

GREAT BLISS

Tantric Sex And The Path To Inner Awakening



John T. Houseman

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To Inner Awakening

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The author warmly welcomes comments from readers.
Suggestions will be incorporated in future editions of this book.

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About the Author



I have devoted myself to Tantra for over thirty years. Trained as a lama, I completed an intensive, solitary three-year meditation retreat in the remote desert mountains of Arizona under the guidance of the Tibetan Buddhist master His Eminence Garchen Rinpoche.

At the age of nineteen, after two years of meditation practice, I had a profound spiritual awakening and vowed to attain enlightenment in this lifetime. I was first taken by Tantric philosophy while studying Buddhism as a Religion major at Wesleyan University, where I studied with three highly regarded professors - Robert

Thurman, Janice Willis, and James Stone. I also received the university's annual James A. Spurrier Award for distinction in ethics. I later earned a master's degree from Columbia University.

I have been in the presence of thirty enlightened masters from among the world's great spiritual traditions. My early spiritual studies were eclectic – I spent time with many highly realized beings such as Brother David Steindl-Rast, Pir Vilayat Khan, Shri Chinmoy, Mother Meera, and Thich Nhat Hanh. I also studied Tai Chi in New York City with master C. K. Chu. I attended the Barbara Brennan School of Healing for two years, where I learned the skills of energy healing. I was a client of John Pierrakos, MD, the founder of Core Energetics, a spiritual, body-centered psychotherapy. I learned channeling as a student of Diana Muenz for six years. In addition, I received from her a two-year course in enlightenment from her spirit guides, and received teachings and intensive empowerments from many of the greatest spiritual masters of all time, including Jesus, Moses, the Buddha, and Quan Yin. I followed for several years a path of soul initiations taught by Alice Bailey of the Theosophical Society and led by Robert Jaffe, MD. I also followed for five years a Sufi path to God realization called the Twenty-Eight Stations of the Heart with Railey Macey. I was a client of two incomparable energy healers, Mark Shoofs for a year, and Nora Cooper, PhD, for three years. I have supported my spiritual path with numerous Ayahuasca journeys, and a meditation practice spanning nearly thirty-five years.

In the early 1990s, my focus shifted strongly towards Tantra. Seeking to understand its exceptionally rich five thousand year history and countless traditions, I read over six hundred books on the subject – I uncovered a secret history of Tantra, virtually unknown to historians, and a secret philosophy of Tantric Buddhism, virtually unknown to Buddhists. I studied traditional Hindu kuṇḍalinī yoga with Swami Hridayananda in France, and received teachings from Guru Mayi at Muktananda Ashram in South Fallsburgh, New York. I also practiced haṭha yoga and studied Sanskrit and the Tantric philosophy of Kashmir Śaivism while living for a year at Satchidananda Ashram in Buckingham, Virginia. From 1999-2001, I led the Tantra movement

in New York City, hosting monthly Tantra community gatherings, and practiced with nearly twenty Western Tantra teachers including Margot Anand. Robert Frey and Lori Grace were my first Western Tantra teachers, who opened my eyes to the power of Tantric sex - through them I finally found my core path. The deep love of a few passionate Tantric yoginīs also helped me to transform what I knew of only as an enjoyable activity into something infinitely greater. Their wisdom, love, and inspiration remains embedded in each page of this book. My Tantric consort for seven years was Katya Salkinder, a highly regarded psychotherapist, yoga and Tantra teacher. I taught Western Tantra for several years in the Northeast. I also had the good fortune to be part of a wonderful and supportive Tantric community in Bethesda, Maryland for two years.



But it is in Tantric Buddhism where I made my home. I studied and practiced Tantric Buddhism for four years as a resident of Karma Triyana Dharmachakra monastery in Woodstock, New York, the North American seat of His Holiness the Seventeenth Karmapa (in photo with the author). I have received teachings from over fifteen Tibetan rinpoches, and more than a hundred Tantric deity empowerments. My outstanding teachers in deity yoga include Khenpo Karthar Rinpoche, Drupon Rinchen Dorje Rinpoche, Garchen Rinpoche, and His Holiness the Dalai Lama. In subtle energy yoga and the visualization practices of sexual yoga, Drupon Rinchen Dorje Rinpoche and Garchen Rinpoche have been supreme. In nondual yoga, my precious guides for Mahāmudrā have been Khenpo Karthar Rinpoche, Thrangu

Rinpoche, Drupon Rinchen Dorje Rinpoche, Garchen Rinpoche, and Nubpa Rinpoche, as well as Traga Rinpoche for the Dzogchen traditions of Trekchö and Tögal.

It has been my lifelong wish to give a great gift to the world. To be able to give the first complete, modern instruction book on the original path of the Indian Tantric Buddhist siddhas, and the first on Buddhist sexual yoga, far exceeded my expectations. For the first time, modern readers have all the information they need to attain enlightenment in a single lifetime. The practices in this book are proven to be the swiftest means of all, and I am determined to give them to a world in suffering so that all beings may know the Great Bliss.

Acknowledgements

Exceptional thanks should be given to the work of several scholars whose life efforts made this book possible. Keith Dowman's classic *Masters of Mahāmudrā* first drew me into the world of the siddhas, but left me with two questions burning unanswered in my heart for nearly twenty years – what *was* the original path of the Indian Tantric Buddhist masters, and how could I follow it? Miranda Shaw's *Passionate Enlightenment* provided the critical groundwork in the philosophy of Buddhist sexual yoga. Elizabeth English's *Vajrayoginī* detailed the ritual foundations for the Indian Tantric Buddhist tradition, and first brought to light the brilliant sādhana that would form the core of my book. She also graciously helped me to locate the published Sanskrit version of *The Sādhana of Secret Vajravilāsinī* at the Bodleian Library at Oxford. Exceptionally good translations of the two most important Buddhist Tantras - the *Hevajra Tantra* by G. W. Farrow and I. Menon, and the *Cakrasamvara Tantra* by David B. Gray - presented crucially important original source texts without which this book could not have been written. The team of translators for Jamgön Kongtrul's *The Treasury of Knowledge* should be especially acknowledged – their massive, multi-volume work took decades to produce, and provided a rich well of material on the unique positions of Tantric Buddhist philosophy, the consecrations and vows, the Four Yogas, as well as many previously unknown practices of sexual yoga taught by the Indian siddhas. This series, one of the great scholarly achievements of the past hundred years, will remain an enduring presentation of the transformative potential of Tantric Buddhism. All these pieces needed to be in place before I could write *Great Bliss*.

Great Bliss took six years to write, and I had much to learn along the way. Once I began, Traga Rinpoche was extremely generous with his time, clarifying many key Dharma points of philosophy and practice – and gave me a mind transmission that left me staggering out of the room. He especially stressed to me the value of love as equal in importance to compassion in Buddhism, a precious teaching for which I remain intensely grateful.

Two translators offered their superlative assistance and aided me in the translation of the sādhana, Suzanne Ironbiter, Professor of Religion at SUNY Purchase, and Amrita Nadi Osborne, senior staff member at Karma Triyana Dharmacakra monastery in Woodstock, New York.

Numerous readers were very helpful in finalizing the text, and to whom I give thanks.

I want to thank also the staff at the Library of Congress, where I spent a month in research, as well as the always helpful staff at the New York Public Library, where I spent two months.

Many line illustrations from this book come from Robert Beer's *Handbook of Tibetan Buddhist Symbols* published by Shambhala.

For those readers concerned about the traditions of secrecy in Tantric Buddhism, please note that all exercises in this book come from previously published sources, and no still secret teachings of any living Tantric lineages are being revealed. The need for secrecy was originally maintained by the siddhas out of concern that these practices would be used for black magic, which was rampant in the ancient and medieval worlds. Today the greatest concern is not black magic but that these practices will be lost forever. Therefore, the greater merit comes to those who publish and preserve these practices rather than those who keep them secret and risk their permanent loss. Texts also have a way of protecting themselves, and I am confident that this book will remain in the hands of those who will use it to truly benefit themselves and others.

Pronouncing Sanskrit

Sanskrit is a very beautiful language, and holds within its vibrations a sacred energy that will greatly empower your spiritual growth. It is easy to pronounce once you learn a few basic rules.

Vowels

a – Short “a” as in “cut.”

ā – Long “a” as in “lot.”

i – As in “king,” a sound between “lick” and “keen.”

ī – Hard “e” as in “keen.”

u – Short u as in “cook.”

ū – Long u as in “shoot.”

ṛ – Trilled “r” followed by a short “i” as in “ri.”

ṝ – Pronounced as above, but longer.

ḷ – L followed by a short “i” as in “li.”

Diphthongs:

e – As in “bay.”

ai – As in “eye.”

o – As in “low.”

au – As in “ouch.”

Vowels with a line on top are pronounced twice as long as short vowels, and they are stressed syllables in a word.

Consonants

Gutturals (made with the tip of the tongue at the back of the throat): k, kh, g, gh, ṅ.

Palatals (made with the tongue at the palate): c, ch, j, jh, ñ.

Cerebrals (made with the tip of the tongue behind the palate): ṭ, ṭh, ḍ, ḍh, ṇ.

Dentals (made with the tip of the tongue behind the teeth): t, th, d, dh, n.

Labials (made with the lips): p, ph, b, bh, m.

Semivowels: y, r, l, v.

Spirants: ś, ṣ, s, h.

Other: ḥ, ṁ.

Aspirated Letters:

All consonants with an “h” after them are aspirated and pronounced separate from each other; ex. “gh” as in “dog house.”

Cs:

c – A “ch” as in “chopper.”

Ns:

ṅ – A “ng” as in “song;” ex. alīṅgana, pronounced “aling-gana,” not “alin-gana.”

ñ – A “nya.”

ṇ – A “n” with the tip of the tongue on the back of the throat.

Spirants:

ś – An “sh” as in “shoe.”

ṣ – An “sh” with the tip of the tongue on the upper back part of the throat.

Other Consonants:

ḥ – A soft “h” that softly repeats the sound of the vowel before it, but is usually left as just a soft “h.”

ṁ – A deeper, nasalized, longer and more resonant “m.”

Consonant Combinations:

Consonant combinations pronounced separately; ex. “th” pronounced like “hot house.”

jñ – A “nya;” ex. prajñā, pronounced “pra-nya.”

Apostrophes:

’ – An elision of a vowel that is unpronounced, like a contraction; ex. “can’t.”

Syllable Stresses:

In a two syllable word, the first syllable is usually stressed; ex. *bali*.

In a three syllable word, the second syllable is usually stressed; ex. *baṅgta*

In a four syllable word, the second syllable is usually stressed; ex. *narteśvara*.

If a word has a long vowel in it, the long vowel is stressed; ex. *mudrā*.

If a word has two or more long vowels in it, all the long vowels are stressed; ex. *Mahāmudrā*.

Nasalization:

All words in Sanskrit are pronounced with a slight nasal tone.

Note on formatting: Since this is a book for practitioners, many of whom will not be familiar with Sanskrit, for ease of pronunciation most compounded words have been broken up, and except in the *sādhana*, a letter “i” has been inserted after the Sanskrit letter “ṛ.”

Introduction.

Juicy Buddhism: The Power of Sexual Yoga

“Buddhahood is obtained from bliss,
and apart from women there will not be bliss.”
- *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra*

Praise to Vajravilāsinī, goddess of eternal love!

The Practice Begins Again



India, 800 CE: Two practitioners, students of the great master Śābara, entered a beautiful pleasure garden to begin their practice. The garden was filled with cuckoo birds, bright flowers, and tall aśoka trees bursting with red blossoms. It was the night of the Full Moon, and a cloudless sky bathed them in a gentle light. They had already taken hot baths and received sesame oil massages from their friends, and their naked bodies glistened in the moonlight. With the air still warm from the heat of the day, they were embraced by the lush forests of Odra.

Their devoted practice was *The Sādhana of Secret Vajravilāsinī*. Clear in their determination to attain enlightenment and liberate all beings from suffering, the practice began with a bow in heartfelt reverence to each other. They recited the opening verses together, which they had long ago memorized by heart. Viewing each other as god and goddess, he touched her body pleurably with his hands, and they kissed each other with rising passion... And now, hundreds of years later, the practice begins again.

The Power of Inner Awakening

“Let your heart unite with my heart.”

- *The Rig Veda*, Ancient India

You can live permanently in peace and bliss. Calm and relaxed, joyful and carefree, yet charged with energy and enthusiasm. You can possess clarity of mind, profound wisdom, kindness and understanding toward everyone you meet. Radiating love, you can feel complete fulfillment through your relationships. Fully open to the pleasures of life, you can create what you desire. All this can be yours, in this very lifetime. And you can use these inner qualities to help bring others to the same bliss as well.

Enlightenment, the highest goal of all spiritual paths, is truly possible for you. While most spiritual paths require great hardship, you can follow a path of intense pleasure. You can have more fun than you ever had before, and find yourself growing in love and joy each day. This book shows you how. The practices are so enjoyable, you will want to do them again and again. These methods are not new. In fact, they come from the oldest spiritual tradition in the world. They have just been hidden for a very long time.

Tantra: The Primordial Path

“If you wish to see the nature of the divine mystery, consider the marvelous image of sexual intercourse. At the moment when the male reaches his climax, the female receives the strength of the male and the male the strength of the female.

These are holy mysteries to be reflected upon and acted out.”

– *The Perfect Discourse*, Ancient Egypt

The path to bliss is bliss. That is the path and goal of Tantra. Tantra is the path of becoming whole through pleasure. It awakens your senses to reveal the sacred in all of life. As you practice, you break out of all the restrictions that have been your safe, boring shell, and expand to the fullness of your true being. The only rules in Tantra are to open to life, drench yourself with its pleasures, and rise again and again to the peak of your ecstatic true being until you and the universe are one. When there is no separation between you and All That Is, then you are free. You become the primordial bliss that is your birthright. Once you attain this bliss, it is eternal.

The word “Tantra” comes from the Sanskrit root word “Tan” which means “to weave.” Tantra weaves together seemingly opposing energies (such as female and male, sex and spirit) to create wholeness, health and happiness. You weave or unite into your entire being breath with spirit, your own daily life with the sacred power of ultimate reality. The result is eternal peace and bliss. The *Guhyasamāja Tantra (The Secret Assembly Tantra)* defines Tantra as “continuum,” the ability to maintain continually the awareness of the dynamic unity of all experiences. It is the simultaneous awareness of oceanic clarity and stillness with pulsing, exultant aliveness, the release of all your limiting beliefs and emotional afflictions, the sexual ecstasy you always dreamed of, and the power to fulfill your heart’s desires, also called *Great Bliss*.

The Tantras, divinely revealed texts from medieval India, teach the secrets to attaining oceanic bliss very rapidly. The central principle of their teachings is: *everything is sacred*. And the path of Tantra is: *embrace everything*. In the Tantric view, any spiritual path that rejects the pleasures of this world is incomplete – a dishonoring of the gift that life truly is. Whatever you love about life, Tantra wants you to have that experience even more. Tantra is the most fun you can have in the universe. It is the ultimate act of being alive, and the ultimate gift you can give to others. *Nothing is or could ever possibly be better than Tantra.*

The Secret History of Tantra

**“My god, sweet is the drink of the wine-maid,
like her drink sweet is her vulva, sweet is her drink,
like her lips sweet is her vulva, sweet is her drink,
sweet is her mixed drink, her drink.”**

- *The Sacred Marriage Rite, Ancient Sumer*

Tantra is the world’s oldest spiritual path, yet it remains one of history’s greatest untold stories. For thousands of years, human beings have used pleasure, and specifically sexual pleasure, to gain the divine powers of the gods. From the time when people first began to develop a spiritual outlook, Tantra emerged, and its themes and practices are so compelling and enduring that *Tantra has influenced every major religion in the world.*

About 150,000 years ago, the first humans moved across Africa, Europe and Asia, living authentically, passionately, erotically and spiritually. They honored the sacredness of their world with their bodies, emotions, minds and hearts fully open, to the awesome powers of nature, and to each other, celebrating in awe and delight each moment of their lives. They lived in peace and harmony with their world in a holistic consciousness that saw life and spirit as one. From these roots, Tantra as the path of uniting sex and spirit emerged as a natural expression of the essence of human existence. *Tantra is not a set of ideas* like a religion that some person once thought of long ago. *Tantra is built into you.* It is a potential within you to realize.

The earliest peoples knew that through uniting sex with spirit they could be transformed into higher beings. The oldest written evidence for Tantra comes from the world’s oldest story, the Sumerian tale *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, which dates to around 2800 BCE, and speaks of timeless wisdom. In this story, the wild man Enkidu spends several days making love to a Sumerian priestess (often pejoratively translated as “sacred prostitute”), after which he becomes “like a god.” In India, the Harappans (6000 BCE to 1800 BCE) participated in ecstatic sacred sex rituals using sacred ring stones and lingams - the ancient origins of the religions of the divine female principle (Śakti) alongside the worship of the eternal male principle (Śiva).

The blissful harmony of early humans was ultimately shattered by catastrophic shifts in the ways people lived their lives. The original *integrated consciousness* that saw life and spirit as one was lost. Beginning around 3000 BCE, following the intensive adoption of farming and herding, new concepts like private property arose, which threw human beings out of their holistic world view. Land, animals, and even human beings became identified as objects to be exploited. Farmers

needed more children to tend their fields, and marriage was stressed as a moral virtue so that men would gain the sole economic benefits of their many offspring. For women to produce more children, the age-old practice of weaning them was shortened from three to four years to about eighteen months. Corporal punishment became the standard for child-rearing. These changes resulted in children growing into anxious, insecure adults - an inner lack searching for an ever-elusive wholeness.

Once people gained greater material wealth, it had to be protected from greedy neighbors. With the development of metals, weapons became more lethal than ever. The terror of war began to dominate the landscape, creating devastating suffering. The invention of writing, which also occurred around 3000 BCE, further shifted human consciousness out of the original balanced harmony of awareness. Holistic thinking was replaced by linear, rational thought, a strong subject-object division of experience, and people were compelled emotionally toward controlling others rather than delighting in being their equals. This relentless process occurred across cultures over a period of several thousand years as human beings became progressively more imbalanced and ultimately insane. What we call the “story of civilization” is principally the story of what human beings do when they lack inner contentment and self-love. These events that began five thousand years ago *continue to shape how most people live their lives today*.

The final shift in human life in ancient times was spiritual. Beginning after 2000 BCE, the world’s religions faced what the historian Joseph Campbell called the “Great Reversal.” The earliest myths point to life on earth as fundamentally good, worthy of sacred celebration. Yet life had become so drenched in misery that these myths could no longer speak to people. New myths arose that describe life on earth as inherently dangerous and filled with suffering, and teach that the only way to find lasting happiness is to escape from it permanently. In the West the concept of Original Sin took ground, while in the East humans were believed to have entered the Kali Yuga - the Age of Strife or degeneracy.

In India, the hymns called the Vedas (Songs) expressed much of the pre-Great Reversal enthusiasm for the sacredness of life. The Vedic religion was a Tantric tradition whose priests made offerings to the abiding spirits of nature, organized their rituals to the polar elements of fire and water (united in the spiritually empowering soma drink), and participated in group sacred sex rituals. The earliest known Tantric sect, the Vratyas, is described in the *Atharva Veda (The Songs of Atharva)*, which tells of worship of ecstatic gods, sacred sex rituals and kuṇḍalinī yoga.

Starting around the time of the Upaniṣads (The Wisdom of Sitting Near; c. 800-400 BCE), however, much of Indian religion reflects an unprecedented new principle that following the sacred path means *rejecting life*. Life on earth is viewed as a tragedy and a trap from which a human soul can only seek to escape. The Sāṃkhya (Enumeration) and Yoga (Union) philosophies both consider that the human soul is *imprisoned in* the world, therefore their goal is *liberation from* the world. Pleasure only further enmeshes you in the sinkhole of life; ascetic detachment, they say, leads to liberation and eternal happiness.

In response to the intense suffering of so many people around the world, an era of reform movements known as the Axial Age (c. 800 BCE - 200 BCE) rose. The many leaders of this Age (such as Plato, Zoroaster, the Jewish prophets, Mahāvīra, the Buddha, Confucius, and others)

accepted the belief of their time that life is inherently suffering, and taught that the only true path to happiness is to reach an other-worldly paradise. They rejected worldly pleasures as leading to hell, and rejected anything Tantric as an especially fast path to hell. The leaders of the Axial Age established the religious language and concerns that guide the world's major religions today. Tantra was once integral to all the ancient Eurasian civilizations. From the temple prostitutes of Babylon to the Greek mystery schools, from the Celtic spring festivals to the Gnostic Christians and the royal palaces of China, the idea that sexual pleasure led to inner transformation was an accepted fact. Following the guidance of the Axial Age leaders, however, almost everywhere the Tantric traditions that celebrated life were wiped out.

The Buddha, like other Axial Age teachers, taught that people suffer because of their never-ending *desire* for sensual pleasures. He found that although it is possible to find limited happiness in this world, because of the impermanence of everything in it, the immutable laws of karma, and the unending cycle of wandering in suffering he called *samsāra*, this world remains *intrinsically dangerous*. By renouncing the world, cutting yourself off from desire and sense pleasures, and pulling your awareness inwards through meditation, you can release yourself from your bonds and attain everlasting peace and bliss. After death, as a liberated being, you will never again have to face the suffering of life on earth. Although the Buddha taught the same world-denying message as other leaders of his era to his monks, remarkably, he taught a dramatically different message to his lay followers that is far less well known to modern people: *to enjoy worldly pleasures responsibly*. This “radical” idea produced two extraordinary results. First, of all the teachers of the Axial Age, the Buddha was the only one who actually established a successful record of bringing more peaceful lives to his followers. And second, it created a rare opportunity for something even greater to emerge – in time, from within the core of the Buddha's own teachings, an extraordinary Tantric tradition once again affirming the sacredness of life and its potential for bliss was eventually born.

Because of the enduring influence of tribal cultures on Indian civilization, Tantric ways remained strong in India even as they nearly died out in Europe and much of Asia. Beginning around the 400s CE, a richly Tantric Hindu culture flowered, and it eventually influenced Buddhism. Beginning around the 700s CE, India's masters of Tantric Buddhism, the *siddhas* (accomplished ones), taught a very different path and goal than those first taught by the Buddha. All beings that are not enlightened are in suffering – the *siddhas* strongly affirmed this position. But the real enemy, they taught, is not *desire*, but *craving* or *compulsive desire* – also called *attachment*. Pure desires, and especially strong ones, can not only be enjoyed for their own sake, but can also be used to propel you to inner awakening. And the best path for achieving that awakening is not through renouncing the world but through *intense pleasure, love, and bliss*.

The *siddhas* taught that the world is *not* inherently suffering – it is only your false misconceptions that make it seem so. Once you are released from suffering, this precious world becomes a paradise. They rejected the central message of the Axial Age leaders that hypnotized the world and reaffirmed the original, primordial vision of human beings of the sacredness of life, pleasure, and sexuality. Tantric Buddhism praises life on earth as inherently good and pleasurable, and all pure desires are to be enjoyed.

Tantric Buddhism is mainly known in the West today in its form as Tibetan Buddhism. Tibetan Buddhism is one of the world's most successful systems for spiritual transformation, and is becoming increasingly popular in the West. As Tantric Buddhism first came to Tibet from the 700s to 1200s, it was largely identical to its practices in India, but over time the Tibetans changed it. The greatest difference between the two traditions is in the role of sexual yoga. The great Indian masters who founded the major lineages of Tibetan Tantric Buddhism, Padmasambhava (c. late 700s), Virūpa (c. 800s), Tilopa (988-1069), and Atīśa (980-1054), understood sexual yoga as central for liberation. Yet most later Tibetans moved away from sexual yoga as a core practice. In addition, many Tibetan teachers rejected the life-embracing philosophy of the Tantric siddhas, and returned to an earlier life-negating message found in the sūtras that life on earth is inherently dangerous and sensual pleasures should be avoided.

Tibetan Buddhism is to a great extent a dis-integrated form of Indian Tantric Buddhism. All Tibetan lineages affirm in principle that sexual yoga is necessary to attain enlightenment, and the reverence for the Indian masters and early Tibetan masters who practiced sexual yoga is high. But the monastic establishment reshaped Tantric Buddhism to suit their needs. As a result, most Tibetan lineages do not practice the original Tantric Buddhist path in its complete form. Tibetan Buddhist rituals are thoroughly desexualized except symbolically, and this change creates a path that is inevitably different in its shape and power from what the siddhas followed in India. Sexual yoga is taught only to special students and a few high masters. Some Tibetan yogis do integrate these practices, but they are in a very small minority.

Numerous other differences arose between the two traditions, and the Tibetans are keenly aware that they have never produced anywhere near the number and quality of enlightened masters as the Indians. Tibetan Buddhism's form of consecrations or "empowerments" is a much weaker version than what is taught in the Tantras – rituals that were originally intended to permanently shift your consciousness into enlightenment have been reduced to merely receiving the blessings of deities. One of the great strengths of Indian Tantric Buddhism was its inclusivity – virtually anyone with the right motivation could practice. In Tibet, however, the preliminary practices – one hundred thousand each of refuge prayers, Vajrasattva mantra recitations, maṇḍala offerings, generating bodhicitta prayers, and guru yoga recitations - introduced by Marpa (1012-1097), along with the 19th Century addition of the three-year retreat, are so arduous that it turned Tibetan Tantra into an exclusive system for training spiritual elites. A final difference is that Indian Tantric Buddhism was motivated by a great spirit of egalitarianism – Tantric communities were fundamentally gatherings of equals. Tibetan Buddhism, however, is hierarchical and formalized, qualities the siddhas sought passionately to avoid.

Tantric Buddhism has come to the West mainly through two groups, Tibetan monks and Western scholars. Neither have an experiential understanding of sexual yoga. Some non-celibate Tibetan lamas, including a few of high renown, practice sexual yoga with their consorts, but the practices have been largely kept secret, often referred to in popular books but never elucidated. The most prominent Tibetan advocate for sexual yoga is actually the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, who writes very openly and positively of it in his books. But because he does not actually teach the practices, sexual yoga remains purely theoretical for his Western followers.

Understanding Buddhist Sexual Yoga

“The bliss experienced when the tip of the male sexual organ is in the lotus is the ultimate realization.”

- Kṛiṣṇācārya, *The Yoga of the Jewel Garland*

Sexual yoga (Karmamudrā – lit. Action Consort or Seal) is one of the most treasured practices of the Buddhist tradition. For over a thousand years it has been honored and taught to remove emotional and mental obscurations and attain the Great Bliss of enlightenment.

Buddhism is not a disembodied “science of mind.” Its teachings are meant to be sensuously understood and lived through the body. It is a system for totally transforming your body, speech, *and* mind into a whole new kind of being. Enlightenment does not mean simply a clear and peaceful awareness – it is the ecstatic intensity of being fully alive. “Mind” in Buddhism really means the “heart-mind,” as pre-modern cultures knew the “mind” to reside in the heart center. Buddhism is a path of the heart. Tantric Buddhism teaches the loving and intimate embrace of life - it values the feeling of connectedness to everything, flowing joyfully with the creative processes of reality. It offers fearlessness, empowerment, and inconceivable bliss.

