

Chögyal
NAMKHAI NORBU

TEACHINGS AT
SINABELKIRCHEN

Austria, October 25th-27th, 2002
Transcription from Oral Teachings



Shang Shung Edizioni

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Series of Teachings
272E

This book should be treated with the greatest respect and is addressed to those who have received the transmission of the teaching from the Master. Any mistakes are due to the transcription and the translation and do not reflect the original teachings.

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CHÖGYAL NAMKHAI NORBU

**DZOGCHEN TEACHINGS
IN SINABELKIRCHEN, AUSTRIA**

(October 25th-27th, 2002)

Edited by Judith Allan



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Shang Shung Edizioni

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PART I

INTRODUCTION

Good evening everybody. Meeting you is particularly interesting for me as many of my old Austrian students are here from twenty-five years ago and we are meeting up again. Generally as practitioners, we are very much aware of impermanence. When we hold a retreat and spend a few days together, we are happy but when our retreat is over, we really have no idea whether we shall meet again or not. It can be difficult to grasp that twenty-five years ago we held our first retreat here and now we are meeting up again. This is why I am happy to see the older students and also very happy that new people are here, who are interested in the teaching. By new, I am not saying that new people don't understand teachings but if they are interested in the teaching of Dzogchen, this is what I am explaining and transmitting.

Many of you might have already followed other Dzogchen masters and received lots of transmissions. I have no idea whether there is something special in the teaching I give which you have not received already. The only thing I have is my experience of life: I know a little about what our lives are like, what we are searching for and what we need. I have sufficient experience to communicate this so you can understand something. We know life is impermanent and impermanence means there is no guarantee we shall still be alive in one year, one week or even one day.

We might learn many interesting things but these can just remain at the level of intellectual knowledge. If we do not integrate what we learn in a practical sense, at the end there is not much benefit. For this reason, we need to go very much to the essence of the teaching. If we don't go to the essence, firstly

we cannot integrate the teaching into our life and secondly, we lose its real sense.

For example a big tree can have many lovely blossoms, branches and leaves. The main point is that you are not only interested in just one blossom but try to understand the trunk of the tree. If you keep this image in mind, then you have the possibility to develop and learn everything. So we should go to the essence of the teaching. Even if there are hundreds or even millions of different methods and teachings, there cannot be hundreds or millions of different kinds of essential teachings.

DIFFERENT KINDS OF TEACHINGS

We need to understand what the teaching is for and why there are so many different kinds of teachings. The first thing to understand is that the teaching exists for the person. The person does not exist for the teaching. Most people think that the teaching is the first thing and a person is dependent on the teaching but why did the Buddha teach so many different teachings? He taught these because people have different capacities and conditions. If he could have taught only one very simply teaching, why did Buddha not teach this? We would then be less confused and have fewer problems. But this is impossible because the teaching exists for the individual to have realisation.

For example, there are many different medicines available if we are ill but it is not enough just to take any medicine. We must understand what kind of medicine we need for our illness. If I am not an expert, I don't know what to take and therefore I go to a doctor, who advises me on the medicine I need: in this way I can have some benefit.

INITIATIONS

In the same way, there are different teachings for different conditions of sentient beings. Particularly when we speak of Sutric or Tantric teachings, we say that these teachings are for people with different capacities. You can see that it is not at all easy to follow Tantric teachings. We have just had the experience of receiving the Kalachakra initiation over three days. I don't know if some of you found it easy to understand but for me, it was very difficult. I have received Kalachakra initiations twice before. Once the teacher gave us initiation in the Sakyapa tradition, one by one, in great detail. Altogether we were less than thirty students. Each morning, the teacher got up at three o'clock and did practice, preparing for the initiation. In the morning, around nine o'clock, he started to give the initiation. At midday we took a small break and then we continued receiving the initiation. By the time it was finished, it was eleven o'clock at night.

So you see how his Holiness the Dalai Lama is passing on everything as it should be passed on, one person at a time. With ritual ceremonies, things become very complicated and it is much more difficult to understand the sense. If you do a transformation like Guru Tragphur or Sinhamukha, it seems a bit difficult but compared to entering into the transformation of Kalachakra, it is very simple. I was very confused when I received the initiation the first time because the teacher was saying, "You should do a visualisation of Kalachakra with the form and colour like this." Later, he told us that all the fingers have different colours and also all their joints. By then I had no idea what the colour of the hand really was so I asked the teacher to explain when he finished the initiation. This is an example of how complicated an initiation can be.

We also have three very famous Yogatantra initiations which are very, very difficult and complicated called Dorje Ying, Palchog and Dorje Tsemo which are much more difficult than the Kalachakra. With these, it is not just enough to receive the initiation, we also need to do the practice. So these are very complicated and difficult, not so easy at all.

This is the reason we must try to go to the essence of the teaching, otherwise it is too complicated. This doesn't mean that there is no one who can do Kalachakra practice. Of course, there are many people who can do it but this means they have the capacity to do it in the Tantric way.

THE THREE GATES

So you can see that if we follow any kind of teaching, there are many things to learn and apply but the real sense is to bring us realisation. What do we mean by realisation? Realisation means we are totally in our real condition and it is not so difficult to understand. This is the purpose of all the teachings. Why then are some methods so complicated? It depends on what kind of experiences and methods we are using. We have our physical body, our speech which is our energy and then our mind. In the teaching we speak of the famous three gates, the three existences of the individual and therefore all teachings and methods are related with these three principles.

THE PHYSICAL BODY

Some teachings are related more with the physical level because this is easier to understand. Normally if we see someone's physical body, we can understand who they are. But if there is no physical body and he/she only exists on the level of energy, it is not so easy to see who they are because we lack the capacity to

see the nature of elements. We know for example that there are manifestations of realised beings who have attained the rainbow body. Ordinarily we cannot see these beings because we live on a physical level and see everything through our sense organs. We have two eyes. When we open them, we see something but our vision is limited to that. If we close our eyes we don't see anything. But if we have developed our clarity and capacity, then we are no longer dependent on our eyes. But an ordinary person doesn't have this capacity and cannot go beyond their limited vision. In the same way on the physical level, we need both ears to hear. This is common to us all and the teachings relate to this.

For example Buddha Shakyamuni manifested a physical body which we call Nirmanakaya: *kaya* means dimension; *nirmana* means the material level and is the more ordinary way of manifesting. Everything we see is the karmic vision of human beings and part of *nirmana*. In order to help ordinary people and communicate teachings, Buddha manifested at birth as a human being. When you read the biography of the Buddha in the Sutras, there are many stories of the Buddha manifesting sometimes as an elephant, a bird or even as a monkey. The Buddha did not become an elephant or a monkey because of his karma. He took on that form in order to communicate with different animals.

In the same way in the Mahayana Sutras, Buddha is considered to be an enlightened being from birth, only manifesting as a human to teach sentient beings how to develop. But in the Hinayana tradition, they consider Buddha to be an ordinary person, who saw suffering and, disgusted with samsara, escaped to become the Buddha. This is more the vision of the material condition.

In any case, Buddha manifested as a human being and even though he manifested full realisation, he still gave teachings

and explanations in the normal way. At that period, anyone in India could see the Buddha if they wanted and receive teachings from him. They could communicate directly with the Buddha. At the end Buddha manifested *parinirvana*. This is an example of Nirmanakaya. The Buddha taught this way and when he gave teachings like the Four Noble Truths, most people could understand them.

THE FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS

You know very well what is meant by the Four Noble Truths. Sometimes they are explained in a very intellectual way but if we go to the real sense of the Four Noble Truths, what Buddha taught was that the first Noble Truth is suffering because suffering is universal for all sentient beings. No sentient being likes suffering but even if they don't like suffering, they don't know how to overcome it. This was the reason that the Buddha spoke of suffering being universal for all sentient beings. Buddha made us understand that suffering is an effect and when we speak of an effect, there is always a cause. If there is no cause, there is no effect.

Buddha made us understand that we must not struggle with suffering because if suffering is an effect, there is nothing to struggle with. We cannot struggle with suffering and win! The value of suffering is to know that it is an effect and through that, we can discover the cause.

Buddha then explained the cause of suffering and how negative karma is produced. This is called cause and effect and this is the principle of karma. In the Sutra teachings, it is one of the most important teachings. Buddha explained very clearly the nature and condition of cause and effect but even though we follow his teaching, we don't understand perfectly what it means. This is why we are always struggling with problems.

Any problem is an effect not the cause and so Buddha taught that one must not struggle with the effect. But we always struggle with the effect, which means this doesn't correspond to the teachings of the Buddha. So when we learn what is cause and effect and karma, it is not enough just to discover that a cause exists. If there is a cause for negativities, we must stop this and eliminate it.

For this reason Buddha explained the third Noble Truth called cessation. But how we can stop suffering? On the material level we have our physical bodies, voice or energy and mind, and all our actions are related with these three gates. Buddha explained how we can stop our suffering by limiting our three existences or three gates.

VOWS, TRAINING AND COMMITMENT

For example, when we receive our Refuge or Bodhisattva Vow, we are always told that we must not do various things with our physical body, voice and mind. This is called receiving a vow and in the real sense, a vow is really very characteristic of the original Hinayana system. But this has also influenced Mahayana and even to this day, the Tantric teachings. Although they speak of Tantric vows, Bodhisattva vows and Sutric vows, in the real sense, a vow is characteristic of the Hinayana system.

In Mahayana, it is called in Tibetan *labpa* which means training. In Tantrism, it is called samaya or commitment. We are not really receiving a vow in the Sutra style; this training is much more developed in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition. Originally it was not known as a vow, but later there was a Tibetan king, Tri Ralpa who called everything a vow.

ANUTTARATANTRA TEACHINGS

Tri Ralpa was very, very powerful and was also very devoted to Buddhist teaching. He made a new rule in Tibet saying publicly that only Sutra teachings could be taught, both Hinayana and Mahayana, and also Yogatantra. It was forbidden to teach Anuttaratantra teachings publicly. This didn't mean that Tri Ralpa didn't believe in these teachings as he himself was a practitioner of Anuttaratantra. But the Anuttaratantra tradition integrates good and bad; integrating pure things which we offer to the Buddhas and Bodhisattva as well as dirty things. It is very different and almost contrary to the Yogatantra system. So Tri Ralpa said, "If we teach Anuttaratantra publicly, many people will be surprised and think it is not a Buddhist teaching. This is not so difficult to understand as in South Asia, most places are traditionally Mahayana. When they see us doing practice like Ganapuja, they get really upset because we use meat and alcohol." This was the reason that King Tri Ralpa forbade Anuttaratantra and for many years after that, all Tibetans and teachers respected that rule.

But slowly, slowly Anuttaratantra teachings dressed up as Yogatantra developed. This is why a lot of ritual developed in Anuttaratantra but originally it was not like that. Originally Anuttaratantra teachings and transmission were very simple.

When the Indian Mahasiddhas went to Oddiyana, they met their teacher and made a specific appointment of time and place to receive their initiation. Initiations of important Tantras like Chakrasamvara, Guhyasamaja, Kalachakra or Hevajra are all very complicated today. In ancient time these Mahasiddhas went to meet their teacher in a cave, or under a tree in a forest. These teachers all had their *samatog* which is a kind of box. In this box, they kept their ritual things necessary for performing the initiation. In ancient times, even the vajra and bell were not

shown, as well as the mala used for reciting mantra. These were all kept in the *samatog* by practitioners.

In the *samatog*, they had this thing called *tsakali*. A *tsakali* is a very small *thangka*, a painting. Today, when we do formal initiations we use many *tsakali* but originally a *tsakali* also included the *tsakali* of the mandala or *tsakali* of the manifestation of the deity. These *tsakali* were used by the teacher to show their students, “This is a mandala and a mandala means the dimension of your transformation. This is the main deity and you transform into this.” And then they told you how you did the transformation. Of course, the teacher transformed himself and then empowered the students. In this way he gave the initiation in a very simple fashion.

Maybe the Yogatantra system originally was a little different but later when it developed, then all Tantras became complicated. So this is how these kinds of initiations developed. In the real sense all Tantric manifestations show us how to use our potentiality of clarity because in our real nature, we all have infinite clarity. So in the Dzogchen teaching, when we go more into the essence, this is what we call *zhi* which means the base. The base refers to our real condition, which is the condition of all sentient beings and all human beings. So, what is our real condition? We explain our real condition through the three primordial wisdoms.

THE THREE PRIMORDIAL WISDOMS

The first of the three primordial wisdoms is called the essence. What is our real condition? We don’t only just think or decide this but by observing and looking at it, we discover our real condition. For example when we observe ourselves for even a few minutes, we discover that many thoughts arise, one after another continuously. We notice many thoughts. Now observe

where the thought is and from where it arises? What does this thought look like? When you observe thoughts in this way, they disappear. This is not just because I say it and you have to believe me. You can observe and discover this yourself. In the end, what do you find? Nothing! That is why it is said in the teaching that finding nothing is the best because this represents our real condition. This doesn't mean that when you can't find anything, you are totally in the state of emptiness. Immediately you find another thought arises and you observe it again. There is no difference between the condition of this thought and the previous one. With this thought, you also can't find anything! You can observe your third, fourth or fifth thought and carry on like this for hours or even days observing thoughts but you still won't find anything.

OBSERVING THOUGHTS

Some Kagyüpa teachers use this method of observing thoughts when they introduce the real nature of mind to their students. They ask them to observe how a thought arises and from where does it arise? Where is it and how does it disappear? These three moments of thoughts arising, abiding and disappearing are called in Tibetan *jung ne dro*. When we observe any of these three, we can't find anything. There is always emptiness. Some teachers ask their students to observe their thoughts for a long time. What do they find when they observe their thoughts for a long time? They discover that there is really nothing but emptiness. These are examples of methods used also in the Sakyapa and Gelugpa traditions.

