

being; rather, it becomes the substantial cause of the impure illusory body and then the pure illusory body, which, at the time of a non-learner's union, is the Complete Enjoyment Body of a Buddha. Death, the dissolution of the aggregates due to the exhaustion of their impelling karma, is destroyed.

Birth is brought to the path in the stage of generation by one's appearance as a deity and it is brought to the path in the stage of completion by taking the old body as an Emanation Body after enlightenment, just as one ordinarily assumes a body at the time of conception in the ordinary state.

Chart 11. *Transformation of the Ordinary State in the Path*

<i>Ordinary State</i>	<i>How Brought to Path by Stage of Generation</i>	<i>How Brought to Path by Stage of Completion</i>	<i>Buddha Body Brought to Path</i>
Death	Meditation on Emptiness Following Pattern of Eight Signs of Death	Dissolution of Winds in Indestructible Drop	Truth Body
Intermediate State	Rising in Form of Seed Syllable or Hand Symbol	Rising in an Illusory Body	Complete Enjoyment Body
Rebirth	Appearing as Deity	Taking Old Body as Emanation	Emanation Body

**Part Four**  
A Comparison of the *Kālachakra* and  
*Guhyasamāja* Stages of Completion



Kālachakra

## 1 Systems of Highest Yoga Tantra

The Tantric College of Lower Hla-sa teaches eight great tantric systems of instruction for the stage of completion: Nāgārjuna's system of *Guhyasamāja*, Jñānapāda's system of *Guhyasamāja*, Lühipāda's system of *Chakrasaṃvara*, Ghaṇṭapāda's system of *Chakrasaṃvara*, the system of *Kālachakra*, the system of the three *Yāmaris*, the system of *Mahāchakra*, and the Six Yogas of Nāropa.<sup>203</sup>

With the exception of *Kālachakra*, all of these systems explain similarly the process of achieving complete enlightenment.<sup>204</sup> They say that first one practices the stage of generation and makes it stable (as in the *Guhyasamāja* subtle stage of generation, wherein at the perfection of visualization the entire mandala can be vividly seen in a subtle drop). Then one gains serviceability of the winds and drops through various techniques (such as wind yoga or heat yoga),<sup>205</sup> as a result, winds enter the central channel, bringing about the manifestation of the four empties — the minds of white appearance, red increase, black near-attainment, and clear light. Completing the process of wind-gathering, one rises in an illusory body, subsequently experiences the mind of actual clear light, and finally attains a simultaneous union of the clear light and

illusory body. In all of these systems, the actual clear light is the substantial cause of the Buddha's Truth Body, and the illusory body is the substantial cause of his Form Body.

The exception to this scheme is the system of the *Kālachakra Tantra*, which sets forth unique methods for the creation of similitudes of a Buddha's mind and body. Whereas other tantras merely teach methods to separate the very subtle body and mind from the coarse and subtle body and mind, the practice of *Kālachakra* results in the total de-materialization of the coarse body of the elements and their evolutes and the subtle body of drops and winds. The following sections will describe the physiology of the subtle body according to *Kālachakra* and delineate the differences between the *Kālachakra* and *Guhyasamāja* systems with regard to the structure of the tantric paths and the fruits of practice.<sup>207</sup>

## 2 Channels, Winds, and Drops

The *Kālachakra* system shares with the *Guhyasamāja* system the basic scheme of the channels and winds, with minor differences.<sup>208</sup>

- 1 In the *Guhyasamāja* system, the right and left channels run parallel to the central channel from top to bottom, but in the *Kālachakra* system, they cross over the central channel at the navel.<sup>209</sup>
- 2 In the *Guhyasamāja* system, in ordinary waking life the right and left channels contain wind whereas the central channel is absolutely empty. However, according to the *Kālachakra* system, all three channels contain various substances. In the upper part of the body, the right channel contains blood, the left channel contains semen, and the central channel contains wind. In the lower part of the body, the right channel (now on the left due to having crossed-over at the navel) contains feces, the left channel (now on the right) contains urine, and the central channel contains semen.
- 3 Some of the channel-wheels have a different number of petals, or spokes: in the *Guhyasamāja* system, the crown has thirty-two, the forehead has none, and the throat has sixteen, whereas in the *Kālachakra* system the crown has

four, the forehead has sixteen, and the throat has thirty-two.

4 In *Kālachakra* there are said to be ten winds instead of the five presented in *Guhyasamāja*.<sup>210</sup>

When compared to the other great tantric systems, the most remarkable aspect of the *Kālachakra* scheme is that winds are already moving in the central channel prior to the beginning of tantric practice and before death. It is also remarkable that the lower portion of the central channel is said to contain semen. (In the *Guhyasamāja* system, where the central channel is empty from top to bottom, the pleasure of orgasm is explained by the fact that semen passes near the central channel; that is why the presence of the red and white drops in the central channel causes a bliss a hundred times greater than that of orgasm.)

