

The Kalachakra Mantra

Kirti Tsenshab Rinpoche: Graz, Austria, September 1999

In the following the main mantra of Kalachakra will be explained. The mantra is as follows:

OM AH HUM HOH HAM KSHAH MA LA VA RA YA HUM PHET

The first four syllables OM AH HUM HOH of the mantra are the four vajra syllables of body, speech, mind and wisdom: OM is the vajra of body, AH the vajra of speech, HUM the vajra of mind, and HOH is the vajra of wisdom. These are the four vajra syllables.

The next two syllables, HAM and KSHAH, are the seed syllables for the father Kalachakra (HAM) and, correspondingly, his consort Vishvamata (KSHAH).

The subsequent syllable MA is the basis for the inestimable mansion of Kalachakra. The mansion is a threefold mandala: in the center there is the mandala of the mind, around that the mandala of the speech, and again around that the mandala of the body. These are the three mandalas of the mansion and it is represented by the seed syllable MA.

The four syllables LA VA RA YA stand for the four elements of earth, fire, water and wind. In the mandala one can see the white border area, separating the outer from the inner. If I continue this may become very boring, technical and difficult; so we stop here.

As mentioned above, the mantra begins with the four syllables OM AH HUM HOH. They symbolize the vajra body, vajra speech, vajra mind and the vajra wisdom. In Tibetan, the letter HUM, which represents the vajra mind, is composed of the body of the letter *HA* with, below, the small 'A and the *U*, and above the moonlike crescent indicating *OM* with the *nada*. OM symbolizes the vajra body, whereas the nada represents the AH -vajra speech- arising from emptiness -the vajra wisdom. Within that one syllable we have, in a condensed form, all four vajras and a symbol for OM AH HUM HOH.

By meditating in accordance with the development stages of the Kalachakra tantra, the meditator purifies his body and manifests the vajra body (symbolized by OM). Similarly, AH represents the purified speech and the manifestation of vajra speech, HUM signifies the purified mind and the manifestation of vajra mind, and the manifestation of the subtle mind of the practitioner is vajra wisdom and corresponds to HOH. The purified body, speech, mind and subtle mind manifest as vajra body, vajra speech, vajra mind and vajra wisdom, and are symbolized by OM AH HUM HOH. The subtle mind is the subtlest aspect of consciousness. Consciousness manifests in different forms - coarse, fine, subtle, and subtlest. The subtlest form of consciousness is called vajra wisdom. This is one way how the meditation on the syllables can be conducted.

HAM KSHAH and MA are representations of the two main deities, Kalachakra and Vishvamata, as well as the inestimable mansion.

The explanation of these ten different aspects of the mantra is quite difficult to understand since it is a very condensed form of description; its origin dates back to the ancient Indian scriptures. This will be sufficient as a small glimpse on the ten aspects of the ten syllables of the mantra.

There are two secret mantras: a short one and a long one. The short one is OM HAM KSHAH MA LA VA RA YA HUM PHET. The longer one is the one explained above. By adding the OM AH HUM HOH to the shorter mantra of OM HAM KSHAH MA LA VA RA YA HUM PHET

one gets the longer mantra. The four letters OM AH HUM HOH are the seeds for the vajra body, vajra speech, vajra mind and vajra wisdom. The practitioner of the Kalachakra yoga engages in the recitation of these seeds to purify his body, speech, mind and coarse mind. As a result of this the vajra body, vajra speech, vajra mind and vajra wisdom (subtle mind) will subsequently be attained.

In its original Sanskrit, the short version of the mantra contains ten syllables. The letters HAM KSHAH MA LA VA RA YA are written in a stacked way, as can be seen in the Kalachakra symbol. This depiction is crowned by a white moon crescent, a red sun and, topmost, a flame. When counting the seven letters together with the moon, sun and flame, then there are ten seeds. This is why the Kalachakra symbol or seed syllable is called ‘The Ten Powerful Seeds’ (*rnam chu dbang ldan*). The whole seed syllable is multicolored, whereas each letter has its own color: HAM is black or dark blue, the following KSHAH is green, the multicolored square is MA, the next yellow letter is LA, then white is VA, the red letter is RA, and YA is dark blue or black.

Colophon

These explanations originate from Kirti Tsenshab Rinpoche’s visit to Graz, Austria in September 1999 to Buddhist center She Drup Ling. This was the first of a series of events in preparation to the Kalachakra initiation of His Holiness the Dalai Lama in October 2002 in Graz. Translator: Peter Roberts, transcript: Michaela Puntigam

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