This is similar to thinking there is a snake in your house and even if others look right through the house and confirm there is no snake, you are still a bit afraid. In this case what is the best thing to do? You bring all your objects out of the house and

completely empty it. Then you search everywhere and discover there is no snake! Finally you are convinced that there is no snake and are no longer afraid.

KADAG AND TONPANYI

That is why we need to do this practice for a long time, searching our thoughts to see if something really exists and if it is real or not. But when we discover there is nothing there, this means we are discovering the state of emptiness. This is our real condition and in the Dzogchen teachings, it is called *kadag*. Generally we speak of *tonpanyi* in Tibetan and in Sanskrit, *sunyata*. What is the difference between *kadag* and *tonpanyi*? *Tonpanyi* means emptiness, that is all. *Kadag* means ‘since the beginning pure’ because ‘since the beginning pure’ means that there has never been something concrete. In Tibetan this word is only used in the Nyingmapa tradition. It is not used in the Sakyapa, Gelugpa, or Kagyüpa traditions but now I see that many Kagyüpa teachers are also using this word. In a real sense this means that, from the beginning, our base and our real nature is the state of emptiness. If we know that everything is empty, is that sufficient or not?

PART II

SUTRA, TANTRA AND DZOGCHEN

EMPTINESS IN SUTRA AND DZOGCHEN

When we study Sutra teaching, it seems that emptiness is the main point but in the Dzogchen teaching, this is not sufficient. We know that emptiness is not the real path because we understand that emptiness has infinite potentiality. If there is no infinite potentiality, then Dharmakaya cannot exist. We speak of infinite wisdom, and the quality and quantity of wisdoms. So when we speak of Dharmakaya in general, the essence, the emptiness represents Dharmakaya but we must understand that emptiness has infinite potentiality. For this reason then, we have the explanation in the Dzogchen teaching of the three primordial potentialities. This is a very special knowledge and is a method found only in the Dzogchen teaching.

ANUYOGA

In general in the Anuttaratantra or Higher Tantra, you do not find this explanation. In Anuttaratantra, there is a kind of Tantric teaching called Anuyoga and this transmission and teaching was originally taught by Guru Padmasambhava. Its method is transformation like in the Higher Tantras but the transformation is not gradual as in Anuttaratantra. The method of transformation in Anuyoga is instant transformation. Why is it instant and not gradual? The reason is that in Anuyoga there is the knowledge of the three primordial potentialities and these potentialities are **just like the potentiality of the mirror.**

THE MIRROR

For example we say that a mirror has infinite potentiality to manifest any kind of reflections. That is true. If there is a mirror and you go in front of a mirror, it manifests your form and not only your form but also your size and colour, everything manifests precisely. The mirror doesn't need any kind of programme to reflect. If there is something there, it instantly manifests it and therefore it is not necessary to develop reflections slowly one by one. This is because primordial potentiality exists and the mirror is an example of this.

PRIMORDIAL POTENTIALITY

Individually we have our primordial potentiality. This means that Tantric manifestation like the Sambhogakaya manifestations of the Kalachakra mandala have, as their root potentiality, the primordial potentiality which only needs a secondary cause to manifest. If you place a *thangka* of Kalachakra in front of a mirror, the image manifests exactly as it is in the *thangka*. It does not need to develop gradually as explained in Tantrism through the development and the accomplishment stages. This is what is meant then by primordial potentiality: everybody has that primordial potentiality and the only thing is that we are ignorant of it.

What do we need with regard to our primordial potentiality? For this we need transmission, teaching and methods. When we have all these as secondary causes, then there is the possibility of our primordial potentiality manifesting instantly. For this reason then, the method of Anuyoga is transformation but instant transformation.

In Anuttaratantra in general, in the Higher Tantras like Kalachakra, Hevajra or Guhyasamaja, these are all gradual

transformations. In these Tantras there is no explanation of the three primordial potentialities and they are not recognised: for this reason there is no instant transformation.

THREE PRIMORDIAL POTENTIALITIES

So, when we speak of the three primordial potentialities, what does this mean? The three primordial potentialities manifest all our potentiality through emptiness. Our real nature is called *kadag*, which means ‘since the beginning pure’ and it is just like the sky. The sky is empty. There is nothing solid. We may say that our real nature is like the sky but everything manifests in the dimension of the sky. Naturally everything manifests because there are different causes and therefore different kinds of manifestations. In the same way also we need secondary causes for the three primordial potentialities to manifest through emptiness. Even with total emptiness, there is always the possibility of manifestation.

When we speak of enlightened beings, their real state and real condition is called the Dharmakaya. You know that *kaya* means dimension and *dharma* means all phenomena. The real condition of all phenomena is emptiness and this represents the condition of Dharmakaya. If we speak of an enlightened being such as Mañjushri; there is also the Bodhisattva Mañjushri and there can be many Sambhogakaya manifestations of Mañjushri. But in the real sense, the real manifestation of Mañjushri is Dharmakaya. Dharmakaya is emptiness: it is beyond form, colour and manifestation. This is the real condition but it also has infinite potentiality.

In the Dzogchen teaching we call that potentiality *lhundrub*. *Lhundrub* means all qualifications are self-perfected and its root is the three primordial potentialities. When there are three primordial potentialities, just like the potentiality of the mir-

ror, there is the possibility of manifestation because there are secondary causes.

If I go in front of a mirror, my whole figure appears, not only part of it. Now, I see my figure because I am in front of the mirror. In the same way also, in front of the Dharmakaya, if there are some beings who have the capacity to have contact with the Dharmakaya, this is the same as manifesting in the mirror.

One of the wrathful manifestations of Mañjushri is called Yamantaka. From the historical point of view, we say that Yamantaka is the form of a class of being of Yama. But who is this class of being called Yama? We have no knowledge of Yama. We can't see them and can't get in the dimension of the Yama. But enlightened beings are beyond time and distance. There are also many different kinds of Yama in this class of beings, not just one, even if their form is more or less similar. For example, you know that all human beings have more or less the same form. We have one head, two arms, two legs and so on and are more or less the same. But we know also that among human beings, there are beings with many different capacities. Many human beings are realised. Others are on the path and there are also normal human beings, who have no knowledge of teachings. This not only applies to the human condition but also to the condition of many other classes of beings.

So, this being called Yama had contact with the Dharmakaya of Mañjushri. The Dharmakaya has no form but that being called Yama was in front of the mirror, and the mirror manifested Yamantaka. There was communication between Yamantaka and the manifestation of Mañjushri, and through that manifestation of Yamantaka, Yama also received the transmission.

This characteristic of transmission is mainly related to our experience of clarity because there is manifestation and through manifestation, we enter into this knowledge. In the Anuyoga system, this is what is meant by manifestation with primordial

potentiality and to explain this way of manifesting, we have the explanation of the three primordial potentialities.

Sound: Inner, Outer and Secret

First of all, we have sound. In any Tantric practice we do, in order to enter into its knowledge, there is the seed syllable which corresponds to sound. When we received the Kalachakra initiation, you will remember that we had to visualise many syllables, with different colours and forms. In a real sense these seed syllables represent sound. For example, the sound of OM is not A and A is not HUM. All are different sounds and developing from these sounds are many different kinds of mantras. Mantras are also sounds and all manifestations arise through sound. This is why we first sound a seed syllable and then manifest a transformation.

In general, we think of ordinary sound but we also speak of inner, outer and secret sound. When we speak of outer sound, this refers generally to what we are hearing with our ears. Sometimes we hear melodic sounds like music; other times there are terrible discordant sounds. There are different types of sound but those we hear with our ears are more related with the physical level.

There is also sound related more to our energy level which is called inner sound. We can't hear inner sound with our ears but those who are more sensitive can hear this inner sound through vibration. This is related more with our energy level.

We also have secret sound which is related more with the mind. Even though this is related with the mind, we are always judging and thinking, and can't discover it. This secret sound is beyond hearing with our ears or feeling with vibration. When we discover what is meant by instant presence, and know we are in the state of instant presence, then we discover this secret

sound. Until we discover the state of instant presence, there is no way we can discover secret sound. So secret sound is something like the root, and from that root develops inner sound, and from inner sound develops outer sound.

SYMBOL OF THE TIBETAN LETTER A IN A THIGLE

In Dzogchen, we use this symbol when we use a method for Guruyoga practice. This is a *thigle* of five coloured circles and at the centre there is the Tibetan letter A. This letter A represents sound and is something like the root or origin of all sounds. For this reason Buddha explained in a Sutra teaching that A represents the state of Prajñaparamita.

Here, the main point is the sound, not so much this letter A. But the letter A is the information to enter into this sound. If you see the letter HUM for example, immediately you have an idea of the sound HUM, in the same way as OM or A. So the main point is the sound and this letter A represents sound.

And then the letter A is shown as white in colour. White colour represents light. Light represents something which is also explained by giving the example of a piece of white cotton. If you have a piece of white cotton, you can transform it into any other colour because it has no colour of its own. In the same way, light in general does not enter into any specific colour and so the white is a symbol of light.

Then we speak of rays, which means we now enter into specific colours. Why do we have colours? We have colours because we have the five energies of the elements. Each of these energies has its different characteristic and function. So in the symbol of the *thigle*, we have these five circles which represent the five elements but not the elements which we know from our relative condition or material level. These are the root and potentiality of the five colours and the potentiality of the five elements.

So, why are they in circles? Circles represent being beyond limitation. These are the words of Guru Padmasambhava, *thigle chenpo tazur medpa*. This means a total *thigle* that represents the state beyond limitations. Limitations are represented by corners. If there are three corners, then we speak of a triangle. If there are four corners, we refer to this as a square. A triangle or a square is always limited. To be beyond any limitation then is represented by a circle. So this A in a *thigle* is the symbol of the sound, light and rays of our primordial potentiality.

Everybody has this potentiality but having potentiality doesn't mean we have manifested, or are manifesting, something. In the Sutra teaching, some traditions speak of the seed of the Buddha, which we all have. They say that in this Buddha seed are all the qualifications of the Dharmakaya, as well as Sambhogakaya manifestations, and also Nirmanakaya. But it is not explained in this way in the Dzogchen teaching.

In the Dzogchen teaching we say that we have the potentiality of a mirror, which has infinite potentiality for manifesting reflections. But if there is nothing in front of the mirror, it does not manifest anything. This doesn't mean that because all manifestations can be reflected in a mirror, all these figures are **in** the mirror. You need to distinguish this well, particularly if you are seriously studying the Sutras from the point of view of Madhyamika and Yogachara.



Changchub Dorje

PART III POINTS OF VIEW

In Dzogchen we don't especially need to study these different points of view but if you want, you can study and have this more precise knowledge. The principle in Dzogchen, however, is not looking outside too much but observing oneself. The point of view of the Dzogchen teaching is very different from other traditions. Other traditions consider they have the view of the eight schools. If someone is following the Gelugpa tradition, then they believe that Tsongkhapa has already established the correct view of the Gelugpa school. Then in some traditions such as the Sakyapa, there are some scholars like Korampa who did not agree with the Gelugpa point of view and much debate and argument followed. Scholars wrote hundreds of different volumes, each discussing and negating the other.

We have eight schools like the Kagyüpa, Nyingmapa, Sakyapa and Gelugpa, each studying Buddhist philosophy in an intellectual way. I also studied like this for many years as I spent five years in college studying all the Buddhist philosophies. I was totally convinced that this was the way to really follow the teachings of the Buddha. Fortunately at the end, before I left Tibet, I met my special teacher Changchub Dorje.

CHANGCHUB DORJE

Changchub Dorje was not a scholar. He hadn't even been to college nor studied what I had but although he hadn't studied, he knew everything. Why is this? In the Dzogchen teaching, there is this possibility. There is a famous phrase in Dzogchen, called *chig she kun drol*. This means that when you have dis-

covered one, you discover all. Changchub Dorje had that kind of knowledge and capacity.

When I met him for the first time and he asked me a question, I always explained everything I had studied. After a few days, he said to me, “Your mouth is logic and your nose is Madhyamika.” Then I thought, “He is only saying that because he never studied these things!” But later, when I received the essence of the Dzogchen teaching, then I understood what he really meant and realised that my study and thinking was very dualistic.

He told me one thing which is very, very important, “When you want to learn the Dzogchen point of view, you are not following what is presented by different schools and different traditions, saying this is correct and this is wrong. Even if you negate one thing and consider another to be correct, you are always in dualistic vision. You must discover the difference between the function of glasses and a mirror. Observing yourself means you are just looking in a mirror. In the mirror your face appears and if you have some defect, you’ll see it. Even if you have very good glasses which allow you to see objects in more detail, they never really help you to discover your real nature!” This was the first teaching which I received from my teacher. Then I observed myself and noticed that it was really true, I was always looking outside. So you can see that the Dzogchen teaching is something very concrete. Concrete means entering into our real nature and returning to our real condition. For this we need the Dzogchen teaching and it is for this reason that ever since then, I have dedicated myself to the teachings of Dzogchen.

When I grew up and received my education, this was mainly in the Sakyapa tradition. I know very well the Sakyapa teachings, much more than the Nyingmapa and Kagyüpa. But I received many teachings from the Nyingmapa tradition and also the Kagyüpa. Even though I received all these teachings,

I was also studying in the ordinary way and finally when I met my teacher, I understood what it meant to integrate teachings into real knowledge.

When my students first asked me to teach them Buddhism, I immediately started to teach Dzogchen because I discovered that is more essential. My idea of teaching students was to help them, not in order to become a great or famous teacher. I am really opposed to all of that but if people are seriously interested, then of course it is also my duty to try and help them. When I first started out in Italy, people asked me to teach for two years or three years but I refused. Also the Gyalwa Karmapa sent two letters to me, saying, “You must teach these people!” I refused and said, “I am not a teacher. I am still a student. I am a practitioner and a student.”

