be found, although those particular prayers are not ones my own teacher was in the habit of reciting. In any case, the visualization process in all these different traditions is exactly the same, so beyond any doubt the streams of instructions were united to become one great river. My venerable teacher received them many times from Kaybjé Dodrup Chen Rinpoche. I feel that all those who received them from him must also have received the Kagyü tradition of transference instructions at the same time, and are therefore authorized to recite the corresponding lineage and other prayers. Whether or not the two condensed prayers given here are identical to those in Dodrup Chen Rinpoche's collection, they differ only very slightly from other versions and I have therefore written them down just as my venerable teacher taught them.

Once, my teacher was giving the transmission of the Sky Doctrines transference tradition. While he was performing transference for a large crowd, some people did not catch the phrase he added, "... all of these (*di nam*), when the time comes for them to die;" so now some say "...this life's perceptions (*dir nang*)..." and others say "... hence (*di ne*)..." both of which are, in my opinion, slightly incorrect.

When you have gone through the practice many times and the time comes to end your session, seal it in the expanse of the five kāyas by saying "P'et!" five times. Then rest in equanimity in the natural state without contriving anything.

All the lineage teachers above your head dissolve into the three main figures; the two Bodhisattvas dissolve into Amitābha; Amitābha dissolves into light and then into you. Immediately visualize yourself as the Buddha Protector Amitayus, red, with one face, two hands and two legs. He is sitting in the vajra posture. His hands rest in the gesture of meditation, holding a vase of life filled with the wisdom nectar of immortality and topped with a wish-granting tree. He is wearing the thirteen sambhoga-kāya ornaments.

Recite "Om Amarani Jivantiye Svāhā" a hundred times, then the dhārani of long life and other mantras. This is to prevent the duration of your life being affected by the practice and—through the truth of interdependence—dispels any obstacles that might threaten it.³²⁵ This part of the practice is not necessary when you perform transference for a dying or already dead person, nor when you do it for real at the moment of your own death.

The signs of success in this practice are described in the root text:

The head aches; a drop of serum, shining like dew, appears;

A grass stalk can slowly be pushed in.

Practice assiduously until these signs arise.

To conclude, share the merit and recite the *Prayer for Rebirth in the Pure Land of Bliss* and other prayers.

Unlike the other practices of generation and perfection phases, these instructions on the profound path of transference do not require a long training period. Signs of success will definitely come after one week. That is why the method is called “The teaching that brings Buddhahood without any meditation,” and that is why everyone should take this unsurpassable shortcut as their daily practice.

Unable to take care of myself, I mutter incoherently over the dead.

Without practicing, I spread the canopy of my interminable teachings.

Bless me and other frauds like me

That we may be able to practise with perseverance.