The *Kālachakra* system also differs greatly from the *Guhyasamāja* system with regard to the types of drops (see chart 12). As in the *Guhyasamāja* system, there are material red and white drops, but the *Kālachakra* system adds four other types of drops (made from the red and white drops) that normally abide in seven separate locations in the body. The four drops are: (1) body drops, located at the crown and navel, which bear the karmic predispositions involved in wakefulness; (2) speech drops, located at the throat and secret place, which bear the karmic predispositions involved in dreaming; (3) mind drops, located at the heart and center of the sexual organ, which bear the karmic predispositions involved in deep sleep; and (4) exalted wisdom drops, located at the navel and tip of the sexual organ, which bear the karmic predispositions involved in absorption (sexual pleasure). All four types of drops are the size of mustard seeds and are a mixture of red and white drops. The very subtle wind and mind abides in all of them (rather than in an indestructible drop, which is never mentioned), and hence, these drops are the basis for the infusion of karmic predispositions.<sup>211</sup> That being the case, the four drops contain all the obstructions that are to be removed,

that is, purified.

The collection of winds at the locations of these drops activates the predispositions infused in them. In wakefulness, many winds gather at the crown of the head and at the navel; in dreaming, many winds gather at the throat and secret place; in deep sleep, many winds gather at the heart and center of the sexual organ; and in sexual union, many winds gather at the navel and tip of the sexual organ. Due to the activation of karmic predispositions that are located at those places, various pure and impure objects are produced. When one is awake, either pure appearances (such as the body of a deity) or impure appearances are produced; when one is dreaming, either pure “mere sound” (such as mantra) or impure “mistaken speech” are produced; when one is in a dreamless sleep, either pure non-conceptuality (the direct realization of emptiness) or impure unclarity are produced; and when one is in sexual union, either pure bliss (a great bliss consciousness that realizes emptiness) or impure emission of semen are produced. Ordinary persons experience only impure objects, for they are as yet unable to activate the karmic predispositions for the production of pure objects.

The goal of the path is to purify the drops such that only the pure objects — pure appearances, mere sound, non-conceptuality, and bliss — remain, whereas the impure objects — impure appearances, mistaken speech, unclarity, and emission of semen — are precluded. On the path, potencies with the body drops are purified into the “empty forms” (deity bodies devoid of materiality) that will ripen as the Buddha’s body, potencies with the speech drops are purified into the mantra sounds that will ripen as the Buddha’s speech, and potencies with the mind drops and exalted wisdom drops are purified respectively into the non-conceptual realization of emptiness and the great bliss realizing emptiness that will ripen as the Buddha’s mind. In terms of the three bodies of the Buddha, potencies with the body drops become the Emanation Body, potencies with

the speech drops become the Complete Enjoyment Body, and potencies with the mind and exalted wisdom drops together become the Truth Body.<sup>212</sup>

In contrast, the *Guhyasamāja* system does not posit body, speech, mind, and exalted wisdom drops, does not say that drops are bases for the infusion of karmic predispositions, and does not have practices aimed at the purification of drops.

Chart 12. *Drops in the Kālachakra System*

Type of Drop	Basic Location	Predispositions	Ordinary Product	Purified Product	Buddha Body
Body Drop	Crown & Navel	Waking	Impure Appearances	Pure Appearances (Empty Forms)	Emanation Body
Speech Drop	Throat & Secret Place	Dreaming	Mistaken Speech	Mere Sound (Mantra Sounds)	Complete Enjoyment Body
Mind Drop	Heart & Center of Sexual Organ	Deep Sleep	Unclarity	Non-conceptuality (Direct Realization of Emptiness)	Truth Body
Exalted Wisdom Drop	Navel & Tip of Sexual Organ	Sexual Union	Emission of Semen	Bliss (Great Bliss Realizing Emptiness)	Truth Body

### 3 Levels of the *Kālachakra* Stage of Completion

As in the *Guhyasamāja* system, the *Kālachakra* system<sup>213</sup> seeks to establish the causes for Buddhahood by the generation of a consciousness in which bliss and emptiness are undifferentiably united. In *Kālachakra*, the undifferentiable union of bliss and emptiness refers to supreme immutable bliss and empty form bodies, that is, bodies of the male and female deities which, though they appear as bodies, are devoid of materiality. Still, because both the appearance of empty form bodies in *Kālachakra* and the appearance of oneself as a deity in *Guhyasamāja* are appearances in form of the wisdom that realizes emptiness, and because the “innate” bliss of *Guhyasamāja* is not inferior to the “immutable” bliss of *Kālachakra*,<sup>214</sup> the two systems are not essentially different in their presentation of the union of bliss and realization of emptiness.

The six levels of the *Kālachakra* stage of completion have the same names as the *Guhyasamāja* system’s six types of practice according to technique, namely: individual withdrawal, concentration, vitality-stopping, retention, subsequent mindfulness, and meditative stabilization. Despite this, there is little resemblance between the two tantric

systems with regard to the actual activities of similarly-named levels.