Then I saw later that people were seriously interested and also I saw people following teachers who were not so serious. If I didn't do anything, this was not so good and now was the time to try and help them. So I started to teach and now I can't stop! We have a saying in Tibetan: “If you know how to fill a sausage, you must also know how to close it!” This is very serious and very real. Once I started teaching, I also had responsibilities. Teaching Dzogchen is not like teaching Tibetan language, history or culture in the University; this does not have any serious consequence.

TRANSMISSION

But the Dzogchen teaching is related with transmission and transmission is related to the guardians of the teaching. In this case, everything must be correct otherwise everybody can have a problem. For this reason then, I am still continuing trying to understand the teachings. I never teach with a book, saying, “Oh! This is the title of the teaching and it is someone else's

teaching.” If necessary, I know how to do this because we studied that way in College but my main point is not this. When I teach Dzogchen, my main point is to make people understand what Dzogchen is and what we can do with it. Even if we do a short weekend retreat, there is not much time but in the short time available, I try to make people understand something, and I also give them transmission. Then they can do this practice and also make progress. So you must also follow the teachings in this way with me, not just thinking, “He is always talking. Talking is called oral transmission.” That is not the main point but it is also necessary. So we can go ahead in this way slowly, slowly.

EXPLANATION OF THE VERY SHORT THUN

This is the first day of our retreat. Even if we can't do a long practice, we can do a short practice together because practice is related also with transmission. This is how we do a short practice.

We begin by sounding A and visualising this luminous white A and *thigle* at the centre of our body. This represents our primordial potentiality and also the primordial potentiality of our teachers or enlightened beings. So we remain just a little while in this state of clarity and then we relax. We relax in this state and then we sing the Song of Vajra.

THE SONG OF THE VAJRA

The Song of the Vajra is in a real sense, the very, very essence of the Dzogchen teaching. It is called the ‘natural sound’. This means that through our primordial potentiality, everything manifests with natural sound and we can integrate everything on the relative level into that state. We sing the Song of the Vajra in

a relaxed way. If thoughts arise when we sing, we don't follow or block them. We don't do anything but just continue in that state of primordial potentiality. This is the Song of the Vajra.

EMAKIRIKIRI.....RA: RA: RA:

After that we dedicate merits with our intention. We dedicate not only the merit of singing the Song of the Vajra, but also I have been explaining the teaching to you and you have been listening. All this produces infinite merits and we are dedicating all these merits so they become the cause of liberation for all sentient beings. That is our intention. And then we empower our intention with this mantra:

OM DHARE DHARE BHANDHARE SVAHA:...
MAMAKOLIN SAMANTA:

PART IV

THE ESSENCE OF THE TEACHINGS

You remember yesterday that I explained it is very important that we try to understand the essence of the teaching. This doesn't mean only the teaching of Dzogchen but any kind of teaching. So how can we understand what is meant by the essence of the teaching? We must understand what are the characteristics of the teaching and its methods, particularly if there are many different kinds of teaching which have really developed from that one teaching. Many teachings over time developed in different ways. If we do not go to the source and the origin of that teaching, then there is no way of understanding the essence.

VOWS AND TRAINING

Sometimes when I explain something, people misunderstand me. For example, yesterday I explained the characteristics of the Hinayana style of teaching, as well as Mahayana and Tantric teachings. When we received the Kalachakra initiation and teachings this time, you remember that took a long a time. His Holiness the Dalai Lama explained the vows of the Bodhisattva, as well as the Hinayana and Tantric vows. I am not saying that the Bodhisattva and Tantric vows do not exist but if you want to go to the origin, to the source, then taking vows are characteristics of the Hinayana system.

In the Mahayana system, we cultivate Bodhichitta. Originally, this was not really called a vow and in Tantrism, it was not called a vow either. But when I explained these things yesterday, someone got worried and said to me, "Oh! Now I am

confused because I am doing the practice of Bodhichitta.” I am not saying that you don’t do the practice of Bodhichitta but try to understand what is the characteristic principle of Mahayana. If you know that, then there is the possibility of entering into the essence of knowledge. That is why I am explaining in this way.

For example, in Tibetan Buddhism there was someone in the Nyingmapa tradition called Ngari Panchen, who wrote a very wonderful book called *Three Vows*. In Tibetan we say *Domsum Namnge*. This means, “What the three vows really are,” and he explained the vows of the Vajrayana, the vows of the Bodhisattva and also vows in the Hinayana style.

In the Sakyapa tradition, Sakya Pandita has also written a very famous book which we studied. It is called *Domsum Rabje*. Later these systems became very diffused in Tibet but it was not originally like this. I want to explain a bit more in detail and then you can have a more precise idea.

When you receive a Refuge vow for example, how do you receive it? The teacher asks you to repeat some words, saying, “From this moment until I die, I will take refuge in Buddha, Dharma and Sangha.” That is the conclusion. So, you repeat these words three times. After the last time, he says, “Now you have received the vow!” This was originally the system of refuge in the Hinayana.

Still today, even if we follow Mahayana or Vajrayana teachings, all our teachers give refuge vows in this way. Why do we say, “From this moment until I die,” when really you take refuge until you have total realisation. But this teaching is characteristically related more to the physical level. You can apply many vows with your physical body but when you die, your physical body goes to the cemetery. You cannot carry that vow beyond death. That is why I am saying that Hinayana teaching is related more with the physical level.

If you are receiving or cultivating Bodhichitta in the Mahayana system, these words were also used by His Holiness the Dalai Lama during the Kalachakra initiation, *changchub nyingpo...* This means that we go for refuge to the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha until we have total realisation. Why? This is the Mahayana point of view which does not give too much importance to the relative condition and the material level. In the Mahayana, our intention is the most important and we go beyond that kind of limitation.

Then after that, there is a very important verse for cultivating Bodhichitta.

The way that all the Bodhisattvas have followed the path of the Bodhisattva, I shall also learn that and try to follow this training.

You see that this is not called a vow but a training. What is the difference between a vow and a training? A vow is limited. For example, if you take a vow not to drink alcohol, you must not even drink one small drop of alcohol. Of course, a drop of alcohol will not create a state of drunkenness in you but that is not the main point. The main point is that you have already taken a vow. So when you receive a vow, you apply it in this way.

When you say that you are following the training, this doesn't mean that you have a completely developed capacity. For example, Bodhisattvas can offer not just objects but also their own lives, their physical bodies. We don't have that capacity but we train to have it, particularly when we are mentally training doing a practice like Chöd. We invite all the guests, saying, "Please come and eat my physical body." I am not really offering my material body but I am doing this practice because I know that I have a very strong attachment to my physical body. This is called mind training. So you can say that Bodhisattva training means we are trying to do our best. It is not like a vow but we

should immediately apply the vow in that way. So you can understand what the difference is.

THE PRINCIPLE OF TANTRISM

The Tantric principle is different because the Tantric teacher introduces you to pure vision; he shows you how to be in a pure dimension like a mandala, with all your functions manifesting in the form of deities. Why do we do this? We do this because we are training ourselves in pure vision in order to have pure vision and remain in it. This is the principle of samaya in the Tantric teachings.

THE PRINCIPLE OF HINAYANA

There are some very important words of teaching from Atisha, who summarised all the Hinayana principles of practice by concluding, “We renounce creating disturbances for others.” This is the main point of a vow.

For example when we take a vow, we say that we won’t do various things with our body, voice or mind, such as thinking bad thoughts. All these vows in the real sense follow the principle of renunciation. Why do we renounce something? We renounce something because we know it is harmful for others and creates problems. This is really the conclusion of the Hinayana principle.

As Dzogchen practitioners, when we speak of integrating the Hinayana principle, this doesn’t mean that we are taking a vow and becoming monks and nuns but we understand this principle and integrate it into our awareness. Dzogchen practitioners must be aware. Being aware means knowing what is good or bad in the circumstances, and also not creating problems for others. If you know that acting in a certain way is not good for others, then

being aware, you don't do this. So in the Hinayana they follow vows which are related to rules. If you receive the full vows of a monk or a nun, there are many rules you have to follow. But if you follow the teaching of Dzogchen, there are no rules. We say this because the principle is different. Learning Dzogchen means you are learning to be responsible for yourself and that is why we say that we must be aware.

If you are following Hinayana, Hinayana never asks you, "You must be aware." They might say, "You must be aware of all these rules. Follow these rules and don't create any problems." So, you can see that this principle is very different.

THE PRINCIPLE OF MAHAYANA

The principle of Mahayana is really the cultivation of Bodhichitta and for this reason, Atisha said, "The conclusion of Mahayana is that you are ready to benefit all sentient beings." For example, if you see someone who is very miserable and hungry and you have a good meal prepared, instead of eating it yourself, you give it to this poor hungry man. This is characteristic of Mahayana, thinking more of others than oneself. Even if you suffer and have problems, it is more important to consider others first. This is why Mahayana is considered to be a wonderful and very important teaching.

REFUGE AND BODHICHTTA

In any case, whether we are doing practice in the Dzogchen, Sutric or Tantric style, we always start with Refuge and Bodhichitta. Most people consider Refuge and Bodhichitta to be just some words we repeat and train with its meaning but in Dzogchen, it is very important that we know what is really meant by Refuge and Bodhichitta. If we know its real sense,

then there is the possibility to integrate and enter into the essence of the teaching.

In conclusion, if we take Refuge in the Dzogchen way, we must go to the essence of Refuge and not only the words. And when we cultivate Bodhichitta, it is not sufficient only to know the words we repeat. We must also go to the essence of these words. It is not enough only to have intellectual knowledge of the essence but we must integrate it into our life. In this way, any kind of practice we do then has real sense.

What does Refuge mean in the real sense? Refuge in the sense of receiving a vow is not the main point. Many people think this. Why? The reason is that the origin of Refuge is Hinayana, and the system of Hinayana is concerned with giving vows. Generally ordinary people say, "Oh, I took refuge from this Lama or that teacher and then I became a Buddhist!" This is only your idea of renunciation as you are thinking, "I don't like my ordinary life and I want to be different." Then you decide that you want to be a Buddhist but if you don't really know the teachings of the Buddha, then you'll never become a Buddhist. The title of a Buddhist doesn't mean anything.

Some people like to go very much by form and try to spread Buddhism. If they succeed in converting someone, they are very happy. I don't think that is really the teaching of Buddha because if someone has a karmic connection with the teaching, one day that person will come to the teaching. This is particularly the case in Vajrayana teaching, and also in Dzogchen where that person must have had that kind of connection. This means that when you are converting people, you are conditioning that person and that is not good at all. So the principle is that we do not try to convert people.

CONNECTION WITH THE TEACHING

For those interested in the teaching, of course we explain something and try to make them understand. If people are interested, this means that at least they have some connection with the teaching. Then there is something that can be developed. Even if that connection is very small, with awareness and collaboration, we can develop that connection into something bigger and better.

I will give you an example. A teacher is giving a teaching and initiation of Avalokiteshvara and a practitioner wants to receive this initiation. On his way to the teaching, he meets a friend on the road. The friend is not interested in teachings and asks, "Where are you going?" The practitioner replies, "I am going to receive an initiation of Avalokiteshvara." The other person has no idea what this means but he is curious and asks, "Can I come with you?" His friend replies, "Of course you can come with me." So he goes and receives the teaching, maybe also the initiation and instruction but he is not really interested in following the teaching or applying it. This means that person had no particular connection with the teaching. It was only because of his friend that he went along. But now he has created a secondary cause, a small secondary cause. One day that cause might mature and he will think, "Oh, I should learn something about this teaching." This means that slowly, slowly his capacity and the possibility of connection with the teaching is increasing.

He may not be a good practitioner but now he has a connection with Avalokiteshvara and the transmission. It might be a very small connection but later he might become more interested in the teaching. If many other practitioners collaborate with him, this can increase his interest even more. And if he participates and does practice together with others, this means that he is

increasing the power of that connection, and it becomes even stronger. In this way he becomes more active and can receive more wisdom from Avalokiteshvara. In the end, through receiving this wisdom, he wakes up and understands, “The path is not only about praying. I must also try to do meditation and be in my real condition.” He discovers then the real meaning of Avalokiteshvara; the real Avalokiteshvara, the real sense of Avalokiteshvara is in ourselves, in our condition and not outside. This is an example of how a connection with the teaching develops. So there are many possibilities.

PART V

THE THREE PATHS OF LIBERATION

There are many ways of following teachings and developing knowledge but they generally follow the three characteristics. In the Dzogchen teaching, this is called *thar lam de sum*, the three paths of liberation.

THE PATH OF RENUNCIATION

The first teaching is related more with our physical body and this is characteristic of Sutra. In the Sutra teachings, we have both Mahayana and Hinayana but the characteristic of both is the path of renunciation. What does the path of renunciation mean? We know that we have many different emotions and if we are conditioned by them and follow them, we have infinite samsara and suffering. For this reason, emotions are considered to be poisons and if we take poison, we die. So this is negative and therefore we reject and renounce any kind of emotion. This is characteristic of Sutra teaching.

To take an example, when you are angry, you know this to be very negative. If you follow your anger, you can create many problems both for yourselves and for others. But what can you do to avoid that emotion? When you are angry, try immediately to cultivate compassion and remember the consequences of anger.

In the Bodhisattva path it is said, “If you are angry just once, you can destroy all your accumulation of good merit over many kalpas.” You remember this and are really aware that anger is something terrible. So when you feel angry, immediately you renounce this and stop your anger. Instead of anger, in its place,

you try to cultivate compassion. This is characteristic of Sutra teachings and is called the path of renunciation.

In the path of renunciation, there is no explanation of the energy level of the individual. This is because this teaching is more for ordinary people, who have less capacity. They are also teachings taught by Buddha Shakyamuni in his physical form.

