

## Explanation of the Kalachakra initiation.

By Alexander Berzin at Maitreya Institute, Maasbommel, Netherlands on 26 - 28th of April 1985

### Why Kalachakra is special.

Kalachakra means cycles of time. The initiation to Kalachakra is very special for many reasons. It's special and worthwhile to do. First of all it's special because His Holiness is giving the initiation some of his qualities. First of all the method that it presents for achieving enlightenment has a lot of very unique features in terms of how you actually achieve the body of a Buddha. In all the different systems that you have for achieving Buddhahood – if you really examine them – the main difference come about in how you achieve the body of a Buddha. That's not easy to do.

The other reason why Kalachakra is special is because it's so extensive and it presents a great many teachings. Actually, going into the initiation is like entering the door of an entire world of various teachings, various methods. I'll give you some idea what Kalachakra teachings contain.

First of all you get a lot of the teachings on astronomy coming from Kalachakra. Kalachakra deals with the external cycles of time and these are the cycles of time that the universe goes through. For example you have:

- the cycles of the planets and their motions through the heavens;
- cycles of the years and the days, months, hours and all divisions of time;
- on an internal level we have the internal cycles of time; the internal cycles of time have to do with the cycles that the energy goes through in our subtle body; also the cycles of the breath; you have a sophisticated analyses how the breath passes first through one nostril and then mainly through the other nostril during the course of the day and the whole detailed analysis of that in relation to the energy in the body and that correlates to the different moods that we go through in terms of the changes of our energy.
- then it presents an alternative cycles of time, which is basically a method for achieving enlightenment, which is going to use this certain type of energy that the universe externally and internally our body goes through and meditate in a system similar to that in order to overcome being under control of these external and internal cycles.

Tibetan astronomy or astrology has things coming into it from 3 different angles:

- 1 The Indian system, which is basically what is presented in the Kalachakra. The Indian astronomy comes with elements similar to Greek astronomy. So you have things that are similar to us like these signs of The Zodiac, you have the days of the weeks being named for the planets etc.
- 2 The Chinese system: the year of the monkey and this type of stuff that you didn't get in India.
- 3 You also have an element coming in from Central-Asia, which combines these things like the years of the monkey etc. with the different elements. So you get a whole presentation of certain cycles of years.

What you get in the Kalachakra system is basically the motion of the planets for astronomy and the calculations you get for where the planets are. Because Chinese astronomy, which was similar to Arab astronomy, which came later, was based on observing the planets and observing different things through various instruments, a little bit like what you have in Stonehenge (England). Based on these observations they had predictions for where the sun and moon were and the planets. Whereas Hindu astronomy is similar to the Greek in the sense that it derives the motion of the planets from mathematic and from different formulas. So in Kalachakra you get a whole system of mathematical calculations for how to predict where the planets, the sun and the moon are going to be, and when eclipses will take place. In the entire Tibetan calendar the calculations are based on this Kalachakra system. This is a lunar calendar based on the phases of the moon. Then there is a whole system of astrology that comes out of the Kalachakra. This isn't an astrology which is used for things like personal horoscopes. In Tibetan astrology the personal horoscopes come out of the Chinese system.

The system of astrology here is a system which is talking about when is the best hour to start doing things or when it is inauspicious to do things and when it is good to plant your crops in the fields and these type of things. This is done in terms of looking where the sun is, where the moon is and in terms of the constellations and correlating that to the different elements; and then seeing if the elements clash or go together nicely. For example if you have two fires together that means one thing; if you have fire and water then that's not too good. So you get a whole system of being able to predict when is an appropriate time to start things or not to start things. You also have this whole system of "arising from the vowels", as it is called, which is a little bit like the Kabala. You know in the West we have this Kabala, which assigns different numbers to different letters and based on that you have different things that you can predict. You don't quite get a correlation of numbers with letters here but you have things like the dates of the month go from 1 to 30. Likewise in Sanskrit you have 30 different vowels and based on that you have a certain vowel which would arise each particular day, each particular date.

You would also have a vowel that arises at each particular hour. And then you would look at that vowel and you would also, look at let's say, the first vowel of your own name. Then there are different elements again which are assigned to the different vowels and based on that, whether they clash or whether they go together nicely, you can make all sort of predictions. Predictions for any type of problem that might come up.

The Tibetans are very much into different systems of prognostication like we have a little bit in the I Ching. The I Ching we have in the Chinese astrology so in that way it came in Tibet. That's a system to predict different situations. Likewise the Tibetans have many different systems for doing that. One of the systems has to do with the astronomy and astrology and all of that comes out of Kalachakra.

Then you have the whole system of presentation of the geography of the world and that is a thing which is different from the usual presentation that you find in the Abhidharma or the Theory of Knowledge. In this presentation of geography it starts to get quite scientific in the sense that it will begin to describe how on different places on the earth you get the length of days which differs if you go north and also the calculations of things related to that.

Then you get a whole theory of history starting first of all with how the world was formed and there is quite a bit of emphasis on the theory of atoms in Kalachakra. This is really quite interesting because instead of having the universe start, as you do in the Abhidharma system, from just blankness and out of blankness or nothingness in which everything is in a state of potentials then the universe evolves; eventually it disintegrates and goes into potentials and comes back out again. Instead of that you get a similar system but here talks about the tiny sub-atomic particles and what happens is that these particles, in the beginning, are just not together. The forces of the time bring these particles together so eventually you get atoms and based on that we have the build up of the universe. After that these atoms break apart until you get what you call atoms of space. So outer space would be where these particles are just not together. Very interesting. His Holiness is quite fond of discussing these atoms of space with scientists –

There also is a discussion of history. I suppose that the main thing that is talked about is the cycle coming of different types of savage hordes or barbarian hordes, who would come and try to destroy civilization and would try to eliminate all the possibilities that we might have for spiritual growth. These types of hordes come up periodically through history and we have many examples of them who have come in the past and their predictions for various things that will come in the future. There is a prediction of a great war that will come in year 2424 – if you calculate it out, that is about 440 years from now. It is not the type of war that's going to destroy all of civilization - what a lot of people seem to be frightened of, but it will be a big war. There is also the whole discussion about Shambala. Basically at that time the King of Shambala will come with his forces and help us overcome the savage hordes that are going to try to take over the world at that time. At that time a new golden Age will begin. We have so much talks in many different western areas about the coming of a New Age in future. Kalachakra speaks about that coming up, in about 440 years from now.

So in conjunction with this discussion of history and the invasion of the various savage forces it gives a lot of social comment about how to handle that type of situation and how to be best prepared for meeting that type of challenge that comes. These type of things, as His Holiness says, is most relevant on a broad level for our western people here, because so many of us are aware of the possible threat towards civilization in the future. And the comments and things that they say in Kalachakra are really very relevant. Just to give an example:

It says for example there was a time that the King of Shambala brought together all the people of Shambala and they were going to be facing an invasion some time in the future. He asked everybody to examine all the customs. He said: "Look at your customs and see how they compare with the customs of the savages, who would like to destroy your civilization. If you find in your customs things which are similar to those of the people who would destroy your civilization then your children and your children's children will see very little difference between their parents and the people who would destroy their civilization and because they would see very little difference they will accept the savage ways much more easily". If you think about that, that's extremely profound.

When you look at the tendency let's say in some of our societies that, if we have difficulty with a different nation or people who disagree with us; that if immediately we just turn to forceful means and aggression to solve our problems, then we are acting in a very savage way. And our children won't see any difference. So in this way Kalachakra is really full of insightful type of comments and advice, about the affairs that were facing India at that time, and which are very relevant in our time as well.

You also get a rather interesting thing in this material about how to build various machines. Coming out a very ancient text, you get commentaries how to build all sorts of technological things, such as machines that fly etc. You get a whole discussion on the internal level of the energy systems and this is going to be slightly different from some of the other

presentations of it. Some of the things you get in Tibetan medicine also come out of this discussion. All Tibetan medicine does not come out of Kalachakra.

Tibetan medicine, like Tibetan astrology and astronomy, also is coming from 3 different directions:

1. Influence from ancient Greek medicine came into Tibet. Likewise you have:
2. The Indian medicine – Ayurvedic system.
3. Ancient Chinese medicine.

These 3 came into Tibet and were put together into a type of system that also changed things a bit from the original form, and you get the present system of Tibetan medicine.

The part of Tibetan medicine that comes from Kalachakra deals with all the calculations which are done in Tibetan medicine for treating the body like for example there are: the energy passes through the body and there is a certain vital point in the body which will shift during the course of the lunar month and in Tibetan medicine some times they burn the body, it is a type of "moxabustion". There are different nerve centres on the body, which they treat with heat to cause the energies to flow in a different way or to draw out lymph and different things that might be affecting rheumatism and these type of things. You want to correlate where you are going to treat the body with where the energy centre is shifted in the body during the course of the month. All these calculations come out of Kalachakra.

Also you get in Kalachakra the discussion of the formulas for how to make the various wonder drugs that we have in Tibetan medicine, particularly the drugs that are made out of Mercury. They have a number of things where they use Mercury, which is a poison but it can be made into medicine like a homeopathic medicine in the west uses different poisonous substances. So you have different processes where they cook up Mercury for many many months on a continuous type of fire, mixed up with various other chemicals and substances. Then you get the wonder drugs that are used for treating cancer, rheumatism etc., a number of extraordinary drugs that you have in Tibetan medicine. All of that comes out of Kalachakra, which is pretty amazing.

In conjunction with that you have a whole presentation of alchemy as well and a sort of spiritual transformation of different elements within the body. There is also a very sophisticated treatment of language and philology in the Kalachakra – in terms of Sanskrit grammar. So you have a big analysis of the different sounds in Sanskrit and how the alphabet correlates with that, tying up a little bit with the system used in astrology for predictions out of the vowels and consonants.

Then you get a whole discussion of the correlation between the external and the internal cycles, a little bit like you get in a lot of systems of correlating the macro-cosmos and the micro-cosmos and how the energies of the universe affect and parallel the energies that we have within our body.

There is also a whole system of meditation which is extremely extensive. You get 722 deities in the Kalachakra World System, or Mandala, which doesn't take the record having the most deities -there are some more – in some other tantras, but it is pretty extensive. What you are doing is basically transforming and purifying all the different elements that change into the external and internal universes. For example you have 360 days in the lunar year, so you get 360 deities for each of the days and these correlate to our 360 bones in our body and 360 joints. So you get 360 deities that also will correlate to that. In fact you even get that in terms of the parts of the body of the main figure. (Vide the picture of Kalachakra).

This deity has 24 arms, each of the arms has a hand and each of the hands has 5 fingers. Each finger has 3 joints. If you multiply that out and add it up it comes to 360 in all different colours and that as well correlates with 360 days, the 360 bones and 360 deities and now 360 parts of his fingers. In this way you get a whole system in which you are making parallels on many many different levels to start to work with the cyclic energy that we have both externally and internally. You also get all the constellations in the heavens turned into deities, the signs of the zodiac, the planets and all these different things are laid all around you in this rather fantastic world system. What we are trying to do here is almost like a mental judo or martial art. You know in martial art you have some energies going in a certain direction and if you want to deal with that energy you have to go in the same direction as that energy but flip it to your own advantage so likewise you do a similar type of thing here mentally in terms of the universe going in a certain energy of the cycles of time. Internally our body is also going through these cycles of time and what we want to do is going in a system that's similar to that, but flip it, so that in fact we're in control of that system. It deals with that type of method.

I suppose that another really incredible feature of Kalachakra is that it's called the "clear tantra". All the other tantras are considered to be obscure or hidden because the teachings in them are presented in a very obscure way. A lot of things that we might want to be more clear are a sort of under the surface and presented in a very puzzling way, in the other tantra. Whereas Kalachakra presents things in a very clear manner and explains what is going on so that we can understand it more clearly. For example you get things, as in the other tantras, the presentation that as you centralize your energies and the

mind gets more and more subtle; you're able to manifest the more subtle levels of mind that various appearances occur. Appearances like things being like a mirage or smoke, white and red appearances, all these sorts of things. In the other tantras it is sort of presented and that's it.

Whereas in Kalachakra it starts actually to explain what is the nature of these appearances and where it's coming from and what actually is going on. So in that way a lot of things are presented in a very clear manner. So it is extremely helpful for all our other studies, to be able to get these explanations from Kalachakra.

### **Building up the correct motivation**

Why do we actually want to get involved with Kalachakra? There are many different reasons that might come to our minds and if we are going because it's something which is very high and something which is so special then that really isn't a very stable type of reason for going. Because in fact we could have the same type of motivation for going to a big rock concert or any type of festival, because it's something so exciting so rare and so interesting. In fact there are many different things that we can think of in terms of why we might want to go.

As all the lamas always say: "Everybody wants to be happy and nobody wants to be unhappy or have problems". And that's very true. We can look at our lives and although we might want very much to be happy, we find very often that our lives don't seem to have much meaning to them etc. and we just have the same type of routine, each day. That is something that is very difficult to live with really, we find our lives just very boring, without any real purpose or direction in it. But we look around and if you ask yourselves, well does this really have to be the case, does everybody have some sort of meaningless life?" That is not true; we can look at some individuals as well in the past as in the present, among the great spiritual masters, who have been able to clear their minds out of all sorts of disturbing attitudes, clear all the cobwebs away and were able to see things the way they really are. They've become very clear, they have cleared out all the garbage from their heads. And they have also been able to evolve themselves so that they have realized the fullest potentials of a human being. We can see living examples of this - I suppose the most outstanding one is His Holiness, the Dalai Lama.

We are very fortunate because the people who have done this, I mean the significance what a Buddha is, a Buddha is someone, who has cleared himself (herself) out of all their shortcomings and evolved themselves fully, so they have realized their fullest potentials. We are very fortunate because the people who have done this in the past have been very kind. They have left all the instructions of how actually to do it ourselves. That's very good, that makes things a great relief. We don't have to discover and figure out all these things ourselves. In fact people have gone before us, have gone on a spiritual path and have actually been able to reach success in it. They haven't given us all the various preventive measures that we can take in terms of avoiding the pitfalls, avoiding the difficulties that might come up, and how to get out of our problems and how to develop ourselves as human beings. Because if you ask: "What is dharma about; what are the teachings about?" It's really about how to become a better person and how to improve ourselves.

These Buddhas who have become clear and evolved, they have taught us the ways and they have actually achieved the end of the spiritual path and there are also a lot of people who are likewise engaged in this type of spiritual journey. They offer us a kind of direction that we put in our lives. In fact we can become just like they are. They indicate to us what direction we can take, in other words a direction of working to become like them, to improve ourselves and this is something which will save us very much from having a meaningless life that goes nowhere, because no matter what type of lives we lead, we can always work on ourselves to become better people, to be able to deal with our families better, to be able to have more meaningful relationships with our friends etc. So there is this safe and sound direction we can take in our lives and that's what refuge is all about: putting a safe direction in our lives.

If we just follow a worldly direction of trying to gain more and more material things, get more books, records, televisions and cars and things like that, is something which really has no end. We never have enough and it just goes on and on and on. The way that it actually ends is that we going to have to die at some point and if our life has always been in terms of a material direction then when it comes to an end, we are going to be quite miserable, because we are going to have to leave behind all the things we have worked so hard to accumulate and that is going to cause us a lot of trouble when we have to leave.

But if, on the other hand, we've been following some sort of spiritual direction in our lives then this is something which does have an end. It is not something that goes on and on endlessly, but you are actually working for a goal, and the goal is something which is to realize our fullest potentials as human beings. It does present an actual goal which is possible to achieve and when the spiritual direction, spiritual pursuit comes to its end, it ends in a state of happiness. In other words when you've actually reached your fullest potentials then in fact you've reached the highest happiness, that we can achieve.

What we really need, as His Holiness always says, is a combination in our lives of both material and spiritual things, because after all we are human beings, we need to eat, we need to live so it is necessary to follow some material pursuit in life, but not to have that as our main focus, but to enrich also our lives with some spiritual direction as well. And to think in terms of benefiting ourselves in the future. It is possible that we can actually become clear minded and fully evolved, because we all have the factors and the causes within us that will allow us to do that. We are not just like a piece of stone or something like that. We have a mindstream and our mind is clear. No matter how sleepy we might be or no matter how depressed, excited or whatever, still our minds are things that reflect what is around us. Because it has the quality to reflect what is around us, it has the infinite possibility of opening up, and being able to reflect, and to see all of reality clearly. There are many different factors within each of us, which will allow us to reach our fullest potentials. That's something which is really encouraging. What we have to do then is basically follow cause and effect. This is as you know the basic idea that you have in the whole Buddhist path, to follow a very reasonable type of thing. One of my teachers said: "If you follow fantasy types of method then you get fantasy types of result. If you follow realistic matters, you will get realistic results". That is really very true.

The realistic way to go about improving ourselves is to work in terms of cause and effect. That we see some result that we want to achieve and then you try to see what are the causes which will bring that about, and once we figure that out. We don't have to figure it out too much, because in fact the great masters of the past have been very kind to help us in that respect. Then we can see if we work on accumulating these causes, then we can get the results ourselves.

The main thing, I suppose, is to have a very strong determination to be free of our problems. We all have various types of problems that face us, no matter how wealthy we might be, how many friends we might have or what type of situation we live in. We find that everybody has some sort of problem or another no matter what type of level it might be and everybody's problems hurt. If you want to ever do something about your problems, first you have to have a strong feeling of disgust: "I don't want to stay in these problems, I don't want to stay in this unsatisfactory situation. I want to develop a strong determination and to break out of it and be free". This is what the word "renunciation" means. It is a determination to be free. "Renunciation" is a bad English choice of words, because it doesn't really mean to give up everything and go live in a cave. What we are talking about is the determination to get out of your problems. If you have that type of determination then going to Kalachakra is something which can be meaningful. Because you are not going to just for entertainment or a big show, you are not going because it's something so high so that you can tell it to your friends. But if you have the strong determination to be free of your problems then you'll go there with the idea: "Here is an opportunity to actually meet with, some type of system of practice and meditation, which I can apply to my own life. I can apply in terms of using it to overcome my different problems". Kalachakra is something which is an extremely practical system.

I think a lot of people have the mistaken idea that Kalachakra is something that's so advanced and so complicated that we can't really relate to it and all we do is sort of go like, you know, get the blessing and that's it. I think that's a big mistake, that we are really short-changing ourselves and not getting the full benefit. In fact it is a very practical system and something which is accessible and can be used in our lives to help us with our different problems. So first of all we need a strong determination to be free.

Then, in order to get free, the teachings basically talk about how we have different things that cause our problems, we all have sorts of disturbing attitudes and all types of impulsive behaviour. That's really what karma is all about, it is impulsive behaviour. Sometimes, I think we all have experienced it, we have some sort of relation with our wife, husband, partner or whoever. We get into a relationship and we know if we start to really nag the other person and when we always say: "You should do this, you should do that", all these types of things, the other person really doesn't like that and the relationship gets very difficult. We know that, but yet, impulsively, you know, our partner walks in and we say: "You shouldn't have done that, you do this, you do that, you wash the dishes, do this, do that". We have no control over it. It is a sort of compulsive thing that comes up. This is really what karma is talking about.

We have built up certain habits from actions in the past and it causes impulses to come up in our mind to do various things, to act in a certain way, to speak in a certain way. It becomes very difficult because in fact we find it hard to break out of these uncontrollably recurring patterns and problems that we create for ourselves. That's what samsara is all about. It's uncontrollably recurring situations and difficulties or problems; that we're again into one sort of relationship, and that relationship doesn't go very well; we have a lot of problems. So we break up, then we go out and find another girlfriend or boyfriend and again the same problems come up. Again impulsively we say the same type of things and we feel the same type of disturbing attitudes, of either being very attached or always getting angry or feeling jealousy, these type of things. This causes us a lot of pain and difficulty.

What we have to do is to have a strong determination to get out of these problems. And the way to do that is basically described in terms of having some sort of ethical self-control in which we, on a gross level, try to have certain guide-lines

for how we going to behave and act with people and with ourselves and also we try to gain some concentration so that we can see reality. Because a lot of our difficulties come about because we don't see very clearly what's going on. We don't see that the other person is just a human being, just like we are. The other person wants to be happy just like we do and doesn't want to have difficulties, just as we do. We don't really see that reality of the other person. Instead we imagine that this person is going to save us from all our problems. We put an awful lot of unreasonable demands on other people, that the other person is going to be so perfect that they can help us in every way. That really is quite unreasonable to put on somebody else. When you do that you're not dealing with the reality of the other person, but you are dealing with the projection that you want the other person to be. When you do that, then you really get into a lot of trouble. So it is important to be able to see the reality of what's going on, the reality of other people and not only to just see it but to be able to concentrate and stay with it and in order to do that you need to have some sort of self-control so that you can be in control of what's going on in your mind and in your life.

These are called the 3 higher trainings. That's the basic way that is followed in Buddhism, to try to deal with our problems and try to get out of them so that we can develop and realize our fullest potentials. All these problems are really limiting us. We become what is called a limited being. It is usually translated as "sentient being". That also is a difficult word to deal with, unless you look it up in the dictionary, but then also it doesn't mean much. Basically it's talking about beings like ourselves, who are limited, whose mind and body are limited and because of our limitations we are not able to deal effectively with our own lives, let alone with other people's lives. In terms of dealing with our own problems if our attitude is just to handle our own problems and to hell with everybody else, they don't really matter, that's something which is also very unrealistic.

I think that here in the West we're starting to really realize that about how interdependent we all are. That the problems that we face in life, let's say environment, pollution, things like that, that's nobody's personal problem. That's everybody's problem. We have to deal with it on a universal level. We can't just think in terms of getting an oxygen mask for ourselves, and it doesn't matter what everybody else does with pollution. That doesn't really solve it. Others are infinite, we are only one person. So in fact it is important to deal with all the social problems and things that come up, and to develop some sort of feeling for other people.

The way that this is done in Buddhism, basically 2 methods are discussed.

1 Recognizing how kind everybody has been to us. In fact everybody has been our mother. You know we have always talked about how we've had infinite lives in the past and in each lifetime we've had a mother, just as we have a mother in this lifetime, so everybody has been my mother and as my mother, everybody has been kind to me, so it's really important to try to pay back that kindness and help everybody.

His Holiness point out - it is very interesting - that using this type of method to expand our hearts to others has a danger in it. He says the danger in it is that you're dealing with "my" mother and the whole idea of "she" was kind to "me". I am going to help her, this person, because s/he is "my" mother. Somehow we can have the danger of reinforcing the whole idea of "me" and "mine". I'm going to help because you are "my" mother and you've been kind to "me". Although it can be a very helpful way of expanding our hearts out to others, it is specially useful in terms of let's say if you have a close relative, who dies and very soon after that an insect comes and insists on being with you, I experienced that in India very often for example you can have a bee that comes into the house and no matter what you do that bee won't leave and then you start to think: "Maybe that's my uncle, who just died or something like that, maybe there is a reason that he wants to be in the house and wants to be near me. If you think in terms of; "If I was reborn as a bee and here I was and here was my nephew, my wife or whatever, how could I try to communicate? All I could do would be buzz around them and say: "Hey, here I am". The response was just to scream and try to chase me out of the room or to swat me with the newspaper that would be not very welcome.

Although this is a very useful type of way of training your mind to try to recognize everybody as having been your mother or some sort of close relative or friend in a past life, His Holiness says it does have this danger of being very self-centered in terms of how you're looking at other people.

2. The other way of expanding your heart out is: to change your viewpoint in terms of self and others and to put yourself from the point of view of others and instead of always thinking only about yourself, to think about other people in the same way. His Holiness says that this has a great advantage to it, because thinking in this way of how everybody is equal and how we can change our viewpoint and see things from other people's point of view and work for others just as we've worked for ourselves gives us a whole feeling of how everybody is interdependent. Because it's dealing with how everybody is interdependent, a dependent arising, that in fact as a bonus we get a little bit more insight into reality by training our minds in this way. His Holiness points out these very useful type of things in terms of these different trainings, which you don't come across many other people pointing out.

**Question:** Can you please repeat this last point?

The last one is if you are training yourself to expand your heart in terms of exchanging your viewpoint for yourself and others and equalizing your attitude towards self and others, in other words if you try to expand your heart to thinking, "Well, everybody in this room is just like me and everybody in this room is a person, their lives are very serious to them, just as my life is serious to me, whatever problems you might be facing are very serious to you, just as my problems are serious to me. If I can look at my own problems and want to work with them just because they hurt me then likewise I can have the same type of feeling for your problems because likewise they hurt and problems really don't have any owner to them. This is something that Shantideva points out. He uses the example of the hand and the foot. If your foot has a splinter or a thorn in it, if your hand were to say: "Well sorry foot, tough luck, that's your problem and you deal with it, because I am up here and I am doing fine". That wouldn't be very good, the foot wouldn't appreciate it. Because we are interrelated it is very proper that the hand deals with the problem of the foot. If you are working with this way of expanding your heart then it has a very good advantage to it, because not only does it help you to expand your heart, but it also helps you see reality. Because the reality is not that we all are interdependent like the hand and the foot. Problems must be eliminated, not because they're my problems or they are your problems, but problems should be eliminated simply because they hurt.

