

A COMMENTARY ON THE
KALACAKRA TANTRA

Taught by

Geshe Lharampa Ngawang **Dhargyey**

Translated by

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Presented at

Sakya Tegchen Choling
Seattle, Washington, U S A.

April 3 - June 12, 1982

ONLY THOSE WHO HAVE RECEIVED THE KALACAKRA
INITIATION
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The Kalacakra Initiation

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Kalacakra belongs to the class of Highest Yoga Tantra and was originally given by Shakyamuni Buddha to the Dharma King of Shambhala, Suchandra. The lineage was maintained in Shambhala and later passed back to India and then to Tibet where it has been preserved until the present day. Recently the Kalacakra initiation has also been given not only to people from the West, but actually in the Western World. However, authentic publications concerning Kalacakra in English or any other Western language remain extremely rare, so we are particularly happy to be able to publish the present work.

In 1983 LTWA's resident teacher, Geshe Ngawang Dhargyey was invited by some of his long-standing students in Seattle USA to give an explanation of the practice of Kalacakra. The present work is an edited translation of that teaching and contains advice concerning the various commitments and initial practices peculiar to the Kalacakra system within the context of Highest Yoga Tantra in general.

The oral teaching was first translated from Tibetan into English by Gelong Jampa Kelsang (Alan Wallace) and the subsequent transcript was meticulously edited and prepared for publication under the able supervision of Ivanka Vana Jakic. The completed copy was then offered to Geshe Ngawang Dhargyey for review.

We are most grateful to all who have contributed their efforts to this project, particularly to the teacher, translator and editor, and also to Venerable Dagchen Sakya Rinpoche and Dagmo Kusho who kindly offered a location for the teaching in their centre Sakya Tegchen Choling.

Sale and distribution of this book is restricted. We urgently request that only initiates into Highest Yoga Tantra and preferably into the Kalacakra system itself should read it. This caution is customary to the tradition, but to disregard it can only be detrimental- That said we hope that the work will be of benefit to those serious students interested in practising this impeccable path to Buddhahood for the welfare of living beings.

Gyatso Tshering
DIRECTOR

Those who have received the Kalacakra initiation can obtain copies upon request from:

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PREFACE

The peerless supreme guide of all gods and living beings, his name in reality being the Omniscient Protector, is His Holiness Tenzin Gyatso Pal Zangpo. The mere hearing of his name provides protection from the fears of existence and quiescence.

As a result of his kindness, I who am his devoted disciple, Geshe Ngawang Dhargyey, have received the complete initiation of Sn-Kalacakra, the King of Tantras, together with the scriptural reading and instructions.

In 1982, at Sakya Tegchen Choling, in Seattle, Washington, U.S.A., I gave a series of teachings based on the Profound Instructions of Sri-Kalacakra, composed by Gyeltsab Choje, which is like an eye with which to perceive the meaning of the Tantra, and is unlike other traditions of explication of the King of Tantras.

I hope that the transcript of those explanations, which has been prepared in book-form with altruistic intentions by Ivanka Vana jakic, and with which I am also pleased, will be of great benefit to many fortunate students.

May all sentient beings, our own aged mothers filling all of space, quickly achieve the supreme attainment of Mahamudra, the state of empty form.

Geshe Lharampa. Ngawang Dhargyey

Library of Tibetan Works and Archives
Dharamsala, India
April 4, 1983

FOREWORD

Between July 1981 and October 1982, for the first time on the North American continents approximately 3,000 people received the Kalacakra initiation from His Holiness Tenzin Gyalso, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, in Madison, Wisconsin, and from the Venerable Kalu Rinpoche, in New York and San Francisco. Through this act of generosity especially extraordinary because it has manifested at a time when the possibility of a nuclear war threatens all life on our planet with extinction, the masters have bestowed upon initiates the timeless legacy of method and wisdom by which Ultimate Goodness can be attained.

For reasons apparent and unknown, the Kalacakra tradition is making its way to the West. With this awareness and with the motivation to benefit those who have received the initiation, I requested the basic teachings on the Kalacakra Tantra from His Holiness and the Venerable Geshe Lharampa Ngawang Dhargyey. With the encouragement of His Holiness, Geshe Dhargyey graciously consented to give a series of lectures on the subject in the Spring of 1982, while he was in Seattle as a Visiting Professor at the University of Washington. We were fortunate that Gelong Jhampa Kelsang (Alan Wallace) accepted the difficult task of acting as interpreter, and that the ideal environment of the Sakya Tegehen Choling was made available through the kindness of its founders, the Venerable Jigdal Dagchen Sakya Rinpoche and Dagmo Kusho.

The twelve teaching sessions offered between April 3 and June 12, 1982 were transcribed from thirteen ninety-minute tapes. Long before the initial typing was completed, it was decided that the material should not be presented simply as rough unauthorized class notes. To make absolutely certain that no omissions or misinterpretations occurred, all tapes had been transcribed twice before a copy was sent to Gelong Jhampa Kelsang for approval. During a subsequent discussion, both of us agreed that the

teachings would be presented as a practical manual, the implementation of which presupposed some reorganization of the word-for-word transcript', and that I would be responsible for outlining and organizing the material.

Since Geshe Dhargyey did not only follow Gyeltsab Je's commentary on the Kalacakra Tantra but also drew from the vast treasury of oral transmissions received from his own masters, there was some initial difficulty in organizing the material. However, most of the titles that appear within the major headings of the present manual were given by the Venerable Geshe himself, and the outline that has finally emerged seems to have done so naturally and of its own accord.

Because the teachings represent a vast exposition on a complex subject, they have been arranged into a more manageable and sequential form to make them readily accessible from the standpoint of actual practice. Due to this consideration of changes in organization, the twelve original teaching sessions have been consolidated into ten sections. Once this rough outline was conceived, I made a journey to Vajrapani Institute (Boulder Creek, California) to consult with the Venerable Geshe about the proposed changes. His full approval and encouragement have been the source of Inspiration and have provided the energy necessary to carry this idea through to its completion.

Geshe Dhargyey's exposition flows readily from one teaching session to the next and it has been organized according to the format given in the Table of Contents. To facilitate a better overall understanding, material has been shifted, in some cases, from one section to another. An example of such reorganization is found in the instructions on vows and pledges. In the second week of the course, Geshe Dhargyey taught the fourteen root tantric downfalls in accordance with the Kalacakra system and the twenty-five modes of behaviour. Later, during the latter part of the tenth and the entire eleventh session, he gave extensive commentary on the fourteen general root tantric downfalls, the eight secondary tantric downfalls, the commitments of the nineteen pledges, and so forth. All of these teachings have been brought under one heading and can be found in Sections Two and Three.

The most important change has been made by shifting the

practical instructions on the vajra recitation and the vase-like meditation. They were originally taught in the seventh session as a part of the explanation on the ten energies, the four drops, and the importance of guru devotion. However, from the functional point of view, and in this particular context, the two meditational practices represent an integral part of the exposition on the third branch of the practice on the stage of completion called 'life-effort,'* For this reason, the reader will find them in Section Nine of this volume.

Since the presentation was oral, a great deal of wordiness, naturally prevalent in spoken language, was conscientiously edited by Richard Baldwin and Bill Johnson who took special care to preserve the original atmosphere of the teaching situation without obstructing the natural flow of the written language. For this reason alone, the current volume is slightly smaller than the original transcripts. However, I would like to emphasize that nothing presented in the teachings has been either excluded or changed. Notwithstanding any apparent modal inadequacies, the teachings preserved shall always be priceless and unaffected by the current instrument of organization.

Equivalents in Sanskrit and/or Tibetan have been provided whenever available and appropriate. Square brackets are employed for my own interpolations. I have also included a number of cross references in the hope that the reader may more readily see and appreciate the inter-relatedness of all sections, and thus arrive at a more comprehensive understanding of the entire text. Furthermore, because of the complex subject presented in such a relatively short time, a few basic annotations have been provided with the hope that they may be helpful to the majority of Dharma students and practitioners who might be unaware of the availability of the related literature already translated into English. Due to restrictions of time, I was barely able to discover or refer to recent translations of works dealing with the subject of tantra in general, and with Kalacakra Tantra in particular. It is my sincere hope that

*This same sequence of material also appears in the notes to the Kalacakra. 'To Enrich the Mind of the Wise' written by Gyalwa Siedun Drup, the First Dalai Lama, was stated by Tillett H. Mullin in *Indigenität Sutra and laturas* (Ithaca; Gabriel Press. 1982). pp. 147-K.

the reader will befriend the reference works cited and will use them as invaluable supplements to this commentary [It cannot be stressed enough that this volume is only an initial attempt to explore the inconceivably rich tradition of one of the most profound subjects of tantra. It would be very important for even a moderately serious student, let alone a practitioner, to clarify areas that have remained unresolved and to answer questions that naturally arise as a result of in-depth reading, by conducting a comparative study of the available authoritative sources and by working closely with a qualified teacher

I would like to express my most profound indebtedness to His Holiness the Dalai Lama for transforming a dream into reality and for graciously fulfilling a wish of a relatively large number of Western disciples who, otherwise, might not have had the opportunity to receive these invaluable teachings directly through the unbroken oral transmission. I am equally indebted to the Venerable Geshe Ngawang Dhargyey for skillfully and compassionately instructing us in methods by which we will, eventually, be able to comprehend the true nature of the dream-like quality of that same reality.

My very special thanks go to Gelong Jhampa Kelsang whose excellent interpreting made it possible for us to begin the process of bringing up to the conscious level some of the intuitive guesses and the often undefined questions about tantra, as well as the possibility of assimilating some of its aspects into our everyday lives.

I wish to acknowledge my heartfelt gratitude to the Venerable Jigdal Dagchen Sakya Rinpoche, the Founder and Spiritual Director of the Sakya Tegchen Choling, Dagmo Kushe and the members of their center for their kind support and warm hospitality.

For their time, guidance and helpful suggestions concerning the original sources of reference, I would also like to express my deep appreciation to T. G. Dhonthog Rinpoche, Thupo Tulku Rinpoche, Geshe Lobsang Oyatso, Geshe Thubten Gedun, Professor Jeffrey Hopkins, and Professor David S. Ruegg.

A tremendous amount of effort has been expended in the production of this volume by a great number of friends. The

process of transmutation from tapes to the completed book hid many different aspects and even a greater number of difficulties. Grateful acknowledgement is expressed to the following people: Christina Clark, Elizabeth Heath, Ken Hockett, Bill Johnson, Bill Lerner, Lorraine Lester, Betty McGowan and Carl Yoder for investing long hours in providing a word-for-word transcription of the tapes; Christina Clark, Elizabeth Heath, Judith Lundberg and Debbie Roland for the initial typing; Richard Baldwin and Bill Jonson for their endless hours spent on editing, discussing, and polishing the final version of the text. All of us are indebted to Judith-Ann Robertson for her painstaking typing of the original manuscript. We express our heartfelt gratitude to Diana Reed, Judith-Ann Robertson and Tsering Yuthok for their patience and perseverance in producing the final copy. Their contribution is indeed greatly appreciated. Special thanks go to Peter Allen, Elizabeth Heath and Debbie Roland for proofreading the material.

We are greatly indebted to the anonymous sponsor who kindly donated the initial funds necessary for Geshe Dhargyey's visit to the West and to our dear friends Roderick and Violet Cassidy for their exceptional generosity in unquestioningly and selflessly sponsoring these teachings. Without their aid and constant moral support, even the best of our intentions could not have materialized.

This volume is a labour of love dedicated, with the highest motivation of benefiting all that lives to the long lives of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and all our precious teachers of the Three Vehicles. Furthermore, it is offered as a small contribution to the gigantic task of transplanting the Dharma to the West, with the hope that deeper appreciation of our ultimate goal as Mahayana-Dharma students and practitioners may be born. May whatever merit acquired collectively and individually, by preserving the pure unbroken oral transmission from the East to the West, nurture greater understanding and peace among all people in the world.

Ivanka Vana Jakid

Seattle, Washington
July 1982 - November 1983

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MANJUSRI*

Obeisance to ray Guru and Protector, Manjusri,
Who holds to his heart a scriptural text
symbolic of his seeing all things as they are.
Whose intelligence shines forth as the sun,
unclouded by delusions or traces of ignorance
Who teaches in sixty ways, with the loving compassion
of a father for his only son,
all creatures caught in the prison of samsara,
confused in the darkness of their ignorance,
overwhelmed by their suffering.
You, whose dragon-thunder-like proclamation of Dharma
arouses us from the stupor of our delusions
and frees us from the iron chains of our karma.
Who wields the sword of wisdom hewing down suffering
wherever its sprouts appear,
clearing away the darkness of ignorance.
You, whose princely body is adorned with the one hundred
and twelve marks of a Buddha,
Who has completed the stages achieving
the highest perfection of a Bodhisattva,
Who has been pure from the beginning,
I bow down to you, O Manjusri.
With the brilliance of your wisdom, O compassionate one,
Illuminate the darkness enclosing my mind.
Enlighten my intelligence and wisdom
so that I may gain insight
Into Buddha's words and the texts that explain them.

* *Daily Recitations of Preliminaries*, 4th Ed (Dharam&ala: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives. 1975). p 9.

MANJUSRI

la.ma d'ung gonpo je.tziin jaro.pal yang la ch'ag.tsal.lo.
g'ang.g'i lo.dr'd drib.nyi Irin dr'al nyi.tar namd'ag rab.sal.wa.
j'i.nye d'on.kiin j'i.zhin zig.ch'ir nyi.kyi l ug kar leg.b'am.dzin.
g'ang.d'ag si.pai tzon.rar ma ng mun t orn dug.ngal gy't.zer wa
dro.tsog kun.la b'u. chig tar.tze yan.lag dr'ug.chui yang dan sung,
drag tar ch'er.drog nyon.mong nyi.long la.kyi chag drog drol.d-
la.ching
ma rig mun.sel dug.ngal nyu g'u j'i.nye cho.cUe ral.dr'i nam.
do.na d'ag.thing sa chui far son yon.tan lu.dzog gyal.sa l'u.wo-
.ku.
chu.tr'ag chu.d'ang cbu.nyi gyan.tra dag.lo mun.sel jam.pal.yang-
la.du.
tze.dan ky'o.kyi ky'en.rab wo.zer.g'yi dag.loi ti.mug miin pa
tab.sil.nL
ka.d'ang tan.cho chung.lug tog.pay.yi.
lo.dr'6 pob.pai nang.wa tzal.d'u.sol.

SECTION ONE

It is of very great importance to cultivate a proper motivation for receiving these teachings. Not just any motivation will do. Since the Kalacakra Tantra is a means of attaining full enlightenment of Buddhahood within one short lifetime, the motivation to be cultivated is to listen to the teachings with the intent of reaching enlightenment ever so swiftly for the great benefit of all sentient beings. Rather than listening to the teachings as mere words, check your own mind and actually cultivate this motivation.

As we receive these teachings we should imagine ourselves not simply being in an ordinary house made of brick and mortar, but rather generate ourselves inside the palace of Kalacakra, that is, a splendid palace of jewels and of light. Likewise, with regard to the Master who is giving the teachings, we should cast aside ordinary appearance. In fact, in the stage of generation on the path of tantra the chief points of refutation are the ordinary appearance and ordinary grasping (ordinary conceptualization). Applying this to the present situation, abandon the ordinary appearance of the Teacher and generate him, or look upon him, as the natural manifestation of Kalacakra. In the same way, those of us who are receiving the teachings should also abandon our ordinary appearance and concept of our own selves and generate ourselves in the simple form of Kalacakra with two hands and fully adorned with the ornaments.

I. THE MEANS FOR PROGRESSING ALONG THE PATH OF KALACAKRA

A. THE MEANS FOR BECOMING A SUITABLE VESSEL TRAINING IN THE COMMON PATH

In the progression of the practice, first of all there is the motivation, the attitude. In the words of the great master, Dragpa

Gyeltsen, "If one clings to this life, one is not a spiritual person."¹ One should draw one's clinging away from the affairs of this life and look rather to the life beyond

Secondly, from the same master "If one grasps at the bounties and pleasures of the cycle of existence, including those of humans and gods, there is no renunciation, the emergent mind." It is important to recognize that whatever pleasures or bounties arise in the entire cycle of existence are without essence and they are by (their) nature unstable. One needs to turn one's mind away from pleasures and fortunes and, in this way, generate renunciation.

Thirdly, "If one clings to personal well-being there is no awakening mind (Skt bodhicitta; Tib. byang. chub. kyi. sems)." The point here is that one must turn the mind away from concern for one's own welfare to that of others. This is something that should really be put into practice

Fourthly, "If there occurs grasping, there is not the view (Skt. drsti; Tib. Ita. ba)" 'Grasping' here refers to the conceptualization of true existence. Although we conceive of things as existing inherently since they do appear [to us] or seem to exist from their own side, in fact, there is no such thing as true existence. Phenomena do not really exist in this way (from their own side inherently), but rather as mere conceptual imputations. As long as one is still conceiving of phenomena as being truly existent, one does not have the 'view,' that is, the realistic view, the view of the middle way.

These verses summarize what is called the common training. It is called 'common' because it exists in both the sutra and the tantra paths. Within these verses are presented the emergent mind or renunciation, the awakening mind of bodhicitta, and the realistic view. These three are what is necessary in order to fully enter the tantric path. If they are missing the tantric path does not bear fruit. Particularly, the awakening mind is essential. If it is lacking, no matter how much one practices tantra it will not lead to full enlightenment, it will not even lead to the Mahayana path of accumulation which is the first of the five Mahayana paths.

There are two paths for attaining full enlightenment: the causal path of the Sūtiyana and the resultant path of the Vajrayana. Of these two, Vajrayana is superior. Among the great panditas of

ancient India, the very profound path of tantra was as renowned as the sun and the moon.

Within the Vajrayana there are four general tantric paths:

1. The Action Tantra (Skt. kriya-tantra; Tib. bya. rgyud).
2. The Performance Tantra (Skt. carya-tantra; Tib. spyod. rgyud).
3. Yoga Tantra (Skt. yoga-tantra; Tib. rnal. "byor. rgyud).
4. The Highest Yoga or Supreme Yoga Tantra (Skt. annuttara yoga-tantra; Tib. rnal. *byor. bla. med).

Among these four, the Supreme Yoga Tantra is extremely profound. It provides the means to attain full enlightenment with one body in one lifetime.

In the Supreme Yoga Tantra, there are the male tantras and the female tantras. The Kalacakra Tantra is a female tantra. What is the general distinction between the male and female tantras? The female tantras particularly emphasize wisdom, that is, the emptiness aspect. Translating into tantric terms, this refers to the 'clear light'. The male tantras emphasize the method aspect, which refers specifically to the illusory body."

Individuals who have not yet entered the path toward enlightenment, and those who are fundamentally capable of attaining full enlightenment in one life with one body, must be born from a womb and be endowed with six factors (Tib. khams. drug). In essence, this means that one must be a human being of this realm (Skt. jambudvīpa). There are different ways of describing the six factors. According to one, the blood, flesh and skin are received from the mother, and the bones, marrow and white bodhicitta from the father. Another presentation is that of the four elements (earth, water, fire and air), plus the channels of energy (Skt. nadi; Tib. rtsa) and the 'drops' (Skt. bindu; Tib. thig. le).

A lot of information is being given here and we hear a lot of words. But it is insufficient to simply leave it at that and say, "Here, now I have this information." The point is that this teaching should be meditated upon. One needs to engage in the practice not only for some days, but for weeks and months. The mind is gradually transformed in this way. Likewise, the emergent mind (renunciation), the awakening mind (bodhicitta), and the realistic view (the view of the middle way) should be cultivated.

We have minds which are fit for the cultivation of all of them. They, as well as our own minds, are impermanent phenomena. Given the proper causes and conditions, these three aspects can arise in one's own continuum. So, it is very important to put these teachings into practice. The people who are receiving these instructions are not simply here to gather some intellectual knowledge but, having received the empowerment, have come here to receive the teachings in order to put them into practice. It is very important that we really apply what we hear.

There are two very different ways of receiving the teachings. One is the worldly way, simply gathering information to gain greater knowledge and also greater reputation and position, and so forth. In tantra, this type of attitude or motivation is totally unsuitable. The point here is to receive the teachings in order to transform one's own mental continuum.

In order to practice the Kalacakra, first of all, it is absolutely essential to receive the empowerment. Furthermore, the master from whom one receives the empowerment should be a fully qualified tantric master who bears the 20 qualities signifying such a master. These 20 include ten outer qualities and ten inner qualities. Furthermore, for the empowerment one needs to have a completely accurate mandala made exactly the right way.* What is required of the practitioners? The disciples must be well trained in the common path (which has already been presented), and have both a very firm faith and enthusiasm for tantra.

B. RIPENING ONE'S MIND BY MEANS OF THE EMPOWERMENT

For the Kalacakra there are seven empowerments which are like a child growing up. These seven are called 'Empowerments of Entering Like a Child.' One needs to receive all of the seven empowerments (in order to be able and allowed) to meditate on the stage of generation.

TUB SEVEN EMPOWERMENTS OF ENTERING 'LIKE A CHILD'

J. The First Empowerment - The Water Empowerment

JUJI as mother having given birth immediately washes the child

with water, in like fashion, the master first gives the water empowerment for cleansing the three doors, that is, the body, speech and mind of the initiates.

2. *The Second Empowerment - The Empowerment of the Head-dress*

The analogy here is that the hair on the child's head is simply left. This empowerment acts as a cause for the eventual attainment of the usnisa (the crown protrusion of a Buddha) when oneself becomes a Buddha. It is very fortunate to be able to receive such an empowerment.

3. *The Third Empowerment - The Empowerment of the Crown Banner*

This represents the five Buddha Families and is likened to putting ornaments on the child, such as earrings.

4. *The Fourth Empowerment - The Empowerment of the Vajra and Belt*

Of special importance in this analogy is the bell which corresponds to the child laughing. The vajra and bell in this empowerment are especially related to the Buddha-Mind and the Buddha-Speech. Receiving this empowerment places imprints upon one's own continuum for giving such a result.

5. *The Fifth Empowerment - The Empowerment of the Thumb-Vajra*

This is analogous to putting an ornament on the child's thumb.

6. *The Sixth Empowerment - The Empowerment of the Name*

This is analogous to naming the infant.

7. *The Seventh Empowerment - Initiation*

The Tibetan word for this empowerment is 'je. nang' (rjes.g-nang), which translates as 'initiation' or 'permission.' This is analogous to the father or the mother teaching the child.

The essential significance is that by receiving the seven empowerments, one is empowered to practice the stage of generation. The first seven empowerments of 'entering like a

child' also empower or cause one to gain the first seven Bodhisattva grounds as follow:

- a. The water empowerment leads and gives rise to the first ground, the Very Joyful (Skt. pramudita; Tib. rab.tu.dga-\ba).
- b. The headdress empowerment gives rise to the second ground, the Stainless (Skt. vimala; Tib. dri.ma.med.pa).
- c. The crown banner empowerment gives rise to the third ground, the Luminous (Skt. prabhakari; Tib. od.byed.pa).
- d. The vajra and bell empowerment gives rise to the fourth ground, the Radiant (Skt. arcismati; Tib. od. 'phro.ba).
- e. The thumb-vajra empowerment gives rise to the fifth ground, Difficult to Conquer (Skt. sudurjaya, Tib. sbyang.dka'.ba).
- f. The name empowerment gives rise to the sixth ground, the Manifesting One (Skt. abhimukhi; Tib. mngon.du.gyur.ba).
- g. The empowerment of permission or initiation gives rise to the seventh ground, the Far Gone One (Skt. duramgama; Tib. ring.du.song.ba).

THE FOUR HIGHER EMPOWERMENTS

1. The First Empowerment - The Empowerment of the Vase

The point of this empowerment is to ripen the mind of the trainee. First, one imagines offering a girl, between the ages of 12 and 20, to the vajra master. Together with this, one offers the mandala and prayers to the vajra master and requests the empowerment,

The vase empowerment is actually given when the imagined girl comes back to the trainee who then enjoys her presence through laughing and fondling her breasts. As one touches the girl's breasts there arises the 'bliss' (Skt. sukha; Tib. bde.ba) which should be experienced as indivisible from emptiness. It is with this experience of indivisible emptiness and bliss that one actually receives the vase empowerment. There is not actually any vase or any pot that is used for this empowerment. What is referred to as the pot* are the breasts of the girl, which are called the "vase that holds the white" (Tib. dkar. 'dzin.gyi.bumpa). Because one touches the breasts of the girl and the breasts are likened to the vase, this is called the empowerment of the vase.

The vase empowerment leads one to the attainment of the eighth Bodhisattva ground called the Immovable (Skt. *acala*; Tib. *mi.g.yo.ba*).

The ninth Bodhisattva ground is called the Good Intelligence (Skt. *sadhupati*, Tib. *legs.pa'i.bio.gios*). The tenth Bodhisattva ground, called the Cloud of Dharma (Skt. *dharma-megha*; Tib. *chos.kyi.sprin*), is the highest of the Bodhisattva grounds. There is no place to go from there except Buddhahood. By the time you get there you are in a very fine place indeed.

2. The Second Empowerment - The Secret Empowerment

The second of these four higher empowerments is the secret empowerment. During the empowerment, one imagines that the secret vajra of the vajra master is placed in the mouth of the trainee and one tastes the white bodhicitta of the vajra master. This white bodhicitta goes down to the heart-cakra of the devotee and there arises 'great bliss' (Tib. *bde.chen.po*). This bliss is experienced with the realization of emptiness, which is essential. With this unified experience of bliss and emptiness one receives (he secret empowerment).

It should be re-emphasized that, because of the nature of the empowerment and the nature of the practice, it is absolutely vital for trainees to have full faith in the tantra. This is called the secret empowerment because the secret substance of the vajra master is experienced.

3. The Third Empowerment - The Wisdom Empowerment

The third of the higher empowerments is called the wisdom empowerment. It is received in the following way: a visualized consort, or dakini-consort, is given to the trainee and they enter sexual union. From this union the white bodhicitta descends from the crown of one's head. When it arrives at the throat-cakra there arises 'joy' (Skt. *ananda*; Tib. *dgu'ba*). When it descends to the heart-cakra there arises 'supreme joy' (Skt. *parama-ananda*; Tib. *mchog.dga*). When it descends to the navel-cakra there arises 'extraordinary joy' (Skt. *virama-ananda*; Tib. *khyad.par.gyi.dga'ba*). And when it descends to the genital-cakra there arises the 'spontaneous joy' (Tib. *lhan.skyes.kyi.dga'ba*), which is the highest of these four. One experiences this fourth type of Joy while

ascertaining its empty nature. With that unified experience of both the bliss and the realization of emptiness, one receives the wisdom empowerment. It is so called because the dakmi, the consort herself, being of the nature of wisdom is called prajna or wisdom. When one speaks of the white and red bodhicitta it should be pointed out that it is not only males that have the white bodhicitta, or only females who have the red - both sexes have both. It is simply a matter of dominance. Even while receiving this empowerment where one goes into union with a consort, if one is a woman, one is still generating oneself in the form of Kalacakra and is receiving the initiation in that state. There is no contradiction in that sense. Likewise, to take just another example of Vajrayogini (Tib. rdo.rje.rnal.'byor.ma), if one is a man, one receives this empowerment and engages in the practice while generating oneself in the feminine aspect of Vajrayogini.

4. The Fourth Empowerment - The Empowerment of the Word

Without allowing the white bodhicitta to come out, but retaining it, one experiences the 'supreme immutable bliss' (Tib. mchog.tu.mi. 'gyur.ba' i.bde.ba), With the experience of this bliss one receives the word empowerment. To allow the white bodhicitta to come out is actually a root downfall in this tantra. It is something to be absolutely avoided.

THE FOUR HIGHER HIGHER EMPOWERMENTS

Finally, there are four higher, higher empowerments. These have the same names as the preceding four in the same order: the vase, the secret, the wisdom and the word. The distinction between the four higher and the four higher, higher empowerments is in what is actually occurring.

One distinction between the two is that the higher empowerments are given in terms of the conventional truth (Skt. *stamvrtisatya*; Tib. *kun.rdzob.bden.pa*). The four higher, higher empowerments are given in terms of the actual meaning (Tib. *nges.don*) and the supramundane (Tib. *jig.rten.las.das.pa*), that is, the actual supramundane aspect or approach.

The four higher, higher empowerments are the ultimate

empowerments in this cycle. These four higher, higher empowerments empower or allow one to perform the activities of the vajracarya or vajra master, involving both giving empowerment as well as explaining the tantra.

1. The First Empowerment - The Vase Empowerment

During the vase empowerment, the white bodhicitta descends from the crown-cakra to the point between the eyebrows (Tib. smin.mtshams) in the central channel and one experiences 'joy' (Skt. ananda; Tib. dga'.ba), it is with the experience of this joy that one actually receives the vase initiation.

2. The Second Empowerment - The Secret Empowerment

The secret empowerment is the empowerment in which the trainee goes into union with the consort or dakini. When the white bodhicitta descends [from the point between the eyebrows] down to the heart-cakra, one experiences the 'supreme joy' (Skt. parama-ananda; Tib. mchog.dga'). That experience is the receiving of the secret empowerment.

3. The Third Empowerment - The Wisdom Empowerment

During the empowerment of wisdom, with the trainee and consort in union, the white bodhicitta descends [from the heart-cakra] to the genital-cakra at which point one experiences the 'special' or 'extraordinary joy' (Skt. virama-ananda; Tib. khyad.dga').

The actual receiving of the empowerment of wisdom occurs with the experience of 'spontaneous joy' (Skt. sahaja-ananda; Tib. lhan.skyes.kyi.dga'.ba) when the white bodhicitta reaches the very tip of the genital organ. For very highly realized beings, the white bodhicitta is not ejected at all but is retained by the force of the 'wind' or 'energy' (Skt. prana; Tib. rlung).

4. The Fourth Empowerment - The Empowerment of the Word

The gradual cultivation of the stage of generation (Skt. utpatti-krama; Tib. bskyed.rim) and completion (Skt. sarnpann-krama; Tib. rdzogs.rim), which are developed by repeatedly engaging in the practice of meditation, eventually culminates in the actual state of full enlightenment. At that point one achieves

the Body (Tib. rlung.sems) of Kalacakra This is not an ordinary, gross body made of flesh and bones like our present body, but is created simply from energy (Tib. rlung) and consciousness (Tib. sems). This is the culmination of the tantric path.

The empowerment of the word is received when one gains an understanding that this is how the tantric path culminates. In other words, one understands that the culmination of the tantric path is (of) the nature of the 'great union' (Tib. zung." jug).

It is pointed out that if one is a monk (Skt bhiksui Tib., dge.skong) or a lay practitioner with vows of celibacy then, in receiving these empowerments, one does not have an actual consort and does not receive the empowerments in the way just described. Not only a fully ordained monk, but anyone who has the vows of going forth (Tib. rab.'byung.sdom.pa). which include the vow of celibacy, will not receive this empowerment with an actual consort. In such a case, the trainee visualizes both the consort and the entire process during the initiation. Furthermore, the empowerment utilizing an actual consort is not given to elderly people who no longer have the red and white bodhicitta but rather by means of visualization. However, if one is very highly realized, then it is possible to take the empowerment with the consort as has just been described. But, one needs to be very highly realized and not just an ordinary monk. This indicates that there are two types of consort:

'Action Mudra' (Skt. karma-mudra. Tib. las.kyi.phyag.rgya).

An action mudra is an actual consort, a real person. It is stressed once again that it is not with this type of consort that an ordinary monk receives such an empowerment

'Wisdom Mudra' (skt. jnana-mudra: Tib. ye.shes.kyi.phyag.rgya). This is a visualized consort. It is with this latter type that an ordinary monk or other persons with vows of celibacy would receive this empowerment.

THE FOUR TYPES OF JOY AS RELATED TO THE FOUR BODIES OF A BUDDHA

These four types of joy, one by one, correspondingly give rise to the four Bodies (Skt. kaya: Tib. sku) of a Buddha

1. The first, called joy (Skt. ananda; Tib. dga'ba), leads to the attainment of the Emanation Body (Skt. nirmanakaya; Tib. sprul.sku).

2. The second, supreme joy (Skt. parama-ananda; Tib. mchog.dga') leads to the attainment of the Enjoyment Body (Skt. sambhogakaya; Tib. longs.sku).

3. The third, extraordinary joy (Skt. virama-ananda; Tib. khyad.dga"), gives rise to the Wisdom Truth Body of the Buddha (Skt. jnana-dharma-kaya; Tib. ye.shes.chos.sku).

4. The fourth, spontaneous joy (Skt. sahaja-ananda; Tib. lhan skyes.kyi.dga'ba), gives rise to the Nature Truth Body of the Buddha (Skt. svabhavika-kaya; Tib. ngo bo.nyid.sku).

A verse from Milarepa praises his guru. Marpa the Great, in the following way, 'I prostrate at Marpa's feet who has arisen from the great lineage of tantra (mantra) and who embodies the four types of joy.'

Upon receiving this empowerment, it is indispensable to keep the pledges and the vows. Quoting a scripture, "Even if one does not engage in the meditation of tantra but keeps the pledges and the vows without the occurrence of a root downfall, one certainly attains full enlightenment within 16 lifetimes." The great translator Ralo Dorje Drak said. "If one does not keep the pledges and the precepts of tantra, the Buddha has not stated that one will then attain supreme enlightenment. Not only will one not reach supreme enlightenment, but one will not even attain siddhis (powers or boons) from the practice." The practice is not effective without keeping the pledges and precepts.

In this large city of Seattle there are many, many people. Among them the number who actually go to receive Dharma teachings is very small. Even in a family where the parents take the children to the temple and show them how to make prostrations and offerings, if the child does not have the merit or imprints, it is very difficult and faith may not arise. So, keep the pledges and precepts (as difficult as it may seem) and recognize the good fortune to be able to receive them in the first place. To be able to receive these teachings, one already has a great store of merit. Furthermore, to have faith in the Buddha-Dharma is also indicative of already having a great store of merit from previous

lifetimes. If this merit were missing, faith simply would not arise. One should reflect upon one's good fortune in having the opportunity to receive the empowerment and being able to follow this practice.

We should feel encouraged to engage in the practice of the Kalacakra. We do not need to do so in a very complicated or elaborate way. Rather we should generate ourselves in the simple form of Kalacakra, blue in color with one face and two arms. In Kalacakra's right hand is a vajra and in his left a bell. Kalacakra is in union with the consort who holds in her right hand a cleaver and in her left hand a skull-cup.

This is an especially good practice because it simultaneously fulfills two functions- On the one hand, it is a tantric practice leading to the culmination of the tantric stage of generation, on the other, it is also cultivating and leading to the attainment of clear stillness. By practicing in this way it is not necessary to cultivate clear stillness (Skt. Samathu, Tib. zlu.gnas) as a separate practice. One attains it naturally through the culmination of the stage of generation. You generate yourself as the Kalacakra deity with the consort-not in the space before you, but you are actually generating yourself in that form. At this time, you cultivate the appearance of the deity and the pride of being this deity. What is the rationale behind this? It is not as if simply some mundane deity, like Isvara, were to think he was a Buddha. If Isvara goes around thinking he is a Buddha, it does not make him a Buddha. The sense here is that one is taking the Buddha one will become, identifying with and establishing the pride in that Buddha, and cultivating this in the present. When we are told to "have the pride of being a Buddha, the Buddha that you will become, in the form of the Kalacakra," what is being stated is that Kalacakra is, in actual fact, a manifestation of the Buddha.