Sexual yoga is vitally important to Buddhism. It prevents the path from falling into either the extremes of scholarly dryness or meditative detachment. Sexual yoga is intimate, juicy, creative, and fun. As the most important practice of Tantric Buddhism in India, all the great Tantric masters practiced it with their consorts and taught it to their students. Buddhist sexual yoga comes from the Tantras themselves, the sacred revealed texts of the Tantric path. Over the centuries, as Tantric Buddhism passed into Tibet, these practices were not lost but overshadowed by other teachings and practices, and often frowned upon by monastic or governmental authorities as a threat to moral order. But the power of the sexual practices never diminished - they are as valuable today as they were a thousand years ago.

Most importantly, as the siddhas knew, the other Buddhist practices find their true power when combined with sexual yoga. Sexual yoga is part of a system of practice called the Four Yogas (Catur Mudrā – lit. Four Consorts or Seals): 1) deity yoga (Jñānamudrā), 2) subtle energy yoga (Samayamudrā), 3) sexual yoga (Karmamudrā), and 4) nondual yoga (Mahāmudrā). Traditionally, these are not performed as four separate practices – they are practiced *simultaneously* and are totally integrated with each other. Like four pistons of an engine, they gain their power by working together.

We are all on a path to bliss - that is our destination. As the *Hevajra Tantra (The Laughing Adamantine Tantra)* teaches, “The world is pervaded by bliss” - it is the true nature of all things. Once your emotional and mental obscurations are cleared, *you see reality clearly*, and dwell in an effortless state of bliss. The permanent, changeless bliss of ultimate reality united with ever-changing worldly bliss is called Great Bliss (Mahāsukha). Awash in this ocean of bliss, you act joyfully to bring all beings into its embrace. *Sexual yoga is the most powerful and effective practice ever created for attaining the Great Bliss.*

One of the most wonderful features of Tantric practice is that it is fun. The road to enlightenment can be long and challenging, and discipline hard to maintain. But in Tantra, the apparent opposites of discipline and play are united so that disciplined practice is inherently enjoyable. In this way, you will *want* to practice, you will practice longer and more intensely, and you will attain results more quickly. The goddess of the practice text presented in this book, Vajravilāsinī, is named the “Adamantine Lady of Erotic Play,” and it is through ritual play with her that spiritual growth is achieved. For the Tantric masters, play (līlā), and especially erotic play (vilāsa), is both a transformative power and an inherent aspect of ultimate reality. The contemporary scholar Miranda Shaw writes, “‘Play’ is an apt term for the contemplative yet amorous gestures of lovemaking as a religious discipline.”

Common Misconceptions of Sexual Yoga

Sexual yoga has always been controversial, even at the height of its popularity in India, and over the centuries many misconceptions have developed. Bringing light to these misunderstandings allows you to see its true power so you will not be distracted in your practice.

One surprisingly popular misconception is that sexual yoga was never practiced at all, and that references to it are merely symbolic. Modern sexual repression and an inability to comprehend a culture that was intrinsically orgiastic and able to produce great erotic works such as the *Kāma Sūtra (The Book of Love)* have long prevented a clear picture of the past. Sexual yoga was practiced extensively, and it produced extraordinary spiritual achievements by countless masters.

Some people believe that Tantric sex was part of a system of male oppression and that women were unimportant in Tantra’s development. In truth, many masters were women and they were central to its growth. In Tantric communities, women and men were honored as equals.

Some teachers have argued that sexual yoga is so advanced that it should only be practiced by the highest level of practitioners, and criticize lower level practitioners. This is the position, for example, of the Tibetan master Tsongkapa (1357-1419). Curiously, however, others have criticized sexual yoga from the exact *opposite* viewpoint and claim sexual yoga is only for the lowest level of practitioners. The First Dalai Lama (1391-1475), for example, writes that it is only for those of “dull capacity,” and should not be practiced by those at a higher level. The place of sexual yoga within the Four Yogas has long been misunderstood - many masters in India taught their own systems and incorporated it in their own ways. The great Indian master Saraha (c. late 700s) taught sexual yoga as the foundation of all other Tantric practices, learned by his beginning students. Yet another Indian master, Jayabhadra (c. 800s), regarded it as the highest of Tantric practices and taught it as the final step. The most common method was to teach it as the third of the Four Yogas, after students attained some proficiency in deity yoga and subtle energy yoga, with nondual yoga saved for last.

One of the most persistent misunderstandings is that sexual yoga is something fully set apart from other Tantric practices. In Tibetan Buddhism, students practice deity yoga, subtle energy yoga, and nondual yoga, while sexual yoga appears somehow divorced from them. For the Indian Buddhist masters, however, sexual yoga is fully integrated into all the practices - so much

so that when other practices are separated from sexual yoga, they greatly lose their power. A classic axiom of the siddhas is “Without Karmamudrā, no Mahāmudrā,” meaning, you will not attain enlightenment unless you unite sexually with a physical consort. All Tantric Buddhist practices are intended to be fully infused with the pleasures and powers of sexual yoga, *making the other practices intensely intimate and enjoyable as well.*

A crucially mistaken belief is that there is no love in Tantric sex - that the practices are done purely and coldly for selfish individual spiritual attainment. Yet the Tantras themselves state that love (priya) is an essential qualification for practicing sexual yoga. The *Hevajra Tantra* says of the female practitioner, “She must love the yogi.” In the same way, Tsongkapa tells his male students to love women with sacred devotion. He advises, “Be very loving toward them. One should always worship women with a cheerful mind.” In Tantra, you love each other intensely.

One very deep-seated but groundless idea is that once you attain enlightenment, you transcend sex and have no more sexual desire. A reading of the Tantras makes it clear that buddhas are eternally engaged in blissful sexual union with their consorts - and want you to be also.

Another unfortunate myth is that in sexual yoga the man never ejaculates and must always hold his semen. There are statements in the Tantras that say this, but they have been taken out of context. Delaying ejaculation is taught because it allows higher states of bliss to be attained for prolonged periods between a man and his lover. But ejaculating is central to Tantric Buddhist rituals, not only for pleasure but also because semen is ingested as a transformative substance.

Some people think that sexual yoga is totally serious and without fun and play. It is true that in practice you hold a strong and focused intention to end the suffering of all beings – and this is the most serious of all goals. Yet play is also deeply honored. And, after the formal practice session is over, during the orgiastic Tantric feasts, few rules apply and you are free to do whatever pleases you, liberating yourself and your lover into pure pleasure as you desire.

Perhaps the most misleading misconception is that sexual yoga, though once popular long ago, is no longer relevant to modern practitioners. This book demonstrates sexual yoga’s power and potential to return Tantric Buddhism to its original qualities of intimacy, juiciness, profound love, and lighthearted play, all leading to the Great Bliss of enlightenment.

How Sexual Yoga is Different from Ordinary Sex

Sexual yoga is dramatically different from regular sex. For most people, ordinary sex is very enjoyable, but it is limited by your habits and cravings, your need to feel whole, and your distorted ego desires to have and hold on to certain experiences. It is limited by your own dualistic illusion of a separate self and other, which gets in the way of achieving much deeper pleasure. It is limited because, no matter how much bliss you experience, that bliss inevitably dissipates, and then you are left with yourself and your insecurities just as you were before. Love and pleasure may be in it, but regular sex is not sacred, it does not elevate you to a sacred plane, and does not have the power to bring you to enlightenment. As the Hindu Tantras famously

observe, “If liberation followed merely from sex with a woman, all creatures would already be liberated by female companionship.” Sex is a sensual pleasure - *a pleasure that always fades*.

Sexual yoga, on the other hand, brings you a bliss so powerful that it destroys your karmic obscurations and pierces the veils of your dualistic awareness. Your disturbing emotions and troubling thoughts are lifted away. Sexual yoga requires tremendous discipline. You must be able to hold your awareness on both the physical and subtle planes where transformation occurs. You cannot allow yourself to fall into mere lust. And most importantly, you must hold the proper motivation. Ninety percent of being a “high spiritual being” is simply *purity of intention*. No matter how wise, loving, or powerful you may be, if you do not have a high intention in your practice, you will not be successful. Pure intention and disciplined practice in sexual yoga bring the ultimate success of buddhahood.

While Buddhism is ancient, it is compellingly modern in its direct approach to addressing the most basic challenges of human life. And sexual yoga is one of Buddhism’s most powerful assets. For over two thousand years, Westerners have inflicted themselves with a false and devastating duality of sexuality and spirituality: to be sexual, you must reject the spiritual, and to be spiritual, you must reject the sexual. Healing this split releases tremendous creative power inside you, bringing you greater health, love, and inner awakening. Sexual yoga can change your whole life for the better.

Sexual yoga is essential for the modern world. Bliss is the greatest gift we can give to each other; we need to create a culture that supports being in bliss, and to establish the practices that can bring us inner awakening. Sexual yoga is intensely enjoyable, quick, and effective. And it is a path almost anyone can follow.

Goals of this Book

**“Erotic love, enjoyed by the ignorant, becomes bondage.
That very same love, tasted with understanding, brings liberation.”
- Āryadeva, *Creating Purity of Mind***

The principal goal of this book is for you to attain enlightenment. Tantric Buddhism as it was originally taught by the Indian siddhas is the fastest and most powerful path to enlightenment ever devised. Thousands of masters and disciples attained enlightenment in medieval India using these methods, and you can too. *Great Bliss* is the first complete, modern instruction book on Tantric Buddhism, and the first on Buddhist sexual yoga.

For those who think that no Buddhist ever thought about sex, *Great Bliss* redefines the Buddhist experience for the modern world, and makes its most secret teachings accessible to practitioners for the first time. It presents the philosophy, history, practices and inner experiences of Buddhist sexual yoga. You will understand how to make the leap from orgasmic bliss to enlightened bliss - the Great Bliss of enlightenment. Tantric Buddhist practices are deeply rooted in the core philosophy and practices of the early Buddhism of the Common Vehicle and the Mahāyāna, and these are presented first. By demonstrating the vital role of sexual yoga in Tantric Buddhism, the

true nature of the Tantric Buddhist path, which has been long obscured out of a failure to understand its most key component, is finally fully revealed.

This book also presents an authentic practice text (sādhana) that focuses on sexual yoga: *The Sādhana of Secret Vajravilāsinī* by the dynamic Indian master Śabara (c. 800s). The sādhana and commentary clarify these essential practices and make them available for you. The Four Yogas are well represented in the sādhana, but sexual yoga is clearly its main focus. In addition, most chapters begin with a short, fictional narrative of a young man in India who practices the sādhana with his consort under Śabara's wise and loving guidance.

Suggestions for Creating a Spiritual Practice through Sexual Yoga

Sexual yoga is an intensive spiritual path, and should not be taken lightly. At the same time, it is also very enjoyable. Ideally, to make significant progress you should plan to dedicate yourself to the practices in this book for at least two years. Regular practice is important, with simple haṭha yoga poses and sitting meditation a daily part of your life.

If you are new to Buddhism, you can begin the sexual practices right away but should also spend some time studying the philosophy, learning how to meditate, and giving yourself the consecrations. You do not have to be a Buddhist to do these practices and benefit from them, but its philosophy is built into them as an integrated system for inner awakening. Performing these practices neither excludes you from working with other Buddhist teachers who may not be familiar with these practices, nor does it require you to find one.

While the traditional steps and requirements of the Tantric Buddhist path are presented in each chapter, it is up to you how you want to create your path. A good plan is to practice twice a week, for two to four hours per session. You can focus the first session on the exercises of the Four Yogas and the second session on the sādhana, which eventually unites the Four Yogas together. With the sādhana, you might begin by spending the first three months learning it and doing just the deity yoga practices. Then, add the subtle energy yoga practices and do them along with the sādhana for another three months. When you are ready, incorporate the sexual yoga practices for the next three months. Finally, integrate the practices of nondual yoga. For daily practice, twenty to sixty minutes a day of haṭha yoga or meditation, or both, is ideal. You can practice sexual yoga with a consort or alone as you desire. Once a year, take a week-long practice retreat to deepen your experiences. In time, you will become a true sexual yogi or yoginī, and begin to know the Great Bliss.

The Sādhana of Secret Vajravilāsinī

The complete title of the sādhana is *Yoginī Sarvasvaṃ Nāma Guhya Vajravilāsinī Sādhanaṃ*, which means *Revered by All the Yoginīs, Known as the Practice of the Secret Adamantine Lady of Erotic Play*. The sādhana could just as easily be called "The Destruction of Suffering through Erotic Play," for that is its chief goal and path: the attainment of supreme enlightenment through intense, amorous love-play. *The Sādhana of Secret Vajravilāsinī* is an extraordinary text, a

masterpiece of the world's spiritual erotic literature. Both beautiful and powerful, it presents a complete path to enlightenment that can be practiced often over many years. It is a sacred text to be treated with great reverence.

The Sādhana of Secret Vajravilāsinī may be one of the greatest Tantric sādhanas ever composed. For many reasons, it is an exceptionally powerful practice. It is an original text divinely received by one of India's greatest masters. It is also preserved in its original Sanskrit, a language of sacred power honored for millennia. And, unlike many Tantric Buddhist texts, it is written in exceptionally good Sanskrit. The sādhana is simple and easy to follow. It has, unusually for an advanced sādhana, a very simple maṇḍala or sacred circle for visualization, making its practice easily accessible yet still very powerful. Through its simplicity and elegance, it is an ideal meditational tool for practitioners of all levels. This sādhana is a slow and lyrical meditation on two deities in lovemaking, which allows you to shift your consciousness with its flow in an easy way. Totalling 151 verses, it is one of the longest Sanskrit sādhanas known, allowing for ever-deepening meditative absorption.

Vajravilāsinī (Adamantine Lady of Erotic Play) is a peaceful form of the great goddess Vajrayoginī. Her purpose is to transform erotic desire into eternal bliss, and her special tool for enlightened transformation is sexual pleasure. She is called Secret Vajravilāsinī because of the power of her love that leads to enlightenment. Vajravilāsinī's dear consort is Padmanarteśvara (Lord Lotus Dancer), the famous Lord of Compassion Avalokiteśvara as an erotic lover.

While a highlight of Buddhist teachings is on developing compassion, it is very clear from the sādhana that these deities do not just feel compassion for each other – they really love each other. Love is a sometimes underappreciated quality in Buddhism, where “loving kindness” and compassion get favored. However, *love is just as important in Buddhism as compassion*. Here pure love comes to the forefront. In addition, most of the highest Buddhist Tantras are to wrathful deities. While the sādhanas of wrathful deities lead to enlightenment through transforming lower emotions like anger, once you have attained a more pure state within yourself, it is ideal to practice with deities whose forms and energies reflect that purity. Vajravilāsinī and her precious consort Padmanarteśvara are in fully peaceful forms. Love is the greatest healer of all, as this sādhana shows. Tantric Buddhism is not only a cultivation of wisdom and compassion, it is also a celebration of love. May Vajravilāsinī be forever honored as the Buddhist goddess of love.

The sādhana is so powerful you do not need to learn any other practices to attain success in your own lifetime. As Śabara observes, twelve years of steady practice with your consort can bring enlightenment. To learn this one sādhana well is to master the essence of the Tantric path. The final advantage is that this sādhana is easily available to whoever would like to practice it. The sādhanas of many Tantric deities are available in some Tibetan lineages only to monks or lamas. In a time of global turmoil, it is urgent that even the highest Tantric practices be made available to the public. In an effort to re-democratize Tantra, this highest practice can be performed by anyone who feels it would benefit them. All acts of love and kindness bring merit and higher rebirth, so you can feel free to practice the sādhana for the benefit of all beings.

Chapter 1. The Path of Renunciation: The Common Vehicle

“Sensual pleasures have been compared to a charcoal pit by the Blessed One. They provide much suffering and despair, while the danger in them is still more.”
- The Buddha to his monks, *The Sūtra to Potaliya*

“There are, householder, these four kinds of happiness which may be achieved by a layperson who enjoys sensual pleasures - the happiness of possession, the happiness of enjoyment, the happiness of freedom from debt, and the happiness of blamelessness.”
- The Buddha to his lay followers, *The Numerical Collection*

A Traveling Buddhist Monk



At twenty years of age, he was young and handsome, and exceptionally well-educated by his father, a brahmin priest in the city of Pragjyotiśa, in the kingdom of Kāmarūpa in northeast India. His father, a noted scholar at a major Śaiva temple, was recently defeated in a public debate against a traveling Buddhist monk, a professor at the great Buddhist university of Nālandā. The defeat sent shock waves across the city, and many feared the priest had been the victim of black magic. With the young man's family disgraced, and fascinated by the new teachings, he took the money his father saved for his marriage and went to see the monk. The monk gave him the Refuge Vow and Lay Precepts, and placed a protection cord around his neck for safe journeying. The young man headed off in a small boat along the Brahmāputra and Ganges rivers to the city of Pāṭaliputra, and then to study at the fabled center of Nālandā.

Introduction

“I attained the highest complete enlightenment. This I recognized.”
- The Buddha, *The Turning the Wheel of the Dharma Sūtra*

Buddhism is an extraordinary religion. It says that you are the creator of your own reality, and you alone hold the keys to your own happiness. No one, not even a buddha, can *give* you enlightenment – you must be the one to save yourself. Buddhist teachings are not meant to be accepted on faith alone, but tested within you. Its practices lead to inner peace and prosperity, and ultimately to bliss. *Buddhism is the religion of bliss*. The path to achieving this bliss avoids the extremes of sensual self-indulgence and cruel self-negation, and creates a moderate and sensible “Middle Way” (Madhyamā Pratipad). It is a proven path to permanent happiness. The early Buddhist path is called the Common Vehicle since it is the foundation of all later Buddhist paths. It is essential to have a basic understanding of its principles for advanced Tantric practice.

The Buddha’s teachings address the deepest challenge of all - the problem of human happiness. Why is it so difficult for human beings to be genuinely happy? You try to be happy by possessing things you think you will like, developing relationships, or accomplishing actions that you think will make you happy. Naturally, you also try to avoid things that will make you unhappy. Unfortunately, you are also driven by inner impulses that you do not understand. You want to relax and enjoy your life, but you cannot because your thoughts and emotional impulses constantly pull you this way and that. Doing nothing terrifies you. You compulsively seek out the next activity, preventing you from feeling fully the rich experience of being here and now. All this running after happiness, the Buddha taught, may bring temporary pleasures, but it will never bring you the *permanent* happiness you are really looking for.

History

“Venerable sir, I have such confidence in the Blessed One that I believe there has not been, nor ever will be, nor exists at present another teacher more knowledgeable than the Blessed One with respect to enlightenment.”
– Śāriputra, *The Collection of Connected Discourses*

The Buddha (563-483 BCE) was a man of exceptional wisdom, love, power, grace, and peace, whose mere presence awed and overwhelmed those who met him. And yet he began, as all buddhas do, just like an ordinary person. The true meaning of his life story is not simply that he became a buddha, but that by doing so, he demonstrated that everyone can follow in his path and become buddhas too. The Buddha, also known as Śākyamuni (Sage of the Śākya clan), was born Prince Siddhārtha Gautama, in Lumbinī (in modern Nepal), son of the king of the city of Kapilavāstu. His birth name Siddhārtha means “he who achieves his goal.” Though living in luxury, he was devastated by the sorrow he saw all around him and determined to find a way *to end all suffering*. At the age of twenty-nine the prince left his palace, wife and child to search for enlightenment. He studied with many spiritual teachers, including two in the Hindu Sāṃkhya tradition, Ālāra Kālāma and Uddaka Rāmaputta, from whom he was very strongly influenced.

After six years of practice, he discovered that neither his life of indulgence in sensual pleasures in the royal palaces nor the harsh ascetic denial of his teachers could attain his aim.

Siddhārtha finally achieved his goal - he realized what he called the Four Noble Truths. Now called the Buddha (Awakened One), he spent the next forty-five years teaching and traveling, establishing a community of renunciates set on liberation, and teaching a path for lay people to find happiness in this life and future lifetimes. He called his teachings the Dharma, the Liberating Truth. He gained a deeply devoted following, and thousands attained enlightenment.



The Buddha's central teachings remained vitually unchanged for almost five hundred years. Though his followers split into numerous different schools, they varied mostly by very minor interpretations of doctrine and monastic rules. Buddhism was a significant religion in India up until the 1200s CE, and it is likely that even after the introduction of the Mahāyāna, the Buddha's original path (also called by later traditions the Śrāvakayāna, the Path of the Disciples) remained the most popular form of Buddhism throughout that time. It is the path still followed today in much of Southeast Asia. Twenty-five hundred years after the Buddha's death,

Buddhism is the fourth largest religion in the world.

It is easy to think of the early Buddhist path as purely ascetic and world denying, but this is not at all true. The Buddha established two very different cultures, one monastic and one lay. For his monks and nuns, he established a community dedicated to renouncing life. He taught monastics to sever all worldly ties and live in quiet isolation, focusing on their exclusive goal of attaining enlightenment. For the majority lay practitioners, however, the Buddha wanted them to enjoy life comfortably and happily, live morally, attend to family, accumulate wealth, honor the sacredness of the earth, and enjoy worldly pleasures to the fullest. Lay members tended to be wealthy, educated city-dwellers, and the religion prospered on their support. The lay culture of early Buddhism was jubilant and boisterous. The sheer excitement of knowing that in all the world you had found a path to enlightenment was worthy of intense and ecstatic celebration. The fruits of practice for the Buddha's lay followers include happiness in this life and in future lives, a very different goal than for his monks.

Masters of the Common Vehicle

“Nirvāṇa, devoid of all stains, is utterly pure.”

- Buddhagoṣa, *The Path of Purification*

Vasubandhu



Vasubandhu (c. 330-400 CE), whose name means “Wealth Holder,” was born a brahmin in Gandhāra (modern Pakistan), and later became a monk. After studying for many years in Kashmir, he wrote *The Treasury of Liberating Truth*, a summary of the Buddha’s teachings intently studied to this day. He also wrote the brilliant commentary *Creating the Five Aggregates*, a classic text of Buddhist psychology. His brother Asaṅga tried to convert him to the Mahāyāna, but at first Vasubandhu resisted. Then one night he witnessed his brother in meditation by a pond, gained a realization of the profoundness of the Mahāyāna, and embraced it. In the Mahāyāna path Vasubandhu’s works are even more important. In support of the Mind Only philosophy, he wrote two definitive texts,

The Thirty Verses on Mind Only and *The Twenty Verses on Mind Only*. He encouraged devotional practice to the Buddha Amitābha, which remains central to Tibetan and East Asian Buddhism, and founded the study of Buddhist logic.

Buddhagoṣa



Buddhagoṣa (c. 400s CE), whose name means “Voice of the Buddha,” was the most important and influential commentator of the Common Vehicle on the Buddha’s doctrines. Originally a brahmin from Bodhgaya, he was defeated in debate by a Buddhist monk and converted. Buddhagoṣa traveled to Sri Lanka, where he wrote thirteen commentaries on all parts of the Buddha’s teachings. His most outstanding work, *The Path of Purification*, clearly organizes and

summarizes the Buddha’s teachings, and remains the principle instruction manual for followers of the Common Vehicle today. A popular and highly imaginative story of his life was written in Burma in the 1400s.

Philosophy

“Even if bandits were to sever you savagely limb by limb with a two-handed saw, those who give rise to a mind of hate toward them would not be carrying out my teaching.”
- The Buddha, *The Sūtra to Kakacūpama*

When You Perceive Your Self as Not Being Independently Real, You Attain Buddhahood

The Potential for Permanent Happiness

The Buddha is like a doctor who determines an illness and offers a cure. He is not, like a philosopher, trying to explain the nature of reality - his goal is to liberate people from suffering. Although everyone wants to be happy, he says, most people go about it *the wrong way*.

The essence of all Buddhist teachings is: suffering occurs because of a *fundamental misperception* about who you are and how to attain real happiness. You see things that appear more magnificent and full of pleasure than you are, and you desire them. Driven by your craving desires, you grasp at them, thinking they will make you happy. Sometimes they do make you happy, other times not. But they *never* bring you *permanent happiness*. Let go of your false concepts “self” and “other,” and there is no more craving desire. Let go of craving and there is no suffering. Your awareness rests peacefully and blissfully in its true state, and you are free.

The Buddha’s way is the path of renunciation. The Fourteenth Dalai Lama writes, “In order to practice the Buddhist path, we need to generate a deep sense of renunciation of the very nature of our present existence, which is characterized by mental and physical aggregates under the control of karma and afflictions. We must develop a deep aspiration to gain freedom from this conditioned existence. The heart of renunciation is a quest for victory over the internal enemy, the mental afflictions.” Renunciation is the relinquishing of desire, aversion, and ignorance of the way life really is.

The Four Noble Truths

Suffering Exists, Has a Cause, an End, and a Path to its End

The Buddha summarized his message in the Four Noble Truths (Catvāri Ārya Satyāni): 1) suffering is inherent in life (duḥkha), 2) suffering has a cause (samudaya), 3) all suffering can end (nirodha), and 4) there is a path to end all suffering (marga).

The Problem: Suffering

Everyone wants to be happy, but few find it. Instead, most suffer (duḥkha). Astonishingly, the Buddha defines suffering not just as unhappiness, but *the general unsatisfactory quality of life* because it can never provide eternal peace and bliss. Even when you are actually happy, the Buddha says, you are *still* in suffering, because that happiness will eventually fade. Only when

you are *permanently happy* can you truly have ended all suffering. Recognizing that *suffering is intrinsic to life* is the first noble truth. The Buddha saw three types of suffering: 1) ordinary suffering - the suffering inherent in basic experiences of life, those of birth, old age, sickness and death, 2) the suffering of change - where you find yourself happy for a while but then the circumstances change and you lose what brought you happiness, and 3) all-pervasive suffering - the subtle suffering of constantly seeking but never finding permanent happiness in this world.

Samsāra

Life in this world, and in others, is inescapably experienced as suffering and can continue for infinite lifetimes. You are not truly free, but “conditioned” (samskṛita dharma) or compelled by other forces, cosmic laws of which you are not even aware. Not knowing these realities and how to attain freedom, *you wander aimlessly* in perpetual suffering or samsāra.

Impermanence

Nothing - no object, person, or experience - in this world can ever give you permanent happiness because everything is subject to the law of impermanence (anitya), change and decay. Whatever you think you need to be truly happy – family, work, lovers, money – will be gone someday.

Karma

Every action you take, good or bad, leads to a result based on the quality of the action and your motivation. Negative actions bring painful results. Positive actions bring happiness, but it is always only temporary. Not understanding the principle of karma (lit. action) is especially dangerous, because strong negative actions can lead to intense and prolonged suffering.