In order to actually develop this type of expanding our heart we have to develop some type of love and compassion for other people and love is basically the idea of caring for others. You really care that they'll be happy, you have feeling for them. Compassion is more like a sort of sympathetic heart.

We were talking about this determination to be free from our problems and now we are dealing with compassion and sympathetic heart. They are very similar because both of them are dealing with problems and both of them are the strong wish for the problem to end. But the first one, the determination to be free, is thinking about your own problems and you want yourself to get out of these problems and compassion or sympathy is exactly the same feeling but aimed at other people's problems: looking at other people and having the strong wish that they get out of their problems as well.

That's why it says that, in order to really have a feeling for other people and to develop compassion and sympathy, we have to think first of all in terms of our own problems ourselves. I think what it really comes down to is taking things seriously. You are not able to take other people's problems seriously if we don't take our own problems seriously. And really I would add that probably the same thing is true with "love", caring for others. I mean it's going to be difficult to have love and care for others, and take their wish to be happy and their right to be happy seriously, if we don't take our own right to be happy seriously.

I think this is a problem that a lot of us face in the west. Very often, we have the inheritance from original sin or whatever, that we are not really worthy to be happy, we don't deserve to be happy. This is something which can be a real problem. It is very important to see that it really is true that we really do deserve to be happy, that we have a right to be happy and we should take our right as something which is very serious, this is something based on the fact that we all have the qualities within us which will allow us to become fully developed beings, that we all have the potentials and abilities to do like anybody else and to become totally clear-minded and to evolve fully. Since we all have these, we do have the right, we do have the things within us which will allow us to be happy it is something also which is very much reinforced by our spiritual masters and teachers. I had the privilege to be very close to a number of great masters and my main teacher Serkong Rinpoche had a quality about him which always really moved me very much. This was the quality of taking everybody really very serious. No matter who came to him, no matter whether he was speaking to the Pope, or he was speaking to just, some ordinary, very very disturbed type of a person who didn't even know how to ask the type of question about what was bothering him, Rinpoche took them all equally seriously. No matter of what type of outrageous thing this person might ask for, he took it serious, and tried to help him, in whatever way. Once we were in a place in America going for a walk in the middle of a town and there was a drunk man and this drunk man came – he saw Rinpoche in the distance – and said; "Oh, you are a lama. I have heard about lamas". We were all very upset about this man coming over, but Rinpoche took him very seriously and spoke to him in a way that was very very kind; he was able to relate to him as a human being. This is, after all, what His Holiness always points out in terms of the human approach to World Peace. The way that we are going to be able to bring about peace is if the leaders and if everybody relates to each other as human beings and this is in terms of taking everybody serious. We can only take other people serious if we take ourselves serious. So if we see for example that our lama, our spiritual master takes us seriously – I could see this is the effect of how Rinpoche was, that because he took the other person serious, even though they themselves might not have taken themselves seriously, it got them to think: "Oh, if he is taking me serious, maybe there's something worthy in me that deserves to be taken seriously". That's a very precious gift, that our spiritual masters give to us. In fact a very precious gift that we can give to other people. No matter who the person might be, how disturbed they might be, if we toss them away like a piece of rag, there is no way that we are going to be able to relate to them. But if we respect them and take them seriously, then the doors start to be open. So in terms of being able to develop caring love for others and compassion and sympathy for others, if we first take our own problems seriously and take our own right to be happy seriously, not in a selfish way – after all we are human beings – then

we'll be able to have the same type of serious concern for other people. Then, if we say, how can we actually help other people?" First we have to take some resolve that we are going to do something about other people's problems and situation. If we see somebody drowning in a lake and if you just stand on the side and say: "What a shame", that's not going to help the other person. You have to jump in there and do something.

Likewise the same is true in terms of any type of dealing with other people's problems. The only way to do something effective is, if we ourselves have overcome our limitations and have evolved fully so that we really know what to do. How often have we come upon a situation in which somebody is very very disturbed and he comes to us for help and we really don't know what to say. Not only we don't know what to say, but we immediately get very frightened and in fact we get very turned off and all we want is that person to go away as quick as possible, so that we don't have to handle them or don't have to deal with this problem that this other person is suffering from. So it's important to get over our limitations and to learn all the skilful means so that we actually can help other people in the most effective. So this is what is involved with what is actually "Bodhicitta", to expand our hearts out. You have this term in Tibetan "Sang. Gya"; Gya is to expand, to grow.

You're dealing here with your heart; the formula which is usually recited, "May I reach enlightenment to be able to benefit all sentient beings", again His Holiness says: "if you look at it that way, "May I reach enlightenment" and reach your full potential to be able to help everybody, that the emphasis here in thinking in that way is on enlightenment. In other words: "I want to become a Buddha". Why? Because it's so great, so high and you know I want to get the highest. Why should I settle for second best? And then there is that little phrase that comes afterwards: "for the sake of all sentient beings", which is, well, OK. That's secondary. And afterwards we deal with everybody else, but let's become a Buddha, because that's the greatest. His Holiness said: "That's quite wrong to think in that way, in fact it should be exactly the other way around. The main emphasis that you want is to be able to help everybody. That's your main thought and secondarily is, "Well, I really have to get it together and become a Buddha if I am really going to be able to help everybody. So what you have to do is to expand your heart out to all others and also expand your heart out to achieving your fullest potential and becoming enlightened. To do that, you have to actually get in there and work on your attitudes and get involved with people and try to develop what is called "the far-reaching attitudes or perfections or paramitas", which are very far-reaching in the sense that they'll bring you to evolve more and more. So try to develop a giving attitude; you try to become someone with ethical self-control, someone who has a great deal of tolerance; someone who has a great deal of positive enthusiasm, so that you can have the energy to work for positive things; someone who also has mental constancy; constancy of mind is something which is very important. It's not a matter of just concentration, but also not going up and down on a roller-coaster – now you're happy, now sad, all these type of things, but to be constant and to have a certain type of discriminating awareness of reality. That's what is going to cut through all this haziness and unawareness that we have of what's going on with people and what's going on with ourselves.

So when we go to Kalachakra it is an opportunity not only to come across a system which is going to be able to help us with our lives, with our own problems, because we have a very strong determination that we have to do something about our lives and actually improve them, but also it's an opportunity to come across a system in which we are going to be able to reach a state where we can help everybody as well. So it's important to go with an attitude of, well, this is for everybody and I am going to be able to be more effective in my dealings with other people, then it becomes a more meaningful event. You're going almost like a representative of your family or of whatever group you're involved with. "I'm going because I want to be a better person, because I have to deal with all these people and if I can improve myself and bring about more peace in my own mind, energies etc. then I am going to be able to be of much better influence on everybody around me". So go with what His Holiness calls; a little bit of universal responsibility for others. Then it's also important to have some idea of reality, of what's going on, because likewise we can go to an event like this and make a big thing out of it, and you know, we have very strange results from that.

Our tendency is to always to go with a black crayon (felt tip pen) in our hand and everything we meet we put a nice black line around it and we make it into a thing: "I have gone to Kalachakra" (big black line around it, Kalachakra). "I am so great". "I was there and I have my little Kalachakra badge that I can walk around and show people and you were not at Kalachakra but I was at Kalachakra, I am so high, you're so low". We get all these disturbing attitudes and reactions, based on having made a thing out of this event that we went to. This is what we do with all the different things we meet.

Let's say you have a certain problem or hang-up in your life, let's say there's a problem in your family and again we have this black felt tip pen and we put a big line around it: "We have a problem", we really have a problem and this problem with this black line around it almost takes on a life of it's own, from it's own side; there it is this problem, sitting there, big black ugly thing. Then we all have these things about: "Oh I am so depressed because we have a problem. Or: he or she isn't dealing very well in school because there's a problem in the family". You make a big thing out of it, rather than seeing



that the whole situation is very fluid, that there are many causes, which are influencing the situation, many different factors and people who are involved and everything is changing. And because everything is changing you don't have this big, concrete black line around the situation, making it a problem from its own side, it's just standing there.

The same thing is going to be true in terms of how we are going to approach our spiritual development. It is necessary to not put this black line around whatever problems we might ourselves have, not to put the black crayon-line around the goal that we might want to attain, which then immediately puts it off in a distance and impossible to attain: "There is enlightenment over there". You know how people get into a relationship with a partner and all of a sudden there's this thing called: "our relationship" (big black line around it) and how many hours are spent talking about "our relationship" and how you're relating to "our relationship". You don't take me and our relationship seriously enough". This is a big thing and we even talk about it as a big thing. Again that's just our mind putting a black line around it and making it into something and creating all sorts of problems because it almost takes on a life of its own out there – "our relationship". Likewise, it's the same thing: "My spiritual quest, my spiritual journey, my meditation. Don't play the music on the record player because I am doing "my meditation" (black line around it). So if we're going to get any type of progress in these meditations and systems it's very important to have some sort of feeling for reality, otherwise we go to an initiation like this, we put a line around it: "This is a far out thing". And you sort of sit there and go "wow". And you don't really get involved, because it's something out there. Or: "This is so high and complicated, I can't possibly understand it". Immediately we condemn ourselves to not being able to understand. We put a line around it and there it is, out there. This event is going on and we might as well be watching it on TV. It makes a big obstacle for ourselves if we don't really see how everything is interdependent and made up of a lot of different parts that are flowing and changing.

So, if we go to the initiation with these type of attitudes, of first of all taking our own life seriously and that we are going to actually go here to come upon a system that's going to help us with our personal lives – His Holiness takes each of us seriously – so we should take ourselves seriously. And our going to the initiation is something serious. If you just go as a game, that's all you're going to get, a game. If we have that type of attitude and we also have an attitude that we're going to do this is not only in terms of relating it to our own lives, because we have to deal with our own problems, but also realizing that our lives are interconnected with everybody else, that we have to deal with everybody's problems, so here's a great opportunity to get into some system that's going to be helpful for that and if we go to it with an idea of the reality what's going on and also here's a system that is to be able to teach us to see reality more quickly and more easily, then it will be much more meaningful and beneficial than just going to it for a show or just to get some blessings.

The next thing that is very very important for being able to appreciate and get more of the initiation is to have some feeling for what tantra is and what the tantric methods are, because after all this is what we're getting involved with here. We'll try to discuss "What is tantra". "What are the special features of tantra and what makes it such a quick path". Then of course we get into the discussion what a mantra is and these deities, why there are so many arms, what's going on here and does this have any practical use to my life or is it just some sort of exotic Tibetan thing that really is just too weird to take seriously. Because we'll find that in fact these things are very special and very usable and have a very down to earth type of explanation of what's going on.

If we go to the initiation with the idea that here's an opportunity to develop ourselves further so that in fact we can be of benefit for everyone around us, not just ourselves, then again it becomes a much more meaningful experience. It's like if you're a mother and you have some difficulty with yourself, some sort of physical problem, some sort of difficulty facing your life, if you're just thinking in terms of yourself then you may have a certain level of interest in terms of getting rid of the particular type of problem you have. Let's say you have a cold, a fever and if there's nobody around you then you might have a strong wish to get better, but if you have a whole group of children and your children are much demanding your help and need your help with them then your wish to get over your cold and your fever quickly is again so much stronger, because the people around you need you very much. So the same thing is true in general in terms of going to something like this initiation, if we're thinking just for ourselves to help our own problems, then we have a certain level of energy and interest in applying this through our lives, but if we think in terms of all our children and all the people around us who need our help, then the wish to apply this to ourselves is going to be much stronger.

Likewise, if we go to this Initiation with some idea of the reality involved, the reality of ourselves, the reality of what type of process we are going to use in our spiritual path and likewise it's going to make much more sense and we are going to approach it with a much more realistic attitude – remember the words of Geshe Ngawang Dargey: "Practical approach gives practical results". It is really very important that everything we do in terms of our spiritual path should be aimed at being practical and down to earth. Because only then it's really going to make sense to us also in terms of our lives with other people. If we have some idea of the reality that's involved and the reality again is one in which we tend to project all sort of fantasized ways in which we imagine things to exist (remember the big black line). It seems that things exist by themselves,

these big events and then we have all sorts of strange attitudes that we develop in terms of it. For example feeling pride that we went to Kalachakra and the other people didn't. You know, or "now we are involved in such big holy things, now we are so holy and great that this is a system of meditation that only these high lamas can do and we can't do. All these things are based on making a concrete thing, out of the process rather than thinking in terms of there are many different variables involved, many different factors, causes, likewise in our own lives we are going through different stages. There are many different ways that we can apply it, and approach the whole practice. If we have these type of attitude we get much more out of it. If we think it is something distant and strange, even though we might not have the wish to be involved with it, because we're determined to be free of our problems and even though we might have a stronger wish to apply it because we think in terms of everybody else around us, still if we think of it in terms of being a concrete, strange thing off in a distance that we can't actually relate to, again we are not going "to get terribly much benefit from it. But if we see how everything is open and it's a matter of how we apply ourselves then again it's going to be much more meaningful, because we'll see that we can actually get into it.

These are some of the general approaches we use in general, let's say in the sutra methods (Sutra means themes of practice). The Buddha taught various themes of ways that we can work on ourselves to become better and better persons. We can work ourselves to clear our minds of all it's limitations, our body and speech as well and how we can become totally evolved and reach the highest potential that is possible.

The basic process that is used here is to have first of all what's called "Bodhicitta". Bodhicitta is an expanding heart – we want to expand our hearts out to all others and to reach enlightenment, reach our fullest potential in order to be able to help everybody. This is our general method. Then we want to develop the wisdom or awareness with which we can actually see reality. Reality is discussed in terms of "voidness" and another way of translating voidness is as "a total absence". It is an absence of fantasized ways of existing, in other words, we have many many different levels of how we might fantasize that things exist. Like if you take a spider on the wall, a spider is just an animal that is standing on the wall there and maybe waiting for some insect or flies to come along so he can eat it, he is hungry and is hanging out there on the wall. When we look at it, instead of just seeing it as a small creature that is trying to have something to eat, we project on to it a whole way of existing. We think: "This horrible thing". If it got on us, we just wouldn't know how to handle it, it becomes a very frightening object to us. What we have to see that there is an absence of that fantasized way that we imagine it to exist. It doesn't exist like that at all. So taking that as a basic simple type of example – there are many many more subtle ways in which we project all sorts of weird thing on to how in fact things exist.

The general idea of the process that we follow in the sutra is that we want to see reality and that's within the context of our hearts expanding out to others and to reaching enlightenment and likewise that we want to expand our hearts out within the context of seeing reality. That is what it means when it is said that you have the method held by wisdom and wisdom held by method. That means that your wisdom or awareness of reality is within the context of an expanding heart and that is within the context of seeing reality. If you can see reality with the force of this very strong feeling of heart then it becomes much more strong and can cut through all the limitations that we have. (Chew this over in your mind so that you can digest it).

So the basic idea here is what we're going to do is have both method and wisdom, both should be joined together and the way that they are joined together is that one is in the context of the other. So that we want to see reality, but you can see reality in many different ways. If you see reality within the context of your heart expanding out to others and with your heart expanding out to reaching your fullest potential, then that's what is called wisdom being held by method. So you see reality within the context of your heart expanding out. Likewise you could have your heart expanding out to others and to enlightenment without any idea of what reality is. But if you really want to be able to help others you have to see reality also. In the context of seeing reality then you expand your heart out to others: method held by wisdom. So you really want to have both, both your heart expanding out and seeing reality and each one is within the context of each other. When we are doing this it's going to take quite a long time, to be able to cut through all our limitations and in fact it's described in terms of taking 3 countless eons; countless is a word that means 10 raised to the 60<sup>th</sup> power, so there are 60 zeros after it, a very big number. There's an English word that comes close to that which is called "zillion"; 3 zillion eons is a very large number. We really can't count it up. It's going to take 3 zillion eons to reach enlightenment by following this type of method.

Why is that so? First of all, it is quite difficult to see through to reality, and see the actual way in which things exist. But when we're able to see it non-conceptually and straight-forwardly, in other words not just relying on some image that we might have of reality, but actually see it straight-forwardly, without relying on any logic and line of reasoning, but see it, when you're able to do that, then that cuts off the intellectual disturbing attitude, the disturbing attitudes based on some ideology. OK. What does that mean?

Let's say that we have this idea that, we have this in America very strongly, the idea of "me first". This "me first" attitude comes up all the time in terms of "I have to get the best job", "I have to get the best type of partner", "wear the best clothes" etc. This is something which is supported by a whole ideology and propaganda of the television, radio, all the bill-boards etc. which always are saying, "you have to get out there and be first". This is the whole philosophy behind this type of western way of being. If you see the actual reality of this thing, the actual reality is that we're all equal and everybody has the same right to be happy, everybody has the same right to get rid of their problems. Likewise everybody has the same right to be first in the line, to have the best seat and everybody has the same right to the type of livelihood. If we can see that reality straight-forwardly that will convince us that the whole ideology behind "me first" is something which really is not true, that it's based on some fantasized way in which we could imagine that we exist that we're better than everybody else and so we have to get out there first. That's not easy to do. It takes zillions of eons to see that straight-forwardly that this idea of "me first" that comes up, supported by the propaganda and the media is no longer going to effect you. There are a lot of different examples, but I think this "me first" is something that we can relate to easily here in the west. Think how much the TV tells you "me first". Not only the TV but our whole society tells us that I have to be first. That really isn't based on what reality is, because why am I different from everybody else; the TV is talking after all to many millions of people, it is not talking just to me. So the message "me first" must be true for everybody. It makes sense that "I" is one person that should be first and that everybody else that's listening to the TV is not going to be first. So in fact the whole thing is based on a fantasy, just to convince me to buy more soap. Isn't that quite silly? So if I really could keep my mind firm on this reality then I wouldn't always go out there and try to be first. This is very difficult, the propaganda is very subtle. It plays on my emotions, it says that I'm not going to get a girlfriend if I don't use the right deodorant. That touches me very hard. So it's going to take a long time to get over my insecurity that this TV plays on, in order to get me realize that it is not necessary for me to be first on line in the super market to buy my deodorant each morning. So, that's our first zillion eons, to get rid of that.

Now even though we might intellectually know that there is no reason for me to be first as opposed to everybody else because everybody has an equal right to whatever, still there is this automatically arising attitudes that come up. Automatically when you enter a room with seats, you go to the first one. Automatically I push and get in the train first. There maybe could be 500 seats on the train and there are 30 people outside, yet everybody pushes to get into the train first. If you come to that crowd and see everybody pushing then it's very hard not to also have the fear arising in you that you're not going to get a seat. So again you go into the crowd and push. Intellectually you might realize that and think "That's silly, there are 500 seats, there are only 30 people pushing onto the train; obviously there is going to be a seat left for me", but automatically we're drawn to go in there and push also. To overcome this automatically arising will take another zillion eons. This disturbing attitude instinctively comes up, even though we know that it doesn't make any sense.

Even though we get rid of that we still are going to have a certain tendency in our minds to make things appear in a way that doesn't accord with reality. This is called "dual appearances". Dual isn't terribly a good word either, because the connotation of it is "discordant", it doesn't accord with what actually is reality. Our minds make things appear like that, from the various propensities and tendencies we have. This is the 3<sup>rd</sup> zillions of eons to get rid of that, this tendency of our mind to make things appear in a way in which it's not actually existing.

The process of seeing reality and getting rid of our limitations is something that's going to take quite a long time. It's going to take a long time, because not only do we have to see reality, but it has to really sink in deep, then we first see reality straight-forwardly it's going to get rid of the disturbing attitudes that come up based on propaganda, ideology and all these things like TV. But still, we're automatically going to have certain disturbing attitudes that come up. So it will take another long period of time to get rid of that. But still our mind is going to make things appear in a way that isn't actually real. In other words we see a group of people and we think: "I am not able to get on the train". Even though it actually doesn't disturb us, still it looks like that when we walk in. We're not actually seeing the reality. If we could see the reality of it, we would see instantly, "Here's a train, here's 30 people trying to get on. There's lots of seats, there's no problem".

Three zillion eons is an awfully long time and if our children are going to need our help, to see reality and help them with that, because if you think about all the different types of fears that our children might have, and now it is really important to be able to comfort them from their fears and to explain to them that it is really not based on anything. We can't just say when our child is crying, "Well, wait three zillion eons, and I'll help you". "I'm frightened as well". That's not going to do.

So we need something, which is much faster. There are three things which are said to be very powerful in this world:

- A Medicine;
- B Machines;
- C Mantras – hidden measures to protect our mind.

Medicine, it is quite obvious how powerful that is, that a small pill can cure us of a big sickness. Machines are very

powerful, they can take us to the moon. But these hidden measures that we can apply to protect our minds and help us, these are something which are much more powerful. Serkong Rinpoche used to tell a very amusing story about the power of "OM MANI PADME HUNG". He used to say that there was once a monk who had a mother and the mother was very negative about doing any type of practice or saying anything like "OM MANI PADME HUNG". The monk told his mother to practice this mantra and the mother would never do it and really resent it what her son was telling her. The son said well I am going to tie a little bell into your dress and every time that you hear the bell ring, you have to say "OM MANI PADME HUNG". The mother was very upset about that, but her son forced her to promise that she would do that and so the mother agreed. Whenever she would walk around the house, she would walk very gently, so that she wouldn't make the bell ring and she wouldn't have to say "OM MANI PADME HUNG". If she would bump into anything or forget and the bell would ring then she would usually say something: "God damn it, OM MANI PADME HUNG". This mother eventually died and she was born in one of the lower realms. You know one of these typical things that you hear about, being in a big caldron and being boiled. Somebody with a big stick mixing the caldron that the mother was in. Once this person was mixing this big caldron and the stick banged against the side of the caldron and made a ringing sound and you could hear from inside the pot: "God damn it, OM MANI PADME HUNG" when the bell rang and as a result of this she was able to get out of this hellish situation. It just illustrates how these hidden measures is something that can be very powerful, even if we are in a hellish type of situation.

So, that gets us into the whole subject of what is tantra? What's going on with these hidden measures that we want to use to protect our mind?

The word "Tantra" means an everlasting stream, the stream of continuity. There are different levels of what this is referring to, this everlasting stream. We have the everlasting stream of the basis that we are working with, which is the everlasting stream of our mind stream, of our subtlest consciousness and awareness. Then there is the everlasting stream of the path, of all these different deity practices that we can do. Likewise there is the everlasting stream of the result that we want to attain, which is the everlasting stream of the different bodies of a Buddha.

**Question:** Could you please repeat this?

There is the everlasting stream of the basis, which is our mind-stream. There is the everlasting stream of the path that we want to follow, which would be the path of the various deity practices, that forms an everlasting stream of practice. There is an everlasting stream of the result of what we want to attain and that's the everlasting stream of having the different bodies of a Buddha. So the word "Tantra" refers to these 3 different levels and also refers to the different texts and books that talk about them.

What we want to do in tantra is basically follow an everlasting stream of practice, which is going to purify or work with the everlasting stream of our mind-stream, the basis that we have to work with, in order to actually achieve the everlasting stream of the result. So we have an everlasting stream of practice that we use to work with our everlasting stream of the basis we are dealing with, in order to achieve the everlasting stream of the result. That is basically what tantra is talking about and why it's called tantra and everlasting stream. The main feature of tantra is that's going to be much faster, for achieving our fullest potentials.

We have **4 different classes of tantra**, of different types of practices that we can do in tantra:

- 1 The first level is called KRYA or ritual practice. In terms of what the emphasis is here, the emphasis is mostly on our external behaviour. We have the external rituals and things that we can do. There are also internal methods and although we have both of them, the main emphasis here is on ritual practices. For example there is a lot of ritual in terms of your diet – a great emphasis on being vegetarian and on ritual cleanliness; all sorts of practices of washing ourselves and setting up things in a very clean manner and this is a little bit similar to what you find in some of the Hindu practices of the Brahmins, of a great emphasis on cleanliness. Because if you want to have your mind be cleaned of all its different disturbing attitudes then it helps very much to have things around you also clean and orderly. There are a lot of practices involved with that, like the practice of the four armed Chenrezig, Manjushri and a lot of these deities that are the most familiar to us.
- 2 The second class of tantra is called CARYA or behavioural deity practice. "Behavioural" is dealing with an equal emphasis on both external behaviour and also internal methods. Examples of practices are Vairocana and Vajrapani. So the first puts the main emphasis on the external and the second puts an equal emphasis on the external and the internal.
- 3 The third class is called "YOGA TANTRA". "Yoga" is a word that actually means: to integrate the real thing. So it is integrated deity practice and here your main emphasis is on the internal methods. Examples of practice: samvid (tib: kun. rig) used for practices to help people in the bardo.
- 4 Then the fourth class of tantra is called ANUTTARAYOGA", which means peerlessly integrated practices; integrated practices that has nothing higher than that. Here it puts the emphasis on even more special internal

methods – Examples of practices are: Kalachakra, Yamantaka, Vajrayogini, Heruka.