How does this relate to the origin of the Kalacakra teachings? While the Buddha was on Vulture's Peak teaching the *Pranjanipramiti* (the *Perfection of Wisdom*), he was simultaneously emanating himself in a place in the south of India where, in the form of Kalacakra, he was giving the Kalacakra teachings. The illustration at the beginning of the book, *Kalachakra Initiation, Madison 1988* is of Dawa Zangpo (lit. 'good moon') who was a king of

Shambhala It was he who requested the Buddha to teach Kalacakra and who was the chief patron, The Buddha then manifested as Kalacakra and the teachings were given.

Engaging in the practice of Kalacakra leads to one's own rebirth in Shambhala where the tantras have greatly flourished and are very widespread. By putting these teachings into practice, the path is open for our own full enlightenment. Kangsar Dorje Chang was a very great recent Tibetan lama who was one of the Root-gurus of both the tutors of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Kyabje Ling Dorje Chang and Kybje Trijang Dorje Chang. It was from him that Kyabje Ling Dorje Chang, the Senior Tutor to His Holiness, received the lineage that we are receiving here. Kangsar Dorje Chang linked Shambhala to Lhasa in that it is an actual place with villages and towns; it is just truly a delightful place. One can attain full enlightenment there.

To reiterate, while practicing the stage of generation, the main objective is to dispel the ordinary appearance and ordinary conceptions (grasping). One way of doing this while looking at any kind of form, even when looking upon a snow mountain, is to see the object (of visual perception) as being the body of Kalacakra. And for any sound that is heard, comprehend this as being the speech of Kalacakra. And whenever thoughts arise in one's own mind, be they good or bad, imagine them to be the mind of Kalacakra. This is something to be practiced all the time, even as you are driving down the freeway. It becomes a very practical way of dispelling ordinary appearances and conceptions.

It is very important to recognize the distinction of the special forms of tantra. What is its distinctiveness? With Cakrasamvara, Guhyasamaja and so forth, it is important to recognize the individual distinguishing factors of these different meditational deities and thereby understand how they differ from ordinary deities like Isvara. Recognizing in this way the profundity of tantra, there arises faith in it. In the process of practicing tantra one learns the means for dispelling attachment by means of attachment. It is like the insect that is born from wood, comes out of a tree and then turns around and eats the wood of the tree.

NOTES

*The English rendering of quotations from books and verbal statements from former masters should be considered as paraphrases and not as strict translations

-From the base of the mandala in some other tantric texts are successive mandalas of three elements: the wind or energy mandala, the water mandala, the earth-mandala. The fire mandala is not explicitly present. Its existence is implied because it occurs by the combination of the wind, the water and the earth. In the Kalicakra, on the other hand, from the base of the mandala there are the wind, the fire, the water and the earth mandalas. Thus, the (fire) is explicitly there. This is one among many distinctions found in this particular tantric system

*"White" refers to milk in this context-

SECTION TWO

We are encouraged to recognize our great good fortune in having this opportunity to assemble here and receive the Kalacakra teachings. This is a very bountiful and fortunate situation which is really due to the kindness of the Venerable Dagchen Rinpoche. If he had not established this place, we would not be here, and it might have been difficult to find a similar situation. Furthermore, you have frequent contact with Rinpoche which is a very rare event. In Tibet, for example, it was very unlikely, if not impossible, for people to have this direct access to the Sakya Gongma, the high lamas of the Sakya tradition. Therefore, it is important to recognize these rare and precious circumstances.

Westerners may get the idea that it is quite easy to meet such lamas as Dagchen Rinpoche or His Holiness because they do have this access. However, the lamas in Tibet, in terms of personal contact, were far more inaccessible. People would feel with regard to His Holiness the Dalai Lama that if they could just simply have the hand-blessing, the chug wang, on top of the head once a year, this would be a precious event. But nowadays, we can see that in Dharamsala Westerners have frequent contact with His Holiness; they can ask for personal audience and this is often given. Whereas in Tibet, just to be able to gaze upon such a lama would have a tremendous impact.

In addition, you have had the great opportunity of receiving the Kalacakra initiation. It is important to recognize and rejoice in these rare and wonderful events.

II. KEEPING ONE'S VOWS AND PLEDGES

A. THE FOURTEEN ROOT TANTRIC DOWNFALLS

Keeping one's vows and pledges is indispensable if one is to progress along the tantric path. The ones to be especially aware of

and to be on guard against the 14 root tantric downfalls. It is extremely important to avoid a root downfall. Compared to one of the four chief monastic precepts of a fully ordained monk, breaking one of these tantric precepts is an extremely serious infraction. It leaves terrible imprints on the mind with a very heavy karmic result. Even to break a secondary tantric precept (Tib. sbom.po) is more than 18 times heavier than breaking the heaviest of the monastic precepts. To commit one of the root downfalls is an extremely unwholesome and detrimental deed and leads to birth in vajra hell. Therefore, as the *SixSession Guru Yoga* states, "The 14 root tantric downfalls should be guarded against even at the cost of one's life".

In order to keep the pledges and precepts or in general to keep moral discipline, one needs to recognize and guard the four doors' which lead to downfalls. It would be like having a room full of gold with four doors. If one did not guard these four doors, a thief would come in and carry off all the gold. The four doors which lead to the commitment of a downfall are:

1. the door of ignorance.
2. the door of irreverence,
3. the door of carelessness,
4. the door of mental distortion.

If one does not guard these four doors, then every day one will commit downfalls

In order to guard the first of these four doors, one needs to know what the pledges and precepts are. Going back to the analogy of the room full of gold, to prevent a thief from coming in one needs to be able to recognize who the thieves are.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama, speaking on this subject in Dharamsala, says that it is quite ridiculous how many people go in a carefree way to receive a tantric empowerment and take all of the Bodhisattva precepts, as well as the major and secondary tantric pledges, every one of which is extremely difficult to keep properly; and yet, when it is suggested that they take the vows of monastic ordination, they think, "Oh no, that's much too difficult! I wouldn't even think of that! I'll just take the tantric and Bodhisattva precepts." The Bodhisattva and tantric precepts are actually far more difficult to keep. In comparison, the vows of

ordination, which chiefly emphasize the activities of the body and speech, are far easier to keep.

To illustrate this further, one can look to the life of AtiFa. He stated that throughout his whole life he had never incurred the slightest infraction of any of his vows of ordination. On rare occasions he would incur an infraction of one of the Bodhisattva precepts. But he stated that his infractions of the tantric precepts were as common as rain pattering down. If this is true of a highly realized tantric master such as AtiFa, it goes without saying that we are in bad shape.

For example, the breaking of a tertiary tantric precept occurs simply by taking food or drink without blessing it with the three-fold mantra Om Ah Hum. Also, failing to bless one's clothes when putting them on is a tertiary fault. This is not a difficult practice. Whenever taking food or drink it is beneficial to bless them with this mantra, Om Ah Hum, three times. Likewise, when you put on clothes, bless the clothes. And, for example, when you put on your lower garment, bless it and think of it as a tiger skin.

GENERAL ROOT TANTRIC DOWNFALLS

1. Abusing or having contempt for one's spiritual mentor.

The first of the root precepts involves the relationship with the guru. This downfall occurs through the abuse and contempt for one's spiritual mentor. Once one has brought about a spiritual relationship with the guru, one should relate to this guru properly and have proper devotion towards all of one's spiritual mentors,

2. Contemptuously disregarding the training.

Take a specific precept like the precept of not eating in the afternoon. If one were to say, "Oh, this doesn't matter," and were to toss that precept out very contemptuously and without any respect, one would incur this root downfall.

3. Disparaging or speaking of the faults of a vajra brother or sister.

Be especially cautious of this point. All of us right here and many other of our friends who have received a tantric empowerment from the same guru are vajra brothers and sisters. This rela-

tionship is very precious. For example, in an ordinary family, children born of the same parents are said to be siblings. A similar relationship occurs in the tantric practice. In an empowerment there is the process of the devotee entering the mouth of the vajra master, who is generated as Kalacakra, not simply the lama as a person. So, one enters the mouth of Kalacakra and goes into his heart, melts into the bodhicitta with the 'turning flame' (Skt. *candali*; Tib. *glum.mo*) at the heart of Kalacakra, descends down to the vajra, and through the vajra of Kalacakra enters the womb of the consort. There one is blessed by the white bodhicitta, the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. One then emerges from the womb and in this way is truly a spiritual child of Kalacakra (the vajra guru) and the consort. This is true of every individual receiving the empowerment. Recognizing this very special relationship among one's vajra brothers and sisters, one should take special care to avoid disparaging or abusing them or speaking of their faults. Committing this root downfall leads to an unfortunate realm of existence.

In general, it is good never to speak of the faults of anyone. Mahakasyapa, a great disciple of the Buddha, stated that after the parinirvana of the Buddha, he looked upon all sentient beings as being Buddhas. He said the reason for doing so was because he himself did not know, among the individuals around, whose mind had and whose mind had not been ripened. So, he simply cultivated this general awareness or recognition of sentient beings as being the Buddha.

4. Abandoning loving-kindness (Skt. maitri; Tib. byams.pa).

This occurs when one looks upon any sentient being thinking, "May this person be separated from happiness." We should be especially cautious with this precept. Although it is unlikely that we would develop a wish that all sentient beings be bereft of happiness, nevertheless, we might very well be inclined to develop such a wish for someone we do not like. In other words, in committing such a downfall it is not necessary to abandon loving-kindness for sentient beings. All that is necessary for such an infraction is to take one individual sentient being, especially a very evil being and, looking upon this person, come to the firm

conviction in one's own mind. "Although I might benefit and serve others, I will not benefit and serve this person. Even if I get the opportunity to lead this person to joy, I will not do so." Just abandoning one sentient being constitutes this downfall of abandoning loving-kindness for sentient beings. This indicates the general mood of the Mahayana Dharma, in which great compassion is so central, encompassing all sentient beings without exception. So, if one does make an exception, saying, "Yes, generally all sentient beings, but not for this or that person," then there is no longer any great compassion.

We should clearly understand what is meant by loving-kindness (Skt. *maitri*; Tib. *byams.pa*) and compassion (Skt. *karuna*; Tib. *snying.rje*). The mind wishing that sentient beings may have happiness [and the causes of happiness] is loving-kindness. The mind which wishes to dispel the suffering [and the causes of suffering] of sentient beings is compassion. If one is simply saying, "love and compassion," without understanding the meaning of these two terms, there is not much benefit.

5. *Rejecting the yearning-hodhicitta and the engaging-bodhicitta.*

Upon receiving the empowerment, one cultivates the aspiration to attain full enlightenment for the benefit of all creatures. One has made this resolution or pledge. Later, if one gets discouraged and loses confidence or enthusiasm for the practice and thinks, "How could I ever do that?" and abandons that aspiration, this root downfall occurs. Therefore, one should always maintain one's courage and confidence in the practice.

Here comes a good story for those of you who are falling asleep. In order to cultivate your courage for the practice, you can look back on the life of Dignaga. Dignaga had been writing a great treatise on one occasion. A non-Buddhist came to debate with him and tried to defeat him and everything he was doing. Dignaga and the non-Buddhist debated, and Dignaga beat him. Seeing that he was defeated, with smoke coming from his nose, the man spit fire from his mouth and burned up Dignaga's robes and all the things around him. Dignaga looked around and saw what had happened and was pretty unhappy. He thought, "In the presence of all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, I have made a resolution to attain

enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings. But if all sentient beings are going to turn out, one by one, like this fellow, it's a losing occupation. How can I ever do this? It seems so impractical." So, he took a stone tablet and tossed it up in the air with the thought, "If this stone tablet falls back to the ground, I'm going to give up bodhicitta, give up that resolution." He threw it up and looked around and did not hear the clunk of the stone falling. He looked up into the sky and there was ManjuSri holding it up for him. ManjuSri told him, "My son, don't do this, don't do this! You must continue! You are very close to falling to the lesser vehicle. You should, by all means, continue writing the text *Pramāṇasamuccaya*. If you do so, it will be unassailable by any non-Buddhist logician and, in the future, it will be like the eyes of wisdom for sentient beings."

This fifth downfall of abandoning the yearning and engaging bodhicitta occurs when one rejects this resolution, thinking, "Ah, how could I ever attain enlightenment for the benefit of all creatures?"

6. Abusing the Dharma - be it of the sutras or tantras

This occurs, for example, if out of one's faith in the Mahayana, one abuses the Hinayana; or out of one's faith in the Hinayana, one abuses the Mahayana. Also, if one has faith in the sutra path and one abuses the tantras, or if one's faith is in the tantras and one abuses the sutras. In any such case of abuse, one incurs this root downfall. One should understand that all of these teachings are from the Buddha, and that they are all methods for attaining enlightenment. Thus, it is improper to abuse any of them. All of these traditions are directed towards the attainment of full enlightenment. In a situation where one thinks, "Oh, my Dharma is good and your Dharma is not good," one commits this downfall.

7. Disclosing tantric secrets to those who have not been ripened.

"To those who have not been ripened" means "ripened through receiving an empowerment." In regard to the Kalacakra, people who have not received the Kalacakra empowerment should not be shown the Kalacakra mandala or the image of Kalacakra himself. One should not explain the meaning of Kalacakra to people who

have not received this empowerment. To do so constitutes this root downfall. We will not go into any great detail now, but there is a great danger here. During the empowerment itself, when the initiate stands at the palace, the vajracarya places the vajra upon the crown of the head and upon the heart, and (with this) binds the devotee to complete secrecy regarding this tantra, saying, "If the secrets are not kept, one's head and heart will burst." This is made very clear during the empowerment itself. At that point in the empowerment, one is also given a drink of water by the vajracarya who says, "If one keeps the secrets, this water will turn into nectar, which gives rise to siddhis or realizations; but if one fails to do so, it shall turn into the molten iron of the hell realms." This indicates the great danger of disclosing tantric secrets to those who are not fit to receive them.

Question: I have a picture of Kalacakra in my room. Should I keep this covered?

Answer: Yes. It would be better to cover such an image as well as one's vajra, ritual bell and even one's rosary. In the words of Baro Dorje Chang, a recent great lama of Tibet, placing such tantric objects out where everyone can see them is like placing herbal medicine out in the sun. If you leave it out in the sun a long time, the power of the medicine wanes until there is just a shell left. And so, in similar fashion, these tantric implements should be kept hidden. In fact, this is why tantra is most frequently referred to in Tibetan as 'sang ngak' (Tib. gsang sngags), which means 'secret mantra.' Secret - because one keeps such things concealed.

8. Abusing the aggregates.

It says here in the book *[Kalachakra Initiation, Madison, 1981]* (Madison, Wisconsin: Deer Park, 1981), p. 76.), 'your body,' but actually it is the aggregates. Practices such as extreme asceticism, extreme fasting and so on cause the degeneration of one's aggregates. In fact, in the tantric practice, one is purifying and transforming the five aggregates into the nature of the five types of Buddhas. This is what is done in the tantras. Therefore, if one contemptuously regards one's own aggregates, thinking, "These are not fit for such a meditation, this is a waste of time," and with such a contemptuous attitude punishes the body, one then incurs this root downfall.

9. Abandoning emptiness.

This downfall is incurred by having no belief or by rejecting belief in the lack of inherent existence or lack of true existence of phenomena and thus simply rejecting the point of emptiness.

10. Devoting oneself to evil friends

This refers to very evil people. Specifically, there are four cases mentioned: those who are harming the Buddha; those who are harming the body of the guru; those who wish to harm all sentient beings or have general malice towards all sentient beings; and fourthly, those who wish to bring about a destruction of the Dharma. These are especially referred to as 'evil friends.' One incurs the root downfall by becoming very intimate with such people and devoting oneself to them as one's close friends. This should not be done.

But, in avoiding this root downfall one should, by all means, also avoid the rejection of compassion (Skt. *karuna*; Tib. *snying rje*) for such sentient beings because when you reject compassion, you incur another root downfall. Therefore, even though one does not become intimate with, or devote oneself to such people, nevertheless, one still maintains compassion towards them and simply leaves it at that. One can be like a very loving parent who appears to be very wrathful and speaks very harshly to his misbehaving children. In other words, inwardly, the motivation is one of compassion while outwardly, the manifestation can appear to be quite wrathful.

This also occurs in the relationship between a guru and disciple. It is said that it is best when the guru does point out the faults of his disciples. This is one of his duties. It is something he should do. If he does so from his side in order to benefit the disciple and the disciple from his side, having heard his faults, checks up and acknowledges these and understands them, this is the best possible situation. Being scolded by one's lama is not really a bad thing; it should be understood as an aid to one's own practice.

11. Not recollecting the view.

One's obligation in the tantric practice is to direct one's mind to the view three times during the day and three times during the

night. It the view of emptiness is with regard to the Pr&sangika system, then this should be done. If one is not able to do that, then one can contemplate identitylessness in accordance with any of the following systems: the Svatantrika, the Cittamatra or the Saur&ntika [this depends on one's knowledge, abilities and realizations]. But in any case, whatever one is able to do, one should do that three times in the morning and three times in the evening. If one fails to do so. then this incurs a root tantric downfall.

12. Defeating the faith of others.

This occurs when there is another individual who does have faith in the tantric practice and one tells this person "Tantric practice is not much good. It is really gross, with people drinking alcohol," and so forth. If that person then loses faith, or if his/her faith in the tantric practice diminishes, then one incurs this tantric downfall.

13. Not devoting oneself to the tantric pledges.

If, during the ganacakra (Tib.tshogs. 'khor), when the meat (Skt. bala) and alcohol (Skt.amrta) are offered, one says (possibly being vegetarian). "Oh, I am too pure for that, I don't touch meat!" or if one is a monk for whom there is the precept of not taking alcohol and says, "I am a very pure monk and I will not touch that." and in either of these cases rejects the tshog, one incurs this root downfall.

In general, it is true that for a monk who has taken the precepts of renunciation, alcohol is very strictly prohibited. Buddha himself has said that not only members of the monastic community, but even householders should not take even the quantity of alcohol like that of a dew drop on a blade of grass - not even a drop. Therefore, it is generally discouraged for everyone and very explicitly prohibited for monks. Nevertheless, in the context of the ganacakra, which is a tantric practice, this offering of bala and amrta should be taken. One should recognize that there is a special significance in the context of tantric practice, in which the meat is like a hook that brings in the siddhis or the attainments, and the alcohol is like a lamp which illuminates the attainments. Therefore, they have a special significance and the offering should not be avoided out of a notion such as. "I'm a pure monk." or "I am

this or that." Actually, an ordained person should just take a drop and a taste, just a tiny amount, not very much. This should be done.

Another example of this root downfall would be thinking, "Oh, I don't need the external mudras or objects like the vajra, the bell and the hand-drum (Skt. damaru) because the meditation is all inside." Rejecting "all that stuff" and just "meditating inside" - such attitudes and practices would involve this root downfall. In fact, even though there is obviously the internal meditation, still the external implements such as the vajra, the bell and the hand-drum are important. The mudras are also indispensable, for it is said that if one is practicing Action Tantra and fails to perform the mudras, the sadhana is incomplete.

14. Disparaging women.

In the tantric context, women are of the nature of wisdom and to disparage them is a root downfall. Particularly in the case where one disparages women in general saying, for example, that women have very heavy mental distortions, they are devious, or that they have unstable minds. This kind of talk and general disparagement must be avoided completely when one enters the tantric paths. [And why?] Because if one disparages women in general, this includes the disparagement of the dakinis themselves. One should rather look upon all women as dakinis.

This completes the presentation of the fourteen general root tantric downfalls. What we have in the book from Madison is the normal presentation of the root downfalls, whereas, the Kalacakra presentation is somewhat different. We should recognize some of the distinctive qualities of the Kalacakra fourteen root tantric downfalls.

ROOT TANTRIC: DOWNFALLS ACCORDING TO THE KALACAKRA TRADITION

1. *Disturbing the mind of the vajracarya, the tantric master.*
2. *Breaking the command or the word of the vajra master.*
3. *Speaking of the faults of a vajra brother or sister (see page 19, No. 31).*

4 *Abandoning loving-kindness for sentient beings.*

Please clearly understand what is meant by loving-kindness and compassion. Loving-kindness is the mind wishing that sentient beings may have happiness (and the causes of happiness). Compassion is the mind wishing to dispel the suffering [and the causes of suffering] of sentient beings (see page 20. No. 4).

5. *Allowing the kunda-like while bodhicitta to emerge.*

Kunda is a flower and the white bodhicitta refers to the semen. In the Kalacakra practice, the emission of semen or the white bodhicitta is a root downfall

6. *Making a distinction or discriminating between the emptiness as it is revealed in the Sutrayana or Paramitayana, and the emptiness as revealed in Tantrayana.*

Making a distinction in terms of one being better than the other (as if the emptiness taught in tantra were superior to the emptiness taught in the sutra path) constitutes the root downfall. There is, in fact, no difference whatever between the emptiness taught in one path and the emptiness taught in the other. Where a distinction does occur is in the mind which realizes emptiness. The mind which realizes emptiness through the practice of the sutra path is a relatively gross mind compared to the mind which realizes it through the tantric path. But in terms of the reality itself, there is absolutely no distinction between the two.

7. *Disclosing tantric secrets to those who have not been ripened [see page 22, No. 7].*

8. *Abusing the aggregates [see page 23. No. 8].*

9 *Abandoning or rejecting emptiness [see page 24. No. 9].*

10 *Maintaining a contradiction (hypocrisy) between one's mind and one's mouth in terms of loving-kindness.*

In other words, a loving-kindness in which there is a lack of accord between one's mind and one's mouth, that is, speaking very friendly words, with a lot of loving-kindness, while cultivating malice or ill-intent in the mind. This hypocrisy constitutes the tenth root downfall

11. The eleventh root downfall relates to the circumstances

of the vajracarya and his consort entering union and, with retention of the white bodhicitta, experiencing the supreme immutable bliss' (Tib.mchog.tu mi.' gyur.ba'i bde.ba). the lama then explains this experience to the devotee. If the devotee, taking the analogy as simply ordinary sexual intercourse, doubts the validity of that experience, then such a doubt constitutes this root downfall.

12. Directly speaking of the faults of an authentic and fully qualified yoginyogini or disparaging him/her

For example, if one should know or see such a being taking a consort and/or alcohol and one disparages such a person, then one incurs this twelfth downfall.

13. Not devoting oneself to the tantric pledge (e.g., not accepting the offering of bala and amrta during the ganacakra or tshog lsee page 25, No. 13J.

14. Disparaging women /See page 26, No. 14j.

This completes the presentation of the 14 root tantric downfalls given in accordance with the Kalacakra tradition. We should understand these very clearly. They are indispensable for the tantric practice. Having understood them, we should diligently avoid committing them.

In order for a root downfall to be incurred, one must have the tantric precepts. If one has not taken them, such a downfall would not occur. The second condition for incurring a root downfall is that one must be in one's right mind. If one becomes mentally disturbed and one of these actions occurs, one does not incur the root downfall.

Apart from rejecting the yearning and the engaging-bodhicitta [the 5th general downfall], all of the other 13 (general) root downfalls must be enacted together with 'four binding factors' for a full downfall to occur. If the four binding factors are not present in the breaking of the 13 precepts, then the root downfall does not occur. What occurs instead is a secondary downfall (Tib.sbom-po). Consequently, one should be especially careful to maintain one's bodhicitta and prevent oneself from rejecting it.

THE FOUR BINDING FACTORS

1. *Not regarding the downfall as disadvantageous or as a fault.*
2. *Not having the attitude of turning away from such an action in the future.*

An example of the second binding factor would be committing the downfall of speaking of the faults of one's vajra siblings with the thought, "There is no fault in this. . . . I'll just carry on in the future doing the same thing "

3. *Taking delight in that action, thinking. "That was just great!"*
4. *Doing so without any sense of shame and having no consideration for others.*

Let us try to understand these two phrases: "sense of shame" and "consideration for others." A shameless attitude causes one to fail in avoiding unwholesome actions, taking oneself as the reason. In terms of one's own self-regard, shame is a private or personal matter: "I would not do this action because this is not something I would do." [The opposite is shamelessness.] This may be more clearly understood by understanding the second one, which is "lack of consideration for others." With this attitude, one fails to avoid unwholesome actions, taking others as the reason. For example, considering the Buddhas, the Bodhisattvas or the people around one, one says, "It does not matter what they think. Never mind about them, I'm going to do it anyway." So, on the one hand, it is in relation to oneself, and on the other, it is in relation to others. To engage in a downfall shamelessly and without consideration for others would be the fourth binding factor.

If one engages in one of the 13 root downfalls with all of these four binding factors present, a full root downfall does occur.

In the following explanations we will go on to the eight secondary downfalls (Tib sbom.po). It is very important to understand them. To follow these precepts and to avoid these downfalls is a very practical form of practice that we should be engaging in

THE EICIN SECONDARY TANTRIC DOWNFALLS

1. The first of these secondary downfalls (Tib.sgom.po) involves practicing with a consort who does not have the following three indispensable qualities:

- a. she must have received the empowerment.
- b. she must be abiding in pledges and precepts,
- c. she must have trained herself through tantric practice

It is totally improper to have a consort of just any type whatsoever.

2. Practicing in union without three attitudes:

- a. regarding one's body as the deity.
- b. regarding one's speech as the mantra of the deity.
- c. regarding one's mind as the Dharma (referring to Dharmakaya).

3. Disclosing or showing objects, such as images of the tantric deities (Hevajra, Kalacakra, Vajrayogini, etc.) tantric treatises or the tantras themselves, as well as one's vajra and bell, to people who have not received empowerment or to those who have the empowerment but do not have faith in the tantric practice. Furthermore, one should not show the mudras or the different movements of tantric dances to such people. If any of the above mentioned are shown, one incurs a secondary downfall.

4. Quarrelling during the tshog. A complete assembly (Tib. tshogs. 'khor) for offering the tshog includes both men and women. If there are only men, it is considered a partial male assembly; if there are only women - a partial female assembly. If during any of these three assemblies, either complete or partial, a person speaks argumentative words or quarrels even to the point of striking another person, one incurs the secondary downfall.

It is stated that it is better not to speak at all during the tshog; however, if one does speak, then to speak of Dharma. Apart from engaging in conversation dedicated to Dharma, it is better simply to remain silent.

There is tremendous benefit in performing the tshog. Here in the Sakya Center, thanks to Venerable Dagchen Rinpoche and Dagmo Kusho, you have the opportunity for engaging in it. If it is done properly, there occurs very great benefit. Whereas, if it is done improperly, there can ensue great disadvantages.

5. Deluding or deceiving another person who has faith. This occurs in a case when a person very earnestly asks questions about Dharma and the practice, and although one knows the correct answer, consciously deceives the other person with a false reply. If one simply does not know and, out of ignorance, gives a mistaken answer, that is another matter.

6. Remaining seven days in the home of a Listener (Skt. *śravaka*; Tib. *nyan.thos*). This specifically refers to a Listener who has contempt for tantra or for tantric practice, one who just writes it off as a waste of time. If, however, there is a purpose, a real need for staying in such a person's abode, then no secondary downfall is incurred.

7. The next secondary downfall occurs when a person, who has done a little bit of tantric practice, maybe the initiatory retreat, a little bit of practice of the stages of generation and completion, thinks that he or she is a great yogin or yogini, possessing supernatural powers and great insights, and so forth, and announces this to other people.

8. Teaching Dharma to those who have no faith. This specifically refers to giving tantric teachings and instruction to those who have no faith. There are many secret points in the context of tantra which must not be disclosed loosely. To do so involves the eighth of the secondary downfalls.

That was the eightfold group of secondary downfalls. However, there are a few others that are not included in this particular presentation of the secondary downfalls.

One of these additional secondary downfalls is a case in which one has neither done the initiatory retreat (Tib. *bsnyen.pa*) nor the concluding fire-offering and, without having completed these preliminaries, one:

- a. confers initiations on others, that is, leads one's own disciples into the mandala;
- b. takes the self-initiation;
- c. performs consecration.

If one has not already completed the initiatory retreat and the fire-offering, these three activities are prohibited. If one does any of the three without the preliminaries, one commits this secondary

downfall. This is a very important one and it must be guarded against.

Another additional secondary downfall is transgressing the vows of individual liberation (Skt. pratimoksa) or Bodhisattva precepts without a specific reason.

That concludes the explanation of the root downfalls and the secondary downfalls which are extremely heavy. Although it is true that the secondary downfalls are lighter than the root downfalls, nevertheless, they are very serious.

COMMITMENTS OF THE NINETEEN PLEDGES RELATING TO THE FIVE BUDDHA FAMILIES

In addition to the above listed downfalls, when taking such an empowerment as we have taken, we also take the commitments of the 19 pledges relating to the five Buddha Families

1. The Six Pledges Relating to the Buddha Vairocana

The first three are abiding in three types of morality or moral discipline:

- a. moral discipline of abiding by one's precepts, be they monastic, Bodhisattva or whatever precepts one has taken;
- b. engaging in wholesome, virtuous actions with the motivation of bodhicitta;
- c. serving the needs of sentient beings.

The final three are:

- d. taking refuge in the Buddha,
- e. taking refuge in the Dharma,
- f. taking refuge in the Sangha.

2. The Four Pledges Relating to the Buddha Aksobhya

- a. The pledge of the 'vajra-mind.' One keeps this pledge when one takes in hand the vajra, which is the external symbol of the actual vajra-mind, and brings to mind the inner vajra-mind which is the wisdom of the indivisible bliss and emptiness. In short, one brings to mind the symbol and the inner vajra-mind together.
- b. The pledge of the 'bell-speech' is kept by taking the ceremonial bell in hand and recollecting the wisdom realizing emptiness.

- c. The pledge of the 'mudra-body' is kept by generating oneself as the deity, in this case as Kalacakra, and identifying with the deity.
- d. The pledge of making the offerings to one's vajracarya, the vajra master, six times daily.

3. *The Four Pledges Relating to the Buddha Ratnasambhava*

These are the four types of generosity. Before explaining them, one should have clearly in mind that the actual practice of generosity is not the things themselves that one is giving, be it money or anything else. Those are the material substances or the objects of generosity. The actual generosity is the mind, the attitude or intent to give. The following are the four pledges of Buddha Ratnasambhava related to the four types of generosity.

- a. Material generosity is the intent to give away material things such as food, clothing, money and so on.
- b. Giving of protection or, literally, fearlessness. This involves releasing sentient beings from situations of danger. Here are just a few examples: being able to bring a person out of prison; with other creatures - seeing an insect on a path where it is likely to be stepped on and taking it away from there; or seeing a worm that is out in the sun and, knowing it might get dried up, removing it from the path and putting it in a moist place. Such acts of generosity as these relate to this practice.
- c. Sharing or making the gift of Dharma. The greatest benefit occurs particularly when one does so with the motivation of bodhicitta, with great compassion. This is stated by Vasubandhu in his text. *Treasures of Phenomenology*, the *Abhidharma-kosa*. He also implicitly states that this should not be done with an improper motivation, such as out of pride or jealousy. It is stated in the sutras that there are 20 benefits from teaching the Dharma with a pure motivation. This is something that can be done not only while sitting on a Dharma-throne; one can be sharing Dharma even while walking about in a park or simply strolling along with another person. If done with a pure motivation, this has such great benefits!

- d. Giving of loving-kindness. This is done by repeatedly cultivating loving-kindness, the wish that all creatures might be happy [and have the causes of happiness].

4. *The Three Pledges Relating to the Buddha Amituhha*

- a. Holding the 'outer' This refers to holding the outer tantras, that is. the first two of the tantric classifications of the Action and the Performance Tantras.
- b. Holding of the 'secret' This refers to the two higher classifications of tantra – the Yoga Tantra and the Highest Yoga Tantra.
- c. Holding the 'three vehicles.' These are the vehicles of the Listeners, the Solitary Conquerors and the Bodhisattvas. The holding of these three is included in one pledge.

These various aspects of the Dharma should be brought to mind six times daily.

5. *The Two Pledges Relating to the Buddha Amoghasiddhi*

a. MAKING THE FOUR TYPES OF OFFERINGS

1. THE OUTER OFFERING (TIB. PHYI I MCHOD PA).

The outer offerings refer to the offering of objects such as butter lamps, food, incense and so forth. You should not neglect these outer offerings, but should make them in accordance with your present abilities. One can look to the life of the Kadampa Geshe Phuchungpa. Due to his material situation, he was initially able to make only the tiniest of offerings. Gradually, he became more and more affluent until each day he was able to offer 21 pieces of gold. This relates to ourselves as well – it is very practical. A good way to start the day in the morning is to make offerings on your altar. This can be done, for example, with seven offering bowls or, if not seven, simply one. If you have no offering bowls, then take an ordinary bowl, like a cereal bowl, and offer some water in that. In any case, offer whatever you are presently able. Gradually, your ability to make offerings will increase.

You can make offerings not only of material things but also through the powers of your imagination. You can visualize all

kinds of beautiful things. Imagine a greater quantity than you are able to offer materially of the same types of things, such as fruit and so forth. Use the full extent of your powers of visualization. You can mentally offer other things you see around -and about - beautiful lights of the city at night, or if you are out walking in the park - offer this. By doing so, you gain the benefits of actually offering these objects.

When the great Kadampa Geshe Potowa was travelling with five or six hundred disciples through a very lovely area, with beautiful meadows and mountains, he simply sat down and offered the *Seven-Limb Pujd* and praises of bodhicitta. This is a very practical way in which this practice can be followed. Also, by the fact that we are in the constant habit of eating and drinking and that we have to keep on doing it more and more because we have this very strong habit, then whatever we eat and drink, we can offer to the Objects of Refuge. In this way, as the years pass and we are eating and drinking, we can be simultaneously accruing more and more merit.

2. THE INNER OFFERING (TIB. NANC. GI. MCHOD. PA).

In contrast to the outer offerings, the inner offerings are held by one's own consciousness, that is, they are a part of one's own being. The inner offerings are the five meats and the five ambrosias, which are the nectars of one's own being, held by one's own consciousness. The complete act of offering the above involves the following three-fold process:

- 1) purification of these substances,
- 2) recognizing and looking upon them as ambrosia,
- 3) their increase.

Only after one has gone through those three processes, does one make the offering. The inner offering is a particularly important one. In fact, upon giving the empowerment, the lama stresses its importance, saying that one should have the inner offering and that this is the chief of all offerings.

3. THE SECRET OFFERING (TIB. GSANG.BAI MCHOD.PA).

This refers to making (a mental) offering of the three types of consorts or dakinis to the lama-yidam, who goes into union with

the consort and experiences the wisdom of the indivisible bliss and emptiness. This whole process is the secret offering.

4. THE OFFERING OF SUCHNESS (TIB MCHOD PA).

This is made when one looks upon the three factors of the process of the offering:

- 1) the object of the offering (the objects of refuge, the lama and the yidam).
- 2) oneself as the offerer, and
- 3) the offerings themselves.

as existing as mere conceptual imputations, as mere labels, as mere signs and lacking any inherent existence whatever. The offering of suchness involves offering with the understanding called the 'ornament of the view.' One should know that even the lama is lacking in true or inherent existence. We can very naturally (and easily) think that the lama and the yidam (or meditation deity) are truly or inherently existent, especially so when we look upon them as being very fine and think, "This is a very great lama and, therefore, he must be truly existent," or "This is an excellent yidam. . . he/she must be truly existent." This is a mistake. As Gampopa was going up to central Tibet, Milarepa told him, "Look even upon your Guru as being like an illusion." Meaning: look upon the guru as being a mere conceptual imputation, a mere verbal imputation, not inherently or truly existent.