Dependent Origination

Dependent Origination (pratītya saṃutpāda) is the universal law that propels you forward into endless lifetimes of suffering. It is a continuous causal chain of events, driven by your desires, aversions, and ignorance, that results in a perpetual cycle of birth, old age and death, and prevents you from dwelling permanently in peace and bliss: 1) ignorance (avidyā), of the true nature of reality, 2) actions (saṃskāra), that result in karmic imprints, 3) consciousness (vijñāna), the faculties of your mind, 4) name and form (nāma rūpa), your mind tied to a body, 5) the six sense organs (ṣaḍ āyatana), which produce sensations and perceptions, 6) contact (sparśa), the meeting of senses, objects, and consciousness, 7) sensation (vedanā), the emotional and mental registering of objects in your mind, 8) craving (tṛiṣṇā), the arising of desires, 9) grasping (upādāna), your attempts to possess things to attain happiness, 10) becoming (bhava), the ripening of the fruit of your desires and graspings that lead you perpetually into worldly existence, 11) birth (jāti), of yourself into the world, and 12) old age and death (jarā maraṇa), and the suffering they inevitably bring.

The Cause: Desire

Misperceiving yourself as independent and eternal, you want things that will make you happy, and avoid things that will make you unhappy. Desire (kāma), also called craving (tṛiṣṇā), leads to compulsive activity or grasping (upādāna) - trying to possess objects, people and experiences that you think will make you happy. Your insatiable craving for sensual pleasures sometimes brings you temporary happiness, but it never lasts. Even as you search for happiness, you are continuously distracted by your own senses as they pull you towards objects you crave urgently. You are like a rider who cannot control your own horse, yet you are not even aware of your senses' sway over you. Through unconscious habitual patterns (vāsanā), you react to things impulsively, based on the habits of your past thoughts and emotions. Your own inner impulses constantly sabotage you. The Three "Poisons" or obscurations (kleśas) are: 1) desire (kāma), 2) aversion (dveṣa), including anger, hatred, fear, or dislike, and 3) ignorance (avidyā), the false belief in a self, confusion, mental churning, and lack of knowledge of the Dharma. You want to be free, but you can't. You want to be happy, but you can't. *Nothing you try works.*

No Self

The deepest cause of your suffering is because you do not exist the way you think you do. All suffering ultimately derives from clinging to an unreal, independent "I" that you try to protect and on which you lavish attention. There is no self (anātman). What you think of as a permanent "I" is merely composed of Five Aggregates (Pañca Skandha), functions of your body and mind, which stay together only due to karmic conditioning. By misconceiving these separate activities as a single, existing unit that does not truly exist, you create a false "I" that leads to suffering:

1. Form (Rūpa): Your physical body, which is composed of the Four Elements: 1) earth, 2) water, 3) fire, and 4) wind. All physical objects are also mere compositions of these elements.
2. Sensation (Vedanā): Subtle sense impressions within your mind, which registers all sense experiences as either pleasant, painful, or neutral - neither pleasant nor painful. It also includes the emotions that arise from these sensations: 1) sorrow, 2) joy, 3) pleasure, 4) pain, and 5) indifference.
3. Perception (Samjñā): Both the act of perceiving objects through the senses, and the conceptual mental activity of making basic mental determinations or "signs" (nimitta) of what an object is. For example, you see a person in the distance, and it registers in your mind with a concept - "a beautiful woman." These perceptions can be wholesome, unwholesome, or neutral based on how they affect the quality of your awareness.
4. Mental Formations (Saṃskāra): Mental actions comprising such functions as intentions, interests, desires, aversions, delusions, choices, habitual tendencies, pride, envy, worry, and the powers of mindfulness and concentration. These can be wholesome, unwholesome, or neutral depending upon how they affect your mind.
5. Consciousness (Vijñāna – lit. Divided Consciousness): The faculty of awareness that: 1) knows the world through the Six Senses: eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind (which perceives imagined objects), 2) analyzes experiences, and 3) makes judgements like good or bad. Consciousness has the capacity to be aware not only of this physical world but subtler planes of existence as well.

The Solution: The End of Suffering in Permanent Peace and Bliss

Nirodha is the cessation of suffering. It leads to nirvāṇa (lit. blown out), an endless state of peace and bliss. You are completely free of the fever of desire, aversion, the ignorance of an illusory self, the Five Aggregates, and karma. It is absolute release, purity, stability, truth, freedom from cyclic existence, unconditioned and without attachment. It is awesome and inconceivable. Attaining it, you never experience the suffering of birth, old age or death again.

The Method: The Path

Once you recognize suffering as a pervasive part of life, you see that it has a cause, and that it is possible to be without suffering, the path (marga) to liberation is through cultivating wisdom, ethical conduct, and meditative stability. On a very deep level, you realize the true nature of yourself as composed of the Five Aggregates, and that these are impermanent and continually subject to karmic conditioning through the cycle of Dependent Origination. You extinguish desire, release your clinging to a self that never really existed, and you are free.

Path

“When a monk gives attention to stilling the thoughts, the mind becomes internally steadied, composed, unified, and concentrated.”

- The Buddha, *The Relaxation of Thoughts Sūtra*

Lay and Monastic Paths

Traditionally, the majority of Buddhist adherents are lay people, who offer devotion and financial support to the community of monks and nuns, and continue to pursue worldly pleasures responsibly. The monastics, renouncing all worldly desires, give up their possessions, take robes, take 200-300 vows depending upon the ways of their particular ordination lineage, and live a life of practice and contemplation. Originally only monastics were instructed in the Noble Eightfold Path. Today, lay followers develop in the Buddha’s quieting the mind practices of Tranquility Meditation, and Insight Meditation is taught exclusively to monks.

Levels of Attainment

Buddhism is a graded path to liberation. Once you understand the Dharma, take the vows, and practice, you are called a noble disciple (ārya śrāvaka is male, and ārya śrāvakā is female). Four levels in the Common Vehicle are marked, based on the degree to which you overcome the Ten Fetters (Saṃyojana), inner obstacles that prevent you from progress. The five lower fetters are: 1) false views, especially about a self, 2) doubt, 3) heretical practices, relying for liberation on rituals that cannot bring liberation, 4) desire, and 5) aversion. The five higher fetters are: 1) desire for the Realm of Form, 2) desire for the Realm of Formlessness, 3) agitation, such as guilt

and worry, 4) the conceit “I am,” and 5) ignorance of the Four Noble Truths. Once you attain the first of these four levels, you are called a noble one (ārya pudgala/ārya pudgalā):

1. Stream Enterer

As a stream enterer (srota āpanna/srota āpannā), you have attained Right View, and released the first three and most crucial lower fetters of false views, doubt, and heretical practices. You are certain to attain liberation within seven lifetimes.

2. Once-Returner

Attaining the level of a once-returner (sakṛidāgāmin/sakṛidāgāminī), you are successful in cultivating wisdom, ethical behavior, and meditative concentration, and have weakened the last two lower fetters of desire and aversion. You will attain liberation in your next lifetime.

3. Non-Returner

In becoming a non-returner (anāgāmin/anāgāminī), you have released the last two lower fetters of desire and aversion. You are permanently liberated from the Realm of Desire. After death you are reborn into a pure realm where you will attain liberation swiftly.

4. Liberated One

As a liberated one (arhat/arhatī), or “worthy one,” you have attained permanent peace and bliss. You have released all five higher fetters: 1) desire for the Realm of Form, 2) desire for the Realm of Formlessness, 3) agitation, 4) the conceit “I am,” and 5) ignorance of the Four Noble Truths. Though you have achieved essentially the same realization as a buddha, you do not have the same worldly mission as a buddha and live the remainder of your life in seclusion.

Benefits

As your understanding of the Dharma deepens, your mind becomes clearer. You know that you are on the right path in your life. You are confident, but quietly so. Through behaving ethically, your mind is not troubled by guilt. By developing peace and bliss in meditation, people and things that once troubled you become untroubling. Physical health, mental clarity, pleasure, wealth, beauty, long life and joyful relationships naturally come your way. For lay followers, the Buddha promised welfare and happiness in this life and in future lives. And yet, he maintained, none of this will result in *permanent* happiness. To attain the supreme goal of the Buddhist path, you must set your intention on liberation through renunciation of all worldly ties.

Common Problems

All spiritual paths have risks. One risk of the Buddhist path is that you may be drawn to the power of the teachings and adopt an intellectual approach that sacrifices ethical behavior and meditation. Similarly, practicing virtue without wisdom leads to temporary rebirth in higher realms that are enjoyable but still permeated by suffering. Another risk is to focus too much on meditation before you have a good understanding of the path. You might become so enamored of blissful meditative states that you do not attain your final goal. Mindfulness can degenerate into self-absorption, and nonattachment can become uncaring. And you can develop a sense of personal achievement so that your ego-pride is actually strengthened rather than diminished.

Techniques

“We learn to live in the present moment, the only place one can truly live.

Each breath is a living reality within the boundless here-now.

To be aware of the breath is to live, ready to participate fully in whatever comes next.”

– Thai master Buddhādāsa Bhikkhu

The Buddha taught an integrated system of practices called the Noble Eightfold Path (Ārya Aṣṭāṅga Marga). Taking vows (śīla) and performing practices of devotion (śraddhā), also taught by the Buddha, provide the foundation.

Vows

Two sets of vows (śīla) mark your entrance into the path, the Refuge Vow (Tri Śaraṇa– lit. Triple Refuge) and Lay Precepts (Pañca Śīla – lit. Five Precepts). The vows of the Common Vehicle are called the vows of Individual Liberation (Prātimokṣa), in which you take either lay or monastic vows.

The Refuge Vow is essence of the path to liberation. It is your own vow to seek protection from suffering in the Buddha (the teacher), Dharma (the teachings), and Saṅgha (the community of practitioners). Once you take the Refuge Vow, your life takes on new direction and meaning: you have the best example of human success, the best of all teachings, and the best support on your path. The refuge ceremony is a living vow that focuses your awareness every day. It is the day you become more safe in an unsafe world.

The Lay Precepts are basic guides for ethical activity that keep you from falling deeper in suffering and bring wealth and happiness. They bring peace of mind and purification, and you come to treasure them in your heart. You vow to avoid:

1. Taking Life: Do not kill other people, and avoid killing animals, even for food. However, it is acceptable to purchase or receive as gifts meat killed by others. Taking life leads to lower rebirth in a hell realm. The positive aspect of this precept is cultivating love and compassion.

2. Taking What is not Given: Stealing from others due to craving leads to poverty and rebirth in lower realms. The positive aspect of this precept is developing generosity.
3. Sexual Misconduct: Sexual misconduct includes having sex with: 1) children who are under the protection of their parents, 2) those who have taken monastic vows, 3) those who are married to others, 4) those protected by law, such as the concubines of a king, and 5) those who are someone else's lover. Sexual misconduct leads to lower rebirth in a hell realm. The Buddha's rules for sexual misconduct allow for great freedom of sexual expression for lay people; of course, all sex must be consensual and nonviolent. The positive aspect of this precept is cultivating inner contentment that releases you from craving for sensual pleasures.
4. False Speech: Lying harms yourself and others and leads to lower rebirth in a hell realm. The positive aspect of this precept is cultivating truthful speech.
5. Alcohol: Alcohol and other intoxicants reduce the clarity of your mind. While taking intoxicants does not itself lead to lower rebirth, it can lead you to do and say things that result in bad karma. As for actual practice, many of the earliest statues of Buddhist art are of women carrying huge jars of alcohol - so this rule was not usually taken very seriously. Intoxicants are an integral part of Indian culture, and Buddhism honors sensual pleasures for lay people, so many followed a "middle way" and allowed for it on special occasions such as festivals. The positive aspect of this precept is cultivating clarity of awareness.

Devotion

Buddhism is highly devotional. The Buddha taught that through intense devotion (*śraddhā*) alone, you can reach the first two levels of attainment. Devotion consists of: 1) veneration of the buddhas, 2) worship of gods and nature spirits, 3) observance day practices, 4) celebrating holy days, 5) pilgrimage, and 6) sacred sex rituals.

Veneration of the Buddhas

In the Common Vehicle, the purpose of devotion to the Buddha is not, as in most religions, to pray for help, because buddhas are permanently beyond this world. A buddha, whether living or dead, does not have the power to liberate you, but their teachings and example guide you to liberate yourself. Devotion focuses your awareness, and helps to attain deeper levels of commitment to the path. The Buddha taught devotion to himself through the initiating ritual of the Refuge Vow, and the Pali texts mention the names of twenty-eight other buddhas who are also venerated. Devotion to buddhas such as the future Buddha Maitreya, the Buddha's mother Queen Māyā, and Gotamī, the first female liberated one, proved very popular.

Worship of Gods and Nature Spirits

Buddhism is built upon the world view of the Vedas. Early Buddhism was strongly influenced by the Vedic religion's affirmation of life and its worship of gods (*devas*) and nature spirits (*yakṣas*). The Buddha said, "The noble disciple makes offerings to the *devas*. This is a case of wealth gone to good use." Since the lay culture of early Buddhism was focused on achieving

worldly happiness in this life and the next, worshipping nature spirits was a timeless way to maintain harmony with the rhythms of life, and gain abundance and happiness. The Vedic gods continue to be honored enthusiastically for their role in upholding the flow of life, the Dharma. While Buddhism is ultimately classed as a non-Vedic religion because of its rejection of the idea of a soul and its non-theistic orientation, the influence of the Vedic view of life is strong and pervasive.



clear translation), which usually falls on the Full Moon of the fifth or sixth lunar month (April or May).

In the Common Vehicle, Mother Earth is the warm, grounded force that protects the Dharma. The 20th Century Thai master Buddhādāsa Bhikkhu eloquently writes, “The most appropriate housing for Dharma practice is that closest to nature, close enough to be called ‘in camaraderie with nature.’ By developing a lifestyle that is intimate with nature, we are making it convenient for nature to speak to us. If we are intelligent listeners, we will hear nature’s voice more clearly than if we were far away. *Intimacy with nature can become the essence of our mode of living.*”

Observance Days

Upavastha (lit. dwelling near): On the four lunar days of the month (Full Moon, New Moon, and the two Half Moons), you take additional vows similar to a novice monk, and spend the day in quiet Dharma study and meditation. These days develop devotion, wisdom and discipline.

Holy Days

The Buddha’s birthday, enlightenment, and death are all celebrated on the holy day (pūjā) called Vaiśākha (a word with no

Pilgrimage

Pilgrimage (yatra) includes visiting the sacred sites that mark the major events the Buddha's life, such as Lumbinī (birth), Bodhgaya (enlightenment), Vārānasi (first discourse), and Kuśinagara (death), and to places that house holy relics of his body.

Sacred Sex Rituals

The Buddha encouraged lay people to enjoy sexual pleasures ethically. Unlike other religious leaders of the Axial Age, he never condemned having many lovers or spouses, orgies, prostitution, homosexuality, sex with animals, or concubines. And sexual rituals, usually considered only part of later Tantric Buddhism, were a part of lay Buddhist practice from the very beginning. Many historians have pointed out that sexual rituals were always an element of the Buddhist path because so much of Indian culture, as well as most cultures in the ancient world, was highly orgiastic. Herbert Guenther, author of *The Tantric View of Life*, writes that "Orgies have been a part of life in India since earliest times and are not a particular feature of Tantrism." The earliest Buddhist art, such as at the sacred sites of Sāñcī and Bhārhut (c. 200 BCE), is joyously orgiastic, and the art historian Garima Kaushik has written that the earliest Buddhist religious sites were actually centers for orgiastic rituals, full of "revelry" and "debauchery." The oldest known Buddhist statues are not of ascetic buddhas but sensuous female wine bearers (kumbha dāsīs), which *The Kāma Sūtra* identifies as a class of prostitute. This matches the *world enjoying* message the Buddha gave his lay followers, rather than the *world renouncing* message he gave his monks.

Two streams of sexual practice influenced early Indian culture. The first stream is a secular stream of teachings on love such as *The Kāma Sūtra*, in which sexual pleasure is enjoyed as an art form without a spiritual goal. The second is the Tantric stream, in which practitioners seek to transform themselves into gods through sexual yoga. Early Buddhist lay culture was strongly influenced by the first stream, and elevated it to a sacred act of devotion to the Buddha that brought merit. Mahāyāna Buddhism was eventually radically transformed by the Tantric stream.

The Buddha on Sexual Misconduct

The Buddha's advice on sex is basically what any wise parent would say to a child, namely, don't do it with anyone who is going to get you into trouble. He guided his followers prudently, explaining, "Abandoning sexual misconduct, do not get sexually involved with those who are protected by their mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, relatives, or their Dharma; those with spouses, those with whom there are punishments against the law, or even those crowned with flowers beloved of another."

– The Buddha, *The Discourse to Cunda the Silversmith*

The Noble Eightfold Path

The Buddha established a broad system of practice called the Noble Eightfold Path (Ārya Aṣṭāṅga Marga). It allows you to rise above the frantic drives of worldly existence. It is also a joyful path, and uses meditative bliss to attain the highest bliss. Diligently pursued, you can achieve liberation in a single lifetime. It comprises the three fields of wisdom (prajñā), conduct (śīla), and meditation (samādhi), and each one of these three relies on the other for success.

Right View

Through Right View (Samyag Dṛiṣṭi), you develop an understanding of the Four Noble Truths. You begin with a conceptual understanding by studying and reflecting on the sūtras, avoiding wrong views, and end with Insight Meditation (Vipaśyanā) by “making the breakthrough” - directly perceiving and realizing the Four Noble Truths. From deep reflection on the immutable laws of existence (Dharma), you skillfully use the power of your own thoughts to stop participating in all activities that contribute to suffering. The last step in this process is to reflect on the Three Stains (Āsavas), the final root causes of suffering: 1) desire for sensual pleasure, 2) desire for existence, and 3) ignorance of the Four Noble Truths. Understanding the Three Stains ends suffering.

Right Intention

You hold the Right Intention (Samyak Saṃkalpa) to understand the Dharma, behave morally, be generous to others, enjoy life, and ultimately attain liberation.

Right Speech

Right Speech (Samyag Vācā) means using language that is truthful, gentle, loving, and helpful to yourself and others. You avoid words that are untruthful, malicious, abusive, idle, or gossip.

Right Action

You do not act in ways that bring harm to yourself or others. Avoiding taking life, stealing, sexual misconduct, false speech, and intoxicants constitutes Right Action (Samyak Karmānta).

Right Livelihood

You choose work that helps others through Right Livelihood (Samyag Ājīva), and live in health and financial balance. You avoid work that harms, including trading in weapons, slaves, meat, intoxicants, and poisons.

Right Effort

You strive persistently in Right Effort (Samyag Vyāyāma) to avoid harmful thoughts, words or actions, and cultivate wholesome ones. You seek constantly to let go of desire and aversion, develop mindfulness and meditative absorption, and directly perceive the nature of suffering.

Right Mindfulness

You maintain continuous awareness through Right Mindfulness (Samyak Smṛiti) of all that you do, say, and think. You remain fully present in each moment instead of dwelling distractedly on past and future events, acting with thoughtful, careful attention. You keep continuous awareness of suffering, impermanence, and no self. Mindfulness brings you conscious control over your senses, from which you release your sensual cravings. You let go of the emotional urges and false ideas that you need anything at all *to make you happy*, and live in a state of nonattachment (aprāpti). With equanimity, you avoid the Eight Worldly Concerns (Aṣṭa Loka Dharma) that keep people from ever actually attaining lasting happiness: 1) gain, 2) loss, 3) fame, 4) disrepute, 5) pleasure, 6) pain, 7) praise, and 8) blame.

Right Concentration

You cultivate states of meditative absorption in Right Concentration (Samyak Samādhi) that purify your emotions and mind through increasingly subtle and profound experiences of peace and bliss. Also called Tranquility Meditation (Śamathā), you begin by resting your mind in single-pointed focus on an object and attain a blissful nondual state of awareness. Tranquility Meditation includes the practice of the Four Immeasurables (Brahma Vihāra), in which you attain deep meditative absorptions on the qualities of: 1) love (maitrī), 2) compassion (karuṇa), 3) joy (mudita), and 4) equanimity (upekṣa). Another practice is the Eight Attainments (Samāpattis), consisting of the Four Form Absorptions (Rūpa Dhyānas) and the Four Formless Absorptions (Arūpa Dhyānas). These meditations lead you into progressive states of blissful awareness that temporarily lift your consciousness into higher dimensions. You pass through the Three Worlds: the present Realm of Desire (Kāmadhātu), the higher Realm of Form (Rūpadhātu), and the highest Realm of Formlessness (Arūpadhātu) – and you discover that *permanent peace and bliss cannot be found in any of them*. Furthermore, these meditative states only *suppress* dualistic thoughts, they do not *eliminate* them. By establishing yourself in profound peace and creating mental flexibility and openness, you prepare your mind for Insight Meditation, which ultimately brings liberation. The Buddha also taught a combined practice of Tranquility Meditation and Insight Meditation called Breathing Meditation (Ānāpāna Smṛiti), through which he himself attained inner awakening.

Results

“I am one who has transcended all, a knower of all, unstained among all things, renouncing all, by craving’s ceasing freed. I alone am a Perfectly Enlightened One whose fires have been extinguished.”

- The Buddha, *The Noble Search Sūtra*

An Awakened One

Śākyamuni called himself the “Buddha” or Awakened One. A buddha is a person who has attained permanent peace and bliss. You have realized the Four Noble Truths, and are free from desire, aversion, and ignorance. While alive, your Five Aggregates still function together, but are released at death so that it is impossible to be reborn into any kind of world. You have entirely renounced worldly life. You experience no lust, and are incapable of becoming sexually aroused or having sex. You no longer attach to a permanent self that never truly existed. You are someone who “knows and sees reality as it is.” All your emotional and mental obscurations are “blown out,” gone. The state of a liberated one is incomprehensible. You are omniscient, radiant and majestic, perfect in knowledge and conduct, loving and compassionate, sorrowless, and utterly unsurpassed. A buddha possesses all excellent qualities.

The Buddha also called himself the Tathāgata, literally meaning the “Thus Gone One,” one who has passed over into the permanent peace of nirvāṇa. A buddha is no longer human, transcending even the gods. He mentions his miraculous abilities to “travel through the sky like a bird,” “touch and stroke with my hand the Moon and Sun,” and know the thoughts and feelings of others. A buddha’s greatest ability of all is to perceive directly the Four Noble Truths.

Vows

The Refuge Vow - Tri Śaraṇa

Taking the Refuge Vow (Tri Śaraṇa) means you seek refuge from suffering in the Three Jewels (Tri Ratna): the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Saṅgha. The vow guides you to peace and prosperity. You make an inner commitment to venerate images of the Buddha, treat the words of the Buddha with respect, and honor members of the Buddhist community.

Suggested Items

Pratimā - A statue or image of the Buddha, representing the teacher.

Sūtra – A text of the Buddha’s discourses, representing the teachings.

Stūpa – An image of a memorial burial marker, representing the community of practitioners.

The Refuge Vow

To take the Refuge Vow (usually done before a monk or nun, but you can do it on your own), kneel with your right leg up and left leg down, hands held in prayer, and recite the following in Sanskrit and in English:

My name is (say your name).

buddham śaraṇam gacchāmi
dharmam śaraṇam gacchāmi
saṅgham śaraṇam gacchāmi

“I go for refuge to the Buddha.”
“I go for refuge to the Dharma.”
“I go for refuge to the Saṅgha.”

Recite 3x.

Touch your forehead with a statue or image of the Buddha, a sūtra text, and a small stūpa, to venerate the Three Jewels of the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Saṅgha.



Congratulations! You are now a Buddhist. Your hair is then shaved off. Traditionally, all of your hair is shaved as a gesture of your transformation into a new and higher phase of your life, but in the modern world most people just cut a few strands. You also receive a Refuge name, which your teacher gives you or you can give yourself. See the Appendix for a list of Buddhist names. A good practice is to recite the Refuge Vow each day, preferably in the morning.

The Lay Precepts - Pañca Śīla

The Lay Precepts (Pañca Śīla) are taken to protect you from lower rebirth, and are the vows of all lay practitioners. It is helpful to recite them each day, or whenever you sit for practice. Take the Lay Precepts by kneeling in prayer and reciting them, in Sanskrit and in English:

māraṇāṅ caurikāṅ cāpi parapatnīm mṛiṣāvacaḥ
tyajāmi sarpavat sarvaṃ pañcamam madyam eva ca

“Killing, stealing, the spouse of another, and false speech,
I will avoid them like snakes, and the fifth, intoxicants, as well.”

Recite 3x.



The Fast Day Precepts – Poṣadha Gāthā

On the four days of the lunar month, spend as much of the day as possible in your sacred space, or in a Buddhist temple or monastery, to read the Buddha’s sūtras and practice meditation. It is recommended to take three additional vows for the day, known as the Fast Day Precepts (Poṣadha Gāthā – lit. Verse of the Observance). Alternatively, and more popularly, you may attend parties and festivals and practice devotional sacred sex rituals. To take the vows, kneel and recite the following, in Sanskrit and in English:

*vikāle 'pi bhojanam
nṛitya gīta vibhūṣāñ ca vajrayiṣyāmi sotsavān
ucchaiḥśayyāṃ mahāsayyāṃ*

1. “I will not eat untimely.” Eat once, after sunrise and before noon.
2. “I will abandon joyous dancing, singing, and dressing up.”
3. “I will not use a high or large bed.”

Recite 3x.



Conduct - Śīla

Follow the ethical guidelines of the Dharma each day:

1. Right Speech (Samyag Vācā): Speak with kindness and truthfulness, avoid harsh or idle words.
2. Right Action (Samyak Karmānta): Do not kill, steal, or engage in sexual misconduct.
3. Right Livelihood (Samyag Ājīva): Perform work that helps you and others and does not harm.

Holy Days - Pūjā

Honor the Buddha’s birthday, enlightenment, and death on Vaiśākha. You are encouraged to eat only vegetarian food, observe all eight Fast Day Precepts, be generous to others, venerate the Buddha, study Dharma and spend time in meditation. You can also be spend them in heavy celebrations and drunken revelry.

Pilgrimage – Yatra

Visit the sacred sites of the Buddha’s life in India and Nepal. Reverently and with folded hands, circumambulate these sites, reflecting on the timeless power of the Dharma. Alternatively, visit these places in your mind by reading the Buddha’s life story or gazing at images of these sites.

Exercises

For those who are new to Buddhism, practicing the following exercises each day for at least a month will establish in you a strong foundation for positive living and inner peace, and prepare you for higher Tantric practices. 20 to 60 minutes each day is ideal.

Devotion - Śraddhā

Supporting your path with devotional practices to start your meditation session greatly intensifies its power.

Creating a Sacred Space – Bodhi Maṇḍa

Create a sacred space for meditation and rituals. You can decorate your room with:
Buddhist images (pratimā) – Such as photos of statues and ritual sites.

The Eight Auspicious Symbols (Aṣṭa Maṅgala) of an enlightened ruler: 1) the conch shell (śaṅkha), the call to awakening, 2) the endless knot (śrī vatsa), wisdom, 3) the pair of goldfish (matsya), fertility, 4) the lotus (padma), purity, 5) the parasol (catra), royal protection, 6) the treasure vase (kumbha), abundance, 7) the wheel (cakra), the law of the Dharma, and 8) the victory banner (dhvaja), enlightenment.

Set up a shrine or altar (vedi):

Buddha image (pratimā) - In the center. A statue or illustration of the Buddha.

Dharma text (sūtra) – The liberating power of the Buddha’s words.

Images of the four great moments of the Buddha’s life (pratimā): 1) a footprint (pāda), his birth, 2) a bodhi leaf (bodhi), his awakening, 3) a wheel of Dharma (cakra), his teaching, and 4) a memorial burial marker (stūpa), his death.