So these are the 4 classes of tantra. Now, it's not necessary to actually go through and practice all 4 classes of tantra. It's not set up in that way, although the different classes become more and more sophisticated, still you would practice whichever level seems to be most appropriate for you.

**It is said that tantra is faster than the sutra methods. How is it faster?**

Well, the first 3 classes are faster in the sense that what they can do is give us a very long lifetime, and having a very long lifetime then, within that lifetime, we can achieve enlightenment through the practices. So it's faster than the sutra methods; because it gives us practices to increase our lifespan so that within the context of that we can work to achieve enlightenment.

But the 4<sup>th</sup> class – ANUTTARAYOGA – is much faster than that because it has these special methods. It says that we can achieve enlightenment within this very lifetime, our usual type of lifetime, and we can even achieve it within a period of 3 years and 3 phases of the moon. A phase of the moon is 2 weeks for the moon to grow full. I mentioned earlier that Kalachakra is a clear tantra, because it explains things as to why you have all these various teachings in tantra. You know very often we hear about 3 year retreats and that you can be enlightened in 3 years, which is actually 3 years and 3 phases of the moon. Kalachakra explains why it's no magical number, these 3 years. Actually it has to do with the cycles of the breath. There is a specific number of breaths you're dealing with, and that add up to the period of 3 years and 3 phases of the moon.

So, how is it actually possible to achieve enlightenment more quickly and realize our fullest potential and see reality more quickly with these different types of tantra? This is something that is very important to have some feeling for when you go to the initiation, because the initiation is to get into tantric practice and even though you might want to achieve enlightenment quickly and even though you might want to be able to help everybody, if you don't have some understanding of the method that is being introduced in this initiation then there is no strong feeling for it and you won't have any strong desire to get involved in the practice. But if you have some idea of what tantra is about then it becomes much more relevant. So I want to discuss this in terms of 3 different levels.

First I'll talk about tantra in general, and then I'll talk specifically about the highest class of tantra – Anuttarayoga – and what makes that even more special than the other classes of tantra and then I'll talk about Kalachakra itself and what makes that even more special than the other forms of Anuttarayoga. So in this way we will have more of an appreciation for what we are actually getting into.

There are different point I want to discuss and basically 4 points.

- 1 These practices are faster in terms of analogies. There are various analogies that are made and because of these analogies it's faster.
- 2 You have method and wisdom in sutra. Here we'll talk about how you get method and wisdom closer and closer together.
- 3 Voidness or reality. Voidness is something which we can talk about, the voidness or the absence of fantasized ways of existing in terms of lots of different objects; you can talk about how this room lacks some sort of fantasized way of existing, or how the people within it lack a fantasized way of existing etc. So the 3<sup>rd</sup> point I'll talk about is the difference in terms of the object, the basis of the voidness. We are going to deal with more and more special bases for voidness.
- 4 In terms of the consciousness with which we understand voidness. Here we are also going to get some special features.

It is because of these things that tantra is a much more quick path and a much more effective path for seeing reality, because we are dealing with methods that are going to have special analogies, we are going to deal with method and wisdom coming much closer, we are going to deal with a special consciousness for understanding the voidness. That's the basic structure we're going to follow.

We want to achieve both the body and the mind of a Buddha. It doesn't do any good to have the body of a Buddha and the mind of a dog or to have the mind of a Buddha and the body of a worm. We need to have the two together in order to be able to help all people, all beings. Usually the way to describe the causes for achieving the body and the mind of a Buddha in terms of the 2 collections: in other words we want to build up a lot of positive potentials and we also want to build up a lot of insight or deep awareness. We are going to need both these things: positive potential and deep awareness in order to achieve both the mind and the body of a Buddha. We need both for both. In order to achieve the body, the main thing is going to be the positive potential we built up and that's going to be helped by deep awareness.

In order to achieve the mind of a Buddha it's the same thing, just the other way around: the main thing that brings about the mind of a Buddha is building up more and more deep awareness, but it has to be helped by some positive potential that's going to actually bring it about. So the positive potential is the main cause for the body and is helped by deep awareness and the deep awareness is the main cause for the mind, helped by the positive potential.

The practices in terms of what builds up a positive potential and what builds up the deep awareness are going to be a little bit like the result, but not so close. So for example you know in the body of a Buddha they talk about how a Buddha has all these 32 signs and these signs are indications of what practices the Buddha did in order to become enlightened.

For example a Buddha has a very long tongue; the long tongue indicates that when this person who became a Buddha, was practicing and developing himself (herself) that he or she took care of everybody else, the way that a mother-animal takes care of her babies by always licking them and to show that he or she cared for everybody like a mother-animal licking her young, he has a very long tongue. So like that, every feature of the body of a Buddha indicates certain things and certain practices that he or she followed. You know, they talk about how they have the impression of a wheel on their hands and feet and this is to indicate how they always went out to meet their spiritual teacher, and escort them with wheels to show them respect. So you're practicing the causes to bring about a result and the causes are a little bit like the result, but not so close.

But what you're doing in tantra is dealing with causes that are going to be much much closer to the result that you want to achieve. That's why it's called the Resultant Vehicle, because you're dealing now with things which are much closer to what you want to achieve. It's like if you want to put on a show, let's say a drama, then you rehearse and by rehearsing and doing it over and over again beforehand then you're able actually to act in that way, without any problems.

What you're actually doing in tantra is like rehearsing and practicing now to do things like you'll be able to do when you actually become fully evolved and realize your fullest potential as a Buddha. That's an important point! What we want to do in order to achieve the body of a Buddha, we imagine now that we already have the body of a Buddha: we're starting to harness and work with the forces of our imagination; imagination is something which is a very very powerful thing that all of us have and one of the big things that tantra does is to start to use your imagination and harness all these powers.

So we imagine now that we actually have the body of an enlightened being and the body of an enlightened being comes from – we can generate it out of our energy system – when you become enlightened it's going to be moulded out of our energy system and so now we just imagine that we are like that and by imagining that we are like that then it acts as a strong cause, much closer to the result for actually being able to achieve the body of a Buddha.

The next thing that we imagine is that the environment and everything around us is likewise pure like the environment of a Buddha. In order for it to come about that everything is most conducive in the world then we imagine everything around us to be most conducive and helpful. That's something which is on a simple level. If you're riding on a crowded bus or a train you can look at it in two ways: it can appear to you as a big crowd, very noisy, terrible and you don't like it and you get very upset or you can view it as: "Look at all these people. They are human beings like me. Here is a good opportunity to think about the reality of other people". So you look at everybody in a very pure way rather than looking at them as just a threat or something which is there just to annoy you. What we try to do in tantra is not only view our own bodies as the body of a Buddha, but also view everything around us, the environment, as something which is pure.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> thing that we rehearse now is in terms of being able to enjoy things the way that a Buddha enjoys things and the way a Buddha enjoy things is without any confusion involved. Whereas the way that we enjoy things or experience things is with a lot of confusion.

Now again we have a word in English that's used to translate this which is not the best choice of word, is the word "contaminated". That has a terrible connotation or feeling in English and it doesn't mean "contaminated" really; what it means is associated with confusion. In other words, let's say, there are some flowers and the way an ordinary person might enjoy them would be completely filled with confusion; the flowers are here and the person might think: "Oh those flowers, I am allergic to flowers, they are going to make me sneeze". Instead of being able to enjoy the flowers the person is very worried and upset that he is going to sneeze because of them. Or there is a glass of water here, again the way I experience it is very confused. I'm wondering: "Oh I wanted it to be hot and now it's cold and I wonder if this glass is clean". Different confusing things come up to spoil the way that we enjoy things. One of the best examples is our stereo record player or tape recorder. We can have the most beautiful music and quality coming across but all of a sudden our neighbour gets a better and more expensive machine and immediately we're upset about the quality of our own machine, and we can't really enjoy it anymore because our mind is completely filled with confusion that "Well maybe there is 1.2% distortion in this machine

and that won't do because my neighbour has 1.1% distortion on his machine" and everything becomes very upsetting. Now a Buddha doesn't experience things in this way of being confused. A Buddha is able to enjoy things without any confusion, because a Buddha can see the actual reality of all things, all the time.

So we imagine in tantra that we're able to enjoy things in a manner which is completely unconfused. That's why you have in tantra for example all these offerings that are made and you imagine that you're enjoying them without any confusion. In other words you have offerings of water, flowers, incense and you're not worried about the incense going to make you sneeze; you have light, butter lamps and you don't worry about it causing your eyes to squint or whatever, but you're able to enjoy things in a very pure way, the way a Buddha enjoys it - you practice and you rehearse, enjoying things in that way. So we think in terms of ourselves having a pure body; we think of our environment around us as being pure; our body isn't something that hurts while we sit or whatever, but a pure body. A pure environment, a pure way of enjoying things.

The 4<sup>th</sup> thing is a pure way of acting and influencing others. A Buddha is able to help others in a way that really doesn't require any effort. They always say that a Buddha spontaneously accomplishes everything. You shouldn't be misled by the word "spontaneous" which often has the connotation that you do anything that comes into your head. So spontaneously you feel like throwing off all your clothes and going and running outside and screaming. (That's not the way a Buddha acts spontaneously.) "Spontaneously" is that a Buddha doesn't really have to do anything conscious on his or her part in order to be able to be a very strong positive influence on everybody. We can see this in terms of the great lamas – in particular His Holiness the Dalai Lama, just their very presence and their way of being and acting itself acts as a very very strong positive influence on us.

So there are different ways that you can be a positive influence on others. One way is to be able to pacify and quiet things around you. I remember once in Bodhgaya, in India which is where the Buddha became enlightened – a place where you have many many beggars – and beggars can sometimes be very difficult to deal with, because there are so many of them and they are always pushing at you to give things to them, there are maybe a 100 of them like that all around you and there is that one lama called Ra Tu Rinpoche, who I saw once in Bodhgaya, who has the ability to quiet things around him; he is called the baby-lama, because very often people bring their babies to him, if their babies are always crying all the time and very upset, because he has this amazing influence over everything around him to just quiet and pacify things. So I remember, in Bodhgaya, there were all these beggars and he just walked very calmly to this crowd of beggars and he had them line up and he counted off 1-10 and gave the 10<sup>th</sup> person a rupee note and said: "You divide this with 10 people behind you. If anybody else should try to do this with these beggars, the beggars will just claw over him. But this lama has such calmness about him, such presence about him, that he was actually able to calm everything around him. So this is a way that the Buddha acts. He doesn't really have to do anything, but just his general presence is able to calm and quiet things down.

Another way that a Buddha is able to act is in terms of stimulating everybody around him to grow. So by their presence your interest grows, your mind becomes much more clear, your heart grows much more warm and in this way they stimulate things to grow. They are also able to influence certain things to happen; they may influence you to follow a spiritual path or to become a better person. In this way they have a certain influence on you. And the 4<sup>th</sup> way is some forceful effect. Again I can think of a very clear example.

In South-India, once His Holiness the Dalai Lama was giving an initiation and I was present at that time and a very large swarm of hornets (very large bees) that give a very bad sting – hundreds of hundreds of them started to fly into the temple – you can imagine everybody in the temple became very nervous at all these bees that were coming inside and we would all get stung; His Holiness simply stopped the initiation, the ritual that he was doing. He started doing something, we couldn't tell what exactly he was doing. He sort of looked at the swarm and he started doing something inside and all of a sudden the swarm just turned around and went outside of the temple. That's something I saw with my own eyes. This is an example of how they are able to exert some forceful influence on things around them to cause danger to go away when the circumstance calls for it. So this is what we practice in tantra.

In order to actually become a Buddha, to become totally clear-minded and fully evolved, what we want to do is if we want to achieve it faster, we will follow different types of practices now that are going to be much closer to what we want to achieve. In other words we rehearse by using our imagination. The way that we rehearse is in terms of thinking that already we have the body of a Buddha and we think in terms of how the environment around us is already the way it would be when we are a Buddha, that everything will be conducive and pure and we'll also think in terms of how we will enjoy different things, how we relate to people or objects, that we'll be able to do this in a way that isn't full of confusion. We see somebody and we are not going to worry about whether they are going to like us or they don't like us, all these sort of things. But we'll be able to deal straight-forwardly with everybody and everything we need and likewise we will be able to exert an enlightening influence on everybody and everything around us, without really having to do anything consciously.

Automatically we'll have a peaceful or pacifying influence on others, we'll be very stimulating for others; we will be able to influence them in positive ways and when the situation calls for it we'll be able to also influence things in a forceful way to remove danger. If we practice now with our imagination, to be able to imagine that we can do these things then that will act as a cause for it actually happening in reality.

You might think: "Well isn't that a lie, because I'm not really an enlightened being? We are not really able to do all these things now. So am I not using a method which is just deceiving myself?" That's not so, because here you're being very conscious about what you're doing. We were talking about the everlasting stream of the basis. (Tantra means everlasting stream) So I'll talk about the everlasting stream of the basis, which is our own awareness and our own subtle energies, then because we can actually become enlightened, out of our subtle consciousness and our subtle energies, what we are doing is just as if we can call ourselves "I" based on where we are now, we can also think down the line in terms of our future attainments and so what we are thinking in terms of is in the future that this is something that we can attain so I am basing my feelings of this attainment now, based on what can happen in the future, which is something which really can happen based on all the factors that I have now. So it's not really a lie because I'm not really fooling myself into thinking that, "Well, really, I am already enlightened and can just go up on the roof and fly off". We realize that's not the case, but we're following this type of method consciously, because we know that in the future we can achieve this.

There's a big difference between a crazy person thinking that he is Donald Duck or Napoleon and myself thinking that I am a Buddha. What's the difference? The difference is that I know that really now I am not Napoleon or Mickey Mouse, but I can imagine myself in this form, which is certainly much better than Mickey Mouse, because I can do all sorts of things as a Buddha, but I realize that I'm only using it as a device in order to bring me to that goal more quickly. And that goal is something that definitely is possible, because I have all the factors within me – my mind-stream, my energies etc. which will allow me to achieve it. So I am thinking now that I am already there, based on what I can achieve in the future. So it's consciously using a method and not really deceiving myself. Whereas to think I am Mickey Mouse is something which is not based on any reality at all.

The next point is dealing with your self-image and in terms of your feelings, if you're in a certain mood, you can either just stay in that mood and say "Well today I feel bad and I feel very tired and depressed", and just stay there, but then you start to actually look at how we take that black crayon line and we make a black line on it and we make a thing out of it: "Today I am in a bad mood", you announce it to your family and everybody had better leave you alone and not bother you, because today "I am in a bad mood". And you almost condemn yourself into staying for the rest of the day in your bad mood. I mean you've already told everybody that you're in a bad mood so if you come out smiling then they're going to be disappointed. So you stay in your bed and feel terrible and grumpy. But if you realize that in fact what you are doing is now, even though you might feel at the moment badly, you're making that into a concrete self-image and then staying with that and not letting it just pass. So what you want to do is deal with different types of self-images which are much more positive that you can substitute at that time. "I may be feeling bad, my stomach hurts. OK that also can pass, I can feel much better". So you work with this idea of being much better rather than working with the negative image.

## **DEITIES**

There are all these different deities and all of them have lots of arms and faces and this is something which a lot of western people have difficulty relating to, because they'd say that, "Well, this is some sort of Tibetan thing or Indian thing". We can't really relate to it, so, "Why don't we just throw it out the window and do something a little bit more western style". This is really missing the point of what's involved with all these various deities because they have many different levels of purpose and meaning and symbolism for all the different parts they have.

First of all the Tibetan word for these deities is the word "Yi-dam" and a Yi-dam is a personal deity to bind our minds closely with. We shouldn't get confused by this word "God" or "Deity" and think that we are talking about the creator God. It's completely different.

What is being discussed is a certain type of image, being that we want to bind ourselves closely with, so that we take it like an ideal model of what we want to be. All of them have a different type of self-image that is involved with it. First of all it's really important to examine what type of self-image we have of ourselves. This is something which very often we try to hide from ourselves. If you really think, who do you think you are? What is your image of yourself? A lot of us have very negative self-images. We think for example: "I am fat and ugly and nobody loves me". Very often this self-image that we project not only onto ourselves, but we project that onto everybody around us. We assume: "Nobody loves me". You walk into a room and feel sorry for yourself and you feel that nobody is going to like you, you get very nervous and feel shy and you don't know what to say. Automatically you emanate this whole image around yourself of "In fact I'm fat and ugly and nobody loves me". Because we are involved in various types of negative self-images, likewise we create new self-images.



Let's think for a moment about what actually is my self-image. Who do I think I really am? How do I feel that I am when I go into a room? Do I think for example that I might have a self-image that I'm somebody very clumsy? I really cannot do anything, I always drop things or I can't cook a meal nicely or whatever. That might be my self-image? I may have a self-image that I am Gods gift to this world. I'm just the most wonderful, beautiful person. Or how about that self-image of "I'm eternally young and strong"; how up-setting that is if we have that self-image and we grow old and we find that we really can't do the things that we did when we were young. We try to hide it by colouring our hair and putting on clothes that teenagers would wear, but that looks a little bit silly on an older person. Just because we have that self-image that we're young and strong. And how many of us do really feel that: "I am ugly and nobody loves me"? A very easy common self-image.

This is really just something coming out of our imagination. To think for example "I am always clumsy and can't do anything". That's not really true. There are things I can do: "I can get up, I can walk across the room and not fall flat on my face". "I am capable of doing a lot of things". "I get up, I can get dressed". So in fact these negative self-images that we have can be very crippling and that really can bring about a lot of problems for ourselves if we really believe that we are what we think we are.

What is going on with a lot of these deities is to try to create a different, more positive, image for ourselves. Of course all these deities have on an ultimate level, their voidness, bliss and you hear all these words about what they are on an ultimate level as a reflection of an enlightened body, an enlightened mind, but on a relative level, they also represent different aspects of a fully enlightened person that we'd want to cultivate. So you have for example

**CHENREZIG or AVALOKITESHVARA**, who is the representation of this whole feeling of compassion. Compassion – warmth – sympathy for others. A very useful self-image to cultivate, to imagine and get the feeling that: "I am a warm person, I am somebody who has sympathy and feeling for others". If we are in a situation with people and our self-image is: "I'm hung up, I have problems" then you are not going to help other people. But if your self-image is one of: "I'm a warm, compassionate person" and you have some self-confidence in yourself as being that kind of person then in fact you can handle a situation with other people much better.

**MANJUSHRI**, the self-image of clarity of mind. "I am very clear and I am able to see things correctly, the way they actually are". Also we can go into a situation in which we feel "My mind is completely scattered and can't really think". If you have to go to the bank and handle some sort of transaction or you have to do something in your work that requires you to be able to think clearly or you are in school and you have to take an examination or something like that, if you go in being very frightened and your self-image is one that thinks: "I am so nervous and I can't take this exam and I'm going to fail. My parents are going to say this to me and my friends are going to say that"; you get all caught up in this negative self-image then in fact you are not going to do very well in the exam. But if instead you have this self-image: "Well I'm a very clear-minded person, I'm very calm and clear and I can see things with no problem, then that gives you the self-confidence to go into that examination or to do that business transaction with more clarity of mind. It's very helpful.

**VAJRAPANI**, the whole self-image of being competent. You have the powerful abilities to be able to do things. How often do we go into new situations in which we feel no confidence and we feel: "This is something new, I can't handle it, it's going to be so confusing", and you have no feeling of ability to do anything. But if you have this strong self-image: "I'm a competent person. I'm able to handle new and difficult situations" then again it's very helpful.

Among the more forceful deities:

**YAMANTAKA**, a very powerful and forceful deity and that self-image is one of: "Cut out the garbage, cut out the self-pity". Sort of BAM! Very often we just indulge ourselves with feeling sorry for ourselves or being in this mood or that kind of mood and sometimes you need something very forceful to cut through all that garbage and get yourself centred and back into a more positive frame of mind. So, to call on this self-image of Yamantaka is very useful, very practical.

**TARA**: Is this whole self-image of being alive, being energy. Sometimes you are in a situation in which you feel a sort of "bla", you have no energy and all the people around you as well are just a bother. But if you call on this image of Tara, the self-image of Tara is: "I'm full of energy, I'm able to give energy and life to everybody around me". It's something that helps you very much to get your energies together, to radiate your energies out to other people.

So now to deal with **KALACHAKRA**, Kalachakra has this whole image of being able to handle the great complexity of life. This is something which is best illustrated by His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Think about His Holiness and what he has to do in his life. First of all he is the head of all Buddhist traditions. He is a master of all the different meditative systems. There are a lot of different systems and teachings that he is the master of. He has also to deal with all the problems and all

the issues in terms of the rehabilitation of the refugees in India; to deal with all the problems of the monasteries and the administration of the monasteries and choosing the people that run them and the problems that come up. He is the Head of State of the government in exile; he has to handle all the reports from all the ministries, all these different issues in the settlements in India. He is also a Head of State, so likewise he has to meet with the Prime Minister of India, various political leaders from around the world and keep on top of all the political developments. He is also very interested in western science, western thought and likewise has to keep up to date on all these things so that he can have a meaningful dialogue with all the people in the west. He has also travelled to many many countries in both the East and the West and likewise to keep some awareness of the different cultures that he deals with. So you can imagine this enormous complexity of life His Holiness leads. Yet he is completely in balance, completely integrated in terms of all that. This is really, when you think about it, very much this Kalachakra type of feeling.

Kalachakra is dealing with cycles of time – this huge complexity of all the different cycles that we can go through.

There is that huge mandala or palace, with all these different deities and yet Kalachakra is able to be an integrated whole of this entire thing. Now let's talk in terms of our own life. As western people we have a professional or business life – the whole aspect of our aspect of our office and the work that we do. There is also a whole aspect of our lives in terms of our wives, husbands, our partners, our children etc. ; taking care of our home, being concerned with having a nice home etc. There is also the whole aspect of our lives that deals with our own parents whether they are alive or passed away, our aunts, uncles, relatives. Then there is the aspect of all our different friends, the personal life that we lead with our different friends. There is our personal interest: we might be interested in studying Buddhism or we might have different hobbies and things that we're involved with, different sports that we play – there is that whole aspect of our life. Then there is another aspect of our life in terms of our own childhood, our memories of our childhood and the things that happened to us and our own education etc. There is all the travel that we might be doing and all the different experiences that we've had and for a lot of us it's very hard to integrate that into a whole. We feel that our life is very fragmented; that what I studied when I was a child and what I'm doing now really doesn't fit together; my office life and my home life doesn't fit together; my personal religious practices and dealing with the neighbours around me doesn't fit together and we're very fragmented.

Whereas to cultivate this self-image of Kalachakra is something which is extremely helpful for that, because we feel as Kalachakra that in fact we're able to handle the entirely complexity of life.

When some new situation comes up we can think: "Oh it's only another group of 20 deities in that corner of the mandala building" When something else comes up: "That's another group of 12 deities in that other corner". By getting this feeling of being able to handle a large complexity of things, it's very helpful for dealing with the complexity of our lives in the West. So when you get into a situation in which your life becomes just too much, too complicated and you really can't handle everything -instead of having that negative self-image that "I can't handle things, it's too much for me", if you cultivate a self-image that "I can handle it, of course. It doesn't matter how complicated things are. I can handle complicated things", it is very helpful. A matter of self-confidence, your self-image. Even if as western people we lead a very busy life, these are things we can integrate in our lives at any time. Because, really, our self-image is something we have to deal with, no matter how busy we are. If we're working 8-12 hours a day or we have 6 children, who are demanding all our time and attention, still, automatically we're going to deal with some sort of self-image and so if we're going to be involved with a negative self-image as we doing that, well, this is what I was saying about mental judo: you flip that. If you are going to be projecting out of your imagination a self-image anyway, you might as well project a positive self-image that's going to help you to deal with the situation.

This is really what tantra is starting to deal with: changing your self-image as represented by all these various deities. It's useful to have a lot of different deities and self-images that you can call on. Because during the course of the day different situations are going to call for different things. There might be a time during the day when you're very tired, but your child or your mother or friend has a problem and needs you. Even though you're tired, it's very important to be able to get the strength and the compassion to say: "It doesn't matter how tired I am, this person needs me and I have to be there, with this person. So it's good to have a self-image of compassion, a self-image of energy etc. that you can call on in that situation. Or at another time of the day you feel very dull and somebody is talking to you and says: "You have to do this and this in your business" and all you want to do is go back to sleep and again if you can call on this image of being very clear that is going to help you to listen to the other person and understand what they are saying. So it's very helpful to have all these self-images and these are what these deities are dealing with, on one level.