Chart 13. *Yogas of Levels of Kālachakra*

Level	Yoga	Result
Meditative Stabilization	Retention with Great Seal of Empty Form	Dematerialization of Old Body and Production of Empty Form Bodies
Subsequent Mindfulness	Retention with Great Seal of Empty Form	Drops Melt and Flow
Retention	Holding Winds by Vajra Repetition and Pot-Shaped Yoga	Fierce Woman Generated
Vitality-Stopping	Vajra Repetition and Pot-Shaped Yoga	Winds from Right and Left Channels Enter Central Channel
Concentration	Concentration on Drop at Upper Opening of Central Channel	Eleven Day and Night Signs Become Stable
Individual Withdrawal	Concentration on Drop at Upper Opening of Central Channel	Winds Withdraw from Outside and Eleven Day and Night Signs Dawn

(read from bottom up)

#### *Individual Withdrawal*

Individual withdrawal, the initial level of the *Kālachakra* stage of completion, is used to collect the winds back from the “doors” of the senses by means of meditative focusing on a drop. This meditation is to be done in complete darkness (it being difficult to restrain the flow of winds through the eye sense-power when there is bright light<sup>215</sup>); thus, in preparation, one has to construct a light-proof cabin in which to conduct one’s meditation. The meditation itself is begun at night. Before beginning the meditation session,

one binds one’s limbs with cloth or rope. Then one rolls one’s eyes upwards (closing them halfway), and holds one’s observation on the upper opening of the central channel (between the eyebrows), where there is an empty space. What one begins to see there is a tiny blue drop; it contains the predispositions that produce the waking state.<sup>216</sup>

As one gains facility in this meditation, a series of eleven objects appear to the mind, called “night signs” and “day signs”.<sup>217</sup> The four night signs are (1) an appearance like smoke, (2) a shimmering appearance like that of a mirage, (3) an appearance like the specks of light given off by fireflies, and (4) an appearance like the sputtering light of a nearly-depleted butter lamp. These four signs are the same mental images that appear to the mind at the time of death during the dissolution of the four elements — earth, water, fire, and wind — of the body, except that the first two signs are reversed in the *Kālachakra* system.<sup>218</sup>

After the night signs dawn, the six day signs<sup>219</sup> arise. They are: the planet *kālāgni* (which is like the sun, or destructive fire, at the end of a great aeon), the sun, the moon, the planet *rāhu* (an eclipse), lightning, and the blue drop itself. The eleventh sign is neither a night or day sign; it is the appearance, in the center of the blue drop, of the outline of *Kālachakra* and his consort, *Vishvamātā*, in sexual union. This last sign is a precursor of empty forms (forms devoid of materiality) that, on the fifth level — the level of subsequent mindfulness — will appear in reality.

The eleven signs that dawn in the yoga of individual withdrawal are not those that precede the dawning of the four empties, although they are very similar to the signs accompanying the dissolutions of the elements and winds preceding death or on the stage of completion of *Guhyasamāja*. They are not signs of the four empties because they are not generated due to the dissolution of winds in the central channel; rather, at the time of individual withdrawal when these signs arise, the winds are merely stopped from going outside from the doors of the senses and have not yet been drawn inside.

*Concentration*

Concentration is the continuation of the yoga of individual withdrawal (the penetrative focusing on the upper opening of the central channel). It is performed in order to stabilize the eleven night and day signs that arose earlier. When the signs become clear and steady, it indicates that the central channel has been purified, and winds from the right and left channels naturally begin to enter it.<sup>220</sup>

The first two levels of the *Kālachakra* stage of completion merely prepare the central channel for the entry of winds, whereas the two like-named levels in the *Guhyasamāja* system actually cause winds to enter the central channel.

*Vitality-Stopping*

Vitality-stopping<sup>221</sup> (*prāṇāyāma*) has two phases, (1) vajra repetition, the observation of the “tones” of the breath, and (2) a yoga called “pot-possessing” which puts together the vitalizing and pervasive winds in the central channel. The pot-possessing yoga is the vivid visualization that the winds from the lower part of the body are held in a pot-like configuration below the navel.<sup>222</sup> These practices cause the winds from the right and left channels to flow into the central channel.

*Retention*

Retention is the holding of the winds inside the central channel. One does this by holding the breath, without exhalation or inhalation, after the winds have been gathered in the central channel by means of vitality-stopping. This causes the Fierce Woman to be generated.