THE PATH OF TRANSFORMATION

But when we speak of Vajrayana Tantric teachings, then there are many explanations on the level of energy. The level of energy is also part of our existence, not only our physical body. To understand the energy level is more complicated than the physical body, and therefore most people have no interest in understanding it. Even some teachers don't explain this because many people don't have the capacity to follow it.

If an important Lama arrives in a village in Tibet, people from the countryside all come to see the Lama and offer him something, asking, "Please give me a blessing or a protection cord." The Lama gives out protection cords and blesses them by putting his hands on their heads, and chanting some mantras. Then they are satisfied but this is not a path to liberate them from samsara and can't be of much benefit. If someone has some capacity and asks the teacher, "Please show me what is the path so I can have realisation," then the teacher can give teachings. By following these instructions, that person can then have realisation. But the teacher can't do anything for people who are missing this capacity.

When I went to the countryside in Tibet, I tried many times to explain to people and make them understand something about the path but they were not interested. Even if I explained teachings, they did not listen so what could I do? The best thing then

was to give them some very nice protection cords which made them happy but it won't help them that much.

We are human beings. Since we know how to talk and judge, we have many possibilities to follow teachings. For this reason, the Buddha taught Sutric teachings to ordinary people but the Tantric teachings were also transmitted by the Buddha through manifestation. Some people say that the Kalachakra was taught by the Buddha one year after the Buddha's *parinirvana*. Others say that he taught Kalachakra one year before his *parinirvana* but this is just our dualistic judgement. We can't put limits on the time Buddha transmitted the Kalachakra because Kalachakra and the manifestation of Kalachakra is beyond time.

KALACHAKRA AND SAMBHOgakAYA MANIFESTATIONS

When we speak of Sambhogakaya manifestations, the dimension of Sambhogakaya is totally beyond time. Normally we look at things from a dualistic position and pass judgment. This does not make much sense and can even become ridiculous. If people really understood what Sambhogakaya dimension meant, Kalachakra is a Sambhogakaya manifestation. Buddha was not able to teach Kalachakra physically. Why is this? You know that Buddha was a monk yet the manifestation of Kalachakra is in union, Yab-Yum. How can there be this kind of contradiction? This means that not only with Kalachakra but also with any Sambhogakaya manifestation, Tantric teachings are received through manifestation in another dimension. Through this manifestation, these teachings and knowledge are communicated. So the characteristic of Tantric teachings is the path of transformation. Tantrism really has not much to do with the path of renunciation.

Traditionally though the path of renunciation became very much the official path. The more traditional teachings of the

Buddha are found mainly in the monasteries and it is monks and nuns who live in monasteries. This is characteristic of the traditional point of view and it is not difficult then to understand why everything seems to be governed by this path of renunciation.

While we were receiving the Kalachakra in the last few days, there was some kind of limitation referring to Sangha. What is the Sangha that they were referring to? In this case Sangha refers to the monks and nuns who dress in robes and shave their hair. They are considered Sangha but this is Sangha in the Hinayana tradition. Even in the Mahayana tradition, it is not necessary to be a monk or nun. I have a real story to tell about this.

THE GYALWA KARMAPA

When I was a small boy, the Gyalwa Karmapa, the sixteenth Karmapa, recognised me as a reincarnation. From the time he recognised me, the Karmapa felt as though he owned me. Then I grew up and went to India. I was now twenty years old. According to Hinayana, this is the moment to receive the vows of a full monk. I was then living in Sikkim and when I first arrived there, I was like all the other Tibetans Lamas. At that time I was also a Tibetan doctor and had a lot of medicine with me. People were always asking me to do Pujas for them so my life was rather comfortable. I continued like this for some months.

In the end, I decided to go back to Tibet because the Chinese had put my father and brother in prison. The reason they were in prison was because I was in India. In India, there were groups of Tibetans involved in political activities against the Chinese but I was not involved in any of this. But the Chinese believed I was involved with one of these political groups and for this reason my father and my brother were put in prison, even though I was innocent.

I thought that at least I could go back to Tibet to free my father and brother. When I reached the India-Tibet border, I knew someone working in a Chinese office and before entering Tibet, I spent a few days in his house with his family. This official said to me, “It is better that you don’t go back to Tibet because the situation is very confused. Instead of being able to help your brother and your father, they will also put you in prison. At least, remain for one week in my house. You must wait and listen for the news from Tibet.” I thought this was good advice and so I stayed one week with this family. Every day I was doing Tara Puja for myself and also for this family.

Every day the news we received got worse and worse and I also had many dreams. These dreams really showed me that it would be better I didn’t go back and after one week, I returned to Sikkim. I understood then that if I couldn’t go back to Tibet, I should do some work because I didn’t want to live like a Lama and Tibetan doctor.

One evening, the King of Sikkim invited me to dinner and also present were friends of Sikkim and many Government ministers. I asked them, “Why don’t you offer me a job? When I spent two years in China, I worked in a school and taught Tibetan so I have had some experience of work.” They replied, “Of course, if you want a job, we can offer you one.” Immediately they offered me a job preparing books for schools in the Development Office and from that time on, I worked every day in an office.

But then the Gyalwa Karmapa arrived from Tibet and finally the Dalai Lama came too. After that China completely closed down Tibet and there was no communication between Tibet and India. At that time, the Gyalwa Karmapa sent me a letter, saying, “You should come to Rumtek to receive the full vows of a monk.” I replied in a letter saying, “I don’t feel like being a monk. If I were living in Tibet, maybe I would like to be a

monk because I would be living in a monastery. There would be a group, a Sangha. I have studied the rules of monks, the Vinaya, and I know how many rules exist. If I am not in a monastery with a Sangha, I would not be able to keep the vows because twice a month, one must do purification. So, if there is no Sangha, I would not be able to do purification.” So I explained that this is the reason why I didn’t want to become a monk.

But after about twenty days, another letter from the Gyalwa Karmapa arrived at my house, brought by a monk. This letter said that I should come to see him and receive vows. So then I went to Rumtek and tried to explain my reasons to the Gyalwa Karmapa. But he was still convinced that I should become a monk. I asked him, “Why do you insist that I become a monk?” He replied, “If you become a monk, you can benefit others more.” Then I had a discussion with the Karmapa and said, “In the Mahayana, Mañjushri was not a monk nor was Avalokiteshvara a monk. All these eight Bodhisattvas were not monks. How can you say they didn’t benefit others greatly?” Finally, at the end he said, “OK, now do as you feel.” So I was happy.

But before I left to come to Italy, I went to Rumtek to visit the Gyalwa Karmapa. The Gyalwa Karmapa gave me a very, very nice ancient statue of Buddha. It was a present because I was leaving but he said to me, “This statue is to remind you one day that you should become a monk.” Then I said, “If one day I feel I really want to become a monk and receive those vows, I will come only to you.” That was my commitment. This is an example. So it is not so easy to be a monk because to be a monk, you must know and really understand all the rules and not make mistakes, otherwise that is not good. In any case, this is Hinayana which is characteristic of the system of renunciation.

THE PATH OF TRANSFORMATION AND THE VAJRA

When we speak of transformation, this is different to the path of renunciation. In Vajrayana teaching, whether it is Lower Tantra or Higher Tantra, there is always the consideration that the principle of our real nature is the Vajra. The symbol of the Vajra is this, which you know already. What we call a vajra today is this metal object but this is not the real Vajra. This is only the symbol of the Vajra. The real Vajra is our potentiality, our real condition, how it is.

With Vajrayana teaching, we discover and understand what this symbol of the Vajra looks like. You see in the centre, there is a kind of a ball. This ball in Vajrayana is presented as our primordial potentiality, in the same way that in the Dzogchen teachings this white A and *thigle* represent our primordial potentiality. So this ball, its state and its real nature, is beyond time and beyond any kind of limitation. Its condition is just like a crystal ball. If you have a crystal ball and you look into it, it is pure, clear and limpid. It does not have any special colour but that depends where it is resting. For example, if you put this crystal ball on a red table, you are not looking at the table but at the crystal ball and this crystal ball looks completely red. If you put it on another table which is yellow, you see the crystal ball looks yellow but in a real sense, it doesn't have any colour. So whatever colour appears depends on the circumstances.

We then have two main aspects of vision: pure vision for those who have some kind of realisation and impure vision, which is the contrary, like karmic vision. So this is a way of presenting the vajra. You can see that under these two parts, there are the leaves of the lotus flower. In a real sense, lotus flowers mean that everything is pure and this pure dimension is the real nature but it manifests both pure and impure aspects of vision.

For example as I have already explained, when there is a secondary cause of vision like the manifestation of Yama appearing in front of the Dharmakaya state, then Yamantaka manifests. This is the pure dimension and a permanent manifestation. But if we are not in the real state of Dharmakaya and fall completely into dualistic vision with the idea of subject and object, this is then samsaric vision. So through pure vision, we speak of the Five Dhyani Buddhas and also the Five Dhyani Buddhas in Yab-Yum. Through impure vision we explain particularly the individual condition, with the five aggregates and also the five elements.

So impure vision is transformed into pure vision through the methods and knowledge of Tantrism. We have the five emotions. In their pure dimension, these five emotions are the five wisdoms but these five wisdoms and five emotions both have the same root. They do not have a different origin; their real condition is the same. When we understand that in their real condition they are the same and that there is no difference, then there is the possibility to transform. That is why Guru Padmasambhava gave us the example of our real condition being like gold. If our real nature is gold, even if gold is formed into different objects like a statue or an ornament, its nature is still unchanging and is always gold. So this is the path of transformation.

THREE MAIN MANIFESTATIONS IN TANTRISM

For this reason when we receive transmissions in Tantrism, there are three main manifestations: peaceful, joyful and wrathful. The Five Dhyani Buddhas like Vairochana and so on are peaceful forms; the manifestations of Shitro are both wrathful and peaceful; Hayagriva, Yamantaka and Vajrakilaya are all wrathful manifestations while Kalachakra, Chakrasamvara and Hevajra are joyful.



Wheel of Life

THE WHEEL OF LIFE

Why do we have these three manifestations? We have three main manifestations because the essence of all our emotions are these three. You can see this in the Wheel of Life, the chakra of samsara, where there are three animals at the centre: a pig, a bird and a snake. These three animals represent our three main emotions. The pig represents ignorance but ignorance here doesn't mean not having education. Here ignorance means that we are lacking clarity, not discovering our real nature. So everybody has this kind of ignorance.

And then we have the snake which is a symbol of anger. In general, the snake is considered to be the animal with the strongest anger. In Tibet when farmers are working and cutting crops, sometimes they kill snakes. Tibetans never want to kill snakes willingly. They are afraid of killing them because the snake is a very angry animal and if you tease snakes with sticks, they can explode with anger! Anger is then the cause of the hell realm and for this reason if a snake is killed, they think, "Oh, that person goes to hell or can suffer that vision of hell later." For this reason then they do a lot of purification if someone kills a snake. If you go to Tibet, there are many big piles of stones on which are written OM MANI PADME HUM. Sometimes you can also see there is a kind of chakra and around this chakra is a snake with mantra. This means that someone has purified their action of killing a snake and this is their representation of it.

The third symbol is the bird and this represents attachment.

So you can see that these three root emotions are used for transforming. For attachment we have joyful manifestations and in Shitro practice, there are peaceful, joyful and wrathful manifestations for these three kinds of purification. In this way we transform our emotions.

For example, if I feel angry, thinking of the consequences of anger I try to cultivate compassion. But if I am a Tantric practitioner, at that moment then I transform into a wrathful manifestation. It does not mean that I am a wrathful manifestation in order to fight with someone but I transform so that the anger can continue and not be blocked. Sometimes when we block anger, it can create illness. So through this transformation, we can continue feeling angry but not in a dualistic way. Generally when we are angry, we are in dualistic vision, thinking, “This person is disturbing me and I don’t like him or his criticism.” But when I transform into a figure like Guru Traghur, I am in a pure dimension and there is no longer dualistic vision.

There is also pride. When we feel proud of being a deity, generally we pretend to be a wrathful manifestation but really we don’t feel it. When we are angry, it is easy for us to feel that anger and transform. Of course, you can’t transform with only that idea in mind. Remember that Tantric practitioners do personal retreats for three months, three years or seven years. When they do this training, they apply the practice and become more familiar with transformation and then there are more possibilities to use this. This is the characteristic of the path of transformation.

DZOGCHEN TEACHING

When we speak of the Dzogchen teaching, first of all we need to understand what Dzogchen is: we must understand that Dzogchen is not a teaching but is our real condition. Dzogchen means the totally perfected state, which means that we have three primordial wisdoms and three primordial potentialities. Since we already have these, everything is perfected. If we are really in that condition, then we are no different to the Buddha or a Bodhisattva and realised beings. But it is not enough only to

have an idea of this, even to have just a small experience. This is why it is useful to have this experience of Dzogchen.

Then there are ways to increase this potential, which means that there is the possibility of integrating all our existence of body, speech and mind into that state. We apply this practice day after day, becoming more and more familiar with it and in the end we have total realisation.

REFUGE IN DZOGCHEN

So how can we be in this state of Dzogchen? For this we have the Dzogchen teaching. The teaching exists so we can discover our real nature and be forever in that state: for this reason, the teaching is very important. When we follow Dzogchen teaching, we need to understand right from the very beginning, what refuge really means. In Dzogchen we do not take a vow or anything of that kind. But we know there is the Dzogchen teaching and this is taught by a teacher. We follow this teaching in order to have total realisation; we need the teaching until we have total realisation. For how long do we need the teacher? We need the teacher until we have total realisation and being aware of this, we follow the teaching. This means going for refuge automatically both with the teaching and the teacher. The principle of Dzogchen is not a ceremony nor a show.