Another level is, you know, we want to become omniscient, we want to be able to understand and see everything clearly, all at once. In order to do that, it's sort of like our mind is the lens of a camera and we want to open that lens wider and wider so that we can be aware of more and more things at the same time. And this is what the deities are very useful for in terms of having all the faces and all the arms and all the legs. It's not that we're practicing to be a spider or a centipede with many

many different legs, that's not the point. The point is that each of the arms and each of the faces and legs and things that they are holding, is symbolic. And it stands for the 4 of this or the 12 of that or whatever. Like Kalachakra for example has 4 faces and the 4 faces can be thought of on many different levels.

On one level it's like the 4 seasons of the year. Just as during the course of the year it goes through the 4 seasons and that's just the natural way that things go and we are able to handle the spring and the summer and the winter etc. likewise, by thinking that we have 4 faces, keeps us more aware of that we have to deal with 4 different types of situations. Same thing in terms of an internal level of 4 basic types of shifts of energy within the body. So these systems of all these hands, arms etc. are helpful for acting as a focus, because if you just think of 4 things in an abstract way, it's hard to get a handle on it. But if you think in terms of: "I have 4 faces so I can handle the 4 different seasons, it's a little bit easier to relate to.

Let's try a little exercise: because again very often we feel: "How can I possibly imagine that I have 4 faces?" So, let's think for example about what my own face looks like on my head with "me" sort of having feeling of being from the inside. That's quite difficult to do. We usually aren't so aware of what we look like. Now try to imagine with you on the inside, your face on the outside in front of your head. Have some sort of awareness of your face. Now try to be aware also of the back of your head (you can be aware of the back of your head, can't you), as well as the front of your head at the same time. Now try to be aware of the 2 sides of your heads where your ears are. You can get a feeling for all 4 sides of your head. Now imagine that just as you have a face in front, imagine a face on all these four sides. So like that it's quite possible to get a feeling that you have 4 faces.

Let's try the arms: Kalachakra has 24 arms. Now, 24 arms go around like a fan, they are all level, not vertical, but horizontal. If you've ever seen those time-exposure pictures where the first picture is taken with your hands in front of you, the next is taken with the hands slightly to the side and then slightly to the side etc. so that in fact at the end of the exposure you have all these arms going around. Imagine that you are like that. You can imagine that it's not so difficult. You can see that the white arms are in the back, the red ones in the middle and the blue ones in front. The partner who is embracing has 8 yellow arms, which are also horizontal, above Kalachakra's arms. If you want to be aware of what the 24 arms stand for in the course of the year: you have 12 months; each month has 2 parts: waxing moon, the moon grows full and waning moon, the moon gets smaller and smaller. In fact there are 24 periods of the moon, during the course of a year, in which various things happen that we need to deal with. So likewise we have 24 arms. So it's just to keep you aware of being able to handle the complexity of the year.

As we have 24 periods of the moon during the course of the year, likewise our breath goes through shifts during the course of the day. You might have noticed or maybe not, but during the course of a day your breath shifts; sometimes it is going primarily through one of your nostrils, and sometimes primarily through the other one of your nostrils and occasionally, as it shifts between them, for a brief time it will evenly go through the two. Also you can start to become very subtle and within the movement in one nostril sometimes it will be predominantly to the top of that nostril or through the right or the left or the bottom. You get a very sophisticated analyses of how the breath shifts. So during the course of the day and the night it actually goes through 12 shifts – back and forth – between predominantly in one nostril or another and it builds up and goes back down, the same way as the moon is going through its phases during the course of the 12 months.

So likewise the 24 arms is to be aware not only on the external level – we have external cycles of time of the phases of the moon during the year, but also on an internal level – of our internal cycles of time – the phases of the breath as it goes through the nostrils and the body. Because that affects our energy and our energy affects our moods and our way of feeling and thinking. So these arms stand for that and it keeps us aware of being an integrated whole throughout the entire process. This is what's going on with all these arms and faces; it's not something which is so strange and alien that we can't relate to, but in fact it's a method of symbolism to

- 1 give us a positive self-image and
- 2 allow us to open our minds and become aware of many more things at the same time.

If I feel that a figure with 4 faces and 24 arms is something so strange, well, why do I feel like that? The reason I feel like that is because I don't really understand why it has 4 faces and 24 arms. If I knew what was going on, it wouldn't be so strange. It's very simple. These deities are dealing with certain self-images and they are in a concrete form like that, because it's much easier to deal with something specific to focus on, rather than just abstract ideas. So, if we want to be aware of the 24 phases of the moon or the 360 days or whatever, if we have a system that has all these different parts that have the same numbers, then it just acts as a focal point for being aware of all these different levels.

If a deity is holding a lotus, well the lotus stands for something it's not that he's just holding a silly flower, but the lotus stands for the fact that, it grows out of the mud and yet it is very beautiful and pure. Likewise our own situation is something that may seem to be very muddy and difficult but likewise something can grow out of that and be pure.

Symbols are useful, because they are concrete; we can actually focus on them. They are not so strange.

### **Mantras**

What are all these mantras that we recite? As I was saying a bit earlier, "mantras" means something to protect the mind. Just as if we have a self-image of ourselves and, by the way, when we talk about visualizing a self-image, visualization is a limited word; it gives the idea of only being visual, but it's not like that: it should be with all your senses. It is using your whole imagination to imagine what you look like, what you feel like, how you hear things, taste things – it is the whole thing, not just side. Just as doing a type of mental judo, to flip the energy of our imagination in terms of our self-image, likewise we have an awful lot of verbal energy. Most of us, the way that our minds work, is that we're constantly talking in our heads, either, we're making a commentary that goes around, like on a radio: we go outside and say "Look at the tree over there, isn't that nice; what a big truck is coming and how noisy it is". You just comment the entire day about what is going on. Or a lot of us sing songs in our heads all day long. It becomes even more absurd when you find yourself singing television-commercials and advertising jingles. You feel very much like a cricket – one of these little insects that has no control over itself, but just automatically is making all this noise all day long. Can you imagine how terrible it must be to be a cricket?

So if your mind is going already in this direction of always having this verbal energy, well, instead of having your mind sing TV jingles, it's much better to use this energy and flip it and have it instead say certain type of syllables, mantras. These syllables have a certain quality about them. One thing is, that, just as that self-image of, let's say, Avalokitesvara, that you have compassion and warmth, is something that keeps your mind much more focused on that feeling, likewise the mantra as well keep you mindful of the feeling that is associated with it. And then likewise the sound quality itself has a certain vibration I mean we talk about vibration – a clear vibration, a lively vibration and even in western science we talk about different types of brain-waves etc., so you're actually generating some sort of verbal vibration around you. So these mantras are very useful. Because if your mind is going to be chattering all day anyway, your might as well have it say something which is going to keep you mindful of having a certain feeling, an image about yourself and is also going to generate, rather than static and all sorts of crazy vibrations around you, to generate something which is very calm and very clear.

"Flipping" – I'm just using that as an example for how in the martial arts, for a person who is coming at you, instead of smacking him, you let him go in that energy, you flip him, but cause him to fall over himself. That's the general method that is used in the Oriental Martial Arts. So likewise you can do that in terms of yourself, in terms of your own mental energy or verbal energy. If it's already going in a certain direction, let's say, if you try to stop your mind from constantly talking and verbalizing things – for some people that might work. But for an awful lot of us we might feel very very frustrated and very difficult, to stop that energy. Rather than stop it, use it, but flip it into a constructive use of verbal energy. That's a sort of method that you're using in tantra. If the horse is running, rather than shut the horse up in a barn, ride it! Let it run, but take your control of how it's going. So this we do with our imagination, and we do with the verbal energy that we have in our minds. We do this with the process of always having some sort of self-image of ourselves and the whole process that we have of always projecting things onto other people and the environment. We are doing it anyway. It's raining outside; what are we projecting on to? "Uh, it's raining outside, horrible, how grey, how dull, how depressing" It is a simple fact: it's just raining, so what? It rains sometimes. You can project something more positive onto it as well – "Oh, isn't it good for the fields, isn't it good for the flowers?" That's about mantras.

Now, there are various different types of these figures then and it's not really correct to think of them simply as archetypes and abstract things, because some of them were actually historical figures. So you have for example TARA – who was actually some woman, who at one point said "I am going to pray to be always reborn as a woman and achieve enlightenment in the form of a woman." Some of them actually are historical figures as well as being a certain type of archetype and others are actual forms that the Buddha manifested himself in, in order to actually give a certain teaching. Like the Buddha manifested himself in the form of this Kalachakra deity when he taught Kalachakra.

So when you think in terms of what a Buddha is actually doing. A Buddha will emanate himself or herself in forms that are going to be useful to other people. I mean, he's not doing it for his own pleasure and then the Buddha likewise isn't going to emanate himself in the form of something that doesn't exist. He is not going to emanate himself in the form of the child of a barren woman (a woman who can't have any children). I mean, obviously, he is not going to manifest himself in the form of a child of a woman who can't have any children, it doesn't exist. So he manifests in forms that do exist in terms of various images that either have some historical model or the Buddha himself manifested himself in that form, which are going to be useful for people to develop themselves and develop the qualities that this stands for. It is possible that there will be different forms of these deities which will appear in the future. Because in the past there have been new forms that have appeared.

These things are things that should be kept very hidden and private, these types of practices of these deities. The reason for that is that, really you're dealing with yourself, with your self-image etc., so it's something very private and if you start telling people that: "Oh I am thinking that I have 4, faces and 24 arms, they may lock you up or they start to laugh at you and make fun and that takes everything out of it, takes all the power out of it. So it's very important not to tell everybody what you are doing, but to keep it very private to yourself. At times when some of these practices have become too public and too spread out like that, so that people are making fun of it, then, at that time different images, different practices came about, either through revelation or whatever, something that had a little bit more power to it.

So it is possible, as His Holiness has said, that there will be future developments which will come, but this has to be something which is made valid, in other words it's not just somebody sitting in the bathroom, and saying, "Eureka, I have a vision of something", and there it is, a new practice. But rather it should be the vision of somebody who is a very highly realized practitioner and which can be validated by other highly realized beings. And then it is possible there will be future ones. It's not something that is absolutely fixed. The point is to have some idea of what these figures are – that they are useful in terms of a self-image and useful in terms of a system for being able to be aware of many different levels of symbolism what it all stands for this is our first point about tantra in general. It is much speedier than sutra, because you're dealing with a system of practice that is closer in analogy to the result of what you want to attain. You imagine yourself in the form of a deity, the way that a Buddha is. A Buddha can manifest in all these different forms according to what's going to be useful. So we imagine now that we have the ability to manifest in all these different forms, according to what's going to be useful. So we imagine now that we have an ability to manifest these different forms. To do all the things that a Buddha can do and to be in the environment that a Buddha is in, to be able to relate to people and relate to objects and enjoy things the way that a Buddha is. That is in terms of the verbal energy – mantras – and in terms of the image of ourselves as deities.

The second point is about the closer union of METHOD AND WISOM or method and awareness of reality.

In sutra, our method is that we want to have Bodhicitta – a heart that's expanding out to all others and to omniscience -the state of realizing our fullest potentials. This is what is basically going to bring us our body of a Buddha, primarily, and what is going to bring us the mind of a Buddha – although as I said, you need both for both – is our wisdom which is aimed at the ultimate reality of things. Now, except for a Buddha, you can't have the two of these together at the same time in one mind. We are thinking first of all on a method level, that our heart is expanding out to everybody and to our fullest potential and our mind is aimed at the ultimate reality. So it's only in the case of a Buddha that you can have these two absolutely together.

But look at the result. The result that we want to do is to be able to have both the body and the mind of a Buddha together, in one package. The term that's often used is that you want to have these two things be "one by nature". That's also a difficult term to relate to. Actually what it's talking about is to have two things together in one package that it always comes together. So the body and the mind of a Buddha always comes together in one package. You can't just get the mind of a Buddha without also getting the body. You can't just get the body without the mind. The two come together in one package. If the result is going to come in one package then what we want to do is practice the causes for this result, which also, if we practice the causes for two things that come in one package, we practice causes that are also in the same package, which brings us closer to the result.

In sutra, the causes are not coming together in one package. The causes for the body is a mind that's aimed at expanding to the whole relative level and the cause for the mind is aimed at the ultimate level. So that's why it says you can only have one within the context of the other or one helped by the other. In other words, we can expand our hearts out within the context of being aware of reality, but we can't really do that exactly at the same time of both – be aware of reality and expand out to everybody and the same thing the other way around. So in sutra, if method is aimed at the relative level and the wisdom is aimed at the ultimate level, in tantra you just deal with the ultimate level. By just dealing with the mind that's dealing with the ultimate level, you're able to bring method and wisdom together, more closer.

How does this works? The way that it works is that the focus or the aim of your mind in tantra is that you aim at the body of a deity and the way that you're taking that object is that you're understanding its voidness, its lack of fantasized ways of existing.

Here, what you're doing is, when you're focused on voidness – this absence of fantasized ways of existing, let's say the absence of something having a black line around, something all on its own. That is aimed at something. What exists that way? What exist that way is going to be the body of the deity that we are imagining that we are. Our mind is dealing with the voidness of that deity. So in fact we are thinking of both: method and wisdom in one package, in one mind. Our mind is aimed at the body of the deity thinking of the reality of that deity.

So this is a very uncommon method that is being used here in tantra, which makes it really very very special, because we're dealing with the method and wisdom together in one package; the body of a deity and the mind that realizes its reality.

So we have these 2 points now, that makes tantra special.

First is that we're using a method which is closer to the result that we want to attain. So we imagine already that we're a deity, like doing a rehearsal for what we want to achieve. The second point is that the method and the wisdom is coming together in one package. So we have ourselves as the deity (as the method) because that's how we're actually going to be able to help people and that will give us the body of a Buddha and our mind is staying aware of the reality of that deity while we're doing it.

## **THE BASIS OF VOIDNESS**

The next point is in terms of the actual basis of voidness or reality that we're dealing – what makes the deity something so special to think about?

If we were to think in terms of the voidness of my own body – our body is something which is very hard to think about without it sort of deceptively appearing to us. IN other words: I think of my body and automatically I think: "I'm fat and ugly and nobody loves me", or "my nose is to big" or whatever, you have all sorts of deceptiveness about thinking of that body. You can think of the voidness of that body and the mind that's involved with voidness is going to be thinking on a very pure level. Voidness is going to be the same, regardless of what you're thinking the voidness of. I mean it is just an absence of a fantasized way of existing and as an absence itself, it's the same. But, the basis of that absence is going to somehow affect the mind that's thinking of it. So for example of one part of my mind is dealing with the deceptive appearance of my own body and the other part of the mind is dealing with the pure reality of that, because one part of my mind is involved with something deceptive, it makes that whole mind a little unstable.

Now, by using a deity – a deity in tantra is always generated first within a state of voidness. It says: "within a state of voidness, I arise as this deity". So you're starting already with a total absence of fantasized ways of existing and within the context of reality then you generate the deities. So already you're starting to think of reality and generating the deity within the context of that reality. So the body of the deity doesn't have this deceptive aspect to it, because you're aware from the beginning that it is devoid of existing in some fantasized way. You are just sort of generating it. Because of that, when you understand the voidness of something that you already started out by generating it out of voidness then both parts of the mind are dealing with something pure. So you're understanding of the voidness is going to be something which likewise is going to be more pure. Because it's not going to be effected by one part of your mind, dealing with the deceptive appearance. That's a subtle point.

The next thing is, if we think of the voidness of our body, our body is something which changes all the time. It's fleeting. Sometimes we feel good, sometimes we feel bad, our body is aging etc. So every time that we try to think of the voidness of our body, the actual basis of what we're thinking about is slightly different. So because it's slightly different it's hard to get a very very stable feeling of voidness, that's the same all the time. Now, by using the body of a deity - the body of a deity is something which is called a so-called "permanent phenomenon"; so-called permanent in the sense that it lasts forever: the body of a deity doesn't grow old and it doesn't feel aches and pains, it's always the same, something that lasts forever.

So if we're thinking about the voidness of that, then we can always bring up the same image and always focus on the voidness again of the same thing. Because of that, our understanding of voidness is going to become more and more stable, because we're using a non-fleeting object, that stays forever the same. So that has a great advantage – you can always think of this form of the deity and you can always bring your mind back to the voidness of that deity and so your understanding of the reality of that deity is going to be much more stable, because that basis is always the same; it's not always changing like our moods are changing.

The final point about the basis is that, if you're thinking about your own body and the voidness of your body, that's something you can only see and think about in terms of your awareness of your eyes. It is something which is very very gross.

Whereas, in tantra, what you're dealing with is something that is appearing only in your mind's eye – this body of the deity; it's not something that you see directly with your eyes. You could see it with "ESP" like that when you get very advanced, but here we're thinking about something that only appears in my mind's eye. Because it only appears in my mind's eye, it's much easier to understand that it doesn't exist as something concrete and solid and real out there. If we are thinking in terms of our gross body that is something gross, so it really does appear to us that it's existing as something solid and fine with a

black line around it.

The body of a deity is only in our mind's eye. It's quite easy to see that it's just made up of parts and things and isn't something concrete, solid and real. So that's the third advantage of focusing on the form of a deity. Likewise because it's so subtle it's going to be much easier for it to appear at the same time as we understand the voidness of it. Because again it's something appearing in the mind's eye.

### **Review.**

To think in terms of the body of a deity as the object of voidness is something which has many many advantages:

- 1 We're dealing with something which is closer to the result of what we want to attain.
- 2 We're dealing with method and wisdom in the same package; it's something much easier that we can get the two together.
- 3 The body of a deity is something, if we think of the voidness of it, it's already pure, because we're generating it out of voidness – it's not going to be so confusing to us; it's something which always remains the same so our understanding of it's voidness will be more stable and likewise it's something very subtle, only appearing in our mind's eye, so it's much easier to realize it's voidness. For that reason, in general, tantra is going to be much more quick, more effective.
- 4 In terms of the consciousness that understands voidness:  
In general we talk about different levels of consciousness:
  - A gross consciousness
  - B more subtle consciousness
  - C the subtlest consciousness
    - our senses; in terms of our conceptual awareness of things- with our mind;
    - our bare awareness of things; the bare awareness and clarity of the mind.

These are things that we're going to get into in the higher classes of tantra. The point here in the three lower classes of tantra is that we're still dealing with the rough level of consciousness. So there's no special feature about it here on that point. We're dealing with imagining that we have the body of a deity, but we're using a rougher level of consciousness so that it's at the same level as, lets say, all the disturbing attitudes and all the mental wandering and things that we could have, so that, even though we maybe focused on that, still, our mind could go off into these other directions which are in the same level with it. So, here, we don't have any special feature with relation to that, but we will get more special features as we go into the higher classes of tantra. It's just to introduce what the variables are.

### **Review**

In general tantra is faster. The thing that takes so long is really to be able to see reality clearly and effectively and pierce through the different obscurations that we have. In general we need to have the force and energy of an expanding heart to all others and to want to achieve enlightenment to help all others to give that seeing of reality more force so it will actually see through everything in general. So, in order to get it much more quick, because it's going to take 3 zillions eons for this, well, let's practice a method that's much closer to the result, so we think we're a deity, we use our imagination; let's practice method and wisdom together in one package, because what we want to achieve has a body and mind in one package. The actual method that will be able to help others is not only an expanding heart of "Bodhicitta" but it's also: "Well let's get the body of a Buddha; let's go to really help everybody". So if we think of that body and the voidness of that body at the same time then we have our method and wisdom together in one package.

Then there are a lot of advantages of thinking of the voidness of a deity. The deity is something which is pure already, being generated out of voidness, so there's nothing confusing about it. It's something which lasts forever and it doesn't change. So our understanding of its voidness likewise will be much more stable, we can always focus on it. And also it's something that only appears in our mind's eyes, so it is much more subtle and it is a little bit more obvious then our body is that it only exists in terms of mental labelling and concepts and all these things. But, still, we're dealing just with our rougher level of consciousness for doing all this process.

### **Special features of Anuttarayoga Yoga Tantra**

What makes Anuttarayoga tantra so special, because going to Kalachakra we're getting involved not only in tantra, but we're getting involved in the highest class of tantra and not only that, but Kalachakra itself. So everything that I've said so far is going to be true about Anuttarayoga – the highest class and it's going to be true about Kalachakra. But we are going to get more, we're going to get more special features that make it even more effective and more speedy.

We have been talking about the Kalachakra initiation that will be coming up in July (1985), in Switzerland what might be

some helpful things to be aware of before going, that will make it a much more meaningful experience. As we were saying that first of all, if you go to this with the idea of wanting to apply the various methods and techniques that are being explained here to your own lives as a way of dealing with your own problems and overcoming your shortcomings because you have a strong determination to be free from your problems, that makes it more meaningful for you; And also, if you do it in terms of wishing to reach the state where you can best benefit everybody, not just yourself, then again it becomes much stronger and if you go with some idea of reality beforehand then likewise you won't make it into some sort of strange thing, but will actually be able to derive more benefit from it, seeing that it's something that you can actually approach and use. Then, to get really into it, it's necessary to have some general idea of what tantra is about, what all these deities are about and why we want to actually use this type of method.

Tantra in general is much more speedy than the sutra methods, because, here, we're dealing with: we want to achieve the body and the mind of a Buddha and so we're going to use a method, which is going to be much closer to what we actually want to achieve. The actual method is going to be in terms of generating out of our energy systems etc. the actual forms of the deities, of an enlightened being and, out of our energy systems, actually being able to do the different types of activities that a Buddha does. But these types of things don't come from nowhere or for no reason at all and the way that we're actually be able to tap into our energy systems and able to actually generate all these things for real is to first do it with our imagination, because if we use our imagination – that's something which is a very very powerful tool – and then we can actually do it for real, based on having rehearsed and practiced doing it in our imagination. It's like if you're rehearsing for a play in a theatre. First you go over it in imagination and do rehearsals and so on. But then, based on having rehearsed so well then you're able to actually do the performance with no problems.

The same is true here, with using our imagination in order to be able to tap into the systems in our body from which we actually are able to generate the body of a Buddha, and the mind of a Buddha. So, we think in terms of how already we imagine that – we have the body of a Buddha and that everything around us is pure like what a fully evolved being experiences and we're able to enjoy and interact with things without any confusion like a Buddha does and we're able to exert an enlightening influence, a positive influence on everybody and everything around us.

Then, we are also following a method in which we are going to get method and wisdom much closer together in one package, by actually thinking in terms of the body of the deity (the method) by which we are going to help everybody and be focused on the voidness of that body so that the two come together in one mind so we can practice both the method and wisdom together at the same time. In this way it comes much more in one package and will bring us closer to the result, which is a body and mind in one package.

We are also thinking in terms of the basis for voidness and that, here, we're dealing with something which is very special, because we're dealing with the body of a deity. And the body of a deity is already pure, because we're generating it within the context of voidness within the context of understanding its reality. So by focusing on its reality like that, the whole mind is dealing with something pure already and also this object – the body of a deity – is not going to be changing all the time – so our understanding of the reality of it is going to remain more stable and likewise it's something which is very subtle, we are generating it into our mind's eye and so it's something which is easier to see that it is not something which is concrete and solid. So we'll be able to understand its reality more easily.

Although there are different levels of mind that we can use, here in general we're still dealing with the rougher levels of mind. You can see that really these methods of sutra and tantra are two things which are not contradictory, but it makes like a graded path. You see the whole sutra approach is one of how first you put certain positive and safe and sound direction in our life, then you follow the laws of cause and effect in terms of how to improve the quality of your life and you look at the various problems that you have, and you develop a strong determination to get rid of them and then you look at the various causes that are making your problems and then you want to get rid of the causes and causes basically are that we're out of control, we have all sorts of disturbing attitudes, we act impulsively and so all that is based on not being aware of reality. So we have to try to see reality and in order to see reality the strongest we have to think not just in terms of our own problems, but think in terms of everybody else. We can't just work to get rid of our own limitations, because everybody is interdependent and we have to take everybody seriously the way that we want to take ourselves seriously and work and expand our hearts out to everybody and on the basis of that expand our hearts out to achieving enlightenment in order to benefit everybody and with that as the force behind our seeing, reality, we'll be able to cut through the root of all our problems. So this is your sort of foundation and tantra is just going the next step further.

There are ways of doing this, just following the ordinary sutra methods, but they take too long and because they take too long we want to follow these more speedy methods so that we can reach the goal quicker. Because everybody can't wait for us to become enlightened over such a long period of time. So, there is no contradiction, it is just the next step further, to go into these deity practices. These being the general characteristics of tantra in general, then what about the highest class of



tantra – Anuttarayoga – the peerlessly integrated deity practices? What makes that so special, that through its methods we can achieve enlightenment in our one lifetime, not just in terms of having a very long lifetime and within that achieving enlightenment?

We can look at the same points we were looking at in general. So the first point is in terms of analogies: in general tantra, we're using a method which is analogous to the result of what we want to achieve. Remember, we were talking about an everlasting stream of practice. That "everlasting stream" is what tantra means and you have an everlasting basis – a stream of a basis – that you want to purify and, above, you have an everlasting stream of result, in other words "Buddhahood" that we want to achieve.