When Milarepa spoke very eloquently of his view of the lack of inherent existence of phenomena, he stated, "There is no meditator, there is no object of meditation, and yet, the Sage (Buddha) states that these are not simply non-existent, but rather exist as conventions."¹ This indicates Milarepa's profound realization of this point. If one just looks at the words themselves, one might take them completely literally and, without the understanding, arrive at the conclusion, "There is no meditator, there is no object of meditation and there is no meditating mind." But, what is meant here is that these three are not inherently or truly existent. Rather, "These and all other phenomena," as the Buddha stated, "do exist as mere conceptual imputations."^{*}

b. THE SECOND PLEDGE OF BUDDHA AMOGHASIDHI IS THE GENERAL PLEDGE OF KEEPING ALL OF THE AFORESTATED PRECEPTS OF THE FIVE BUDDHAS

This concludes a brief explanation of these 19 pledges **relating to** the five Buddha Families.

THE THREE METHODS WITH REGARD TO TANTRH: PLEDGES AND PRECEPTS

The Buddha Vajradhara, out of his great compassion, showed three methods with regard to these teachings on the pledges **and** precepts:

1. the method of acquiring or taking the pledges and precepts for those who have not taken them;
2. the method of preventing the breaking of the pledges which have already been received;
3. the method for restoring broken pledges and precepts.

This method is meant for those practitioners, like ourselves, **who** are strong in mental distortions and who do commit the downfalls due to mental afflictions, and for those who have incurred the downfalls or broken the pledges. There are three different means within this one method for restoring the degenerated, broken precepts and pledges:

- a. The first means for such restoration is going to one's spiritual mentor, one's vajra master, and receiving the empowerment once again.
- b. If one is not able to receive empowerment, the second way of restoring the pledges and precepts is to engage in the initiatory retreat together with the concluding fire-offering. Having done so, it is possible to take the self-initiation which purifies the downfalls, the degeneration of the precepts and pledges.
- c. If one is not able to apply either of the above recommended methods, then the third alternative is to recite, one hundred thousand times, the purificatory one-hundred-syllable mantra of Vajrasattva. Having done so, the pledges and precepts are purified. This takes quite a while and it is difficult, but it is also one of the techniques.

All of us have received the empowerment, so we should try our best to keep the pledges and precepts that we have taken. If downfalls do occur, we should keep in mind the three methods for purification and try to follow them.

in one's daily practice, one can ward off many potential downfalls if, in the morning, upon arising, one generates one's abode as the mandala of the deity (in this case, the Kalacakra), and while putting on clothes and eating, one blesses (the garments, food and drink with the mantra. Om Ah Hum.

This concludes a brief explanation of this tantric practice.

THE TWENTY-FIVE MODES OF BLHAMOR OR DISCIPLINES

The first five are avoiding the five non-virtues/evils:

1. killing
2. stealing or taking that which is not given
3. adultery
4. lying
5. taking alcohol.

The second set of five are avoiding the five 'proximate' or 'secondary non-virtues.'

6. Gambling, such as with dice or playing cards. This needs to be avoided. If one really thinks about this and really follows the disciplines, precepts and pledges of the Kalacakra, it will lend one's life a great dignity.

7. One should avoid eating meat in the three cases of actually seeing, hearing or suspecting that the animal in question was killed specifically for one's own consumption.

8. Idle gossip or letting the mouth run on. Among the so-called ten non-virtues, idle gossip is the least heavy, the least serious. Nevertheless, for beginning practitioners, it is the worst because it is so easy to give up so many hours, so much of one's life, to idle gossip. While one is gossiping, two or three hours can pass with the greatest of ease so that one does not know where the time has gone. In contrast, if we sit for an hour in meditation, it can be tormenting for both the body and the mind. Idle gossip is so easy that one can waste one's life just in that one mode itself. For example, while reciting our sadhanas, we might find a tendency to

fall asleep, but this is never a danger while we are engaging in idle gossip.

9. Mistaken commemoration of one's parents. This has to do with a yearly commemoration of parents who have died by the offering of blood and flesh. Such a false commemoration, or wrong way of remembering one's parents, is to be avoided.

10. Offering animal sacrifices. This was not only a tradition in ancient time, but it also exists today in some places in Nepal and India where, for example, people still kill an animal as a sacrifice and offers its flesh and blood. This is to be avoided.

Abandoning the five types of killing:

11. killing a cow.
12. killing children.
13. killing women.
14. killing men,
15. destroying representations of the Enlightened Body, Speech and Mind. An example for Mind would be a stupa; for Speech the words of the Buddha, such as the *Kangyur* (collected works); and for the Body of the Buddha would be paintings, statues, and so forth. Thus, destroying any of these constitutes a breaking of this precept.

Abandoning the five angers:

16. rejecting faith in the Buddha and Dharma,
17. having anger towards one's companions.
18. having anger towards one's lord or master,
19. having anger against the Sangha.
20. deceiving and misguiding those who have placed their confidence or trust in you.

Abandonment of the five types of attachment are explained quite simply as attachment for:

21. visual form.
22. sounds.
23. smells,
24. tastes,
25. tactile objects that one feels.

This has been a brief presentation of the 25 disciplines, which should be kept according to one's capacity, that is, as well as one is able. However, due to the strong force of mental distortions.

conscientiouslessness and lack of awareness, many faults are incurred. In that case, one should not simply disregard or ignore them, but rather recognize the faults, confess them and, when possible, engage in the initiatory retreat (Tib. *bsnyen pa*), which makes one fit for the further practice of Kalacakra. Following that, and only following that, it is possible to take self-empowerment, which can purify the harmful imprints that occur due to such infractions.

SECTION THREE

Let us begin by cultivating the proper motivation, aspiring for the highest, supreme enlightenment for the benefit of all creature* throughout space. With this motivation, let us listen to these teachings with the intent of putting them into practice and, upon the attainment of perfect enlightenment, lead all other creatures to that same state.

As has been emphasized before, it is extremely important to know and to keep the various pledges and precepts we have taken because they are indispensable for the practice of (antra, specifically with regard to the stage of generation and the stage of completion. They can be likened to building a house. In order to build a house, first of all, one must have a suitable site. The site, or the ground upon which one will build, can be likened to the proper keeping of the precepts and pledges, on the basis of which one builds the practice of the stages of generation and completion. An explanation of the tantric downfalls and pledges has already been given. Please do not forget them! All of us who have received the empowerment have taken upon ourselves the commitment to avoid these downfalls

In the words of Ralo Dorje Drag, the great interpreter and tantric practitioner, "Without keeping the precepts and the pledges, there is no attainment of the siddhis. Those who do meditate, but do not keep pure moral discipline, do not know the vital or central point of the practice." Again, please do not forget, but bring them again and again to mind.

[II.]

B. THE EIGHTEEN ROOT BODHISATTVA DOWNFALLS

1. Desiring devotion and fame, one disparages others.

If this happens, the first root downfall occurs and the Bodhisattva precept is lost.

2. *Not giving Dharma and wealth.*

This root downfall occurs in a situation in which one has certain knowledge of Dharma and/or certain material objects which one is able to give away but, out of miserliness, one does not do so when requested.

3. *Not listening, even when there is an apology*

This occurs when another person has done something against oneself, but afterwards comes with regret to apologize, saying, "This was my mistake. Please forgive me. I apologize." Not listening or not accepting the apology and even responding with greater anger is the committing of this root downfall.

As one listens to these various downfalls, it is important to keep in mind the general context of the Bodhisattva's way of life motivated by the attitude of cherishing others more than oneself. In this context, one should understand each individual precept. Further, it should be understood that a Bodhisattva offers prayers that others might not direct mental distortions such as anger, attachment and jealousy toward himself or herself. This is a very frequent prayer that Bodhisattvas make. One can see how this relates to the downfall here. If one refuses to accept the apology, it is very likely that that person will respond with anger or some other mental distortion, which would be very detrimental for him or her. This is a prayer we too should make - that other people not direct such mental distortions towards ourselves. These prayers do come to fruition, particularly as we draw close to full enlightenment.

4. *The abandoning of Mahayana.*

This occurs by abusing or disparaging the Mahayana.

5. *Stealing the possessions of the Three Jewels.*

This can be in a very open or direct manner - simply stealing things that belong to the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, or by devious means of trickery or deceit.

6. *Abandoning Dharma.*

This especially relates to the attitude of abandoning the Mahayana teachings. Denying that the *Mahayana Triptaka*, in particular, are the real teachings of the Buddha incurs this downfall.

7. *Stealing the saffron robes.*

This involves:

- a. beating a monk as a punishment regardless of whether he is pure in moral discipline or not,
- b. stealing his robes or actually taking his robe away from him,
- c. taking away or robbing him of his ordination.

Any of these three cases involves a root downfall.

8. *Enactment of any of the five heinous crimes:*

- a. killing one's mother (one's mother in this life),
- b. killing one's father,
- c. killing an Arhat (a Liberated Being),
- d. drawing the blood of a Buddha with malice (not like taking a medical sample, but with a wish to harm),
- e. causing a schism in the Sangha. This occurs when one intentionally creates divisions and disharmony among the Sangha. It is stated that if one commits this downfall, then even the grass in the area where such a person lives dries up. This last one is a very serious unwholesome act.

If one commits one of these five heinous crimes, even if one tries to meditate for 12 years, no kind of samadhi will arise. It would act as a tremendous obstacle to one's spiritual growth.

9. *Holding false views.*

This would be holding a view which denies the workings of karma (actions and their results) and of former and later births.

10. *Destroying villages or towns.*

This comes into question when one has developed supernatural powers, since with them one could destroy an entire city. If one has such powers and uses them to that effect, then one incurs this downfall.

11. *Teaching emptiness to those whose minds are untrained.*

12. *Turning away from full enlightenment*

This occurs when one has already taken the Bodhisattva vow or precept resolving to attain enlightenment for the sake of all sentient beings and has practiced, to some extent, the six

perfections. Then, after some time, one grows discouraged with the practice and thinks, "Oh, it does not look like I'll ever be able to attain enlightenment. How will I ever be able to do that?" Turning away from that aspiration and directing oneself rather to the attainment of a Sravaka or Pratyeka Arhat, one commits this root downfall. Having taken the Bodhisattva precept, one should maintain one's courage and mental fortitude, keeping a very strong aspiration to serve the needs of sentient beings

13. *Abandoning the precepts of individual liberation (pratimoksa precepts).*

Some people who do not understand Dharma or some young people may think that these pratimoksa vows (such as the monastic vows) are only for people who seek to become Sravaka Arhats or Pratyekabuddhas and that they are not for followers of the Mahayana. They may consider these precepts unnecessary or of no use. The precepts of individual liberation are, in fact, an extremely important foundation for the entire Mahayana path. It is a big mistake to think that these are just for another path. These vows of individual liberation are very highly praised in the Root Kalacakra Tantra.

14. *Holding the notion that through the practice of the Sravaka or Pratyeka path it is not possible to completely eradicate such mental distortions as attachment.*

This shows the variety of misconceptions that might arise. Though one might think this, it is certain that through the practice of the Sravaka and Pratyekabuddha paths one can completely eradicate these mental distortions as has been proven countless times in the past by great Arhats, such as Sariputra and Maudgalyayana.

15. *Speaking falsely.*

What this actually refers to is a situation in which one has not gained realization of emptiness, but makes a pretense of having realized this and tells people, "You must meditate very well on emptiness and if you do, you will gain direct realization like I have." As soon as one utters these words, deceiving others in this way, and the words are understood by them, this root downfall is committed.

A downfall occurs in a situation where one is teaching the Dharma and reciting the scriptures to others desiring their devotion and respect as well as a great reputation for oneself. Not admitting this pretention but, instead, maintaining that one's own motivation is pure while pointing to others and saying, "That person over there is teaching out of a desire for devotion and great reputation," one incurs a downfall. It should be clear that this is a downfall, but it is not enumerated among the 18 root Bodhisattva downfalls. It is included implicitly in the first of the 18 root Bodhisattva downfalls - praising oneself and abusing others.

16. The situation in which a person in some position of power, such as a king or a minister, robs the Sangha of its possessions.

This could be offerings which are in the temple for the Sangha to eat, food that the Sangha has, other possessions of the Sangha such as their scriptures, or money belonging to the temple. Imagine that a king or some minister robs the Sangha of these, then offers them to someone else, say a Bodhisattva. If that Bodhisattva should accept these offerings from the king, he or she commits this root downfall.

17. Imagine a situation in which there is a person who

is very seriously engaged in the practice of meditation, particularly the cultivation of mental stabilization, a patron who wishes to make an offering to this contemplative, and a third person acting as a messenger, who is actually supposed to deliver the offering. Then imagine this messenger not liking the person who is practicing dhyana: he receives the gifts for the contemplative, but instead of giving them to him, gives them to another person who is simply reciting texts and doing oral recitations. If one does this, one commits the root downfall

18. Discarding bodhicitta.

These are the 18 root Bodhisattva downfalls. For 16 out of these 18 to occur, they must occur in conjunction with the same four binding factors which were explained previously with regard to the tantric precepts (see page 29). The remaining two (of these 18) for which the four binding factors are not necessary are:

- a. holding false views (see page 43. No 9], and

b. discarding bodhicitta [see page 45. No. 18].

If either of these two takes place, even without the four binding factors, the root Bodhisattva downfall still occurs.

The 16 root downfalls do not occur in the absence of all four of the binding factors. However, one should not have the mistaken notion that if the four binding factors are absent, there is no fault at all. There is, in fact, a very great fault; it is simply not the complete root downfall. Still, it places extremely unwholesome imprints upon the mind.

This can be likened to another situation in which, let us say, one has a very strong intent to kill someone and maintains that intent but, for some reason or another, is not able to do it. In this case, the full act of killing a human being does not occur. Nevertheless, having that motivation is extremely deleterious to one's own welfare. All of us here, having taken these Bodhisattva precepts and engaging in the Mahayana Dharma practice, should keep very well in mind these 18 root Bodhisattva downfalls and guard against them.

There are also 46 secondary Bodhisattva faults. There is no time to go into them now, but it is very important to receive teachings and know them. When the opportunity presents itself, or you make the opportunity, you should try to receive these teachings. Again, be aware of the very fine situation you have here being able to have contact with the great Lama Dagchen Rinpoche. If this were Tibet, it would be very, very hard to meet him personally. Here, it is obviously much easier.

THE THREE METHODS WITH REGARD TO THE BODHISATTVA PRECEPTS

1. The Method for Receiving the Precepts for Those Who Have Not Yet Received Them

One should receive the Bodhisattva precepts from a qualified Mahayana spiritual master endowed with the ten qualities and who holds the Bodhisattva precepts.

- a. The mind of such a master should be subdued through the practice of moral discipline [Skt. Sila, Tib. tshul.khrms].
- b. The mind of such a master is made peaceful through the cultivation of meditative stabilization [Skt. samadhi; Tib. ting.nge.'dzin].

- c. The mind of the master is made yet more peaceful through the cultivation of wisdom [Ski. prajñā; Tib. shes.rab].
- The first three of these ten qualities involves the master's cultivation of the Three Higher Trainings.
The spiritual master should be:
- d. of greater attainment than the disciple,
 - e. one who enthusiastically serves the needs of others,
 - f. rich in knowledge of the scriptures. This means that he/she should have received many Dharma teachings
 - g. The next quality involves the realization of suchness. that is. the realization of emptiness. If possible, the actual realization should be there or at least a correct conceptual understanding so that it can be taught properly.
 - h. The spiritual master should be skilled in speaking. This refers to teaching the Dharma. This makes a very great difference in terms of the effectiveness with which the spiritual master can guide the disciples.

Looking to the ancient past in India, it is said that the foremost of teachers was Vasubandhu: the foremost of debaters were Dignāga and his spiritual son Dharmakīrti; and the foremost in composition was Aśvaghoṣa. Once Dharmakīrti went to a king who asked him, "Who is the greatest sage in all the land?" Dharmakīrti replied, "The one who is greatest in intelligence is Master Dignāga: the greatest in composition is Aśvaghoṣa: the greatest in rhetoric, in very beautiful writing is Candragomin: but the one who is supreme in all directions is myself." The king replied, "Is it then you who is the greatest in all the land?" And Dharmakīrti said, "You might say so." It can be seen that Dharmakīrti was an extremely self-confident type of person.

He wrote in another verse, "When the sun of Dharmakīrti sets (when he passes away), the Buddha-Dharma will be in a very pathetic situation- It will be as if it were going to sleep or were dying out altogether. Then what non-Dharmic elements will arise and take over?" What he was saying was that after he had passed away, there would come many people disputing the teachings of the Buddha and that there would not be anyone to answer them and defeat them in debate. He was a very fine debater. It is said that he brought approximately 100,000 people to Buddhism.

Still going off on a bit of a tangent (just for fun), looking again at the text *Pramanavornika* by Dharmakirti. He writes, "All of the rivers find their source in the ocean, and all of the rivers go back into the ocean. Likewise, in this text that I have composed, the *Pramanavarūka*, all the reasonings are to be found and these are sent out, but those of weaker intelligence will not be able to understand them. So, eventually all of them will just come back to me again," namely, from the ocean out, and then back to the ocean - himself. In fact, *Pramanavarūka* is very difficult to understand. One of his disciples, perhaps his foremost disciple, tried to write a commentary to it and showed one of his first attempts to his Guru, Dharmakirti, who looked it over and tossed it in the water. Then the disciple wrote a second one. Dharmakirti looked that one over and tossed it in the fire. The disciple wrote a third one. Dharmakirti read it, mused for a while, and finally said, "Well, you've gotten the general meaning. It is a good 'meaning commentary' but, as for a word-by-word commentary, you still have not made it." So it is very difficult to understand. One of the doctrinal advisors of His Holiness the Dalai Lama was Mongolian. He read over the *Pramanavarttika* and was so deeply impressed by it that as he was reading, he kept saying to himself, "This man could not be a Cittamatrin!" (Cittamatra is not the highest school of Buddhist philosophy.) Again and again, he would say to himself, "He could not be a Cittamatrin ... He could not be a Cittamatrin." Keeping in mind that Dharmakirti was a very highly realized tantric master who had visions of Cakrasamvaiva, the Mongolian Geshe stated, "If one looks at the lines of reasoning of Dharmakirti in the *Pramanavarūka*, in relationship to the Cakrasamvara Root Tantra, it seems impossible that the author of these lines did not understand emptiness in its final depth of realization."

The great Sakya Panchen, out of his kindness, wrote *Tsad.margis.glor*, which is a commentary to the *Pramanavarūka*, where he very clearly elucidates the thoughts of Dharmakirti. The same master Sakya Panchen first caused the Buddha-Dharma to flourish in Mongolia, so, he is especially kind in this regard. The life story of the Sakya Panchen is really awe-inspiring to read. To take one instance, while he was once dreaming, he received a complete

teaching on Vasubandhus *Abhidharmakoto* from Vasuhandhu himself. When he awoke the next morning, he had complete and profound understanding of the text. In his ordinary appearance he had many such astounding accomplishments as this, but, in actual reality, Sakya Panchen was Manjusri himself.

One account from the life of His Holiness, the present Dalai Lama, is something not often spoken of, and never in public. During the daytime he would be reading the scriptures and, sometimes, he would have some uncertainty or some qualms on certain points. At night he would go to bed and in his dreams all of the points about which he had uncertainty would become clear and the next morning all uncertainty would be gone. There are many other things that are equally awe-inspiring concerning his life too. Going back to the ten qualities of a fully qualified Mahayana master:

i. The master must be a being of compassion and must particularly have compassion for the disciples.

j. The master must abandon depression or discouragement. This is specifically with regard to teachings, and more specifically, with regard to teaching very dull-witted disciples with whom the same point will have to be gone over again, and again, and again . . . No matter how often the master has to go over the same points, there never appears any depression or discouragement.

Here is one example from my own experience. There was a monk who was at the Jhang-guncho, a place in Tibet where monks from the great monastic universities in central Tibet would come to debate on logic and epistemology. Two other lamas and I were simply trying to teach this monk three definitions, the longest being one full sentence. We were three teachers working with one disciple for a period of six weeks trying to teach him the three definitions which are absolute basic fundamentals of logic, and we failed. This, once again, is a case when one needs great perseverance and vigor against depression.

Another account from the sutras concerns Arya Lamchung, who was born of the Brahmin caste and who was, as a youth, trained in the *Vedas*, the Brahmanical literature. However, as

much as he was trained he simply did not understand them and his teachers threw him out. He wandered around for awhile, encountered some Buddhists, and studied with an Arhat who tried to teach him the fundamentals of Buddhism. He tried, and tried, and tried but Lamchung still was not able to understand. So, he was taken by the hair and again thrown out. Wandering around, he was thinking, "I am not a Brahmin, and now maybe I am not even a Buddhist. What am I?" While he was wandering around weeping the Buddha encountered him and asked him, "What is your problem? What are you crying for?" Lamchung told him how he was thrown out of here, and chucked out of there, and still did not know anything and was too stupid to learn anything. The Buddha said, "Do not be depressed. The Arhat who tried to help you is a relative of mine but he does not have the same realization as myself. He has neither cleared away all obstructions to full enlightenment nor has he gained the degree of knowledge that I have. I can see that there is still some hope." So, the Buddha took him in hand and taught him two phrases: "Clear out the dust, clear out the stains." When Lamchung memorized "clear out the dust," he could not remember "clear out the stains," and when he remembered "clear out the stains," he would forget "clear out the dust." He could not juggle both in his mind at the same time. Seeing this, the Buddha put him to work in a temple where he would be sweeping out and acting as a servant for the elder of the temple. One day, as he was sweeping he took the broom in hand and understanding [the point] he said, "The actual dust is not the dirt but it is the mental distortions. The actual stains are the mental distortions." By taking the broom in hand he gained direct realization of emptiness, became an Arya, and went on to become an Arhat. Taking this as an example, regardless of one's own evaluation of one's intelligence, one should not grow depressed but see that with perseverance and enthusiasm one can progress. Lamchung, also known as Lamten, became one of the Sixteen Arhats. It is said that he became the finest of the teachers among the Sixteen.

Those are the ten qualities of a fully qualified Mahayana master from whom one should receive the precepts,

2. *The Method for Preventing Degeneration of Bodhisattva Precepts Which Have Already Been Taken*

Here is a brief explanation of the 'four black actions' and the 'four white actions.' Through avoiding the former and following the latter one is prevented from being separated from bodhicitta in future lives. It is very important that one maintains this **aspiration** from life to life. Toward this end it is very important to **offer** prayers that one may have a continuous cultivation **of the** awakening mind

a. THE FOUR BLACK ACTIONS

- 1) Lying to and deceiving one's spiritual mentor.
- 2) Discouraging others in their practice of virtue. This can occur when one looks upon another person engaging in Dharma practice and says, "What are you wasting your time on this for when you could be out making money and really having some success?" If one speaks in this way it is a black action - something to be avoided.
- 3) Speaking unpleasant, harsh words out of anger to a Bodhisattva,
- 4) Tricking sentient beings out of a motivation other than the superior intent (which is a motivation just preceding bodhicitta)

These are the four black actions to be avoided and should be held well in mind

b. THE FOUR WHITE ACTIONS

- 1) Avoiding lying even for the sake of a jest. That is, not lying in order to bring even a laugh.
- 2) Instilling others not only with delight in their practice, but guiding them towards the Mahayana path rather than to lesser paths.
- 3) Looking upon all sentient beings as being the 'Teacher' (Tib. ston.pa)

- 4) Dealing very straightforwardly with all sentient beings out of the motivation of the superior intent.

These four points should be clearly understood as methods designed to prevent the degeneration of the Bodhisattva precepts which have already been taken

3. The Methods for Restoring the Bodhisattva Precepts Which Have Degenerated

Various methods have been designed for the restoration of the Bodhisattva precepts which have degenerated.

- a. One method is to go to one's spiritual mentor and take the Bodhisattva precepts again. In fact, it occurs very frequently that at least some of the 4th secondary faults do occur.
- b. If this is not possible, then one simply visualizes the Buddha and the Bodhisattvas in the space before one and takes the Bodhisattva precepts in their presence.
- c. The third method involves a specific Bodhisattva prayer of confession for the restoration of the precepts.

It is very good that on this Saturday afternoon of this weekend holiday, when you could have been out having fun in the park or having a picnic, you are here having your "picnic of listening to the Dharma" and learning about all the root downfalls. This is far more beneficial.

SECTION FOUR

The mind is of foremost importance since it is **through the** activity of the mind that one reaches either **(ull enlightenment or** one of the lower realms of animals, spirits or **hell-beings. One** should study and listen to these teachings with the motivation of attaining full enlightenment in the form of Kalacakra for **the** benefit of all creatures. If one does so, then listening for **even five** minutes has very great benefit.

One should keep the pledges and precepts as best **as one can.** Among the precepts and pledges that have already **been explained,** one should recognize those that one is able to keep **now** and keep them. For those that one is presently unable **to keep,** rather than simply discarding them with the thought, **"I cannot keep these!"** one should recognize one's present inability **and offer** prayers that, in the future, through the further ripening **of one's** own mind, one will be able to keep all of them perfectly. **In this** way, keep them in mind and maintain them as well as possible.

As far as the long-term view of eventually being able to keep all of the precepts is concerned, the mind certainly has this capacity. The Indian Bodhisattva Santideva explains in his great text. *The Guide to the Bodhisattva Way of Life*, that the Buddha, whose teachings are true and without deception or deceit, has said that even insects have the ability to attain full enlightenment because they have Buddha-Nature. Consequently, if this is true of insects, it goes without saying that human beings, who are endowed with the ability to recognize and avoid that which is unwholesome and cultivate that which is wholesome, have the ability to attain full enlightenment. If there is the enthusiasm, if there is the effort, then full enlightenment can be attained.

It is a wonderful and rare opportunity to be able to practice tantra because it is so very special. When the Buddha Maitreya appears, the human life-span will be 80,000 years. Buddha Maitreya himself will remain in this world for 60,000 years. During

that time he will have an exceedingly great number of Sravaka Arhats among his disciples, a far greater number than those who were with the Buddha Sakyamuni.' Nevertheless, despite the fact that the Buddha Maitiyea will remain so long and have so many disciples, he will not teach tantra. The reason for this is that due to the great degree of pleasure and happiness in that existence, they will neither be inclined toward nor suitable to receive it. The nature of human existence will be very different then. At the present time, however, disciples are very good and fit for tantric practice-

In order to bring one's practice to its culmination, it is necessary to have a constant and evergrowing practice of Dharma. For example, when one is filled with happiness during the good times, one should avoid acting like people who think that because they are feeling good they can do without Dharma. They get happy-go-lucky and carefree, just enjoying the good times, not giving any time to spiritual practice. Instead, one should recognize that well-being is a result of one's former wholesome, virtuous actions. This recognition should impel one to further spiritual practice-

Likewise, there are those who in times of misfortune, be it of poverty, sickness, suffering and so forth, feel, "Oh, I can't practice Dharma now, things are too bad." They are simply too depressed to engage in any practice. This is also a problem. During such times one should recognize misery to be the result of one's previous non-virtuous action and let this recognition impel one to **avoid** acting in such non-virtuous ways in the future. So, regardless of the situation, one should use it as an aid to one's spiritual practice and, in this way, the practice can proceed to its culmination.

In order to engage in an authentic practice of tantra, as explained repeatedly in the past by such great masters as Sakya Pandita, it is necessary to cultivate the common path. This should be done in the following way: first, focus on the cultivation of renunciation; following this, the generation of bodhicitta; next, the realistic view; then, the stage of generation, bringing to culmination both its gross and subtle aspects; and finally, the stage of completion. This is the manner in which practice should be

carried out in order to gain actual realization. Initially, it is essential to recognize that the cultivation of renunciation, bodhicitta and the realistic view are indispensable for the practice of Dharma.

The importance of this point is illustrated in an account of a very great Tibetan lama. Purchog Jampa Rinpoche, who was an emanation of Maitreya. Once, he was giving the Guhyasamaja, Cakrasamvara and Vajrabhairava empowerments in the Jowo Khang, the central temple of Lhasa. On that occasion, Changkya Rolpe Dorje, another extremely erudite lama in Tibet, came to receive the empowerments with a circle of his own disciples, among whom were many well-learned geshe. All of these disciples had gathered there to receive the empowerments and, as the transmission begun, Purchog Jampa Rinpoche started by giving a very extensive teaching of the *Lam Rim*, the basic instructions on the cultivation of renunciation, bodhicitta and realistic view. One of the geshe-disciples of Changkya Rolpe Dorje commented [as an aside] that it seemed like Purchog Jampa Rinpoche did not know tantra very well because, instead of teaching tantra as he should have been doing, he was giving instructions on more fundamental material. But, Changkya Rolpe Dorje put his hands together and said, "The Great Purchog Jampa Rinpoche is a master who combines the qualities of erudition and direct insight, illustrating his profound realization of the very essential meaning of the Dharma. It is because of the indispensability of these three factors that he is stressing them so much." Because they are so vital, many of the Kadampa geshe have said that if one is deficient in these three aspects and engages, for example, in the vase-like meditation on the retention of the breath, it has no more significance than the bellows used for a fire; and even if one is engaging in a very elaborate practice of the stage of generation, it has no more significance than walking around a temple and looking at all the pictures.

To further illustrate this, the stage of generation and the stage of completion are found, in their entirety, in non-Buddhist practices such as the Hindu tantras. Missing in these non-Buddhist practices, however, are renunciation, bodhicitta and realistic view, which are found in Buddhist tantra. Tantra without the three

principles of the path is like tu^2 without butter - it just does not hold together. If one is practicing the stage of generation and completion without bodhicitta, one will not be able to attain even the lower stage of the Mahayana path of accumulation. In fact, it will not even be a Mahayana practice.

The profound significance of bodhicitta with regard to the practice of tantra can be seen in the life of Alisa. He had a total of 155 gurus, many of whom gave him tantric empowerments. However, although he had faith in these lamas, above all of them, he had the greatest reverence for Serlingpa, the lama from whom he received the oral transmission of bodhicitta. He had such reverence that whenever he would utter his name he would put his hands together in obeisance and tears would flow from his eyes. This account illustrates how bodhicitta is the very life-force of all Dharma, both the sutra and tantra practices.

[With the three principles of the path as a foundation.] one should not be discouraged in the practice of Kalacakra, feeling that it is too complicated, too difficult, or that the visualization is too intricate with the different faces, many arms and so on. One should not become discouraged, fall into despair and give up, thinking, "Oh, I'll never be able to do that!" If one becomes accustomed to practicing it, one's ability increases. We can see this in other fields, such as making music or songs and so forth, where people practice, learn the words and, in the course of time, become very adept. If this is possible for music, then it is applicable here as well. Slowly, the ability increases.

Likewise, in the beginning, understanding the meaning of the Buddha's scriptures is quite difficult. It is easy to feel discouraged, thinking that one just cannot understand what is being said. But, if one persists, after a while, one gets a little bit of understanding. And if one goes further and penetrates more deeply, there comes good understanding. Finally, one gains limitless understanding devoid of all obstructions. This was stated by the great Kadampa Geshe Potowa who was one of the three prominent disciples of Dromtönpa and who was said to have been a manifestation of Manjüri.

III. THE MEANS OF CULTIVATING THE PATH

A. CULTIVATING THE STAGE OF GENERATION

MEDITATION UPON THE PALACE - "THAT WHICH IS RELIED UPON" [GENERATING THE PALACE]

There is a tremendous amount of information that could be explained about the nature of the palace, its dimensions and proportions, but this would be a bit too cumbersome for the time being. Therefore, one should simply think of it as being a very glorious place - not at all like an ordinary house. It has four walls, each of which has a door in its center that faces one of four directions. Above each door a golden Dharma-wheel is flanked on either side by a deer.

One should not think of this palace as being made out of stone, mortar, brick and so forth, but rather think of it as being Buddha. In what sense? In the sense that the Wisdom Truth Body of the Buddha manifests in the form of the palace. In other words, the palace is actually an emanation, a manifestation of the Buddha-Mind.

The various parts of the palace are manifestations of facets of enlightenment. For example, the doors to the east, south, north and west are manifesting the four close applications of mindfulness,¹ or more commonly known by the Pali term as the 'four satipatthanas.' Other aspects of the palace are emanations of the 'four bases of miraculous action,' the 'five powers' and so forth, including the '37 facets of enlightenment'.

Let us practice visualizing it right now and get a bit of an acquaintance with it!

MEDITATION ON THE DEITY - " THAT WHICH REUES UPON THE PALACE" [GENERATING ONESELF AS KALACAKRA]

In the very center of this palace one generates oneself as the deity Kalacakra, standing upon a throne. The visualization of Kalacakra is not generated in front of oneself (Tib. mdun.bskyed). This type of visualization, in which one generates oneself as the

deity, is called 'self-generation' (Tib bdag.bskyed; *betag* means 'self and *skyed* means 'to generate') This is a practice in the stage of generation, the first of the two stages of tantra. It is called the 'stage of generation' (Skt. utpatti-krama; Tib; bskyed.rim) because one is generating the palace and oneself as the Kalacakra deity in that palace

Kalacakra stands upon a throne of moon, sun, and Rahu, [and Kfflagni] discs. The color of Kalacakra is blue.

1. He has four faces; one in the front; two on the sides; and one in the back.

The front face is black and in a somewhat wrathful, ferocious aspect so that the eye-teeth are showing slightly. When ordinary people like ourselves get really angry, we grimace and show our teeth. However, such is not the case with a yidam. with Kalacakra. In this instance, the expression appears out of the force of compassion. The ferocity or wrath is not directed toward any sentient being, but rather toward the ignorance of grasping at a false identity.' As the great Sakya Pandita said, "Vami, The Lord of Death, kills beings even with a great smile. Whereas, a meditational deity, though appearing wrathful, is actually expressing compassion "

The right face is red and has the appearance of lust or attachment.

The face to the back is yellow with an expression of meditative equipoise, as if the deity were in meditation.

The face on the left is white and has a very peaceful expression.

Each face has three eyes, namely, the two [regular] eyes the third eye of wisdom.'

2. The hair on the head is coiled into a topknot on top of which is a varicolored vajra with the symbol of the half-moon. In addition, the deity is adorned with many jewel ornaments, such as the ornament on the very crown of the head, the necklace, the earrings, the ornaments on the wrists and ankles and so on. Finally, the deity is dressed in a tiger skin.

3. There are 24 arms, 12 on either side. The first four arms are red, and the last four arms are white.

The first of the right black arms embraces the consort and holds a vajra in the hand; the second - a sword; the third - a trident

(like (hat of Isvara); and the fourth - a cleaver.

The first of the right red hands (or the fifth hand) holds an arrow, which is called a "fire arrow" in the text, but it is simply an arrow. The second red hand holds a long-handled vajra hook which, on its upper end, has a half-crossed vajra on one side and a hook on the other. The third hand holds a damaru (hand-drum) which is producing a drumming sound. And the fourth hand holds a hammer.

The first of the right white hands holds a wheel; the second - a spear; the third - a stick, and the fourth and final of the right white hands - an axe.

These are the 12 right hands with their respective implements and they should be kept clearly in mind.

The first of the left black hands holds a bell; the second - a shield. This type of shield was used in the past to guard against arrows and swords when fighting sword-battles. However, if you look at the thanka printed in the book, the illustration is a bit strange because the shield is down. Actually, the shield should not be held down facing oneself but should be held outward to help you a bit. This incorrect way of depicting the hand holding the shield down and facing oneself was done repeatedly. A number of artists in Dharamsala (India) were painting the deity in this way. His Holiness the Dalai Lama noted how they were painting it and said "Now, you take a shield and hold it like that! Wouldn't your hand be vulnerable to spears and swords?" They were very impressed by his practical wisdom and, I guess, eventually caught on. In any case, it is indeed a shield, but the way of holding it is a bit backward.