Oil lamp (dīpa) - The lamp is the light of the Dharma.

Incense burner (dāhaka) - Incense is the smell of good moral conduct. Sandalwood, gum guggul, or storax are common incense.

Flower vase (puṣpa) - Flowers represent impermanence. White carnations show inner purity.

Deity image (pratimā) - A worldly deity such as the earth goddess Pṛithivī (aka Bhu Devī). She was the Buddha’s first witness to his enlightenment, and gives generously to all.

Each time you enter your sacred space for practice, offer a reverent bow with your hands in Añjali Mudrā to your Buddha image. With your hands together reverently, touch your head, throat, and heart center, representing your devotion through your body, speech and mind.

Honoring the Deities of Nature

Honor and praise the deities of nature. Pay homage to their place in the divine order, and pledge to work cooperatively with them.

1. Invoke the gods and goddesses who preside over the natural world: “I invoke the divine couples Indra and Indrāṇī, king and queen of the gods, Dyaus and Pṛithivī, god and goddess of sky and earth, Varuṇa and Varuṇī, god and goddess of water, Agni and Svāhā, god and goddess of fire, and Vāyu and Vāyavyī, god and goddess of wind. I ask you to be present with me.”
2. Recite poems from *The R̥ig Veda*, sing your own songs, or honor them quietly in your way.
3. Ask the gods for their assistance in creating what you desire.
4. Thank the gods for their help, and dismiss them: “I thank you for your assistance. You are dismissed.”

Benefits: Wins the friendship of the gods, who assist you in attaining worldly pleasures and defeating outer obstacles to inner awakening.

Time: 5 minutes.

Devotional Ritual

1. Recite the opening verse of respect to the Buddha, in Sanskrit and in English:

nāmo tasya bhagavāto arhato sama sambuddhāya

“Homage to the blessed one, the arhat, the complete and perfect buddha.”



2. Recite the Refuge Vow.

buddham śaraṇam gacchāmi

dharmam śaraṇam gacchāmi

saṅgham śaraṇam gacchāmi

“I go for refuge to the Buddha.”

“I go for refuge to the Dharma.”

“I go for refuge to the Saṅgha.”

Recite 3x.



3. Recite the Lay Precepts.

*māraṇāñ caurikāñ cāpi parapatnīm mṛiṣāvacaḥ
tyajāmi sarpavat sarvaṃ pañcamaṃ madyaṃ eva ca*

“Killing, stealing, the spouse of another, and false speech,
I will avoid them like snakes, and the fifth, intoxicants, as well.”

Recite 3x.



4. Reflect on the good qualities of each of the Six Remembrances (Saḍ Anusmṛiti): 1) the Buddha, 2) the Dharma, 3) the Saṅgha, 4) moral discipline, 5) generosity, and 6) the deities. For the last, reflect on the deities of the heavenly realms, and the virtues they performed to get there.
5. Meditate, practicing Tranquility Meditation, Insight Meditation, or both.
6. With contentment and joy, close your session by reciting a few verses of the Buddha’s teachings, such as these words:

“Happy indeed are the liberated ones! No craving can be found in them.
Cut off is the conceit ‘I am.’ Delusion’s net is destroyed.”

Benefits: Develops devotion, which supports practice that leads to inner awakening.

Time: 20 to 60 minutes.

Wisdom - Prajñā

Wisdom refers to Right View (Samyag Dṛiṣṭi) and Right Intention (Samyak Saṃkalpa). It encompasses the intention to become a buddha, textual study, and the direct perception of reality. Set aside some time each week for study and deep reflection on the Buddha’s teachings.

Right View – Samyag Dṛiṣṭi

Cultivate an understanding of the Buddha’s teachings through reading, and reflect on how you can integrate them into your daily life. Over time, develop the ability to directly perceive the liberating truth.

Benefits: You gain merit, the quality of your life improves, and you avoid the traps of suffering.

Time: 1 hour a week; continuously.

Right Intention – Samyak Saṃkalpa

As you cultivate Right View, set a strong intention to understand the Dharma, behave morally, practice meditation, enjoy worldly pleasures responsibly, and ultimately attain liberation.

Benefits: Your intention to attain liberation becomes strong, and you create the conditions for your enlightenment.

Time: 1 hour a week; continuously.

Meditation – Samādhi

Develop inner peace through Tranquility Meditation and Insight Meditation. Right Effort (Samyag Vyāyāma), Right Mindfulness (Samyak Smṛiti) and Right Concentration (Samyak Samādhi) concern meditation. These practices are often best done at first in short time periods, and you can extend the time as you become more advanced.

Sitting Posture for Meditation

Sit in a comfortable meditative posture on a cushion:

1. Your legs are in the Meditation Pose (Dhyāna Āsana, also called Lotus Pose or Padma Āsana), with your feet resting on your thighs, or the Half-Lotus Pose (Ardha Padma Āsana), one foot resting on one thigh, or cross-legged. Your hands are in the Gesture of Meditation (Dhyāna Mudrā) either just below the navel or in your lap, left hand under the right hand, the ends of the thumbs slightly touching, and elbows slightly sticking out.
2. Your eyes are half open.
3. Your eyes gaze softly at the tip of your nose.
4. Your back and neck are straight.
5. Your shoulders are straight, nose in line with your navel.
6. Your lips are gently closed.
7. Your tongue rests gently against the roof of your mouth.

As you hold the posture, let your body be relaxed. Focus your awareness on the point where the breath enters and leaves your body between the nostrils and upper lip. Breathing is relaxed, natural, silent, steady, and even.



Tranquility Meditation – Śamathā

Develop profound inner peace through the various practices of Tranquility Meditation:

The Four Immeasurables – Brahma Vihāra

Sit and cultivate love, compassion, joy, and equanimity towards yourself and all beings. These qualities must be pure, without selfish motivation, and without emotional attachment to others. Focus first on the quality of love, becoming meditatively absorbed in it. Once you have successfully developed that quality over a period of days or weeks, move on to the next quality and do the same until you attain proficiency in each one of them. Then begin with love again and deepen your realization.

1. Reflect on the danger of hate and the value of love.
2. Generate love towards *yourself*. Say to yourself, “May I be happy and free from suffering.”
3. Reflect on a beloved teacher, saying, “May this good person be happy and free from suffering.” With love, become meditatively absorbed in them.
4. Reflect on a dearly beloved friend, saying, “May this good person be happy and free from suffering.” With love, become meditatively absorbed in them.
5. Reflect on a person you feel neutral toward, generating love for them as though they were a dear friend, saying, “May this good person be happy and free from suffering.” With love, become meditatively absorbed in them.
6. Reflect on a person you feel dislike toward, and generate neutral feelings toward them. Then seek to generate love for them, thinking, “This person, as my mother in the past, carried me in her womb, played with me in her lap, and nourished me. And this person as my father nourished me by bringing me back wealth thinking to feed his children.”
7. If you still cannot generate love toward someone you dislike, reflect on the benefits of love: 1) you sleep in comfort, 2) you wake in comfort, 3) you dream no bad dreams, 4) you are dear to human beings, 5) you dear to nonhuman beings, 6) deities guard you, 7) fire, poison and weapons cannot harm you, 8) your mind is easily concentrated, 9) your face is serene, 10) you die without confusion, and 11) you will be reborn into a higher realm.
8. If you still cannot generate love towards them, ask yourself what part of their Four Elements you are angry with: their earth element, water element, fire element, wind element? Which of their Six Senses are you angry with? Which of their Five Aggregates as you angry with? You discover there is no one to be angry with.
9. If you still have dislike toward that person, go to them and give them a gift.
10. Once you develop love toward the person you felt dislike toward, become meditatively absorbed in them.
11. Having attained a loving meditative absorption, move through the First to Fourth Absorptions (see the Four Formless Absorptions below for instructions).
12. Generate love pervading the entire world, equally to all. Think, “May all beings be free from enmity, affliction and anxiety, and live happily.”

Benefits: Develops inner peace and happiness in this life and future lifetimes.

Time: 20 to 60 minutes.

Mindfulness Meditation - Smṛiti: The Four Foundations of Mindfulness

This practice is performed with profound awareness and releasing of all sense of attachment to anything in this world. Practice mindfulness, both as a sitting meditation as well as continuously throughout your day. In each moment bring mindful, impartial awareness to your body, sensations, mind, and the Dharma. Let go of attachment and aversion as they arise.

Body - Kāya

1. Breathing: Breathe in and out, and observe your breath. Notice if it is long or short. Be aware of your entire body as you breathe, and how your breathing becomes progressively more peaceful.
2. The Four Postures: Be aware of your body as you: 1) walk, 2) stand, 3) sit, and 4) lie down.
3. Clear Comprehension: Maintain continuous, clear-minded awareness of each action you take.
4. Unattractiveness of the Body: Reflect on the inherent impurity of the body: 1) head hairs, 2) body hairs, 3) nails, 4) teeth, 5) skin, 6) flesh, 7) sinews, 8) bones, 9) bone marrow, 10) kidneys, 11) heart, 12) liver, 13) diaphragm, 14) spleen, 15) lungs, 16) intestines, 17) mesentery, 18) stomach, 19) feces, 20) bile, 21) phlegm, 22) pus, 23) blood, 24) sweat, 25) fat, 26) tears, 27) grease, 28) spittle, 29) snot, 30) oils of the joints, and 31) urine.
5. The Four Elements: Be aware of how your body is composed of the Four Elements: 1) earth, 2) water, 3) fire, and 4) wind. Your body is not a single entity, but a construction of elements.
6. The Nine Charnel Ground Contemplations: Reflect on your own body as it progressively becomes: 1) a corpse after three days, 2) a corpse devoured by animals, 3) a skeleton with flesh, blood, and sinews, 4) a skeleton with blood and sinews, 5) a skeleton with sinews, 6) a skeleton with bleached bones, 7) heaped up bones, 8) more than a year old, and 9) crumbled to dust. With each subject think, “My body will be like that some day.”

Sensations - Vedanā

Notice whether your physical sensations are pleasant, painful, or neither pleasant nor painful. They may be: 1) carnal - pleasant, painful, neither pleasant nor painful, or 2) spiritual - pleasant, painful, neither pleasant nor painful. As each sensation arises, think, “There is a sensation.” A carnal sensation is obscured by desire, aversion, or ignorance, while a spiritual sensation is clear.

Mind - Citta

Be aware of the changing qualities of your mind. Notice when it is: 1) with desire or without desire, 2) with aversion or without aversion, 3) with ignorance or without ignorance, 4) contracted or distracted, 5) exalted or unexalted, 6) unsurpassable or surpassable, 7) concentrated or unconcentrated, 8) liberated or unliberated. As each thought arises, think “There is mind.”

Liberating Wisdom – Dharma

1. Reflect on the Five Hindrances (Nivarāṇa): 1) desire, 2) aversion, 3) drowsiness, 4) agitation, and 5) doubt. Observing them as present or not present, think “There is or is not this quality in me.”
2. Reflect on the Five Aggregates: 1) form, 2) sensation, 3) perception, 4) mental formations, and 5) consciousness. Seeing the impermanence of each one, think “Such is form, (etc.), its arising and passing away.”
3. Reflect on the Six Senses: 1) eye, 2) ear, 3) nose, 4) tongue, 5) body, and 6) mind. Recognize each sense, what appears to them, whether the obscuration of desire that arises dependent upon them is or is not present, and understand how it is abandoned.
4. Reflect on the Seven Factors of Enlightenment (Sapta Bodhyāṅgāni): 1) mindfulness, 2) understanding the Dharma, 3) effort, 4) joy, 5) tranquility, 6) meditative absorption, and 7) equanimity. See them as present or not present within you. Tranquility means quieting the mind and emotions, while equanimity is a deeper state of awareness that attains the First Absorption.
5. Reflect on the Four Noble Truths. See how these are present for you in each moment.

Benefits: Leads to inner peace and nonattachment.

Time: 20 to 60 minutes; continuously throughout your day.

The Eight Attainments - Samāpattis

The Eight Attainments consist of levels of meditative concentration including the Four Form Absorptions and the Four Formless Absorptions. These are levels of bliss, luminosity, and spacious awareness that pervade your entire body, and are without disturbing mental thoughts. They are spontaneous realizations you become aware of as they arise. The three qualities of successful concentration are: 1) stability, possessing unwavering focus, 2) purity, without distracting emotional and mental obscurations arising, and 3) activeness, strongly present.

Once you attain the Fourth Absorption, you establish a very strong foundation to practice Insight Meditation and attain final awakening. You may also develop magical powers. As you attain each level, avoid any concepts of personal achievement. Reflect on how each one brings feelings peace and bliss, but also realize these levels cannot lead to permanent peace and bliss. You discover that nothing in all the Three Worlds of Desire, Form and Formlessness holds your interest, because they are all still planes of saṃsāra. Releasing your desire for them, you set your goal on nirvāṇa.

Access Concentration - Upacāra Samādhi

A state of awareness near the First Absorption is called an Access Concentration (Upacāra Samādhi). To attain the First Absorption you must temporarily suppress the Five Hindrances: 1) desire, 2) aversion, 3) drowsiness, 4) agitation, and 5) doubt. This is the main work of a beginning meditator.

1. With your focus on your breath, bring conscious awareness to your mind, and shift gently into meditative absorption. Allow your thoughts and emotions to rise and fall as they may, but do not pay attention to them. When disruptive thoughts and emotions arise, do not judge yourself – simply refocus your awareness. You are not trying to eliminate your thoughts, just notice them.
2. As you develop your concentration, your awareness becomes absorbed into your breath. Peace and bliss arise, and you cultivate those feelings by focusing on them. The Five Hindrances are suppressed, and the First Absorption spontaneously emerges.
3. When negative thoughts arise, you can: 1) focus on something wholesome, 2) examine the danger of those thoughts, 3) forget them, 4) still your thoughts, and if all else fails, 5) clench your teeth, place your tongue on the roof of your mouth and forcibly constrain your mind.

The Four Form Absorptions – Rūpa Dhyāna

1. First Absorption - Five factors are present in your awareness: 1) the object of meditation (grāhya), your breath, 2) strong, absorptive concentration on the object (samādhi), 3) excited happiness or rapture (pīti), 4) peaceful happiness or bliss (sukha), and 5) one-pointedness (eka gratā). You are without sense desires, as your awareness temporarily disconnects from the Desire World into the Form World, which consists of forms without desire. Filled with bliss, your physical body experiences no pain. Your thoughts are still present, and your awareness easily maintains one-pointed focus on your breath. Your mindfulness and concentration may be unstable, and equanimity may be weak.
2. Second Absorption – Releasing your attention on the object of meditation (your breath), three remaining factors are present: 1) rapture, 2) bliss, and 3) one-pointed awareness on the absorptive experience. You are free of thoughts, and your perception is “signless,” free of conceptual labels. Mindfulness and concentration are stable. Your awareness is released into a higher and more refined level of form. Equanimity is present.
3. Third Absorption - The two factors present are bliss and one-pointedness. Excited rapture falls away. Bliss is stronger. Mindfulness and concentration are strong. Equanimity is strong.
4. Fourth Absorption - The two factors present are equanimity and one-pointedness, and both are very strong. Bliss is released. Mindfulness and concentration are very strong and pure. Free of pain and pleasure, your mind and body are luminous and rest in deep stillness.

The Four Formless Absorptions – Arūpa Dhyāna

5. Base of Infinite Space (Ākāśānantya) – Meditating on infinite space, you perceive space but no longer perceive any forms or sensory experiences (sight, smell, etc.) within it. Temporarily released from both the Desire and Form worlds, you experience the Formless world. You gain even deeper equanimity and one-pointedness.
6. Base of Infinite Consciousness (Vijñānānantya) – No longer perceiving either form or space, you perceive only infinite awareness. You gain ever deeper equanimity and one-pointedness.
7. Base of Nothing Whatever (Akiñcanya) – Passing beyond consciousness, you perceive only absolute nothingness. You gain even deeper equanimity and one-pointedness.

8. Base of Neither Perception nor Nonperception (Naiva Saññānasanja) – From absolute nothingness, you release any sense of the act of perception, and yet a very subtle residual perception remains. You gain very deep states of equanimity and one-pointedness.

The Ninth Special Supramundane Attainment - Nirodha Samāpatti

9. The Cessation of Perception and Feeling (Nirodha Samāpatti) – This absorption is the total cessation of consciousness. It is the highest and most refined attainment, and purifies you deeply. It is only attainable by nonreturners and arhats, not ordinary practitioners. However, it is still only a temporary meditative attainment - it cannot on its own bring liberation.

Benefits: Develops profound inner peace that becomes the base for Insight Meditation.

Time: 20 to 60 minutes.

Insight Meditation - Vipāśyanā

Insight Meditation - Vipāśyanā

Reflect with deep inner focus on the laws of worldly existence. As you arrive at true understanding, abandon the underlying tendencies toward suffering within you.

1. Reflect on what is unwholesome and wholesome: the Three Poisons and the Lay Precepts.
2. Reflect on the sustaining factors of life: 1) food, 2) contact, 3) mental formations, and 4) consciousness. Understanding the sustaining factors of life ends suffering.
3. Reflect on the Four Noble Truths. Understanding the Four Noble Truths ends suffering.
4. Reflect on old age and death. Understanding old age and death ends suffering.
5. Reflect on birth. Understanding birth ends suffering.
6. Reflect on worldly existence. Understanding worldly existence ends suffering.
7. Reflect on attachment. Understanding attachment ends suffering.
8. Reflect on desire. Understanding desire ends suffering.
9. Reflect on sensation. Understanding sensation ends suffering.
10. Reflect on contact. Understanding contact ends suffering.
11. Reflect on the Six Senses. Understanding the Six Senses ends suffering.
12. Reflect on name and form. Understanding name and form ends suffering.
13. Reflect on consciousness. Understanding consciousness ends suffering.
14. Reflect on mental formations. Understanding mental formations ends suffering.
15. Reflect on ignorance. Understanding ignorance ends suffering.
16. Reflect on the Three Stains (Āsavas). These are the final root causes of suffering: 1) desire for sensual pleasure, 2) desire for existence, and 3) ignorance of the Four Noble Truths. Understanding the Three Stains ends suffering.
17. Deeply realizing these truths, you are liberated.

Benefits: Develops the wisdom that leads to liberation.

Time: 20 to 60 minutes.

The Union of Tranquility and Insight Meditation – Yuganaddha

Breathing Meditation - Ānāpāna Smṛiti

Breathing Meditation unites the meditative absorption of Tranquility Meditation with the penetrating power of Insight Meditation. The following steps are progressive: begin with the first four steps, taking your time with each one, and slowly shift into deeper and subtler levels of absorption. Add the other steps slowly over time, always beginning each session with the first steps and eventually making your way to the end. Perform each step while focusing deeply on your own breath as you naturally breathe in and out.

Body – Kāya

1. Contemplate the long breath. Take long, slow breaths, and notice how they affect your mind. Is it pleasant or unpleasant? Is it calming or exciting? Does it make you happy or unhappy?
2. Contemplate the short breath. Take short, quick breaths, and notice how they affect your mind. Is it pleasant or unpleasant? Is it calming or exciting? Does it make you happy or unhappy?
3. Experience the whole body. Observe your breath as it conditions your body. Recognize that your physical body is continually affected by your breath.
4. Calm the whole body. Focus one-pointedly on your breath to calm your breath, which calms your physical body and mind. Breathe long breaths to release any negative emotions and thoughts, and reach inner peace. See how your breath influences the qualities of your body and mind. Long breaths bring peace and happiness, short breaths excitation and discomfort.

Sensations - Vedanā

5. Experience rapture. Notice as sensations of excited happiness or rapture (prīti) arise and how they affect your mind.
6. Experience bliss. Notice as sensations of calming happiness or bliss (sukha) arise and how they affect your mind.
7. Experience the mental formations. Be aware of rapture as a coarse, stimulating and disturbing quality that disrupts your body, breath, and mind. Be aware of bliss as a subtle, calming and healing quality that pacifies your body, breath, and mind.
8. Calm the mental formations. Drive away your sensations of excited rapture through deepening meditative concentration, and cultivate your awareness of calming bliss. In this way, you gain conscious control over your sensations.

Mind - Citta

9. Experience the mind. Be aware of your mind in each moment in all its qualities. Take note if there is: 1) desire, 2) aversion, or 3) ignorance, which may arise as hope or fear, fixation or continuous mental churning on a subject that troubles you. Is your mind clear or unclear? Concentrated or not concentrated? Supreme or not supreme? Liberated or unliberated?
10. Bring joy to the mind. Cultivate supreme joy, delight, and contentment by reflecting on how happy you are that you found the Dharma and how it will bring you to the end of all suffering.
11. Concentrate the mind. Through meditative absorption, drive away unwanted thoughts and establish yourself in the three qualities of successful concentration: stability, purity, activeness.
12. Liberate the mind. Release all attachment to any material objects, wrong views, unliberating rituals, and all thoughts and sensations you use to define yourself through the illusions of “I” and “mine.” Release the Five Hindrances and the Three Poisons.

Liberating Wisdom - Dharma

13. Contemplate impermanence. Reflect on the impermanence of all conditioned phenomena. Reflect on suffering, and no self.
14. Contemplate dissolution. Having recognized the true qualities of worldly existence, allow all your attachments to dissolve. Allow your mind to be still, silent, and equipoised.
15. Contemplate cessation. Release completely your attachments, fears of birth, old age, and death. End all your emotional states of suffering. End your desire, aversion and ignorance to everything. End your idea that any of the Five Aggregates constitute a “self.” As cessation arises, nirvāṇa arises.
16. Contemplate freedom from attachment. With great equanimity, release all last remnants of “I” and “mine.” You are completely liberated.

Benefits: Leads to liberation.

Time: 20 to 60 minutes.

Couples Sacred Sex Ritual - Maithuna Vidhi

You can practice your own Buddhist sacred sex ritual following in the ways of the Common Vehicle. While the buddhas are beyond providing blessings and assistance, you can look to them for inspiration and develop your devotion. Focus on generating pure love without attachment between you and your lover.

Suggested Items

Sacred Space: An altar, a couple of pillows on the floor, some blankets, towels and tissues.
Gifts: Small gifts to give to each other, such as a jewel, a shell, or a flower.

Clothes: Wrap-around skirts for men and women, both topless, and some simple and elegant jewelry. For the woman, a slim waist belt can be very elegant and erotic. Gather together some flowers and make them into two wreaths for offering crowns.

Flower garlands: One aromatic garland for each of you.

Food: Fruit slices or other bite-size food, delicious and easily digestible, served in a small bowl.

Drink: Wine served in copper cups or coconut shells. Invoke the goddess of wine (Madhu Devī) to consecrate your drink before the ritual: “Goddess of wine, bless this drink so that it may bring us love and joy and inspire us on our path to liberation.”

Plates and Utensils: Large green leaves for plates, and use your fingers to eat.

Music: Indian music such as sitar and tabla, vīṇā (lute), or belly dance.

Personal Preparation

Clean your bodies, give each other massages, take a warm bath, don ritual clothing, and practice a few haṭha yoga poses.

The Ritual

1. Sit on your cushions facing each other, and bow to each other with Añjali Mudrā, the hand gesture of devotion.



2. Recite the opening verse of devotion to the Buddha.

nāmo tasya bhagavāto arhato sama sambuddhāya

“Homage to the blessed one, the arhat, the complete and perfect buddha.”



3. Recite the Refuge Vow.

buddham śaraṇam gacchāmi

dharmam śaraṇam gacchāmi

saṅgham śaraṇam gacchāmi

“I go for refuge to the Buddha.”

“I go for refuge to the Dharma.”

“I go for refuge to the Saṅgha.”

Recite 3x.



4. Reflect on the virtues of the Three Jewels.
5. Practice Tranquility Meditation on one of the Four Immeasurables.
6. Practice Insight Meditation, reflecting on the Four Noble Truths.
7. Invoke the gods of love, Kāma and Ratī, and ask them to support you in your lovemaking. “We invoke the gods of love, Kāma and Ratī, and ask you to support us in our lovemaking.”
8. Give gifts to each other, and crown each other with a wreath of flowers.
9. To stimulate the sense of hearing, share words of affection for each other.
10. To stimulate the sense of sight, each woman gets up from her seat and dances for her lover. She sits down. Each man gets up from his seat and dances for his lover. He sits down.
11. To stimulate the sense of smell, offer each other a garland of fragrant flowers.
12. To stimulate the sense of taste, she moves to sit on his lap; offer each other food and drink.
13. To stimulate the sense of touch, offer each other sensual pleasing touches.
14. Arouse each other through erotic touches and pleasing your partner with your mouth.
15. Make love to each other, using various positions as you enjoy them.
16. Cuddle together afterwards.
17. Give thanks to the gods of love for assisting you in your ritual and dismiss them. “We give thanks to the gods of love for assisting us in our ritual. You are dismissed.”
18. Venerate the buddhas with deep respect. “We venerate the buddhas, whose perfect realization has brought them to perfection. We seek always to cultivate your precious qualities.”
19. Sit on cushions facing each other, and bow reverently with Añjali Mudrā.



Benefits: You create good karma between you and your lover for the love and pleasure you share. You receive the blessings of the gods and nature spirits who will help you create what you desire. Develops devotion, inner peace, and bliss, and merit that leads to higher rebirth.

Time: 2 hours, including 1 hour preparing for the ritual, and 1 hour performing it.

Chapter 2. The Path of Purification: The Mahāyāna

**“All the suffering in the world arises out of wanting happiness for yourself.
All the happiness in the world arises out of wanting happiness for others.”**
- Śāntideva, *The Way of the Bodhisattva*

The Allure of Nālandā



By the time the young man arrived at Nālandā, the university was already hundreds of years old, renowned as the greatest seat of learning in the world. With ten thousand students and two thousand teachers, every field of knowledge was represented. It was filled with beautiful temples, meeting halls, classrooms, an enormous library, lakes and parks.

Yet for all this success, for the first time in the university’s history, an unmistakable insecurity hung in the air. Since the time of the Buddha, the scholar-monks had been the undisputed leaders of the Saṅgha. Now a new class of leaders arose who overshadowed their wisdom and abilities: the siddhas. As radical liberators, they both inspired and discontented the community. The siddhas rejected the standards of the monastics, laughed at their celibacy and scholarship, dazzled crowds with their magical feats, and dared the monks to stop talking about enlightenment and actually attain it. One day, students of the Siddha Śābara came to the university to visit. Determined to meet him, the

young man left Nālandā early one morning and hitched a ride on a bullock cart to the southeast.

Introduction

“There is no wisdom, and there is no attainment whatsoever.”
- *The Heart Sūtra*

The Mahāyāna (Great Path or Vehicle) is a dramatic reinterpretation of the Dharma. It is, in a very real sense, the Buddha’s original set of teachings turned on its head. The extraordinary themes of the Mahāyāna are: 1) the goal is not to attain liberation for yourself alone - but for all beings, 2) the philosophy is not only that persons are without self-existence - but all appearances are without self-existence, 3) the path is not to renounce the world - but to engage in it fully out of compassion, and 4) the result is that a buddha is no longer inaccessibly at peace - but intensely and eternally involved in bringing everyone to enlightenment. While holding to the Buddha’s most essential principles of the Four Noble Truths, the Mahāyāna transcends his original teachings, while also claiming to be revelations of his own true words given at a later time to bodhisattvas in higher dimensions. The Mahāyāna does not regard its teachings as contradicting the Buddha’s, but as a more profound elaboration on them.