So, in general tantra, the practices are analogous upwards towards the result the results that we want to achieve. But in Anuttarayoga Tantra it is also analogous to the basis that we want purify. Now analogies are working both ways; upwards towards the result and downwards towards the basis of what we're working with.

### **What are we working with?**

We're working basically with this everlasting stream of the cycles that we go through and the main thing that we go through is: we die and we go through an intermediate state or the Bardo in between and then we're reborn. This is something we have no control over and it's something which is based on the various types of actions we do. Then we have all sorts of impulses that come up and we just are thrown into various rebirth situations which just perpetuate our different problems. So this is the basis that we want to work with.

If we gain some control over that whole process of how we die and how we're reborn, then in fact we'll be able to appear in any type of form that will be the most helpful for helping everybody. So that's something which is a very positive type of thing to attain. It's what the incarnated lamas have achieved – they are able to control how they die and how they are reborn, so that they continue all the different types of good work that they were doing, from one lifetime to the next. So if we could do that then we wouldn't be involved in these uncontrollably recurring situations in life, but we'd actually be able to be in control. So, this is what we want to work with, and it's analogous to what we want to achieve.

Let's take some examples. When we die the consciousness gets more and more subtle until we finally get to what's called the clear light of death. In other words we get all these more rough types of consciousness: our eyes, ears; we're no longer able to see or hear, because obviously we don't have a body and we're no longer able to have all sorts of conceptual ideas and things because likewise that is something which is more gross and our minds get more and more subtle, so we just get bare clarity and awareness of mind. This state of the clear light of death is something which is very similar to what we're going to get at the time of enlightenment, what the mind of a Buddha is. Because the mind of a Buddha is likewise something which is very subtle. It doesn't have these gross rough things around it and because it's so subtle, it's able to reflect absolutely everything.

So what we want to do is to follow some type of method which is while we are alive, through various practices, to be able to focus on the clear light, in other words to get to the subtlest level of consciousness, because that's something which is similar to what we want to purify, which is the clear light of death and it's going to be similar to what we want to achieve. We want to be able to get the clear light awareness of a Buddha. So we follow a method, in other words, if what we have to work with is already similar to what we want to achieve, in other words getting to that subtlest mind, is similar to what we want to achieve which is to get to the subtlest mind completely expanded – so it sees everything, a method for doing that is to try to get to the subtlest mind now, through our meditations. So by getting to the subtlest mind already in our meditations, it's similar, both down and up. It's similar to what we want to purify, which is getting to that subtlest mind at death, and similar to what we want to achieve which is to get that subtlest mind as a Buddha, omniscient with everything.

This is similar also for example to the whole process of what happens when we fall asleep. When you fall asleep it's similar to what happens when you die: the consciousness gets more and more subtle, you leave behind the rough consciousnesses, you are no longer able to hear, no longer able to see, those things aren't working and the mind is getting more and more subtle. You can see as you fall asleep that you don't hear or see things anymore, but your mind is still racing with maybe some ideas. But eventually the mind gets more subtle and the ideas and the thinking stops and you just fall into deep sleep. So that's very similar to what happens when you die, and very similar to what happens as you get to the more and more subtle levels of consciousness. Then when you go into the in-between period – the bardo period – that's very similar to what happens when you dream. All sorts of visions and things appear to you, but they're not something which is like our external reality. Then when you're reborn, it's something very similar to waking up again. So there is an analogy on several different levels, of what we're working with. We're working with this analogy of when we die – bardo and rebirth. But also it is the same as when we fall asleep, dream and wake up.

So likewise, if we want to achieve the different bodies of a Buddha, for example the physical body, then what we're working with, the analogy is, let's say when you go into the bardo, then you get a sort of subtle body and when you wake up you get a gross body. When you fall asleep, then first you dream, you have subtle bodies and subtle images and when you wake up then you're back in your gross bodies.

When you want to become a Buddha, you can appear in subtle bodies, which are called SAMBHOGAKAYA – bodies of full use – that only highly realized beings can see. Then you also want to appear in more gross bodies, called NIRMANAKAYA – emanation bodies – that more people can see.

On the resultant level of what we're dealing with is we want to achieve a body of a Buddha. So out of the clear light, the omniscient mind of a Buddha, you could also manifest in a subtle body, which is called Sambhogakaya, a body of full use, that only the highly realized beings can see, not everybody can see, and then also you manifest in more gross bodies, called Nirmanakaya – the tulkus – these emanations that more people can see. This thing is very parallel. We want to do is use a method of generating a deity, which is going to be similar to the way in which our death process happens, our sleeping process happens and the enlightened process happens.

So we were talking about how we want to do deity yoga, and arise as a deity.

If you first go into voidness, or clear light – as you remember we were talking about generating the deity out of voidness. Well, how do you get to voidness? You can get to it in a process that's similar to get into the clear light of death and is similar to the result what we want to achieve – to get into the clear light of an omniscient Buddha. We go to a meditation practice, which is similar to some of the things that happen as we fall asleep or similar to what happens when we die, in order to get a method to get to the mind of a Buddha. Likewise we generate this deity within the state of voidness. You can generate it just sort of: "There it is, there's the deity out of voidness". But you can also generate it, here in Anuttarayoga Tantra, in the same manner, in which you would arise in the Bardo or you would arise in dreams, which will be the same way in which you will arise out of the mind of a Buddha into the body of a Buddha that's both subtle on a gross level.

Before we were talking about how the whole process is similar to the result. So, it's similar to the result in the sense that we imagine now that we're a deity and we think of the voidness of that deity. There are many ways that you can do this. This is a sort of general presentation. But you can do this in a way that's going to be similar to what happens ordinarily anyway. Before we were talking about a mental judo, that you want to use the energy, the direction that we're going into anyway in order to flip it into a more beneficial way. Ordinarily we go through the process of our mind getting more subtle, either we die or fall asleep and then ourselves arising, first in a subtle form and then in a gross form; like a dream and then we wake up, or we go into the bardo and then we're reborn and that's going to be in fact exactly how it is going to work when you're enlightened. So this is a special feature of Anuttarayoga Tantra.

There are 4 methods to get rid of problems that are described:

- A **You can apply an opponent force.** For example if you are very attached to somebody then the opponent to that, when you think "Oh, this person is so beautiful", then you imagine what that person would look like if you took off the first layer of skin over their bodies. Then they wouldn't be so pretty, would they? Or you imagine that what they would look like, let's say, they're a very young person, and you imagine that actually this is an eight year old person, wearing a mask of a twenty year old person. Actually that's just an appearance and you try to imagine what this person will look like when they're eighty. To help get over this infatuated view that you have.
- B **To try to think in the opposite way.** If you think "I'm fat and ugly and nobody loves me" and you think that that's really the way that you are, then to think in terms of "Well I am devoid of that, that really isn't the case". That's the opposite way of thinking.
- C **To try to change negative things into positive things.** Let's say you want to go on a trip and it doesn't work out and you're not able to go, there's trouble with your car, then you could become very upset and unhappy about that, but also you could change it into a positive circumstance and think: "Oh I'm fortunate that this happened, if it happened on the road while we were driving then I might have gotten into an accident and got killed. So the fact that my car wouldn't start now is very good, I should be happy about it, because I've been saved from something that could have gone wrong while we were driving". If you think in that way, it makes it much easier to handle the situation, because in fact you're not going to be able to go on your trip anyway. You might as well be able to deal with that situation, without getting too upset. So you transform negative circumstances into positive circumstances.
- D But the 4th way, which is the way that we dealing with here, is **to flip the situation** and flip it in the sense that if we are going to be naturally going through the process of dying and taking the bardo and then being reborn, then let's go with that energy and try to flip it so that instead of it happening in an uncontrollable way, we rehearse it happening. We rehearse what happens when we die for example so that we are not thrown by it and we can use that energy the way that the mind naturally will go to a more subtle state and then appear in subtle forms and then in gross forms.

We can use it to actually become a Buddha, to use that as the method for becoming a Buddha, because that's how it happens anyway.

**In Anuttarayoga Tantra we have 2 stages of practice:**

- 1 The completion stage – sometimes it's called "completing", but it doesn't really complete anything; it means "complete" in the sense that now you have everything complete and you can actually do these things, you can actually manifest your subtlest consciousness, you can actually manifest the body of a deity out of your energy system.
- 2 The generation state, in which you generate in your imagination. In your imagination you imagine that your mind gets more and more subtle, in your imagination you imagine that within the state of clear light voidness you arise as a deity, similar to what happens when you take rebirth or what happens when you wake up. By doing it in your imagination then that will eventually ripen into being able to actually do it with your energy system and being able to actually do it with your energy system will then ripen into being able to actually do it completely as a Buddha.

The analogies are not only using a method which is analogous to the result of what we want to achieve (upwards) but it's also analogous downward with the basis of what we're working with.

Now we are getting into dealing much more with all the different aspects of our life. We are dealing with some of the most fundamental elements that everybody experiences, even an animal. And even animals are going to die and be reborn, and even animals are going to sleep and wake up. So, we're dealing really with some of the basic fundamental elements of our lives, and bring even to the path, by working with it.

What about the point of getting method and wisdom together in one package? We were talking in general tantra that we get it into one package in terms of thinking in our imagination that we have the body of a deity – we start off with our imagination; later we're actually going to generate it. But we think in terms of: in our imagination we have the body of a deity and then we think of the reality of that deity, so we get the two together in one package. But we're doing this with rough levels of consciousness.

In the Anuttarayoga Tantra, what we are doing here is dealing with the subtlest level of consciousness and the subtlest level of consciousness always has with it the subtlest energies that we have. Sometimes called "energy wind" or "breath" – the subtlest energy.

When we talk about consciousness or mind, we tend to think of it as a noun. Because we think of it as a noun, we tend to think of it as a thing: "My consciousness, my awareness, it becomes almost something physical. So the distinction between body and mind doesn't become so clear to us. Because "body" is something that we have and a "mind" is also a thing that we have; our "awareness" is also a thing that we have. But actually what is being discussed here, because they make quite a difference between body and mind in terms of describing what's involved, is more like a verb and it's a verb in the sense that it's talking about a function. The function is to be aware of things, to be clear about things, both in a transitive and an intransitive sense. So it's to make things clear and to be clear. It's to make things become aware and to be aware. It's like a function that we do. And this is what we have on a very very subtle level: that just this basically making things clear and aware - this function. And that has as part of it a certain energy. So we have both the energy that sort of involves it with objects and this whole function of making things clear.

So this is what we are dealing with when we are talking about the subtlest mind and the subtlest energies. The subtlest energy is like a horse and the awareness, the subtlest mind is like the rider on top of the horse. The horse takes it to the objects or whatever and the rider on the horse is the one that is aware of things. You can see that actually it is talking about two different aspects of the same thing: that there's an energy that goes out and it has this function of making things aware.

These two come together in one package, don't they?

Now, what we're doing here in Anuttarayoga Tantra is that not only are we taking or imagining ourselves as a deity and thinking of the voidness of that deity (so that comes in one package), but what we're using is this subtlest awareness, your consciousness and its wind, its energy, which comes together in one package. So we have this subtlest energy and consciousness in one package. One part of it, the awareness aspect, we are going to use as the awareness of voidness; the energy aspect of it is what we're going to generate into the body of the deity. The deity is generated out of the energy, so in fact, our method and wisdom here, the body of a deity and the awareness of the voidness of that deity are even closer in one package, because it's not just sort of on a rough level: just the body of a deity and thinking of the voidness of that deity, but in fact what we are doing is generating the body of the deity out of our subtlest energy and the subtlest awareness which is already in the same package as that, is going to be the awareness that is used for understanding its voidness or reality.

**Question:** Why are the subtlest energy and the subtlest mind together in one package?

**Answer:** Because the consciousness is the function to be clear about things and that can't exist without some sort of basis, which is the energy that is involved with it. Western science thinks in terms of, there is a certain energy that goes through our nerves and we think of mind we tend to think only on the physical level of that energy. Now, Buddhism isn't denying that. It's not saying that that's wrong. But it is making more of a distinction. It's saying; "Yes, that's the physical basis of it and let's look at its function. Its function is to be aware of things and make things be clear. That's what we're calling "mind" in Buddhism. So, there is no contradiction with science on that. Where we get into trouble is, as I said, when we think of mind as this noun, so we tend to think it has to be either the energy or it has to be our brain or whatever. It's not denying the brain – that's just talking about the physical basis of what is going on. What we're talking about in Buddhism is what the brain does, not the brain itself.

This is not only by generating the deity out of the subtlest energy and the awareness of its voidness out of the subtlest consciousness, but also it's much more similar to the actual result, because likewise the body of a Buddha is going to come from the energies and the mind of a Buddha is going to come from the subtlest awareness. We're dealing now much more with what we have to work with when we're going to become enlightened. The body of a Buddha is just one method, one aspect of the method that's used in tantra.

The other aspect of the method is what's called "great bliss". "Bliss", I think we have to add a few more syllables here: I think more of a blissful awareness. It's not just feeling bliss, you know "well I'm happy", but it's a blissful awareness, which is a certain quality of awareness of things. And a "blissful awareness" is something which has a lot of good aspects to it, which make it very powerful thing to develop. Out of our wish to help everybody and our wish to be able to actually achieve enlightenment we're going to need a body – A body is going to be the way that we're going to actually help everybody, so you see that a body of a Buddha is something that's brought on by this wish to help everybody. Likewise, this blissful awareness is going to be something which is going to help us be more effective in achieving enlightenment more quickly. Why is this? It's because a blissful awareness is something which is much more intense. Because it's a much more intense. Because it's a much more intense type of awareness then naturally it will draw our energies together, so that we will be able to get to more and more subtle levels of mind and energy, because it's so intense. It's one of the more intense experiences that we can have.

Also it helps us to get us more and more subtle as I said, and also more and more deep in to not being just involved with all sorts of scattered thoughts and concepts, because as our mind becomes more and more Intense with the blissful awareness, we tend to naturally just focus on that at the moment, and not be involved with all sorts of other thoughts at the same time.

So method + wisdom, are coming together in one package on many different levels. It's coming together not only a deity and focusing on the voidness of the deity; it's coming out of using the subtle energy and the subtlest consciousness in one package and it's also in terms of that subtle consciousness of voidness is also a blissful consciousness, so, that's one package. We're using our blissful awareness to be what's going to understand voidness.

When they talk about inseparable voidness and bliss, they talk about you have your awareness of voidness. This awareness of voidness is being aware of the voidness of, let's say, your body of a deity. It's illuminating its reality. It's like having a deity her and a flash light over there, which is aimed as it, understanding its voidness, making it clear. Now, you can use a flashlight, or, you can use instead of that something which is much more intense. Let's use a laser beam. The laser beam is like blissful awareness, because it's more intense. So, if what we want is to understand voidness, we can use a laser beam. Let's use our blissful awareness to understand the voidness of the deity. That's what it means when it says, inseparable voidness and bliss. It is one package, because it is the blissful awareness that you are using to understand the voidness of the deity.

This blissful awareness you hear talk about in the 4 different classes of tantra, you hear it in terms of there's the bliss from actually seeing a partner and the bliss of smiling at a partner and the bliss of holding hands or hugging and the bliss of union or peak experience with the partner. First of all, these are more and more intense experiences of a blissful awareness, but you shouldn't think that in fact these blissful awareness are used in the 3 lower classes of tantra as an actual path. They are not just described in terms of the 3 lower tantras just to give you an example of how they would compare if you wanted to use the dimension of comparison of blissful awarenesses. But they don't actually come, in the lower tantras you don't actually use them there.

So it's just giving us an example for how the 4 would compare with each other, although they are not actually used, in the 3 lower ones; it's only in Anuttarayoga that you use as a method "blissful awareness", because it's so intense and because it will act to get the energies in your body more and more subtle, and more and more concentrated.

## Review

We were talking about how Anuttarayoga is very special. Because in fact it's analogous, not only our practice of imagining that we're a deity is not only similar to what we want to achieve, but it's also similar to what we're working with to purify. We're working with the death process and being reborn. So that's one factor of it. Another factor of it is that our method + wisdom are going to come together in one package, much more closely because we want to achieve a body and a mind of a Buddha, which are in one package; so we're going to use a method + wisdom that are going to be in one package also and it is in one package not only in terms of focusing on a deity and the voidness of that deity, but we're using, to make that, two things which are already in one package – the subtlest energy and the subtlest mind; and also we are going to use as a method a blissful awareness – because we want to get something really intense and sharp and the way that that's going to come in one package is that we're going to use that blissful awareness as the awareness that understands voidness.

Our next point that we were talking about is the feature of the basis of voidness and in general we are using as a basis of voidness the body of a deity and the body of the deity has a lot of advantages to it, because first of all it's something that's pure already, it's coming out of voidness, well that's still the case, and it's something which is not changing and it is something which is subtle, which we can only see in our mind's eye. Here, what we're doing in Anuttarayoga tantra is making the body of the deity out of our subtlest energy – this is a process called "Illusory body", it's made out of the subtlest energy – and this illusory body is something which even more than just let's say a figure that we can call up in our imagination it's something which is always there, all the time whether we're awake, asleep, dead, enlightened, whatever and so by making the body of the deity and the basis of voidness out of that it's something which is even more stable.

But the most outstanding feature that you have in Anuttarayoga Tantra is the fact that you're dealing here with the subtlest consciousness and the subtlest consciousness is what we're working with to gain the understanding of voidness and this is where a real quality of Anuttarayoga Tantra comes in. This subtlest consciousness is first of all closer to the result that we want to achieve, because it's out of that subtle awareness that we make an omniscient mind. We don't make an omniscient mind out of rough consciousness in our eyes or ears and we don't make it out of the little bit more subtle consciousness which still is pretty gross of the conceptual mind which is dealing with the subtlest mind just that bare clarity and awareness. This is something which automatically is non-conceptual.

In other words here is our rough consciousness: our eyes, ears, etc. our subtle consciousness is the level at which we're dealing with all sorts of ideas and concepts. Our subtlest level is more subtle than that, it's beyond that, it's more fine than that. If you want to get a non-conceptual understanding of reality or voidness which takes us one zillion eons to get in sutra, if you use the subtlest consciousness, which is already non-conceptual, then automatically, you don't need zillions eons for that. If you can get your understanding of voidness with that subtlest level of consciousness, you're already home, you already have it non-conceptual not one zillion eons.

It's very easy. If you want to get a non-conceptual understanding if you stay on the same level as your concepts (of consciousness) then you constantly have to be on guard, because your mind is at the same level as the danger that you want to avoid. So it could very easily slip into mental wandering and concepts and all these other things. A very clever method, just go on a different level! If you are on a more subtle level than the concepts there's no way that that can affect your meditation. It is automatically non-conceptual. That's very profound. So this is the first zillion eons taken care of. Likewise this subtlest level of consciousness doesn't illuminate things or make things appear in a discordant way – a way that's different from reality. It's just basically making things appear; being clear about things.

Our 2<sup>nd</sup> zillion eons was dealing with overcoming these automatically arising disturbing attitudes. These automatically arising ones are coming up in terms of things appear to be different from the way they actually are and so these automatically arising disturbing-attitudes come up. Instinctively they come up. If we are dealing with a level of consciousness that doesn't make things appear in some strange way, then it doesn't take our second zillion eons to get rid of this second problem of automatically arising disturbing attitudes.

This subtlest consciousness we were talking about is something which is a very powerful tool for being able to see reality, because it doesn't see things in a conceptual way, so automatically we can see things non-conceptually if we use it, so it's the first zillion eons taken care of. It doesn't illuminate things in a gross incorrect way, so that gets rid of our second zillions eons and third of all it's something which is so subtle that it will allow the 2 levels of truth: relative level and ultimate level to appear simultaneously on it or to it and because of that it doesn't take our 3<sup>rd</sup> zillion eons. So this subtlest consciousness, if we can actually tap in to it and use it then it's going to be our really speedy tool for being able to achieve the mind of a Buddha. So then you have all the methods within Anuttarayoga Tantra to actually get into that system, of the subtlest mind and the subtlest energy.

### **Now what about KALACHAKRA.**

That's even something more outstanding. First of all, the first point is in terms of analogies that not only are we doing a practice that's analogous to what we want to achieve – the mind and body of a Buddha; not only is it analogous to what we're working with in terms of the whole process of death and rebirth. Here by the way in Kalachakra you're dealing only with the process and death and rebirth.

We don't have a separate treatment of the process of bardo, because it's explained that if you purify and work with just death and rebirth that that takes care of the bardo automatically. So it's slightly different, but we're dealing with the same general idea. So not only is it analogous to that process that we go through of dying and being reborn, but also we have a whole system of meditation that's analogous to what I was explaining before: the external cycles of time, in other words all the things that go on around us in terms of the motion of the planets, the passage of the years and days and hours etc. It's analogous to that as well and it's also analogous to the internal thing in terms of how the energies flow through our body and the breaths and all the cycles, that goes with as well.

So we're going to meditate on a system that is going to bring in even more of all the aspects of our life. This is something that really makes Kalachakra special in that it covers just about everything and anything that you can think of in our lives. So it deals not only with this fundamental thing of death and rebirth, but also it deals with the changes that the universe goes through on an internal level and makes this also then into a way of practice that will bring us an enlightened state. That is our first point.

I will give some examples of these analogies. You have for example the way that the moon grows full. The moon will grow full in a process of 16 days – the 15 days of the waxing and then the 16<sup>th</sup> day we are talking of the part when it's actually full. Likewise on an internal level then you can speak in terms of how for example for a male that the process of the seminal force and energy in the male to reach its full maturity likewise takes a process of 16 years. Again we have this 16 stages process of something growing full. Now on a practice level you can also talk about things like how in order to get a full type of blissful awareness, this also is something which grows in 16 stages, in order to get as a result the full level of blissful awareness, related to all the different types of voidness. So what you're dealing with is a process of meditation that's similar to, let's say the external thing of the moon growing full and the internal thing of the seminal energy of a male growing full and then using a system of meditation that's similar to that for getting the full blissful awareness which will also go through a process of growing in 16 parts to then use that as your awareness of voidness and get enlightened.

I'll give you a different type of example. You have 12 months in the year. And you have 12 shifts of the breath in the course of a day. Those two are parallel. (Remember we were using this whole idea of things go through certain cycles. So we go through a cycle of let's say dying and being reborn; so we meditate in a manner that's similar to that, so that we actually use that as a technique for becoming enlightened.) So here we're doing the same thing, but in addition to that we're also using methods which are similar to the process that's going on externally and internally within our bodies. Externally things go through a process of 12 months, internally things go into a process of 12 shifts of the breath. So likewise in our practice you can go through a process of 12 levels of a highly realized mind. It's just going in a process that's similar to what we have to work with, dealing with a lot more things in our life. In Kalachakra you're not working with the illusory body. What you're working with instead is what's called the "devoid form". Sometimes it's called "void form" but actually it's better to use devoid, because it's devoid of atoms. Kalachakra has a great deal of discussion with atoms. So, this is a form that is devoid, of atoms. They say that this is something which is merely the reflection of the clear light mind.

I'll explain it. If they say that it's also possible to experience these just ordinarily when you are playing around and the examples are in terms of staring at the sun or staring at the shadow or something like that and then looking away. I think that the best example we can relate to from our own experience as Westerners is, when somebody is taking a picture of you with a flash camera. After they've taken the picture with the flash camera you see a blue dot. This blue dot is something that you see whether your eyes are open or closed. Now this blue dot is a form that's not made out of atoms. It's something which is a reflection of an impression that has been made on your consciousness. Here it's an even closer package than we had before, because before our one package of the body of a deity and the understanding of the voidness of the deity was based on one being from the energy and the other being from the mind. Here both of them are coming from the mind. One is the mind itself and one is the reflection on the mind. In Kalachakra we are dealing with devoid forms and devoid forms are devoid of atoms.

Here Kalachakra is the Clear Tantra, because it's making clear what actually appears in the other teachings. In the other teachings, even in sutra, it will say that the body of a Buddha is not made of atoms, it's not made of ordinary things like our bodies are made up of they are the results of collections of positive potential and deep awareness. You might have come across that and said what in the world does that mean. Well, here is the explaining what it means.

It's not something which is made out of gross atoms like what things ordinarily are, but it's just a reflection or appearance of the clear light mind. That's a difficult point, but that's really getting to the essence of what makes Kalachakra so special. You have to get to the subtlest energy but you do not actually work with the subtlest energy, as in other highest yoga tantras.

Why I am talking about this and why we would want to know about these things. The main reason is, first of all, during the Initiation his Holiness is going to talk about these things. So if you hear "void form" and all these different type of things, if you've never heard of it before, it's going to be very difficult to just immediately pick up what's being talked about. On one level, what I am trying to do is to introduce you to some of the ideas and factors that go up to make this Kalachakra practice, so that at the actual teachings you'll be able to get a little bit more out of it. Second of all, you know the way that we gain an understanding of things is that first of all we have a rough idea of what it is. You shouldn't expect that at the beginning you're going to be able to really understand something clearly just from the first hearing about it. This is the general procedure that's always discussed in Buddhism about how you learn things. First you have to hear about it and then you have to chew it over in your mind and ponder it and then you have to actually reflect on it and try to see things in terms of it. So likewise, although this is a lot of material that's coming here, basically if we can get out of it some rough idea of some of the things that are involved in tantra, then it will act as a foundation on which your understanding can grow.