In the third left black hand, the deity holds a khatvaha. This is a certain kind of staff that has three skulls and half-crossed vajra impaled on it. It is the same type as the one held by Cakra-samvara.

In the fourth, the deity holds a skull-cup (Skt. kapala) filled with blood.

Now we go to the red arms on the left. The first hand holds a bow, the second - a lasso, which is not used today. In the past and in Tibet as well, when a couple of people were having a fight they would bring out a lasso, snag the other person and then "beat the

dickens out of him " The third hand holds a precious jewel; and the fourth-a white lotus

The first of the white hands on the left holds a white conch; the second - a mirror; the third - a vajra or an iron chain; and finally, the fourth - the head of the deity Brahma, by the hair.

4. Kalacakra has only two legs The right one is red and the left one is white. There is much significance to this which will gradually be explained. Simply stated, the right leg symbolizes the right energy-channel (Tib. ro.ma) which is filled with blood, and the left leg symbolizes the energy-channel on the left (Tib. rkyang.ma) filled with the white bodhicitta There is much more that could be said but we will leave it at this very simple explanation for the time being

5. The consort of KSIacakra is called Natsog Yum (Tib. sna.tshog-s.yum). *Yum* means 'consort' [or 'mother']; thus, the Natsog Consort. She is yellow in color and, likewise, has four faces, each with three eyes: the front one is yellow, the one on the right is white, the one on the back is blue, the one on the left is red.

6. She has eight arms - four to the right and four to the left.

The first of her right hands, the arm of which embraces KSIacakra, holds a cleaver, the second - a vajra hook; the third - a drumming damaru, like that of Kalacakra; and the fourth - a rosary, which she is turning/counting.

The first of her left hands, the arm of which embraces Kalacakra, holds a skull-cup filled with blood; her second hand on the left holds a lasso; the third - a white eight-petailed lotus; the fourth - a precious jewel.

7- Natsog Yum is wearing a crown, which is of the nature of Vajrasattva. She is adorned with the five types of ornaments, whereas Kalacakra himself has six types of ornaments. The missing ornament on the consort is the one symbolizing the white bodhicitta. Her left leg is in union with the deity Kalacakra.

It is very important to clearly understand the significance of the sexual union of the deity and consort. It very specifically symbolizes the union of method and wisdom. In this case, the deity Kalacakra symbolizes method which, in this tantric context, refers to the great bliss. The consort symbolizes wisdom which is the

realization of emptiness. Their union symbolizes the union of the great bliss and the wisdom realizing emptiness.

The further meaning is that without the wisdom of the indivisible bliss and emptiness, it is impossible to reach the state of full enlightenment. It is for this reason that Kalacakra, symbolizing the method, and the consort symbolizing the wisdom, are in union. Hold this very clearly in mind!

This is a full form of the Kalacakra deity with the 24 arms and his consort, Natsog Yum, with eight arms.

We should realize the great good fortune of being able to generate, or to meditate on ourselves as a Buddha. We have never done so before and, although we are not Buddhas at the moment, it is legitimate for us to engage in such a meditation because we are cultivating the identification with the deity that we will become - the resultant Buddha. Eventually, we will actually attain the state of Buddhahood, manifesting as Kalacakra. To that end, we are identifying with and drawing that into the present. With this identification we must cultivate the divine pride of being the deity, Buddha Kalacakra, that we will become. So, the two (the visualization and the pride) go together. We should meditate on this and do our best.

If you are not able to engage in this visualization in the detailed way, you can generate yourself as the deity in the simple form, having one face and two arms, holding the vajra (right) and bell (left). The consort holds a cleaver in her right hand, a skull-cup in her left.

However, at the beginning you should not expect the visualization to be clear. It will not be! So, while generating or visualizing yourself as Kalacakra, you can visualize yourself as the generally blue deity in union with the generally yellow consort; vaguely imagine the palace around you, hold it in mind and be satisfied with that. You should not immediately expect a very precise visualization, that comes only through practice. This is not only true for meditation but it is also true for sculpting, painting and so on. At the beginning one has to be satisfied with a crude attempt but, in the course of practice, one's skills increase. Eventually, in this meditation we gain a very powerful experience of both the pride and the visualization of Kalacakra.

The great tantric master, Gungtang Rinpoche, was once giving the oral transmission of the tantric deity Vajrabhairava. Among those receiving it was a disciple with very, very good powers of visualization. In the course of the teachings, he was visualizing himself in the form of Vajrabhairava with many arms, each hand of which was holding some implement. At that point he was asked to be a tea-bearer. He was a young monk and when he was told to pour the tea for people, he looked around in confusion and asked, "But how shall I pour tea? All my hands are full!?" Of course the Lama responded, "Just use your hands . . . these right here!"

I hope that this will not create any great difficulties for us when we have generated a strong visualization of Kalacakra and try to get into the automobile to drive, but cannot get to the steering wheel because all of our hands are full.

NOTES

¹Another distinction between the Buddha Maitreya and Buddha Sakyamuni is that Buddha Maitreya will be much larger physically. A Buddha always appears somewhat larger than ordinary people around him. In general, during the time of Maitreya, human beings will be larger and, in turn, Buddha Maitreya will be even larger. The environment will also be quite different: it will not be mountainous or rough but flat.

²Tu is a very tasty Tibetan dish made from cheese, brown sugar and butter. It is butter that holds the ingredients together.

SECTION FIVE

First of all, we should cultivate a proper bodhicitta motivation, the awakening mind aspiring for full enlightenment for the sake of all sentient beings. With this aspiration, we listen to teachings with the intent of putting them into practice thereby attaining full enlightenment in the form of Kalacakra and leading other sentient beings to the same attainment.

[III. A. CULTIVATING THE STAGE OF GENERATION]

THE MEANS OF ENGAGING IN THE MEDITATION

It is far more important to gain a clear understanding of the meditation than to go into the intricate details of the specific implements, what they mean, as well as the many details of the palace and the mandala of Kalacakra. If one is able to meditate on the full form of Kalacakra with the four faces and the 24 arms, this is fine. However, it is very difficult. If, on the other hand, one finds this practice beyond one's [present] ability, then, for the time being, one should meditate on oneself as Kalacakra in his simple form with one face and two arms.

There are two aspects of the meditation ('divine pride' and 'clear appearance') directed toward eradicating ordinary conceptual grasping and ordinary appearance.

I. Divine Pride

The first point to emphasize in the meditation is cultivating the 'divine pride' (Tib. *lha'i.nga rgyal*), the pride of identifying with the Buddha Kalacakra that one will become. It would be a mistake

to think, "I am a Buddha." while one is not a Buddha; however, the divine pride in this practice is based on the fact that one will eventually attain full enlightenment in the appearance of Kalacakra. This is called 'taking the fruit and applying it to the path,' that is, taking up the fruit of one's spiritual path, which is oneself as a fully enlightened being, and applying it to the present point in one's own spiritual path. Hence, one is identifying with the Buddha one will become and applying this in the present. Therefore, first of all, cultivate the pride and keep this strong and stable in the mind.

2. *Clear Appearance*

When there is some sense of stabilization, you can further develop the 'clear appearance.' involving the visualization in some detail, going through the dark and white parts of the eye, and then down through the various parts of the deity. But first and above all, seek stability. Furthermore, at the outset of the meditation, when one is just beginning and one's capacity is not very great, it would be best to just focus upon the front black face only. If even the whole front face is a bit too much, on the basis of having already cultivated divine pride, it would be better to focus on just the one wisdom eye.

3. *Aspects of the Practice Leading to the Attainment of Clear Stillness*

As one engages in the meditation, one must seek mental stability and beware of and eradicate what are called the 'five faults.' One accomplishes this by means of the 'eight remedies' which are aspects of the practice leading to the attainment of 'clear stillness' (Skt. *śamatha*; Tib. *zhi.gnas*).

Such an accomplishment in this Kalacakra practice would lead to the attainment of the gross and subtle stages of the stage of generation. It is by this means on the tantric path that one attains clear stillness. Maitreya, in his text *The Investigation of the Center and the Extremes* (Skt. *Madhyantavivhaga*; Tib. *dbas.dang-mtha' rnam.par.'byed.pa*), taught these five faults and eight remedies, which are equally applicable whether one is following a sutra or a tantra path.

a. THE FIVE FAULTS

1) The first of the five faults one encounters in the practice of meditation is called 'laziness'¹ (Tib. leJo). In the practice of Kalacakra, it is simply the lack of interest or desire to **meditate**; more specifically, to generate oneself as Kalacakra. This **type of laziness** is the first fault.

2) The second fault is literally called 'forgetting the quintessential teaching' (Tib. gdams.ngag.brjed.pa). It does not refer to forgetting teachings that one has heard or received from the lama, but rather to forgetting the object of the meditation while trying to meditate upon oneself as Kalacakra. One's mind no longer stays involved with the image or the visualization of oneself as Kalacakra and simply wanders elsewhere. Consequently, it is actually forgetting the object of meditation.

3) The third fault has two aspects called 'sinking' and 'excitement,' both of which come under one heading (Tib. bying.rgod). They are the two chief obstacles in the course of meditation which must be eradicated

'Sinking' is a very literal translation. There are two types of sinking: gross and subtle

When the mind is very steadily abiding on the object, but the clarity of the mind is missing, this is gross sinking.' One does not have to be concerned about gross sinking until one is rather advanced in the meditation since it only occurs when there is stability.

The nature of 'subtle sinking' is such that, although stability and clarity exist, vivid clarity with extra vitality and strength do not. This happens because the retention of (the mind is a bit too loose, too slack. Subtle sinking occurs when one is quite advanced in meditation. So advanced, in fact, that the scriptures relate how many Tibetan lamas arrived at this point where they were subject to subtle sinking, but failed to see it. Failing in this way, they thought they had attained some extremely high tantric realization or, perhaps, the state of samadhi on the stage of completion.

To sum up [when subtle sinking occurs], although clarity exists, the real vivid clarity of the mind, which needs to be cultivated, does not. This is an extremely subtle obstacle that needs to be recognized [and eliminated] eventually.

Grosser than either of the two types of sinking is 'mental fogginess' This is the cause of sinking and is much more obvious. We can experience mental fogginess now as it simply involves a heaviness of both the body and the mind.

For the time being, when one is just beginning in this type of meditation, one really does not need to worry about sinking, and especially about subtle sinking. The reason for this is that sinking only occurs when there is a strong mental stability, that is, when the mind really abides with the object

Since, in the early stages of the meditation, the mind is so rambunctious and has so much agitation, this fault will not arise. Progressing toward the attainment of clear stillness, one passes through nine mental states. It is not until one has gained the fifth state that subtle sinking occurs. Even gross sinking will only occur around the fourth of these mental states. Before then, there is so much agitation that subtle sinking is simply not a matter of concern.

The second of the two major obstacles in the course of meditation is what is technically called 'excitement.' Again, there are two types of excitement: gross and subtle.

'Gross excitement' occurs when the mind is agitated or distracted and, consequently, simply loses the object. In other words, it veers off the object and goes elsewhere, so that the object is altogether lost. It is relatively easy to recognize.

'Subtle excitement' occurs when retention of the object exists simultaneously with an undercurrent of rambling thoughts. Is the object there? Yes. Is the mind focused on the object? Yes. However, some kind of rambling thoughts are also occurring, for example, "I would like to go off on a drive," or "When the meditation is finished, I have to do that." and so on. This subtle agitation/excitement is rambling thought beneath the surface of the meditation, like water flowing beneath the ice on a river.

Sinking and excitement must be eradicated. If they are not dispelled, it is neither possible to achieve a really fine samadhi nor to arrive at the culmination of the stage of generation. As already mentioned, only through the culmination of the stage of generation in this tantric practice does one attain clear stillness. In brief, clear stillness is only reached on this high level and it cannot be

attained without dispelling sinking and excitement.

4) The fourth fault is 'non-application' (Tib. 'du.mi.byed). It occurs in a situation when either sinking or excitement arises and there is a need to apply the appropriate remedies to dispel these faults, but one neglects and fails to do so. Thus, one does not apply the necessary remedies. This non-application is the fourth fault.

5) The fifth fault is called 'application' (Tib. du.byed). This fault occurs in a situation in which one has already recognized sinking and excitement, has already applied the necessary remedies, has already dispelled these faults such that the mind is now free of them, and yet continues to apply the specific antidotes for sinking and excitement. In other words, once one is free from these faults, one should no longer apply the specific remedies for eliminating them. If one does so at such an inappropriate time, this then damages one's mental stability. This fault would be that of application.

One should clearly ascertain and keep these well in mind because such faults as these arise in meditation and one needs to be able to recognize them when they occur.

b. THE EIGHT REMEDIAL APPLICATIONS

The first four remedial applications are specific antidotes for dispelling the first of the five faults, laziness.

1) The first of the remedial applications is 'faith' (Tib. dad.pa). One can speak here of faith in samadhi, the development of concentration or, more specifically related to this practice, faith in the Kalacakra stage of generation. Such faith is generated by recognizing and having confidence in the tremendous benefits one gains through cultivating the stage of generation.

2) The second is 'yearning' (Tib. dun.pa), which actually involves an aspiration or striving toward the object of the faith [in the Kalacakra stage of generation].

3) The third remedial application is 'enthusiasm' (Tib. brtson.*grus).

4) The fourth is called 'suppleness' (Tib. shin.sbyangs). In fact, among these four, the direct antidote for laziness is suppleness. However, the three preceding aspects of faith, yearning and

enthusiasm are the mental faculties that give rise to suppleness, which then acts as a direct antidote to dispel laziness. The word 'suppleness' has a very specific meaning here and we need to differentiate between physical and mental suppleness.

- When 'physical suppleness' arises, one actually feels a physical ease, a physical lightness and a physical readiness similar to a sense of physical well-being. The body is lit for action, fit to be used as one chooses. It is a fit tool.

- When 'mental suppleness' arises, the clarity of the mind, the clarity of the visualization becomes very strong. One's mind is filled with a great sense of mental well-being and gladness, a sense of mental well-being and gladness, a sense of mental and physical buoyancy (sometimes shin sbyang is translated as 'buoyancy'). Whether one wants to engage in meditation or recite prayers, whatever one might wish to do, the mind is there, ready for action. This quality of suppleness is attained through the cultivation of samadhi or concentration.

5) 'Mindfulness' (Tib dran.pa) is the mental factor or capacity of the mind to retain the object or the qualities with which the mind has become accustomed. In this case, it is the mental factor that retains the visualization of the face [of the Kalacakra deity]. That is its function or duty.

It is the direct antidote for what has been called 'forgetting the quintessential teachings,' forgetting the object of meditation. This occurs when the power of mindfulness, involving retention of the object, wanes and the mind wanders away.

To draw an analogy, it is comparable to driving down the freeway. You keep your eyes and your mind right on the freeway. You do not wander off to the left or to the right because you would increase your chance of a collision. In like fashion, while you are doing this meditation, whether you are focusing on the general body of Kalacakra or on his face or simply on the wisdom eye, keep your mind right on that and do not allow it to veer to the left or to the right. It is actually a fairly close parallel.

When you drive, you also keep an eye out to the right and to the left in order to make sure you will not get cut off by traffic on either side. Likewise in meditation, you keep your attention focused on the main object, but in the meantime you look to the

right and to the left to see whether sinking or excitement are arising. You keep on guard for them.

A quote from one text states. "As long as I am **not able to focus** my mind, even for the time it takes to milk a cow **and my mind is flying off** in this and that direction without being **able to retain** mindfulness, it is impossible to progress along **the 'grounds' and 'stages'** of either the sutra or tantra paths. Therefore, **I will apply** myself assiduously to the practice of meditation.* **Bless me that I may do so!**"

Special emphasis is on this point: **"I shall assiduously address** myself to this practice." It is not just a matter of relying **on the** great blessings of the Buddhas. If this were the case, we **would** already be fully enlightened ourselves. Rather, it is half **and** half. One half - the effort we exert from our side; and the other - **the** blessings from the Buddhas.

One meditator in retreat was giving much time to meditation. But, as he was meditating, he would occasionally break his **session and** tell his servant. "Oh, I want this," and in a little while. "Get me that." The servant, a bit confused, asked. "What is all this **coming** from the meditation?" To which the novice meditator replied, "I have so much time to think while sitting in meditation that I remember all the things I had forgotten I wanted you to do for me!" Mindfulness is considered the crucial factor in meditation - if it is really firm and stable, samadhi can be attained quite easily.

6) The sixth of the remedial applications is introspective alertness' (Tib. shes. bzhin) Its function is to check up on the mind- It is called 'introspective' because it does not concern itself with the visualization, but with observing the mind, which is visualizing. "Is the mind on the visualization? Is it focused there or is it wandering?" While one part of the mind retains its object through mindfulness, it is the mental factor of introspective alertness which checks up on that mind. One might actually find during the meditation that, sometimes, the mind goes off to town or off driving and so forth. When introspective alertness sees that the mind has wandered off, it brings the mind back in and applies it again to the meditation.

*This refers especially to the stabilization of the mind and the cultivation of clear tithncu.

In other words, introspective alertness is initially necessary in order to recognize and ascertain the presence of faults. Once it has done so, one is then in a position to apply specific remedies for the faults. And how does this function? While the main force of one's attention is focused upon the object of meditation (here, oneself as Kalacakra), literally 'one corner of the mind,' or one part of the force of the mind, is turned back on the meditating mind itself in order to determine whether the mind is focused on, or veering off the object. Therefore, it is the 'quality control' for the meditation, checking up to see whether or not the mind is meditating properly. If introspective alertness discovers that a fault has arisen in the meditation, then one applies specific remedies to dispel the fault in question. For example, if sinking has arisen, one needs to apply specific remedies that inspire or exalt the mind.

To draw an analogy, in war one needs to reconnoiter in order to discover if the enemy is present or attacking. This would be your spy. The spy is not the main force of your army but is out there, peering around to see if the enemy has arisen or not. If he checks and sees that the enemy is attacking or is present, then the spy does not go out and wage war with him; he goes back to headquarters and tells them about it and they do what is necessary. In like fashion, introspective alertness is just one aspect of the mind. It does not go and try to eliminate the faults, it simply recognizes them. One must then apply specific remedies.

Mindfulness and introspective alertness are two factors that must be cultivated because of their extreme importance. By doing so, one gradually arrives at a greater stability in the meditation. In the beginning, however, there is not much stability. Nevertheless, the Buddhas of the past reached enlightenment by training their minds in this way. At one time, they too were like ourselves and they did not start out with glorious accomplishments. But through practice such as this they reached their goal.

7) The next remedial application is that of 'application' which is the antidote for non-application. When sinking or excitement arise, one needs to refrain from non-application and apply the necessary remedies.

Sinking occurs due to the vitality of the mind going too low. As a result of this, one needs to apply remedies to uplift, exalt and

inspire the mind in order to give it more energy. This can be done, for example, by contemplating the preciousness of one's own human existence, the great potential and great fortune of meeting the Buddha's teachings, the opportunity of cultivating bodhicitta and, in various ways, inspiring the mind. When the mind is uplifted from this kind of low energy level, lifted up to a more usable, appropriate level, then, setting aside the remedy, one goes ahead with the meditation.

Excitement occurs when there is too much energy, too much tension. In this case, one needs to lower it, to subdue it, make it more workable. For example, one would meditate on such topics as impermanence, the sufferings of the lower realms of existence and so forth. It is a fault, in general, to have too much energy, to be, in a sense, too glad all the time. If one is "Missed out" all the time, has a lot of energy and is always excitedly happy, then this acts as an obstacle to the meditation.

There is the account of the king Suddhodana, whose position was such that he was always very glad and would reflect upon his great fortune. Sixty thousand of this Sakya clan had attained great realization on the Buddha's path and he was completely blissed out over this fact. In the meantime, he was not gaining any direct realization himself. On one occasion, when the Buddha was giving teachings, many devas and the Four Great Kings were present but, somehow, King Suddhodana was not admitted. Suddenly he was very downcast and depressed.

When the exultation of his mind diminished, it became ripe to receive teachings and he, too, gained realization.

8) The eighth remedial application is 'non-application.' In a situation in which sinking and excitement have been dispelled, it would be a fault to apply remedies to dispel that which does not need to be dispelled. Therefore, the antidote is not to apply any remedies or applications, but simply to carry on with the practice of samadhi itself.

Just as in school, one passes successively through different grades, so too does the gradual cultivation of samadhi lead to clear stillness. In the context of the tantra and generating oneself as the simple form of Kalacakra, one's first task is to prevent the mind from being dispersed, that is, to draw it in and focus it upon the

object - oneself as the simple form of Kalacakra. This entails the attainment of the first of the nine mental states (Tib. *sems gnas.d-gu*) which is called, 'mental placement.'

c. THE NINE MENTAL STATES

1) At the beginning of the meditation, one cultivates the first mental state, 'mental placement' (Tib. *sems jog.pa*). At this point, the mind has very little stability; one finds the object and then very swiftly loses it. The mind wanders elsewhere. Thus, it is going out and being drawn in again and again. When one actually engages in the cultivation of clear stillness, eventually one feels that, as a result of meditation, one has more wandering thoughts than before. It seems that the meditation is increasing mental distraction. When this recognition occurs, one should not regard it as a fault, but rather as a good sign that one now has a greater awareness of what is happening in the mind.

To draw an analogy, one might be outside somewhere and, as long as one is not paying any special attention but is simply sitting there with a wandering mind, daydreaming about this and that, one would not necessarily notice if many cars or people pass back and forth. One would not especially notice, or even know, whether or not a lot of traffic passed by because one would not be concerned. But if, one another day on the same spot, one really paid attention to the number of people and cars passing by, one would notice a great deal of traffic. One might conclude, "There is a lot more traffic today than before," whereas, in fact, there is not. At this time, instead of being oblivious one is being aware.

2) The second of the nine mental states preceding and leading to the attainment of clear stillness is called the 'continual placement' (Tib. *rgyun. du.'jog. pa*). Before this attainment, one continues practicing a great deal and, again and again, brings the mind in after it has wandered off. Eventually, sufficient stability does arise in the mind so that the attention will remain uninterruptedly focused on the object for, say, five, six or seven minutes. When that degree of stability has been attained, one has reached the second mental state called continual placement.

3) The third mental state is called the 'patch-like placement'

(Tib. glan. te. 'jog.pa). With the attainment of this third state, one's degree of mental stability is even greater than before such that the mind will remain uninterruptedly focused on the object for, say, 10-15 minutes. It is called 'patch-like placement' because, basically, the mind is focused upon the object with a reasonably good degree of stability and yet, occasionally, it will wander off. On those occasions, one recognizes this and brings it back. One is 'patching-up' one's samadhi. This is similar to having a tear in one's robe - one recognizes it and says, "Oh, there!" and just patches it up.

4) The fourth mental state is called 'close placement' (Tib. nye.bar.' jog.pa). Having attained this fourth state, the mind no longer loses the object of meditation, because the power of mindfulness has come to completion. This is similar to a person growing up. There will be certain physical tasks that can or cannot be performed. However, when this person becomes an adult of 20 years or so, his strength is complete and he is now able to do whatever is necessary. In like fashion, the strength of mindfulness is now complete. One does not lose the object, because the mind is no longer drawn away from it.

5) The fifth mental state is called 'subduing' (Tib. dul.ba.byed.pa). While one is abiding in the previous mental state of close placement, the mind becomes very inwardly directed and a high degree of stability exists. But, on the basis of that attainment, a very great danger of subtle sinking exists as well. For this reason, one especially needs to cultivate an extremely acute introspective alertness. It has to be extremely acute, because this fault of subtle sinking is very, very subtle and difficult to recognize, in fact, many contemplatives of the past have mistaken a concentration in which subtle sinking has arisen with proper and extremely fine samadhi. They stunted their practice by failing to recognize the fault of subtle sinking and thought, instead, that they had accomplished their goal.

To draw an analogy, if one is in a household in which the other people in the house are lavishing one with kindness, praise, nice words and so forth while, at the same time, they are robbing one blind, it is very difficult to recognize them because they seem to be one's friends. They are much more difficult to recognize than

people who come pounding on one's door is blatant **robbers of bandits**. **Those**, at least, are easy to recognize. In like fashion, **subtle** sinking can very easily be mistaken for proper meditation, **whereas**, in fact, it is a fault which must be recognized. It is **recognized** through an extremely acute introspective alertness.

6) The sixth mental state is called 'pacification' (Tib. zhi.bar-byed.pa). While abiding in the fifth mental state, the subduing, **which is**, in fact, a very fine degree of samadhi, one is giving a lot of **effort** or attention to cultivating extremely acute introspective **alertness**. As a result of this, the energy of the mind increases a **great deal**. With this increased and perhaps excessive energy of **mind**, as one goes to the sixth mental state, there is a danger of (**ubtle** excitement. To guard against this, one needs to recognize it by means of very active introspective alertness

7) The seventh mental state is called the 'full pacification' (Tib. mam.par.zhi. bar.byed.pa). In this state, there is not really much danger of the arising of either sinking or excitement. They will occasionally arise a little bit and when they do, they are not difficult to dispel and can be eliminated by the force of enthusiasm. By and large, they are not there. In the illustration of an elephant following a winding path, depicting the course of mental development towards the attainment of clear stillness, at **this stage**, the elephant, representing the mind, has a little tiny bit of **blackness** on it symbolizing the fact that the mind, at this point, is **only** slightly subject to sinking and excitement.

Here is a recent example of Geshe Rabkye, who was in the same **class with me**. In cultivating clear stillness, he had definitely **attained** the seventh of these nine states. In his meditation for two or **three hours** at a stretch, he would have impeccable concentration, a very high degree of samadhi. At that point he died. **However**, if he had lived, there seems no doubt that he would have **proceeded right** to the full attainment of clear stillness. Once one **has attained** the seventh state, to attain the following ones is a **matter of** relative ease-

When I was in Dalhousie (another hill-station in northern India) quite a few years back, **I** was living alone very, very simply with **only the most** basic possessions. At that time, compared to Geshe **Rabkye**, **I** was very wealthy. He really looked simply like a beggar;

all he had was a meditation cushion, a couple of pictures and that was it. Sometimes Geshe Rabkye, who was very good in debate would come to my place and talk or debate. Once I asked him what realization had he gained and he replied, "Well, I have not gained any real realization, but I have the feeling no one in the world is happier than I am." This is an indication that he was truly a spiritual practitioner. His Holiness the Dalai Lama really took a very special interest and had an especially great affection for Geshe Rabkye. He invited him down from the mountain, **where** he was meditating, into his own palace to meditate there. It is true that His Holiness the Dalai Lama does take this very special interest, have this special affection for people, be they Tibetans or Westerners, who are devoting themselves very earnestly to spiritual practice.

8) The eight mental state is called 'single-pointed application' (Tib. rtse. gchig.tu.byed.pa). Upon the attainment of the eighth mental state, sinking or excitement no longer arise. By this time, at the beginning of one's sitting session, with just the slightest bit of effort, the mind becomes focused upon the object (in this case, oneself as Kalacakra). One can then simply continue to abide in the meditation for as long as one likes. For the duration of the meditation, there is no sinking or excitement. This can be likened to a person who falls asleep and is completely out for eight hours, sleeping solidly the whole time without any effort. Likewise, with just a little bit of effort at the beginning of the sitting, this person can sit for a long time during which sinking and excitement do not arise.

9) The ninth mental state is 'even-placement' (Tib. mnyam paT. 'jog.pa). With the attainment of this state, one is totally accustomed to the practice. Without any effort at all, one simply enters the meditation, focuses upon the object (oneself as Kalacakra) and abides in it effortlessly. This is like a person who has recited the Om Mani Padme Padme Hum many, many times. It becomes so effortless that, even if his mind is wandering all over the place, his mouth is saying Om Mani Padme Hum. . . .

Even at this point, however, one has not yet reached the actual state of deep stillness. This is called 'single-pointed concentration

of the realm of desire.' One needs to continue in the meditation and, after some time, there arises a very special kind of joy and bliss, SO strong that it is almost unbearable. It arises, and then it wanes a little bit. Thereafter, there arises a physical joy due to physical suppleness, and then a joy due to mental suppleness. It is following this that one actually reaches the attainment of clear stillness, also called the access concentration to the first mental stabilization.' Once one has attained this state, the mind is an extremely fine instrument for any type of meditation one wants to engage in. The mind will simply be able to focus on that. And that is that!

These are the nine states one gradually passes through, regardless of whether one is practicing the sutra or the tantra path. The way one progresses (whether focusing on the lace or merely on an eye) is by focusing and maintaining mental stability with good mindfulness for, say, five minutes, gradually extending to ten, then fifteen minutes and, in this way, lengthening the period of stability further and further.

If one truly tackles this type of meditation, it necessitates full use of one's intelligence to approach it in a variety of skillful ways. Sometimes, one will be sitting in meditation, intensely applying oneself while, at other times, one needs to relax. Then again, at other times, one needs to apply oneself toward accumulating merit and purifying unwholesome imprints and obscurations. And why? Through the meditation in which one cultivates clear stillness, one chiefly accrues 'collection of wisdom,' sometimes called 'mental merit', whereas, through other practices, for example, devotional practices such as performing the *Seven-Limb Puja*, as well as through cultivating generosity and so forth, one chiefly accumulates 'physical merit' or collection-of merit.¹ Therefore, through meditation one is accumulating only the mental merit.

If one is accumulating only one type of merit, this can create an imbalance that can produce insurmountable obstacles. For example, if one is just engaging in meditation, as many people nowadays think is possible, this causes an imbalance which can create simply one obstacle after another. And why? Because with a deficiency of [physical] merit, it is possible that disturbances of one's subtle winds or other obstacles might arise. In fact, even

though one is not using up merit through meditation, but is actually accumulating mainly the collection of wisdom, it might seem as if one were exhausting it. The reason for this is that if one is just focusing on and cultivating this one type of merit, which is also very much related to wisdom and intelligence, it is said that this can decrease one's lifespan. When disturbances and obstacles of this type arise, one needs to focus more on the accumulation of [physical] merit and purification of unwholesome imprints, accomplished through performing complementary practices such as the ones mentioned above, the *Seven-Limb Pujii*, making offerings and so forth.

However, if one already has a tremendous store of merit, the situation can be different, but, nowadays, we are beings living in what is called the time of degeneration.' So, we must balance our meditation or complement it with these other practices [designed specifically for the accumulation of physical merit] Otherwise, because one obstacle will come after another, it can perhaps seem as if one were exhausting one's merit. In brief, one must have a balanced practice, comprised of meditation and complementary practices, that is, one must accumulate both physical and mental merit [in order to attain one's goal].

d. THE SIX POWERS

1) The first among the 'six powers,' by means of which one attains the nine mental states, is the 'power of hearing' (Tib. thos.pa'i.stobs). It is by means of the power of hearing and retaining the master's instructions on the meditation that one attains the first of the nine mental states.

2) The second is the 'power of thought' or the 'power of reflection' (Tib. bsam. pa i slobs). It is by means of this power, which involves thinking or reflecting upon the teachings one has heard and bringing them to mind again and again, that one goes on to attain the second mental state.

3) The third is called the 'power of mindfulness' (Tib. dran. pa'i. stobs). It is by means of this power that one attains the third and the fourth mental state.

4) The fourth is the 'power of introspective alertness' (Tib. shes.bzhin.gyi.stobs). With this especially acute power of intro-

spective alertness, one is on guard, first against subtle sinking and then against subtle excitement. Thus, by means of this power, one attains the fifth and sixth mental states.

5) The fifth is the 'power of enthusiasm' (Tib. brtson 'grus-kyi.slobs). Remember that it is in the seventh state that one dispels the occasionally arising sinking and excitement by the power of enthusiasm. Then in the eighth, at the outset of the sitting, with just a little bit of effort and a little bit of application of enthusiasm, one can continue unhindered.

6) The sixth is the power of full acquaintance' (Tib. yong. su. dris pa'i.stobs). It is by this power that one attains the ninth mental state. By this time, one effortlessly engages in the meditation because one is habituated and accustomed to the practice.

Just as one uses different methods to build a house or an airplane, so are these six powers the tools for building the structure of clear stillness. In fact, this practice can be included in the field of knowledge of creativity, which was mentioned previously. Among the three aspects of this field - physical, verbal and mental creativity - this practice is included in that of mental creativity.

e. THE FOUR TYPES OF ARNNI 'IN

Now we go on to the four types of 'attention' which are also means for attaining these nine states.

1) The first of these is called the 'squeezing attention' (Tib. bsgrims, te. 'jug.pa'i.yid.byed), or forceful attention. It is with this attention that one attains the first two mental states.

2) The second attention is the 'interrupted attention' (Tib. chad.cing. 'jug.pa'i.yid.byed). It is with this type of attention that one attains the third up through the seventh mental states. It is called 'interrupted' because it is during this period of mental cultivation that one's concentration is interrupted by the occurrence of sinking and excitement.

3) The third is the 'uninterrupted attention' (Tib. chad, pa.med.pa. 'jug.pa'i.yid.byed). This occurs in the eighth mental state.

4) The fourth is the 'spontaneous attention' (Tib. lhan.gyi grub-par. 'jug. pa'i.yid.byed). It occurs in the ninth mental state.

This is the means for the practice of meditation and these are the teachings. Whether one actually applies them or not is one's personal affair. However, whether or not one does engage in the practice of meditation, simply listening to the teachings and ascertaining their meaning leaves extremely beneficial imprints on one's own mindstream. One finds in the sutras many such accounts including those of Maudgalyayana and Sariputra. Both of them practiced a great deal during the time of the Buddha KaSyapa, the Buddha before our Buddha Sakyamuni. But, although they practiced a great deal, they did not become Arhats at that time; so, both of them offered prayers that they would attain Arhatship during the time of the next Buddha, the Buddha Sakyamuni. In that lifetime, with a short period of practice, they attained a very great realization and became Arhats very swiftly. In like manner, if we can meditate, this is excellent. Nowadays though, people are very busy; one might simply not find or make the time for a lot of meditation- Do as much as you can! Merely receiving the teachings is very beneficial. Due to their imprints and through the merit stored in this way, it can happen in the future that with very little effort, with just a few conditions coming together, one may attain samadhi very, very swiftly.

This is the manner in which one generates oneself as the deity Kalacakra. As Sakya Pandita said, "one generates oneself as one's special tutelary deity, and by doing so, dispels the ordinary appearances and conceptualizations. Through this, one rises from the cycle of existence. By the elimination of ordinary appearance and conceptualization, one opens oneself to the tremendous blessings of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas." We should, by all means, listen to the words of this great master.

Sakya Pandita continues, "By this means, one purifies unwholesome mental imprints accumulated with the body. One should continually recite the mantra of Kalacakra, which acts to purify unwholesome mental imprints accumulated through speech. One should cultivate compassion in union with the realization of emptiness to purify unwholesome mental imprints accumulated through mental activity. In this way, if one purifies the unwholesome imprints accumulated through the body, speech and mind, there is no way that one can avoid becoming a fully enlightened being."

Moreover, Lama Gunglang lampeyang said, "The door which opens the Dharma is hearing the teachings and reflecting upon them. A person who turns away from the bounties of the cycle of existence, particularly of this life, has the quality of the one who is holding Dharma. Thus, turning ones back on the pleasures of this life alone, and looking beyond to the hereafter is the distinction between a Dharma practitioner and one who is not. And finally, the essence of the path is method and wisdom and the union of the two."