The Mahāyāna begins with the Buddha’s realization that all beings who are not enlightened are in suffering. Reflecting deeply on this bleak condition, followers of the Mahāyāna vow out of great compassion to bring not only themselves but all beings in all the worlds to complete and perfect enlightenment. The idea of seeking enlightenment only for yourself is viewed as selfishness, the very disease the Buddha was trying to cure.

Furthermore, the Buddha’s principle of selflessness is radically reinterpreted. A “person,” in the early Buddhist view, has no enduring self, but is a mix of the Five Aggregates that appear to be a self, held together by karma and habitual tendencies. Though “you” are not real, these aggregates are real and the world is real. In a decisive insight, the Mahāyāna texts reveal, not only are persons not real, but also everything you experience in your world has no self-existent reality. The power of this idea becomes immediately evident: by viewing all appearances as illusions, you can release your desires and aversions to anything much faster. Furthermore, the Mahāyāna texts claim that because arhats have attained only “the selflessness of persons” and not “the selflessness of appearances,” their realization is incomplete. The spiritual attainment of an arhat is only the destruction of emotional obscurations, not mental ones, and an arhat, while dwelling in inner peace, is still not a buddha. The wisdom and compassion of the arhats must be roused so they may enter the Mahāyāna path and attain complete and perfect buddhahood.

The Buddha’s teachings focus on yourself - and all your thoughts, feelings and actions to gain liberating self-awareness. The Mahāyāna’s orientation, however, is towards others. By selflessly serving others while holding the perception that they are as illusory as dreams, you help relieve them of suffering, and you move closer to enlightenment. In contrast to the Buddha’s teaching that buddhas are forever “gone to the other shore” of nirvāṇa, the Mahāyāna teaches that this is the very thing it is *impossible* for a buddha to do. This is because a buddha, realizing the true nature of reality, also spontaneously realizes great compassion. Out of oceanic compassion for others, a buddha emanates countless forms in countless worlds and tirelessly assists in liberating all beings without exception. It is these selfless acts combined with the wisdom of supreme

selflessness that are the most profoundly purifying. The Mahāyāna is the path, not of *renunciation*, since you remain in the worlds, but *purification*.

The Three Refuges - the Buddha, Dharma, and Saṅgha - the heart of the Buddhist path, are profoundly reinterpreted. The Buddha is not just quiescently peaceful, but eternally acting out of compassion. The Dharma is not just a set of teachings but an inconceivable presence. The Saṅgha is not just the community of monks and lay followers, but the infinite expanse of highly realized bodhisattvas who are an invisible yet ever-present and compassionate reality.

Even more so than in the Common Vehicle, the inherent dangers of the world are strongly emphasized. In this “orthodox” Mahāyāna philosophy (as opposed to the later “Tantric” Mahāyāna), the world is by its very nature suffering, and a bodhisattva never remains in this world to enjoy its pleasures. While the Indian Buddhist siddhas embraced the main teachings of the Mahāyāna, the Tantric affirmation of the world would become their most important point of difference.

History

“These Three Worlds are Mind Only.”
- *The Developing Direct Perception Sūtra*

Several hundred years after the Buddha’s death, Buddhism was revolutionized as the Mahāyāna, or the Universal Way, arrived with an inspiring new set of teachings. The Mahāyāna movement began with the sacred revelation of the Perfection of Wisdom sūtras. The earliest text of this class was *The Perfection of Wisdom Sūtra in Eight Thousand Verses*, which arose around 100 BCE. This text teaches that, just as in a dream, there is no self and no other, no saṃsāra and no nirvāṇa, appearances are insubstantial in nature, and buddhahood is fundamentally the perception of this truth. The Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras became the foundation for the philosophical tradition that teaches Emptiness (Śūnyatā), called the Middle Way (Madhyamaka).

From the First Century CE, several texts emerged with additional radically new teachings. The first text to teach that all that you perceive is the Mind Only (Citta Matrā) is *The Unraveling the Mystery of Thought Sūtra*, which proclaims that its teachings supercede even the view of the Middle Way. Around the same time, *The Buddha Essence Sūtra* presents the first teachings on the philosophy of Buddha Essence (Tathāgata Garbha), the idea that there is a truly existent ultimate reality consisting of an infinite field of primordial light, and that the path to enlightenment is the recognition that you are that light. Following the teachings in the Mahāyāna sūtras themselves, most Indian Mahāyānists may have followed these higher philosophies rather than the philosophy of the Middle Way, although after c. 600 CE the Middle Way appears to dominate in the universities. Also in these early centuries, *The Flower Garland Sūtra* establishes the awe-inspiring ideal of the bodhisattva, who acts with wisdom (prajñā) and compassion (karuṇa) to liberate all beings from suffering.

The Mahāyāna’s rise in popularity seems to have been slow, and was likely always a minority movement. By the 400s, however, it became the predominant teaching at Nālandā and other

prestigious universities. Mahāyāna philosophy and practices continued to develop until the 1200s when Buddhism was lost in India.

The Buddha himself did not present these teachings in this world, it was said, because of their depth and intensity - people were simply not ready for them, so they remained hidden in other dimensions until wise masters could reveal them at a later time. Yet they remain true to the essence of the Buddha's teachings, and are intensely and, to their devotees, even more profoundly Buddhist. In the Mahāyāna, the Buddha's sūtras are called the first "turning of the wheel" or presentation of the Dharma, the intermediate teachings on the Middle Way the second turning, and the highest teachings of Mind Only and Buddha Essence are the third.

As the Mahāyāna developed, the lay community remained firmly grounded in celebrating the pleasures of life, honoring the sacredness of nature and enjoying orgiastic festivals. The languid sensuality and bright joy found in the Buddhist art of the time, such as Ajantā, remain testament to the enduring embrace of life by lay Mahāyāna followers. The two Buddhist cultures, monastic and lay, continued to run parallel to each other, until finally the lay communities, led by the Tantric siddhas, dominated the Buddhist imagination for five hundred years.

Masters of the Mahāyāna

**"There is nothing to remove and nothing to add. Truly beholding
the true nature, when truly seen, is complete liberation."**

- Asaṅga, *The Supreme Continuum*

Nāgārjuna



Nāgārjuna (Bright Serpent Spirit; c. 100s) founded the Middle Way (Madhyamaka) teachings of Mahāyāna Buddhism. Born a brahmin near the town of Nāgārjunakoṇḍa (in modern Andhra Pradesh), he later converted to the Dharma. Recognized for his depth of wisdom, he received the Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras as a gift from underwater serpent spirits (nāgas). He left extensive writings, of which *The Fundamental Verses of the Middle Way* is most important, and explains with brilliant and dazzling logic the philosophy of Emptiness. While the Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras present the concept of Emptiness and invite it to be accepted on faith, Nāgārjuna argues compellingly that Buddhism, and reality itself, can only make sense logically within a correct understanding of emptiness. His texts remain central to nearly all Mahāyāna traditions.

Asaṅga



Asaṅga (Not Attached; c. 300s) is among the most influential of all Mahāyāna philosophers, and at least as important as Nāgārjuna. He was the first major philosopher of both the Mind Only (Citta Matrā) and Buddha Essence (Tathāgata Garbha) teachings, and his texts place the teachings of the Middle Way within the framework of these higher philosophies. Asaṅga was born into the warrior caste in the city of Puruṣapura (modern Peshawar, Pakistan), the capital of the kingdom of Gandhāra, a strong center for the Mahāyāna at the height of a cultural golden age. As a monk he accepted the Middle Way teachings but found them to be incomplete. He prayed ardently for twelve years for guidance to the future Buddha Maitreya. In response, Asaṅga received five revealed texts: 1) *The Ornament of Clear Realization*, a concise summary of the doctrine of the Middle Way, 2) *Distinguishing the*

Middle from the Extremes, on how the Mind Only philosophy avoids attachment to extreme views on reality, 3) *Distinguishing Appearances from their True Nature*, on the Mind Only conception of the Two Truths, 4) *The Ornament of the Mahāyāna Sūtras*, the Mind Only view of the Mahāyāna path, and 5) *The Supreme Continuum*, the central text on the philosophy of Buddha Essence. Asaṅga also personally authored several texts including *The Compendium of Liberating Truth*, a summary of the Dharma from the Mind Only philosophy, *The Compendium of the Mahāyāna*, an influential presentation of the Mahāyāna, and *The Bodhisattva Levels*, which describes the bodhisattva path from the Mind Only tenets. Asaṅga converted his brother Vasubandhu to the Mahāyāna, who made crucial contributions to the Mind Only philosophy.

Philosophy

**“As for the many inconceivable teachings that are taught by words,
those who fixate on words do not understand what is explained.”**

- *The King of Samādhi Sūtra*

***When You Perceive Both Your Self and Appearances as Not Being Independently Real,
You Attain Buddhahood***

Shared Views of the Mahāyāna

The Inconceivability of the Dharma

In the Common Vehicle, the nature of a buddha is inconceivable. In the Mahāyāna, *the Dharma itself is inconceivable*. The Mahāyāna distinguishes itself by its teachings on wisdom, and argues that because of the limitations inherent in the teachings of the Common Vehicle, that path is limited in its ability to attain complete liberation. The Common Vehicle, it says, is based on a dualism of self and other, when reality is not dualistic. All beliefs, such as good or bad, existence or nonexistence, saṃsāra or nirvāṇa, are no more than mental constructions, conceptual overlays

that your mind places onto a reality that is never confined by any of them. The Mahāyāna teaches that if you could only *see reality clearly*, you would see the vast expanse of peace and bliss that permeates and truly is everything. Dharma extends infinitely beyond the scriptures as an ever-present power, so any moment of your life can be an opportunity for higher realization. The Mahāyāna sūtras inspire wonder and astonishment through their visions of worlds vast and profound, instilling devotion to its excellent teachings.

Saṃsāra and Nirvāṇa are Perceptual



The Mahāyāna teaches that the all-important distinction in the Common Vehicle between saṃsāra and nirvāṇa is merely perceptual - they are not actual places. When your awareness is obscured by ignorance, you are in saṃsāra. When your awareness is freed from ignorance, you are in nirvāṇa. *Saṃsāra is simply the misperception of nirvāṇa.* The Mahāyāna redefines the nirvāṇa of a buddha as nonabiding nirvāṇa (apraṭiṣṭha nirvāṇa) - a buddha avoids passively retreating into nirvāṇa, and at the same time avoids personal suffering in saṃsāra while remaining fully engaged in the world out of compassion for others.

However, liberation does *not* result in a joyful celebration of appearances. Karmic obscurations are what create the world of appearances (saṃjñā) in the first place – and appearances are comprised of the very fabric of karmic conditioning. There is never a time when you are enlightened and simply relax and enjoy the beauty of the world. *The White Lotus Sūtra* explains, “This world is produced by karma, this world manifests by means of karma. All beings are produced by karma. They appear through the cause, karma.” Appearances are dependently originated from karmic conditioning and experienced as suffering. In liberation you would theoretically experience nothing at all, because your karmic obscurations that produce appearances would be completely released. However, because of compassion, buddhas remain in the world of appearances purely to liberate others from suffering.

The Mahāyāna View of Life

The orthodox Mahāyāna view of the sūtras, taught principally by scholar-monks, retains the fundamental life-negating positions of the Buddha on the nature of life - that it is *inherently* suffering. Although the Mahāyāna teaches that saṃsāra and nirvāṇa are ultimately perceptual rather than physical places, the practical reality remains that for ordinary beings and bodhisattvas they are as different as night and day, effectively as though they still are places. Saṃsāra *is* dwelling in the six realms (ṣaḍaloka) of beings (humans, gods, anti-gods, demons, hungry ghosts, and animals), and nirvāṇa *is* the pure peace and bliss that lies outside them. The body is inescapably suffering; birth, old age, and death are unavoidably experiences of suffering, and liberation from them is inherently peaceful. It is *impossible* to attain permanent happiness in this world. The Mahāyāna sūtras denounce sensual objects as “like honey smeared on a razor’s edge,” seemingly pleasurable but incurably dangerous. Women remain inferior to men - they are unable to attain enlightenment in female form and must reincarnate as men. And a bodhisattva who remains on earth does so solely out of compassion, not out of any inherent pleasure in it. Only nirvāṇa brings permanent peace and bliss – it remains the highest goal of the Mahāyāna path for all beings to dwell in it.

The Liberating Purpose of Philosophy

The Mahāyāna sūtras present three philosophies: the Middle Way, Mind Only, and Buddha Essence. They may seem so different from each other that they have nothing in common, but each one complements the others well. They all help to liberate you from your emotional and mental obscurations so that you can perceive reality directly and bring a permanent end to your suffering. The Middle Way philosophy liberates you from attachment to appearances, the Mind Only philosophy liberates you from attachment to the subject/object split of your mind, and the Buddha Essence philosophy liberates you into primordial wisdom. Key distinctions among the three philosophies include how they address the Two Truths (Dvi Satya), referring to the world as it appears and the world as it truly is, and provide a vision of buddhahood (buddhatva).

These philosophies are all valuable tools for deep personal reflection, but only when they are combined with meditation can they truly liberate you into the direct perception of reality whose nature is inconceivable, beyond all concepts and philosophies. The final goal of Buddhist philosophy is never simply to understand mentally how reality “really” works, but to provide you with conceptual tools that lead you to inner awakening. In the Mahāyāna, Buddhism can never be a fixed doctrine or tradition. The Dharma is certainly not an idea of “no self” or “self” - it is whatever liberates you. The essence of Buddhism can never be contained in words, because *the essence of Buddhism is bliss*.

The Middle Way

Reality is the Absence of Inherent Existence

You and the world around you appear to consist of solid, separate things that exist permanently. It is the normal way of seeing. Yet to see appearances as having their own self-existence is not only mistaken, it is a dangerous delusion that results in suffering. *The Heart Sūtra* declares this teaching: “Form is emptiness and emptiness is form.” To know the meaning of this one sentence is buddhahood:

1. Form is emptiness – Direct perception into the ultimate nature of things reveals that no forms can be found at all. All forms dissolve into a complete lack of inherent existence.
 2. Emptiness is form – Though absent of any self-existent nature, appearances arise due to karmic conditioning.
- This is the wisdom of emptiness.

To see clearly and attain perfect wisdom is to see emptiness (śūnyatā). Emptiness is the principle that everything is insubstantial, interdependent, arising out of Dependent Origination, impermanent, continually changing, and ultimately inconceivable. What you see as things is only the appearances of things. These appearances (dharmas) arise and fall away continuously. And there is no underlying plane of ultimate reality from which any appearances arise.

The term Emptiness means that all things are empty of inherent self-existence (svabhāva). With no intrinsic, eternal nature that is independently your own, you and the world appear to exist only as a result of karmic conditioning. From the teachings of the Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras, appearances are explained as ephemeral and insubstantial as: 1) the reflection of the Moon in water, 2) a magician’s trick, 3) a face in a mirror, 4) a mirage from water, 5) the sound of an echo, 6) clouds in the sky, 7) a ball of foam, 8) a water bubble, 9) the empty core of a plantain tree, and 10) a flash of lightning.

This philosophy is called the Middle Way (Madhyamaka) because it rejects as extreme views either of the two ideas that: 1) appearances have any kind of eternal existence, or 2) appearances do not exist at all. Emptiness does *not* mean nothing exists at all, instead it is the awareness that appearances lack inherent existence and arise only due to karmic conditioning. At the same time, emptiness is not a quality of a supposed plane of ultimate reality from which appearances arise and return. When you directly perceive the lack of inherent existence of all appearances, you enter the bliss of nirvāṇa.

The profound and liberating value of this teaching is that there are no things for you to attach to, no persons to cling to, no ideas to conceive, and no goal to achieve because *there are no beings in suffering and no buddhas who liberate them*. It is the shocking discovery that all your concepts about reality are wrong because the very nature of reality cannot be encompassed by concepts. You will *never* understand reality. There is nothing to gain, and nothing that can possibly be lost. And, without anything to attain, and no obstacles to oppose you, there is absolutely no reason why you cannot be completely and perfectly peaceful and blissful in this and every moment. Upon directly perceiving emptiness, all appearances dissolve into their

inherent insubstantiality, and your mind is naturally purified. You then see the limitless possibilities for liberating yourself and others from suffering.

The Two Truths

The Middle Way philosophy teaches Two Truths (Dvi Satya), or ways of perceiving reality. The distinction is critical - from one arises saṃsāra, from the other, nirvāṇa. Yet these truths are not two separate realities, because saṃsāra and nirvāṇa are inseparable. They are just two different ways of perceiving the same reality. Through your perceptions, you create your own prison and you free yourself from it.

The first truth is relative truth (saṃvṛiti satya) - the ordinary world you know in which appearances arise and seem independently real. It is the world of how things appear to be to most people. Relative truth is what you experience as truly existent, but is not. It is a “false truth.” Appearances do not possess the self-existence (niḥsvabhāva) that they seem to, but arise purely due to the karmic conditioning of Dependent Origination. It *only* due to your own emotional and mental obscurations that you experience appearances. Nevertheless, appearances do not *not* exist – they have a presence for those whose minds are obscured. Though itself empty of self-existent reality, the principle of Dependent Origination prevails in worlds created from relative truth. Kamalaśīla (c. 800s) observes, “Although ultimately all these phenomena lack identity, conventionally they definitely exist. If this were not the case, how would the relationship between cause and effect, and so forth, prevail?” Appearances, though illusory, should not be casually dismissed as “mere illusion” because they carry the sting of karmic conditioning.

The second truth is ultimate truth (paramārtha satya), which is the true nature of things. As a liberated being, you perceive directly the lack of inherent existence of appearances. It is the world as things truly are. Ultimate truth is nothing more than the direct perception that appearances arise as a result of karmic conditioning and that they are without self-nature, meaning they lack any kind of ultimate, intrinsic, permanent existence of their own. No permanent metaphysical principle or power called “Emptiness” is asserted. Ultimate truth is not an eternally present substratum to existence that is nothing, since appearances could never arise as a causal result from complete nonexistence. Instead, ultimate truth is simply *the absence of self-nature* of appearances. Emptiness is a designation for the direct nonconceptual experience of the absence of self-nature of appearances, an experience that is in itself inexpressible but still realizable. Nāgārjuna describes ultimate truth (tattva - reality or suchness) in this way: “Not dependent on another, peaceful and not fabricated by mental fabrication, not thought, without distinctions - this is the character of reality.”

Buddhahood as Wisdom and Compassion

A buddha is a being who understands and perceives emptiness. This perception releases all suffering and brings complete perfection. Nāgārjuna explains through profound logic that a buddha is beyond all conceptual categories: “Since he is by nature empty, the thought that the Buddha exists or does not exist after nirvāṇa is not appropriate.” Buddhahood, like nirvāṇa,

cannot be spoken about in terms of what it is, but only in terms of what it is not. When you are fully present to the emptiness of what is, that is buddhahood.

Theoretically, a buddha would perceive *nothing at all*. *The Song of the Dharma Sūtra* says: “When emptiness is seen, there is no seeing. Not seeing all phenomena is seeing perfectly. Seeing nothing whatsoever is seeing suchness.” However, upon realizing emptiness, great compassion arises, and this brings a buddha’s awareness back into the world of appearances, where you seek to liberate all beings from suffering. A buddha continually perceives appearances and their emptiness simultaneously - the final realization of the identity of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa.

Because everything arises only from karmic conditioning, even buddhas, though they are perfect, arise *only* in response to the karma of beings in suffering and the buddhas’ determination to liberate them. In no way do buddhas exist as independent beings. Their purified aggregates and compassionate intention to liberate others keep them in the world of appearances. It is solely from the unleashing of the oceanic power of compassion that buddhas arise.

Mind Only

Reality is Mind

The Mind Only (Citta Mātra – lit. Mind Mother) philosophy teaches that, contrary to your normal way of thinking, external objects do not exist independently - everything you experience is a projection of your mind. It is just like a dream. But because you do not realize this, you react to things as though they were real when you created them all along. When you do not understand how mind works, you create suffering. Understanding it, you know the path to liberation.

Mind is an all-pervasive field of consciousness, not something locked in your head the way Westerners tend to think of it. The Mind Only philosophy is not a solipsistic idea that says everything is “your” mind, because it completely rejects the idea of “you” and “others” to begin with. There is only *one* mind. Mind is a shared dream-like experience with others, yet we all create different versions of what that reality is, generating conflict. Your mind creates an illusory and dualistic mental overlay between “yourself” and the “objects” around you. This polarizing belief wrenches apart the unity of experience and creates desire. As a result, your mind wants you to have things it believes are outside of you that it thinks will make you happy. And desire creates karma, which leads to suffering.

By understanding your mind correctly and practicing meditation, the ordinary conflicted mind (vijñāna) is purified and becomes the wisdom mind (prañā). Dualistic thinking stops, desire stops, karma is ended, and liberation is achieved. Compassion spontaneously arises, and you seek to liberate all beings from suffering. Finally awake to the reality that everything is a dream, your powers are unimaginable. This philosophy, whose core teachings are found in the Mahāyāna sūtras, is popularly called Yogācāra (lit. Yogic Practice), although Yogācāra actually encompasses both the Mind Only and Buddha Essence teachings.

The Three Natures

The principle teaching of the Mind Only philosophy is called the Three Natures (Tri Svabhāva). These represent the three ways your mind can perceive the appearances it creates of the world: 1) the Imaginary Nature (Parikalpita), afflicted consciousness, in which appearances are produced in an entirely fictional way by your emotional and mental obscurations, 2) the Dependent Nature (Paratantra), dualistic consciousness, in which appearances are produced once you clear your emotional obscurations, but you are still obscured by the root mental obscuration of dividing your experiences into subject and object, and 3) the Absolute Nature (Pariniṣpanna), pure consciousness - as you are free of any emotional or mental obscurations, no appearances are produced. By understanding the Three Natures of your mind and practicing meditation, you attain enlightenment.

The Imaginary Nature is the state of most people who incorrectly perceive reality through desire, aversion, and ignorance, and create their own suffering - in Western terms neurotic projection. You see and respond to things that do not exist in any way at all. However, the Mind Only philosophy goes much deeper than Western psychology to say that to have any experience of anything at all as “real” is completely imaginary, pure projection. The principle power that sustains the Imaginary Nature is *language*. By continually assigning mental labels and emotionally charged meanings to appearances, you create your own web of suffering.

The Dependent Nature of mind is the state of those who have cleared their emotional obscurations, released attachment to their own labels through language, and correctly understand intellectually the true nature of reality as without division of subject and object, but have not yet realized it directly. You see appearances as they arise, without emotional projection, nevertheless your perception is still obscured by the root dualism. This is what Western psychology calls the ideal of a mentally healthy person, but in Buddhist psychology is still mentally obscured and open to suffering. The Dependent Nature is sustained by the root stains of “I” and “mine,” the subtle but deep belief in self and other. This state is called the Dependent Nature because, like a reflection in a mirror, its way of being does not exist independently but exists subject to karmic conditioning, and is dependent upon the Absolute Nature, which does have true existence.

The Absolute Nature is attained by those whose minds are liberated from all emotional and mental obscurations, in which your mind perceives only itself. Vasubandhu writes, “The Absolute Nature opens the door of wisdom to the realm of suchness,” because you are finally seeing reality clearly. It is pure consciousness without appearances, perfect peace and bliss.

The Eight Consciousnesses

You normally think of yourself as having just one mind, but the Mind Only philosophy teaches that you have Eight Consciousnesses (Aṣṭa Vijñāna), each with fully separate functions, that together you unknowingly group together and call your mind. To attain enlightenment, you must purify them all completely. The first five consciousnesses are the Five Senses - sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch - which receive and subtly interpret the sense impressions of your world.

They can become obscured through injury or illness, and the sensations arising from them that you interpret as pleasant, unpleasant, or indifferent can also become karmically obscured.

The sixth consciousness, the Conceptualizing Mind (Mano Vijñāna – lit. the mind that divides wisdom), receives the sense experiences of the first five consciousnesses. It is within this consciousness that thoughts occur that label and divide experiences, that you remember the past, reflect on the present, and plan for the future, create visual images of things, and make judgements of good or bad. This consciousness does not perceive the world directly, but creates a mental image of it within it, which may or may not be very close to what the world really looks like. It operates under confused conditions, driven by habits of dualistic thought and action. Meditation occurs at the level of the sixth consciousness, which spontaneously purifies all the other consciousnesses.

The seventh is the Afflicted Consciousness (Kleśa Vijñāna), a very subtle level that holds tightly to the false belief in self and other, and creates your fundamental confusion and unclarity of perception about life. Its chief attribute is that it possesses the Three Stains (Āsavas), the deepest root causes of suffering: 1) desire for sensual pleasure, 2) desire for existence, and 3) ignorance of the Four Noble Truths. It is where your compulsive desires and aversions actively drive you in your thoughts, words and actions. The powers of the seventh flow into the sixth, veiling your conscious mind with emotional and mental obscurations, and obscuring your bodily sense consciousnesses as well. By directly perceiving the illusion of self and other at this level in meditation, you release the seventh consciousness, and it is transformed on awakening into the Wisdom of Equality (Samatā Jñāna), in which all appearances are perceived as equal.

The eighth is the Store Consciousness (Ālaya Vijñāna). This is the unconscious plane of awareness, and is always fully aware of each moment. Vasubandhu observes, “Store consciousness contains all appearances in the universe.” It is where karmic imprints of past actions are stored, ripen, and later arise, inflicting you with unexpected and unwanted suffering. The seventh consciousness arises from and is sustained by the karmic seeds (bīja) stored in the eighth consciousness that continually obscure your experiences and create the suffering you experience in your life. When the eighth consciousness is completely purified, it transforms into the Wisdom of True Reality (Dharmadhātu Jñāna), and buddhahood is attained.

The Two Truths

In the Mind Only philosophy, relative truth is the mistaken idea that self and appearances exist independently and separately from the mind. The Imaginary Nature creates all the false emotionally charged projections you impose onto appearances. The Dependent Nature, though more pure, similarly arises as the false but deeply rooted belief that you and others exist separate from the one mind.

Ultimate truth is the release of the incorrect perception that subject and object are something other than mind. When you attain this truth, which is the Absolute Nature, the illuminating nondual buddha mind spontaneously arises. You perceive directly that appearances arise as in a dream, but still lead to suffering because they are karmically conditioned. Ultimate truth is the

reality of the universal mind - it is neither a solipsistic mind nor the primordial awareness taught in the philosophy of Buddha Essence - it is simply consciousness free of subject and object, singular, not divided into knower and known, permanent, naturally clear, pure awareness.