Also another big reason for wanting to get some idea of what is involved here, is to have a little bit more of faith and interest in the actual process and in the actual meditation system that this is introducing you to. Because in fact it is something which is special and really very outstanding – this whole approach to how you become enlightened, and how you realize your fullest potentials. Because it's such a very profound method then rather than just basing your feeling for this, on just hearsay, because you heard that Kalachakra is so high, so special and so you go, if you're only going like that then it becomes quite difficult to really get into it. You put it onto some pedestal: "Kalachakra that's only what the Dalai Lama does and that's only what a few people in this world have any understanding for", then it's very difficult to relate to it. If you go with that type of attitude and feeling then although it's possible to get a lot from the initiation you won't get as much as you might be able to get if you have some feeling for what all of this is about. So although the ideas and concepts are a little bit complicated, nevertheless I think it's worthwhile to have some general idea and general feeling for what's involved. That's why I'm going over this type of material and let's see if we can do it a little bit more clearly and a little bit more slowly so that we get some sort of feeling for what really is Kalachakra.

You know all these things in it about astronomy, Shambala and these type of things are very interesting and I will speak a little bit more about them later, but really the whole point of Kalachakra is that it is a system to become enlightened. It's a system of meditation and that's its real focal point. All these other things are secondary things which are very good and makes it very complete and gives you access to a much larger world of knowledge and experience. But we shouldn't lose sight of the fact that this is actually a system of practice, that it's actually something that we can do. And it's something that I'm not really explaining here how you do it. The explanation how to do it comes after the Initiation. What I'm trying to explain now is as a preparation to give you an idea of what is involved. How to do it is what you're getting the initiation for. After that, then you learn how to do it, then you can actually go about trying to do it. But if you've an idea beforehand of what's involved, it becomes easier.

A lot of people talk about bringing Buddhism to the West and what is going to be the factors that are going to make western Buddhism. Because Buddhism did go from one civilization and country to another in Asia and it changed quite a lot, it's whole feeling aspects and approach to it. Let's say Tibetan Buddhism or Chinese Buddhism or Buddhism in Thailand or Sri Lanka, these are all quite distinctive. So if you ask what really will be the distinctive factors of western Buddhism. I mean of all us can just give our opinion on that, but one of my opinions – and it's really an opinion – is that, you see I don't think that we have to change things like the forms of the deities and these things. As I was saying before if you if you understand what's involved with it, it's just a symbol and nothing more. And so whether the eyes of the deities are slanted or they aren't slanted..... you know, big deal, it doesn't make so much of a difference.

But, one of the things I think is helpful in terms of dealing with a western mentality and how we approach Buddhism is things like what I'm trying to do now for example If you were dealing with a Tibetan audience it really wouldn't be necessary to give some sort of introductory talk. This is something they've grown up with, it's part of their culture and also the whole way of approaching it is..... They have so much respect and faith for the great lamas that they would just go along with that. It doesn't matter really what is involved in the teaching or the practice. They see the examples of these lamas: this is clearly what I want to become like these lamas whether in this lifetime or future lifetimes and so, of course, I'm interested in learning this system of practice.

But for Westerners - not everybody but a lot of westerners -they like to know beforehand what they're getting into. And they like to know beforehand some sort of basic idea of what's involved . Because we have a whole tradition of thinking about things and really evaluating and taking what we do very serious. This I think is a very good great point, a great asset

of western civilization in general and so one of the things is helpful I think in terms of western Buddhism is explaining things a little bit more clearly in the beginning so that we have some idea. And you shouldn't expect from the initial explanation: "That's it, that's the complete explanation", it's not. And it's not a complete idea of how to do it and all these other things. But it gives us a general outline of what's going on. I think this is one of the reasons why His Holiness has allowed texts like the graded stages of the tantric path written by Tsong Khapa and that Jeffrey Hopkins has been translating to be published. Some chapters appear in: Tantra in Tibet, "and The Yoga of Tibet", these type of volumes.

Here again there's difference between explaining an actual practice, which he doesn't do, or explaining the theory the principle behind. His Holiness feels that it's good to explain the theory behind tantra and the theory behind these advanced methods, so the people have some idea of what it is. Because we're not really willing – as western people – to jump into something blind.

So with what I've been explaining, I think that's sort of the general idea of what I'm trying to do: to give us some idea of what's involved in Tantra, what's involved in the highest class of Tantra and what's involved in Kalachakra. So that we have some better idea of why in the world we really want to get involved with it. Also, by – seeing what's involved with it, it gives us a better feeling that it actually is something that we can do. You know, you look at these different practices and these different things and you could say: "This really doesn't have any relevance to my life".

You know, you're talking about subtle consciousness and subtle energy and all these things and really what does that mean? What's the relevance of it? I think the relevance of it is even if we don't actually have the opportunity to really practice and pursue this type of method fully ourselves. I was talking about having a certain direction and having a certain goal in life we're aiming for. If the goal that we're aiming for is to reach our fullest potentials as a human being and to become the best type of person that's person that's possible, well that's a very nice ideal and that can sustain you to a certain extent. But if you don't have confidence that it's actually something that you can do and that's possible then again it becomes just a nice dream. So here when we're talking about the different methods for "Well, how do you actually do it? How do you actually get the body of a Buddha? How do you actually get the mind of a Buddha? How do you get rid of all your shortcomings? How do you evolve to much higher states of being? If you have some confidence that in fact, "Well, there is a method; it is all laid out and in fact it's an incredible method and the method is getting more and more sophisticated" then it gives you more hope I think for what you want to do, what direction you want to go in your lifetime.

You see that it is possible, that there is a method that is very clear and is very profound, really the type of method that's being used. To think in that direction, just thinking in that direction itself and knowing that that exist and knowing that there is a whole system of how to actually work with our subtlest mind, subtlest energy and how you actually do it. Gives us the feeling that it's possible. If you know it's possible, that gives you a great more meaning in your life, much more hope. That again is some of the relevance of what I'm explaining. You shouldn't just think of it as, "This is an intellectual scheme and big deal". But it can have some practical meaning in terms of knowing, just knowing that this exists. And in-fact it's possible to have some feeling for what it is, because it really isn't so complicated that it's beyond us. That is this whole idea of putting a black line around it and saying: "Oh, it's up there, I can't possibly understand it". Things can be understood.

Let's get the body and mind more and more close together in one package. If it's just in our imagination then, although it's one package, it's a little bit distant from each other. If we deal with the subtlest awareness, the subtlest consciousness that has a subtle energy that is associated with it, that acts as its force, of how it moves. So if you generate the body out of the energy and the mind out of the consciousness – it's in one package but coming closer together. If you have a coin, a coin has 2 sides. If you make the 2 things in one package one of them out of one side and one of them out of the other side of the coin, they are going to be close together, because the 2 sides of the coin come close together – they always come in the same package.

**What's Kalachakra doing?** It's making them both out of the same side of the coin. Rather than having them out of the 2 sides of the coin, which of course do come together in on package, they're going to be even closer together if they're both out of the same side of the coin. So Kalachakra you're using the subtlest consciousness for the mind and the reflection of that consciousness as the body. So it's even closer together in one package. The subtlest energy is still there, but you're not working with it. That's the general idea of what's going on.

**Answering to the question.** Is there a difference between the different Buddha essence for example Kalachakra's body is made up differently? Different people have different energy systems – we all are different. And because we have different energy systems, some method of practice is going to be more conducive for us. So, although you might have some people that say that Kalachakra is the highest, that can be a little bit misleading. Although it's one of the most sophisticated systems, it doesn't mean that you can't attain enlightenment with any of the other systems. His Holiness says when it actually becomes time to put all our energy, all our efforts into becoming enlightened, at that time you should have already



had some experience with a lot of different meditation systems and based on your own experience and based on the close guidance of the Spiritual Master you can decide: "Well, what really is the system that I'm going to put all my efforts into what really is in tune with my particular energy system". What you do then is you'll choose which will be the completion stage practice that's going to actually achieve the body of a Buddha. Are you going to work in terms of – for some people it's more relevant to work with the energies and to think in terms of making it out of the energy, whereas with other people that might not be so conducive and it might be better to think in terms of the body as a reflection of the mind, because their energy works better in that way rather than actually some sort of forceful way with the energy.

Both an illusory body and a devoid form can be the cause for the body of a Buddha. The devoid form is generated out of the clear light mind itself, as its reflection; the illusory body is generated out of the subtlest energy accompanying the mind, to generate a devoid form, one stays in the clear light. The devoid form is a reflection of the clear eyes mind. In order to take an illusory body, one has to arise from the clear light state, in what corresponds to the bardo state.

So once you've seen what is going to be the final method that you're going to use, then you put all your efforts into the generation stage, in other words the stage of using your imagination etc. that will ripen into that. Before that, it's very helpful if you have the capacity to get introduced to all the various different types of systems. Don't mix them into a big stew! But at least have some sort of feeling for all the different possibilities so that then, when it comes time to seeing what suits you best, you have some more realistic idea. Also if you want to become omniscient and you want to be able to help everybody, well, everybody is different and everybody is going to have a different type of meditation practice and system which will be best suited for them. So it's very helpful to know all these things.

Whether you achieve enlightenment through Kalachakra or through some of the other Tantras or Dzogchen or any of these methods, the result is going to be the same.

By receiving the Kalachakra Initiation now, it opens up the possibility that may be this is the one that will suit you. Also the fact that it deals with all the things in astronomy, astrology and the making of medicines and all the other things it is a clear Tantra so it explains what is obscure in the other tantras. That is also a great benefit? Because now you can get into all these things, which otherwise would be difficult to study. There is another aspect here in Kalachakra which is not only the devoid form, but there's also what's called "unchanging bliss" unchanging blissful awareness. Again you're going to hear this in the initiation, so you might as well have some idea of what it is.

And here, in terms of getting a blissful awareness within your body it's done in terms of certain energy drops within the body and these energy drops – you have various types of methods of yoga or what ever for working with these energy drops in the body and moving them. Based on moving them you get the ordinary blissful awareness in the other tantras of the Anuttarayoga Tantra – the highest Tantra. Here in Kalachakra, it's based on getting these energy drops not only to move, but then to stabilize them. The blissful awareness is generated in terms of these energy drops, made stabilized, so that they don't move anymore. Therefore it's called "unchanging blissful awareness" because the basis for them, these energy drops are no longer changing, you've got them into a definite, stable, situation within the body, the subtle body and so, therefore this blissful awareness is more stable.

**Question: What are drops?**

**Answer :**The word "drop" is not a very easy term to have some feeling for. Maybe if you think of it as just a tiny spark. When it says sesame seed, it's just talking about the size, which is just one factor. But I think of drops in the sense of a spark, an essence of the energy.

These are the things that are quite special in Kalachakra. We are dealing with as a method.

- the unchanging blissful awareness, that we're going to use as the awareness of voidness – used as our wisdom;
- also we're generating a devoid form which is the reflection of our clear light mind.

So they're always going to talk about "void form" and "unchanging bliss", those are the usual ways that they translate it.

So you have some idea of what it is. This unchanging bliss is a more special bliss, because it's based on stabilizing the energy -the sparks or drops of energy in the body and the devoid form is a special type of form, because it's something which is just a reflection of the clear light mind. As a basis for voidness – remember we were giving the analysis of 3 points as a basis for voidness – this devoid form is something that's really special, because in general, bodies of deities were useful, we could just generate them out of our imagination at any time. And they always stay the same.

In general Anuttarayoga – we can always generate it out of our subtlest energy and it would always be available to us and

here it becomes even more special, because we can always have it as a reflection of our clear light mind, which underlies every moment. So it becomes special in that way. And the blissful awareness as the consciousness which understands voidness the unchanging blissful awareness – is more special, because its basis – these drops of energy – is more stable.

So if we have some sort of general idea of what makes Kalachakra so special then as I was saying, going to the Initiation is something that's going to be much more meaningful to us, because here is a system that may be it's going to be the system that we'll use for actually becoming enlightened, maybe it won't be. That's not really so much the point: we don't know now whether or not it's going to suit us, so we might as well, if we have the opportunity, become involved with it, get a little bit a taste of it, because then we know what all the different possibilities are. And then we see further down the line what actually is going to suit us. It's not true that the same thing has to suit everybody. We shouldn't feel it's too high too difficult to do, just because for example it has 722 deities. There is no reason to have to start it on that complicated level.

I have asked His Holiness: "Is it helpful to, let's say, practice a simpler deity beforehand. Like to do Vajrayogini or Yamantaka, because they're only one deity AND THEN SLOWLY WORK OUR WAY UP TO KALACHAKRA". His Holiness said: "No, that's not so, because Kalachakra has many different levels of practice. You can start practicing it in terms of just being a simple deity with one face, two arms, no partner, and then work on from there to increase your capacity. So in fact it presents a completely graded path of graded practices that as you feel that you have the time and you feel that you have the capacity, you could grow with it".

So these things will be available after the Initiation and there are graded practices that I've been preparing and will be available through Geshe Wangchen in London. So it's something that you can get into; it's not just something so complicated and difficult that, "forget it".

If we have some idea that this Kalachakra practice is something that is possible to get involved with, because you don't have to do it on the most sophisticated level, but you can start it whatever level you're at and if you have some idea of what makes it so special, then it really becomes a great opportunity to get involved with the practice. The whole approach in Buddhism is: here is what we want to achieve: we want enlightened; we want to totally clear out all the garbage in our minds, all our limitations; we want to evolve to the highest state possible.

### **How is that going to come about?**

It's not going to come about out of the sky. We have to actually build up the causes which will bring it about – everything follows from cause and effect. So in this sense it's a very scientific and practical type of approach.

So what are the actual causes for being able to achieve a state of enlightenment? It's the complete stage practices, in other words, when we have every thing complete that we can actually work with the subtle energy system, we can work with the subtle consciousness and mind etc. Out of that we'll actually be able to make our state of enlightenment. Where does that come from, the ability to do that? The ability to do that comes from the generation stage practices which is using your imagination and harnessing all the forces of your imagination, because by doing it in your imagination then you can get into contact with the subtle energy systems; you can get into building up the habits that will allow, let's say, like we were talking about: you have to have the flash of a light bulb in order to then get the reflection of the blue dot. So likewise you have to build up this impression on your mind, of the deity for actually your clear mind to reflect in that form; it's not going to do that by itself.

Now, how we're going to actually build up the cause for being able to do these practices with our imagination? It's by receiving the initiation, because the initiation is what basically cleans the ground out and plants the seeds, plants the seeds for success.

### **INITIATION.**

There are 3 different types ceremonies that are done for planting seeds which will enable us to have success in our practice. These are known as

- A Initiation or empowerment (Tib. WANG).
- B Subsequent permission (Tib. JE-NANG ),
- C Gathering together the MANTRA (Tib. NGAK. DU).

What's the difference? Sometimes it's not so obvious what the difference is or what's going on there. An empowerment or initiation, "empowerment" is actually closer to the Tibetan word, because the word means "power", it gives you the power to do something and what it does, it empowers you to visualize yourself as a deity, basically. We're talking in general. So

you might ask: "What about in sutra methods are there any of these deities going on?" Yes, there are deity practices in sutra. For example to learn how to concentrate on that form of the Buddha. There are other practices which are done for purification, for example Vajrasattva in which you visualize a figure on top of your head – a deity.

But if you're going actually to visualize yourself as a deity then you require an initiation or empowerment.

Now the subsequent permission – the way that Serkong Rinpoche used to describe it – is that the initiation is like getting a sword and the subsequent permission (Je Nang) is sharpening the sword. So in fact the Je Nang is something which is more advanced than the initiation. Most people in the West think it's the opposite way around. They think that the permission is something little and the initiation is something great. Whereas in fact it's the exact opposite way around. Because when you take one of these Je Nang (permissions) then you have to be able to visualize yourself as a deity. If you haven't received an initiation before, you can't visualize yourself as a deity. So all you can imagine is that you're getting the blessings or the inspiration or there's the deity in front of you, but you can't actually do the whole thing in terms of visualizing yourself as the deity. But once you've received an initiation then you can visualize yourself as the deity and it sharpens it. Makes to see it's much more sharp for the body, speech, mind and all three together.

The way it works is that you don't have to have the initiation for every single deity you get the permission for. If you have an initiation – like we talked about the 4, classes of Tantra – if you have a full initiation for let's say any deity in the 1<sup>st</sup> class of Tantra (Ritual or Kriya), then you can receive the permission of any other deity within that class. So the most usual initiation in the 1<sup>st</sup> class of Tantra is the full initiation of Chenrezig (Avalokitesvara) in the aspect of 11 heads and 1000 arms. That's the most commonly given one, in fact the major one that's given in that class. Once you've received that, you can receive any permission for any deity in that entire class. Because now you have the power to visualize yourself as a deity, in that class.

If you've received an initiation of any deity in one of the higher classes, let's say in Anuttarayoga Tantra, then it's good for all 4 classes, all the classes below it as well. So that's why in the beginning, let's say, sometimes you get like Lama Zopa gave in Bodhgaya last year, this collection of the 100 initiations and a lot of that have these permissions with it and in the beginning they give the Yamantaka Initiation. The reason is that you need an initiation first in the highest class and that serves as the basis for getting anything after that. As I said, the permission is a sharpening of the sword and making the seeds more clear for body, speech and mind, once you actually have the power to visualize yourself as the deity, and then, the gathering of the mantra makes the power of the mantra even more firm. The way you can tell what you are receiving, if it's not clear to you what you're receiving, is that an initiation is always given from a Mandala. A mandala basically is a round symbol it doesn't have to be round of course, but it's a symbol of the world-system of the deity. So usually you have a little pagoda-set-up and inside it will be a picture of the palace of the deity or it could be many other different forms but at least there's some sort of Mandala there.

The initiation is given from that Mandala and I'll explain later what that actually means. That's not so obvious what that means,

A permission is usually given from a torma (cakes which are sculptured out of barley flower (tsampa) and usually have some butter sculpture and things on them). In India they use this tsampa; in England they use marzipan for example in a lot of places and in other places they use different types of cake or whatever. It really doesn't matter what's it's made out of.

So you have a cake and the cake is generated into the form of the deity and the initiation is given in terms of this deity generated in front. You can tell that it is a permission because they are going to actually have a picture on top of it, like you have in this room, that's held up and various things are done with that during the ceremony.

Then for the gathering of the Mantra, the 'way that that's done is very interesting. There's a whole problem with the Sanskrit letters of the alphabet and what actually are the syllables of the MANTRA. Very often there's going to be some mistakes along the line in history of copying out the Mantra, specially when you're dealing with people for whom Sanskrit is not their native language. So you have this special ceremony which is to ensure that all the letters – the consonants and vowels of the Mantra – are correct. What you have is usually a mirror and this mirror is usually a polished metal disc and on that with red powder you usually will draw the different letters of the Sanskrit alphabet and they'll be in a certain geometric design. This geometric design will be different for each deity and this geometric design sometimes will be in a triangle going around – a sort of spiralling in – or other times will be in all sorts of other different configurations.

And then what you do in the ceremony is that the person will transfer the mantra from this design in which the letters are laid out into actually writing out the Mantra with powder and that will be done in terms of saying: the vowel is the 4<sup>th</sup> one from the right and the consonant is the 5<sup>th</sup> one down in the 2<sup>nd</sup> column. They do it like that so that there's no room for any mistake because you have laid out the geometric pattern the way that it should be, and then it becomes very specific, then

you'll have no doubts whatsoever about the mantra. So it makes it much more firm and stable. So this is the gathering of the mantra ceremony. Very rare, by the way.

So we have these 3 different types of ceremonies that plant seeds.

In terms of the Anuttarayoga Tantra, which is what Kalachakra is, we have basically four types of initiations within the Initiation. Now we'll get into the structure of what's going to be happening. Let's first talk about it in general.

In Anuttarayoga Tantra you have first of all the "Preliminaries Ceremony" and then you have the actual initiation. So the first day when we're there of the initiation will actually be the preliminaries will be in terms of passing out all sorts of things that we'll use during the initiation, like they'll pass out different pieces of long grass etc. that we'll put under our mattress or our pillow for examining our dreams. There will be all sorts of things that will go on in this Preliminary Ceremony. It will be explained at that time.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> day will be the actual initiation. An Actual Initiation in Anuttarayoga Tantra has 4 different initiations in it, in general. These initiations are:

- A. Vase Initiation or empowerment.
- B. Secret Initiation or empowerment.
- C. Wisdom Initiation or empowerment.
- D. Fourth Initiation or empowerment. (Sometimes it's called the Word initiation or empowerment).

The vase Initiation

(A) In general Anuttarayoga Tantra consists of the Common Initiations for the Disciple (there are 5 of them) and the Vajra Master Initiation (1)

What are the 5? These are:

1	Water Initiation	The 5 initiations of a disciple
2	Crown Initiation	
3	Vajra Initiation	
4	Bell	
5	Name	
6	Vajra Master Initiation	

That's the basic structure of the Vase Initiation.

To give you an idea of what class of Tantra you're receiving an initiation into: Each of the 4 classes of Tantra is going to have a different number of these initiations. So if you're receiving an Initiation and you're not told or you haven't really caught what class of Tantra this is you can tell very easily by the number of initiations that are given. So now we have 5+1 for the Vase initiation.

1st class of Tantra	Kriya (ritual)	only the first 2 of the 5 disciple Initiation
2nd class of Tantra	Carya (behavioural):	all 5 of the disciple initiations.
3rd class of Tantra	Yoga Tantra (integrated Tantra)	has not only the 5 of the disciple, but also the Vajra 'Master initiation. It's has the complete Vase Initiation.
4th class of Tantra	The highest class	all 4: the vase, secret wisdom and the fourth or word initiation.

I am saying this basically because a lot of us have received initiations and very often we don't know what in the world we have received. This is the general structure of the different types of initiations, but an individual Lama may decide in some cases to do it slightly differently. So don't get confused.

The bodhisattva vows are something which you have in all 4 classes of tantra. The bodhisattva vows are basically dealing with you know, there are the 2 levels of bodhicitta. You just wish to be able to help everybody; you actually involve yourself in doing it. This is what the bodhisattva vows are about. These are basically very practical guidelines of how you're going to be most effective for helping other people. So for example one of the vows starts off with "I'm" not going to always praise myself and put down other people. "Let's think about it. If a person is trying to help other people, would you go to a person for help, who's always saying: "I'm the greatest, these other people are no good". You would be quite

suspicious about this person. So these are giving very practical guidelines if you really want to be best help to everybody then you shouldn't always put yourself up and belittle everybody else. So like that there are all these different guidelines. Basically there are 18 root vows and 46 secondary ones. You can read about these.

Any initiation has them. In any initiation in any of the 4 classes there's the taking of the bodhisattva vows. That's the actual dividing line of whether or no you're going to receive the initiation. This is something that His Holiness makes very clear. He says: "Now comes the time for the bodhisattva vows and here is where we actually make the decision".

If you really want to get into the practice and you feel that you can accept these guidelines then here is where you actually do that. Then you can go on and do the visualizations, and things – the process of the initiation. If you feel that you're not ready to accept these guidelines, that's fine, there's no problem, but you at this point then become an observer, a neutral observer and these are the actual words His Holiness uses in English. Just be a neutral observer and watch and if you have respect for what's going on and you have some understanding, that makes it even better. But at that point you, would stop actually participating and doing all the different visualizations and things that are being described. So, taking the bodhisattva vows is the dividing line, where you actually going to step in to it or just stay outside and be an observer.

III. Then, in addition, there are the Tantric Vows.

Remember, we had this structure in the Vase Initiation there are the 5 disciple initiations and the 1 Vajra Master initiation. If, there is a Vajra Master Initiation then there's the taking of, the Tantric Vows. , which means that out of the 4 classes of Tantra you only have the Tantric vows in the top 2 classes:

- Yoga Tantra; and
- Anuttarayoga Tantra, because

The other thing that's involved very much in any initiation is the various vows that we take. There are vows which are vowed restraints in certain guidelines that we follow for our behaviour and there's also the close bonds that we' might have to the practice. In terms of vows, what's discussed, if you want to see reality then for seeing reality you need wisdom. And the wisdom is like having a sharp axe, to actually cut through and see reality. But if you don't have good aim then even if you have a sharp axe, you're not going to be able to actually hit the point. So they say that concentration is like having the good aim, you can always use the axe and cut the tree. But even if you have a sharp axe and you have a good aim, if you don't have the strength to be able to chop, then that's not going to be of any help. So the strength is what comes from ethical self-control, or discipline. And if you aren't able to control your external behaviour than it's going to have some control over the mind itself. So we have these various different types of vows and they always say that success in Tantra comes from being able to follow these guidelines. This is something which is very very true. It's an extremely important point.