*Subsequent Mindfulness*

Subsequent Mindfulness involves the use of either an imagined or actual seal (consort) to make the Fierce Woman blaze up, melting the white drop at the top of the head. Also, one performs deeds of any of the three types — elaborative, non-elaborative, or very non-elaborative —

with this seal in order to increase the constituent and keep it from spreading out at the channel wheels.<sup>223</sup> The white drop flows down to the tip of the sexual organ, generating “innate immutable bliss;” it is not emitted, for one has gained control over the winds that ordinarily would cause emission.<sup>224</sup> This drop is the first of 21,600 white drops that descend and pile up in the central channel, forming a white column while 21,600 red drops rise one at a time to the top of the head and pile downwards, forming a parallel red column.<sup>225</sup>

As this process unfolds, one begins to experience the appearances of actual empty form deities; that is, one oneself appears as a deity devoid of materiality. (These appearances, however, are not fully qualified until the end of the next level, meditative stabilization; they gradually become manifest as the drops pile up.<sup>226</sup>) That is because, as each drop piles up or down without any emission, one portion of the material (form) aggregate and karmic winds are consumed and one “immutable bliss” is experienced. The materiality of the *entire* body gradually diminishes because each of the 21,600 portions of the form aggregate pervades the whole body.<sup>227</sup> The ordinary body does not actually *become* an empty form body; rather, it is explained that just as in alchemy, where iron is not transmuted into gold but rather disappears in the presence of the alchemical substance, allowing gold to *appear*, the ordinary body is dematerialized so that an empty form body can appear.<sup>228</sup>

*Meditative Stabilization*

Meditative stabilization is the continuation of subsequent mindfulness, with perhaps one difference. During subsequent mindfulness, it is said to be sufficient to use any of the three seals (the imaginary Wisdom Seal, actual Action Seal, or Great Seal of Empty Form). Meditative stabilization specifically involves the use of a Great Seal of Empty Form, which is needed to accomplish the complete consumption of the material aggregates.

The perfection of this practice is sufficient to bring about Buddhahood. Gradually, the white and red drops are built up and down, the material aggregates are consumed, the karmic winds are consumed, and one is suffused with supreme immutable bliss. (The drops, it should be noted, also lose their materiality as they pile up and down.) This bliss serves to vastly empower the wisdom consciousness that realizes emptiness, making it possible to quickly overcome the obstructions to liberation and the obstructions to omniscience. At the end of this level, one has completely abandoned all obstructions to Buddhahood and is endowed with both a Buddha's mirror-like wisdom and his body of empty form, which is said to be "like a rainbow".

Chart 14. *Achievement of a Buddha's Body, Speech, and Mind*

<i>Levels of Stage of Completion</i>	<i>Function</i>	<i>Aspect of Buddhahood Achieved</i>
Meditative Stabilization	Entity of Immutable Bliss	Vajra Mind
Subsequent Mindfulness	Proximate Cause of Immutable Bliss	Vajra Mind
Retention	Making Winds Remain in Central Channel, Igniting Fierce Woman	Vajra Speech
Vitality-Stopping	Control of Winds that are Root of Speech (causing winds of right and left channels to enter central channel)	Vajra Speech
Concentration	Make Empty Forms Stable/Purify Central Channel	Vajra Body
Individual Withdrawal	Achieve Empty Forms/Purify Central Channel	Vajra Body

(read from bottom to top)

### 3 *Summary of Differences with Respect to Practice*

It is now evident that in several respects there are considerable differences between the *Guhyasamāja* and *Kālachakra* systems of the stage of completion.

(1) With respect to the stages of the path, the first level of the *Guhyasamāja* stage of completion — physical isolation — would not occur in the *Kālachakra* system until the level of vitality-stopping, because it is not until then that winds actually enter the central channel. The first two levels of *Kālachakra* practice would not even be included in the *Guhyasamāja* stage of completion, but would be consigned to the stage of generation. Also, heat yoga (the generation of the Fierce Woman) does not begin in the *Kālachakra* system until the fourth level — retention — whereas in the *Guhyasamāja* system, the Fierce Woman is generated at the first level — physical isolation — and at every subsequent level of the path. Furthermore, in the *Guhyasamāja* system, it is necessary to cause all of the winds to dissolve in the indestructible drop at the heart in the central channel, and for that, it is necessary to generate the Fierce Woman, inner heat, by way of sexual union with an Action Seal. However, in the *Kālachakra* system, the winds are not said to dissolve



into the indestructible drop.

The absence of the Fierce Woman until the fourth level of the *Kālachakra* stage of completion presumably means that there is no experience of the four joys of ascent and descent of the white and red drops until the fifth stage (although, in fact, the four joys are never mentioned; only “supreme immutable bliss” is mentioned as the aspect of bliss).

(2) There are ten signs of the dissolution of the coarse into the subtle instead of the eight posited by the *Guhyasamāja* system, and the order of the first two signs, the appearance of smoke and mirage, is reversed.

(3) The *Kālachakra* system requires the use of a different type of seal — the Great Seal of Empty Form — because it is said that otherwise the drops would not be able to pile up without spreading out at the channel-wheels.

(4) The effect of the piling up of drops is to de-materialize the body, which means that there is no way that the old body could be used as an emanation body as in the *Guhyasamāja* system. (However, if one wished, one could emanate a body like the old one.)