PROVISIONAL AND DEFINITIVE REFUGE

In general refuge means that when you need help to overcome problems, this is what we call refuge. If you are out walking in the street and suddenly there is a very strong downpour of rain, what do you do? You escape under a tree and at that moment, you are going for refuge to that tree. But this doesn't mean you are going to take refuge in that tree for a long time, even for many

years. When rain stops and you don't need to shelter under the tree anymore, you leave.

If you need to cross a big river, you get into a boat because you can't swim and the water might be very cold. When you get into that boat, you are automatically going for refuge to the boat. You go for refuge until you are on the other side of the river. When you get into the boat, you are not going to say, "Oh, Boat! I am going to you for refuge so that you can get me to the other side of the river." If ceremonies are really so very important, when you get on the boat, you must do something right then. But actually you don't need it. Going directly to the essence in the real sense means this. So you must understand you are taking refuge in the teachings.

At times people say to me, "I never took Refuge!" or "I have no Refuge!" We can have problems like this. For example, a Lama came to Rome and a group of Italians invited him to give an initiation of Mahakala. Some of my students who had already followed my teachings for two or three years, went to receive this initiation. Just before the initiation, they were asked, "Have you taken Refuge?" My students replied, "No." They were told, "If you have not taken Refuge, you can't receive this initiation. Maybe you can come tomorrow and the Lama will give you Refuge. Then next time you can receive this initiation." My students were surprised and told me this story. Then I also felt a little guilty because I hadn't explained very much about Refuge and this is why they didn't understand. But in a real sense, they had been following my teaching of Dzogchen for two or three years, so how could they say that they had no Refuge? Of course, they had Refuge but they did not recognise it. This is just an example.

It is very important that when we do any kind of practice, at the beginning we are aware we are now on this path in order to have total realisation. This is really the Refuge. You are in

no way indifferent to the path, you know it to be indispensable and that it is very, very important in order to have total realisation. So you should understand this well and know that Refuge really means this.

THE PRINCIPLE OF MAHAYANA

Also cultivating Bodhichitta in the Mahayana principle means observing what kind of intention you have. In Mahayana it says, “If you have good intention, then everything is fine but if you have bad intention, then everything goes badly. So you must try to cultivate good intention.” This is the principle of Mahayana practice and the reason we always observe our intention when we practise; we need to ask ourselves why we are doing practice or acting in such a way. We might think that we are doing good for others but before acting, we need to observe ourselves a little as to our intention. When we observe ourselves and discover our intention, if it is perfect, then that is fine. But if you have an egocentric intention which benefits only yourself, then you must change this and cultivate correct intention. This is really the reason for cultivating Bodhichitta. The Mahayana principle of practice is not only going to temples, praying to Buddha, offering flowers and so on. Through observing your intentions in your daily life, you can understand how to follow seriously the practice of Mahayana.

Many people consider offering flowers and going to temples, praying to the Buddha, to be the attitude of Mahayana but the real principle or practice of Mahayana is to try and observe your intention. If you are not distracted, you can do this at any moment whether you are working, walking or speaking to people. If you have a bad intention, immediately you can transform it into good intention and this is really the meaning of cultivating Bodhichitta. This is much more powerful and more important

than chanting mantras or prayers. When you chant mantras and prayers, maybe at first you have good intentions and are visualising what you are saying. When you get used to doing this every day, you need a mala to count mantras but mentally you are thinking how to do business. This is not very good karma nor very good practice.

PRELIMINARY PRACTICES AND THE ACCUMULATION OF MERIT

In a real sense many practices, and our attitude to practice, are related to our intention. I will give you an example. Many of you are doing more traditional practices, such as the preliminary practices of *ngöndro*. In the *ngöndro* you first do prostrations with the thought, “I do prostrations in order to purify my body, speech and mind.”

When you do prostrations there are many things to visualise and if you do this in the correct and perfect way, then you accumulate merits. You accumulate merits because you have good intentions and you are convinced that you are doing something good. It is not a question of only doing prostrations. Maybe the movement of the prostrations can help you physically and make you healthier but this is not the main point of *ngöndro*.

In Nepal you will see many Tibetans circumambulating the Stupa at Bodha. They are very involved with this but if you ask them, “What you are doing?” they reply, “We are doing Dharma activities!” You might respond, “If you are walking around the stupa, how can this be Dharma activity?” Most people can’t explain how this is Dharma activity but it doesn’t really matter because their intentions are good and therefore they accumulate merits.

Of course originally there was a reason for all these Dharma activities. In ancient India, when Shakyamuni Buddha had finished giving teachings, all his students were really satisfied

and paid respect to the Buddha by prostrating to him. Then they circumambulated around the Buddha seven times before leaving. Prostrations are only a way of showing respect. That is all. Also, when you are circumambulating, this is also only paying respect. Why is this? In the Sutra teaching and also in Yogatantra, when you pay respect to your teacher, you always put your teacher on the right side of you. If you put your teacher on the left side, this means that you are not paying respect. That's why students always walk keeping the teacher on their right side. This is also the reason for going around the stupa in this way; that is the origin of this and something related more to the system and traditions of ancient India.

In China their attitude is the opposite: guests are put on the left side and this is paying respect. Likewise, in ancient times the tradition of Shang Shung in western Tibet also paid respect by putting honoured guests on the left side. This is the reason why the Bönpos go round a Stupa the contrary way because they put the Stupa on their left side, which is their sign of paying respect.

In conclusion everything has its origin in history but is also related to our intention. What produces merits is our intention and this is what matters when we do a preliminary practice like the *ngöndro*.

SECONDARY PRACTICES

Even if you don't do preliminary practices like prostrations, in Dzogchen we have secondary practices like *tröndu*. We know that our primordial potentiality manifests like a white A and *thigle*, and through that white A and *thigle* we spread light and through this light, we manifest infinite offerings. At the same time we are also communicating with all the dimensions of Dharmakaya, Sambhogakaya and Nirmanakaya: all enlightened

beings. We are presenting an infinite manifestation of offerings to all enlightened beings and in this way, we accumulate merits.

In the more traditional preliminary practices, there is the offering of the mandala. Whether you do the mandala offering, or spread lights and make offerings to all enlightened beings, there is no difference. For this you don't need a mandala or any objects. It is sufficient only that you do this visualisation.

Instead of doing the purification of Vajrasattva, you can also spread light through this white A, and this light is received by all beings in the six realms or Lokas. With this potentiality of light, you are purifying all the obstacles and negative karma of sentient beings. We don't know really how to purify all sentient beings but we accumulate a great quantity of merits with our intention. This is also part of our purification and is very powerful. This is an example to show you that everything is related with our intention which is very important. So going to the essence of the teaching means knowing these principles and not only going after form or words.

THE HELL REALMS

There can be many complicated explanations but these exist for a reason. For example, when you learn a practice like the *ngöndro*, there are explanations of the six realms particularly the hell realm. There are eight hot and eight cold, plus another two hell realms and it is very complicated, almost like learning a geography of the hell realms. But in a real sense if we ask where is hell, it doesn't exist anywhere. This is true because at this moment we are in the human dimension and we have human vision. Human dimension and vision is something more or less real for us but for how long do we continue to have this vision? We have this human vision until the moment of the *bardo* of

death. At that moment we die and then we lose our vision as human beings. This is the reason we call it the *bardo*, the intermediate state. Why do we call it the intermediate state? This is because the *bardo* does not belong to any of the six Lokas and the six Lokas are the product of our karma. Everybody has the accumulation of all these infinite karmic potentialities, which can also include the manifestation of hell.

We can observe ourselves just for one day and see how many times we feel angry. That is the cause of hell. How many times do we feel jealousy? That is the cause of the Asuras. When we manifest all these emotions, we produce the potentiality of karma; we can't say that we have no cause for rebirth in the six Lokas. Everybody has infinite causes for rebirth in the six Lokas. Until we exist in that particular dimension, it doesn't exist as something real. This is why the Buddha also said that our life as human beings in the human dimension is just like a dream. When we are dreaming, it seems real but when we wake up, we realise that it was only a dream. So this is our real condition.

THE BARDO AND SIX LOKAS

For example, when a human being dies and arrives in the *bardo* of existence, they naturally have a very strong attachment to the human condition and still feel that they are human beings. For this reason, if we are practitioners and another practitioner is dying, then we can do an introduction for them. Introduction here means that person's mind is waking up and is in the state of the *bardo*. We can make contact with this person and talk to him/her, "You must remember now that you have died and even if you feel as if you are still alive, this is not true! Look at yourself and see that you have no shadow. This means you have no physical body and if you try to go through walls, you can go through them as if they were transparent. In this way

you can understand that you are dead and that death is normal. Everybody knows that when there is birth, there is also death. No one can remain on this earth without dying. So don't feel sad that this is your moment of death. Instead of feeling sad, you should try to be aware and remember the methods of practice.” So this is how we do this kind of introduction and if someone is a practitioner, it helps a great deal. Even if someone is not a practitioner, then slowly, slowly, after one, two or three weeks, their attachment to their past life diminishes slowly and after a few weeks, they realise that they are dead. They might have also suffered a lot and the secondary causes for their rebirth will depend on their karma. When the secondary causes manifest, many different kinds of karmic potential also manifest. This is an example of samsara.

When we study this sort of explanation, we must understand there is a reason for this but we must not take it too seriously. For example studying the hell realms or realms of the Pretas makes people afraid; they take everything very seriously. There cannot be a kind of geography of the different realms. It is important only that we know we have these causes for rebirth in different realms. For this reason Dzogchen practitioners do a great deal of practice of the purification of the six Lokas. This means that we are purifying this accumulation of the passions.

In your lifetime you might have experienced very strong jealousy and even knowing it's not good, you can't stop being jealous. If you have this kind of problem, then it is better to do the practice of purification of the six Lokas a little; particularly you can purify more of the cause of the Asuras. If you have very strong anger, this can be the cause of the hell realm and you need to purify this in the same way. So you can see that in Dzogchen these kinds of purification practices are much more important than the official preliminary practices.

THE GRADUAL TRADITION

Why then do all the schools teach these preliminary practices of *ngöndro*? Each school feels that they own the global teaching of Buddha and they want to present all the practices in a concentrated way like the *ngöndro*. They also consider most practitioners as being new to the teachings, which means they also consider them to have lesser capacity. This is the characteristic point of the view of the gradual tradition.

The gradual tradition is just like our traditional society. In our society if you want to study at university, first you go to the university office who ask you for your diplomas. If you have no diplomas, you can't study at university. A university never allows you in unless they have checked your credentials. This is characteristic of our social system and the gradual system is also like this. If someone is new to the teaching, he/she is considered a little stupid in terms of Buddhist teachings. So, he/she must start by studying Refuge and Bodhichitta, and then slowly, slowly go higher and higher. This is mainly the Sutric point of view but it is not the point of view of Vajrayana. In Vajrayana, initiations are given which means that the path has already been introduced to you.

PART VI

DIRECT INTRODUCTION IN DZOGCHEN

Particularly in the Dzogchen teaching, first of all we introduce the state of knowledge directly otherwise we cannot understand a person's capacity. In our society, this is a bit like checking our capacity at the very beginning. But this is the Dzogchen way and it is a non-gradual system. Why do we do it this way in Dzogchen? Even if someone is completely new and has never followed either Dzogchen or Buddhist teachings, if that person is interested and wants to learn and receive teaching, from the point of view of Dzogchen we consider they already have a connection with the teaching. We don't know what kind of connection that person has, whether it is higher, lower or medium. So we give a direct introduction and can discover what kind of connection they have. If they don't have sufficient capacity, then we know what to do as there are many secondary practices. So these are the different characteristics of the gradual and non-gradual traditions but the important point is to know how to get to the essence of the teaching.

TRANSMISSION

Now I will give you transmission of *lung*. You need this particularly to do the practice of mantras. *Lung* is not an explanation but produces the sound of the mantras. I read the mantras and you listen because the function of mantras lies in the sound. When you receive this then later, when you apply the mantra, it works for you because you are connected with the transmission. I am giving you the transmission of the *lung* of the Short Thun. The Short Thun refers to a very condensed way of practice which we shall do later today together with a Ganapuja.

FOUR INITIATIONS IN TANTRISM

When we speak of transmission, this is a very general name. We use this word sometimes when we are also transmitting *lung*. Transmission of *lung* of mantra is not something very important but when we speak of different teachings, there are some main transmissions. We saw in Tantrism that there is the initiation of Kalachakra in the Kalachakra teaching. This is according to the transmission system of Tantra. But when we speak of the Dzogchen teaching, transmissions take place in a slightly different way. Initiation is a Tantric system.

Some people might say, "Oh, I have received the Dzogchen initiation." But this is not really correct. Sometimes one can introduce the knowledge of Dzogchen through an initiation because there are four kinds of initiation in Tantrism.

The first initiation is called the initiation of the vase. The vase represents our physical body and our physical body contains the Vajra. So introducing this, and receiving this initiation of the vase, is also called the initiation of the body. Then there is the initiation called secret initiation, which refers also to the initiation of the voice. This is related more to the energy level and mantra.

Then another initiation which we call the initiation of prajña is, in the real sense, the initiation of the mind and is related with knowledge. So, these first three initiations are related with body, speech and mind.

Then there is the fourth initiation. Some traditions call this the initiation of the word because it is done by pronouncing some mysterious words that cannot be understood easily. In a real sense, this is a kind of introduction and is really the most important initiation. In Vajrayana we call knowledge and understanding of our real condition, the Vajra. We also call it Tantra and in the Dzogchen teaching, it is called Dzogchen. This is our real condition and in the Sutra teaching, it is called

Prajñāparamita and Prajñāparamita means 'beyond intellectual knowledge'. So this is always explained by saying, "It is beyond word and beyond explanation." That is why in the fourth initiation one cannot explain it: some important words are repeated by the teacher which represent the knowledge of our real condition and this is considered the fourth initiation. Many times in Tantrism, the knowledge of Dzogchen is introduced with the fourth initiation.