Buddhahood as Wisdom and Compassion

Buddhas are beings who have purified their minds completely; all karmic seeds in the Store Consciousness are exhausted, and their minds are of the Absolute Nature. At the moment of the final release of karma is a spontaneous inner awakening called the Reversal of the Basis (*Āśraya Parāvṛitti*), because the experience of the Eighth Consciousness, the unconscious basis of your mind, shifts from suffering to bliss. A buddha would naturally experience no appearances at all - only the pure consciousness of *nirvāṇa*. But out of compassion for all beings, you remain in the world of illusions to liberate others. Since all experiences are dream-like, all the miraculous powers of the buddhas arise for you effortlessly.

Buddha Essence

Reality is Primordial Wisdom

Buddha essence is primordial buddha wisdom (*buddha jñāna*), an infinite field of pure enlightened awareness, and only that ultimate reality exists, and everything else is illusory. Its essential nature (*tathāta*) is equally present in all beings, only temporarily obscured within them. Buddha essence is the inner potential and power of all beings to attain enlightenment. Its ever-present power moves through all beings seeking to liberate them. Without Buddha essence already within you, attaining buddhahood would be impossible and all your efforts would produce nothing. Since only the bliss of *nirvāṇa* exists, you are already a buddha. But because you do not recognize it, you suffer. Buddha Essence (*Tathāgata Garbha*) philosophy is the highest statement of the *Mahāyāna sūtras* on the nature of reality.

The philosophy of Buddha Essence teaches that beyond all illusory appearances ultimate reality *truly* exists – it possesses its own true, intrinsic self-nature (*svabhāva*) that can be directly perceived by a buddha. It is an infinite field of inconceivable awareness with its own: 1) eternal wisdom (*jñāna*), 2) transcendent qualities (*guṇa pāramitā*), and 3) self-existent presence (*anābhoga*). It is pure self-awareness (*pratyātmavedya*) without the awareness of any appearances. *The Supreme Continuum* describes its infinite and inseparable all good qualities, noting especially that it possesses four transcendent qualities:

1. Purity (*Śubha*) - It is unstained by karmic obscurations.
2. Self (*Ātman*) - It is primordial, all-pervasive, self-aware wisdom.
3. Bliss (*Sukha*) - It is the source of ultimate bliss.
4. Permanence (*Nitya*) - It is eternal and unchanging.

These four qualities are important because they completely overturn the Buddha's own doctrines on existence as possessing the qualities of 1) karmic impurity, 2) no self, 3) suffering, and 4) impermanence. *Buddhists who follow the first two turnings of the wheel of the Dharma do not believe in a self – Buddhists who follow the third turning of the wheel do.* Buddha essence is

primordial, still, and all-pervasive. It does not arise out of karmic conditioning. Nothing other than it truly exists. All appearances (dharmas) are purely illusory and have no existence in any way at all.

Buddha essence is difficult to find and realize, but it is the greatest of all treasures because it is your own true nature. It is like: 1) a buddha in a decaying lotus, 2) honey amidst bees, 3) grains in their husks, 4) gold covered in filth, 5) an underground treasure, 6) shoots piercing through fruits, 7) a statue of a buddha inside a pile of torn rags, 8) a monarch in the womb of a poor and wretched woman, and 9) a precious image inside clay. The Buddha Essence philosophy honors your own potential to attain inner awakening and is intended to give you great confidence. The goal of its teachings is for you to see the shimmering Clear Light of ultimate reality and compassionately liberate yourself and all beings from suffering.

The Two Truths

In the teachings on Buddha Essence, relative truth is the false perception of any appearances at all. It is perceiving appearances hidden from the direct experience of buddha essence by your emotional and mental obscurations. These obscurations are completely accidental (*āgantaka*) and illusory (*bhrānti*). *The Supreme Continuum* says, “The faults are incidental,” and “The obscurations are like covering clouds, by nature non-existent.” In no way do obscurations affect ultimate reality. *Appearances do not exist at all*. No arising of appearances *ever* occurs, Dependent Origination is itself illusory, so any appearances you perceive are only illusory. The root of the power of relative reality is your own mistaken belief in self and other.

Ultimate truth is the ability to perceive directly the indivisible field of primordially existent ultimate reality (*svabhāva*). Ultimate reality is primordial consciousness and luminosity, infinite wisdom, love, peace and bliss. *The Supreme Continuum* is extensive in its descriptions: it is the Clear Light, eternal, uncaused, the open expanse, “changeless like space,” “nondual,” “indestructible,” “unchanging,” and “everlasting.” It is unconditioned, free, permanent, and blissful. It is empty of illusions, impermanence, appearances, and suffering. It is self-originated primal purity, stainless, forever possessing perfect qualities. Though it appears to act to those with deluded minds, it is actionless. It is inexhaustible, all-pervasive, omniscient wisdom, compassion, free of conceptuality, uncompounded by Dependent Origination. “It is the changeless reality... It is true Self (*Ātman*) because all of the complications of self or no self have been absolutely quelled.” Seeing ultimate truth, you are liberated.

Dolpopa (1292-1361), the principle Tibetan commentator on Buddha Essence, argues that to say that *nirvāṇa* and *saṃsāra* are “inseparable,” as the Middle Way philosophy claims, is nonsensical. In truth, he says, *saṃsāra* does not exist, and *nirvāṇa* does. While agreeing with the Middle Way philosophy that ultimate reality is inexpressible, Buddha Essence philosophy observes that by adopting the idea that all experiences of any kind are merely self-empty (*niḥsvabhāva*), the Middle Way philosophy can actually mislead you into missing the ultimate reality that is not self-empty at all. Buddha Essence philosophy says it is not enough simply to see appearances as not truly existent. *The Ornament of the Light of Wisdom Sūtra* cautions against the Middle Way philosophy, saying “The destruction of appearances through realization

of emptiness is *not* the cessation of suffering,” because a much greater experience awaits you through realization of Buddha Essence. While the Mind Only teachings express that ultimate reality is your mind, Buddha Essence teachings observe primordial reality is not mind (citta) in the conventional sense, and even mind does not exist as an independent entity, so meditating on “Mind Only” could lead you to miss the true ultimate reality as well. What *only* exists is the infinite, primordial wisdom mind (jñāna), also called the Clear Light nature of your mind (Prabhāsvara citta).

Buddhahood as Wisdom and Compassion

The Supreme Continuum reveals, “Buddhahood is the radiance of primordial wisdom.” In this very moment, you are a buddha – there is nothing else you could ever possibly be. Your complete perfection as a buddha is already fully present but momentarily obscured by illusion. Buddhahood, primordially existent, is the only thing that exists. It does not arise due to causes and conditions, but is “uncreated,” “the self-existent,” “the supreme nirvāṇa,” and “the self-nature.” Its self-nature is its indestructible spaciousness, wisdom, and luminous clarity.

Because all appearances are illusory, even the appearances of buddhas are illusory. “These are just appearances,” *The Supreme Continuum* notes dispassionately. Images of buddhas arise from the deluded minds of beings, and are not true arisings - “Ordinary beings do not understand the fact that these are the manifestations of their own mind.” There is no action that buddhas actually perform; they are always in perfect peace. At the same time, their activities towards beings trapped in illusion are unlimited, effortless, ceaseless, and spontaneously arising.

Path

“One should understand that the path cannot be compressed into one limitless eon.”

- Asaṅga, *The Bodhisattva Levels*

The Bodhisattva

At the heart of the Mahāyāna is the determination to end suffering for all beings. As difficult as it is for even one person to attain enlightenment, a bodhisattva (lit. awakened being), motivated by great compassion (karuṇa), seeks to bring all beings throughout limitless time and space *without exception* to final liberation. Kamalaśīla inspires with an example, saying “Just as a mother responds to her small, beloved, and suffering child, when you develop a spontaneous and equal sense of compassion toward all beings, you have perfected the practice of compassion. And this is known as great compassion.”

As a bodhisattva, you generate bodhicitta (lit. awakened mind) - the compassionate aspiration for enlightenment. Bodhicitta is the profound intention to liberate yourself and all beings from suffering. It is the unique driving power of a bodhisattva that gives him or her their inconceivable powers of wisdom and compassion, without which it is impossible to attain enlightenment. It is not simply a desire for all beings to be happy, but a profound commitment

that *you* will liberate them. *The Ornament of Clear Realization* declares, “The wish for completely perfect enlightenment for the welfare of others is bodhicitta.” It is your declaration of the highest possible intention a being can hold. It is *only* through cultivating the aspiration for universal enlightenment that enlightenment can ever be attained, because only bodhicitta has the power to break through the illusion of self and other.

As a bodhisattva, bodhicitta is not only an aspiration but also a continuous activity. You do not retreat from the world, but remain compassionately engaged in it, while recognizing the true nature of reality. Compassion is not a state of being miserable from constantly seeing other’s suffering, but a warm tenderness of heart and empathetic connection. Wisdom liberates compassion from sorrow in its recognition that no one ever really suffers - they only think they do. And compassion liberates wisdom from impassively observing the nonexistence of beings. Together, wisdom and compassion guide you and all beings to enlightenment.

Levels of Attainment

The Mahāyāna is a gradual path to enlightenment. Your path is guided by your intention for universal liberation, oceanic compassion, profound meditative absorption, and penetrating wisdom into the ultimate nature of things. It is a path of purification, and as *The Supreme Continuum* defines it, “Purity is the absence of desire.”

After taking the Bodhisattva Vow, you are called a noble son or daughter (ārya putra/ārya duhitā). Once you attain a direct perception of ultimate reality in meditation, you are a bodhisattva/bodhisattvā, also called a noble one (ārya/āryā). You then pass through the Ten Stages (Daśa Bhūmi) of a bodhisattva to enlightenment, all so difficult they take three incalculable eons to complete. The bodhisattva path is a continual exercise in developing merit (puṇya), good deeds in helping others that bring you the good karma to attain enlightenment, and wisdom (prajñā), the direct perception of ultimate reality. Merit clears emotional obscurations and wisdom clears mental obscurations. These two, merit and wisdom, called the Two Accumulations (Dvi Saṃbhāra), when cultivated together, lead to the Two Accomplishments (Dvi Siddhi) - magical powers and omniscience that you use to liberate others.

1. Great Joy

Success over lifetimes of practice results in an upwelling of joy as you finally attain direct perception of ultimate reality in meditation - you reach the level called Great Joy (Pramuditā). When you sit in meditation, you immediately attain nondual awareness of true reality. In post meditation, however, you are unable to maintain direct perception of ultimate reality. You have made some progress in clearing your emotional and mental obscurations, and are able to inspire others in their path. Free from worldly fears, the focus of your practice is on generosity. Once you attain the first level, you may consciously choose rebirth in this world or another.

2. Stainless

At the stage called Stainless (Vimalā), you free yourself of the stains of unethical behavior. Your focus is on ethical discipline.

3. Radiant

For the bodhisattva at the level of Radiant (Prabhākarī), the light of your wisdom naturally radiates to others. Your practice emphasizes acceptance.

4. Light Giving

For those at the stage of Light Giving (Arciṣmatī), your awareness of the illusory nature of self and other deepens. Your own inner light shines to others. You cultivate mainly effort.

5. Difficult to Master

When you reach the level called Difficult to Master (Sudurjayā), your practice shifts more fully into training others. You master your own emotions as you guide those who are often as yet untamed emotionally. Having purified your emotional reactions, you refine your own inner mastery. You develop principally meditative absorption.

6. Facing the Transcendent

Once you attain the level of Facing the Transcendent (Abhimukhī), you face the equality of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, and abide in neither of them. In your maturity, you are particularly skillful in pacifying arrogance in beings. You focus mainly on cultivating wisdom, and come to understand the illusory nature of emotional and mental obscurations.

7. Gone Afar

For the bodhisattva at the level called Gone Afar (Dūraṅgamā), you master entering into and arising from the vast expanse of ultimate reality, the Dharmadhātu, and realize the essential sameness of all appearances. Through deepening realization, you renounce self-grasping. You develop skillful activity in liberating others, always guided by transcendent wisdom.

8. Immovable

In the first seven levels, as a bodhisattva you still have emotional obscurations that arise in meditation. At the eighth, Immovable (Acalā), you attain perfect meditative stability, undisturbed

by any inner or outer perceptions, pure nonconceptual awareness. It is the level of the true tolerance of the inconceivability of reality. It is also the level of irreversibility. You gain the ability to see directly the subtle forms of the buddhas (saṃbhogakāyas) on higher planes. Your emphasis is on intensifying strength. You release your deep-seated belief in a separate self. Your aspiration for complete and perfect buddhahood for yourself and all beings heightens.

9. Meritorious Wisdom

Once you attain the ninth level, Meritorious Wisdom (Sādhumatī), you gain the Wisdom of Discriminating Awareness (Pratiśamvedanā). This includes: 1) the ability to teach the Dharma according to the capacity of students, 2) the ability to understand the true meaning of the teachings, 3) the gift of using language skillfully to teach the profound subtleties of the Dharma, and 4) the complete self-confidence that cuts through doubts. Your main focus of development is on spontaneous enlightened activity.

10. Dharma Cloud

At the tenth level, Dharma Cloud (Dharma Meghā), only the faintest remains of emotional and mental obscurations hold you back from complete enlightenment. There is almost no difference at all between your awareness in meditative states and post meditation. You gain limitless, omniscient wisdom equal to the sky, pouring down a rain of Dharma. Your main emphasis is on cultivating omniscient wisdom, releasing the last remnants of your most subtle karmic obscurations. Entering the Adamantine Samādhi (Vajra Samādhi) that clears away the last subtle remnants of your obscurations, you directly perceive the relative truth of appearances and the ultimate truth of the absence of appearances simultaneously, and attain complete liberation.

Benefits

By following the Mahāyāna, you commit yourself to the true path of enlightenment. You gain great merit, become a support to other beings, and purify negative karma. Suffering and confusion fall away. The benefits are truly countless as all good qualities develop within you. Wealth, long life, health, joy, peace, clarity of mind, happiness, pleasant dreams, and many excellent qualities begin to manifest for you. You gain worldly magical powers through meditative concentration, and effortlessly create what you desire. Peace and harmony surround you, the gods protect you, and you naturally attract many friends. You are virtuous, your emotional obscurations diminish, compassion arises, you are able to make strong effort in practice, you abandon all distractions to your path, and you neither attach to nor reject this life. In addition, you ensure the most wonderful future lives, and attain perfect buddhahood.

Common Problems

The Mahāyāna teachings are extensive, profound, and awe-inspiring – and it is easy to get distracted by the philosophy and neglect practice. If you misunderstand the teachings on the Middle Way and confuse emptiness with nothingness, you might not care about anything any more. Thinking karma is just an “empty” concept, you may commit negative acts that lead to lower rebirth. The risk of the Mind Only teachings is that, while you recognize appearances as mental projections and can release your attachment to them, you might attach to inner experiences of peace and bliss and create an aversion to other emotions, slowing your true path. From the teachings on Buddha Essence, over-confident in knowing that you are already a buddha, you might decide not to practice, and cut yourself off from ever realizing buddhahood.

Since the Mahāyāna path takes inconceivable lifetimes to attain liberation, you may not be motivated with the urgency to practice and become lazy. Trying to be a bodhisattva, you could become merely a good deed doer – helping others without penetrating into a deeper awareness of ultimate reality is called “defiled virtue” (*kliṣṭa puṇya*), and should be avoided. Your growing compassion could increase your attachment to others and lead you into greater suffering. Finally, without a true and sincere commitment to liberating yourself and all beings from suffering, you are not a follower of the Mahāyāna, but the Common Vehicle, and will never be able to gain the merit necessary for buddhahood.

Techniques

“Where there is perseverance, there is enlightenment.”
- The Sāgaramati Requested Sūtra

Vows

In the Mahāyāna tradition, the Bodhisattva Vow (*Praṇidhāna Samvara* – lit. Aspiration Vow) is the most important act you will ever take to attain enlightenment. It is the ultimate vow of cosmic responsibility. You commit yourself to vast lifetimes of personal development, as you seek to assist all beings throughout infinite space and time to attain enlightenment as well. The vow directs you on your path, keeping you from the dangers of *saṃsāra* and the inactive bliss of *nirvāṇa*. The Bodhisattva Vow is recited frequently in order to generate the wisdom and great compassion that fuels your path to enlightenment. Progress is impossible without keeping it.

Devotion

Devotion (*bhakti*) is even more important in the Mahāyāna than the Common Vehicle. Unlike in the Buddha’s original path, you cannot attain realization completely on your own - you need the help of the buddhas and their continuous teachings. Through devotion, you make a strong heart connection with them. Buddha wisdom pervades the universe, and buddhas have the ability to manifest at any moment, in any way, for anyone who calls upon them with true devotion. You give your devotion to the buddhas and bodhisattvas, to the Mahāyāna sūtras as sacred revelations

of wisdom, to your teachers, and to omnipresent wisdom itself. Yet buddhas can only teach and inspire, they cannot actually remove your karmic obscurations - only you can do that. Your principal act of devotion in the Mahāyāna is the Bodhisattva Vow (Prāṇidhāna Samvara).

Sacred Sex and Sexual Yoga

The Mahāyāna continues in the use of sacred sex rituals as acts of devotion to the buddhas, and for the first time in the Buddhist path also incorporates sexual yoga - the use of sexual energies to attain enlightenment. In *The Ornament of the Mahāyāna Sūtras*, Asaṅga writes, “Supreme self-control is obtained in the reversal of sexual intercourse, in the blissful Buddha equipoise and the unobstructed vision of one’s spouse.” The “reversal of sexual intercourse” refers to the yogic practices of driving sexual energies up into the subtle body rather than out into your partner to empower your enlightenment. Sexual yoga is an integral part of the bodhisattva’s path.

The Mahāyāna View of Sexual Misconduct

At least by the Tibetan master Gampopa’s time (c. 1074-1153), the orthodox Mahāyāna tradition had expanded the Buddha’s original teachings on sexual misconduct. He writes: “There are three types of sexual misconduct: protected by the family, protected by the owner, and protected by the Dharma. The first means sexual misconduct with one’s mother, sister, and so forth. The second means sexual misconduct with someone owned by a husband or king, and so forth. The third has five categories: even with one’s own wife, sexual misconduct refers to improper parts of the body, improper place, improper time, improper number, and improper behavior. Improper parts of the body are the mouth and anus. Improper places are close to the spiritual master, monastery or stūpa, or in a gathering of people. Improper times are during a special retreat, when pregnant, while nursing a child, or when there is light. An improper number is more than five times in a night. Improper behavior refers to beating, or having intercourse with a male or hermaphrodite in the mouth or anus.”

- Gampopa, *The Jewel Ornament of Liberation*

Wisdom

Wisdom is the ability to directly perceive the true nature of things. To cultivate wisdom, you study and reflect on the Mahāyāna sūtras, taking their lessons deep into your heart. You begin by developing a conceptual understanding of the Mahāyāna, and develop faith and conviction about its value. And then through practice you attain the highest wisdom of stainless, direct knowing.

Compassion

Compassion (karuṇa) is cultivated through the Bodhisattva Vow, setting a strong intention for the liberation of all beings. Your compassion becomes warm, tender, unsentimental and effortless because it is informed by the wisdom that there are no beings to liberate. To develop compassion without wisdom, or wisdom without compassion, is bondage, because neither alone can liberate you from attachment to self and other.

Ethical Conduct

Ethical conduct in the Mahāyāna is called skillful means (upāya), because your actions are intended to relieve and liberate beings from suffering. Over time, you develop great skill in liberative technique.

The Six Perfections

As a bodhisattva, you cultivate the inner qualities of a buddha while serving others in bringing them to higher realization. The Six Perfections (Ṣaṭ Pāramitās) are the basic actions of a bodhisattva: 1) generosity (dana), 2) ethical conduct (śīla), 3) acceptance (kṣanti), 4) perseverance (virya), 5) meditative concentration (dhyāna), and 6) wisdom (prājñā). Generosity lifts you out of your self-clinging, and also brings you enough wealth as a result of your good karma so that you have time to practice meditation. Ethical conduct makes you harmless to others, prevents bad rebirths, and provides you with a mental clarity free from guilt and worry, an inner foundation for higher meditative states. Acceptance means freedom from hope and fear, simply allowing whatever is present, a tolerance for the inconceivability of reality. Effort means continuing vigor in mindfulness and practice. Meditative concentration refers to developing meditative absorption in Tranquility Meditation, cultivating inner peace, stability and mental focus through pacifying your emotions. Wisdom is the most important of all, developing the view that in all actions there is no actor, no action, and no one being acted upon.

Mind Training

The Mahāyāna system of Mind Training (Citta Patha) deepens the practices of the Six Perfections to purify you of all negativity. These include practices such as: 1) Seven-Point Cause and Effect (Sapta Krama Hetu Phala), honoring others as having been your loving mother from beginningless past lives, 2) Equalizing and Exchanging (Parātma Parivartana), considering that you are fundamentally the same as others in wishing happiness, 3) Giving Up Self-Cherishing (Anupādāna Ātman), resolving to release self-grasping and, out of compassion for others, always put the interests of other people above your own, 4) Giving and Taking (Dana Graha), visualizing yourself taking in the suffering of others and sending them pure love, and 5) Poison and Antidote (Viṣa Pratipakṣa), finding a poison in your mind, such as a harmful emotion, and learn to cultivate its opposite. In the Mahāyāna, you do not eliminate your obscurations as in the

Common Vehicle through the forceful effort of renouncing them and shunning them away. Instead, by purifying them, eventually they are released.

Meditation

In the Mahāyāna, the motivation for meditation is no longer solely for yourself. Meditation must be motivated out of universal compassion or you will not attain inner awakening.

In Mahāyāna Tranquility Meditation (Śamathā), the first four meditative states taught by the Buddha, the Four Form Absorptions, remain of value to the path. The Four Formless Absorptions, however, are avoided because their intense peace and bliss can too easily lead you to believe that you are enlightened when you are not, and may lead to higher rebirth into impure realms to which you might become attached. Special instructions called the Nine Levels of Mental Stability (Nava Bhūmi) help you to attain the First Absorption, called Even Placement (Samāhita), more easily. Through Tranquility Meditation, you attain a stable, thought-free, single-minded focus with clarity of awareness, the foundation for Insight Meditation.

For Insight Meditation (Vipaśyanā), you meditate on the three veil-penetrating philosophies of the Middle Way, Mind Only, and Buddha Essence, and seek to perceive ultimate reality directly. You see relative truth as conventional, illusory, and leading to suffering, and ultimate truth as stainless and liberating. Insight Meditation is never simply a mind quieted of its thoughts, which alone cannot uproot the core misconception of self and other. Once you perform the deep analysis of Insight Meditation, you can then shift into nonconceptual meditation. The highest Insight Meditation establishes a nonconceptual, bright, clear awareness. Seeing your emotions and thoughts as without any self-existence, they are naturally pacified without forceful effort.

Through the union of Tranquility Meditation and Insight Meditation, you calm your mind and enter a profound meditative absorption, perform an analysis of the Two Truths, and then rest your mind in a deep, nonconceptual meditative absorption on the true nature of reality. It is this union that eliminates all your obscurations and leads to buddhahood.

Results

“The complete, perfect buddha always abides in total absorption.”
- The Profound Play Sūtra

Buddhahood

Buddhahood in the Mahāyāna is far more vast and glorious than in the Common Vehicle, and is more celebrated. The activities of the buddhas are inconceivable. In early Buddhism, a single buddha arises in an era, teaches, and then passes away into nirvāṇa. In the Mahāyāna, buddhas transcend time and space and are innumerable. The Mahāyāna rejects the original Buddhist goal of individual enlightenment ending in peaceful isolation. As a buddha, your Five Aggregates are not released but purified, and you remain eternally engaged in the world to relieve the suffering

of others. You respond to everyone from pure wisdom and compassion so every being can attain buddhahood. You possess incalculable miraculous powers that you use to liberate others.

The Three Dimensions of a Buddha

The vastness of a buddha comprises the Three Dimensions (Tri Kāya, lit. Three Bodies). These dimensions arise spontaneously once you attain enlightenment, and are the means buddhas use for all their infinite liberating activities: 1) the dharmakāya, 2) the saṃbhogakāya, and 3) the nirmāṇakāya.

The Dharmakāya

The dharmakāya (dimension of liberating truth) is the infinite, all-pervasive, expanse of ultimate reality, space-like, which you know to be identical to yourself. It is the unending field of pure primordial consciousness that knows itself. It is subtle, unitary, undifferentiated, indivisible, and without birth and death. It is all the vast good qualities of buddha essence: Purity, Self, Bliss, and Permanence. It is luminous Clear Light, free of the stains of desire, aversion and ignorance. It is inconceivably profound, infinite wisdom and compassion. Its essential quality is radiance. Upon enlightenment, your mind recognizes itself as the dharmakāya. The dharmakāya is the same for all buddhas, and is the eternal and unchanging wellspring for the other two buddha dimensions. It is the unending source of a buddha's wisdom and loving activity, and can grant all desires.

The Saṃbhogakāya

The saṃbhogakāya (dimension of enjoyment) is the emanation of a buddha on the subtle plane, in which you serve higher level bodhisattvas and guide them to enlightenment. As a subtle emanation of a buddha, you emanate a pure buddhafiield, along with a subtle body that is perfect in form, has no intrinsic reality, but manifests eternally out of compassion for those in suffering. You preside with your following of bodhisattvas. It is always simultaneously within the dharmakāya. Its essential quality is spontaneity. Upon enlightenment, you manifest a saṃbhogakāya on the subtle plane. A buddha on this dimension teaches the Dharma according to the Mahāyāna, and its actions are spontaneous and free. From the saṃbhogakāya form of a buddha, highly realized bodhisattvas receive the highest teachings they need to attain realization.

A buddhafiield (buddha kṣetra) is a field of pure enlightened awareness generated out of compassion by a buddha, either on a higher dimension or on earth, that purifies beings who dwell in it. In this way, the purifying activities of a buddha are continuous. Within a buddhafiield, beings are spontaneously developed in their positive thought, virtue, high resolve, and wisdom. Dwelling in your all-embracing buddhafiield, beings can attain enlightenment more quickly.

The Nirmāṇakāya

The nirmāṇakāya (dimension of physical emanation) is the physical emanation of a buddha, existing out of compassion for worldly beings. A nirmāṇakāya has as its basis the dharmakāya, from which it arises out of love and compassion for others, and manifests for the benefit of beings on the earth to liberate them. Its essential quality is unceasing compassion. Upon enlightenment, your physical body transforms into a nirmāṇakāya. A buddha can physically manifest in multiple forms simultaneously to serve others. A nirmāṇakāya is no longer a physical body comprised of karmic conditioning, but an emanation of the dharmakāya. You have no conceptual thoughts and no impure movements, and your actions are spontaneous and effortless. Your speech proclaims the Dharma effortlessly and tirelessly. A nirmāṇakāya is permanent, and always united with the dharmakāya. The purpose of a nirmāṇakāya is to bring beings in this world to renounce saṃsāra and instruct them in how to purify their own obscurations. You also possess miraculous powers which you use to instill inspiration and confidence in the Dharma.

Vows

Bodhisattva Vow - Praṇidhāna Samvara

Take the Bodhisattva Vow by standing in front of an image of the Buddha, or visualizing countless buddhas and bodhisattvas in all directions in space, kneel and recite these verses, first in Sanskrit and then in English:

*viśuddham dhārayiṣyāmi yathā buddhena deśitam
tena jītvā śaṭhamāraṃ prāpya buddhatvam uttamam
bhaveyaṃ bhavakhinnānāṃ śaraṇaṃ sarvadehināṃ*

“I will maintain purity, as taught by the Buddha.
Conquering the demon Mara, and attaining supreme buddhahood,
I vow to be a refuge for all beings, weary of saṃsāra.”