The teachings on the nine states and the four attentions come from Asahga and his lexis the *Grounds of the Listeners* [Skt. *Sravakabhumi*, Tib. *Nyen. thos.kyi. Sṃ*] and *Bodhīśattva Grounds* (Skt. *Bodhisatnabhumi*, Tib. *Byan.chub sems.sems.dpa'i.sa*). The teachings on the six powers, by means of which one attains the nine mental states, have been explained by Holy Maitreya and are found in the *Ornament for the Mahayana Sutras* [Skt. *Mahayana-sutralamkuru*; Tib. *Mdo sde.rgyan*, one of the five works of Maitreya brought back from Tusita Heaven by Asahga]. In brief, the teaching which has been given here comes from Asahga and Holy Maitreya. It is said to be the king of quintessential instruction on the cultivation of clear stillness.

In addition to the above teachings, the author Asariga describes, in his *Grounds of the Listeners*, the 13 accumulations which are the causal accumulations toward the attainment of the clear stillness. Je Tsongkapa, in his *Exposition of the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment* (Lam rim.chen.mo), highly recommends this text to people who are following this type of meditation. Therefore, it should be read and studied. It is especially beneficial to read texts written by Asahga and attributed to Holy Maitreya: *Ornament for the Mahayana Sutras* [mentioned above], *The Investigation of the Center and the Extremes* (Skt. *Madhyatavibhaga*; Tib. *Dbus.dang.mtha'.rnam.par. 'byed.pa*), the *Ornament of the Realizations* (Skt. *Abhisamayalamkdra*; Tib. *Mngon.par.rtoqs.pa'i.rgyan*) and others. By doing so, as His Holiness the Dalai Lama has said, one places imprints upon the mind which lead to one's future rebirth in the circle of the foremost disciples of Maitreya.

If you want to meditate, the teaching that has been given here is indispensable. The sources of the teachings are the Buddha

himself, the Holy Maitreya and Asanga. From such totally authentic spiritual guides, there is no possibility that one could be deceived or follow mistaken paths. Understand them and then meditate to the best of your abilities. This meditation practice is for students as well as for teachers. Therefore, I encourage you to meditate and I will do the same.

That is all for today. Everybody now has plenty of things to meditate on. You should be very clear about these teachings. There is no time now to go downtown shopping . . . from now on, meditate only!

SECTION SIX

We should listen to these teachings on the Kalacakra with an awareness of the great good fortune of having the opportunity to receive them. In addition, our listening should be free of the three faults of a vessel;

having a mind which is like an upside down pot.

having a mind which is like a pot with holes in it;

having a mind which is like a pot that is dirty inside

Finally, we should listen with the three types of attitudes or six recognitions', as well as with a cheerful mind and a glad countenance.

[III. A.]

TAKING THE THREE BODIES OF THE BUDDHA AS THE PATH

The task in the Kalacakra practice is to purify and transform ordinary death and ordinary birth. Other tantras, such as Guhyasamaja, Vajrabhairava and Hevajra, speak of the purification and transformation of death, intermediate state and birth as a means toward enlightenment. In the Kalacakra Root Tantra, there is no reference to purifying the intermediate state; it speaks only of purifying death and birth. However, the very process of purifying ordinary death and ordinary birth automatically purifies the ordinary intermediate state. While still on the path and not yet a Buddha, by this means, one attains a facsimile of the three Bodies of the Buddha which take the nature of the actual three Bodies of the Buddha upon full enlightenment: the Truth Body (Skt. dharmakaya; Tib. chos. sku). Enjoyment Body (Skt. sambhogakaya; Tib. longs.sku) and Emanation Body (Skt. nirmanakaya; Tib. sprul.sku).

In this tantric practice, there are the two stages: the stage of generation and the stage of completion. The function and the task

of cultivating the stage of generation in general is to purify the ordinary birth, death and intermediate states. What is meant here by 'an ordinary state' is one that occurs due to mental distortions and actions motivated by mental distortions. That is what is to be purified.

It is indispensable to attain the stage of generation prior to the stage of completion, because it is impossible to attain the realizations of the stage of completion if one has not yet attained the stage of generation. It is like taking one step before the next. Step two is out of the question unless step one has been achieved. In Tibet, this was a subject of much disputation. Some lamas held the mistaken view that the stage of generation was directed only towards the attainment of mundane siddhis such as psychic powers.

A paraphrase of the definition of the stage of generation is as follows:

It is a deity yoga in which the energies, or winds (Skt. *vayu*; Tib. *rlung*) have not yet entered, abided and dissolved in the central channel by the forces of meditation. It is a yoga which is a ripener for its resultant stage of completion to which it leads. In other words, it ripens one's mental continuum for the following stage of completion and bears a similar aspect to birth, death and the intermediate state.

Very briefly stated, in the actual death process, there occurs the gradual dissolving of the elements: the earth dissolves into the water; water into fire; fire into the wind; and the wind dissolves into the consciousness which, itself, goes through ensuing experience in the death process. What is the meaning of . . . a similar aspect to . . ."? In the course of the meditation on the stage of generation, although one is not dying yet, the meditation one engages in is similar to the death process, as well as the subsequent processes of the intermediate state and birth. That will have to be a sufficient explanation for the time being.

Crucial to the stage of generation is taking the three Bodies of the Buddha as the path. Through cultivating the stage of generation by applying these aspects (of taking the three Bodies of the Buddha as the path), one cultivates the causes for being able to die without the suffering of fear. In fact, if one becomes adept in

this practice on the stage of generation, as a result of becoming very acquainted with it, one transcends any fear of death. As Miarepa said, "It was fear of death that drove me to the mountains. There, I meditated upon the deathless nature of mind. Now, death holds no fear for me." Although there is no question of the fact that we will eventually die, through such a practice, one can be freed of any fear of death. Again, to paraphrase Milarepa's statement, he likens the Lord of Death to the shadows cast by a mountain. As the sun goes down, the shadow comes closer and closer and closer - you take one step away from it, it takes one step towards you; you take another step, and it just keeps on following you until, finally, it catches up. It is the same with the Lord of Death who approaches without cessation. He is not just another person standing there, such that you can walk away and leave. Therefore, he is likened to this ever-advancing shadow. However, Miarepa says, "Having attained enlightenment myself, I am now free of this danger," and he encourages us to follow [the path leading] to the same attainment. These teachings of Miarepa are extremely fine, extremely nice to hear, as well as having profound importance.

Following death, the intermediate period occurs in which there is normally much fear. Such a practice [of taking the three Bodies of the Buddha as the path] enables one to pass through the intermediate state without fear, and also to take birth free from suffering.

There are many meditation manuals describing practices on the stage of generation. Some of these are very brief, but if they are complete in the practice of taking the three Bodies of the Buddha as the path, they are a complete practice. Even though other meditation manuals or guides are very long in dealing with the stage of generation, if they miss any of the three aspects of taking the Bodies of the Buddha as the path or applying them to the path, they are not a complete guide.

I. TAKING THE TRUTH BODY OF THE BUDDHA AS THE PATH IN CONJUNCTION WITH ORDINARY DEATH

In order to follow the first of these three, taking the Truth Body of the Buddha (Skt. dharmakaya; Tib. chos.sku) as the path, one first needs to gain a clear ascertainment of what are called the

three fundamental' or "basic bodies' (Tib. *gzhi'i.sku.gsum*) [death, intermediate state and rebirth]. The term 'fundamental' or basic* refers to the time while one is still in the cycle of existence.

DISSOLUTION OF THE TWENTY-FIVE GROSS FACTORS

Each of us is endowed with 25 gross factors or aspects which need to be dissolved in the following practice. These 25 are: the five aggregates, the four elements of earth and so forth, the six sense faculties, the five sensory objects, and the five transcendental wisdoms. One is born with these 25 and they gradually dissolve during the death process. Moreover, it is important to recognize the five aggregates and their relationship to the five transcendental wisdoms and the five types of Buddhas. At the time of one's attainment of enlightenment, these five aggregates are of the nature of the five Buddhas.

1) *Aggregate of Form*

There are five qualities relating to the form aggregate (Skt. *rtipa*; Tib- *gzugs*):

- a) The first is the form aggregate itself.
- b) The fundamental mirror-like wisdom' refers to the mind in the present state, which is able to perceive many objects simultaneously, just as a mirror is able to pick up many images simultaneously.
(The term 'fundamental' or 'basic' refers to the time while one is still in the cyclic existence.)
- c) The third quality relating to the form aggregate is the earth element.
- d) The fourth quality is the eye faculty [sense].
- e) The fifth quality is the form which is held by one's continuum.

There are five outer signs of the dissolution of the form aggregate occurring during the death process:

- a) Even if the body is normally quite heavy, it becomes thinner, decrepit and loses its strength and power,
- (b) The sign of the dissolution of the fundamental mirror-like wisdom is that one's visual perception become hazy or indistinct.

- (c) The sign of the dissolution of the earth element is that (he body feels very heavy, the limbs become very slack and one feels as if one is buried under the ground.
- (d) Normally, (he eye-lids flicker. The sign of the dissolution of the eye faculty is that the eyes become still, glazed over, taking on lifelessness. [n short. the life goes out of the eyes.
- (e) The sign of the dissolving of the form which is held by one s continuum is that the complexion or radiance of the body diminishes and becomes very poor.

These are the outer signs of death occurring during the death process and people who are nurses or aides to the ill would understand them.

While the outer signs can be seen by a person observing the dying, there are inner signs that occur [while one is passing through the death process], which take place in one's own subjective experience.

- The first corresponding inner sign that occurs simultaneously with these outer signs during (his stage of the death process is the 'mirage-like apparition that appears to the mind. This is comparable to being out in the desert when the sun is shining down on the hot sand and seeing an apparition or mirage of, for example, water that is not actually there Likewise, there occurs a mirage-like apparition during this stage of the death process.

2) *Aggregate of Feeling*

There are five qualities relating to the feeling aggregate (Ski. vedana; Tib. tshorba):

- a) The feeling aggregate itself heeling is the mental factor which experiences suffering, happiness and indifference
- b) The 'fundamental even-minded wisdom' is the mind or cognition which remembers the three types of feelings: pleasant, unpleasant and indifferent.
- c) The water element.
- d) The ear faculty [sense],
- e) The sound which is held by one's continuum.

There are five outer signs of the dissolution of the aggregate of feeling occurring during the death process:

- (a) The sign of the dissolution of the feeling aggregate [itself] is

that the feelings associated with the various sense consciousnesses vanish, namely, they no longer arise.

- lh| The sign of the dissolution of the fundamental even-minded wisdom is that one is no longer aware of the feelings associated with the mental cognition.
 - (cj) The sign of the dissolution of the water element is that the tongue becomes very dry so that one is not able to speak very clearly and can only mumble very inarticulate sounds. Also, the various fluids within the body, such as the blood, perspiration and the seminal fluid, dry up.
 - (d) The ear faculty dissolves so that one no longer hears sounds.
 - (e) The fifth sign involves the dissolution of the inner sound which is held by one's continuum. Normally, we can hear a subtle humming in the head. At this point, however, this inner humming or droning sound stops.
- The corresponding inner sign that occurs simultaneously with these outer signs is what is called the 'smoke-like apparition.' This is not like the smoke seen billowing up from a fire, but rather more like the smoke in a room where incense has been burning • a still haze of smoke.

3) *Aggregate of Discrimination*

There are five qualities relating to the aggregate of discrimination (Ski samjna; Tib. 'du.shex);

- a) The aggregate of discrimination is the mental faculty which is able to recognize or distinguish different people, like one's mother, father and so forth. It is the distinguishing or recognizing faculty of the mind
- b) The 'fundamental discriminating wisdom.'
- c) The fire element.
- d) The nose faculty [sense],
- e) Smells which are held by one's own continuum.

There are five external signs of the dissolution of the aggregate of discrimination occurring during the death process:

- (a) | With the dissolution of the aggregate of discrimination itself, one no longer recognizes the meaning of different objects. In other words, one is not able to distinguish or recognize different realities.

- (b) The sign of the dissolution of the fundamental discriminating wisdom is that one is no longer able to recollect the names of different objects or people - one's father, mother and so forth.
- (c) The sign of the dissolution of the fire heat element is that the warmth of the body is lost, the body becomes cold. If the heat recedes from the body, going from the feet up, this is an indication that one is about to take rebirth in a fortunate realm. Whereas, if the heat recedes from the head down, it indicates that one is about to take birth in a lower realm. In any case, the heat gradually does come together at the heart. The consciousness also abides here for some time. At conception, the consciousness is first at the nucleus of the heart. Likewise in the death process, the final abode of the consciousness in the body is at the heart. This is where the final heat would be.
- (d) The sign of the dissolution of the nose faculty is that the exhalation of breath is quite strong, but the inhalation is very, very weak.
- (e) The sign of the dissolution of the smells which are held by one's continuum is that one is no longer able to smell any type of fragrance.

- As far as the inner sign is concerned, there occurs an apparition like 'fireflies in the sky. To understand this, it would be like lighting a bundle of grass, setting it on fire, and then tossing it into the air, with sparks flying in different directions. It could also be compared to hitting a log that is on fire and seeing the sparks fly.

4) *Aggregate of Mental Formations*

There are five qualities relating to the aggregate of mental formations (Skt. samskara; Tib. du.byed):

- a) Sometimes, 'mental formations' is translated as 'volition,' which is one of the mental formations. In any case, this aggregate is that faculty of the mind which enables us to move. It emphasizes the volition aspect of moving the limbs, moving from one place to another.

- b) The 'fundamental accomplishing wisdom' is that faculty of the mind which impels us into various types of ordinary worldly

actions, and recollects those actions, as well as the purposes involved in them.

- c) The wind element.
- d) The tongue faculty [sense].
- e) Tastes which are held by one's continuum.

There are five outer signs of the dissolution of the aggregate of mental formations:

- a) The sign of the dissolution of the aggregate itself is that one is no longer able to move intentionally, that is. to move the body or to apply one's volition to physical movement.
- b) The sign of the dissolution of fundamental accomplishing wisdom is that one no longer recollects actions or their purposes.
- c) With the dissolution of the wind element, there is the complete cessation of breathing or respiration, such that an ordinary, worldly person would think. "Oh. this person is now dead."
- d) With the dissolution of the tongue faculty, the tongue itself becomes very thick and the root of the tongue, the base, turns blue. One is no longer able to speak.
- e) The sign of the dissolution of the tastes which are held by one's own continuum is that one is no longer able to taste any of the six types of tastes [sweet, sour, bitter, astringent, pungent and salty].

At this time, the tactile faculty or tactile organ and the physical sensations which are held by one's continuum dissolve. The sign of this is that one no longer feels any type of tactile sensation, be it of softness, coarseness and so forth

- The inner sign that occurs at this time is called the 'butter-lamp-like apparition.' In some texts, this is described as an inner vision or apparition like a fluttering candle when it is going out and is sputtering. My own teachers say that this is not quite correct. Rather, it is more like an apparition of a very still and constant flame, like a butter-lamp or a candle, which is guarded by a paper shade. It is very still and very faint, giving constant radiance. So, the apparition is more like this.

This has been a fairly elaborate description. It relates to a process that many of us have probably heard of, where one speaks of the

earth element dissolving or merging into the water element, which then dissolves or merges into the Air element, that into the wind element, and that into consciousness. These relate to the same process, but one should understand the terminology here. When we say, for example, that the earth element dissolves into the water, this is not to say that the earth element transforms into the nature of the water element, which then transforms into the nature of the fire element, and so on. Rather, what it means precisely is that the earth element, which is acting as the foundation for consciousness, and is supporting consciousness, loses its power to do so. And due to the loss of the potency of the earth element, the water element becomes more apparent, appears more clearly. It seems as if one dissolves into the other, but, in fact, that is not the case. One does not become of the nature of the next.

5) *Aggregate of Consciousness*

By the time the above signs have occurred, such a person would normally (in the world) be pronounced dead; actually though, the person is not yet dead. There are a number of apparitions or experiences that are yet to be passed through before the actual death, such as the experience of a 'pale light,' 'reddish light' and of 'darkness.' This becomes much clearer in the explanation of the Stage of completion.

In order to understand this, first of all one needs to know that the white bodhicitta [the white drop obtained from the father] is normally held in the cakras of the 'great bliss' (Tib. bde.chen. 'khor.lo) by the knots in the channels (Skt. nadī; Tib. rtsa), as well as by the 'life-supporting wind' (Skt. prāṇa; Tib. srog. 'dzin. gyi. rlung). Normally, this is the case. A great yogin, who is advanced in this practice, will be able to unravel the knots of the channels and bring down the white bodhicitta, passing through these stages [of dissolution] consciously by the force of his meditation. But in the death process this occurs naturally. By this time in the death process, the life-supporting wind has already receded from this area and has come back to the heart, no longer upholding the white bodhicitta there. The knots in the channels become unravelled and the white bodhicitta descends. Where it descends to is called the drop which is indestructible

for the duration of life' (Tib. ji.srid.'tsho yi.bar.du.mi.shig-.pa'i.thig.le). This is quite small in size and is located right now at one's heart. In the death process, the wind and the consciousness converge into this drop at the heart. This term, 'the drop which is indestructible for the duration of life/ occurs very frequently in tantric texts.

There is yet another term (Tib. brtan.du. mi.shig.pa'i.thig.le) which means 'the forever indestructible drop,' referring to the 'extremely subtle consciousness and energy' or 'wind' inside the drop which is indestructible for the duration of life. **These** forever indestructible components are so called because they **are** indestructible throughout this life, through death, through the intermediate period, through the full duration of one's existence in the cycle of existence, and right on through to **one's** attainment of enlightenment and, following that, as an Enlightened Being. The extremely subtle energy and **consciousness** remain throughout: they are totally indestructible.

a) *The Four 'Empties'*

- (1) For the reasons previously explained, at this stage in the death process the white bodhicitta descends to the drop which is indestructible for the duration of one's life and covers the top of it. During this descent, one has an inner subjective experience of an apparition or vision of pale light, like the moon just rising from beneath the horizon, casting a pale sheen upon the sky."

The inner mental consciousness during this first stage is called the 'mental consciousness of appearance' (Tib. snang.ba'i.yid.shes). At this time, there occurs the first of the four 'empties' (Tib. stong pa.bzhi) which is called the 'appearance-empty' (Tib.snatig.ba. stong.pa) [or just 'the empty' (Tib. stong.pa)].'

- (2) Following this, the mental consciousness of appearance, together with the accompanying energies, dissolves into the mental consciousness of increase" (Tib. mched.pa'i. yid.shes). The inner sign during this occurrence is a reddish-like light apparition. The empty that occurs at this time is called 'the very-empty' (Tib. shin.tu.siong.pa).⁴

Do not try to draw the meaning from the above names. The meanings are as follows: the life-supporting energies have [already] retracted from the upper parts of the body, and the white bodhicitta has descended. Likewise, they are retracted from the lower portion of the body beneath the heart and are drawn up into the heart. As a result of this, the red bodhicitta [obtained from the mother], the female element residing at the navel,⁵ is no longer held down, but rises and also comes up to the indestructible drop at the heart.

- (3) Following this, the mental consciousness of increase, together with its corresponding energies, dissolves into the next type of mental consciousness, the 'mental consciousness of near-attainment' (Tib. nyer.thob.kyi.yid.shes). What occurs at this point is that the red bodhicitta and the white bodhicitta now completely cover the indestructible drop at the heart, like a shroud. The inner experience at this time is one of darkness, like on a very, very dark night when there are no stars, there is no light. With this type of mental cognition, there occurs the 'great-empty' (Tib. stong.pa.chen. po).^h There are two phases of the experience of the mental consciousness of near-attainment in which the experience of darkness occurs. In the earlier phase, there is the experience of darkness. In the latter phase, there is simply no awareness at all, a lack of awareness. By this time, there is a cessation of the specific consciousnesses and energies that were developed in this life.
- (4) Following this period of a total lack of awareness, a period of tremendous mental lucidity arises as the extremely subtle consciousness and energy become manifest. There is an extraordinary mental clarity. This can be likened to an extremely clear, bright and radiant sky, free from any type of blemish, any clouds.⁷ At this time, one does not realize emptiness, but the mind is endowed with such a tremendous degree of clarity that it might seem like it. This experience is called the 'clear light of death' (Tib. chi.ba'i. od. gsal). It is a very common term that one encounters frequently in

tantra. What is manifesting at this time is **the** continuum of the extremely subtle consciousness and energy **that carries** on right to our own Buddhahood and **thereafter**. **This, then,** is the fourth empty, 'the completely-empty' or 'all-empty' (Tib. thams.chad.stong.pa).^k

b) *Clear Light*

At this point in the death process when there **occurs this period** of great lucidity, the extremely subtle energy and **consciousness**, called the **mother clear light'** (Tib. ma'i.'od.gsal), become manifest. A highly advanced tantric **practitioner** or a yogin can also arrive at a similar state through **meditation**, that is. not in the death process, but simply during **meditation**. **This** is called the 'son clear light' (Tib. hu i.'od.gsal). **When entering** into the actual death process and applying the **wisdom** that is cultivated through meditation to his own death **process**, such a practitioner integrates the mother clear light and the **son clear light** so that there is the combination of the **two**. **When this** occurs, such a yogin or yogini may abide in this **state during** the death process for even a year or two or sometimes **just** for weeks.

What has been called here the "clear light of death." **and which** occurs for any person, is not the actual clear light. It is often mistaken as such, but it is not the actual emptiness, not the actual clear light. However, for an advanced tantric yogin or yogini, who combines and thus manifests the mother and son clear light, the clear light that is experienced during his death process is the actual clear light.^y One should remember this distinction and know that it is not true that any sentient being, upon reaching this point in the death process, experiences the actual clear light.

Upon the conclusion of the experience of the clear light of death [sec p. Y2 (4)], the consciousness departs from the indestructible drop and one's existence in the intermediate state commences.

Signs of this are that the white bodhicitta, which was **at the heart**, being of the nature of water, descends and **emerges from** the genital organ, whereas, the red bodhicitta, **the female**

clement which is of the nature of fire, ascends and appears from the nose, like a little drop of Mood. These outer signs do **not occur for** every person at death. But in cases when they do, it is certain that death has occurred, that consciousness is no longer in the body, and one can then burn the body or dispose of it as one likes. However, if one disposes of the body before the death process is completed, there is a great fault in this - one accumulates the karma of killing because the being is still alive.

b. MEDITATION PRACTICE WHICH PAKAI I FLS THE DEATH PROCESS

The practice relating to this process is called 'taking the Truth Body (Ski. dharmakiiya; Tib. chos. sku) as the path'. This is a meditation practice on the stage of generation in which the basis to be purified during the practice is ordinary death. As one engages in this practice, one follows a sequence of meditation which parallels the process of death that has just been explained.

One could generate oneself as Kalacakra and emits rays of red light in all directions, which strike the environment and sentient beings in the environment. Transformed into light of the nature of great bliss, these then dissolve back into one's own body, into oneself. At this time, one should imagine that there occurs the experience of the mirage-like apparition [see p. 86].

In the next stage of the meditation, one's entire body (the top, bottom, front and back) transforms into light. Then, the light dissolves into the Hum (pronounced hoong) syllable at the heart. This visualization is better done with the Tibetan letter 'Al'. At this point, one imagines the experience of the smoke-like apparition [see p. X7]. One should meditate on this well and visualize the process clearly.

The next stage is the dissolving of the vowel sound u (Tib. zhabs.kyu) into the part of the letter above it. At this point, one should imagine that the fireflies-in-the-sky apparition has appeared (see p. HK).

Next, the 'h' merges into the head-line of the 'm'. At that time, one should imagine that there has appeared the

apparition of the flaming butter-lamp [see p. 89].

Then, the head-line of the *ha* merges into the crescent moon disk. At this point, one should imagine that there appears the apparition of pale light [see p. 91, (1)].

Next, the crescent moon symbol merges into the drop. At this point, one should imagine there appearing the reddish light which is like the light of the sun [see p. 91, (2)]. The following stage is when the drop merges into the *nada*. One should imagine that there appears the apparition of dense darkness [see p. 92, (3)].

One should then visualize the *nada* dissolving into emptiness and imagine that there occurs the appearance of an extremely clear sky, like the sky at dawn that is unpolluted or untainted by anything whatsoever [see p. 92, (4)].

At this point, one should cultivate the pride, identifying with one's own resultant Dharmakaya. In this experience, there should be three qualities:

- 1) the appearance: clear emptiness (Tib. stong.gsal);
- 2) what one ascertains: the lack of inherent existence;
- 3) the experience: the experience is of the nature of great bliss. And this is speaking of the experience of the mind. At this point, the nature of the mind is the nature of the great bliss - the mind is experiencing great bliss.

In this way, one is following a sequence of meditation which parallels the death process.

Engaging in and becoming accustomed to this meditation practice as described acts as a means to free one of fear at death. If one has an authentic and fully qualified practice of this meditation, then one gradually develops and reaches the culmination of the stage of generation and goes on to the stage of completion.

There is also the practice of 'taking the Truth Body as the path' in the stage of completion, where it is by means of the 'facsimile of the clear light and the actual clear light' (Tib. dpe. dang.don. gyi od.gsal) that the basis, which is ordinary death, is purified. Briefly, what is referred to as 'facsimile of the clear light' is the mind which realizes emptiness, but in which the realization is mixed with a conceptual generic image. On the other hand, the actual clear light refers to the mind which directly, non-

conceptually realizes emptiness. To sum up, in both the stage of **generation** and the stage of completion, the basis to be purified is **ordinary death**

If one attains the facsimile of the clear light in the stage of **completion**, one will experience no ordinary death at all; one will be **freed of** ordinary death altogether. But that is a very difficult **attainment**. It is not so likely that we will attain it in this life. But **simply following** this practice, whether or not one attains this very **high realization**, **does** act as a means to dispel the fear at death. **And our own death is** something which **we** can be entirely **certain will come**. **However**, by engaging in this practice, in which there is a **parallel** to the phases of the death process, we can **become accustomed to it**. By being accustomed to it, when eventually the **actual death comes** and when one experiences it, then **one can pass through!** it without fear. Since one knows what to expect, one has **become accustomed** to it. This can be likened to **the people** who **jump from tremendously** high rocks or cliffs into the water many **floors down** and sometimes do fantastic somersaults as they go. **Just watching them** for the first time, one might think **that** it would be **terrifying to do** that. Nevertheless, they become accustomed to it **and then the** fear is gone

Here is another example, if you have never flown in an airplane, **the first time up** might be pretty scary; but if you have flown in **them a lot**, then it is 'old hat.' There is no fear at all because you have **become** accustomed to it.

Likewise, here in the meditation, one is going through a kind of **rehearsal** for the death process and becoming accustomed to it. **Then instead** of having fear when passing through the actual death process, previous habituation with the meditation will cause one to **think of one's** spiritual mentor and one's meditational deity. If one has **these in mind** at death, it is certain that one will not take a **rebirth in the lower** realms of existence in the immediately **following life**.

A very famous Tibetan lama, Longdol Rinpoche said, "In the **morning**, through my spiritual practice as a gelong, u monk. **I cultivate the causes for** having a divine rebirth. In the evening, **I cultivate causes for taking a divine** rebirth, And so, **I am** delighted with death. **I am happy to die.**" This same lama did take **birth as**

one of the lineage-holder kings of Shambhala. This **point** about the morning and evening especially indicates the great potency of tannic practice. For example, in the **morning**, if one is carrying the imprints of having committed one of the **tantric** root downfalls and one dies, one will definitely go to a **vajra hell**. Whereas, if one does not die in the morning and receives empowerment or does self-empowerment, one **can purify that**. Then if one were to die in the afternoon, one **could take** an extremely fine rebirth. This indicates the tremendous **power** of tantra.

The Seventh Dalai Lama, Kelsang Gyatso, said that if **through** the practice of spirituality, that is, engaging in wholesome actions, one can die with delight, die with joy, then by all **means, one should practice** the Dharma.

As the Kadampa geshes of old used to say, "If one has **Dharma**, there is no fear of death. Why would there be **any** fear of **death**?" Surely this is so if one has a strong spiritual practice, **specifically** this practice here, there would be no fear of death. **One would** simply see that one is discarding this old body and **getting a new** one instead.

We have gathered here out of devotion to Dharma, **turning our** minds to it. This is an extremely good and faultless choice because, especially at the point of death, there is nothing **apart from** Dharma that will be of the slightest benefit. Teachings **from a lama** or from the Buddha need not be accepted with blind faith. **We can** check up on these and, really giving them some profound **thought**, reflect, "When the time of my own death comes, what **will be of** benefit? If I have a hundred houses, a hundred automobiles, a thousand airplanes, no matter what kind of things **I have** accumulated, of what benefit will these be to me at the **time of** death? Even my own body, which has been created simultaneously with me in my mother's womb and which I have **had for the** duration of my life and have given so much attention to (providing it with clothes, food and medicine) and which has been an **object of** great cherishing, **will** have to be discarded . . . It goes **without** saying that the other things that I have accumulated **will also have** to be discarded. At the point of death, only **spiritual practice** is of true and real benefit,

NOTES

'Df. Yeshe Dendun. *The Ambrosia Hear, Taniru* translated by Ven Jhampa Kelsang Dharamsala. Library of Tibetan Works and Archives. 1977). p 13: "The six proper attitudes are:

1. thinking of oneself as being like an ill person.
2. thinking of the teachings as being the medicine.
3. thinking of one's teacher as being the doctor,
4. regarding all the Awakened Ones as supreme beings and thus sound sources of knowledge.
5. wishing for the flourishing of the teachings
6. having the intention to overcome one's personal faults by practicing the teachings."

*Lati Rinbochay and Jeffrey Hopkins. *Death, Intermediate State and Rebirth in Tibetan Buddhism* (Valois, New York: Gabriel Press, 1979), pp 3K anil 42: "After the four elements dissolve, the five phenomena on the level of the aggregate of consciousness must dawn in stages. These five are the mind of eighty indicative conceptions, the mind of radiant white appearance, the mind of radiant red increase, the mind of radiant black near-attainment, and the mind of the clear light of death. . . . The sign of the mind of appearance itself when those eighty indicative conception* have dissolved into it is the dawning of extreme clarity and vacuity as well as of light with a white aspect like a night sky pervaded by moonlight in the autumn when the sky is free of defilement."

Ibid., p. 42: "It is called 'appearance' (because an appearance like moonlight dawns)" and the empty' [because of being devoid of eighty conceptions as well as the wind that serves as their mount)."

Ibid., p. 43: "It is called 'increase of appearance' [because of being very vivid like sunlight]³¹ and the very-empty' (because of being devoid of the mind of appearance as well as the wind that serves as its mount)."

'One encounters a great deal of discussion about the cone of the psychic heat and obviously, there is a great deal of mediation which is done about this point relating to the red bodhicitta at the navel.

Ibid., p. 44: "It is called 'near-attainment' [because of being near the clear light]" and the 'great-empty' [because of being devoid of the mind of increase as well as the wind that serves as its mount]."

Ibid., p. 46: just as space is a vacuity that is a mere negation of coarse obstructive contact, so appearances of coarse conceptually have disappeared for those minds and an appearance of vacuity dawns during the four 'empties' [empty, very-empty, great-empty and all-empty). The modes of appearance (in these four states) are similar to an autumn sky, and so it is used as the example. It is not that appearances of the sky and so forth dawn on these occasions."

Ibid., p. 45: "This is called the 'clear light of death' and the all-empty' (because of being devoid of eighty conceptions, and of appearance, increase and near-attainment as well as of the winds that serve as their mounts) It is actual death.

*There are the 'subjective' and the objective clear light". The subjective clear light Tib yut can.gyi. od gsal) is the mind realizing emptiness.

The objective clear light (Tib. yul.gyi. od.g'al) is emptiness itself

SECTION SEVEN

As we receive these teachings, we should dispel the ordinary appearance and conceptualization of this place by imagining it to be the palace of Kalacakra. Furthermore, the ordinary appearance and conceptualization of oneself (and others) should be dispelled by generating oneself as Kalacakra with one face and two arms. The Guru should also be conceived of as Kalacakra. Then, listen to these teachings with a motivation aspiring towards the highest enlightenment for the benefit of all living beings.

[III. A.]

2. TAKING THE ENJOYMENT BODY OF THE BUDDHA AS THE PATH IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE ORDINARY INTERMEDIATE STATE

It is very important to know that in the Kalacakra Tantra, there is no practice of taking the Enjoyment Body (Skt. sambhogakaya; Tib. longs.sku) as the path with regard to the intermediate state. The reason for this is that if one purifies the ordinary death and the ordinary birth, by the very force of that, one naturally purifies the ordinary intermediate state. Consequently, a separate practice is not necessary. In the Kalacakra Tantra and its teachings, there are a number of uncommon points which differ from other tantra teachings such as those found in the Vajrabhairava, Guhyasamaja, Cakrasamvara and Hevajra, where there is the possibility of attaining enlightenment during the intermediate period, as well as during this life or a subsequent life. In these tantras, there is the practice of taking the Sambhogakaya as the path in relation to the intermediate state, whereas in the Kalacakra, one either attains full enlightenment in this lifetime or in a lifetime thereafter, but not during the intermediate period.

To understand this aspect of meditation, [taking the Enjoyment Body of the Buddha as the path in conjunction with the intermediate state.] it is necessary to know the process of the intermediate period. [And to understand better this process, let us look at some parallels first.]

When we fall asleep in our present state and consciousness gradually dissolves or recedes, the following very subtle signs occur: a mirage-like sign, a smoke-like sign, a sign similar to sparks or fireflies, and sign like a still candle flame. After these signs have appeared, there occurs what is called the clear light of sleep* (Tib. gnyid. kyi.'od.gsal). This is the name given to the dream consciousness which is only a mental consciousness, namely, it does not include any of the sensory consciousness. When the dream consciousness (Tib. gnyid.kyi.sems) manifests, one engages in various types of activities. During the dream period, one has a dream body with which one performs different activities.¹ Upon the conclusion of sleep, the energies converge at the heart like breath-mist on a mirror gradually drawing towards the center. One then awakens and engages in various types of activities.

This [entire process] is similar to the death state when one experiences the four signs and consciousness together with the energies converge at the heart. When the very subtle consciousness and the very subtle energy [that is, the forever indestructible drop] leave the body [through any of the nine orifices²], and the gross body made of flesh and bones is discarded, existence during the intermediate period begins. There is a parallel here.

THE INTERMEDIATE PERIOD

Birth as an intermediate being is called 'spontaneous' or, more literally, 'miraculous,' but it means spontaneous and sudden. With the sudden birth of one's body of the intermediate period (Skt. antarabhava: Tib. bar.do), all of the five senses, the major and minor limbs (minor being the fingers, etc.) occur suddenly and simultaneously - unlike birth from a womb in which the senses and the limbs are formed very gradually. Such a being is called a 'smell-eater' (Tib. dri.sa) because it feeds on smells. It is also called 'the one searching for rebirth.'

During this period, one's body is composed only of consciousness (Tib. *sems*) and energy (Tib. *rlung*), and it is very, very subtle. Wherever one's thoughts are directed the body spontaneously goes there - one thinks of a place and the body » immediately there. It moves effortlessly, just by the direction or application of the mind to a certain place,

Intermediate existence is a very strange kind of existence. Except for the mother's womb into which one will eventually enter, one's body is unobstructed by anything solid, such as buildings or solid structures. The second quality is that by the force of karma, one has certain supernormal powers. Thirdly, one has a degree of natural clairvoyance or heightened awareness.