Sometimes in Dzogchen Upadesha, four different kinds of initiations are also presented but the origin of these is really Anuyoga as the Anuyoga system is used in Upadesha. Why are there four initiations in Upadesha? They are called initiations because people know about the four initiations in the Tantric system. Even in Dzogchen they are called four initiations but these are not the same initiations as in Tantra.

FOUR INITIATIONS IN DZOGCHEN

The first initiation is called *tröche*. *Tröche* means we make preparations and do something in a more ritual way. The second is called *tröme* and *tröme* is without *tröpa*. *Tröpa* means preparing something. This means introducing in a simple way.

Then there is the third initiation called *shintu tröme*, which means a very simple introduction.

Then the fourth initiation is called *rabtu tröme*, which means the supreme simple way. You can see that this has nothing to do with the three initiations of the Tantric system. They only use these names because Dzogchen masters introduce different aspects to the student, depending on the type of student. If the student is very scholarly and intellectual, there is also a way of introducing the student in an intellectual way. Intellectuals like discussion and argument and there are many ways of introducing knowledge to them.



Garab Dorje



Mañjuśrimitra

GARAB DORJE AND MAÑJUSHRIMITRA

To take an example, the first and most important student of Garab Dorje, was Mañjushrimitra, who was a very famous pandit of Nalanda University. At that time, news reached Nalanda that there was a very interesting boy who was chanting a kind of Tantra of Dzogchen in the land of Oddiyana. This boy was also starting to give a teaching, which went beyond cause and effect.

When all the pandits of the Buddhist universities received this news, they were very worried because the teaching of the Buddha was based on the Four Noble Truths and explained cause and effect. If someone was giving a teaching beyond cause and effect, then they thought it might be a dangerous teaching. They decided that some pandits from Nalanda should go to Oddiyana to argue with Garab Dorje. For this reason, Mañjushrimitra and some other pandits went to Oddiyana.

At that time travelling to Oddiyana took a long time but eventually they arrived there. When Mañjushrimitra first met Garab Dorje, he immediately started to argue with him but Garab Dorje replied very, very clearly in the style of the Dzogchen teachings and Mañjushrimitra woke up instantly. At once he understood what it meant to be beyond cause and effect and became a student of Garab Dorje. Later he was his most important student.

All the teachings of Garab Dorje were collected by Mañjushrimitra and ordered into three series: Dzogchen Semde, Longde and Upadesha. This is an example of introduction through the intellect and sometimes it is possible to introduce in this way. In this case, it was not necessary to perform any initiation or particular way of introducing but of course this method doesn't work for everybody. Mañjushrimitra was very ready to wake up and also he had a good connection with Garab Dorje and

the Dzogchen teachings from the beginning. Sometimes it is possible to introduce in this way.

Some people are very used to following the Tantric style of teaching and when we only do a symbolic transmission, a direct transmission which is very simple, they don't feel satisfied. This is really true! People want to be given something to eat or at least be given something. I remember once I gave three days teaching in Turin, northern Italy. There was a group of people who had been following the Sufi tradition and were very focussed on having an initiation. They asked me to give them an initiation when I finished my teaching. I told them, "I don't know how I can do it now but really you don't need an initiation because I am teaching Dzogchen and I have transmitted the principle of the teaching to you." But they were not satisfied and at the end they said, "At least touch me!" They thought that if I touched them, they would feel something.

So, when we do a very simple transmission, we are not touching anyone nor are we handing out anything to eat and drink: for those used to initiations this is not at all satisfying. This is why these initiations exist in the Upadesha teaching but they are really according to the Tantric system and not Dzogchen.

THREE TRANSMISSIONS IN DZOGCHEN

In the Dzogchen teaching, there are three transmissions because we have body, speech and mind. Transmission which is related to the body is the transmission of a symbol, which can be very important for knowledge. For example, we show you a mirror, explaining that this is a symbol of knowledge because you know it is related with our mind and the nature of mind. So with the mirror you learn much better than only with an explanation.

And then we also have oral transmission, which is related with the voice and through this the teacher explains the base and the three primordial potentialities. Even if you don't discover it, you have some idea and with this idea, you can work with the teacher particularly if the teacher is giving a direct introduction. This doesn't mean that the teacher is doing something secret or performing a kind of magic. The teacher is working with the student. We know that only having an explanation is not sufficient because knowledge is beyond words and beyond explanation. If this is true, then there is no way we can introduce it.

This is something like reading that famous sutra called the *Prajñāparamitahridaya*. At the beginning of the Kalachakra initiation, the monks are always chanting this mantra, "There are no eyes, there are no ears, there is no nose etc. ..." and at the end, "There is no path and there is no wisdom. There is nothing." So then if there is nothing, how can we enter into knowledge? If there is really no possibility of being in the state of knowledge, why then are we having teachings? And why are we following teachings if there is no possibility of having realisation? So there must be some possibility. That is true. But what is that possibility? It is not an explanation nor is a symbol sufficient. Everything is negated.

THE THREE EXPERIENCES

Now the teacher explains how we work with our experiences. In our life, everything is experience and all that we have learned is through experience. If we have learned everything with experience, why do we not have that knowledge? For this reason, we have many different methods of teaching and all of them use different methods for having experiences. Even if there are infinite kinds of experiences, when we summarise them, there are only three because we have our body, speech and mind and this is always like a key to everything.

THE EXPERIENCE OF SENSATION

The experiences with our body are connected to different kinds of sensation, some very happy and pleasurable and others that are painful and make us sad. All these are mainly related to the physical body.

THE EXPERIENCE OF CLARITY

Then another experience is that of clarity and this is related with our experience of energy, what we call the voice. For example if we observe Tantric practices, what are we doing? We are working with our mind and transforming ourselves. Once we have transformed, our dimension is like a mandala and our existence manifests in the form of different deities. Through this, we have the experience of clarity. Even if we don't think in a specific way, with concentration and transformation we can feel this presence and this is part of our clarity. Generally when we speak of clarity, clarity means everything that appears, not only special visions. We know already the aspects of our dimension: we have pure vision and impure vision. If I open my eyes I can see very clearly this house, its walls and everyone present. This is also my vision and my clarity but of course it is not pure vision. In the same way if we do practice with visualisation and transformation, we can have pure vision and this is also part of our clarity.

THE EXPERIENCE OF EMPTINESS

Finally we have the experience of the mind which is empty. When we search our mind and first notice a thought, we search further for this thought. Observing it we find only emptiness, not only once but always. In the same way when we do practices like the calm state or Shine, in a real sense what we have is the

experience of emptiness. So this is the characteristic experience of mind.

We have these three experiences: emptiness, clarity and sensation. The teacher introduces knowledge to the students using one of these three experiences, sometimes not only using just one but even two experiences or sometimes three. It depends on the methods and how we use them. In any case when we know how to use them by applying experience, we can discover our real nature. The teacher cannot show the student his/her real nature just by saying, "Oh, this is your real nature." But the teacher can introduce knowledge to the student by using methods and applying them together. In this way he can make them understand the real condition. This is the system of Dzogchen.

Direct Introduction

So from the very beginning, from the teacher Garab Dorje until today, we use the method of direct introduction. Knowledge of the Dzogchen teaching is not just something that we decide and believe in. If the teacher just explains that our real nature is like this or that and you believe him, this is not sufficient to have real knowledge. But, if you learn well and listen carefully to what the teacher says, then it is possible to have direct introduction. Through this method you can have experience and through your experience, you can really discover your real nature.

In this case what you do is apply it together with your teacher because your teacher has this knowledge. A teacher who has real knowledge can help others because my nature and real condition are no different to your condition. Your nature and my nature as teacher are beyond being one or separate. For this reason, when you apply this method with experience, the teacher is also applying it, so it is easier for you to get into that state, not only when the teacher introduces you.

But if you are doing Guruyoga with the teacher, you can also have that benefit; not only with the teacher but this can also apply between students and students. We always think, “Oh, we are students, we are all the same.” But we are not really all the same as everybody has a different capacity. If someone has a developed capacity, and you are applying practice together, you can receive their influence. This is the reason why it is very important for practitioners to do collective practices together.

So in the Dzogchen teaching we say that we discover our real nature, not that we just believe in it. Believing is only something we decide with our mind and generally we do that, always thinking things to be true. With our intellect, we cannot get into our real nature and this is why it is said in the *Prajñāparamitahridaya*, “There is no wisdom, there is no path ...” and so on. But with experience, we can discover our real nature. Discovering and believing are both very, very different things. When we discover something, we now believe it and there is no problem. Also, we now understand the value of the teaching and transmission, as well as the value of the teacher, and everything becomes real. Until this moment, everything is false but we don’t know that it is false and still believe it to be real.

THE ROOT GURU

Sometimes people speak of their root guru but what does this really mean? Many people choose as their root guru someone who may be an important or famous teacher and decide that this is their guru. But that is a mental decision and is false! This decision can change at any time. If you really discovered something real, there is nothing to change. I always give the example of a sweet. If someone has never tasted a sweet in his life and wants to know what a sweet is like, how can you introduce this taste? You can find many books which explain what a sweet

is or invite many experts to explain what a sweet looks like. Maybe the expert develops an idea of a sweet and gets you to believe it but you don't really get to know what a sweet really is. You discover what a sweet is only by tasting a small piece of chocolate, or putting a cube of sugar on your tongue. This way you discover immediately what a sweet is. This is experience, not intellectual knowledge and is an example of how you can discover real knowledge. So direct introduction in Dzogchen works that way.

Some people think that direct introduction in Dzogchen is very secret and they want to have an appointment alone with the teacher. Then they make an appointment and come, asking for direct transmission. The teacher doesn't know what to do as he always tries to transmit direct introduction to all his students, make them all understand, not just one. In this case, the teacher is not hiding the real knowledge of Dzogchen!

There are some specific methods for which students need to have some preparation otherwise they can't do certain practices. In the Dzogchen teaching, there is the method of Dzogchen Thögal for example, and also the practice of Yangti, the dark practice. To do this kind of practice, you really need the capacity to be in your real nature. If you do not have that base and the teacher teaches these practices, it becomes dangerous for that person. This is the reason that these kinds of teachings are kept secret. If it is possible, of course we can make all sentient beings understand the real knowledge of Dzogchen. There is nothing secret about this. But when someone comes secretly asking for direct introduction, the teacher doesn't know what he should do! So it is very, very important that you know what is meant by transmission. This is transmission!

Symbolic and oral transmissions are also used for direct introduction and when we do direct introduction, finally the student can discover something. This doesn't mean that when

you discover your real nature, you suddenly become Buddha and are totally realised. But you understand now what realisation means and you try to be in that state again and again with Guruyoga at any given moment. You do practice day after day, becoming more and more familiar with it and slowly slowly all the aspects of your life become integrated. When you have succeeded integrating everything in that state, then you have realisation. For this reason once you have received direct introduction, then you need to do practice.

When you do practice, there are benefits even if they don't immediately manifest. But you will notice that you have fewer problems in daily life. Even if you have a problem, it doesn't feel so heavy and you are able to integrate it into your practice. This is already a good sign of your practice. We should go ahead slowly, slowly in that way. So you see then that direct introduction is very important.

CONNECTING WITH THE TRANSMISSION

Direct introduction is always related with Guruyoga because Guruyoga means being in the state of the teacher. The state of the teacher represents knowledge and understanding, the real condition. When you receive this transmission, it means that you are now connected with the transmission. To have realisation, first of all you need to discover your real nature. After that, in order to develop your capacity and integrate into that state, this is related to the transmission. It is not sufficient just to do meditation. Transmission is very important. It is just like an electric current. For example, if there is a light, you need to connect it with the electric current. If it is not connected, even if there are many lights, they do not illuminate. In the same way also transmission is indispensable in order to increase and develop our clarity. So we must be connected with the transmission.

This is something very important as today there are some Westerners creating modern versions of the Dzogchen teaching. They say, “We don’t need teachers. We can just read books, apply them and this is sufficient.” This is the modern Dzogchen invented by Westerners.

We don’t believe that this is the way to have realisation because in Dzogchen, there is the Dzogchen Longde, Semde and Upadesha transmitted from Garab Dorje without any interruption, right up to the present day. Generally we also separate Dzogchen from the teachings of Vajrayana and Sutra. If you want to learn the Sutra teachings, you can do this even if you have no teacher, and have not received a vow. There are many explanations of the Buddha’s teaching, explaining what is good and not good. You can then apply these teachings and benefit from them.

But Vajrayana and Dzogchen are not like this. In Tantric teachings it is indispensable to receive initiation and to have a teacher. Particularly in Dzogchen, you must have a teacher because otherwise you cannot receive transmission. If there is no transmission, you cannot have realisation and for this reason therefore, it is very important to receive the transmission of Guruyoga.

GURUYOGA

Guruyoga is the main practice in Dzogchen because any kind of teaching we receive is from the teacher. This is not only in Dzogchen but also in Tantrism. We have just received the Kalachakra initiation but we didn’t receive it from Kalachakra. We received it from His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Maybe the Dalai Lama transformed into Kalachakra but we couldn’t see his transformation because we don’t have that capacity. We only have our two eyes, which are related to our sense organs. When

we close our eyes we can't see anything but when we open them, we only see material things; we don't see the nature of these immaterial things. This is why we cannot see the Dalai Lama's transformation. So we receive the initiation from the Dalai Lama and if there is no Dalai Lama, there is no Kalachakra initiation. Who is more important then, the Dalai Lama or Kalachakra? The Dalai Lama is much more important. In this way you can understand all teachings are like this. The teacher is the one person with whom we have live contact and for this reason we do Guruyoga. Once you receive the transmission of Guruyoga in Dzogchen, you can then do many kinds of practices and use many methods of Dzogchen. You don't need to receive all the transmissions one by one like in the Yogatantra system.