Recite 3x.



Congratulations! You are now a follower of the Mahāyāna. You receive a new bodhisattva name. See the Appendix for a list of Buddhist names.

Bodhisattva Conduct – Bodhisattva Caryā

Your ongoing vows in daily practice are to be mindful of the Bodhisattva Vow, practice the Six Perfections and Mind Training, and seek ways to liberate others from suffering.

Bodhisattva Vow – Praṇidhāna Samvara

Be mindful of the Bodhisattva Vow throughout your day, and strengthen your commitment to attaining enlightenment for the benefit of all beings.

1. Reflect on the importance of liberating all beings from suffering, even though they have no inherent existence.
2. Deepen your commitment.
3. Over time, true aspiration arises spontaneously, fully present with you throughout your day.

The Six Perfections – Ṣaṭ Pāramitās

Practice the Six Perfections each day. Perform these without attachment to any results, to any concept of a self, an action, or a recipient.

1. Generosity – Cultivate selflessness by giving to others. This liberates you from self-grasping.
2. Morality – Practice moral conduct. This makes your mind clear and stable in practice, makes you harmless to others, and keeps you focused on helping others rather than yourself.
3. Acceptance – Accept what happens in your life without hope or fear, because everything is the illusory play of primordial consciousness.
4. Perseverance – Vigorously apply yourself in practice to attain success.
5. Concentration – Cultivate meditative tranquility and profound states of absorption, from which you can realize wisdom.
6. Wisdom – Reflect on and realize: 1) all appearances are empty of inherent self-nature, 2) appearances come from your mind, and 3) your mind is identical to primordial wisdom.

Mind Training - Citta Patha

Seven-Point Cause and Effect – Sapta Krama Hetu Phala

1. Generate equanimity toward all beings.
2. Generate a sense of emotional closeness and intimacy with all beings.
3. Recognize that you cannot bear the suffering of others.
4. Commit yourself personally to end the suffering of all beings.
5. Generate loving kindness.
6. Commit yourself personally to bringing happiness to all beings.
7. Generate bodhicitta - aspire to benefit all beings and liberate them into nirvāṇa.

Equalizing and Exchanging - Parātma Parivartana

1. Reflect deeply on your essential sameness with others - you wish to be happy, and so do all other people.
2. See that you are only one person, while all other beings are infinite in number – their need is greater than your own.

3. See that everyone is interrelated. What happens to one person affects all others.
4. Recognize that all your efforts to make yourself happy by pursuing your own personal happiness above others have been unsuccessful.
5. Understand that if you make an effort to put the happiness of others first, you will eventually attain enlightenment.

Giving Up Self-Cherishing - Anupādāna Ātman

1. Recognize that all great beings such as the Buddha attained enlightenment by letting go of self-cherishing and cherishing the needs of others.
2. Resolve to release self-grasping and, out of compassion for others, put the welfare of other people above your own.

Giving and Taking – Dana Graha

When you see someone who is in suffering in some way:

1. Visualize yourself as Avalokiteśvara, the bodhisattva of compassion.
2. Visualize a white, flaming hot *hriḥ* seed syllable in your heart center.
3. Visualize pulling a black cloud of negative energies of the other person through your nose and down to your heart, where it is completely burned.
4. Visualize sending out a white mist from your heart to the other person, and imagine that they become pure and happy.



hriḥ

Poison and Antidote - Viṣa Pratipakṣa

1. Reflect on the emotional and mental obscurations that hold you back from buddhahood.
2. Choose an obscuration, and purify it by developing its antidote. For desire, reflect on ugliness. For aversion, reflect on love. For ignorance, reflect on Dependent Origination. For jealousy, reflect on yourself as equal to others. For pride, practice Exchanging Yourself and Others.

Daily Conduct - Caryā

After rising from your meditative absorption, in post meditation go about your day with a mindfulness that brings you clarity of awareness in all your activities. In your Illusion-Like

Samādhi (Bhrānti Samādhi), perceive all appearances absorbed in an awareness that they are not substantively real but illusions. You see everything as empty of self-nature, like a dream generated by your mind, or as pure and perfect buddha wisdom.

Exercises

Perform the following exercises for at least a month will prepare you well for Tantric practices.

Suggested Items

Add to your altar in your sacred space:

1. A copy of a Mahāyāna sūtra.
2. An image or images of Mahāyāna buddhas and bodhisattvas to whom you feel devotion.

Wisdom – Prajñā

Develop wisdom each day by contemplating the profound insights of the Mahāyāna sūtras.

Benefits: You realize the pervasiveness of suffering and cultivate ways to help all beings.

Time: 1-2 hours per week; continuously.

Opening Practices - Sevā

Begin each practice session with the following:

1. Recite the Refuge Vow.

buddham śaraṇam gacchāmi
dharmam śaraṇam gacchāmi
saṅgham śaraṇam gacchāmi

“I go for refuge to the Buddha.”

“I go for refuge to the Dharma.”

“I go for refuge to the Saṅgha.”

Recite 3x.



2. Recite the Bodhisattva Vow.

*viśuddhaṃ dhārayiṣyāmi yathā buddhena deśitaṃ
tena jītvā śaṭhamāraṃ prāpya buddhatvam uttamaṃ
bhaveyaṃ bhavakhinnānāṃ śaraṇaṃ sarvadehināṃ*

“I will maintain purity, as taught by the Buddha.
Conquering the demon Mara, and attaining supreme buddhahood,
I vow to be a refuge for all beings, weary of saṃsāra.”

Recite 3x.



3. Practice Meditation on the Buddhas.

Benefits: Develops strong aspiration for enlightenment, purifies obscurations.

Time: 9 minutes.

Meditation on the Buddhas - Buddhānu Smṛiti

Meditate on Buddha Amitābha and his pure realm of Sukhāvātī. You can also perform this devotional practice with other buddhas.

1. Visualize Amitābha in front of you: He is red, with one face, two arms, wears the flowing garments of a buddha, and sits on a red lotus. His hands are in the Gesture of Meditation (Dhyāna Mudrā). The bodhisattvas Avalokiteśvara and Mañjuśrī stand to his left and right.
2. With devotion, recite his mantra *oṃ amideva hriḥ* many times.
3. Pray to Amitābha for what you desire.
4. Dissolve the visualization into emptiness.

Benefits: You receive the protection and blessings of one of the greatest buddhas.

Time: 5 minutes.



Meditation - Samādhi

Tranquility Meditation - Śamathā

Tranquility Meditation follows the same practices of the Common Vehicle, but adds a refinement of steps leading progressively to the attainment of the First Absorption. It is up to you how you want to structure the amount of time you spend on each step. This method is called The Nine Levels of Mental Stability (Nava Bhūmi):

1. Sitting in a meditative posture, begin by expelling stale air three times from your lungs, exhaling completely and with a little more force than usual. Keep your mind effortfully focused to cut through distractions and establish nonconceptual absorption. To correct drowsiness, gaze upward. To correct agitation, gaze downward.
2. Meditate on a statue of the Buddha. Continue this practice until you attain some degree of meditative stability, not allowing your mind to wander.



3. Shift your focus of awareness and meditate on your breath.
4. Follow the Nine Levels of Mental Stability:
 - a. Setting the Mind (Citta Sthāpana) – Pull your mind away from external objects and all distractions, and place your mind on the breath.
 - b. Continuous Setting (Sam Sthāpana) – When your mind wanders, return your focus on the breath. Thoughts and emotions become quieter and less disturbing, your focus remains longer.
 - c. Resetting (Ava Sthāpana) – You have only occasional outer distractions and disturbing thoughts, and confidence in practice. You are clearly aware when distracting thoughts arise, and you return to your focus right away. You attain a stable focus on breathing.
 - d. Close Setting (Upa Sthāpana) – Your focus shifts from stability to attaining sharpness and clarity. You deepen your focus on avoiding agitation and drowsiness.
 - e. Disciplining (Damana) – Your work of meditation shifts from struggle to harmony and joy as you feel the benefits of practice. You perceive disruptive outer or inner perceptions as they arise with their faults, and you avoid projecting your own emotional obscurations onto them.
 - f. Pacifying (Śamana) – Your joy in meditation becomes stronger. Your focus is squarely on your own mind. You consider the negative power of distracting thoughts, taking care not to project your emotions onto perceptions before they arise.
 - g. Thoroughly Pacifying (Vyupa Śamana) – Your mind's thoughts become quieter and more still, with only occasional disruptions. You quiet disturbing thoughts and emotions as they arise.
 - h. One Pointedness (Ekotī Karaṇa) – You have quieted disturbing thoughts and emotions, but you must still make some effort to keep your awareness on your breath. Your concentration becomes stronger.

i. Equipose (Samādhāna) – Your mind is spontaneously still, undistracted with single-minded focus, and vibrantly awake. You are centered in yourself, at peace, in a simple, thought-free, nondual meditative absorption.

5. Meditate on the Four Form Absorptions as taught in Chapter 1: The Common Vehicle.

Benefits: Develops inner peace and bliss. The final result after attaining these levels is the First Absorption, called Even Placement.

Time: 20 to 60 minutes.

Insight Meditation - Vipayśanā

Insight Meditation is developed through progressively cultivating understanding and ultimately directly perceiving the views of emptiness, mind only, and buddha essence. Begin by reading a few pages of a Mahāyāna text that describes the true reality, such as *The Heart Sūtra*, Vasubandhu's verses on Mind Only, or Asaṅga's *The Supreme Continuum*, reflect on it, and gain a strong conviction about its truth.

1. Meditate on emptiness:

a. Sitting in meditation, see the world of relative truth where appearances seem to have self-nature. See that all appearances arise due to karmic conditioning, and they are of the nature of suffering. This is saṃsāra.

b. Releasing attachment to relative truth, do not see a self, sensations or any appearances as having a self-nature of any kind. Do not accept, grasp, or reject anything. Do not rest your awareness on any single appearance. Do not conceptualize anything.

c. Attaining meditative absorption, rest in nonconceptual samādhi.

d. Allow the ultimate truth of emptiness to arise spontaneously in your awareness. Appearances and emptiness are inseparable. As emotions arise, relax into them, and see their empty nature. As thoughts arise, relax into them, and see their empty nature. As nonconceptual awareness dawns, your obscurations dissolve. The complete, direct perception of emptiness is to perceive no appearances at all. This is nirvāṇa.

e. Recognizing that beings are in suffering through their attachment to a false belief in a self and to empty appearances, allow compassion to arise naturally. Nondual awareness free of self and other spontaneously dawns. Your perception returns to the world of appearances. Seeing all beings as illusions, you avoid saṃsāra's traps, but you remain out of compassion for others.

f. When you know there are no buddhas, you are a buddha.

2. Meditate on mind only:

a. Perceive that outer objects are mind only.

b. Determine that no outer objects are ever perceived.

c. Determine that a mind that cognizes objects is not perceived.

d. Unable to perceive either objects or a consciousness that perceives them, rest in nondual absorption.

e. Recognizing that beings are in suffering through their attachment to false belief in a self and to appearances as mental projections, allow compassion to arise naturally. Nondual awareness free

of self and other spontaneously dawns. Your perception returns to the world of appearances. Seeing all beings as illusions, you avoid saṃsāra's traps, but you remain out of compassion for others.

f. When you know everything is the stainless nature of mind, you are a buddha.

3. Meditate on buddha essence:

a. Meditate with devotion on buddha essence. Confident that the true nature of ultimate reality possesses the transcendent qualities of Permanence, Bliss, Self, and Purity, you rest naturally and evenly in peaceful nonconceptuality, without fixing on any object of focus.

b. Direct perception of the Clear Light of primordial wisdom dawns.

c. You recognize your karmic obscurations as illusory, and your obscurations dissolve.

d. As your realization deepens, you see all appearances as completely illusory. Nothing to remove, nothing to add - no appearances ever arise. False appearances fall away. You no longer meditate "on" ultimate reality but *are* ultimate reality itself.

e. Recognizing that beings are in suffering through their attachment to a false belief in a self and to appearances that have no existence at all, allow compassion to arise naturally. Nondual awareness free of self and other spontaneously dawns. Your perception returns to the world of appearances. Seeing all beings as illusions, you avoid saṃsāra's traps, but you remain out of compassion for others.

f. When you know you are already a buddha, you are a buddha.

Benefits: Cultivates buddha wisdom leading to omniscience.

Time: 20 to 60 minutes.

The Union of Tranquility Meditation and Insight Meditation – Yuga Naddha

1. As you develop yourself in ever-deeper levels of meditative absorption, reflect on the true nature of things through the philosophies of the Middle Way, Mind Only, and Buddha Essence.

2. Attain nonconceptual absorption in Tranquility Meditation. Your mind is stable and focused.

3. While maintaining your meditative absorption from Tranquility Meditation, attain clarity of awareness through Insight Meditation. Your mind is bright, still, and clear.

4. You attain the indistinguishable union of tranquility and insight, and rest effortlessly in that awareness. After three incalculable eons of practice, you attain perfect buddhahood.

Benefits: Cultivates inner peace and wisdom that leads to inner awakening.

Time: 20 to 60 minutes.

Closing Practices - Visarjana

Dedication of Merit - Pariṇamana

At the end of all practice sessions, end with a prayer dedicating the merit you generated be passed on to benefit all beings. Recite the following prayer, in Sanskrit and in English:

punyaṃ prabhūtaṃ yad ihāpi sarvaṃ sambodhaye tat pariṇāmayāmi
“I dedicate all merit arisen here for the goal of complete and perfect enlightenment.”



Benefits: The merit you gained from practice helps limitless beings.

Time: 1 minute.

Group Sacred Sex Ritual – Maithuna Maṇḍala Vidhi

The following is a group sacred sex ritual in the tradition of the Mahāyāna.

Suggested Items

Set up your sacred space as described in Chapter 1: The Common Vehicle, with additional items for each person in your group. You can also add the additional Mahāyāna items to the altar.

Pillows: Place pillows in a circle around the room for each of the participants, in sets of two. Women sit on the left pillow, men on the right. The leading couple sits in the center.

Personal Preparation

Prepare yourselves as in the couples sacred sex ritual in Chapter 1: The Common Vehicle.

Conduct of the Ritual

1. Sit on your cushions and face your lover.
2. Recite the Refuge Vow.

buddham śaraṇam gacchāmi
dharmam śaraṇam gacchāmi
saṅgham śaraṇam gacchāmi

“I go for refuge to the Buddha.”
“I go for refuge to the Dharma.”
“I go for refuge to the Saṅgha.”

Recite 3x.



3. Recite the Bodhisattva Vow.

*viśuddhaṃ dhārayiṣyāmi yathā buddhena deśitaṃ
tena jītvā śaṭhamāraṃ prāpya buddhatvam uttamaṃ
bhaveyaṃ bhavakhinnānāṃ śaraṇaṃ sarvadehināṃ*

“I will maintain purity, as taught by the Buddha.
Conquering the demon Mara, and attaining supreme buddhahood,
I vow to be a refuge for all beings, weary of saṃsāra.”

Recite 3x.



4. Practice Tranquility Meditation as practiced in the Mahāyāna tradition.
5. Practice Insight Meditation as practiced in the Mahāyāna tradition.
6. Invoke the blessings of the buddhas and ask them for what you desire in your life.
“We invoke the buddhas, and ask for their guidance and inspiration during the ritual.”
7. Invoke the gods of love, Kāma and Ratī, and ask for their support during the ritual.
“We invoke the gods of love, Kāma and Ratī, and ask for your support during the ritual.”
8. Bow to your lover with Añjali Mudrā.



9. Give gifts to each other, and crown each other with a wreath of flowers.
10. To stimulate the sense of hearing, share words of affection for each other.
11. To stimulate the sense of sight, each woman gets up from her seat and dances for her lover. She sits down. Each man gets up from his seat and dances for his lover. He sits down.
12. To stimulate the sense of smell, offer each other a garland of fragrant flowers.
13. To stimulate the sense of taste, she moves to sit on his lap; offer each other food and drink.
14. To stimulate the sense of touch, offer each other sensual pleasing touches.
15. Arouse each other through erotic touches and pleasing your partner with your mouth.

16. With your lover, make love to each other. Use the various positions as you enjoy them.
17. After 10 minutes, bow to your lover with Añjali Mudrā.



18. The women move to their left and begin again with a new partner, repeating steps 15-17. Let your mind be free of any judgements of your partners.
19. When all the women have made love with all the men, the circle is completed.
20. The woman returns to her original partner, and you cuddle together.
21. Give thanks to the buddhas and dismiss them.
“We give thanks to the buddhas for their guidance and inspiration. You are dismissed.”
22. Give thanks to the gods of love, Kāma and Ratī, and dismiss them.
“We give thanks to the gods of love, Kāma and Ratī. You are dismissed.”
23. The group bows to the lead couple in the center with Añjali Mudrā.



24. Recite the Dedication of Merit, dedicating the merit of your lovemaking to all beings.

puṇyaṃ prabhūtaṃ yad ihāpi sarvaṃ saṃbodhaye tat pariṇāmayāmi
“I dedicate all merit arisen here for the goal of complete and perfect enlightenment.”



Benefits: You develop inner peace and bliss, and win the support of the buddhas.

Time: About 4 hours; 2 hours to prepare and 2 hours for practice.



Chapter 3.

The Path of Transformation: The Vajrayāna

**“Delighting in the rapture between lotus and vajra – enjoying that,
who in the Three Worlds could not have their hopes fulfilled?”
- Saraha, *The People’s Song***

Journey to the Master



Having passed through the hilly forests of Odra and coming to a clearing, the young man found over a hundred disciples living in Śabara’s community. Most were naked except for their jewelry, much of it made of simple materials like vines and shells. They came from many parts of India, from many castes and ages, but all were now members of one family or kula, all equals. He noted their kindness and generosity, and the unmistakable bliss that shined from their eyes.

Śabara, a scholar and adopted member of the local Śabara tribe, radiant with inner light, sat quietly under a canopy of large trees, on an antelope skin carpet and a cushion of kuśa grass. The young man spoke to him of his journey and his determination to attain the ultimate. With a peaceful smile, Śabara performed the ritual of a guru accepting a disciple. He then selected a consort for him, and said he would teach him *The Sādhana of Secret Vajravilāsinī*.

Introduction

“What is Tantra’s purpose? It is the means of achieving all desired aims - the worldly powers that are the good qualities of the desire realm, and the supreme achievement, the wisdom of the buddhas.”

- Vīravajra, *A Sign of the Lighted Goal*

Tantric Buddhism, called the Vajrayāna (Adamantine Path or Vehicle), promises something no Buddhist had ever openly dreamed of: the fulfillment of all your personal desires, *and* enlightenment for yourself and all beings. Put most simply, *Tantric Buddhism promises you everything you could ever want.*

Tantric Buddhism is a philosophy, a set of practices, and a lifestyle for rapid spiritual growth. These ways are not found in the sūtras of the Common Vehicle or the Mahāyāna, but in the Tantras. They are advanced because in order to be most effective, you need a foundation in the principles and practices of the first two vehicles. Developed in meditation and wisdom, and motivated out of oceanic love and compassion, you perform these practices to end your own suffering, enjoy the pleasures of the world, and bring bliss to all beings. It is the quickest path to awakening, and the only one in which *you can attain complete enlightenment in a single lifetime.*

Embracing the Sacredness of Life

The Vajrayāna affirms the sacredness of life itself. It teaches that you do not have to reject this world to live in bliss - only your own emotional and mental obscurations are impure. Though firmly rooted in the essential philosophy of the Mahāyāna, Tantric Buddhism holds its own distinct, radically life-affirming philosophy and values. The Tantras ground their philosophy most strongly in the teachings of Buddha Essence, but take a dramatic turn from that philosophy as well - they declare that all appearances are real and primordially pure. This “Tantric” Mahāyāna contrasts with the orthodox Mahāyāna position that stresses appearances as fundamentally illusory and impure. While recognizing that suffering in this world is often great, Tantric philosophy soundly rejects the idea that this world is in any way *inherently* suffering.

For the Buddha, desire and craving are synonymous - the cause of suffering. In the Tantric tradition, however, they are completely different. Compulsive craving must be transformed, but desire undefiled by emotional and mental obscurations is a virtue to be pursued intently. All Buddhists agree that you must release your attachment to sensual pleasures in order to find inner peace and happiness. In the Vajrayāna, however, while attachment leads to suffering, *pure desire without attachment leads to bliss.*

While the orthodox Mahāyāna teaches you to avoid worldly pleasures, the Vajrayāna embraces them as the most powerful path to inner awakening. The Common Vehicle *shuts down* the senses, the Mahāyāna *neutralizes* the senses, and the Vajrayāna *opens* the senses and floods them with bliss. In the sūtras, the principal motivation for practice is negative: the dangers of saṃsāra lead you fearfully to practice. This is the “stick” approach: if you do not practice, you will suffer. But the Tantras offer another inspiration, the “carrot” approach: the Tantric yogas are so

pleasurable you will *want* to practice. Renouncing life leads too easily to repression and self-hatred. The purpose of life is not to negate it, but to *enjoy its gifts*.

The Superiority of the Vajrayāna

The Vajrayāna is the path of *transformation*. You do not renounce the world as in the Common Vehicle, but you do renounce suffering. You do not merely purify yourself of negativity as in the orthodox Mahāyāna, but you are profoundly purified. Above all, you rapidly transform yourself into a buddha by harnessing the incomparable power of *bliss*. According to the Tantras, Tantric Buddhism is superior to both the individual way of the Common Vehicle and the universal way of the Mahāyāna. It offers many methods, each one designed for the specific needs of practitioners. It avoids the hardships of three eons of slow inner perfection. It is clear, direct, enjoyable, fast, and its power is indestructible. Men and women are equally capable of attaining the highest realization. No matter how terrible your actions have been in the past, your karmic stains can be quickly wiped away.

History

“Thus have I heard: at one time the Blessed Lord was dwelling in the vulvas of the adamantine ladies, the essence of the body, speech and mind of all the buddhas.”

- *Guhyasamāja Tantra*

Between 200 and 1200 CE, a new class of revealed Buddhist texts emerged in India: the Tantras. The original class, the sūtras (lit. thread), are each a single “thread” of teaching. But the Tantras (lit. weavings) are manuals that richly “weave together” many threads of teachings and practices to create a powerful and dynamic path to enlightenment. These texts were influenced by the dramatic growth in popularity of the Hindu Tantras that pre-date them. The Buddhist Tantras are regarded by their followers as the authentic words of the buddhas that both complement and supersede the sūtras. For Buddhism, the Tantras signal a profound new shift in philosophy, practice and lifestyle. And yet, as they draw from the well of the world’s oldest spiritual path, they are a *rediscovery* and a *restatement* in Buddhist terms of the original Tantric worldview of early humans.

Around the 400s CE, a fully Tantric civilization blossomed in India, and Tantra dominated and saturated the culture for 800 years. The sensual and erotic sculptures found all over the temples of medieval India demonstrate a popular movement receiving rich royal patronage. Over the centuries, countless Hindu Tantric lineages practiced with great vigor, producing talented spiritual masters generation after generation. Buddhist masters, receiving their own revelations, soon had Tantras of their own. By the late 700s, the Vajrayāna emerged as a movement with its own distinct identity.

Tantric Buddhism grew up alongside the monasteries, and its gurus eventually stripped them of their dominant influence. Remarkably, the monasteries did not resist the siddhas and their orgiastic communities, but supported them. The siddhas became their heroes, and the major

source of debate was over how to integrate Tantric practices into the monasteries without completely destroying the monastic tradition itself. Monks found many ways of accommodation, including practicing the Tantras before or after living in a monastery, spending time away from the monastery in Tantric communities, practicing Tantric rituals in the monasteries in secret, and practicing sexual yoga only with visualized consorts. Over time, monks created Tantric rituals in which the physical sexual practices were left out. But few monks who accepted the Tantric path rejected the sexual rituals outright, and they continued to leave the monasteries to learn from the siddhas and attain inner awakening.

Tantric Philosophy in India and Tibet

The life-affirming philosophy of Tantric Buddhism is called the Innate (Sahaja - lit. co-arising). It teaches that both ultimate reality and appearances are truly real, pure, and to be erotically enjoyed. Although the monasteries were strongly influenced by the Tantras and the siddhas, the Innate did not develop as a distinct philosophy among scholars in India. The scholars clung to their textual traditions and ignored it, but they also honored it quietly as a philosophy to be lived rather than a philosophy to be thought about. Though based on the *Hevajra Tantra* and running through the teachings of major siddhas like Saraha, without a formal tradition of scholars to develop and defend it, the Innate remained part of the oral tradition of practitioners, embedded in the Tantras and the songs of the siddhas, embodied in the Tantric communities (kulas), and respected at a distance by the monasteries.

When Buddhism came to Tibet, the teachings on the Innate influenced the similar Great Perfection teachings of the Nyingmas. But the other lineages, led by scholar-monks, principally carried on the philosophical traditions of the Indian monasteries. Tantra became viewed as not having a philosophy of its own, but simply a set of practices. Many Tibetan teachers also reverted to the conservative, orthodox view of the Mahāyāna which the Indian siddhas had rejected centuries earlier. The Innate was not recognized as a philosophy in its own right, but erroneously subsumed under the philosophy of Buddha Essence established by Dolpopa called Empty of Other (Tib. Shentong), and called Tantric Shentong, and partially absorbed into the practices of Mahāmudrā. *Great Bliss* is one of the first books to present the Innate as an independent philosophy at the apex of the Buddhist tradition. Previous discussions of Innate philosophy include Herbert Guenther's works, David Snellgrove's *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism* (1987), S. K. Hookham's *The Buddha Within* (1991), Roger Jackson's *Tantric Treasures* (2004), and it is a theme that runs through Jamgön Kongtrul's (1813-1899) *Treasury of Knowledge*. *Great Bliss* is the most complete presentation of this extraordinary but little known philosophy.

The Four Classes of Tantras

Indian Buddhists generally categorize the Tantras into four classes: 1) Kriyā (Action) Tantra, 2) Caryā (Performance) Tantra, 3) Yoga (Union) Tantra, and 4) Yoginī (Goddess) Tantra. These classes developed sequentially over time, but each type remained popular and was practiced throughout Tantric Buddhist communities and monasteries in India. The two earlier classes of

Tantras were composed by monks, the later Tantras by the siddhas. The early Tantras contain no new philosophical speculations, while the later Tantras virtually transcend Buddhism itself.

Kriyā Tantra

The Kriyā Tantras (Action Tantras) focus on rituals to attain worldly magical powers (siddhis). The principal practice is to invoke the presence of the buddhas and their retinue of deities called a maṇḍala (sacred circle), worship and make offerings, recite mantras (magical words), and request magical abilities. A feature of these early Tantras is that the benefits you attain depend on the Buddha Family you worship. The most important Tantra in this class is the *Mañjuśrī Mūla Kalpa (The Mañjuśrī Root Ritual)*. Another highly regarded Kriyā Tantra is the *Susiddhikara Sūtra (The Means of Good Accomplishment Sūtra)*, which includes instructions for invoking female spirits for ritual lovemaking, as sexual rituals were always an element, though not a dominating one, of early Tantric Buddhist practice. These Tantras arose around the 200s CE.