The intermediate being (and the intermediate existence itself) is called the 'foundation Sambhogakaya' (Tib. *gzhi'i.longs.sku*). Keep the word 'foundation' clearly in mind as referring to the present time. In addition to the foundation Sambhogakaya, there are the path Sambhogakaya and the ultimate Sambhogakaya.* The foundation and the path Sambhogakayas are not the actual Sambhogakayas; only the ultimate one is the actual Sambhogakaya. The others are merely given the above names as designations.

To understand why this body of the intermediate existence is called the foundation Sambhogakaya, one needs to look at the nature of the actual Sambhogakaya of a Buddha. The actual Sambhogakaya is not made up of gross matter such as flesh and blood, but is simply composed of consciousness and energy. This is a subtle body that is adorned with major and minor marks of a Buddha. Similarly, the composition of a body during the intermediate period is also that of consciousness and energy, and is very subtle. It is because of this parallel that the body of the intermediate existence is called the foundation Sambhogakaya."

The point of the meditation with regard to the foundation Sambhogakaya is to purify the ordinary intermediate period which comes through the force of mental distortions and actions motivated by mental distortions. During the path Sambhogakaya, one is creating causes for the arising of the actual Sambhogakaya. Finally, there arises the Sambhogakaya at the time of the result, which is actual, ultimate Sambhogakaya, the culmination of one's spiritual practice.

If one meditates now on the stage of the practice which takes the Enjoyment Body as the path in conjunction with the intermediate period this acts to dispel many fears that would normally occur during the intermediate state period.

3. TAKING THE MANIFESTATION BODY OF THE BUDHA AS THE PATH IN CONJUNCTION WITH ORDINARY BIRTH

The Enjoyment Body of a Buddha has such a subtle form that it is only accessible to the Mahayana Arya Beings. In order to benefit and be accessible to a greater number of beings directly, the Enjoyment Body manifests in the grosser Manifestation Body (Skt. nirmanakaya; Tib. sprul skuj. The parallel to this (transformation of the Sambhogakaya into the Nirmanakaya) is that of the intermediate being entering the combined regenerative substances of the parents and taking birth.

In order to discuss 'taking the Manifestation Body as the path in conjunction with birth,' first of all, it is necessary to understand the nature of conception and the birth process. If one understands this well, one can realize the truth of former lives. There is no doubt whatsoever concerning the certainty of former and latter births. If future lives did not exist, Dharma practice would be irrelevant. If Dharma practice were irrelevant, we could simply put the energies of this life into having the best of times knowing that at death everything would be finished. However, a very clear understanding of the process and the nature of conception and birth brings to light conclusive evidence indicative of former and latter lives.

a. CONCEPTION

The following teaching comes from the sutras, specifically the *Sam on Entering the Womb* (Tib. mngal.'jug.gi.mdo). For consciousness to enter into the womb and for conception to occur, there must be three conducive factors, as well as the absence of three faults:

The Tint of these three conducive or vital factors is that there be

no disorder of the womb of the mother and that she does have the menstrual cycle.

The second vital factor is that the intermediate being must be nearby and accessible so as to be able to enter. It should be very clear that there must be an intermediate being in the proximity of the future parents for the conception to take place.

The third conducive factor is that male and female have sexual intercourse.

The first of three faults that must be missing for conception to occur is that there must be no defect in the womb of the mother. Due to an imbalance in the so-called three 'humors' of wind, bile and phlegm, or through some other disorder ("the mother's womb must be free from the fault of its center being like the shape of a barley seed, an anvil's waist or a camel's mouth"), it is possible for a blockage of the womb to occur so that conception cannot take place.

The second fault that must not occur is that the regenerative fluids of either the male or the female do not descend; the regenerative fluids of either the male or female must not fall at different times, that is, one early and one late; even if they do descend simultaneously, the male's [as well as the female's] regenerative fluids must not be 'rotten' or lack potency.

The third fault is the fault of karma: the karma on the part of the intermediate being to have these two people as parents must not be missing. And likewise from the parents' side, their karma for having this intermediate being as their child must not be missing.

To sum up, the three conducive factors are: freedom from the three faults: the intermediate being must be in proximity; the male and female must have sexual intercourse. If any of these are missing, conception cannot take place. The three faults are: the fault of the womb; the fault of the seed; the fault of karma. If any of these faults are present, conception cannot take place.

At the time its future parents are engaged in sexual intercourse, the intermediate being sees only their sexual organs, but in the manner of a mirage, an illusory type of image or vision. Concurrent with this sight, the being's own desires arise. If this being is to be a female child, there is desire/attachment for the father and aversion towards the mother. If it is to be a male child,

(here is desire/attachment for (he mother and aversion for the father. {However, "... when the intermediate being begins to embrace the one that is desired, through the force of previous actions it does not perceive any part of the body except the person's sexual organ, whereby anger is generated."⁴). This anger and "desire ... act as the cause of death \ bringing the intermediate period to an end. [i.e., the intermediate being dies.) and consciousness enters the womb.

During intercourse, the movement of the sexual organs causes the 'downward-dispelling' wind to move and become agitated, and an ordinary "psychic heat," which is not an actual turn.mo. arises. Due to that, the bodhicitta melts and descends. Eventually, thick regenerative fluids arise. | "After that these drops of semen and blood, which definitely do emerge from both male and female ... " * 1 descend and mix (in the mother's womb), forming a viscous mixture, like skim on top of boiled milk. It is at that point that consciousness enters the mixture in the mother's womb⁷, and the fetus begins to grow.

b. FORMATION OF THE SEVENTY-TWO THOUSAND CHANNELS

There are 72,000 channels (Skt. nadi; Tib. rtsa) in the body that gradually begin to form at the heart during the gestation period in the womb. The principal one, which runs like a central shaft in the body, is called the 'central channel,' the uma (Skt. avadhuti; Tib. dbu.ma). The channel on the right is called the roma (Skt. rasana; Tib. ro.ma) and the channel on the left, kyangma (Skt. lalana, Tib. rkyang.ma). These form at the heart while (the fetus is still) in the womb.

The other channels that initially form at the heart are the sumkorma (Tib. sum.skor.ma) channel to the east (front), the doma (Tib. 'dod.ma) channel to the south (right), the dudralma (Tib. hdud.bral.ma) channel which is immediately next to the central channel (a very bad channel because it constricts the other channels and prevents the energy from flowing freely), the khyima (Tib. khyim.ma) channel to the west (back), and the turn.mo (Tib. gtum.mo) to the north (left).

Initially, five channels form simultaneously: uma, roma and

kyangma. as well as the sumkorma of the east and the doma of the south. After that, the dudralmsi, the khyim and the turnmo channels occur simultaneously. These are called (the eight initial channels at the heart

The channels in the four [cardinal] directions divide into the four channels of the intermediate directions: the southwest, northeast, and so forth. Thus, there are the initial four and the intermediate four, which makes eight. Each of these develops a three-fold branch, which makes 24 branches. If one goes into more advanced stages of meditation or the body-mandala practice, one uses these 24 in the meditation.^k These 24 similarly branch into three, making 72. Each of the 72 channels divides into a thousand, making 72.000.

This is the manner in which channels are formed during the gestation period. If you remember 24, you will be doing quite well. Even if you cannot remember 24, please do not forget the three central ones: uraa, roma and kyangma. These you must remember!

c. FORMATION OF THE PRINCIPAL AND SECONDARY ENERGIES

One should know that the 'energies' or 'wind-energies' (Skt. vāyu; Tib. rlung) are at the root of both saṃsāra and nirvāna. It is by way of the energies that one goes either to liberation and full enlightenment or to the lower realms of existence. Apprehension of any type of object, for example, is made in conjunction with the energies. Mental distortions such as attachment and anger also arise in conjunction with energies. The energies and states of consciousness are very intimately related.

In other tantras such as Vajrabhairava, Guhyasamāja, Cakrasamvara, there are descriptions of the 'five principal energies' and the 'five secondary energies,' making ten [altogether]. In the Kalacakra Tantra, this particular terminology is not used, but there is still an explanation of ten energies.

- 1) In the explanation of the manner of the formation of energies, one initially speaks of what is called the 'life-sustaining energy' (Skt. prāṇa-vāyu; Tib. srog 'szin.gyi.rlung). This energy is of two degrees: the subtle (Tib.

- phra.mo) and gross (Tib rags pa) During the death process, the various energies gradually dissolved into the subtle life-sustaining energy." It is the gross life-sustaining energy that maintains the relationship and acts as the link between the body and the mind - it sustains one's life, [In the death process.] the gross life-sustaining energy having already dissolved." there remains only the subtle life-sustaining energy" during the experience of the clear light [of death]. This subtle energy is always with us, inseparable [from us], and it goes to the next life
- During the first month following conception, the subtle life-sustaining energy gives off a gross life-sustaining energy. At this time, the shape of the fetus is like a fish
- 2) In the second month, there occurs the downward-clearing energy' (Skt. apana; Tib. rlung thur.sel). The shape of the fetus is like a turtle, insofar as it really does not have any distinct features except a little lump for the head and little lumps starting to protrude for the limbs.
 - 3) The energy that occurs during the third month, when the fetus is in the shape of a wild pig, is called the 'fire-accompanying energy' (Skt. samana; Tib. rlung.me.mnyam).
 - 4) During the fourth month, there arises the 'upward-moving energy' (Skt. udana; Tib. rlung.gyen.rgyu) At this time, the upper part of the fetus' torso is larger, taking on a shape somewhat similar to that of a lion.
 - 5) During the fifth month, the 'pervasive energy' (Skt. vyana; Tib. khyab.byed.gyi rlung) arises. The shape of the fetus, at this time, is like a very short person, definitely a human shape, but very short.
 - 6) During the sixth month, there arises an energy which is specifically related to the visual faculty, the eye organ, called the 'moving energy' (Tib. rgyu.ba) At this time, the earth element arises.
 - 7) During the seventh month, there arises another energy, which is specifically related to the auditory faculty, the ear organ, called the fully moving energy' (Tib. rnam. par rgyu.ba). At this time, the water element arises.
 - 8) During the eighth month, there arises the perfectly moving

energy* (Tib. yang.dag.par.rgyu.ba) associated with the olfactory faculty. The fire element arises at this time.

- 9) During the ninth month, there occurs the '**very moving energy**' (Tib. rab.tu.rgyu.ba).' This is associated with the gustatory faculty (tongue) and the wind element.
- 10) During the tenth month, there occurs the '**certainly moving energy**' (Tib. nges par.rgyu.ba), associated with the **tactile** faculty, the organ of touch or tactile feeling. With this **arises** the element of space. This is not to say that the fetus **takes** ten months for gestation. According to the Buddhist tradition of Tibet, gestation takes nine months and ten days; **so it** would be following the ninth into the tenth month.

The is the manner of the arisal of the various energies and **how** they gradually manifest during gestation in the womb. However, none of them passes through the nostrils while one is still in the womb. It is only after birth (from the womb) that these energies begin to circulate and actual breathing occurs. The birth with this ordinary body is called the foundation Nirmanakaya (Tib.gzhi'i.s-prul sku.) The way that the foundation Nirmanakaya relates to conception, gestation and birth, namely, the formation **of** the body, must be known in order to fully understand and practice the stage of generation.

d. FORMATION OF THE DROPS

To understand the nature of the formation of the drops (Skt. bindu; Tib. thig.le), one should remember the explanation about the indestructible drop at the heart [see p 91]. "There is the white bodhicitta (Tib. thig.le.dkar.po) of the father and the red bodhicitta (Tib thig le.dmar.po) of the mother Both of these drops combine at the heart, so that the white bodhicitta is on the top and the red bodhicitta is on the bottom, forming the indestructible drop (Tib. mi.shigs.pa'i thig.le). [t is about the size of a sesame seed and is mixed with the 'extremely subtle consciousness' and the 'extremely subtle energy.'

During the period of gestation, a part of the white aspect [of the indestructible drop] at the heart ascends through the **central** channel, comes to rest and stays at the crown-center. This **white**

bodhicitta at the crown-center is called 'Ham'. It is the source of the increase of the white bodhicitta throughout the body. A part of the red aspect of the indestructible drop at the heart descends to and remains at the navel-center. It is called the 'fire of psychic heat' (Skt. candali; Tib. gtum mo). This red drop at the navel directly increases the red element throughout the body.

In all of the 'energy-centers' or cakras, there are portions of these drops, but the chief place of the expansion of the white **elemeni**/bodhicitta is the crown-center of the great bliss' (Tib. spyi bo.bde chn. gyi khor.lo) and the main place of the increase of the red element/bodhicitta is situated at the navel ['emanation-center' (Tib. sprul.pa'i khor.lo)]. The indestructible drop at the 'heart [-center of Dharma' (Tib. chos kyi khor.lo)], which is composed of both elements, increases both the red and the white bodhicittas equally.

e. ILLUSORY BODY

There are two types of illusory body" (Skt. Mayadeha; Tib. sgyu.lus): the impure and the pure.

The 'impure illusory body' is an illusory body in which one has not yet abandoned the obscurations to liberation (Skt. klesavarana; Tib. nyon.mongs.pai'i.sgrub pa) or, more literally, the obscurations of the mental distortions.

The 'pure illusory body' is the illusory body in which one has abandoned the obscurations to liberation.

Both of these illusory bodies are attained during the practice of this tantra. Ordinary people like ourselves would not be able to encounter or see an illusory body. It is something that is different from our gross body of flesh and bone, and arises separately. An advanced contemplative, who has reached that stage in the meditation, causes to arise the illusory body adorned with the major and minor marks of a Buddha. Such a being can go to various Pure Lands and there receive teachings, make offerings, and so forth.

Since this illusory body is neither accessible to nor encounterable by sentient beings, in order to be able to serve others, it merges back with the senses and into the gross body of the

meditator. In that state, such a contemplative teaches the Dharma and serves in various ways. This is done during the stage of completion. Therefore, it is necessary to understand the process of conception and growth of the fetus, not only in relation to the stage of generation, but also to the stage of completion, so as to be able to attain the impure and pure illusory bodies.

The illusory body being out [of the body], its merging and returning back into the gross body, parallels the taking of a gross body at conception and the growth of the fetus.

MEDITATION PRACTICES OF TAKING THE THREE BODIES OF THE BUDDHA AS THE PATH IN CONJUNCTION WITH DEATH, INTERMEDIATE PERIOD AND BIRTH

One should see now very clearly the parallel of the three stages of death, intermediate state and birth; at death, there occur the dissolution of the various elements and the experience of clear light; this is followed by the intermediate period and then birth or conception.

The stages can be related to the following meditation practice:

- a. In meditation, one successively dissolves the various elements, then experiences emptiness and identification with the Dharmakaya, having the three qualities which have already been stated.
- b. Then, recognizing that as the Dharmakaya one is inaccessible to anyone but other Buddhas, (here arises the motivation to manifest as the Sambhogakaya. In order for this to take place, there appears an eight-petalled lotus upon which rests a moon disc. Then the Dharmakaya, the Buddha-Mind itself, manifests as a blue pillar of light about one cubit long (from elbow to the tip of the middle finger). It is of the nature of the Buddha's Mind, and it represents the Sambhogakaya.
- c. However, recognizing that as Sambhogakaya one is still inaccessible to many beings, one generates the motivation to manifest in a grosser form. In the process of transforming the Sambhogakaya into Nirmanakaya, this pillar of blue light (which is still standing on the eight-petalled lotus and moon

disc) melts into the seat of the lotus and the moon, and oneself arises as Kalacakra, the Nirmanakaya. It is important to understand this parallel.

To sum up, in these meditation practices, the objects to be purified are the foundation [basic] death, intermediate state and birth. That which purifies those three, in that order, are: the taking of the Dharmakaya upon the path in conjunction with death; the Sambhogakaya in conjunction with the intermediate state; and the Nirmanakaya in conjunction with birth. These purifications are done by means of a practice which is of similar aspect to that which is being purified. It is important to recognize this.

In other types of practices, one cultivates purifications which are contradictory to the object to be purified. For example, to dispel the misconception of grasping at a personal identity, a wisdom which is not in accordance with that ignorance, which sees through that ignorance, contradicts it and thereby dispels it, is cultivated and applied. Here, in the tantra, purification is not accomplished by a contradictory or incompatible antidote, but rather by the cultivation of an antidote which bears a similar aspect to that which is being purified. That which is purified and the purifier bear a similar aspect. So, upon purifying ordinary death, intermediate state and birth, one accomplishes the three Bodies of the Buddha.

The above three practices of taking the Dharmakaya as the path in conjunction with death, taking the Sambhogakaya as the path in conjunction with the intermediate state, and taking the Nirmanakaya as the path in conjunction with birth are the antidotes, the purifiers on the path of generation which act to suppress the ordinary death, intermediate period and birth. However, they do not completely eliminate these three ordinary events.

The actual remedy which truly and completely purifies and eliminates the death, intermediate state and birth occurs on the stage of completion through the 'facsimile clear light' and the 'actual clear light' (cf. p. 93).

The facsimile clear light (Tib. *dpe.'od.gsal*) is a conceptual realization of emptiness ('conceptual', meaning that the realization is mixed with a generic or conceptual image).

The actual clear light (Tib. *don.gyi.'od.gsal*) is a realization of

emptiness free from any conceptual image. It is a **completely** direct and non-conceptual realization.

To draw an example from the sutra path, one engages in types of meditation on impermanence, suffering and **so forth, which act to suppress or decrease the grasping, such as misconception with regard to the i.**' However, these meditations **do not actually dispel it, they simply suppress it.** It is the wisdom **that realizes** identitylessness which actually dispels or eradicates that form of ignorance. So, there is a parallel here as well.

In order that this form of meditation may be practiced **someday**, the manner of the arising of the channels, the energies **and** the drops should be clearly understood. Furthermore, **this understanding acts as the basis for the practice of the stage of completion; therefore, it is indispensable.**

NOTES

¹While one (5) dreaming, it is very important to recognize that one is in the dream state. Although this point is especially emphasized in the Kagyu tradition, it is, nevertheless, very important generally. If, while dreaming, one recognizes that one is dreaming, it is possible, while in the intermediate state, to recognize that one is in that state. By such recognition, much fear can be dispelled.

²Lati Rinbochay and Jeffrey Hopkins, pp. 53-4. "One who is to be reborn in a hell-being exits from the anus, as a hungry ghost, from the mouth; as an animal, from the urinary passage, as a human, from the eye, as a god of the desire realm, from the navel; as a *yaksha*, from the nose; as a god of magical accomplishment or as a 'probable-human', from the ear.⁴¹ If one is to be reborn in the form realm, the exit is from the middle of the brow, and if one is to be reborn in the formless realm, it is from the crown of the head. These are set forth in the eighth chapter of *Sampulā Tantra (Sampulā)* and so forth."

³Lati Rinbochay and Jeffrey Hopkins, p. 58.

⁴*Ibid.*, p. 59.

⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 50-60.

⁶*Ibid.*, p. 61: "...it should be understood that there are three doors of entry to the womb - the male's mouth, the top of the male's head and the door of the female's womb."

⁷This relates to the stage of completion, the advanced stage of this tantric meditation, which we must practice *some day*. There is another practice, on a whole different level, in which one meditates on the impurity or foulness of the body in order to dispel attachment for the body, because there is a natural conceit in thinking that one's body is «> magnificent. That is a very good meditation.

⁸Lati Rinbochay and Jeffrey Hopkins, p. 15: "At the channel-centers there are white and red drops, upon which physical and mental health are based - white predominant at the top of the head, and red at the solar plexus. These drops have

Its origin in a white and red drop at the heart, which is the size of a large mustard seed or small pea and has a white top and red bottom. It is called the indestructible drop, since it lasts until death. The very subtle life-bearing wind dwells inside it and, at death, all winds ultimately dissolve into it, whereupon the dear light of death dawns."

WJHJ P 31: "At the time of death all the winds in the seventy-thousand channels gather in the right and left channels. Then the winds in these two dissolve into the central channel. The winds in the upper and lower parts of the central channel finally dissolve into the indestructible life-bearing wind at the heart."

"Ibid., p. 32: "The very subtle wind is the indestructible life-bearing wind into which the final dissolution [in the death process] occurs. [Death occurs in this way] because, except for this very subtle wind, in the slightest wind that acts as a basis of consciousness dwells in any part of the body, death is not possible."

¹Cf. "The definition of the stage of generation, p. 83.

SECTION EIGHT

As always, we should begin by cultivating an awakening mind, aspiring for the highest, perfect enlightenment for the sake of **all** sentient beings. With this motivation, we should listen and practice these teachings in order to attain the enlightenment of Kalacakra and then bring all sentient beings to the same **level** of realization.

I encourage you to listen well and take notes as you desire, but not to leave it at that. After the class, you should read the notes again and again so that you can really become familiar with the material taught. There was a tradition of note-taking in Tibet as well. Patrul Rinpoche, a great Nyingma lama, pointed out the importance of not just taking the notes, rolling them up and putting them in the closet, but actually studying and **making good** use of them.

[11]

B. CULTIVATING THE STAGE OF COMPLETION

Preliminary Teachings

1. FURTHER CHARACTERISTICS OF THE VAJRA BODY

As explained previously, in order to practice the stage of completion, it is indispensable to understand the way in which the channels, energies and drops arise. Within this presentation, one should, by all means, have a clear understanding of the three major channels: the central channel, *uma*, and on its right and left, the *roma* and *kyangma*, respectively.

In the explanation of the stage of completion there are three **bodies**: the gross, the subtle and the extremely subtle. Likewise, **one can** speak of the gross, the subtle and the extremely subtle **minds**. It is especially important to understand the nature of the very subtle mind because, nowadays, many people say, "There is no afterlife; there is only this one life." Such an assertion is **founded** upon the assumption that there is no subtle mind. It is true that the gross mind does not carry on after this life. But there is **also the** very subtle mind. If one really understands the very **subtle** mind and the very subtle energy, which is a very subtle form of the **life-sustaining** energy, and their functioning, then one sees **that** they have been with us since beginningless time **and will** carry on without end. By understanding them, one sees the logical basis **for asserting** both former and future lives. If future lives were not to exist, there would not really be any reason to practice Dharma **at all**. One could simply lead a hedonistic life.

A. THE ENERGY-CENTERS

There are different presentations of the energy-centers (Skt. cakra; Tib. 'khor.lo). When one speaks of the four, they are:

- 1) the 'center of great bliss' (Skt. mahasukha-cakra; Tib. bde.chen.'khor. lo) situated at the crown of the head;
- 2) the 'center of enjoyment' (Skt. sambhoga-cakra; Tib. long-s.pyod.kyi.'khor.lo) at the throat;
- 3) the 'center of Dharma' (Skt. dharma cakra; Tib. chos.kyi.'khor.lo) at the heart;
- 4) the 'center of emanation' (Skt. nirmana cakra; Tib. sprul.pa'i 'khor lo) at the navel.

When presenting five energy centers, in addition to the above **four, one** speaks of:

- 5) the 'bliss-guarding center' (Tib. gsang.gnas.bde skyong.'khor.lo) which is located at the genital area

Sometimes, there is also a presentation of the six energy centers.

1) *The Center of Great Bliss*

The center of great bliss at the crown of the head is situated in the **area** beneath the top of the skull and just above the brain. The width (of the center) is like a Japanese incense stick, about 1/8 of

an inch or so. It is multi-colored: white, green, red and **black**. Its center is triangular in shape. At present, the central channel, **uma**, is constricted by two side channels, the **roma** and the **kyangma**, making a knot. These channels branch off into four and into **eight**, and so forth, eventually making a total of 32 subsidiary **or branch** channels branching off the center of great bliss. **In appearance**, this center resembles an open umbrella held aloft.

2) *The Center of Enjoyment*

This center is situated at the throat, right at the Adam's apple. Its color is red. The very center of the cakra is round. As **above**, the central channel is constricted by the two side channels, **making a** knot. The center of enjoyment has 16 branch channels, **which** branch out like an inverted umbrella. Clearly keep in mind **that** the previous center at the crown is like a right-side-up **umbrella**, whereas this throat-center resembles an inverted umbrella. **Visualize** them!

3) *The Center of Dharma*

The center of Dharma is situated at the heart, between the two breasts, in the chest. It is white in color. The center of this cakra is triangular in shape and is constricted three times, namely, there are three knots made by the two parallel side channels. It has only eight branch or subsidiary channels, which branch out like a right-side-up umbrella.

Think this over carefully. Get it clearly in mind so you can visualize it just as has been explained.

4) *The Center of Emanation*

This center is situated at the same height as the navel itself. Like the one on the crown, the emanation center is multicolored. Its center is round, while its 64 subsidiary channels branch out like an inverted umbrella.

So, the umbrella-like center at the navel are facing each other, just as the ones at the crown and the throat are facing each other.

5) *The Bliss-Guarding Center*

This center is situated at the genital area or, more precisely, at the very base or the very root of the genitals. Its center is triangular in

shape and it is red in color. It has 32 subsidiary channels. The energy-center itself is like a right-side-up umbrella.' One should understand that all of these centers are pierced through the middle by the central channel, which acts as an axis for all them, as the trunk of a tree is the axis for its branches.

B. THE ETYMOLOGY OF THE NAMES OF THE ENERGY CENTERS

It will also be helpful to understand why these five centers are called by their respective names:

- 1) Because the foundation of bliss, the white bodhicitta, abides principally at the crown, this center is called the center of great bliss.'
- 2) The enjoyment center at the throat is so called because this is the place where one tastes the six kinds of tastes: sour, sweet, bitter, salty, astringent and pungent.
- 3) The chief means, the chief instrument for the practice of Dharma is the mind, which has its main abode at the heart, specifically at the indestructible drop which comes from one's parents [see p. 107]. It is for this reason that the heart-center is called the 'center of Dharma.'
- 4) The basis of the emanation of great bliss is the fire of the psychic heat (Tib.gtum.mo'i.me), the turn.mo fire, the principal abode of which is situated at the navel. Therefore, this navel center is called the emanation center.'
- 5) The bliss-guarding center at the genitals is very closely related to the four types of joy [see p. 12] involving the movement of the bodhicitta in forward and reverse orders. Specifically, the spontaneous joy (Tib.lhan.skyes.kyi. dga-'ba) is experienced when the bodhicitta reaches the very tip of the genital organ. Because it is so instrumental or critical to these various types of joy, this center is called the 'bliss-guarding center.'

It is important to understand well the etymology of the names of the five centers, as well as the previous explanation of the various types of energies or winds and drops, in order to use them in meditation. Remember especially the five principal energies: the life-sustaining energy, the downward-clearing energy, the fire-accompanying energy, the upward-moving energy, and the pervasive energy.

C. LOCATION OF THE FIVE PRINCIPAL AND FIVE SECONDARY ENERGIES

One should understand not only the manner of the arising of these energies, but also know their locations.

- 1) The life-sustaining energy abides at the **heart** and its function is to form the link between life (the vital force) and the **body**.
- 2) The downward-clearing energy is located at the genital **area**. Its function is to send downward and dispel, **or retain and hold** when necessary both the white and red **bodhicitta**, as well as urine and excrement. This type of **energy** can malfunction causing[^] for example, diarrhea.
- 3) The fire-accompanying energy abides at the navel. The word 'fire' here refers to the gastric fire. The function of the fire-accompanying energy is to separate the nutriment of one's food and drink from the waste (or the different stages of nutriment from the different stages of waste), sending the **nutriment** to sustain the various parts of the body and dividing the waste so that it goes into the various waste products.
- 4) The upward-moving energy abides at the throat. All of one's vocal activity, as well as swallowing food and drink, **occurs by the** functioning of this energy. In the death **process**, **when this energy** has dissolved, one is no longer able **to speak or to swallow**. One puts food or drink in the mouth and **it just comes right back up again**-
- 5) The pervasive energy pervades the entire body. Various physical movements of walking, leaning **forward**, **leaning back**-ward and so forth are all due to the functioning of the **pervasive energy**. When this energy declines, one loses **the power of movement**.

One should also consider the five secondary **energies**:

- 1) the moving energy resides at the eye and it apprehends form;
- 2) the fully-moving energy, which abides **at the ear**, **apprehends sound**;
- 3) the perfectly-moving energy, abiding at the nose, experiences odors;
- 4) the very-moving energy, which abides at the tongue, apprehends tastes;
- 5) the certainly moving energy, which abides in the **tactile faculty**, apprehends objects of touch and different **kinds of feelings or sensations**.

A clear understanding of the different types of energies, channels and so forth is necessary for the meditations on the stage of completion which bring all of these various energies into the central channel and then into the indestructible drop at the heart. Unless the energies are first brought into the central channel, the realizations of the stage of completion are not attained. Whether one is meditating on the stage of completion or not, at death there occur this retraction of the energies into the central channel and then into the heart. So, just as this naturally and effortlessly occurs in the death process, one is now duplicating it consciously in meditation.

Among the various types of the stage of completion and meditations, there are the 'vajra recitation' and 'vase-like meditation.' In the practice of these, the purpose is to draw the energies into the central channel and then to the indestructible drop at the heart.

D. THE FIVE PRINCIPAL AND THE FIVE SECONDARY ENERGIES AS RELATED TO THE FIVE BUDDHA FAMILIES

The five principal energies also correspond to the five types of Buddhas: the life-sustaining energy is the energy of Aksobhya; the downward-clearing energy is that of Ratnasambhava, the fire-accompanying energy is the energy of Amoghasiddhi; the upward moving energy is the energy of Amitabha; and, finally, the pervasive energy is the energy of Vairocana.

The five secondary energies are also related to the five types of Buddhas: the moving energy is the energy of Vairocana; the fuUy-moving energy is the energy of Rainasambhava; the perfectly-moving energy is the energy of Amitabha; the very moving energy is the energy of Amoghasiddhi; and the certainly-moving energy is the energy of Aksobhya.

E. THE FIVE PRINCIPAL AND THE FIVE SECONDARY ENERGIES AS RELATED TO THE FIVE ELEMENTS

There is also a relationship between these energies and the various elements: the life-sustaining energy is related to the water element; the downward-clearing energy is related to the earth element; the fire-accompanying energy is related to the wind or

the air element: the upward-moving energy is related to the fire element; and the pervasive energy is related to the element of space.

Likewise, there is a relationship for the five secondary energies: the moving energy is related to the earth element; the fully-moving energy to the water element; the perfectly-moving energy to the fire element; the very-moving energy to the wind element; and the certainly-moving energy to the element of space.

F. THE ENERGIES AND THEIR RESPECTIVE COLORS

There is also a distinction of colors with regard to these various energies; the life-sustaining energy is white; the downward-clearing energy, being related to the earth element, is yellow, the fire accompanying energy is dark green; the upward-moving energy, being related to the fire element, is red, and the pervasive energy is blue.

Likewise, these five colors are connected to the secondary energies: the moving energy is red; the fully-moving energy is blue; the perfectly-moving energy is yellow; the very-moving is white; and the certainly-moving is green.

G. THE TEN ENERGIES IN THE KALACAKRA SYSTEM

There is one vital point that has already been mentioned and which should be remembered. In general tantric presentations, there is the explanation of the five principal and five minor or secondary energies. The distinction in the Kalacakra is that the terminology of the 'five principal' and 'five secondary' energies is not used; nevertheless, the presentation of all ten is there [and the names of the first five energies are identical in both presentations],

- 1) The life-sustaining energy (Skt. *pranavayu*; Tib. *srog 'dzin gyi.rlung*.);
- 2) the downward-clearing energy (Skt. *apana*; Tib. *rlung-thur.sel*);
- 3) the fire-accompanying energy (Skt. *samana*; Tib. *rlung-me.mnyam*);
- 4) the upward-moving energy (**Skt. *udana***; Tib. *rlung.gyen.rgyu*);

5) the pervasive energy (Skt.vyana;Tib khyab.byed.gyi rlung).
The names of the next five energies are given in either Sanskrit or English:

6) the naga (Skt.naga;Tib.klu) energy goes through the channel to the northwest;

7) the 'tortoise' (Skt.kurma;Tib.rus.sbal) energy situated at the heart, flows through the southeast subsidiary channel;

8) the 'chameleon' (Skt. krkala; Tib. rtsangs.pa) energy flows through the southwest subsidiary channel and is of the nature of fire;

9) Devadatta (Skt. devadatta; Tib lhas.byin) flows through the northeast and is of the nature of the water element;

10) Dhananjaya (Skt. dhananjaya; Tib nor las.ryal) which, like naga energy flows through the northwest, is of the nature of the earth element.

These are the names [as well as locations! of the ten energies in accordance with the exclusive tradition of the Kalacakra. There are some differences. Je Tsongkapa says the tradition of the Kalacakra is somewhat different from the other tantras. and he praises it very highly, it is stated that if one has a thorough understanding of the Kalacakra. then this understanding is easily applicable to understanding all the other tantras. It is a very important tantra.

There is an important point made in the context of the sutras: it is stated that the root of the cycle of existence is the ignorance which misconceives of the self. In the context of tantra, it is stated that the energy is the root of both the cycle of existence and of liberation. In the detrimental aspect, there are the 80 conceptions, each of which is related to a corresponding type of energy. They keep us in the cycle of existence and cast us to lower states of existence. In this sense, the energy is acting as the root of the cycle of existence. Likewise, the energy is also al the root of enlightenment because there is an energy intimately related to, for example, the clear light. For each of the various mind states, as one progresses towards enlightenment, there are corresponding energies

H. THE FOUR DROPS IN THE KALACAKRA SYSTEM

In accordance with the Kalacakra system, there are four types of drops (Skt bindu; Tib. lhig. le).

1) The 'drop of the arising of deep sleep' (Tib. gnyid. 'thug. skabs. kyi. thig. le). which is chiefly energy, abides at the heart and at the tip of the genital organ.

When energies in the upper portion of the body, the head, the chest and so forth condense into the heart, and the energies in the lower part of the body condense into the genital region, one goes into deep sleep. The drop of the arising of deep sleep is also called the 'mind-drop' (Tib. sems. sam. thugs. kyi. thig. le).

2) The 'drop of the arising of dreams' (Tib. rmi. lam. skabs. kyi. thig. le) also abides at the genital region. When energies in the upper portion of the body converge at the throat, and the energies in the lower portion of the body converge at the genital region, one dreams. This is when the dream state occurs.

One often hears the statement that all phenomena are not truly existent and that they are like dreams. Take the case of a young woman who dreams she has given birth to a child whom she adores. She is enchanted by the child - she loves it so much. The child dies. She is incredibly distressed. She weeps and wails and goes through torment. Then she wakes up. There has not been any child, there has not been any death of the child, and she is out of that suffering. Likewise, for conventional truth, although phenomena do not truly exist, nevertheless, the relationship between actions and their results, that is to say, the law of karma, of suffering and of happiness, conventionally do exist. This drop of the arising of dreams is also called the 'speech-drop' (Tib. ngag. gam. gsung. gi. ihig. le).

3) The drop of awakening' (Tib. sad. pa'i. skabs. kyi. thig. le) abides chiefly at the forehead and the navel. When energies in the upper portion of the body converge at the forehead and the energies in the lower portion of the body converge at the navel, one awakens from sleep. This is what happens each morning in Seattle around 7 or 8 o'clock. This drop of awakening is called "the body-drop" (Tib. lus. sam. sku'i. thig. le).

4) The drop of the fourth occasion' (Tib. bzhi. pa'i. gnas. skabs.

kyi thig.le) abides at the crown of the head and at the genitals. The term 'the drop of the fourth occasion.' refers to the occasion of the sexual bliss that is experienced during sexual intercourse between a man and a woman. During that time, the energies in the upper portion of the body converge at the crown and the energies in the lower portion of the body converge at the genitals. Bliss is experienced with the descent of the bodhicitta. This drop of the fourth occasion is also called 'the drop of transcendental wisdom' (Tib.ye.shes kyi.thig le)

It is important to know these different drops because they are indicative of the type of practice that one follows in the deep sleep, the dream and the awakening states. Corresponding to each of these stages there is a practice that is to be followed.