(5) From the point of view of the *Guhyasamāja* system, there would be no way to achieve enlightenment in place of the intermediate state in the *Kālachakra* system because there is no metaphoric clear light or illusory body. According to *Guhyasamāja*, the attainment of the metaphoric clear light is a necessary precondition for attaining enlightenment in the intermediate state; also, if one were to be enlightened in the intermediate state, it would be in an illusory body which takes the place of an intermediate state body. However, the *Kālachakra* system speaks of dematerialization of the form aggregate rather than the manifestation of an illusory body. Since *Kālachakra* practice aims at the dematerialization of the coarse and subtle body in order to destroy the karmic seeds and predispositions preventing liberation and omniscience, it must occur in a coarse body, not in a subtle body such as an intermediate state body.<sup>229</sup>

This means that one could not attempt to become enlightened in the intermediate state as one was dying, contrary to other systems both of tantra and sutra.<sup>230</sup>

(6) In the *Kālachakra* system, unlike the *Guhyasamāja* system, one can generate an empty form — an appearance of the fundamental mind — without actualizing the fundamental mind itself.

(7) Finally, whereas in *Guhyasamāja* the fundamental wind is the substantial cause of the pure illusory body, in *Kālachakra* there is no mention of any substantial cause of the empty form body.<sup>231</sup>

physical, verbal, and mental isolation — are equivalent to those sutra paths.

In the *Guhyasamāja* stage of completion, one passes from the path of accumulation (which begins with the generation of the altruistic aspiration to enlightenment by way of the *Guhyasamāja* system) to the path of preparation when winds begin to enter and dissolve in the central channel; this occurs at the very beginning of the stage of completion when the subtle stage of generation becomes the level of physical isolation of the stage of completion. One remains on the path of preparation through the level of impure illusory body, passing to the path of seeing at the first moment of manifesting the mind of actual clear light. The path of meditation is coextensive with the level of learner's union. It can be divided into nine bodhisattva grounds according to the enhancement of the bliss consciousness that realizes emptiness, the increase in the number of one's exalted qualities, and so forth.<sup>232</sup> The path of no more learning, the path of a Buddha, is the non-learner's union.

In the *Kālachakra* system, on the other hand, the path of preparation does not begin until the first white drop reaches the tip of the sexual organ on the fifth level, the level of subsequent mindfulness. The path of seeing (the first direct realization of emptiness) occurs when the white drops have piled up to a point halfway to the secret place, that is, at the 1,800th drop, at the beginning of the level of meditative stabilization.<sup>233</sup> There are twelve bodhisattva grounds in the *Kālachakra* system as opposed to the ten grounds in the sutra and *Guhyasamāja* layouts,<sup>234</sup> and the other eleven grounds are attained in the same way: one passes from one ground to the next with the completion of each series of 1800 drops. This reflects the fact that with the descent of each successive drop, the ignition of bliss becomes more intense, enhancing the realization of emptiness. The level of meditative stabilization develops right into Buddhahood, the path of no more learning.

## 4 The Five Paths and Ten Grounds

The paths leading to enlightenment in the sutra system are five: accumulation, preparation, seeing, meditation, and no more learning. A practitioner of the Great Vehicle reaches the path of accumulation upon making a firm determination to attain highest enlightenment with the altruistic motivation of being the greatest source of help to others. The path of preparation is attained through conceptual realization of emptiness by a consciousness that is a union of special insight and calm abiding. The path of seeing and the first bodhisattva ground is reached by the direct realization of emptiness. Subsequently, the realization of emptiness is deepened and enhanced by meditation and the practice of the perfections on the path of meditation (which is composed of the remaining nine bodhisattva grounds), culminating in Buddhahood, the path of no more learning.

When the *Guhyasamāja* and *Kālachakra* stages of completion are correlated to the five paths and ten grounds, it is clear that the breakdown of *Kālachakra* levels is weighted more to the paths of accumulation and preparation than is the system of *Guhyasamāja*. Five of the six *Kālachakra* levels are correlated to the paths of accumulation and preparation, whereas only the first three *Guhyasamāja* levels —

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objects (June 9, 1981).

186. Scent-eaters (*dri za, gandharva*) are beings with very subtle bodies who can live even inside of rocks and are able to subsist by using scents for food. They inhabit cities that seem to spring up out of nowhere and disappear suddenly. The *Illumination of the Texts of Tantra* compares the relationship of the scent-eaters and their city to the relationship between the illusory body's mandalas of the support and the supported. The mandala of the support is the mandala itself, whereas the mandala of the supported is the deities arrayed within the mandala. Like a city of scent-eaters, the mandala the yogi meditates on — of which, as a deity, he is a part — seems to arise and disappear suddenly (Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Clear Light of Bliss*, p. 200).

187. According to the Dalai Lama, a dream body can separate from the coarse body and go anywhere, even into deep space (“Tibetan Views on Dying” in *Kindness, Clarity, and Insight*, pp. 179-80).

188. The following identifications are from Tri-Rin-bo-chay, June 11, 1981.

189. In the following examples, the system of *Kālachakra* must be excepted, as it does not purify the intermediate state or have illusory bodies made of wind and mind (Geshe Lhundup Sopa, “An Excursus on the Subtle Body in Tantric Buddhism”, *JIAS* 6, #2, p. 56).