For example, in Dzogchen we have Rushen practice and the series of Semdzin practices. We also have mind training practices and the night practice (what you call dream practice) and for these you don't need any particular transmission. If there is the possibility, you can receive instructions for these practices from your teacher and that could be useful. But really the transmission is Guruyoga.

In the Tantric teachings of the Nyingmapa tradition, we have a method which is called *riggya rigchig*. This means one hundred families are represented only by one family. When we receive initiations like Shitro or the initiation of Vajrasattva, then we don't need many different kinds of initiations. We can do the practice. If we have this understanding then everything is integrated in this principle. This is the Nyingmapa tradition but many Sakyapa and Gelugpa teachers negate this and there is much debate between the Nyingmapa and other traditions.

In the same way in the Dzogchen teaching, Guruyoga is all. So we say that Guruyoga represents also *chig she kun drol* i.e. when you discover one, you discover all. Also the way of doing Guruyoga in Dzogchen and other traditions is different but I'll explain that another time.

PART VII HOW TO DO THE TRANSMISSION PRACTICE

Now it is more important that we do this transmission. How do we do it? We do it through the three Vajras: OM, AH and HUM, which represent the states of body, speech and mind and with the visualisation of Guru Padmasambhava or Guru Garab Dorje.

First of all, we sound A and visualise a white A and *thigle* very precisely at the centre of our body. This represents our real potentiality. We do the visualisation, then we relax and experience the presence of clarity. Again we sound A and at that moment we imagine sending light from our white A and *thigle* and this light communicates to the teacher. At this moment, the teacher is represented by me because I am the one giving you the transmission! This means that you are sending your light to me and immediately when your light touches me, I no longer manifest as an ordinary person but I manifest in the form of Guru Garab Dorje or Guru Padmasambhava. Why do you do this? First of all you send me this light because it represents your desire and participation. I cannot give you an empowerment if you are not interested. So you must be active and show a wish to participate. This is why you send me your light and I receive it.

Why do you imagine that I manifest immediately like Guru Garab Dorje or Guru Padmasambhava? This is because you are working with pure vision, otherwise you might think, “Oh, he is Namkhai Norbu and just an ordinary person like me! He eats, sleeps, gets ill and needs to go to the doctor. He has all these problems.” Even if you don’t say it, automatically you

have this kind of idea and it is not useful for you. This is what Guru Padmasambhava said, “If you see your teacher as a totally enlightened being, then you can also obtain total realisation. If you see your teacher as an ordinary person, your realisation is also that of an ordinary person.” But we don’t need that kind of realisation as we already have it! For this reason you transform me into the form of Garab Dorje or Guru Padmasambhava in his rainbow body. When we think of Garab Dorje or Guru Padmasambhava, we always have pure vision and this is why you do this transformation.

After that we sound OMAH HUM. OMAH HUM represents the three Vajras. You visualise the white OM at the forehead, the red AH at the throat and the blue HUM at the heart and all are manifesting in a *thigle* of five colours. Each time you do the visualisation, you pronounce also OM, AH and HUM. If you don’t know precisely what OM, AH and HUM look like, then it is better that you visualise instead a white ball, a red ball and a blue ball, all luminous in three *thigles* at the forehead, throat and heart. You know that these represent the states of the body, voice and mind so you can do it in this way. Particularly when we are transmitting, you can have problems if you don’t have a clear idea of these Tibetan letters. In this case, visualise the three luminous balls instead. So these three Vajras appear in the three places of Guru Garab Dorje or Padmasambhava.

Now we pronounce OM AH HUM a second time and from these three syllables or luminous balls, radiate infinite lights, white, red and blue which communicate to all enlightened beings in the three dimensions of the Dharmakaya, Sambhogakaya and Nirmanakaya. This also means we are being active and we can’t receive these wisdoms if we are not active.

After that we pronounce OM AH HUM and imagine that from the three places of all enlightened beings in the universe, and also from Guru Garab Dorje or Guru Padmasambhava, we

receive infinite lights. All these lights dissolve into our three places and represent empowerment and wisdoms related with the three Vajras. So continually keeping this presence while receiving lights, at this moment I give you the transmission of mantra and particularly the very important mantra of the Song of the Vajra. You hear the sounds of the transmission of mantra at the same time as receiving infinite lights continually. This is the best way to receive the transmission of mantra but you don't need to chant anything. I am the only one who chants.

Generally when we chant mantra and are giving an empowerment, we also sound the bell because sound represents energy penetrating into you and the blessing and empowerment integrates in you. This is why we use the sound of the bell with mantra.

When we have finished this, again we sound OM AH HUM. At this moment you imagine Guru Garab Dorje or Guru Padmasambhava dissolving into the three lights of OM, AH and HUM and these three lights then dissolve into you. They unify in your three places and five coloured *thigles* appear in which white OM, red AH and blue HUM (or three luminous balls) manifest in your three places. This is the state of unification of the teacher and yourself and you remain in this state of clarity. You keep your visualisation of the three *thigles* and don't go after thoughts; you just remain in the state of clarity, not doing anything and continuing in a state of relaxation.

When you are relaxed, then I suddenly shout PHAT! When I shout PHAT it means I am giving you direct introduction. Generally when I shout PHAT, you have a kind of small shock but you don't really have a shock because I have already warned you that I am going to shout PHAT. If I hadn't already told you that I was going to shout and just said, "You relax" and then shouted PHAT suddenly, you could really have a shock. Generally this is the way we do direct introduction but it can

sometimes be a little dangerous and create problems for some people. For this reason then I warn you that I am going to shout PHAT. But we don't shout PHAT together because I am the one who is introducing you. So remember that!

But the important thing is that when I shout PHAT, then you are aware at that moment and observe what happens. If you have a kind of shock and there is nothing, this is an experience of emptiness. But immediately after this experience of emptiness, instant presence arises and you must discover this before any thought arises. When I am doing direct introduction, it is really very difficult for everybody to discover this state of instant presence. If you don't discover it, what should you do? Later when you have the possibility, you can repeat the practice in a quiet place on your own. You do that practice exactly as we have just done the direct introduction. You do it by yourself. Then you shout PHAT many times until you discover this state. Somehow you must discover it. This is the main point.

This is called instant presence and in Tibetan, we call it the state of *rigpa*. When we speak of *rigpa*, *rigpa* is the contrary of *marigpa*. It is not so easy to understand, but if we speak of instant presence, maybe you can understand it better. So, this state of instant presence is the state of your teacher and whenever you do Guruyoga, try to be in this state. Generally in Dzogchen, when we speak of doing meditation, this means being in the state of instant presence and doesn't mean visualising deities or anything. This state of instant presence is the most important thing in Dzogchen and through this, you are also connected with the transmission and Guruyoga.

SUMMARY OF PRACTICE

So, is this clear for you and do you remember what you should do? When we begin, we visualise our primordial potentiality as a white A in a *thigle*. Then we sound A and send light from our white A and *thigle* to the teacher. The teacher manifests in a form like Guru Padmasambhava or Guru Garab Dorje. It doesn't matter which one of these we choose and then we pronounce OM AH HUM.

With the first OMAH HUM we visualise in the three places of Guru Garab Dorje or Guru Padmasambhava, three *thigles* with the three Vajras. Again we sound OM AH HUM and from these three places, we radiate out lights which communicate to all enlightened beings in the universe. Then we sound OM AH HUM again, receiving lights from all enlightened beings and also from Guru Garab Dorje or Guru Padmasambhava, and these lights dissolve into our three places. At that moment I am also chanting mantra. After that, we sound OM AH HUM again and Guru Garab Dorje or Guru Padmasambhava dissolves into light and unifies into our real condition. Now we relax in that state and at that moment I shout PHAT! That is direct introduction and you try to discover instant presence. Then we finish. Is that clear now?

Generally when we do direct introduction, we sing the Song of the Vajra and integrate, continuing in that state. But today we are doing Ganapuja and for this reason we don't sing it now. The important thing is that you recognise instant presence. You should also distinguish between ordinary presence and instant presence as they are different. Instant presence is beyond time while ordinary presence is in time and related to our mind and our attention. But even though ordinary presence is at the mental level, it is very, very important. One of the most important practices in our daily life is to be in the state of ordinary presence: we

must try to be in that state. When we have the capacity to be in the state of presence in the normal way, then introducing instant presence is very easy. So then we have a greater possibility of integrating instant presence into our life and practice. This is what we should do and this is the direction we should go.

PART VIII ADVICE ON DAILY LIFE

This is the last day of this retreat. First of all I want to give you some advice on how to integrate practice into your daily life.

First we follow the teaching and try to understand the sense of the teaching. Once we understand it, it is very important to integrate the teaching into our daily life. The most important time is our daily life because our life is passing, day after day, night after night,. Sometimes we have the time to do practice or even personal retreat but in our daily life what is very, very important is to be aware. This means that we know our situation in daily life and we must try to integrate our practice with it. Otherwise everything we have learned just remains on the theoretical level and this doesn't help us very much. For this reason then, it is very important that we integrate practice into our everyday life.

Integrating practice into our daily life doesn't mean that we dedicate only a few minutes or a few hours every day. It is good if we are dedicating one or two hours every day to practice but in order to have realisation, this is not enough. We know from the biography of Milarepa that Milarepa dedicated his entire life to staying on a mountain, remaining alone doing practice all the time. At the end, he gained total realisation.

If we are Tantric practitioners and we are seriously dedicating ourselves to practice, we must do something similar. Otherwise, really it is not so easy to have realisation. In the Dzogchen teaching the main point is to be in the state of Guruyoga. To be in the state of Guruyoga, it is not necessary to be on a mountain. For this you can be in your house or your office. There are many

different places where you can be in a state of Guruyoga. The principle is being aware and then you do Guruyoga. Of course if you don't want to do this, then Guruyoga doesn't just come automatically to you.

When we think of doing Dzogchen practice, we think of dedicating ourselves to practice twenty four hours a day, not only for just a few hours. Spending twenty four hours dedicating ourselves to practice doesn't just mean sitting down and doing only Guruyoga. This is not possible but doing Guruyoga is not asking you to practise that way.

With Guruyoga, there are many ways of doing Guruyoga. If you like to do practice in a more formal way, then you can do a Medium Thun or the Longer Thun. There are many complicated things to do with visualisation and chanting in the longer practices but if you have less time, you can dedicate yourself to doing the Short Thun.

THE ESSENCE OF GURUYOGA

Even if you don't want to do sitting practice, then you should go to the essence of Guruyoga. The essence of Guruyoga in Dzogchen is doing this visualisation of the white A and *thigle* and relaxing in that presence and clarity. Then you have the experience of instant presence and are in the state. If you do not have the knowledge of instant presence yet, then you remain in this state of clarity and relax in it. If you have the time, then you sing the Song of the Vajra.

THE SONG OF THE VAJRA

The Song of the Vajra is a very, very important practice and is explained in a Tantra of the Dzogchen Upadesha. It says that if someone tries to discover the state of instant presence and can't

Kagyüpa do Guruyoga with Milarepa, Marpa or the Karmapa and the figure is not important but the important point is that it is always only the Kagyüpa lineage. It is the same with the Sakyapa and also the Nyingmapa.

GURUYOGA IN THE DZOGCHEN TEACHINGS

In the Dzogchen teachings, when we do Guruyoga, we should do Guruyoga called *kundü* which means all are unified together. We do not do Guruyoga to support a tradition or a teacher's position. We do Guruyoga for our realisation. In this case we must do our best, in whatever way, to gain realisation. If you have received many different teachings, you must keep all the samaya commitments of these teachings but you are not able to do all the practices you have received.

INITIATIONS

You see in the teachings, there is a series of initiations called the *Rinchen Terdzö*. In the *Rinchen Terdzö* there are thousands of initiations. It's the same in the Sakyapa tradition and there they are called *Gyüde Kuntü*, a collection of all the Tantras. When you have received hundreds and hundreds of different Tantras and methods of practice, all the initiations present you with the path and of course, you now have a responsibility to keep your commitments! If you don't do anything and only consider initiation as a kind of blessing, then this doesn't correspond. When you receive an initiation and don't do any practice, you just accumulate negativities because you are not keeping your commitments. For this reason then, you should do Guruyoga. In Guruyoga you unify all our teachers and this is the Dzogchen way.

You don't need to discuss this method with a Sakyapa or Gelugpa teacher as they won't agree with this. There is absolutely no reason to discuss this with others. Some people go and ask a teacher, "Oh, Namkhai Norbu says I can do this kind of Guruyoga. Is it really having some benefit or not?" If the teacher is not a Dzogchen practitioner, he will reply, "No, there is no benefit." Then what do you do? You are now completely confused. Also you wouldn't ask that question if you had full confidence in me. So listen well and apply this practice for your own benefit.

Some people are worried that if we unify all our teachers in the form of Guru Padmasambhava, we are mixing Gelugpa teachers together with Nyingmapa and Bönpo teachers. Then the result will be confusion and even an accident! You must observe yourself a little as to why you are confused. The reason is that you don't have pure vision. When you think of your teacher, you must consider your teacher to be an enlightened being. Guru Padmasambhava said, "If you consider that your teacher is fully enlightened, you will obtain that kind of realisation." You are not supporting your teacher, giving him some kind of position by saying, "Oh, you are a totally enlightened being." Even if you think that some of your teachers are not fully enlightened, this doesn't matter but you need to have this consideration that your teachers are enlightened beings. This is very important for your realisation.

If you think your teachers are enlightened beings, then how can they have limitations and accidents? We have accidents and conflicts when we are ordinary people with dualistic vision and then these problems arise. If you understand that these ideas are your problem and not the problem of the teachers, then you try to go beyond that limitation.