2. THE FOUR PRELIMINARY STEPS WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON THE GURU YOGA

Before this is in preparation for the actual practice of the stage of completion. For this practice, one needs:

- a. the proper teaching on refuge, namely, on how to avoid taking refuge in or relying upon false paths or upon extremist teachers (in other words, one must have a pure refuge);
- b. the teaching on bodhicitta, which is superior to the paths of the Listeners (Skt.sravaka; Tib.nyan.thod) and the Solitary Victors (Skt. pratyekabuddha; Tib.rang.sangs.rgyas);
- c. the teaching on Vajrasattva for the purification of unwholesome mental imprints and obscurations;
- d. the teaching on guru yoga for swiftly receiving blessings.

Among these four subject headings, the one on guru yoga is especially important. The great Sakya Pandita likened the blessing of the Buddhas to the rays of the sun. If one has some firewood, no matter how strongly the sun might be shining, the firewood does not burst into flame. One has to have a magnifying glass in order to ignite the actual flame. Likewise, even though the Buddhas are very powerful and are able to bestow great blessings, it is impossible to receive them without a guru. The guru and one's relationship to the guru are indispensable.

To further illustrate this, there is an account of the translator Marpa when he was living with his Guru Naropa. One day Naropa manifested the entire Hevajra Mandala together with the deity. He then called out to his disciple Marpa, saying, "My son, Chdkyi Lodro (which was Marpa's personal name), get up, rise up! Here it is a vision of Hevajra!" He rose and was awestruck. Then Naropa asked Marpa, "Which will you prostrate to? Will you prostrate to Hevajra or will you prostrate to me, your Guru?" Marpa thought, "Well, this is a very special event. Here is the yidam, the meditational deity himself, appearing. This is an extraordinary event. . . . I can always prostrate to my Guru, he is always here. I will prostrate to the yidam." And he did so.

Naropa then responded with one verse, the essential meaning of which states that the yidams are an emanation of the guru. Having recited this stanza, he snapped his fingers and Hevajra, together with the entire mandala, dissolved into his heart. Naropa then told Marpa, "This was not properly done: you made a mistake! As a result of this, your personal (family) lineage will be short!" And, in fact, this was the case. Marpa had nine sons, but his hereditary lineage was cut. In contrast, for example, in the Sakya lineage, the hereditary lineage has been preserved right up to the present. Whereas in the Kagyis, although the Dharma lineage is very much preserved and is very much alive and flourishing, the hereditary lineage from Marpa ended long ago.

To continue that same story, Marpa found this very strange. He was very, very unhappy and worried about this because he found it so bizarre - "Why did I do that in that situation?" This must have been the ripening of a residue from a karma committed long ago. He had previously had many visions of Hevajra and he was devoting himself to the practice of the Guru as being superior to the Yidam Hevajra. He had no confusion on that point. Although he had this clarity, nevertheless, he acted in that way. He was very concerned and was wondering, "What is happening to me?" As a result of this inner consternation, he fell ill.

One day, Naropa and Marpa went out to a pond to bathe. While they were there, a crow took a protection ring from Marpa and flew up in the air. Naropa did a very special threatening mudra and shot down the crow. When the crow came fluttering down, he

took the protection ring and gave it back to Marpa saying. Now you will be free from this problem, free from the mara " It was as if a mara had taken over his mind and influenced him. Then Marpa responded by asking what he should do? And he decided that he would simply like to meditate.

This threatening mudra is a very powerful one when it is used by a highly accomplished person on the stage of completion. For example, such a practitioner could sit here, point this mudra at a far off fruit-tree, and he would be able to draw the fruit of that tree to himself. Then he could reverse the whole process and send the fruits back up to their respective branches. These supernatural things which one is able to do in the practice of tantra are a lot of fun. This is simply one of a number of feats that might be done.

The supernormal powers of the Buddhas and the Bodhisattvas are beyond the realm of conception of ordinary beings. The manner of the ripening of various actions and the relationships that occur in terms of the law of karma for ordinary beings, are equally astounding. For example, the bizarre physical deformities of some people born without a mouth, or those born with one leg that is enormous and the other one tiny, or one leg that is bent way backwards - in each and every case, there is a very profound karmic relationship which comes into play and which ordinary beings cannot comprehend.

To draw a practical parallel, take a nomad, for example, who is living way out in the wilds and has no contact with civilisation at all, simply living all by himself. If such a nomad were told that there are things such as airplanes that fly through the air and they do not even flap their wings, or that there are trains and so forth, he would say, "That is nonsense, that is impossible! Of course, there are no such things!" He would never believe it. Likewise, when an ordinary person is told of some of the supernormal powers of the Bodhisattvas and the Buddhas they might seem totally unbelievable to him. Nevertheless, just as airplanes and other amazing technological feats have been created, likewise, these powers are facts. Just as one can be shown these inventions, the powers of the Bodhisattvas and Buddhas can also be shown. On another occasion, when Milarepa was leaving his Guru to go off into retreat to meditate. Marpa and his wife Dagmemu came

out 10 send him off. Marpa, as a farewell, cast off his ordinary form and appeared in the form of C'akrasamvara. That disappeared and he took the form of Hevajra. That disappeared and he took the form of Guhvasamaja. That disappeared and then he took the form of all and kali [vowels and consonants]. When this was done, he called out to Miiarepa, saying, "My son, have you seen?" Miiarepa said, "Yes, I have. Yes, I believe. Might I also be able to accomplish such wonders as, you!" Then he went off into retreat and, as is very well known, attained the same enlightenment as his Guru Marpa and was able to perform many supernormal feats, like flying in the sky and so forth. With the same kind of reverence that Miiarepa had for Marpa, so should one practice and look up to one's own guru. There was also a girl, who was a disciple of a lama by the name of Sakya Gyeltsen. She practiced and was also able to perform the miraculous wonders of flying through the sky and do forth. In verses of praise, she also referred to the great Yogin Miiarepa and his powers.

The previous Dagchen Rinpoche, Gongma Choglang Rinpoche, came to the province in Eastern Tibet, where there was a Sakya Monastery by the name of Langmi Gompa, which literally means, "the Elephant-trunk Monastery." At that time, Rinpoche knew that there were going to be a lot of violent earthquakes in the area. He told the people around him, "If you want to be with me, then come into this room. If you don't want to, stay outside." and he gave them each a blessing cord. The earthquakes occurred then up to a point along a certain ridge of a mountain. They flattened a lot of houses, but no damage occurred to the house in which Rinpoche was living. Afterwards, he did pass away in that house. There were many devotees who wanted to bring his remains back to Sakya, but the people there told them, "No, this would not be correct, because Rinpoche had a definite reason for passing away here. So, his remains should be kept here." Then, they built a golden stupa to hold the remains. This was adorned with a pearl parasol. It was a very precious and holy place. Many Tibetans suffering from various illnesses came there to circumambulate the golden stupa and a great many of them were cured. It was considered a very holy site. Each year, this stupa grew a little bit

larger. From that time forward, the inhabitants of the area say that there have never occurred earthquakes in that valley. In other places, when earthquakes do occur, the people naturally call out to Gongma Choglang Rinpoche, praying for his help. Such is the blessing that great lamas have.

Again, to paraphrase a stanza by Sakya Pandita, who was himself an emanation of Manjusri, "Merit accrued through service and devotion to the guru for the duration of just a fingersnap, outshines the merit that is accrued during a thousand eons of practicing the six perfections." This would include sacrificing one's own body, head, arms and so forth.

Therefore with great delight and joy, one should engage in devotion and service to the guru. The people who are here at the center have the opportunity to devote themselves to their own guru in that fashion.

NOTES

¹Gyalwa Gendun Drub, the First Dalai Lama. "To Entice the Minds of the Wise" (Notes on Kalachakra). in *Bridging the Sutra and Taijitu*, trans. and comp. Glenn H. Mullin (Ithaca: Gabriel Press, 11W2), p. 13. "In the *Kalachakra Tantra*, the six pressure points, or 131 *chakras*, are as follows: The first is located just below the crown aperture of the skull and has four petals of energy channel. The second is at the forehead and has sixteen petals. The third is located at the throat and has thirty-two petals. The fourth, which has eight petals, is at the heart. The fifth has sixty-four and is located at the navel. The sixth has two branches; the first at the anus, with thirty-two petals, and the second at the center of the jewel, with eight

²The reader is reminded that the word "air" or "wind" (Ski. *vayu*; Tib. *rlung*) is the same word that has been translated, in other instances, as "energy."

³Gyalwa Gendun Drub, the first Dalai Lama, pp. 135-6: "For ordinary beings the four drops can be the potency or inducing perception of the impure objects of the world. The potency of causing confused appearances and sound to arise, and the potencies giving rise to obscurity of mind, ignorance and perishable happiness. The aim of the Kalachakra yoga is to take these impure and obscured base, and to transform them into the path or enlightenment. To be specific, these three potencies are to be purified and transformed into the empty body, unconfined sound and unchanging bliss. These are cultivated to perfection, giving rise to the body, speech and mind of a Buddha and to ultimately pristine awareness."

SECTION NINE

It goes without saying that if we cultivate a very good motivation now, listen with this motivation, and then put the teachings into practice, this is extremely good even if we do not practice much, but simply have a good motivation while listening, very beneficial imprints are made upon our own mindstreams so that, in future existences, we will have propensities for gaining a very profound understanding of the Dharma.

In order to practice the stage of completion, one needs to understand the basis that one is working with. Prior to this, one should have at least the basic understanding of the stage of generation. There has already been an explanation of the channels and the various energy-centers, with the 32 branch channels at the crown of the head, the one with 16 at the throat, the one with eight at the heart, 64 at the navel and 32 in the genital region. One also needs to have the basic understanding of the three channels, the four principal energy-centers, the drops and the illusory body.

[III. B.]

MEDITATION PRACTICES ON THE STAGE OF COMPLETION

THE SIX BRANCHES OF THE PRACTICE

To go on to the stage of completion in the Kalacakra, one should know that there are 'six branches of the practice.' We have set for ourselves the goal of full enlightenment. To accomplish it, we should know what we are attaining: the Body, Speech and Mind of a Buddha. This is like the attainment of anything else. If we wish to go to India, we should first know the nature of our destination; if we are going to Tibet, we should know where we are headed.

Since we are headed for Buddhahood, it is the attainment of the Body, Speech and Mind of a Buddha which is required. The way to accomplish this goal is through the following six branches of the practice.

1. The first of the six branches of the practice [or yoga of the Kalacakra] is called individual convergence* (Skt. pratyahara; Tib. sor. sud). It is designed to draw together the individual energies of the five sensory consciousnesses into the heart.

As has already been explained, there is now a very intimate relationship between consciousness and energy. This can be understood in terms of an analogy. Imagine a person who has no legs but has clear sharp vision. Off in the distance, he sees a tree with fruit on it. He would like very much to eat that fruit, but having no legs he cannot get there. However, there is another person who is blind, but has both of his legs intact. He does not know where the fruit is, but he can walk around. If the two were to get together, the man with no legs riding on the shoulders of the man with legs but no eyes, then the man with the eyes could direct him. "Now go forward, then right, now left. . .", directing the man with the legs to the fruit. Having arrived at the tree, he could pluck off the fruit and enjoy it. In like manner, the person with eyes is like consciousness; the person with legs is like energy. It is the consciousness that apprehends the object, but it is able to go to the object only by the force of the energy. It is the energy that enables the consciousness to come in contact with the perceived object. The two work together in that manner.

2. The second branch of the practice is called individual stability' (Skt. dhyana; Tib. sor. gtan or bsam. gtan).

These two practices, the individual convergence and the individual stability, are the means of accomplishing the 'body of empty form' [see below, p. 131]. If this body has not been accomplished previously, it is accomplished freshly; and if it has already been accomplished, it is increased. These two act as a means for the attainment of the Body of a Buddha, the Nirmanakaya.

3. The third branch of the practice is called 'life-effort' (Skt. pranayama; Tib. srog. rtsol)¹ Its function is to draw the energy of the mental consciousness into the central channel. The energies of

the five sensory consciousnesses have already been drawn in by the previous practices.

The first syllable of this compound term. (Tib srog), which literally means 'life' or 'life force' . refers to the energy. The second syllable (Tib. rtsol) refers to the closing of the two side channels, the roma and the kyungma, and the drawing of the energies into the central channel. It implies the movement of the energies through the central channel. As long as these energies are flowing through the roma, the right side channel, there occurs "halting", and as long as the energies are flowing through the kyungma, the left side channel, there occurs attachment. To bring about the cessation of these two mental distortions, the active energies are not allowed to go through these side channels, but are drawn into the central channel.

4. The fourth branch of the practice is called 'retention' (Skt. dharana; Tib. 'dzin pa). Its function is to retain the energy of the mental consciousness called the 'active energies of mental consciousness' (Tib. las.rlung) in the central channel.

Thus, it is through the life-effort practice that the active energies of mental consciousness are drawn into the central channel and, with the retention practice, they are retained there. Having done so, one achieves what is called "mastery over the energies," specifically the mastery over energies that are the root of speech. Hence, these practices act as a cause for attaining the Buddha's Speech, the Sambhogakaya.

There is a distinction between the sutra and the tantra explanations of the Sambhogakaya. The sutras explain the Sambhogakaya in terms of the five 'certain' or 'definite aspects,' whereas in the tantras, the Sambhogakaya refers to the Buddha's Speech.

5. The fifth branch is called 'recollection' (Skt. anusmrti; Tib. rjes.dran). In this practice, the turn, mo, the fire of the psychic heat, flares up and melts the white bodhicitta, which [then] flows down to the tip of the genital organ (called the 'jewel') where it is retained (i.e., it is not allowed to come out) and, at this point, one experiences the spontaneous joy (Tib. lhan.skyes.kyi. dga'.ba). The recollection or the bringing to mind of this joy is what is involved in the fifth of these practices.

6- The sixth branch practice translates as '**concentration**¹ or meditative equipoise' (**Ski**, samadhi; Tib ting.**nge**.'dzin). It refers to the meditative equipoise of the non-dual bliss and emptiness. What is being referred to as 'bliss and emptiness' is as follows: (he bodies of the deity and the consort are bodies of empty form called 'emptiness.' and the bliss is the supreme immutable bliss (Tib. mchog.tu.mi gyur. ba'i.bde.ba). Therefore, **the attainment of the sixth practice is the meditative equipoise of the non-dual bliss and emptiness** which, in this particular context, **refer respectively** to the supreme immutable bliss and the two bodies of the deity and the consort.

What is meant by the term, "body of empty form"? In order to accomplish the body of empty form, one has to use up or exhaust the material element of one's body and then generate the form of the deity and the consort. Rather than being composed of [gross] matter, their bodies are composed simply of energy and consciousness. More specifically, they arise from the cultivation of the great bliss and the wisdom of emptiness. From these two aspects, **there** arise, in the divine embodiment of these two factors, **the body**, which is the body of empty form, and the mind of that body (colloquially called 'sem' and in polite speech referred to as 'thug'), which is the wisdom of the non-dual bliss and emptiness. Thus, it is this mind or this wisdom of the non-dual bliss and emptiness which is to be accomplished by these two final branch practices.

To draw a parallel in the world: a sprout needs to arise from a cause which is similar to itself - the seed. It cannot arise from a totally dissimilar cause. In like fashion, **the** result of this practice is the attainment of the body of the deity and the consort. To bring about this result, one needs to nurture or cultivate a similar cause, that is, a cause similar to that result.

[Here follows an explanation of the six branches of the practice in their reverse order:]

6. In order to accomplish the body of the deity and the consort, first there must be the attainment of the meditative **equipoise** of the union of the [non-dual] bliss and emptiness. This is **what** is involved in the concentration branch of the practice.

5. Prior to that, there has to be the attainment of the stage of the recollection practice

4. For the stage of recollection to occur, there must be the previous attainment - the fourth of these branches of practices, 'retention.' With this practice, one unwaveringly retains the energies in the central channel, at the heart. Only when this is done is it possible to turn mu fire to flame upwards and cause the white bodhicitta to melt and descend.

3. Before the stage of retention can be attained, there must be the prior accomplishment of the third branch of the practice, the life-effort. Without preventing the energies from passing through the two side channels and without drawing them into the central channel, it is quite obvious that one cannot retain them there.

2. & J. In order to eventually draw these energies into the central channel, there have to be the initial two stages of this practice: the individual convergence and the individual stability. The purpose of these is to regulate the energies in order to make this process possible. Thus, the function of the first two branches of the practice is to make these energies fit for action, usable. If they are not made serviceable (Tib. las.su.rung ba) through the training of meditation, it is not possible to bring them into the central channel.

The initial task of the first branch of the practice, the individual convergence, is designed to draw the active energies associated with the five sensory consciousnesses into the central channel. Only when this is accomplished is it possible to draw the energies into the central channel and prevent them from passing through the side ones. All of this must be done in sequence.

There are 11 signs of having brought the energies of the Five sensory consciousnesses into the central channel and they will be explained later. Also, in this process (of bringing the energies into the central channel), there are three major stages:

- 'Entering' (Skt. praveśa; Tib. 'jug). The sign of the energies entering into the central channel is that the force of the breath through both nostrils is even in strength. Normally, the breath is stronger through the left or the right nostril.
- 'Abiding' (Skt. alaya; Tib. gnas). The sign of the energies abiding in the central channel is that the flow of the breath through both nostrils ceases entirely and there is no further movement of the abdomen, that is, respiration has stopped.

- 'Dissolving' (Skt, ulthana, thim). The signs of dissolving the energies into the central channel include the sequence of signs beginning with the smoke-like apparition through to the clear light. These signs, which have been explained previously **appear** in their respective order.

The following is a very concise explanation of the six branches of the practice [in their original order].

1. & 2. The first two, -the individual convergence and the individual stability, are designed to accomplish the Buddha's Body. They train and regulate the energies in order to draw them into the central channel.

3. The life-effort practice is designed to prevent the energies [of mental consciousness] from passing through the two side channels and to draw them into the central channel.

4. The retention practice is designed to retain **those energies** that have been drawn into the central channel, not **allowing** them to waver in and out [of that channel].

5. On the basis of an already accomplished retention **practice**, one engages in the recollection practice, which involves **the union** with any of the three types of mudras. **This practice is designed to flare up the fire of the psychic heat which melts the bodhicitta. Its descent to the tip of the genitals is the cause for the experience of the spontaneous joy** (Tib. llun.skyes.kyi.dga'.ba).

6. That which is accomplished through the sixth branch of the practice, concentration, is the great union (Tib bzung. jugs). This is done through the attainment of the body of empty form of the deity and consort and [the experience of] the supreme immutable bliss (Tib. mchog.tu.mi.'gyur ba'i.bde.ba) followed by the cultivation of their union. The result of practice is the attainment of the great union [cf p. 14. 4]

There are two types of yogas known as the night and daytime yogas.

1. THE NIGHT YOGA

a. Tut P i M i or Tilt PRACTICE

The place in which one meditates during the practice of the night yoga should be dark. This has many benefits for the generation of

the body of empty form. In the past, lamas who followed this practice were very meticulous about this point of sitting in a room which does not have even the tiniest glimmer of light. There was not even a crack the width of a hair in their rooms. It was totally dark. We might find such a practice impractical to follow for the time being; nevertheless, it is important to hear about it, as well as to have these mental imprints placed upon the mind.

B. IHI- POSTURE

During this meditation, one assumes a definite posture: the legs should be in the crossed vajra position, with the left foot upon the right thigh and the right foot up on the left thigh. The hands should be in the mudra of meditative equipoise: the left hand beneath the right with thumbs touching, palms facing upwards, and four-finger widths beneath the level of the navel.

An alternative mudra is to put the thumb of each hand on [its respective) palms, make a clenched fist out of each and place them on the upper part of the thigh. This is particularly used for the practice of the individual convergence because of the emphasis on drawing the energies associated with the sensory consciousness into the central channel.

C. THE ACTUAL PRACTICE

There are a number of rather varying traditions concerning the actual mediation at this point. For example, one tradition instructs that one should direct the mind to the sky. Whereas, Gyeltsab Je states that this is ridiculous because the point of this practice is to draw the energies into the central channel. To bring the mind out, by directing it to the sky, would obviously not be of any benefit.

One begins the practice of this meditation by visualizing the central channel. Then, one should single-pointedly focus the mind upon the empty central channel, particularly at the point between the eye-brows in the forehead (Tib. *smin mtshams*), which is also visualized as empty. As a related point and one that has previously been mentioned, *mintsam* is the place where the drops are situated at the time of awakening from sleep [see above, p. 121, 3].

THE TEN SIGNS OF PROGRESS

If one engages in this practice properly, there will arise certain signs. There are four night and six daytime signs.

The four night signs, which have already been explained and which occur as one draws the energies into the central channel, are:

- 1) the smoke-like sign
- 2) the mirage-like sign
- 3) the fireflies-like sign
- 4) the butter-lamp-flame-like sign.

The six signs that occur during the day are:

- 1) the sign of fire
- 2) the moon-like sign
- 3) the sun-like sign
- 4) the sign of Rahu, which is like darkness or gloom
- 5) the sign of lightning
- 6) the blue drop.

If one meditates very well, this is how it happens¹

In the next stage, one visualizes a very, very tiny black drop in the central channel in the space between the eyebrows. Within that very tiny drop, one visualizes or imagines, as clearly as possible, the Sambhogakaya-like form of the Kalacakra embracing the consort and endowed with 'five certainties.' However, one must clearly understand that the appearance seen in one's field of imagination is not the actual Sambhogakaya because one is not able, at this point, to actually encounter the Sambhogakaya of a Buddha. Nevertheless, one visualizes or creates the deity with the consort in the Sambhogakaya like form.

THE FIVE CERTAINTIES OF THE SAMBHOGAKAYA-LIKE FORM

The first of the five certainties is the 'certainty of time': after the appearance of the four signs of the night and the six signs of the daytime, (the Sambhogakaya like forms [of the deity and consort] are visualized and seen. In other words, the time of the Sambhogakaya-like form is the time after all of the ten signs have been experienced.

The second of the five certainties is the 'certainty of abode,' indicating that the deity and the consort appear in the central channel.

The third is the 'certainty of nature,' that is, the certainty that the deity and the consort are not composed of an aggregation of particles but are, rather, appearances of one's mind.

The fourth, the 'certainty of the body,' is the certainty of the appearance that occurs: the deity and the consort are Vajrasattva (Vajrasatta being the same as Vajradhara).

The fifth, the 'certainty of aspect,' is the certainty that the deity and the consort appear embraced in union. This is the form of the deities that should be seen within the central channel.

d. THE FUNCTION OF THE SIX BRANCHES OF THE PRACTICE

1) It is with the first of the six branches of the practice, the individual convergence, that one experiences the above-mentioned ten signs and then accomplishes the eleventh - the sign of the deity with the consort, as has been just explained. Thus, the function of the first branch is to accomplish [all of] the eleven signs.

2) The function of the second branch of the practice, the individual stability, is to stabilize that which has been accomplished by the first of the six branches.³

By means of the first two, individual convergence and individual stability, one makes these energies somewhat usable, fit for action and serviceable. As a result, the energies naturally begin to enter into the central channel.

3) It is at this point that one begins to practice the next branch, the life-effort. Keep in mind that this term is a very literal translation: 'life' (srog), in this context, refers to the energies, and 'effort' (rtsol) to the blocking of the two side channels (the roma and kyangma), as well as the drawing of the energies into the central channel (uma). It is after these energies have been made serviceable that one enters this stage of practice called the life-effort and engages in the two practices that have already been mentioned, the vajra recitation and the vase-like meditation [see above, p. 118].*

a) *The Vajra Recitation*

The task of practices of the stage of completion [as already mentioned several times], is to draw all of the ten energies into the central channel and then into the indestructible drop at the heart. To actualize this goal, there is an inner condition which is a type of meditation called the "vajra recitation" (Skt. vajrajapa; Tib. rdo.rje zlas.pa). We have not heard about this kind of practice for many lifetimes.

By this tantric meditation alone, it is possible to bring into the heart four out of the five major energies: the life-sustaining, the downward-clearing, the fire-accompanying and the upward-moving energies, as well as the five secondary energies.⁵ The fifth major energy, the pervasive is very difficult to draw into the heart. In order to do so, it is indispensable for the yogin to meditate in union with an actual consort or a dakim (Skt. karma-mudra). In other words, the real reason why [at a specific time] it is necessary for the yogin to actually engage in such a practice is to bring that Final, pervasive energy into the heart.

For the vajra recitation, one should recognize the importance of the syllables Om, Ah, Hum. There is no mantra that is not included within this one mantra. It is the king of all mantras: the syllable Om is the seed of the vajra-body; the Ah is the seed of the vajra-voice; the Hum is the seed of the vajra-mind. In the actual practice, one visualizes the energy and the mantra as being inseparable, indivisible.

- As one inhales and the breath or energy comes in, one should imagine it to be the nature of the Om, that is, as if the Om is being drawn in together with the breath energy or the wind-energy.
- After inhaling, there follows [the phase of] the retention of the breath, which bears the syllabic Hum.
- The exhalation carries the syllable Ah.

This is a very short presentation of the vajra recitation, especially in accordance with the Kalacakra system,⁶ and it differs somewhat from the Guhyasamaja presentation. It is very beneficial to hear about this tantric practice and to have such mental imprints, or simply to gain a brief understanding of it.

b. *The Vase-Like Meditation*

The purpose of the vase-like meditation is to draw together the life-sustaining and the downward-clearing energies into the heart-center. For an ordinary person, as the life-sustaining energy passes through the nostrils, there is a similar passage for the downward-clearing energy through the lower orifices. These two move together. However, in the vase-like meditation, one draws the two energies together (like two bowls joined together, facing each other) into and through the central channel, and then into the heart-center.

(1) *Preparatory Practice*

Right now, you should visualize the central channel (Skt. *avadhuti*; Tib. *dbu.ma*), which goes from the tip of the genitals through the center of the body like an axis. ["Its color is white on the outside and red within."] It is situated inside the body, a little more to the back than to the front. Furthermore, it goes right through the center, up through the throat, to the crown of the head, comes down and emerges right between the eyes. This is how you should visualize its upper end in meditation. You imagine the lower end going down just slightly below the navel.

The right channel (Skt. *rasana*; Tib. *ro.ma*) is red in color [cf. p. 104]. Its upper end emerges from the right nostril and it runs about one finger width below the bottom tip of the central channel. This is an important point to remember.

The left channel (Skt. *lalana*; Tib. *rkyang.ma*) is white in color and it emerges (at the upper end) from the left nostril, comes upward and then goes down next to and about one finger width lower than the bottom tip of the central channel.

Visualize these three as clearly as you can and, for a little while, meditate in this fashion'.

Now, with your powers of visualization, take the right channel and insert it into the left channel, like placing one sleeve into another. This insertion of one channel into another is done just below the navel. Then, with the ring finger of your left hand, block the left nostril and inhale through the right nostril. Imagine, while you are doing so, that you are receiving the blessings of the guru, the Buddhas and all the Bodhisattvas. Inhaling in this fashion,

imagine the blessings going through the right channel and, as they do so, purifying any faults of that right channel. The energy is then funneled into the left channel, following that little curve down by the navel. Having fully inhaled, retain the breath as long as possible, but exhale before any physical discomfort sets in. Do not really strain yourself by any means. If you retain the breath for too long to the point of feeling really uncomfortable, rather than helping you, this will simply harm your health. So, again, hold the breath just as long as you comfortably can.

Then with the ring finger of your right hand, block the right nostril. Exhale through the left nostril while imagining that you are dispelling all anger and hatred (see above, p. 129. 3).

To reiterate: one inhales through the right nostril, draws the energy down through the roma and upon its entering the kyangma, one retains the breath or this energy in the kyangma (for as long as it is comfortable) and, finally, exhales through the left nostril. This process should be repeated three times.

Next, visualize the left channel as inserted into the right channel. Then, inhale through the left nostril. The energy passes through the kyangma and enters into the roma. Retain the breath in the right channel, the roma, for as long as possible, but only while it is still comfortable. As you inhale, you should imagine, just as before, receiving the blessings of the guru, the Buddhas and all of the Bodhisattvas. Then, exhale the energy that is coming up the right channel through the right nostril. As you do so, you should imagine all of your attachment and lust is being expelled. Inhaling through the left and exhaling through the right nostril should also be done three times.

For the third phase of this meditation, visualize that the tips of both the roma and kyangma are inserted into the bottom aperture of the central channel. You inhale through both nostrils, however, breathing should be free of the following three faults:

- the fault of sound - you should be breathing so gently that you cannot hear the passage of the air;
- the fault of breathing very forcefully,
- the fault of breathing erratically-this is where the inhalation is longer than the exhalation or vice versa. It should be even.

As you are inhaling through both nostrils, you should imagine the breath-energy from the right nostril going through the right channel and, simultaneously, the breath-energy from the left nostril going into the left channel. The energy passes down through channels to the level below the navel, enters into the central channel and fills it. As was done previously while inhaling you imagine receiving the blessings of the guru and all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. Similarly, as before, retain the breath as long as possible. Then, exhaling through both nostrils, one imagines the energy coming through the central channel and being emitted through the point between the eye-brows, like a spotlight sending a ray of light up into the sky.

The inhalation through both nostrils, the retention of the breath and the exhalation through both nostrils are also done three times.

You should know that, in fact, due to the many constrictions of the central channel by the two side channels (the roma and the kyangma), no energy actually passes through the central channel [see above, p. 114. 1]. If it were to pass through the central channel, there would be a very great force of virtue there but, for an ordinary person, it does not. It is by means of visualization that one imagines this happening.

(2) The Actual Practice

The first step in the vase-like meditation is to visualize oneself very clearly as Kalacakra.

There are two ways of practicing the vase-like meditation: one is to visualize the vase in relationship to the navel-center and the other way is to visualize the vase in relation to the heart center. Both are correct; but the best way would be if one could practice with the vase placed at the heart. However, if a beginning practitioner engages in the vase-like meditation at the heart, instead of gaining realization, there is a great danger of actually disrupting the energies at the heart with a malfunctioning of the life-sustaining winds, possibly resulting in physical disorders. Therefore, it is more practical and less dangerous for the beginning practitioner to engage in this meditation by focusing at the navel-center [only]. By doing so, one avoids the above-mentioned dangers.

The next stage in this practice is to visualize the syllable Ham at the navel-center. The syllable is of the nature of one's own mind; it is the emanation of one's own mind.

The function of the vase-like meditation is **to take energies** from the upper portion of the body and press them **down**, and to take the energies from the lower portion of the **body and draw them up**. It is like two bowls that join together like **a vase**.

In the actual meditation, one does this by drawing the energies down from the upper portion of the body. This must be done very gently, smoothly and slowly, otherwise, there is a danger of having energy disorders in the upper part of the body, such as the shoulders.

To draw up the lower energies, one closes **the lower apertures**. Then, very gently, one draws these energies **up to the navel**. Again, a strong emphasis: this must be done gently. For **just as** a more forceful drawing down of the energies from the **top can lead** to problems in the energy-flows in the upper portion **of the body**, likewise, a too forceful or violent practice on the **lower energies** can disrupt the energy-flows in the lower portion of the **body in** such a way that one is no longer able to urinate **or defecate** properly. It can mix up that whole system down there. **Therefore**, it must be done gently.

Having drawn the energies together, the upper energies down and the lower energies up, one then focuses them around the navel-center and retains the breath as long as possible - again, without discomfort.

Initially, one cannot retain the breath very long; therefore, **one** engages in this practice for just a short time, then exhales. Gradually, one's power of retaining the breath increases. Eventually, the various energies in the body will first enter into **the** central channel, then abide there and, finally dissolve. Those **are** the three stages of the practice [see above, pp. 132-3].

When you have attained that level, should you happen **to fall ill** and experience physical discomfort, you can easily **remove** yourself from it simply by going through this process **[of entering, abiding and dissolving energies in the central channel]**.

There was a Kadampa geshe. Geshe Gompawa, **who** was meditating and during this vase-like meditation the **various signs**

appeared. So, of course, his respiration completely stopped. Seeing this, his disciples were very, very sad. They thought, "Oh, the lama has died!" and they started to weep and lament. Then, Geshe Gompawa came out of his meditation with a burst of laughter asking, "What's wrong with you?" And they said, "Well, we thought you were dead!" He responded, "No. I'd been feeling a little bit of physical discomfort — my body had not felt very good. So, I dissolved it!"

This was a brief explanation of the vase-like meditations, which are aspects of the stage of completion. It would be very good if one could cultivate this practice somewhat. However, until one has gained the authentic realization of the stage of generation, it is not possible to gain the actual realization of the stage of completion. Nevertheless, it is good to do it a little bit, because it places very beneficial imprints upon one's mindstream.

The purpose and the function of these [two] tantric meditations on the stage of completion is to draw the energies into and through the central channel and then into the heart-center. Once these energies have been drawn into the central channel. The function of the life-effort branch of the practice has been accomplished [see above, p. 136, 3)].

4) It is not the function of the third branch of the practice to make the energies firmly abide in the central channel. This is, rather, the purpose of the next stage of the practice called retention. After one has reached the stage where the energies are abiding firmly in the central channel, one is ready for the next stage.

5) The fifth branch of the practice is called recollection. These two stages need to be practiced for a long time. One does not practice one for just one day, going on to the next practice the following day. The nature of this fifth branch of the practice is the yoga of the psychic heat, the tummo yoga, which is designed to cause the flame or the fire of the tummo to rise up. Once, when Gampopa came to Miiarepa, Miiarepa asked him what meditation practice he had been following and Gampopa described it. To this Miiarepa commented, "Well, you don't get butler by squeezing a handful of sand. So, if you want to understand the nature of the mind, then you should follow my

practice, the cone practice of the turn.mo yoga. By such means, you will realize the nature of the mind."

The result of this practice of causing the turn.mo fire to rise up is that the white bodhicitta at the crown of the head melts and descends through the central channel all the way to the point of the genitals, where it is retained. When one is highly advanced in the stage of completion, one never allows the white bodhicitta to be emitted (see p. 27, no. 5) but, as it descends to the very tip of the genitals, without (it) wavering, one retains it without any emission whatsoever. It is at this point that one experiences the initial moment of the immutable bliss (Tib.mi.'gyur.ba'i, bde.ba) and that the material components of the body and the various active energies (Tib.las.rlung) begin to be exhausted. This process has begun and it will continue as one proceeds in the later stages of meditation.

[6] By means of the first five branches of the practice, one accomplishes the sixth, called concentration. A more detailed explanation on the fifth and the sixth branches of the Kalacakra yoga is given on pp. 151-3.)

This presentation is the particular system of the Kalacakra that is different from the general Anuttara Yoga Tantra presentations, such as those found in the Vajrabhairava, Guhyasamaja, Cakrasamvara and Hevajra Tantras. In their practices, this body remains and, apart from this body, there arises the illusory body as Hevajra or whoever it might be. Then, one attains enlightenment as that particular illusory body, which arises separate and distinct from these present aggregates. In the Kalacakra system, on the other hand, this material body, together with the active energies, is gradually exhausted.