190. The latter correlations are from Tenzin Gyatso, Dalai Lama XIV, *Kindness, Clarity, and Insight*, p. 97.

191. The *Illumination of the Texts of Tantra*, 58.4. Clear light is discussed on 58.4-62.3.

192. Tenzin Gyatso, Dalai Lama XIV, *Kindness, Clarity, and Insight*, p. 178.

193. Sarat Chandra Das, *A Tibetan-English Dictionary* (Calcutta: Bengal Secretariat Book Depot, 1902), p. 576.

194. Tri-Rin-bo-chay, April 3, 1981.

195. Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Clear Light of Bliss*, pp. 215-16.

196. Tri-Rin-bo-chay, June 12, 1981.

197. The *Illumination of the Texts of Tantra*, 62.3-4. Learner's union is discussed on 62.3-64.6.

198. There is some controversy over the relationship of the mind of black near-attainment of the reverse process and the mind of clear light that precedes it. Kay-drup thinks that since

the afflictive obstructions are destroyed in the first moment of actual clear light, it would seem that the mind of clear light is an uninterrupted path of meditative equipoise and that the mind of black near-attainment that follows it is a path of release of meditative equipoise. (In meditative equipoise on emptiness, the uninterrupted path is the portion of meditative equipoise that actually destroys obstructions — either the afflictive obstructions or the obstructions to omniscience — and the path of release is the portion of meditative equipoise that follows the destruction of those obstructions.) He thinks that the verbal conventions of “uninterrupted path” and “path of release” are applicable because both consciousnesses directly realize emptiness, though the mode of apprehension of the mind of black near-attainment is looser than that of clear light. Those who disagree with him reply that the mind of black near-attainment, being dualistic, cannot possibly be a path of release; moreover, it is a coarser mind than the very subtle mind of clear light and thus is even a different type than it. Nga-wang-bel-den reserves his judgement, but Tri-Rin-bo-chay went along with Kay-drup, even going so far as to say that although a path of release is an exalted wisdom of meditative equipoise, it is not necessarily non-conceptual (June 18, 1981).

199. Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Clear Light of Bliss*, p. 211.

200. Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Clear Light of Bliss*, pp. 211-212.

201. Yang-jen-ga-way-lo-drö, *Presentation of the Grounds and Paths of Mantra*, .16b.1-.2.

202. In this paragraph and the two subsequent to it, information on the stage of generation is from Lati Rinbochay and Jeffrey Hopkins, *Death, Intermediate State, and Rebirth in Tibetan Buddhism*, pp. 69-70.

203. There are many other tantric systems in addition to these eight; for instance, there are six systems of *Chakrasamvara* alone. Bu-dön classifies some twenty-four tantric systems; see David Riegle, *Books of Kiu-te*, p. 20. One famous system not mentioned in Nga-wang-bel-den's list is that of the *Hevajra Tantra*, traditionally considered to be the original source for the practice of heat yoga (the Fierce Woman) found in many other tantras (Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Clear Light of Bliss*, pp. 34-5).

204. Although, with the exception of *Kālachakra*, the great tantric systems are quite similar, they have divergent emphases, generalized in the distinction between “father” and “mother”

tantras. The terms “father” and “mother” derive from the father-mother (*yab yum*) tantric iconography that depicts male and female deities in sexual union. The embracing figures symbolize the union of method and wisdom, the male deity representing method (great innate bliss) and the female deity representing wisdom (the mind of actual clear light realizing emptiness). Accordingly, Father tantras are those that emphasize method, and Mother tantras are those that emphasize wisdom, based on whether or not the tantra extensively teaches the illusory body (Father tantras) or clear light (Mother tantras). Tantras such as the *Guhyasamāja Tantra* and the *Yamāntaka Tantra* are considered Father tantras, whereas tantras such as the *Chakrasaṃvara Tantra* and *Kālachakra Tantra* are considered Mother tantras (Geshe Lhundup Sopa, “An Excursus on the Subtle Body in Tantric Buddhism”, *JIABS* 6, #2, p. 54 and Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Clear Light of Bliss*, pp. 189-90). The classification of *Kālachakra* as a Mother tantra seems questionable because of the emphasis in *Kālachakra* on generating empty form bodies. Buddhön, in fact, sets it apart in a third category, shared by no other tantra, called “non-dual (*advaya*) tantras” (David Reigle, *Books of Kui-te*, p. 20). The Dalai Lama discusses both views in *The Kālachakra Tantra: Rite of Initiation*, pp. 159-60.

205. Dzong-ka-ba says that verbal isolation and mental isolation can be replaced by the Fierce Woman, and that this substitution occurs only in mother tantras (*Lamp Illuminating the Five Stages*, cited in the *Illumination of the Texts of Tantra*, 33.1-.2).