You have 3 different types of vows:

#### **Vows for individual liberation (Sanskrit: PRATIMOKSHA)**

These can be either as a lay-person, which would be like the vows that we follow when we stay here: of not killing and lying etc. On a more advanced level you can become a novice (a monk or nun) or become a fully ordained monk or nun. These vows called individual liberation. They are not seen as a punishment something that will liberate and help free us. This is in terms of how basically we follow cause and effect. If we have various problems and difficulties they come as a result of having acted in a destructive manner. Because we acted, destructively and did something negative then as a result we get various problems. If you act in a constructive (positive) way then it brings about happiness. So if you want to be free from your problems then the best way to do that is to stop acting destructively. This is what the vows are about, because they give us certain guidelines to follow that will prevent us from being problems on ourselves.

It's also liberating in another sense: you know if you're trying to stop smoking, if you just say: "Well I'm going to not smoke". And you don't make something definite about that, then the problem comes up that each time you feel like having a cigarette or each time that people around you are having a cigarette, you have to make the decision over and over again: "Will I take that cigarette or not?" So in fact, if you try to stop smoking in that way, it's going to be quite difficult because you always have to make the decision over and over again and it's really very nerve-racking and difficult. But if you take a vow and you say: "That's it" And you do it in front of someone that you respect like your spiritual master or whatever, then that frees you from the indecisiveness of every single time having to make the decision whether or not to take that cigarette, because it's decided already, finished: "I'm not going to smoke".

So also to actually take a vow rather than just stopping, let's say lying or killing, is going to save us from that indecision of always having to make the decision so in that sense as well, it's very liberating. In order actually to get into a Tantra, according to Tsong Khapa, it's necessary to have some sort of level of this general sort of vows for individual liberation,

which could be simply on the level that "I'm going to restrain myself from acting in a gross destruction manner. Like they talk about the 10 non-virtues and this type of business. Just on a general level it could be that. It doesn't have to be that you're actually a monk or a nun. They have a Vajra Master Initiation.

So if you're thinking in terms of what initiation have I received and what vows have I taken (because you might not even be aware of what you did):if it was any initiation whatsoever it had the bodhisattva vows and it was any of the 2 higher classes of initiation: Yoga or Anuttarayoga, it had the Tantric vows in addition. These Tantric Vows are again guidelines of how you're going to be most successful in the practices. These will be things like you shouldn't belittle your teacher, because the teacher is the one who's actually going to, show you how to do all the practices. So if you start to put your teacher down, then you're going to doubt what he says and if you doubt what he says then you are never going to be able to really get into following his instructions. So, it's a very practical type of advice.

For this there are 14 root vows and 8 secondary ones. You can read about these as well.

After that there are some close bonds to the practice, which are also part of the Tantric Vows. This will get us into the whole subject of the Six Session Yoga, which is "a particular practice for helping us keep the vows.

We were talking about the vows, because are 2 things that they always emphasize that are very very important in any initiation and in any tantric practice: one is the spiritual master and that having a very special and close relation to the spiritual master is what really is going to be the foundation for your success in that practice and likewise keeping the vows. Concerning the Spiritual Master, you can look at this in several different ways. They always say that you should see the Lama as being the actual deity or a Buddha. That's very true in terms of linking yourself to the whole lineage and to the whole line of the practice. There's a big difference between just imagining that you're Napoleon or Donald Duck or something like that which you just sort of make up in your head, and actually going to an event which is done very seriously and here you have a spiritual master and he can give you. The names of all the masters going all the way back to the Buddha that this practice has been done and it has been done successfully and so you get this whole feeling that you're tying in to a whole line that goes all the way back so that when you're doing this it gives you confidence that other people have done this, other people have been able to have success with this and so now I'm doing something which is very valid, which is a very safe type of path. This gives a lot of strength to your practice and confidence in what you're doing. Because, sometimes, later on you might think: "Oh, what I'm doing is crazy and why I'm doing this?" But if you think back to this event that you went to, you'll remember His Holiness, and you'll remember the whole tradition that you were becoming part of, then it gives you a little bit more having your feet on the ground.

Now, the Guru, is inseparable from the deity in the sense that he has actually realized this system and whole practice and is bringing you into his world system. (There's a book by Steve Batchelor "Alone with others" in which he points out the other side of this, which I think is a very good insight. He says in this book that not only is the point that you see the master as the deity, but also to see the deity as The master. To see the deity as the Master the whole point of that is to make this thing human. Sometimes if we think of all these deities then it's just something really far-fetched, you know all these holy beings walking around and it's very hard to relate to these deities).

What does it mean to be an enlightened being, what does it actually mean to be a deity? It's to be like this human being, like this spiritual master that they're able to relate to people, they're able to handle all sorts of different situation and it makes it, as I say, much more human and alive. It's very very important to have a feeling that these practices are alive and that what you're aiming for is not to be some unworldly being that sits up on a throne somewhere, radiating out beams and that's it. But rather that you actually are able to really have deep and meaningful contact with other people as you can see from the example of the spiritual master. So really the lama is most essential in the practice, because he always keeps you grounded to what you're aiming for. What you're aiming for is both all these high realizations of that lama, but also the way that that lama integrates that with really being a human being in the full sense of all the qualities, realizing the full potentials of a human being.

Keeping the vowed restraints, you follow certain guidelines in your life which will make it possible for you, let's say in terms of the bodhisattva vows, to be of best help to others and in terms of the tantric vow to have the most success in the practice. So again they're very practical guidelines to follow in your behaviour and that's something that I always feel as a great deal of relief that somebody is actually showing the guidelines of what's going to be the proper way to act in different situations. Very often if we don't have guidelines it's very hard to know what's really going to be the best way to relate to other people. But if somebody points out to you that, if you always are criticizing other people and always praising yourself then in fact other people, when they see you criticizing people, there going to likewise criticize you, they're going to feel very uncomfortable with a person who is always criticizing others. Whereas if you remain humble and respectful for others then likewise people are going to have more open to you in general.

In the Six Session Yoga you recite the 18 Bodhisattva vows (you don't recite the similarly vows), and the 14 root Tantric vows and 7 secondary ones. In this text you'll come across some extra ones; there are extra ones, but in the technical count there are 14 and 8.

Remember we were talking about how many initiations there and there was the Vase, the Secret, the Wisdom and the Fourth Initiation and in the Vase, we had the 5 disciple initiations and those 5 initiations are involved with the 5 Dhyani Buddhas (Dhyani isn't the most common term for it in Sanskrit; somebody pointed out that there is in fact one text in term which they're called, but usually they not called that). But in any case, it doesn't really matter. What are they? You know you have a certain type of omniscient mind of a Buddha that has deep awareness and there are different aspects of that deep awareness that you can have and these are characterized by the 5 Buddha families (the 5 Dhyani Buddhas):

- I. The deep awareness that's like a mirror that can reflect everything.
- II. The deep awareness that can be aware of the equality of things in the sense of: I can be aware that everybody in this room is equally a human being; everybody in this room equally has a right to be happy and doesn't want to have problems. You can see the equality of things.
- III. The deep awareness to see the individuality of things: I can see that this person has his own individual background and the person next to here of him has a different type of individual background. So there's that type of deep awareness of the individuality of things.
- IV. The deep awareness to accomplish things: I'm aware that I need to talk to you or to stand up or sit down or whatever.
- V. The deep awareness with which you see the actual nature of things: you can see what things are, what their deepest nature is.

The Tantric Vows have actually 2 different aspects. One is technically called the Tantric Vows and those are for all 5 Buddha families in general. So in common it's dealing with the whole thing.

After that you also have what's called the 19 SAMAYA (Sanskrit word) (Tib. :Dam. Tsig). Perhaps an English word for it is "Close Bonds". Something to bond you closely with each of the 5 individual Buddha families. So you have 19 of these and there will be for example 6 for one family, 4 for another, it's not a symmetrical breakdown of the same number for each family. But these are for the individual families.

The Six Session Practice is basically a way of keeping mindful of these 19.

I'll give you an example. We have 5 aggregate factors in our experience. That is talking about basically, in each moment of our experience that there are 5 bags of things. And in each moment of our experience we're going to have at least one, if not more, things from each of these 5 bags. So one bag is the aggregate factor of forms. So you are going to have some sort of sight, or sound or smell or tactile feeling, in each moment of your experience. Another bag is the bag of feelings; some sort of feeling in each experience happiness, un-happiness or whatever. Another bag is going to be a bag of a certain type of recognition, that you recognize something. You are aware, it doesn't have to be specific what it is, you can just recognize there's some thing in front of me. Then there's the aggregate factor of other effecting variables. In other words any other type of effecting variable like feeling sleepy, feeling excited, feeling attachment, feeling angry; all these other variable factors, one or more of them is going to be present in each moment of your experience. So we've had forms, some sort of feeling, some sort of recognition; we have some other effecting variables which change any affect what you are doing; and then the 5<sup>th</sup> one is some type of consciousness; eye, ear, mind or whatever type of consciousness. Those are also associated one with each of the Buddha families.

And you have 5 types of disturbing attitudes as well. The 5 basic disturbing attitudes are also going to be linked with these 5 Buddha families. Like infatuated desire; you infatuated with something and you make it, you exaggerate it to more than what it is and you're attached to it. Or you have jealousy or you would have pride or you would have close-minded ignorance; you close, you don't want to deal with things or you would have hostility and anger, this type of thing.

Then you have these close bonds to the 5 Buddha families. So let's mix all together and see how it fits together. What you're doing is, you have a certain disturbing attitude. Let's deal with the Family of Ratnasambhava.

These 5 Buddha families have the names of the 5 Dhyani Buddhas

1. Vairocana.
2. Ratnasambhava.
3. Amitabha.
4. Amogasiddhi.

## 5. Akshobhya.

Let's take the example of Ratnasambhava. Ratnasambhava is purifying the disturbing attitude of pride and miserliness, and working with the aggregate of feelings. What in its perfected form it is going to be the deep awareness to see the equality of things. So what's preventing me from being able to see that everybody is equal and everybody has an equal right to happiness; it's this whole feeling of pride, this disturbing attitude that I'm better than everybody else, miserliness with which I want to keep everything to myself and not share with other people. So what are the practices that are going to bond me closely to Ratnasambhava? It's the 4 types of giving:

- I will give to other people material things;
- I'll give them the teachings;
- I'll give them freedom from fear;
- I'll give them love.

So the aggregate that I'm working with here is feelings. In other words if I want to overcome my miserliness and my pride, I have to work with feeling to see the equality of everybody and to give equally to everybody. This is this whole sort of picture of Ratnasambhava and the close bonds to keep you close to this family of Ratnasambhava.

Like this you can do a similar analysis for each of the 5 Buddha Families and these 19 practices or close bonds, which bond you closely to these families. So you see, there are many deep levels that you could go into about what's going on with these 19 close bonds. I'll give you an idea of what the practices are. We start with the

- 4 for Ratnasambhava; 4 types of giving.
- 6 for Vairocana,
  1. 3 refuges;
  2. 3 types of ethical training or discipline, which is to restrain yourself from negative acts to engage in positive acts and also to do anything that will be of benefit to others. Vairocana is working with close-mindedness (to open yourself up).
- 3 for Amitabha.
  1. to uphold the Sutra teachings.
  2. to uphold the 1<sup>st</sup> 2 Classes of Tantra;
  3. to uphold the 2<sup>nd</sup> 2 Classes of Tantra.

These are to work with your attachments, by upholding everything, so that you're not attached to one thing or another, which will allow you to see the individuality of things.
- 4 for Akshobhya .
  - 1 to have always the Vajra. Be aware of what the Vajra stands for, which is this blissful awareness or method.
  - 2 to always keep the Bell, which means what it stands for which is in terms of, the Bell stands for wisdom of voidness
  - 3 to keep the Mudra. The Mudra is the sealing partner, which would be like the union of method + wisdom.
  - 4 to always keep your close bond with the spiritual master.

And that's working with anger in order to actually see the reality (the actual nature of things). To see the nature of things through the Vajra, Bell, the Mudra, Guru etc.
- 2 for Amoghasiddhi .
  - 1 To make the different types of offerings;
  - 2 to uphold all your other commitments and everything else you've promised.

That's to work with jealousy you know when we're jealous we don't make offerings to other people or accept their good qualities and to get into this deep awareness to accomplish things.

In the Kalachakra system then is the sixth Buddha Family of Vajrasattva. The importance of this is, we have the Six Session Practice and the Six Session practice is a way to keep these 19.

The Six Session Practice was first made by the 1<sup>st</sup> Panchen Lama, who was the Teacher of the 5<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama. He was the first one who made up a Six Session Practice. That was very kind of him and we have a lot of different versions of it in which it allows us to be mindful of these close bonds, each day.

First of all there are different levels or versions of links that you can do this Six Session Practice with. There's a really short one with only one verse, 4 lines. There's what's called the short one -abbreviated one – which is a little bit longer. Then



there's the full Six Session Yoga. In the Kalachakra book it has the full Session Yoga, but you can get the shorter ones in other books and then there's specifically one in relation to Kalachakra. So there's 4 different lengths of it that we can do. Any of them will do, it doesn't matter which one you will do, it depends on you what you want to do. The important thing is to be mindful and actually be a giving person each day and these type of things not to just recite: "I'll be a giving person", then lock everything up in your house.

When it talks about a six session practice, it means that you should do it 6 times a day, which if you're going to do it ideally, the way that it would be done is six separate individual times – 3 during the day – 3 during the evening at different times. Hardly anybody does that, but that would be the full ideal way to do it. The way that most people do it is 3 times together in the morning and 3 times together in the evening. If you are doing it that way for the one verse and the short one, well they're so short, you just repeat the whole thing 3 times. For the long one – and the one in association with Kalachakra – then they have instructions of what to do. You repeat the whole thing once and only certain parts of it the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> time. That you can follow in the text it says quite clearly how to do that. If you can't find time to do it like that – 3 times in the morning and 3 times in the evening – it's also permitted to do all six together at one time. It really doesn't matter, because you're not doing it the full way anyway of six individual ways. So you can do it 2 times, 3 times a day or 6 times 1 time a day or however you want to do it. Serkong Rinpoche has explained it like that.

Also it's not necessary that each time during the day you do the same one. You might like go into the Kalachakra one, but it's very long. So you might not want to do that 6 times, because it's going to take an awful long time. So you can do that once and you can do a shorter one the other times, it doesn't matter. The point is to be mindful of these 6 close bonds in either a short or a long way. By the way, in Kalachakra you have some extra vows in addition. So you have an additional 7 root vows and an additional 25 secondary vows, which are called the 25 types of tamed and involved behaviour. These are just further things in terms of the actual practice of Kalachakra.

So when you receive the Initiation, then usually this is the commitment for any of the Anuttarayoga Tantra – the highest class of tantras, that you do a Six Session Yoga – Six Session Practice – and this you'll find specifically within the GELUKPA Tradition that it will mention that. You shouldn't feel that in the other traditions they don't have that. They do have it, but they don't have an actual six session practice as a way of keeping it, but they certainly do have these 19 close bonds and you are supposed to keep them.

## **THE ACTUAL KALACHAKRA INITIATION ITSELF.**

In Kalachakra we have 11 initiations.

Kalachakra is almost on every point a more elaborate system than you find in any of other tantras. Here we have 11 initiations and what it does, it plants seeds for success in analogy with the stages of the growth of a person through the various stages of life. Kalachakra tends to have a lot more analogies than in the other systems. As I explained, there's the analogy in terms of the internal and external cycles. So here in the initiation as well analogies are made. The analogies are going to be made with how a person grows up: all the different stages in life. Each of the Initiations will take us through a different stage in life.

First we have 7 initiations of entering like a child. I'll give you the names:

1. Water Initiation.
2. Crown Initiation
3. Ear-tassel Initiation. An ear-tassel is a piece of ribbon that's hung over the ears. You see it sometimes during initiations, they will have people actually put on a crown and then they'll put on this ribbon that goes over the ears.
4. Vajra + Bell.
5. Tamed and involved behaviour initiation.
6. Name Initiation.
7. JE. Nang Initiation (subsequent permission initiation).

- Those are the seven of entering like a child, and then there is an additional one, called the Vajra Master Initiation, which is to conclude it. That's not counted as a separate one from the seven.
- Then you have the 4 higher and the 4, highest (or literally higher than high) initiations.
- Remember, we spoke about the vase, secret, wisdom and fourth initiations
- So we're going to get 2 sets of these: higher vase, secret, wisdom and fourth and highest vase, secret, wisdom and fourth.
- And then after that we have what's called the Great Vajra Master Over-Lord Initiation.

### How does that make that 11?

First of all, one lama made a very interesting comment, which I always find quite helpful. He said: "Symmetry is stupid". Among Western people, we tend to have this very ingrained thing within us which is to grasp for inherent symmetry – it seems to be our inheritance from the Greeks. That if there are 5 of this, there has to be 5 of that if there's four of this, there has to be 4 of that. In the Tibetan systems we don't find these nice neat symmetries, and Kalachakra is an outstanding example of where we are not going to find neat symmetries.

The way you get eleven is like this:

- First of all you get the 7 of entering like a child with the Vajra Master one, that counts as 7. It's not counted as a separate one.
  - Then we had 4 higher and 4 highest.
  - So the higher Vase and the highest Vase count as 1.
  - The higher Secret and the highest secret count as 1.
  - The higher wisdom, the highest wisdom and the higher fourth, those 3 count as 1.
  - The highest fourth counts as 1 by itself.
- So, that makes eleven.

The Great Vajra Master Over-Lord one is actually a repeat of a few of the initiations that came earlier, but done in a slightly different way and so it doesn't count as a separate one.

### Each empowerment will do 2 things:

- a. It will purify a certain stain that we have,
- b. it will plant seeds for success.

This is similar to what I was describing with what a Buddha is. A Buddha is somebody who has cleared out or purified all their limitations. So purifying a stain sort of goes in that side and someone who has evolved fully and realized all their potentials. So laying a seed goes towards that side. So each initiation will work on those 2 levels.

It will plant a seed on 2 different levels:

- A. In terms of a conscious experience during the initiation.
- B. Actually formally laying some sort of seed of potential to ripen in the future. This will then be the causes for purifying ourselves and growing.

In general, in Anuttarayoga Tantra, with the four initiations, generally we are doing things like purifying your body, speech, mind and then all 3 together. This is in general what's going to be happening in the higher and the highest – those 4 – they also will be working to purify body, speech, mind and all 3 together, the same basic function. But in general Anuttarayoga Yoga, is the vase initiation you have the five disciple initiations and the one of the Vajra Master, and that is working in general to purify the body, but these five disciple initiation work more specifically with purifying the five aggregates.

Now in Kalachakra, the equivalent type of thing are the 7 of entering like a child. But that's not called the Vase Initiation, because you have the 4 higher and the 4 highest in which you get a Vase etc.). So although, it's similar to what's called the Vase and the other initiations, it's sort of more like a "preliminary", it's not actually called the Vase Initiation here in Kalachakra. It's just a different way of assigning names; it's going to do a similar type of function to what was done by the Vase and the other ones. The purification and the laying of seeds is going to be much much more extensive than we have in the usual Anuttarayoga Tantras. In the usual Anuttarayoga Initiations the 5 Disciple ones simply purify the 5 aggregates, one by one, and plant seeds for the 5 Buddha families, one by one, and that's it. Here you get a much much huger system which is in keeping Kalachakra being so extensive. As they say the larger the basis for purification, the more complete the whole transformation is going to be. '

### Let's go through these 7 what they're actually going to be working with.

1	Water Initiation	is going to purify the 5 elements in our body; so we are going to start off with purifying the earth, water, fire, wind and space. These are purified in the sense of, they will be transformed into deities, which sort of symbolizes their purity.
2	Crown Initiation	is going to do the same thing for our 5 aggregates; so the aggregate factors of each moment of our experience of form, of feeling, recognition, some additional variable and a type of consciousness.
3	Ear-tassel Initiation	is going to purify the 10 energy winds within the body we have 10 different types of energy winds; these are basically: We have an upward going energy, which deals with things going up and down the up per part of our body so like

		<p>for example food and things being swallowed and going down or throwing up or these type 'of things that come back up: sneezing coughing; these type of energies that are going in and out the throat. Another type of energy in the body is called the down-ward voiding energy which is the downward – going energy that has to do with either releasing solid or liquid things out of the bottom parts of our body or keeping them inside. Then there is the equalizing energy which is the energy that has to do with digestion. Then there is the all-pervading energy; the all-pervading energy has to do with the energy of motion in the body, moving.</p> <p>Then there's the life sustaining energy or winds which sustains our life and keeps the heart beating – that type of stuff. Then there are 5 energies which are associated with the 5 different senses: sight, hearing, smelling, tasting and touching. So your 3<sup>rd</sup> Initiation is going to purify these ten energy winds and again generate them into the form of deities.</p> <p>You know I was explaining the 722 deities and the Mandala. They're all representing the purification of all sorts of different aspects of it. So some of them are purifications of our elements, some our aggregates, some our energy winds, etc., it becomes a huge system.</p>
4	Vajra + Bell Initiation	will purify the right and left channel.
5	Tamed and involved behaviour Initiation	is going to purify the different sensors (sense-powers) we have. We have the photosensitive cells of our eyes, you know some physical cells in our eyes that can respond to sight or light. We have sound-sensitive cells in our ears. We have smell-sensitive cells in our nose etc. So it purifies these sensors and their objects.
6	Name Initiation	is dealing with our action organs: our hands and feet and the actions that they're involved with, which would be to hold things, to walk etc.
7	The subsequent permission initiation	Kalachakra presents a system of 6 aggregates and 6 elements; the 6 <sup>th</sup> aggregate is the aggregate of deep awareness, (Tib. Yeshe) which is underlying each moment of our experience the 6 <sup>th</sup> element is the element of consciousness. The subsequent permission purifies those 2.

The purification has an analogy similar to the stages of growth, so there is a whole correspondence made here of the 7 are like first washing the child you know, its called the water initiation – washing the child and then the baby is getting his first hair cut, so you have the crown and getting the ear pierced (Indian culture little babies have their ears pierced). So there you get the ear-tassel, and like that there's a whole correspondence that's drawn with each of the Initiations and a stage of how a baby develops through childhood. Now the Vajra Master empowerment comes after these 7. What this deals with is, usually you're given in the other Anuttarayoga tantras the 3 close bonds of Akshobhya. There are 4, but you're given just three of them to hold the vajra, to hold the bell, and to have a seal or mudra.

Here, in Kalachakra, what is a special feature is that you're generated not as a couple at that point, but you're generated as a single deity – because at each stage of the initiation you're going to be generated into a different form. You're generated as a single deity and instead of getting the seal of having a partner at that point it's just the seal of having a fully developed body. So it's like at the end of childhood, you have now a fully developed body.

After that you get the 4 higher and the 4 highest Initiations and these are analogous to the stages of going through puberty and becoming an adult. So they will purify different levels of sexual desire that you would have as you go through adolescence. You know, you have desire to hold hands with somebody and kiss and eventually as you get a little bit older your desires increase. So it will purify these stages that we go through as we go through being a teenager and becoming an adult. Also it will be analogous to the levels of spiritual development that we would go through for example in terms of being a lay-person, a novice, a fully ordained monk or nun and an analogy will also be made with those stages of development. So like that all the different initiations will sort of take us through stages of growth from being an infant all the way up to being a full adult and someone who has gone the whole way in the path.

Now there are 3 levels of extensiveness of giving the Initiation and you can give either just the seven of entering like a child this is what His Holiness did in Wisconsin for instance, in America. And that empowers you to do the practices on the generation-stage which would be the practices with your imagination and doing what is called Sadhana. Sadhana literally means a method of accomplishment or actualization. And it is a practice that you do which is sort of like, you know, there is a whole, almost like an opera, of visualization of all the different things that you go through, a huge, long opera. And the Sadhana is, basically you get like the script of the opera, and you read through this what you are supposed to be visualizing,

because it is quite long and complicated, and so you read through this and you imagine that all of this is happening as you go through it. And that is basically a Sadhana and by doing that with your imagination and doing it over and over again each day, then it builds up a very strong impression on you, and each specific part of what you are doing will act as a cause for ripening into something actually happening with the energy-systems. Now it might not be terribly obvious what they actually ripens into, that is why you need to get teachings, not only on what actually you are supposed to be visualizing, but what each thing is doing. But you should be confident beforehand that nothing in it is arbitrary and everything in it has a definite purpose, and usually quite a few levels of purpose of what is going on. So it is not just some crazy thing going on. So the seven of entering like a child empower you to do the generation stage practices, to do the Sadhana.

Then on the middle level you receive 11 initiations. Which 11 do we receive?