E THE SIX ENERGY CENTERS AND THE PROCESS OF EXHAUSTING THE MATERIAL COMPONENTS OF THE BODY. ACTIVE ENERGIES AND THE DROPS OF THE WHITE AND RED BODHICITTA RESULTING IN THE ATTAINMENT OF THE BODHISATTVA GROUNDS

As mentioned before, it is the energies which are the root of samsara and by extinguishing them, one extinguishes the root of karma. Also, as stated before, the consciousness itself is not able

to contact an object: rather it is by means of its conjunction with the energies that consciousness is able to apprehend the object and relate to it [see above, p. 105. c]

To further understand the gradual process of exhausting the material components of one's body, and so forth, let us return to the energy-centers or cakras: the genital-center, the navel-center, the heart-center, the throat-center, the forehead-center and the usnisa or crown-center [see pp. 114-115]. In the following stages of the meditation, one draws both the red and white bodhicitta through these centers. Eventually, as one progresses in the practice, one successively attains the ten Bodhisattva grounds. In the Kalacakra system, however, there exist two more Bodhisattva grounds.

In each of these energy-centers, there are 3600 drops of white element, the white bodhicitta. Corresponding to each of these 3600 drops are the 3600 immutable blisses. With each of these 3600 drops, there are 3600 material components of the body, as well as the 3600 active energies that are exhausted.

1) These drops of the white bodhicitta that lead to the immutable blisses first build up or draw-together at the lowest, the genital-center and then, they gradually build up through the successive centers. This 'building up' process is like slowly pouring curd into a glass. As a result of retaining the 3600 drops of the white bodhicitta (without any emission whatsoever) in the genital-center, the corresponding 3600 immutable blisses arise and act as the antidotes that bring about the exhaustion of the 3600 material components of the body and the 3600 active energies. Through this achievement, one attains the first and the second Bodhisattva grounds called the Very Joyful and the Stainless [see above, p. 9].

2) Next, the 3600 drops of the white bodhicitta are drawn together or built up at the navel-center. As a result, there arise again the 3600 immutable blisses. And when this occurs at the navel, one attains the third and the fourth Bodhisattva grounds called the Luminous and the Radiant.

3) Then, one builds up the 3600 drops of the white bodhicitta at the heart-center. Like before, there occur the 3600 immutable blisses that act as the antidotes for the 3600 material components of the body and the 3600 active energies. It is by means of this that

one attains the fifth and the sixth Bodhisattva grounds called Difficult to Conquer and the Manifesting One.

4) The seventh and eighth Bodhisattva grounds [see above, pp. 9–10], called the Far Gone One and the Immovable, are attained when this process occurs at the throat-center.

5) A similar process has to take place at the forehead before one can attain the ninth and tenth Bodhisattva grounds called the Good Intelligence and the Cloud of Dharma.

6) The eleventh and the twelfth Bodhisattva grounds are attained after this process is completed at the crown-center.

In all, there are 21,600 drops of the white bodhicitta. 21,600 of the material components of the body and 21,600 of the active energies (i.e., 6 centers x 3600 = 21,600).

Simultaneous with this process of successively building up the white bodhicitta in the centers, starting from the bottom and ascending upward, is a complementary movement of the red bodhicitta that successively descends from the crown of the head, through these same energy-centers, to the genital-center. Again, this involves the 3600 sets (of the red drops) going down through the various energy-centers. Upon the conclusion of this ascending and descending process, again without allowing the red bodhicitta to be emitted, one experiences a supreme immutable bliss (Tib. *mchog tu mi.'gyur.ba'i.bde.ba*), with which all of the 21,600 material components of the body are exhausted. Because the white and red bodhicittas are also material aspects of the body, these too are extinguished at this time.

It would be a mistake to think that this process is like filling a pot or vessel with milk insofar as, at this point, the material components of the body are completely exhausted and one actualizes Kalacakra with consort, who are composed of just energy and consciousness, and one attains the 'rainbow body'. One can understand and see now that what needs to be done is to extinguish this material body which acts as a basis of suffering. If one exhausts or extinguishes this material body, then, of course, there is no basis for sickness.

It is true that the realizations of the stage of completion do not arise if one has not already gained the realizations of the stage of generation. The above explanation on the various stages of

meditation is clearly on the stage of completion. Although we are not really fit to practice them yet, it would still be beneficial to contemplate the stages and to know the different Bodhisattva grounds. As one advances towards Buddhahood, the grounds will be the stages one will pass through. They can be thought of as signposts on a journey one is now in the process of making. In Tibet, for example, geshe and lamas had learned detailed descriptions of various holy places in India, such as the Vulture's Peak, Bodhgaya, Sarnath and so forth. Only words and imagination were involved. But then, later on, when they came down to India, they were actually able to visit these various places of pilgrimage, that they were already somewhat familiar with from the explanations they had previously received.

You are now, similarly, receiving a brief explanation of the stages of the Bodhisattva grounds, like names on a map. You can hear about them now and later on, when you actually attain them, you will remember, "Oh yes! Back there in Seattle. I remember him talking . . ." You are not always going to be in the situation in which you are now. If you continue your practice, eventually you will certainly become a Bodhisattva and head right on towards Buddhahood. It is a mistake to look upon the Buddhas or their images on the altar and to think of them as being "way up in enlightenment," whereas we are 'way down here' - as if there were no relationship between the two, or as if there were a great abyss separating us. This is simply not the case. We are related to the Buddhas. We are following the same path and when we come to the culmination of our own practice, we will be up there on the Dharma-throne giving our own teachings. So, through our own practice, it is definitely possible to attain Buddhahood.

For example, Je Tsongkhapa was once speaking to Manjufri saying, "We used to be on a very equal plane. Both of us were wandering about in the cycle of existences. You, however, overcame self-cherishing and the false conception of the self and attained enlightenment. But here I am - still in the cycle of existences." ie Tsongkhapa practiced the above six branches of the Kalacakra yoga and had a vision of Kalacakra, who told him that he would be like Dawa Zangpo and would cause the Kalacakra teachings to flourish greatly.

Lama Drukpa Kunleg, a great Kagyü master, also made a very similar statement when he addressed Jowo &kyamuni, the Buddha in the central cathedral in Lhasa. •"Previously, you had also been in the cycle of existences, but you practiced and gained realization; whereas I am still in samsara. To you I prostrate."

One could likewise look to the Buddha &kyamuni. He was previously like ourselves, simply wandering about in the cycle of existences; but he met qualified spiritual mentors, especially the masters of the Mahayana and, having practiced, he attained enlightenment. As this has been true in the past, so is it still true for ourselves in the present. These individuals simply practiced with perseverance and enthusiasm and, therefore, attained enlightenment. We have been lagging behind and are left over. All of us are here to practice and those among us who do so with the greatest enthusiasm and perseverance will be the first to attain full enlightenment. And there will still be some of us left over. One should understand that enlightenment is attained through enthusiastic perseverance. Contemplating this, one should bolster up one's courage for the practice.

If one is engaging in a one-day tantric practice, it would be better to devote most of one's time to the practice of the stage of generation. Then, right at the end, give some time to the stage of completion. In this way, one has a rounded and complete tantric practice that places very important imprints upon the mind.

NOTES

¹F. D. Leasing and A. Wayman. *Introduction to the Buddhist Tantric System* (Delhi: MUIJI Ban;rsidass. 1980), p. 175. The *prana-dhyana* of the three lower Tantra divisions has different occasions, requirements, and methods of contemplation from the *prana-avama* explained in the Arvuttara [Tantra].

²Gyalwa Gendun Drub, the First Dalai Lama, p. 144. The *Guhyasamaja Tantra* states that the signs first arise at the eyebrows. The *Kutachakra Tantra* adds that because there are various types and levels of energies, there are also various places and times for the manifestation of the signs. For example, when the yogi cuts off the flow of the vital energies passing through the four petals of the four intermediate directions at the heart *chakra*, or the *ru-pel* (*tsang - pa - tha - chut*, and *pa-ka-geal* energies, he experiences the signs of smoke, a mirage, radiant fireflies and a butter lamp. When he halts the flow of the equally abiding, upward flowing, all pervading and *tu* energies that flow through the four petals of the cardinal directions, he perceives the signs of Kalagni, the moon, the sun and Rahula [sic].

One then cuts off the flow or (he life sustaining and downward moving energies which course above and below, thus experiencing the signs of lightning and the primordial drop"

Ibid., p. 146; "The physical position for performing the yoga of meditative stabilization is as previously explained

Through application of this yoga one fills the skies with the various empty bodies and symbols previously generated within the mystic drop

One then dissolves all these gods into one another and then into the Beatific Form of the *Sambhogakana* as explained above, establishing the special divine pride until it effortlessly arises. When this divine pride dominates one's entire being, the yoga of meditative stabilization has been attained. One then is ready to enter into the third of the six yogas, that of energy concentration."

Ibid., p. 147: "One must here apply special techniques in order to bring the life sustaining and downward moving energies to the navel and to unify them accordingly.

The two main techniques used to bring about this union is [sic] the vajra recitation and the vase breathing. The method for applying these two yogic techniques for concentrating, holding and dissolving the vital energies are [sic] explained in the *Commentary to the Praise of Vajrapam*"

"Keep clearly in mind that the Kalacakra system does not use this particular terminology of the 'five major' and 'five secondary' energies [see above, pp. 119-120].

Ibid., p. 148: "In our tradition the vajra recitation is as explained in the *Commentary to the Praise of Chakrasambhara* and also Naropa's *Commentary to the Treatise on the Initiations*. When one meditates upon the yoga of energy concentration and casts the glance eliminating demons, one watches for the Stimulant and actual signs as explained previously in the yoga of sense withdrawal. One observes the empty body unified with the vital energies. The energies enter inside and are then made to arise with the luminosity of *urn*. This is brought to the center of the pressure point at the crown, where Tests the empty body that was previously produced through the first two yogas. This energy is then retained and made to arise with the luminosity of the letter *Hum*. Together with the empty body it is then brought to the navel. As the energies are released, they are made to arise with the luminosity of the letter *Ah*. The strength of the flowing energies causes the empty body and so forth to move up the path of the central channel to the upper aperture, where they exit.

Through repeated meditation, the inhalation and exhalation periods gradually decrease and the period of retention increases until one is eventually able to retain the application of the empty body and the vital energies at the navel for long periods of time.

After the vajra recitation technique has been mastered one can take up the practice of 'vase breathing' "

¹Garmu C. C. Chang. *Teachings on Tibetan Yoga* (The Citadel Press, Secaucus, New Jersey, 1977). p. 56.

SECTION TEN

We should engage in whichever of our practices we are presently capable of following with full diligence. Those that we are not able to practice at this time should not be simply disregarded but, rather, we should offer prayers that we may be able to follow them either in the latter part of this life or in future lives. While keeping hold of this aspiration, let us engage in practices designed *to* further purify the mind and accumulate merit.

The Bodhisattva Santideva quotes the Buddha, who is totally free from any fraudulence and teaches very honestly **and** straightforwardly, - stating that even insects are endowed with Buddha-Nature and, therefore, have the ability to attain full enlightenment. If this is true for insects, then it goes without saying that human beings, who are likewise endowed with Buddha Nature and, in addition, have the ability to recognize and avoid that which is harmful and engage in that which is beneficial, certainly have the ability to attain enlightenment. This is within reach if we simply maintain enthusiasm and perseverance in the practice.

Santideva further states that if people holding very ordinary vocations, such as fishermen, carpenters or loggers, give so much effort and endure great hardships of heat and cold for relatively minor aims of this life alone, then those of us who are striving towards full enlightenment should certainly be able to take on the hardships involved in the practice. So, Santideva asks a rhetorical question, "Why is it that you, who are seeking full enlightenment for the benefit of all creatures, are not able to bear these hardships?"

[III. B.J

2. THE DAYTIME YOGA

A brief explanation of the night yoga has already been given. Now, we continue with the explanation of the daytime yoga,

a. THE PLACE OF THE PRACTICE

First of all, one should meditate in a place surrounded by walls, hut with no roof so that it is open at the top. One should be facing in such a way that the sun is behind one. Snow mountains or bodies of water are not in one's vision, and the wind is not blowing against one's face.

b. THE POSTURE

The physical posture [that one assumes] during the meditation is that of the vajra posture, with the hands either in meditative equipoise or clenched into a fist, thumbs tucked in. All aspects of the posture are the same as described previously for the night yoga [see above, p. 134, b).

c. THE ACTUAL PRACTICE

The meditation is also the same as described for the night yoga. One visualizes the body of empty form of the deity and consort in the central channel, between the eyebrows.

There are also the six branches of the meditation. The above visualization is done in the first stage, the stage of individual convergence. During the second stage, the individual stability, one stabilizes what has been accomplished during the first branch of the practice. All of the ensuing five branches of the practice after the first one has been attained, are simply to further develop and increase this first practice.

D THE FUNCTION OF THE SIX BRANCHES

Although the following material has already been taught and we have become familiar with it, it is helpful to hear it again [and again], and to have the mental imprints [on our continuum]

ISO

1) & 2) Since individual convergence is the practice which initially actualizes the body of empty form in the central channel at the forehead opening, and individual stability creates firmness/stability, these first two branches of the practice make the various active energies serviceable.

3) The third stage of the practice, the life-effort, blocks the two side channels, the roma and the kyangma, causing the energies to abide in the central channel. Thus, the chief practices of the life-effort branch of the yoga are designed to draw together the downward-clearing energy and the life-sustaining energy. These practices are the vajra recitation of the Om, Ah, Hum mantra and the vase-like meditation, both of which have been described previously.

4) The next stage of the practice, retention, occurs after one has already drawn the energies into the central channel and is somewhat able to make them abide there. The function of the retention branch is to stabilize the retention of the energies in the very center of the central channel - to make them firmly abide there.

5) In the recollection branch of the practice, one goes into union with one of the three types of consorts, literally called •mudras*: the Action Mudra (Skt. karma-mudra; Tib. las.kyi.phyag.rgya), who is an actual person, a consort brought to one by one's karma; the Wisdom Mudra (Skt. jnana-mudra; Tib. ye.shes.kyi.phyag.rgya), who is a visualized appearance in the meditator's mind - the union with her takes place during the visualization; the Great Mudra (Skt. maha-mudra; Tib. phyag.rgya.chen.po), the consort of Kalacakra, Natsog Yum, whose body is the body of empty form. A practitioner of dull faculties enters into union with the Action Mudra; a person with medium faculties goes into union with the Wisdom Mudra; and a practitioner of the sharpest faculties with Great Mudra Natsog Yum.

While one is in union with any of these three types of consorts on this stage of the practice, the white bodhicitta melts from the crown-center, descends to the tip of the genitals, where it is retained and, in this way, one experiences the immutable bliss.

However, in order to engage in a practice such as entering into union with the Action Mudra, rather than the Wisdom Mudra, several qualifications are indispensable-

- a) one ought to have trained one's mind on the common path;
- b) one ought to have perfectly received the empowerment;
- c) one must be maintaining the precepts and pledges;
- d) the male and the female practitioners ought to be at the same level of realization; one's realization should not be higher than that of the other. For example, if the yogin, the male practitioner, has attained a level in the stage of completion called 'mind-liberation,' then his consort, the yogini, should also have attained that same degree of realization. When both are of equal realization, by engaging in this practice, the male practitioner increases the female's realization, and the female increases the male's realization, Enlightenment for both of them is soon attained.

It is very important to understand the purpose of this type of meditation, that is, the male and female practicing in union. This is a very profound practice coming from Vajrughara Miiarepa. Speaking on this critical point, said that in the practice, one meditates using the channels, the energies and the drops, and that one should, at the proper time, practice with an Action Mudra; however, one must do so in a fully qualified way. If one does not, practicing prematurely leads to birth in a hell. It is also said that, as a result of such a malpractice, one remains in the hell for as long as space lasts.

There is much to be explained about the recollection branch of the practice. In fact, one could spend many, many days just explaining this because it is very extensive. One aspect of this practice is that of gazing upon Natsog Yum, the consort of Kalacakra. [through which one experiences!^{1,1c} spontaneous bliss (Tib. Ihan.skyes.kyi bde.ba) and the rising of the turn.mo flame. This melts the white bodhicitta at the crown, which then descends through the various energy-centers where one experiences the four types of joy: the joy (Ski ananda; Tib. dga'.ba), the supreme joy (Ski. parama-ananda; Tib. mchog.dga); the extraordinary joy (Ski. virama-ananda; Tib. khyad dga') and the spontaneous joy (Skt. sahaja-ananda; Tib. Ihan.skyes.kyi.dga'.baj [see above. P 11. 3].

The preceding are the first five branches of the practice by means of which one accomplishes concentration, the sixth branch of the yoga of Kalacakra.

6) The single-pointed union of the emptiness of all phenomena and the mind that is realizing that emptiness constitutes the sixth branch [of the Kalacakra yoga].

The second way of understanding this branch of the practice is as follows: it is the union of the emptiness of all phenomena appearing in the divine form of the consort Natsog Yum, who is the nature of wisdom, and the supreme immutable bliss (Tib. mchog.iu.mi.'gyur.ba'i.bde.ba) that appears in the divine form of Kulacakra. Thus the union of the wisdom realizing emptiness symbolized by the consort, and the mind of the supreme immutable bliss embodied in the deity Kalacakra is also called the concentration branch of this yoga of the Kalacakra (cf. above, p. 133, 6).

One should keep in mind that the union of the deity and consort is not like mundane sexual intercourse; it symbolizes the union of method and wisdom, where the deity Kalacakra embodies the method and the consort Natsog Yum embodies the wisdom aspect of the teachings (cf. p. 60, 7). As a result of one's going into union with one of the three types of consorts, the Action Mudra, the Wisdom Mudra or the Great Mudra, the immutable bliss (Tib. mi'gyur.ba'i.bde.ba) arises and is then increased more and more.

This brief explanation of the six branches of the yoga of Kalacakra completes the exposition of the various stages of meditation. The next topic to be explained is the attainment of full enlightenment in this practice of Kalacakra.

IV. THE STAGE OF MANIFESTING THE RESULT

A. A GENERAL PRESENTATION OF THE HIGHEST YOGA TANTRA

There is a general presentation of the Highest Yoga Tantra (Skt. anuttara-yoga-tantra; Tib. rnal.'byor.bla.med) such as is found, for example, in the Hevajra and the Vajrayogini practices. Let us look at the Hevajra practice where there are three primary steps in the tantric practice, particularly on the stage of completion: the

attainment of the illusory body, the attainment of the clear light, the union.

1. If one has attained the illusory body, it is then completely certain that one will attain enlightenment in that particular life. The attainment of the illusory body with regard to Hevajra does not mean that this body becomes Hevajra but, rather, that one attains or actualizes, apart from this gross body of flesh and bones, the Hevajra Body marked with various major and minor signs and which is to be understood in terms of 12 analogies.

The illusory body that one emanates as can go to different places, such as the Pure Lands, and make offerings in the beings there. However, to be of direct service to the gross beings here, one has to have a gross body and (with that motivation in mind) one brings back and dissolves the illusory body into one's gross body (see p. 109). Then, one can reach Jharna or do whatever one wants to do.

QUESTION: "What about in the Kulacakra system? After you have completely exhausted this [gross] body, how can you directly help people?"

ANSWER: "That is a very easy question because, after you attain enlightenment, you can manifest, emanate yourself, as many times as you like and serve in that way. You are a Buddha and, in just a moment, you can emanate yourself all over the place."

2. Following the illusory body is the attainment of the clear light which is twofold, the subjective clear light. The objective clear light is the mind which realizes emptiness,

3. The union refers to the union of the illusory body and the clear light. That is the essence of the stage of completion.

If one asks, "Is meditation on emptiness a practice on the stage of completion?" one must reply, "No, it is not, because meditation on emptiness also occurs in the sutra practice." Then one might further ask, "Is meditation focusing on the energies a practice of the stage of completion?" one must again answer, "No, it is not." Why? Because such meditation on the energies is also found in the practices of the lower three classifications of tantra. There are many meditations on these energies also found in the non-Buddhist practices. Deity meditation also is not an exclusive

practice of the stage of completion either, **because those who *taf*** still practicing on the stage of generation **are certainly engaging** in deity meditation.

So, what are the stages of generation and completion? A definition of the stage of generation has already been given. Can anyone remember it?

STUDENT: "I think it is the purification of birth, **death and bardo.**"

GESHE DHARGYEY: "That would equally apply, **or even** more so, to the stage of completion because it is the **stage of completion** which actually brings about the **purification of death, bardo and birth.**"

One should at least know the definitions and **understand the** differences between the two stages of the path. Here is a **rough** translation of the stage of generation:

An artificial or constructed meditation involving **visualization** which follows the parallels of the processes of death, **bardo** and birth without drawing energies into the central **channel** (cf. p. 83).

And here is a rough definition of the stage **of completion**: **The** entering, abiding and dissolving of the energies **in the central channel** by means of non-artificial meditation. **More specifically,** it is the focusing upon the vital points of **the vajra-body** in order to draw the energies into the central **channel***

B. ATTAINMENT OF FULL ENLIGHTENMENT THROUGH THE KALACAKRA PRACTICE

In the general outline of the teachings that has been followed over the past weeks, there was first the presentation of the baas [I. A. and B.j, Following this, there were the teachings on vows and pledges [II. A and B.J, then the presentation of the path of meditation consisting of the stage of generation [III. A.) and the stage of completion [III B.]. We will discuss now the stage of manifesting the result, which is the attainment of full enlightenment in the practice of the Kalacakra.

Having, first of all, trained one's mind in the common **path** by means of the cultivation of renunciation, bodhicitta and **the** realistic view, one then needs to properly receive an **empower-**

menl. Then, one trains in the stage of generation: first in the gross and then the subtle stages. Having come to the culmination of the subtle stage, one engages in the practice of the stage of completion consisting of the six branches of the yoga that have just been described. In doing so, one focuses on the six essential points of the energy-centers: the genital, navel and so forth. In this process, one gradually builds up the white bodhicitta and, at the same time, causes the descent of the red bodhicitta in these successive centers. Throughout this process, the bodhicitta is not allowed to be emitted and, as a result, the active energies and the material constituents of the body are gradually extinguished. Finally, the red and white bodhicitta themselves are extinguished. Upon the conclusion of this practice, one attains the body of empty form, which is like the colors of a rainbow.

The Buddha Vajradhara was extremely kind to sentient beings to reveal this very profound practice of tantra. It is truly like a gold-transforming elixir that is able to turn copper and other base metals into gold. With this practice of tantra, one is able to transform one's body, which is presently of a gross material nature and therefore subject to suffering and sickness, by exhausting its material components, and also to transform the 'primordial mind' (Tib. *gnug.ma'i.sems*) and the 'primordial body' into the nature of the deity and consort. In this material body, there are active energies that cause the arising of such mental distortions as anger, attachment and so forth. In the process of transmutation, these active energies are extinguished.

It is important to understand what is being translated here as the 'primordial mind' and 'primordial body':

The primordial mind (or stream of consciousness) is the very subtle mind which has always been with us.

The primordial body is the very subtle life-sustaining energy that accompanies the primordial mind and has, likewise, always been with us.

It is these that are transformed into the nature of the deity whose body is composed of only consciousness and energy.

To understand this, imagine that there are people who have always lived here in Seattle. You could say that they are like the primordial inhabitants, the native inhabitants of Seattle. People

who just come in, like transients, could be considered the adventitious inhabitants of Seattle. So, likewise, each of us is endowed with both consciousness and the life-sustaining energy that are primordial in the sense that we have always had them. Most of the components of our being, like our sensory perceptions, most of the factors of mental consciousness, the gross body and so forth, are simply temporary aggregates that we have for a short time. But, as has been explained previously, these are shed in the death process and the various sense perceptions become latent. After the period of gloom or darkness in the death process, the very subtle primordial mind and the primordial body (or life-sustaining energy) manifest. It is these that carry on from lifetime to lifetime, whereas the other aggregates do not.

With the culmination of this tantric path, one actualizes the body of empty form of the deity and consort and attains the consciousness that simultaneously directly experiences all phenomena and is, itself, of the nature of the great immutable bliss. Upon this attainment, one has become a fully enlightened Buddha and one has attained the 'seven-branch union' or, more literally, the 'seven-branch kiss', which refers to the union of the deity and consort. Furthermore, one attains the four-fold Body of the Buddha: the Emanation Body, the Enjoyment Body, the Wisdom Truth Body and the Nature Truth Body (see above p. 12). Being a Buddha, one is now immensely capable of serving sentient beings. In just one instant, one is able to emanate oneself in many, many ways throughout the world in order to be of service to sentient beings.

In the present situation, while still unenlightened, one does not have a very great capacity for serving the needs of sentient beings; one is simply not terribly effective. Upon the attainment of enlightenment, one has brought this ability to fulfillment and one will spontaneously and continuously have this perfected ability until all sentient beings are enlightened.

As explained previously, there are two types of methods for attaining Buddhahood in the tantric practice. In the Guhyasamaja practice, for example, one actualizes the illusory body apart from the gross body and, in this way, attains full enlightenment. In contrast, in the Kalacakra system one actually extinguishes this

material body and actualizes the body of the deity and consort. Both of these methods are perfectly authentic and they are completely effective.

The mere fact that there are different ways of teaching, or different ways of guiding a yogin or a yogini through these tantric practices does not mean that they are actually contradictory or that they are leading to different attainments. They are different, but they are not contradictory. They lead to exactly the same state of full enlightenment. This would be like having one room with different doors. Are the doors the same? No. Nevertheless, if you pass through any of the doors, you come into the room and the room is the same. Although there are different methods within the practice of tantra leading to full enlightenment, the state of full enlightenment is the same.

A parallel can be found in the four spiritual traditions of Tibet. Each of them has its own name for different reasons: Nyingma is named after their following of the old translations of the tantras; Sakya is named after the region, specifically, the terrain of that region; Kagyu is named after their holding of the four oral lineages; Gelug is named after the name of a monastery. So, it is simply a question of different names. There are slight variations in the customs, in the emphasis, or in the traditions of the lamas of these different traditions; but, in essence, they all go back to the teachings of the Buddha and each offers an authentic means for the attainment of full enlightenment. One needs to understand that the mere fact that they are different does not mean that they are contradictory, that one has to be right and the others have to be wrong.

Nagarjuna has stated that if one does not have sharp faculties and is not very intelligent, it is difficult to progress on the path. Why? Because one finds in the Dharma teachings that sometimes the Buddha states that phenomena are inherently existent and sometimes he states that they are not inherently existent. Consequently, if one is a person of dull faculties, one might simply be left with confusion, thinking that sometimes Buddha said this and sometimes he said that, both of which seem to be contradictory. One might get all mixed up. While on the contrary, a person with sharp faculties will be able to pierce through [these seemingly

contradictory statements] and come up with the actual meaning. Thus, if one looks at these various traditions or the various means of guiding disciples with sharp faculties with clear intelligence, then one's understanding becomes greater and greater.

One should understand the teachings of the Buddha to be like a medicine given to specific patients. Just as the medicine will vary from one patient to another, so do the teachings vary from one disciple to another. Take, for example, a person who is suffering from a very drastic heat disorder. While the heat is very dominant, a qualified physician will tell that person to avoid taking any meat or alcohol. However, let us imagine that his heat disorder has died down, but a wind or energy disorder has arisen. That same doctor might now tell that same patient. "You should now have meat and alcohol." There is no actual contradiction here because these substances once harmful, can be beneficial at another time.

In like manner, the Buddha states very frequently in the *Vinaya Suttas* [scriptures on the monastic discipline] that the monks should take absolutely no alcohol and should not have any sexual intercourse or relationships with women. In fact, they should not even be alone in the same room with a woman. This is very emphatically and repeatedly stated it is very strict. This is meant for beings who are still subject to taking lower rebirth as a result of such actions. However, monks who have gone quite far in their practice and have gained very high states of realization in terms of bodhicitta, realization of emptiness, as well as their practices of tantra, are allowed by the Buddha to have sexual intercourse with women and to take alcohol. The reason is that at a certain stage of practice, when one is sufficiently advanced, these same activities can further one towards the attainment of full enlightenment. Consequently, there is not actually any contradiction here at all. If one really looks into this with intelligence, one feels greater and greater faith rather than confusion.

Take the analogy of the peacock that is able to eat poison. As poison nourishes him, his feathers become all the more bright, shiny and colorful. Whereas, if a crow should look at what the peacock is doing and take the same poison, he would keel over dead. In like manner, if beginning practitioners like ourselves should try to take on some of the practices of the very highly

advanced beings, this would be to our detriment rather than benefit. The five ambrosias are literally substances such as excrement, urine and so forth. A highly realized yogin is able to transform them and actually experience great bliss. If one has attained that stage, where one can transform such substances, then one has a free allowance in terms of what may be done.

This completes the teaching on the Kalacakra. The last few lectures have been on the stage of completion. We cannot meditate now on this stage properly and expect to gain the realizations. The best we can do is offer prayers that we may eventually be qualified to follow such practices. And for now, we can do just a little bit of this practice simply to place beneficial imprints upon our mind-streams but it cannot be the main practice yet. What should be emphasized above all in our present practice is keeping the tantric pledges and precepts, for it is stated that if one manages not to incur any of the tantric downfalls over a period of 16 lifetimes, even if one is not engaging in the practice of meditation, simply keeping the precepts purely, within 16 lives, one will attain full enlightenment.

I received the Kalacakra empowerment first from Lhatsun Dorje Chang. He was a very great lama in Tibet, a Root-guru of the Junior Tutor of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, and was considered a sage by the lamas of all spiritual traditions in Tibet. His Holiness has frequently said, "It is a very great pity that it was not possible for Lhatsun Dorje Chang to come to India."

I also received the Kalacakra empowerment three or four times from His Holiness the Dalai Lama. His Holiness received the empowerment and the teaching from his Senior Tutor, Kyabje Yongdzin Ling Dorje Chang. Kyabje Yongdzin Ling Dorje Chang received the empowerment and teaching of Kalacakra from Kyabje Kangsar Dorje Chang [see p. 15]. It was said that he was a manifestation of Manjushri. The lineage goes back in an unbroken succession from lama to lama to the Buddha Vajradhara [Dorje Chang]. Within the context of tantra, it is necessary for there to occur this Unbroken continuum of the lineage which always goes back to Vajradhara.

CLOSING REMARKS

We strongly believe that the Buddhist teachings are **still present** due to the kindness of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. **We should all** offer prayers for his long life.

We should further offer prayers for the long **life of both** Venerable Dagchen Rinpoche and Dagmo Kusho, **as well as for** the flourishing of their activities. It was due to their **kindness** that we have had the place for these teachings to **be imparted**.

Furthermore, in making this series of teachings possible, many people have given their time and made great efforts in making the necessary arrangements, and we should offer prayers also that their practice might continue, prosper and be free of obstacles. In short, we should offer prayers that their minds turn to Dharma, and that their Dharma may progress on the path, and be free of obstacles. Please offer such prayers. This course has gone very well - free from interruption, free of major illness, free of other kinds of obstructions. The fact that it has gone so well is due to the efforts of the people involved.

I have been teaching Westerners for quite a few years now. And over the years, I have been repeatedly asked to come to the West, but my answer was always, "No. What would be the benefit? I cannot speak their language." But then, when this situation was presented and His Holiness asked me, not once but twice, saying that it would be most beneficial if I were to come to the West and especially to give these Kalachakra teachings, thinking of the great benefit of following the instructions of one's guru, I decided that this would be good to do. Due to the kindness of all these individuals, I myself have been able to accrue great merit.

As I said before, all of you have a very good situation here in which to practice Dharma. Obviously, during the daytime, you have your jobs that you need to do. But, when your daily work is finished, you can come to this center to receive teachings, meditate and practice according to your abilities. This is extremely good. When a person does not receive teachings for quite some time, the mind tends to grow rough, more barbaric. With teaching, the mind is once again cultivated for the Dharma. It is like the grass in a meadow: if rain does not fall for a long time, it tends to

wither. Soil is the same for the mind - that is its nature. Do not let your aspiration to practice dwindle, but rather encourage it, foster it so that it grows stronger and stronger!

One further point is the importance of having the company of other people who are following spiritual practice. This can be very helpful. In contrast, if one becomes very intimate with those who have no regard for spiritual practice, this leads to harm one's own practice. Therefore, where possible, associate with people who are following the path.

There is an account of two men in Pempo, an area to the north of Lhasa in Tibet. One was a heavy drinker and the other was not. They split up. The drunkard went to Ruling Monastery and there encountered a very fine lama who told him of the disadvantages of alcoholism and taught him how to follow spiritual practice. He gave up drinking and became a very fine practitioner. The non-drinker went down to Lhasa, and there he got in to the company of a bunch of drunkards. He started "hitting the sauce," and made a big habit of it and became, more or less, an alcoholic. This indicates the strong influence of people with whom one associates.

To give one more analogy, if you are in a place that is all black (with soot on the walls) and you move around, you end up all black. Whereas, if you are in a place that is all white (with whitewash on the walls, as in India), then you end up all white. Likewise, if one associates with smokers, one becomes a smoker; if one associates with snufflers, one becomes a snuff-inhaler. Generally, bad qualities tend to be contagious. If you can associate with people who are following good practice, it is very helpful.

Where there is the Mahayana Dharma, the main practice is the cultivation of bodhicitta which should be the central pillar of our practice. This center, Sakya Tegchen Choling, "The Place of the Mahayana Dharma," is very well named. Venerable Dagchen Rinpoche and Dagmo Kusho have been extremely skillful in their strong emphasis on Avalokitesvara practice. It is stated that Avalokitesvara is the divine embodiment and the essence of all the Buddhas; the six syllable mantra, Om Mani Padme Hum, is the essence of all mantras; and the very essence of all Dharma is bodhicitta. Having this as the very center of one's practice is an

extremely, skillful approach. The master Rahulagupta told AtHa, who had a very profound samadhi, "Even if **you** have such a degree of samadhi that a person could beat a drum **right next** to your ear and you wouldn't even hear it, nevertheless, **this will** not be sufficient for attaining the paths or Bodhisattva grounds. Rather, devote yourself to the cultivation of bodhicitta. **Devote** yourself to Avalokitesvara, who is the divine **embodiment of the** compassion of all the Buddhas "

As one great Tibetan lama stated, "**Even if one has a whole** valley filled with gold, one would not be able **to take even the** tiniest bit with one at the point of death. Whereas, simply **reciting** the mantra Om Mani Padme Hum once is something **that is of** benefit in this life and beyond, after death." One should not **have** the idea that the Om Mani Padme Hum **recitation is a very simple** practice for simple-minded people or amateurs in **the Dharma**. Rather, the mantra is very profound. In one context, **it embodies** the method and wisdom aspects of the teaching. In terms of **the** lower two classifications of tantra, it embodies the practices **of** 'with sign' and 'without sign.' In terms of the Highest **Yoga** Tantra, it embodies both the stages of generation and completion. A qualified master could spend six or seven years giving **the full** implications of just this one very profound mantra.

Nowadays, there is a lot of talk about the need for **world** peace. Nevertheless, it is not happening. Why is it not happening? Because no matter how much people talk about it, as long as **minds** are still dominated by such mental distortions as attachment and anger, peace is an impossibility. You can drink all the tea **you** 'like, and still the anger is not abated. You can eat as much as you want, but still the anger is not abated. Anger and the other mental distortions decrease through the practice of the Buddha's teachings. Here, we have the possibility to do something efficacious for world peace by subduing these mental distortions in our own minds. Further, while engaging in the practice oneself, if **one** encourages other people who are not in the Dharma to enter into the practice, this is also very helpful and important to do.

In conclusion, one of the responsibilities for those of us who are practicing Dharma is to avert war especially world war by continually offering very strong prayers that such an event may be avoided. Let us do so!

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