206. In mother tantras, it is called a “rainbow body of light” (Tenzin Gyatso, Dalai Lama XIV, in *The Kālachakra Tantra: Rite of Initiation*, p. 164).

207. For a description of the *Kālachakra* stage of generation, see the Dalai Lama and Jeffrey Hopkins, *The Kālachakra Tantra: Rite of Initiation* (London: Wisdom, 1985).

208. These differences are discussed in the *Illumination of the Texts of Tantra*, 79.1-81.4.

209. The Dalai Lama explains that the difference in channels, and so forth, between the *Guhyasamāja* and *Kālachakra* system stems from the fact that yogis have different types of bodies (“Union of the Old and New Translation Schools” in *Kindness, Clarity, and Insight*, p. 222). This would suggest that there are wide variances in the physical makeup of the subtle body, and

hence one needs to find a tantric practice for which one is physiologically suitable.

210. Apparently, five of the ten winds mentioned in *Kālachakra* are secondary winds, just as there are five secondary winds mentioned in verbal isolation in the *Guhyasamāja* stage of completion. Gendun Drub (Dalai Lama I) says that all ten winds can be subsumed under the five basic winds (*Selected Works of the Dalai Lama I: Bridging the Sutras and Tantras*, p. 165). He adds that there is a further difference — that the pervasive wind, in the *Kālachakra* system, mainly flows through the nostrils (p. 165). Ordinarily it is described as being responsible for the movement of the limbs and the vitalizing wind is involved with inhalation and exhalation. Some of the names are different; the ten winds mentioned in *Kālachakra* are: vitalizing, fire-accompanying, upward-moving, pervasive, serpent, turtle, chameleon, devadatta, *dhanamājaya*, and downward-voiding.

211. In the Middle Way Consequence School (*prāsaṅgika-mādhyamika*), the philosophical basis for tantra as explained by the Ge-luk-ba school (though the Mind-Only School [*cittamātra*] is also said to be acceptable), the basis for the infusing of karmic predispositions is the “mere I”, the “I” which is merely imputed in dependence on the aggregates and which goes from life to life. In Highest Yoga Tantra, since the *final* basis of imputation of the mere I is the very subtle wind and mind, it is the very subtle wind and mind in the drops that is the basis for the deposition of the karmic predispositions.

212. The last two sentences are based on Geshe Lhundup Sopa, “An Excursus on the Subtle Body in Tantric Buddhism”, *JIABS* 6, #2, p. 57.

213. Levels of the stage of completion are discussed in the *Illumination of the Texts of Tantra*, 81.4-90.2.

214. Nga-wang-bel-den quotes Dalai Lama I, Gendun Drub (*dge'dun grub*), on the difference between the supreme immutable bliss of *Kālachakra* and the innate bliss of *Guhyasamāja*; the first Dalai Lama argues that there could be no difference between the two because otherwise at the end of the paths of other tantras one would be required to enter the path of *Kālachakra*. Rather, the supreme immutable bliss of *Kālachakra* is given a different name than the bliss mentioned in *Guhyasamāja* to denote its unique mode of production, namely, a different method for increasing

the drops. In the *Kālachakra* system it is necessary to rely on a Great Empty Form Seal in order to bring about empty form bodies. The Great Seal of Empty Form is a special type of consort who in some way (not specified in the text) surpasses an Action Seal. According to the *Kālachakra* system, if one did not use a Great Seal of Empty Form, the drops piling up and down in the central channel at the level of subsequent mindfulness and meditative stabilization would spread out at the channel-wheels instead of staying in the central channel.

215. Gendun Drub, Dalai Lama I, *Selected Works of the Dalai Lama I: Bridging the Sutras and Tantras*, pp. 177. For a more detailed description of the meditation, see pp. 172-175.

216. In general, the predispositions that produce wakefulness are located at the crown or forehead and navel.

217. According to the First Dalai Lama, Gendun Drub, the four night signs dawn as the result of stopping the coursing of four of the ten winds in four of the ten channel-branches coming from the heart, namely, those of the intermediate directions. The first four day signs are produced as a result of stopping four more winds from coursing through the four channels branching out in the cardinal directions. The final two day signs are generated by stopping the final two winds, which course through the channel-branches going up from and down from the heart, respectively (*Selected Works of the Dalai Lama I: Bridging the Sutras and Tantras*, p. 175-176).

218. According to the Dalai Lama, the signs dawn differently according to *Guhyasamāja* and *Kālachakra* systems because of the differences in the number of spokes or petals in the channel-wheels at the crown of the head and at the heart (“Tibetan Views on Dying” in *Kindness, Clarity, and Insight*, p. 174).

219. The day signs occur even at night “for superior persons” (the *Illumination of the Texts of Tantra*, 85.1). The explanations of *kālāgni* and *rāhu* are from Geshe Lhundup Sopa, “An Excursus on the Subtle Body in Tantric Buddhism”, *JIABS* 6, #2, n. 50 (p.65). Serkang Rinpoche, in a talk in Madison, Wisconsin, in August, 1980, described the light of *kālāgni* as like star-light.