Some people are accustomed to practising Guruyoga in the style of the Kagyüpa, Nyingmapa or Gelugpa schools. You

might have learned Guruyoga with the figure of Tsongkhapa. This doesn't matter and you can continue with this visualisation but now you must consider that in the figure of Tsongkhapa, his three Vajras are the unification of all your teachers. But you don't tell your Gelugpa teachers that you are practising Guruyoga this way and then you won't have any problems. It is not necessary that you limit yourself and in this way Guruyoga can become a benefit for your realisation.

In learning Dzogchen, you must learn to work with circumstances. This is something very, very important in Dzogchen because there are no rules. You must be aware in your daily life in any circumstance, and you try to do your best. This means that you must understand your circumstances and how you work with them. Generally if it rains, you need an umbrella or a raincoat. If you go out wearing a raincoat in warm weather when it's not raining, everybody laughs as you look abnormal. This means then that you are working with circumstances and this is very, very important. It is not that you are limited by rules. Instead you work with circumstances. The principle is always to remember Guruyoga and be in a state of Guruyoga.

HOW TO DO GURUYOGA

You can do Guruyoga with OMAH HUM, the three Vajras. You visualise OMAH HUM and relax in that state. Then, with this clarity, you sing the Song of the Vajra. Also at any moment when you remember to do Guruyoga, you visualise the white A and *thigle* and relax in that state of clarity. You can do a Guruyoga lasting only five or ten seconds, or even one minute. If you do Guruyoga, this means you are connected with the transmission. You are also using correctly all the teachings which you have received from other teachers because that state of Guruyoga represents the unification state of all your teachers.

You unify all the teachings you have received from different teachers and that is why Guruyoga is very, very important.

For example when you wake up early in the morning, immediately you try to remember Guruyoga. We have an image of a white A and *thigle* which you can put somewhere in your house. This is very helpful in reminding you of your state of Guruyoga and also reminds you to do Guruyoga when you go to bed and do the practice of the night. Early in the morning when you wake up, you open your eyes and see this image of an A in a *thigle*. Immediately you then do Guruyoga. So this is very simple and not the same as preparing an altar.

Some people like to prepare an altar with many pictures of their teachers. If you want to do this, you can but it is not indispensable. There are times when having an altar is not so positive because we live in a society with all kinds of people and not everybody is a practitioner. If everybody is a practitioner, then there is no problem. But some friends might visit who are not practitioners and when they see an altar, think you are strange. In our society also political situations often change and if people show they are spiritual, they can become targets. Generally, it is much better that when you do practice, you don't show too much.

Some people like to show a lot but this is not a good idea. If you are a practitioner, what you really need is knowledge and integrating with this, you live a normal life. Fortunately in the Dzogchen teaching, we don't need to change anything. I am always saying that you stay just as you are and continue in this way because it is said in Dzogchen: "Everything is in the dimension of Samantabhadra." This means that everything is fine. For example, if you are in a state of instant presence and regardless whether something good or bad, pleasing or ugly, is in front of you, it doesn't influence you. You don't become a slave to these influences because your instant presence governs

everything. For this reason, it is not necessary to change anything because everything can be integrated and this is how we do our main practice in daily life.

SECONDARY PRACTICES

All I am asking you to practise is Guruyoga and if you are interested in the Dzogchen teachings, you should do Guruyoga. This is indispensable and any other practices are secondary. Secondary practices mean that when you need something, then you can have it. As an example, a very nice raincoat or an umbrella is a secondary thing because we need them when it rains but it doesn't always rain. In the same way there are many things that we can learn and receive the transmission. There are many booklets and these are all secondary practices. If you like these practices and need to do them, then you need the transmission, at least the transmission of mantras. Otherwise, when you need to use these practices, they don't work.

Some people even call me on the telephone asking for a particular transmission for their problems! I really don't know if I can give them transmission on the telephone because at the time of Padmasambhava or Buddha Shakyamuni, there were no telephones. If we don't do something seriously with total confidence, one hundred per cent confidence, it doesn't work and for this reason when it is possible to meet together, I try to give the transmission of the *lung* of secondary practices. But you must not think that these are the main practices. With practices like the transformation of Guru Tragphur or Sinhamukha, if you know how to work with clarity, this can also become a main practice. In this case we do not go too much into secondary things but concentrate mainly on Guruyoga.

PART IX PREPARATION FOR DYING

THREE KINDS OF PHOWA

We never know what will happen. One day, you might have an accident and are dying. You remember that you are a practitioner and notice you are dying. What do you do then? Some people have learned Phowa from other teachers in different traditions. If you have learned Phowa and really practised it well, it might help a little but I won't guarantee that it helps one hundred percent. Why is this? When we are dying, we are in the moment of the *bardo* of death. This is not the same as sitting comfortably in our room in silence learning Phowa and doing visualisations. At the moment of dying, all our senses are dissolving inwardly; each element is also dissolving and through this, we can have very strong experiences. Most people lose their sense of presence at that moment so it is not at all easy to do complicated visualisations. Then what should you do? Really the best thing for a Dzogchen practitioner at that moment is to be in a state of Guruyoga.

When we speak of Phowa, there are three kinds of Phowa, not only one: the Phowa in the Dharmakaya style, which means the very, very essential; the Phowa of Sambhogakaya and the Phowa of Nirmanakaya.

The Phowa of Dharmakaya means that from our ordinary mind and concepts, we are immediately in the state of instant presence. When we are in the state of instant presence, this state is beyond time and beyond the experience of mind. In this state, we notice everything dissolving inwardly but we are not subject to this because we are in the state of instant presence. In the

Dzogchen teaching, this is why we learn many practices like Rushen or Semdzin. You try to learn and apply these methods. The purpose of all these practices is to distinguish between the state of instant presence which is the nature of mind, and what are the workings of the mind.

If you are in a state of Dharmakaya, at that moment there is nothing to transfer and nowhere to transfer to. You are just in your real nature, your real state. Your ordinary existence and physical body is dying and you notice this with your presence. You see this is the supreme Phowa. If you did the practice of Guruyoga in your lifetime, it is not so difficult to be in the state of Guruyoga at the moment of dying. So, this what you do when you die.

If you are a good Tantric practitioner and have done many years' retreat and transformation practice, then you are very familiar with the development and accomplishment stages. In this case your transformation has become very familiar and it is not so difficult to get in this state of clarity. Then when you are dying, you can instantly transform into the state of clarity of that transformation and remain in that state; at that moment this represents your real nature. This is what we call the Phowa of Sambhogakaya and you can transfer in that way.

When we speak of transferring Phowa in the Nirmanakaya style, this has three considerations which are related with our mind. We always judge and think at the mental level and are never in the state of the nature of mind. What are these three considerations? We visualise the central channel and this is the path, the way in which we transfer and what we transfer is our consciousness. We visualise something like the letter HRI, or the letter A at the centre of our body. This is what we transfer. Then there is the consideration of where we are going to transfer. We visualise Amitabha or Vajrasattva above our head and this is where we transfer. With these three considerations, now we

do an invocation, "Please, help me. I am trying to transfer." In some Phowas in the Nyingmapa tradition, they also use kumbhaka and the force of prana energy to transfer. Then after the invocation, we sound this seed syllable A or HRI, five times slowly, slowly and consider that it is going up to the crown of our heads. At the end we shout PHAT or HIK, exhaling the sound. We shout this and integrate into the state of Buddha Amitabha or Vajrasattva. Until that point, everything we are doing is with the mind and we are not in the real nature of mind. This is why it is called the Nirmanakaya Phowa. The different traditions of the Gelugpa, Sakyapa, Nyingmapa and Kagyüpa have slightly different invocations but the main point is always the same. So this is called Phowa but if you are a Dzogchen practitioner, remember that Guruyoga is very important for this.

PRACTICE OF THE NIGHT

Guruyoga is very important for sleeping as half our life is night and this period must also be integrated into practice. How do we do this? When we get into bed and lie down, visualising the Guruyoga of the white A and *thigle* and relaxing in this clarity, we slowly fall asleep. If we sleep this way, there is a continuation of presence and this continuation of presence is not ordinary presence. Ordinary presence is related with our mind but if we relax in a state of Guruyoga, we can have the experience of instant presence and there is easily the continuation of instant presence. We might not notice this at the beginning but after we fall asleep, slowly, slowly our mind wakes up and we become more and more familiar with our dreams. Our mind is associated with our consciousness of the senses. This is called the mental body and with this, we have all kind of dreams. Generally we have karmic dreams which are related with our tensions. If we have had strong tensions in the past, then those

dreams always repeat themselves. Even if we sleep very heavily, karmic dreams will still manifest.

Once we have slept most of the night then slowly, slowly, we start sleeping very lightly. Around four or five o'clock in the morning, we sleep very lightly and at that time, then we can have more dreams of clarity. If we succeed in doing this practice of the night, our dreams become more aware. Awareness means that when I am dreaming, I know I am dreaming. It is not necessary that I wake up but I can continue dreaming and this is called awareness of dreams. So in dreams of clarity and in most dreams we have this presence of our present situation. Sometimes the future can be related to our present actions and this is why we can have these kinds of dreams.

Especially if we are practitioners, many things might appear in our dreams connected to practice. When we have more and more dreams of clarity, we can guide our dreams. For example, if we are interested in particular methods of practice, we can apply them in a dream. In a dream we have seven times more clarity than during the day because our senses are not dependent on our sense organs. For this reason, we can have many interesting experiences in a dream and can make a great deal of progress with our practice in a dream. As we become more familiar with our dreams, we can also feel that influence in our daily life.

For example we can think about what Buddha said, "Everything is unreal, just like a dream!" We need to make an effort in the daytime to keep thinking that everything is just like a dream. If we become more familiar with dreams, we can almost confuse our dreams with daily life and can feel that they are almost the same thing. If you really have that kind of experience, you no longer have very strong attachment or fear. Your problems diminish and even if you have a lot of problems, they don't seem so heavy as normal. So you can see that dream practice is very important.

Dream practice is also related with the practice of the *bardo*. You don't need to be in the *bardo* but with your knowledge and awareness of dreams, you can understand perfectly what the *bardo* is like. At the moment of death, when we are dying and after death, we have the state of *bardo* of the Dharmata and then we have the *bardo* of existence. All these are very, very similar to that state when we fall asleep. So dream practice is very important also for this moment of death.

Some people can't sleep at night and take medicine to sleep. If you suffer from this kind of problem, this is because your energy is disordered and you must co-ordinate it. In particular, your air element is disordered and you need to use natural medicine and different kinds of therapy, as well as changing your diet and attitude. In this way you can bring yourself back to normal life and sleeping normally; until you sleep normally, you can't do the practice of the night.

Once your life returns to normal, don't immediately do Guruyoga before going to sleep otherwise you won't be able to get to sleep. Before going to bed, sit somewhere quiet and do Guruyoga. Then when you are in bed, just observe your thoughts. Observing thoughts doesn't mean following your thoughts otherwise you can't get to sleep. Observing means noticing only that there is thought. Observe the face of that thought and it disappears. So relax and in that way go to sleep. This also helps your practice and later on, slowly, slowly you can do practice in the normal way.

Generally when people do the practice of the night, they don't have many difficulties. But for some, even if they try for a long time, they always have problems with this and never succeed doing it. If you have this kind of problem, then it is better for you to do a short period of dark retreat.

DARK RETREAT

The dark retreat is a Yangti teaching but it is not only used for that. If you do the practice of the base of dark retreat, it helps you a great deal with your sleep. How do you do this practice? If you want to do Yangti practice later, before you start the dark retreat, you should do sufficient practice of Shitro and the Guruyoga of Garab Dorje. Then you enter into dark retreat. You can do dark retreat for only twenty-four hours even if the place is not that perfect, so long as no one disturbs you.

But if you are doing a longer dark retreat, say for two or three days, then you need a specific place which should be very quiet and where no one creates any problems or makes a noise. You also need someone to bring you food and drink. In the room you prepare a very comfortable bed so you can use the bed for doing practice and also you can lie down to sleep.

Then first of all you do Guruyoga, that special Guruyoga of Garab Dorje with the invocation and Guru Garab Dorje dissolving into your forehead. These are special visualisations which are very important for developing your vision. Then after you have done sufficient Guruyoga, you sing the Song of the Vajra. All of this is under your breath, and not sounded out loud.

Now you sit in the Rishi position. This means that your knees are joined together close to your stomach; you put on your meditation belt and then put your elbows on your knees. You place these three fingers on your eyes. Two of the fingers are pressing on the side of your eye and the central finger is on top of your eye. You press just a little stronger with these two fingers. Then you look up and remain like this for a little while. Looking up, you might feel a little pain in your eyes but it won't create any problems. In fact, this is always helpful for your eyesight.

When you feel tired, take away your hands. Remaining like this, you might have some visions appearing like *thigles* or

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Chögyal NAMEKHAI NORBU

TEACHINGS AT SINABELKIRCHEN

When we speak of the Dzogchen teaching, first of all we need to understand what Dzogchen is: we must understand that Dzogchen is not a teaching but is our real condition.

Dzogchen means the totally perfected state, which means that we have three primordial wisdom and three primordial potentialities. Since we already have these, everything is perfected. If we are really in that condition, then we are no different to the Buddha or a Bodhisattva and realised beings.

It is not enough only to have an idea of this, even to have just a small experience. Of course it is useful to have this small experience of the Dzogchen state but then there are ways to increase this knowledge, which means that there is the possibility of integrating all our experience of body, speech and mind into that state.

We apply this practice day after day, becoming more and more familiar with it, and in the end we have total realisation.

འཇུག་པོ་ལྷོ་མཁའ་འགྲུབ་ལྷོ་མཁའ་འགྲུབ་ལྷོ་མཁའ་འགྲུབ་



Shang Shung Edizioni