We receive the 7 of entering like a child, which of course includes the Vajra Master one. Out of the higher ones we receive the higher Vase, the higher Secret, the higher Wisdom. We don't receive the higher Fourth because that was included in the same category as the 2 Wisdom Initiations, so we receive the highest Fourth. So the 1<sup>st</sup> 3 of the higher ones and the fourth of the highest. That's 11. And that's what His Holiness will be giving in Switzerland. This empowers us to do in addition to the generation stage practices, it empowers us to do all the complete stage practices as well, it empowers us to listen to and receive all the teachings on everything in Kalachakra and also to be able to explain it to others, if we understand it. So on the 3<sup>rd</sup> level, the most extensive level, everything is given. So you get the 7 of entering like a child with its Vajra Master Initiation. All 4 higher, all 4 highest and the Great Vajra Master Over-Lord Initiation as well. And the only thing that that will empower us further to do is to actually give the initiation to other people. That we won't be receiving since that it's not so relevant to any of us here.

### **Initiations are given from Mandalas.**

MANDALA literally means a round symbol and it's a symbol in the sense that it's something from which you can take the essence of meaning. Of course it doesn't have to be round. Again symmetry is stupid. It's just a word which is talking about an entirety rather than an actual shape.

So they're many different types of symbols (round symbols). Usually, on one level it's talking about the symbolic world of the deity. So it would be his entire world, usually it has different elements in it, a Mount Meru and a whole palace. Most of the time when we think of a Mandala we're thinking of the actual symbolic round world – the symbolic world of the deity in which every single element is symbolic. Just as we had all the different arms and faces which are symbols for (symbolizing) different things, likewise in the building of the Mandala, in the Palace, all the different architectural parts of the Palace will be symbolic of different things. You have this number of pillars which stand for this number of realizations or whatever. The different types of initiations we have: Vase, Secret, Wisdom and Fourth, are given from different types of Mandalas, different types of round symbols.

Now, a Vase Initiation in general, can be given from 4 different types of Mandalas. I'll go into this, because it raises some special features about Kalachakra and it might be a little bit confusing and it might be helpful for you for the future.

A Vase Initiation can be given from the symbolic world of a deity which is a:

#### **I CLOTH MANDALA**

It's a round symbol drawn on a cloth. Basically you have a picture of the Mandala, which is either painted on a piece of cloth or an actual photograph in modern times. You have usually a little pagoda that's built and on the bottom of the pagoda they've put down a piece of cloth or a painting of the Mandala and there it is. You should realize what these paintings are. It basically is an architectural blue-print in 2 dimensions of a building so it's a floor plan. If it's a cloth Mandala it's laid down flat. Basically it's what the floor looks like and then the walls are sliced down the corners and laid flat. Then there are various archways like the little things on top here are archways and they would actually stand up. So everything in the Mandala can be put back together again as a 3-dimensional building.

#### **II POWDER MANDALA.**

This is the 2<sup>nd</sup> type it can be given from. A Powder Mandala is a Mandala which is made exactly like this, except out of powdered coloured rocks. You know, sometimes you get with the American Indians – the Navahos – they make sand-paintings. It's like that. It's very complicated, because you can see how complicated that is. It's made out of very fine powdered rocks.

#### **III. BODY MANDALA**

A Body Mandala is a Mandala which is a world system of the deities in which all the different parts of the body of the

Spiritual Master are generated into deities and into the different parts of the building. So each part of the body is generated into either the deities or parts of the building. So the four sides of the body, the front, back, the 2 sides are generated into the 4 sides of the building, using the energy systems. We would see it in our imagination, but actually the parts are generated like that for example the tongue is long and straight. So on top of the building you have a little thing that goes around the top, so the tongue is generated into that. Like that each different part of the body is generated into a different part of the building. So you get the building and each part of the body would also be generated in the form of the deities.

(In the Gelugpa and the Sakya Traditions it says that before you can receive that type of initiation-from just the body Mandala- you would need to receive an initiation beforehand from a Cloth or a Powder Mandala. The Kagyu Tradition will say: "No". There are 2 different traditions. There are examples like Vajrayogini, these things are given from a body Mandala or within Heruka – there is one Heruka practice which is given from the body Mandala).

#### IV. CONCENTRATION MANDALA

It's basically just the Lama, generating it out of his energy systems through his concentration and there it is. You don't see it also. It's not actually generated from the parts of his body, it's just generated out of his energy systems.

So these are the 4 different kinds of mandala that the Vase Initiation can be given from.

Now, just to list the other type of Mandalas that initiations are given from:

- the Vase Initiation we just saw.
- the Secret Initiation is given from what's called the Mandala of relative Bodhicitta, which would be the round symbol of a heart expanding on the relative level so it's actually not a building but something else.

Wisdom Initiation is given from the round symbol of a womb.

Fourth Initiation is given from the round symbol of ultimate Bodhicitta or the heart that's expanding to understand the ultimate.

In KALACHAKRA things are slightly different. Here, in the root text of Kalachakra, particularly coming out of one of the commentaries by Naropa – a great Master of India - it says that the Kalachakra Initiation which here is referring to the "7 of entering like a child" should only be given from a powdered Mandala. Because we had the 4 possibilities: cloth, powder, body and concentration mandala. So he said it should only be given from a powdered Mandala, except in some rare cases where for some special disciples, who have abandoned everything and just live in caves, and who don't have the material means to get any sort of Mandala – then it can be given from a concentration Mandala. This is followed by the Gelugpas, and by some of the Sakyas (Buton mainly) and that's it. In the Kagyu Tradition and in some of the other Sakya Traditions that are mostly practiced today – they don't follow Naropa's commentary on this and they also give it from a cloth Mandala. I explain this so you won't get confused.

His Holiness follows the tradition of his monastery, the Namgyal monastery, which follows the Gelugpa tradition – and according to that tradition following Naropa – it's always given from a powdered Mandala - so that's why all the monks are coming over from India and why they have these elaborate rituals and ceremonies beforehand for many many days for actually constructing the powdered Mandala which we'll all be able to see at the end of the Initiation. So they make the powdered Mandala, set it up with a lot of rituals and then after the Initiation is finished then they collect back together all the powdered sand – which clearly demonstrates the impermanence to all of us – and then they make an offering of this powdered sand with another ritual into a body of fresh water. So usually it will be put into a stream or into a lake.

Another great Lama, Kalu Rinpoche-also gives Kalachakra Initiation and has given it a number of times in Europe. He follows the Kagyu Tradition of it. The Kagyu tradition of it doesn't follow Naropa's commentary on this point and so he gives it from a cloth Mandala. You shouldn't be confused, by that, it's just following a slightly different lineage and tradition. So, the seven initiations of entering like a child will be given from a powdered mandala. It is prohibited here by Naropa's commentary, that it would be given from a cloth Mandala, so it's not, or that it could be given from a body Mandala and in Kalachakra you don't have the parts of the teacher generated into parts of the building, then it couldn't be given from one, because there isn't one. Even, though, during the Initiation you will have different deities dissolving into your body, you don't have a body Mandala. It's not that the parts of the teacher are generated into deities.

Now the other initiations: the Vase, Secret, Wisdom and Fourth Initiations in Kalachakra.

The Vase Initiation which is among the higher and highest ones, is given from something which unfortunately is called, the

Mandala of the Body. But here it's just talking about the round symbol of body in general and not parts of the body being generated into deities.

The Secret and the Wisdom Initiations in Kalachakra are the exact opposite of what we find in other Anuttarayoga practices. So in other Anuttarayoga initiations the Secret one is from the relative Bodhicitta Mandala and the Wisdom is from the round symbol or Mandala of the womb; here it's the opposite way around. The Secret is given from the round symbol of the womb and the Wisdom is given from the round symbol of relative Bodhicitta, or the heart expanding to the relative. Symmetry is stupid. The actual procedures of it are very much the same. It's just the way it's labelled.

What it says that the Initiation is being given from the powdered Mandala that doesn't mean that it's actually being given from those pieces of rock on the table. We were tailing a little bit about the teachings on voidness and the teachings on voidness are referring to how things exist by mental labelling and usually when it's put into English it says "mental labelling alone or mental labelling only". That tends to be a little bit confusing, because of where the word "only" is put. If you put the "only" by mental labelling alone or only" then that gives the connotation that it's only a mental label, everything exists in your head, and that's completely incorrect in terms of what is being explained in Buddhism. It's not saying that when things exist by mental labelling alone that doesn't mean that everything just exists in your head and that if I call the wall a door knob that makes the wall a door knob. It doesn't make it a door-knob. Or if I shut my eyes no longer exist. It's not like that. The word "only" would go much better in the beginning of the phrase. Things can only exist in as much as they can be mentally labelled. What can you say about things? You can say that things exist as something concrete and findable. We have a bunch of flowers here and what is the bunch of flowers? Can we actually point to the bunch of flowers? The bunch flower isn't that flower or that that flower, it's not this leaf or that leaf. So we can't actually pinpoint the bunch of flowers. What can we say about the bunch of flowers, how does it exist? The only thing that we can really say about it and here is where the word only comes in is that we have this word "bunch of flowers". This doesn't mean that the bunch of flowers is only a word. It's what the word or concept refers to on the basis of this whole conglomeration of causes and parts etc. – which is being used as the basis for labelling it. So it's almost as if you have 3 things here: the basis for labelling, the word "bunch of flowers" and what the bunch of flowers is – a sort of this nebulous, illusory -like-everything is like an illusion – what the word refers to on the basis of the basis for labelling.

So there's a bunch of flowers what is the bunch of flowers? It's not this, it's not that, it's not that. The bunch of flowers does exist of course, it does function, you can smell it etc. But all that we can say about it, the only thing is that it's what the word "bunch of flower" refers to on the basis of that.

I have a problem. What's the problem? Here's the basis, all these causes, parts, things like that. What is the problem? What the word "problem" refers to on the basis of this whole situation. The problem itself isn't something concrete, we can actually pinpoint it with the black crayon line around it.

With the Mandala, the rock-powder on the table is the basis for labelling the Mandala. What is the actual Mandala-the world system of Kalachakra? It's the reflection of His Holiness's clear-light mind in the form of this actual 3 dimensional building, which is on the basis of the powdered rock on the table.

So what you're actually given the Initiation from is the whole 3-dimensional world system of Kalachakra, that is the reflection of His Holiness's mind and it needs something to sort of anchor it. And the anchor is the powdered Mandala. The same thing is true in terms of for example things like an inner offering.

You know, you're doing the practices and you have a little cup of tea or something on your table; it's important to have the cup of tea for the inner offering there should be some sort of anchor or basis. You're not offering this little cup of tea, that's not the point. Your visualizing and imagining this enormous thing that you're offering with all the ingredients and all the special features about it. The inner offering is what this whole concept of inner offering refers to – this incredible thing that you're imagining, on the basis of this cup of tea. You need some basis to anchor it into reality. It's important to have some physical basis. So that's what the Initiation is being given from. So when we actually go to the Initiation we should imagine that we're entering into this 3-dimensional world of Kalachakra. You should feel that you're actually doing that and that it's not just a game this is what you're entering – a very special world and you should try to see His Holiness not in his ordinary form, but to imagine that His Holiness is in the form of the deity Kalachakra. Actually, when you're a deity of a Mandala you're not just the central figure but you're the whole thing.

So in fact His Holiness is all the deities in the Mandala and the building as well. So you get a feeling that you're everything. Now, if you think that's very strange to imagine that you're a lot of different parts and different things let's just try a very simple exercise.

Think in terms of "I am my body, my 2 arms and my 2 legs. Now try adding your fingers and your toes. It is possible to be aware of being made of many many little parts. So it's the same thing in terms of being a deity and a Mandala- you're all the different deities, you're all the different parts around you. You can be aware that you're in a room and that the room has 4 walls around you. You don't have to actually look at the walls to get the feeling that there are 4 walls around you. And how about that there's a garden, and a road outside this building? You can get a feeling for that. How about the feeling of just geography. Here we are in a place in Holland and there's Holland all around us and there's all these other countries of Europe around us as well. You can get a feeling of being in a space and this is sort of what you cultivate in terms of being inside a Mandala. That's something which is also quite helpful to sometimes be aware of where you are. Sometimes we tend to really cut off a feeling that we're actually in a house and there's the land around us and so forth and we become very narrow; sometimes it's quite refreshing to up our minds and just get a feeling of where we are on this planet or where we are in a city or in a country and that there is ground outside, a country etc.

### THE ACTUAL BUILDING

Now, what does the actual building look like? We're imagining that we're entering the building – a huge Palace – His Holiness as the form of the central deity. In fact he is all the deities, but let's focus on him being the central one. We're imagining that the place around us isn't ordinary, but it is this Palace. And the people around us as well aren't in their ordinary form – imagine that everything is in a very pure form and we'll all be generated into different deities.

What does the Palace look like? The Palace is a square and it looks a little bit like a wedding cake. It's 5 stories high and each of the stories is half the size of the one underneath it. So it's becoming like a wedding cake with different layers on top that are smaller and smaller. The top of the building is 200 times our size in height. That's big.

What that means is when the Mandala measurements are given there's no absolute unit. It's in terms of what you feel comfortable of visualizing yourself as and then everything else is in proportion to that. So whatever size you're imagining yourself then 200 times that size is the height of the top of the building. So you get an idea of the proportions. That's important.

So the bottom one – the bottom storey which is on the ground floor, where we're going to enter this thing is 200 times our height long and 200 times our height wide and a 100 times our height high. So it's 200 by 200 square, and 100 high. And then each one after that is half.

Bottom	Storey	200 x 200 x 100
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Storey	100 x 100 x 50
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Storey	50 x 50 x 25
4 <sup>th</sup>	Storey	25 x 25 x 12.5
5 <sup>th</sup>	Storey	12.5 x 12.5 x 6.25

Like that it builds up to get 200 high (top of the building).

When you walk into the building, the ground floor of the building is going to have first of all 4 doors: 4 big entranceways on each side. On the outside of the entrance way there's going to be a big arch. We go through the arch way and then there is like an entrance porch, on each of the four sides. Inside the building you're going to have in the middle of the floor an enormous cube, like a big box, and this cube is going to go all the way up to the ceiling. Between the walls and this cube there is the floor and then there is a raised ledge and then goes back down to the floor again. And where all the deities are is either they're standing in the door or they're all on the ledge, that goes all the way around the cube. So the floor is in front of this ledge and also there's another piece of floor between the ledge and the cube and in that piece of floor there are stairs and the stairs go up to the top of the cube. This cube is the foundation for the next floor.

So you come in and there's a ledge in front of you with the deities standing on it: on the other side of the ledge the stairs going up this enormous cube and you get up to the top of the cube. This cube is the foundation for the next floor.

So you come in and there's a ledge in front of you with the deities standing on it on the other side of the ledge the stairs going up this enormous cube and you get up to the top of the cube which is the level with the ceiling and there's another building, exactly the same as the ground floor, except half the size. The ceiling goes over the ledge, but not all the way to the cube. If you're standing on the staircase and look up, you see the sky. There are pillars standing on the inner edge of the ledge that support the ceiling. The ceiling doesn't go beyond the pillars. The part of the floor between the ledge and the cube doesn't have a ceiling above it.

These levels are called "Body Mandala". This is again a different type of body Mandala. It's called:

- A. Body world, or body mandala 1<sup>st</sup> floor
- B. Speech mandala, or the world of speech 2<sup>nd</sup> floor
- C. Mind mandala, or the world of speech 3<sup>rd</sup> floor

You go up the stairs and you get another building. This building doesn't have arch-ways (the 4<sup>th</sup> floor). It has a veranda instead of the arch ways. The veranda has pillars on the outside and on the inside of it doesn't have any walls. There are lots of deities sitting on the veranda. This fourth floor is called the mandala of deep awareness. Now inside the veranda in which what would be the main proper house of the 4<sup>th</sup> level is where you have an enormous large lotus on the floor – with a lot of deities standing on the petals – and in the middle of the lotus you have the main figure. That's where you'd imagine His Holiness to be – on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor. This inside part of the fourth floor is sometimes called the great bliss mandala.

And the 5<sup>th</sup> floor is a steeple, or a pavilion on top of that inside portion where the lotus is. It's in the shape of a little pagoda. It doesn't have a floor, but there are beams on which some people are standing. This 5<sup>th</sup> floor doesn't have a name.

You're entering into this enormous building and we're always going to stay on the ground floor and you imagine His Holiness is way up on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor. There are a lot of deities on these ledges. We can see His Holiness very clearly - everything is transparent and made out of light. We're sort of down here and this is an enormous thing and His Holiness is up there. Try to get a feeling for being in a building. And remember this whole mandala is a reflection of His Holiness clear-light mind.

**Some unique features of the Kalachakra.**

First of all, when the initiation begins, where are we standing? You might have had some other initiations and In some other initiations the palaces are usually sitting on top of a crossed vajra which is a large cube and there are stairs going down the 4 sides and there's a sort of spokes of the vajra around it and around the stairs going up to the palace when we start the initiation. That's in other initiations, but not here in Kalachakra.

In Kalachakra you don't have this crossed vajra. So the palace is just on the flat ground, which is on top of Mount Meru (on top of a big mountain) and down below the mountain there are various elements, water and all sorts of things around us. Basically we're just standing outside of the Eastern gateway. Let's not get confused about directions, because a lot of directions are going to be spoken about in terms of North, South, East and West.

If you imagine that His Holiness is standing in the middle of Holland and we are in Germany, looking at His Holiness. So East is in front of His Holiness and in front of us. In other words His Holiness is looking out towards Germany, from Holland, so He is facing the East, the East is in front of him. And when we are looking towards His Holiness – from Germany towards Holland – what's being called the East, His Holiness's East is in front of us. So that's the eastern gateway where we are. And when they talk about the northern gateway and the southern gateway and the western gateway, relative to Holland the North is the North Sea, the South is France and the West is England.

Some of the unique features of the Initiation are that, you know in a lot of initiations they call forth little mandalas, little palaces with lots of deities in them and then the initiation is given by these little deities and these little palaces up in the sky. In Kalachakra it's not done like that, but rather the initiations are actually given by the deities in the actual big Palace itself. So when it says that different deities will emanate replicas of themselves and they dissolve into us – it's the actual figures in the big Palace that are doing that. It's the upper-storey deities are emanating out into us, not those of the lower stories.

In the general Anuttarayoga Tantra everything takes place in the Eastern doorway. In Kalachakra it's not like that. First of all we're going to come in to the Mandala – we'll be given blindfolds in the beginning, so you imagine that you can't see everything; eventually the blindfolds are removed and we're able to see everything. We are going to be asked to circumambulate the building – to walk around it on the inside – that's all on the ground floor. Then in other initiations you always stay on the front door – in the Eastern gateway. Here, different initiations are going to be given in different gateways, so we are going to be moving around. We are going to move around and face Kalachakra. Kalachakra has 4 faces. We receive the Initiation from the different faces it means that we're facing one of the different faces and his faces are the same colours as the directions around and also it's the same colour as the colours of the sides of Mount Meru. There is a parallel as well.

From the point of view of the deity itself, we have:

A	Mind face in front	black	East	facing Germany
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B	Body face left	white	North	facing the North-Sea
C	Speech face right	red	South	Facing France
D	Deep aware face backness	yellow	West	facing England

We are going to be in the different doorways and generated into different forms which will basically be the same colour as the face that we're facing. So we are going to be moving around. It will always be the doorways on the ground floor.

The direction colours here where the Dhyani Buddhas are placed, is going to be different from our usual Anuttarayoga. You shouldn't get confused and just keep in mind this line about symmetry. It's not necessary that at all times and in all systems Vajrasattva for example be white – and on face and 2 arms. He is not. Here he is blue, has 3 faces and 6 arms. Or that Vajrapani always has to be blue. Here he is green, Guhyasamaja is yellow, it could be any sort of different colour and thing. So don't grasp at it that it has always to be the same colour and in the same direction. The emphasis in the Kalachakra is always on the 6 elements – the elements of the body, with atoms, all this sort of approach. So the colours of the directions are 'basically being determined by the elements.

	Direction	Colour	Element	Deity
1	East	black	wind	Amogasiddhi
2	South	red	fire	Ratnasambhava. So here Ratnasambhava is red
3	North	white	water	Amitabha. Amitabha here is white
4	West	yellow	earth	Vairocana
5	Top	green	space	Akshobhya
6	Bottom	blue	deep awareness	Vajrasattva

So that's going to be the general colour of the deities in each of these directions.

You don't get Akshobhya and Vajrasattva as deities standing separately, because they're dissolved in to the body of the main deity, but in any case, Akshobhya is green, and is on top of the mandala. He is associated with the element space. He's not actually there, but his family is green. So at different times of the Initiation we are going to be transformed into various deities and things and you'll hear the names of these different deities and don't be surprised if the colours are different.

As I was saying there are 722 deities in this Palace. His Holiness will introduce us to where they are in general. If you just have this general idea that most of them are on these ledges and in the doorways, in the veranda and on the lotus and then if we up on Mount Meru then there's a whole bunch of them down at the bottom, outside, that's enough. The deities are basically in clusters or groups.

So the main point in the Initiation is the motivation. You're going there basically to apply it to your own lives, you have some determination to be free from your problems, you're not doing it not just for yourself, but for everybody else as well, you're doing it with some understanding of reality, of what's going on there and some basic understanding of what the tantric method is and what specifically is involved with Kalachakra that makes it such a special system. It's so special because it's so extensive. It covers all these other aspects: astrology, astronomy, the energy-systems, how to make various medicines and this type of stuff. It's also a special type of method, because, here, we're generating the body of a Buddha as a devoid form which is going to be a reflection of our clear light mind. We're going to deal with an awareness, which is a special type, called the unchanging blissful awareness, which is based on making the energy drops in our body very stable – working with them. It's a very special type of system and so when you actually receive the empowerment, what it does it link you and connects you to the lineage, so you sort of plug into this whole line that has come down from the Buddha. It gives you confidence that what you're doing is something that has been tested over time so that it's not just something crazy in your head and you have a great deal of this quality of it being alive, by actually receiving it from a great Master like His Holiness, who is the living embodiment of what we're trying to do. For an initiation certainly, it's very important that the Master who gives the initiation be a fully qualified Master. When it's His Holiness the Dalai Lama you can be extremely confident that he is certainly the most qualified of any Master that we have living in these times now. So we're very fortunate to be able to have this opportunity to receive something from His Holiness himself.

During the initiations you shouldn't view things as being ordinary, but you should view things as being pure and special in terms of the Teacher and ourselves, the place and everybody around us. One thing that comes up in the Initiation and that sometimes is a little bit difficult to relate to is they'll say that "Now having the Vase touched to the top of your head, you get a feeling of voidness and bliss". It's going to be said after each Initiation. As I was saying the Initiation purifies a certain type of stain. So we're working with purifying either the elements, or the aggregates or the energy winds, or the channels or whatever. It plants a seed in terms of both the conscious experience and an actual seed that will ripen later. The conscious

experience is this experience of voidness and bliss. It was saying, when it talks about inseparable voidness and bliss, what it means is a blissful awareness that is aware of voidness. So inseparable voidness and bliss is a blissful awareness of voidness.

In one of the commentaries that explains about this, it says you shouldn't worry about the fact that during the Initiation you most likely will not get an experience of voidness and bliss. It says that what you should do is try to at least generate a feeling of happiness. This is something that we can do. Feel happy. And in the state of feeling happy, think about reality or voidness. You know, this is devoid of whatever type of fantasized trips. I might be projecting on it. That this is all in terms of dependent arising, parts and labels, things like that and it's not something solid and concrete, existing out there. So just try to feel happy and in a happy state of mind try to see the reality of what's going on. And they say that this then will act as a seed, a conscious experience of a seed that will grow into having more and more this experience of really blissful awareness, really intensely being aware of voidness in its totality. So that's what it means when it says it's a conscious experience: you just have some sort of feeling of happiness, some sort of idea of reality. It's important to have an understanding of what's going on in the initiation and not just be there, and sort of sit there and not have any idea.

Serkong Rinpoche had used an example for this. He has said that we shouldn't be like an owl. Once there was an owl and a person asked the owl: "Why is your head so flat". And the owl said: "Because I've been hit on the top of my head with a vase during the initiation so many times, that my head is flat". Then the person asked: "Why don't you have any ears". And the owl said: "I don't have any ears because I never understood anything that was going on". So try to participate in the initiation to the best of your ability. If you feel you're willing to take on the vows and the guidelines – Bodhisattva vows – tantric vows etc. then participate as best as you can. If you feel that you're not ready then, as His Holiness says, just be a neutral observer and just watch. If you have some understanding of what's going on and some appreciation for it then you can at least get some sort of aspiration, "Well I'm not ready now, maybe, but it's worthwhile what these people are doing and maybe in the future I'll be able to get involved with this."

In that way when they say: "You can go and just get the blessing of the Initiation". "Blessing" is a type of word that is not so easy to get a feeling for what that is. The Tibetan word that it's translating is more sort of "inspiration", that you'll find it very inspiring experience and it will make a certain impression on you. The more that you understand, the more that you have some appreciation for what's going on – the deeper an impression it will make and it can be a very positive experience.