220. Gendun Drub, Dalai Lama I, adds that one visualizes that the sky is filled with the various signs and then that they dissolve into the empty form body of *Kālachakra* and his consort. When one’s divine pride is fully developed, this level is complete

(*Selected Works of the Dalai Lama I: Bridging the Sutras and Tantras*, p. 177).

Also, although previously it was said that the right and left channels contained blood, semen, and so forth, they also contain winds in order for those substances to move about.

221. Paṅ-chen Sö-nam-drak-ba (*pan chen bsod nams grags pa*, 1478-1554), who wrote the textbooks for Lo-sel-ling (*blo gsal gling*) College of Dre-bung (*’bras spung*) Monastic University, explains that although the meaning of *prāṇāyāma* in *Guhyasamāja* is vitality-lengthening — a life-lengthening wind — *prāṇāyāma* in *Kālachakra* means stopping the winds of the right and left channels and causing them to enter the central channel (from *General Presentation of the Tantra Sets, Captivating the Minds of the Fortunate/rgud sde spyi’i rnam par bzhag pa skal bzang gi yid ’phrog*, Dharmasala: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, 1975, cited in Jeffrey Hopkins, supplement to Tsong-kha-pa, *Yoga of Tibet*, p. 265, n. 105).

222. The *Illumination of the Texts of Tantra* says nothing more about this practice; Geshe Kelsang Gyatso adds that the pot-possessing yoga, the vivid imagining of holding the winds of the lower part of the body in a pot-like configuration below the navel, is done to ignite the Fierce Woman (Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Clear Light of Bliss*, pp. 54-5). See Gendun Drub, Dalai Lama I, *Selected Works of the Dalai Lama I: Bridging the Sutras and Tantras*, pp. 179-80, for a more extensive explanation.

223. See the *Illumination of the Texts of Tantra*, 88.2-.4.

224. Tri Rin-bo-ḥay, July 2, 1981.

225. The text (87.1-.2) seems to indicate that the red drops may not begin to pile down until the white drops are piled up, but is somewhat ambiguous.

226. Nga-wang-bel-den says that at subsequent mindfulness one achieves a “non-imaginary” empty form body (*ma brtags pa’i stong gzugs*, 82.4-.5), but he is not certain that such has been “achieved in fact” (*angos gnas la ’grub pa*, 89.6-.7). It appears that Kay-drup and others hold the position that the empty form body is achieved in fact whereas Dzong-ka-ba indicates that it is not achieved until all material aggregates are consumed. Also, Sopa (p. 58) indicates that the empty form achieved on this level is the cause of the empty form body of a Buddha on the next level.

227. Tri Rin-bo-ḥay, July 3, 1981. Dzong-ka-ba himself com-

pares the process to alchemy, the transformation of iron into gold (the *Great Exposition of Secret Mantra*, cited in the *Illumination of the Texts of Tantra*, 89.3-.6).

228. Tri Rin-bo-chay, July 2, 1981.

229. Geshe Lhundup Sopa, "An Excursus on the Subtle Body in Tantric Buddhism", *JiABS* 6, #2, p. 59.

230. The exclusion of enlightenment in the intermediate state is contrary not only to other tantric systems such as *Guhyasamāja*, but is contrary to the tenets of the Low Vehicle and Great Vehicle as set forth, respectively, in Vasubandhu's *Treasury of Manifest Phenomena* (*chos mngon pa'i mdzod, abhidharmakośakārikā*) and Maitreya's *Ornament for Clear Realization* (*mngon rtogs rgyan, abhisamāyalaṃkāra*) (Geshe Lhundup Sopa, "An Excursus on the Subtle Body in Tantric Buddhism", *JiABS* 6, #2, p. 55).

231. However, Nga-wang-bel-den (the *Illumination of the Texts of Tantra*, 89.6-90.1) points out that perhaps the fundamental wind acts as the substantial cause of the empty form body, since the very subtle mind of clear light, mounted on the fundamental wind, is generated in the entity of supreme immutable bliss. Therefore, the fundamental wind would be present at the time of an empty form body. He notes that there is no clear source saying that the fundamental wind acts as the substantial cause of an empty form body, and takes no position himself.

232. See the *Illumination of the Texts of Tantra*, 66.2.

233. Geshe Lhundup Sopa, "An Excursus on the Subtle Body in Tantric Buddhism", *JiABS* 6, #2, n. 52, p. 65.

234. The *Illumination of the Texts of Tantra*, 86.5-.7, indicates that the path of preparation lasts through the 1799th drop, when the path of seeing occurs; 1800 drops later, the second ground, the Stainless, is generated. There is nothing particularly unusual in positing more than ten grounds, for there are systems in which eleven, thirteen, fourteen, fifteen, and sixteen grounds are posited (Yang-jen-ga-way-lo-drö, *Presentation of the Grounds and Paths of Mantra*, 17a.4-.5).

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*Highest Yoga Tantra*

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