Caryā Tantra

The Caryā Tantras (Performance Tantras) use highly complex and lengthy rituals to transform you into a buddha. The principle deity is surrounded by an extensive retinue of buddhas and bodhisattvas in the maṇḍala. For the first time, the principal activity is not just worshipping but *becoming* the deity. Your goals are to attain magical powers and purification to facilitate your evolution into a buddha over many lifetimes. The major text in this class is the *Mahāvairocana Abhisambodhi Tantra (The Tantra of the Complete and Highest Enlightenment of the Great Vairocana)*. Some Caryā Tantras include praises of sex as an offering to the buddhas. These Tantras begin to appear around the mid 600s.

Yoga Tantra

The Yoga Tantras (Union Tantras) are marked by a strong intention to attain enlightenment in a single lifetime in addition to worldly magical powers, and these mark a truly new path in Buddhism called the Vajrayāna. They use deities with maṇḍalas comprising predominantly male deities and retinues. The first phase of this class includes the *Sarva Tathāgata Tattva Saṃgraha (The Compendium of Categories of All Buddhas)* as the most important. By attaining the state of the vajradhātu (aka the dharmadhātu – lit. sphere of ultimate reality, same as the dharmakāya), you attain union not with a single buddha, but with the essential adamant nature of all buddhas. This Tantra refers to “the yoga of the union of the two organs,” i.e., sexual yoga, and praises desire as sacred - clearly establishing a different philosophy than the conventional Mahāyāna. It also introduces vows of conduct that reject conventional social rules (vāmācāra). The *Sarva Durgati Parisōdhana Tantra (The Elimination of All Evil Destinies Tantra)* includes sexual yoga and the rituals of the higher Tantric consecrations. These emerged in the late 600s.

Key differences mark the early Yoga Tantras and the later Yoga Tantras (sometimes called the Mahāyoga Tantras). In the early Yoga Tantras, the sexual practices are kept quietly secret, while

in the later ones they are so brashly prominent they astonish their readers. These Tantras introduce deity yoga visualization practices with deities in sexual union. Deity yoga, which was the main practice in all previous Tantras, becomes the first of two stages called the Creation Stage. The second, the Completion Stage, is introduced, which includes practices for meditating directly on ultimate reality to quickly attain enlightenment. For the first time, sexual yoga (Karmamudrā) is presented as a *requirement* for attaining enlightenment, and the highest meditative practice is Clear Light Yoga (Prabhāsvara Yoga). The *Guyhasamāja Tantra*, the most important of the later Yoga Tantras, stresses the inherently erotic qualities of buddhahood. The practice of performing transgressive social actions to liberate you from stifling cultural behaviors is elevated to an important principle of daily conduct. They arose around the early 700s.

Yoginī Tantra

In the fourth and highest class, the Yoginī Tantras (Goddess Tantras), the main instrument for attaining enlightenment is the wisdom and bliss of feminine energy. The retinues of the deities of the maṇḍalas are predominantly female, and the bestowal of power in the consecrations is often performed by female deities. Female deities are regarded as inherently superior to males in their ability to bestow bliss, which gives the Yoginī Tantras an edge over the earlier Tantras. This class is the first to introduce the Wisdom Consecration with a physical consort, in which you use the secret power of orgasm to attain liberation. Strongly influenced by the Hindu Śaiva Tantras, they include the popular fierce deity practices of Hevajra, Cakrasamvara, Vajrayoginī, and many others. The retinues of their maṇḍalas, the ḍākinīs, are also fierce; they wear jewelry made of cremation ground bone ornaments, and fervently consume human flesh and blood.

The Yoginī Tantras present the philosophy of the Innate (Sahaja), the key doctrine of the Vajrayāna. In this class of Tantras, as historian David Snellgrove writes, “Hindu and Buddhist notions are often intermingled” in their philosophy. They teach the most powerful and fastest of all Tantric paths, presenting the Creation and Completion Stages in an integrated system called the Four Yogas (Catur Mudrā). The two principle texts in this class are the *Hevajra Tantra* and *Cakrasamvara Tantra (The Circle of Bliss Tantra)*. The Yoginī Tantras, first revealed around the late 700s, quickly dominated the Tantric Buddhist world, leading many to inner awakening.



Masters of the Vajrayāna

“Desire is the root of suffering.”

- The Buddha, *The Connected Collection*

“I never wanted liberation by abandoning desire.”

- King Indrabhūti

Lakṣmīṅkarā



Lakṣmīṅkarā (Provider of Fortune; c. late 700s), a princess of Udyāna (modern Swat Valley, Pakistan), was one of the founding yoginīs of the Vajrayāna. Arranged to be married at an early age, she refused and went off to practice Tantric meditation in a cremation ground for seven years, finally attaining enlightenment. Her brother King Indrabhūti was her Tantric guru, consort, and student. When townspeople scorned her for having sex with her own brother, she cut off her head and paraded it through the streets to demonstrate her realization. She is credited with the transmission of *The Six Texts of Vajravārāhī*, a set of sādhanas to the goddess Vajrayoginī. In *The Attainment of Nonduality*, Lakṣmīṅkarā teaches that enlightenment can be realized not through renunciation or over-reliance on ritual but through honoring the sacredness of daily life and worshipping your own body as a source of pleasure and bliss -

a landmark in the history of Buddhist thought. In addition to her brother, her other principal students were Sahajayoginīcintā, Virūpa, Jālandhara, Līlāvajra, and Dārika. Nine of her texts are included in the Tibetan collection of commentaries known as the Tengyur.

Indrabhūti



Indrabhūti (Lord of Spirits; c. late 700s) was the king of Śambhala in the once-famous Tantric region of Udyāna. After meeting with some monks in his palace, he asked them to show him a path to enlightenment that did not require him to renounce his harem. They refused, but in response to his prayers, he received the *Guhyasamāja Tantra* as a revelation. Through sexual pleasure he attained enlightenment, and converted the region to the Vajrayāna. He attained the indestructible body and disappeared with his harem into the buddhfields. A master of both the Yoga Tantras and Yoginī Tantras, his most well known text is *The Accomplishment of Wisdom*, a commentary on the *Guhyasamāja Tantra*. Indrabhūti's guru and main disciple was his sister Lakṣmīṅkarā; his other principle students included Dhanarakṣita and Kukkuripa. Thirty texts in the Tibetan Tengyur are by him.

Sahajayoginīcintā



Sahajayoginīcintā (c. late 700s), whose name means “Spontaneous Jewel-like Yoginī,” worked as a wine merchant to King Indrabhūti in Udyāna, and later became a swine herder. She wrote an important early text on the philosophy of sexual yoga, *Realization of Reality through the Body*. This work establishes the principles of how erotic bliss is transformed into enlightenment, and is regarded as one of the most foundational texts of Tantric Buddhism. Her gurus were Princess Lakṣmīkarā and Prince Vīṇā, and she was a lineage holder of a practice tradition of Cakrasamvara. An expert on supreme bliss, she had many disciples - among the most renowned include Ḍombīheruka, Anaṅgavajra, and Ghaṇṭapa.

Saraha



Saraha (c. late 700s) is widely honored as the greatest of all Tantric Buddhist siddhas. He was the first master of the Yoginī Tantras and its highest practice of Mahāmudrā. His name means “He Who Shot the Arrow,” as he pierced the illusion of dualistic thought to see reality clearly. Born a brahmin in Orissa, after years as abbot of Nālandā University, Saraha left the monastery and became a yogi. His principle guru was his wife and Tantric consort, an arrow-making yoginī named Hedharmā - out of devotion to her he took his name from the name of her caste. With her as his guide, Saraha attained enlightenment. Saraha was the lineage founder of the practice of Cakrasamvara, which became the most popular Tantric Buddhist deity practice in India. Saraha is also one of the greatest poets of all time. He is most famous for his brilliant songs of realization (dohās), popularly known as *The People’s Song*, *The Queen’s Song*, and *The King’s Song*. Saraha’s two most important students were Nāgārjuna, a master of the Yoga Tantras, and Śabara, a master of the Yoginī Tantras. He composed twenty-six texts preserved in the Tibetan Tengyur.

Tilopa



Tilopa’s name (Tib.; Skt. Tilo; 988-1069) means “Sesame Seed Man,” as he attained enlightenment while at his profession of pounding sesame seeds. Originally a brahmin priest and king from Bengal, Tilopa became a Buddhist monk and scholar at Somapuri but eventually left his monastery to study with Tantric masters. His most important guru was Sitāryavatī (White Excellent Lady; Tib. Karpo Sangmo), a yoginī from whom he received the Tantric consecrations and guided him in his path; his other teachers included Matāṅgi, Lalapa, and Nagpopa. Tilopa worked for his consort Dārimā (Courtesan), a prostitute, attracting clients. Tilopa’s

main deity practice was Cakrasamvara, and he was a lineage holder of many teachings including the Mahāmudrā instructions of Saraha. Through a vision of the primordial Buddha Vajradhara, Tilopa received direct teachings on Mahāmudrā and finally attained enlightenment. He had nine great disciples, of which his principle student was Nāropa. With dark skin and protruding, blood-shot eyes, Tilopa was a master of using magical powers to bring liberation. Tilopa’s Four Transmissions (Tib. Kagyu) of teachings include: 1) Great Seal (Mahāmudrā), 2) Inner Heat (Caṇḍālī), 3) Clear Light (Prabhāsvara), and 4) sexual yoga (Karmamudrā). Seven of his texts are in the Tibetan Tengyur.

Nāropa



Born to a royal brahmin family in Kashmir, as abbot of Nālandā University, Nāropa (Tib.; Skt. Nāḍa; Roar; 1016-1100) became the most renowned scholar of his time, but at his monastery he failed to realize the Dharma’s true meaning. After a vision of the goddess Vajrayoginī, he was compelled to face his lack of inner awakening, and left to study with his guru Tilopa. After twelve years of severe trials, Tilopa broke Nāropa of his pride and he attained enlightenment. Nāropa’s major deity practice was Cakrasamvara. His consort was the Tantric master Niguma (Tib.; Skt. Niguptā; Unguarded). Nāropa taught a system of Completion Stage practices famously known as the Six Yogas of Nāropa, which include sexual yoga as a core practice. Among his many important students were Śāntipa, Maitrīgupta, and the Tibetan master

Marpa. Twelve hundred of his disciples attained enlightenment, of which a thousand were women and two hundred men. Over thirty of his texts are in the Tengyur.

Philosophy

“The way of beings is the inconceivable play of the buddhas.”

- Cakrasamvara Tantra

When You Perceive Reality as Both Unchanging Essence and Changing Appearance, You Attain Buddhahood

Dancing with Reality

Tantric Buddhist philosophy arises from the wisdom revealed in the Tantras and popularized by the siddhas. Tantra accepts the Mahāyāna teaching that you can never understand reality, but adds, *you can dance with it*. It overturns all previous Buddhist teachings of rejecting life, pleasure, and the body. It boldly affirms the sacredness of desire, enlightened love, bliss, eroticism and spontaneous play. The Vajrayāna is called “the indestructible path” because the path and its goal are *indestructible*, and the name is a demonstrable rejection of other Buddhist

teachings on existence as being “impermanent.” It destroys the illusions of saṃsāra so you can perceive and enjoy the true nature of reality, which is *both* the formless expanse of the dharmakāya *and* the pleasurable world of the senses.

The Innate

Reality is Both Unchanging Essence and Changing Appearance

The Innate (Sahaja – lit. co-arising) is a dynamic vision of primordial wisdom as a blissful and active power in the world. Sahaja means “the Innate” because it expresses how primordial consciousness is innately present within all levels of reality. It is the spontaneous creativity of ultimate reality within the joyous world of appearances. The Innate is the ecstasy of intrinsic reality, not caused or conditioned by anything but always fully present, overflowing and awesome in its immensity. It is also a state of spontaneous love, play, and erotic aliveness. The Innate perceives life as essentially good, enjoyable, and blissful. It is immediate, authentic presence, and deep, ecstatic aliveness. It is unchanging bliss and delightful involvement in the world for yourself and others without attachment. It is līlā, the divine creative play of ultimate reality, and vilāsa, erotic play. The Innate is the essential philosophical foundation for Tantra that leads to inner awakening.

The Innate wipes away the misconceptions of the spiritual path common in many religions influenced by the Axial Age: that life is not sacred and a mistake, that the point of the spiritual path is to renounce the world, and that the final goal is to return to the state of being uncreated. It destroys completely any idea that the act of creation from Source is not passionate - *ultimate reality is intensely passionate, and the worlds it creates are passionate as well.*

Four major characteristics comprise the Innate:

1. Pure Appearance (Evaṃ) - Appearances are real, pure, and erotic.
2. Great Passion (Mahārāga) – Desire is real, pure, and erotic.
3. Essence (Tattva) – Ultimate reality is real, pure, and erotic.
4. Great Bliss (Mahāsukha) – Great Bliss is the erotic union of ultimate bliss and worldly bliss.

Pure Appearance

For the Innate, appearances are real, pure, and erotic (Evaṃ). In the Middle Way, Mind Only, and Buddha Essence philosophies, *appearances have no value* to them – your goal is simply to avoid attachment. In the Innate, however, *appearances have value* – they are sacred manifestations of the cosmic play of ultimate reality.

Appearances are Real

Appearances are *real* - they are neither karmically constructed nor lacking in true existence. While they are without an independent self-existence - the naïve, ordinary view of the world as consisting of separately existing objects is still rejected - they do possess the same essence of ultimate reality, which makes them real. Ultimate reality, the *Hevajra Tantra* says, “is the imperishable supreme.” And all beings, the text reveals, possess the “intrinsic nature” of ultimate reality.

The *Hevajra Tantra* explains that appearances arise from the infinite creative potential of ultimate reality, which is comprised of two primordial powers: the female and male essences, known as Wisdom (Prajñā) and Method (Upāya). Ultimate reality, which the *Hevajra Tantra* calls “the Great Consciousness,” is simultaneously essentially female *and* male, polarities that endlessly delight in each other, *and* transcends them both. The *Mahāmudrā Tilaka Tantra (The Essence of Nondual Awareness Tantra)* presents the constituents of primordial awareness as bindus (lit. points), *indestructible* points of light that are the essence of wisdom, love, and creative power. Bindus comprise ultimate reality. Since nothing in the Middle Way philosophy is ever “indestructible,” the use of this term demonstrates that the Tantras draw their philosophy far more from Buddha Essence than the Middle Way as is commonly assumed. The female and male dynamic energies of ultimate reality are directly perceived as red and white bindus respectively, the essences of the female and male cosmic polarity from which all appearances arise.



Appearances are real because they arise from a real source. That source is called *Evam*. The word *Evam* literally means “thus,” the first word in all the Buddha’s sūtras, which marks a text as sacred truth. The Tantras reveal that *e* is the seed syllable of the divine female essence, Wisdom, the direct perception of ultimate reality, written as a downward triangle in the ancient Gupta script of Sanskrit. Similarly, *vaṃ* is the seed syllable of the divine male essence, Method, the erotic love and compassion that drives you to liberate yourself

and others to enlightenment, an upward triangle in the Gupta script. These two primordial energies are real and indestructible.

When female and male essences join together in union, they create *evam*, the shape of a six-pointed star called the Dharmodaya (lit. Reality Source), from which all appearances arise and dissolve. Though drawn flat, the Dharmodaya is actually a three-dimensional tetrahedron. It is

the symbol of the creative Innate play of ultimate reality and appearances. The dynamic union of female and male essences eternally and erotically create and destroy the worlds. The appearances these two essences create together - the world, the body, and the senses - are pure and perfect, erotic and blissful. The *Hevajra Tantra* explains, “It is in the Dharmodaya that the Three Worlds arise having the nature of Wisdom and Method.” David Snellgrove writes that Evaṃ symbolizes “the whole truth of all Tantras and the whole Buddhist doctrine.”

Appearances are real because they *co-arise* with their Source, which is primordial wisdom. Ultimate reality is a field of primordial wisdom that is real, and generates appearances that are comprised of it and are therefore equally real. The *Hevajra Tantra* reveals, “The Innate is contained in all as well as free of all.” Kṛiṣṇācārya (c. 800s) explains that the ultimate, changeless reality is simultaneously “of the nature of phenomenal things.” Saraha says there is nothing at all unreal about appearances: “In front, behind, and in the ten directions, whatever you see is true reality.” Appearances arise *as* ultimate reality, and are in this way *truly existent*.

Appearances are Pure

Appearances are *pure*. They arise as pure, and are never impure or degraded. The *Hevajra Tantra* observes, “Forms and whatever manifests are all pure in nature, for the world is pervaded by the enlightened nature.” Similarly, the text reveals, all beings are pure, “Truly all beings are enlightened beings, but they are veiled by the accumulation of defilements. By removing this veil, all beings are enlightened beings without doubt.” All appearances are free of karmic stains. This view firmly rejects the Emptiness and Mind Only philosophies, because they claim that appearances *must be karmically stained* to arise, and similarly rejects Buddha Essence philosophy, in which appearances *never* arise and are purely illusory.

The world, the body, and the senses - all rejected by so many philosophies as unalterably impure – are inherently sacred. In the Tantras, you do not need to leave this world to find sacredness. In the *Hevajra Tantra*, the enlightened deity Lord Hevajra passionately proclaims, “I am the world as well as worldly things,” and “I experience an intrinsically pure world.” As for the human body, Saraha famously offers the highest praise: “I have visited in my journeys many sacred sites, but I have not seen a place of pilgrimage as blissful as my own body.” The senses are equally pure. The *Hevajra Tantra* notes, “The Six Sense Organs, their objects, the Five Aggregates and the Five Elements are by their intrinsic nature pure, but they are veiled by ignorance and obscurations. For the yogi, form and whatever objects of experience that manifest are all pure in nature, for the world is pervaded by the enlightened nature.”

In Tantric philosophy, because all things are pure, the dualistic consciousness that results in suffering is resolved not by negating the world and retreating into the undifferentiated bliss of nirvāṇa, but by embracing *both* the world *and* the bliss of nirvāṇa. The traditional Mahāyāna belief is that a bodhisattva, out of great compassion, skillfully avoids both the peace of nirvāṇa and the sufferings of worldly existence. Saraha, however, overturns this idea completely and expresses a point that can be found *nowhere in the sūtras*: “The fortunate toss away neither existence nor nirvāṇa,” because both are good. To revel in both the bliss of worldly existence and

the bliss of nirvāṇa is called Great Bliss (Mahāsukha). For an explanation of how beings come to perceive appearances on subtle levels of reality as impure, see Chapter 6: Subtle Energy Yoga.

Appearances are Erotic

Appearances are *erotic*. Appearances arise erotically, as the creative love play of the female and male essences known as Wisdom and Method. All appearances are born from the love of this primordial bi-unity – appearances are infused with their erotic powers and radiate their erotic intensity. The *Hevajra Tantra* declares, “The Three Worlds arise having the nature of Wisdom and Method” - you, and the world you live in, were created *not* by a karmic accident, but from *divine love*.

The bi-gendered essences that comprise the bi-unity of ultimate reality are revealed in the Tantras in the forms of the two primordial deities Vajradhara (Bearer of the Adamantine Nature) and Vajradhātviśvarī (Lady of Adamantine Space). They are images of the two essences in perfect balance and love play. All the worlds arise out of their sexual union, a continuous flow of white bindus and red bindus, which find their most concentrated physical form in semen (śukra) and blood (rakta), uniting and giving birth to a perfect world. The *Hevajra Tantra*, calling Vajradhara “the Father,” praises him as “the omniscient one.” And Vajradhātviśvarī, as “the Mother,” is the one who “delights all beings” with Supreme Bliss. Their bliss pervades the universe. Ultimate reality is *peaceful* - they dwell contentedly in Great Peace (Mahā Śānta). Ultimate reality is also *passionate* - they love each other with Great Passion (Mahā Rāga). They love you intensely, and they want you to be in bliss too. To attain “the state of Vajradhara” is to attain enlightenment, and as Kṛiṣṇācārya shares, “*Erotic bliss is the very nature of Vajradhara.*”

It cannot be said that this divine pair is “merely symbolic.” Rather, the essences of the female and male aspects of primordial consciousness reveal themselves to the siddhas in these forms so they can be known and realized within you. These deities are no less, and no more, real than you are. At the same time that the *Hevajra Tantra* celebrates these forms, it advises not attaching to any conceptions of the awakened state at all, and even transcends its own language in revealing, “By the complete awakening of Essence there is neither Wisdom nor Method.”

Because ultimate reality is bi-gendered, the embodiment of the erotic power of the two genders in human form is sacred. It is not to be erased, but celebrated as creative manifestations of the purity of the divine female and male essences. Sahajayoginīcintā observes, “In order that one may realize one’s Innermost Self (Nija), which is the Innate, naturally pure, and nondual, the Innermost Self manifests in this world as man and woman.” Women and men are in their very essence equal in nature and capable of enlightenment. Their fundamental equality mirrors the cosmic equality of the primordial female and male essences. Their combined erotic power gives birth to inner awakening.

Great Passion

The Innate is the Great Passion (Mahārāga), in which desire is real, pure and erotic. Desire arises from the primordial female and male essences, which means it is real and pure. And because the female and male essences are erotic, desire is also erotic. The pure desire that arises from ultimate reality includes your personal desire for erotic bliss, the loving desire for union with your consort, and the altruistic desire to attain enlightenment for yourself and all beings: it is simultaneously erotic, heart-centered, and cosmic. *Only through Great Passion can enlightenment be achieved*, because it is the only desire powerful enough to destroy illusion.

Desire is Real

Desire is real because it arises from ultimate reality. The female and male essences arise together, and create beings with desire. The *Cakrasamvara Tantra (The Wheel of Bliss Tantra)* praises its central deity as “the mighty lord of all desires.” Desire, comprised of ultimate reality, is sacred. Desirelessness is unholy, and cannot lead to liberation. The *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra* declares, “There is no greater sin than dispassion, and no greater virtue than pleasure.”

Desire is Pure

Desire is pure and perfect. Tantra is the sacred embrace of the world, and all desires for it are to be honored and savored. The Tantric goal is not to *leave* the world but *enjoy* it, and to help others enjoy it too. Desire is the sacred fuel that propels you to higher realization. Intensify your desire, realize its true nature as wisdom and bliss, and *you become a buddha*. The *Cakrasamvara Tantra* reveals that once you attain enlightenment, “*There will be enjoyment of all the worlds without exception.*” This is the most revolutionary of all statements in the Tantras. It rejects entirely any need to release yourself from this world and brashly proclaims that as you become enlightened, all the worlds become pleasurable.

The Buddha defined liberation as *the extinction of desire*, and the Mahāyāna sūtras steadfastly maintain this position. To the Tantric masters, however, *liberation is not the extinction of desire at all*. It is the freedom from afflictive, compulsive, *craving* desires, so that *pure* desires can be enjoyed and fulfilled. *Desire is the dynamic energy of reality*. A desire is the potency of the primordial energy of ultimate reality arising to experience itself in the world of appearances. All desires in their original form are perfect. But when you fight them, when they are obscured by your emotions or dualistic thoughts, or you attach to them the expectation of certain results, you create suffering. By allowing your desires to flow and fulfill themselves through you while maintaining contentment and nonattachment, you find true happiness.

Pleasure is the delight of life, to be enjoyed fully. The master Bhavabhaṭṭa writes in *The Auspicious Cakrasamvara Commentary*, “The yogi succeeds through the enjoyment of all pleasures.” While the sūtras argue that enlightenment can only be attained by renouncing pleasure, Saraha asserts the exact opposite: “Perfect wisdom can *only* be attained while enjoying the pleasures of the senses.” Renunciation requires tremendous willpower to resist this world and

its ever-tempting pleasures. Instead of struggling against pleasure, Tantra uses pleasure itself to purify your emotional and mental obscurations and attain permanent bliss. In this way, Tantra is easy and enjoyable. You will want to practice, and you will attain enlightenment much faster than through an unnatural, pleasure-denying path.

Kṛiṣṇācārya describes the Great Passion as the unrestrained passion between the female and male essences, the impassioned state “that delights the world.” He adds, “By using the arising of Great Passion, which is characterized as the nonduality of the two bodies of Wisdom and Means,” inner awakening is swiftly attained. It is true that desire leads many beings astray and into suffering. And yet *the path to inner awakening is through desire*. The *Hevajra Tantra* observes in one of its most famous verses, “Those who are burned by the fire of passion cure themselves by using the fire of passion.”

Passion, as most people know it, is imbued with distorted ego desires, and compulsive, lustful desires born of neediness and attachment. Passion freed from these obscuring elements is *pure passion*, born of the heart’s desires and a pure mind free from dualistic thought. Pure passion, known as Great Passion, arrives brilliantly alive but without attachment to results.

Desire is Erotic

The erotic love that the female and male essences have for each other drives the desire for enlightenment in a Tantric practitioner:

Wisdom and Method erotically desire each other.

The female and male bindus, channels, and cakras erotically desire each other.

The female and male deities erotically desire each other.

The female and male practitioners erotically desire each other.

The female and male sexual fluids erotically desire each other.

All this is the Great Passion. When all these erotic desires unite in clarity of purpose, buddhahood is attained. Enlightenment is the personal and cosmic crescendo, the fulfillment of the Great Passion that destroys all obscurations and creates endless bliss.

The Five Buddha Families

The *Hevajra Tantra* reveals, “The Great Bliss, which is essentially one, in sexual union becomes five.” Out of supreme erotic delight, primordial wisdom emanates as the Five Buddha Families (Pañca Kula). These families represent the conscious flows of energies that create and sustain the worlds. All buddhas and bodhisattvas are emanations of the Five Buddhas (Pañca Tathāgata) and their consorts, depending upon the emotional obscurations they principally serve to transform. These five primordial couples are dynamic bi-unities of erotic Great Passion.

Though intrinsically pure, the Five Buddha Families are experienced by those in suffering as the emotions called the Five Obscurations (Pañca Viṣa). As you transform these obscuring emotions, they become the Five Wisdoms (Pañca Jñāna). You train yourself to recognize that all forms and

experiences that appear to cause suffering are in their true nature the primordially pure expressions of the Five Buddhas and their consorts. Following the *Hevajra Tantra*, these are:

1) *The Buddha Family: Vairocana and Locanā*



Vairocana's name means the "Radiant One." He represents the enlightened physical body. He is the head of the Buddha (Tathāgata) Family, symbolized by the wheel (cakra). He is white, and his hand gesture is called Teaching the Dharma (Dharma Cakra Mudrā). He transforms the poison of ignorance into Mirror-Like Wisdom (Ādarśa Jñāna), the wisdom that sees everything clearly and objectively. Vairocana presides over the navel cakra. He is the Buddha of the earth element, the aggregate of form, and the nectar of feces. His consort is the charming Locanā (Eye), the Buddhā of sight. Family members include the wise deities Sitatapatrā and Māricī. He is the Buddha of the Eastern direction, and his pure land is called All-Pervading Circle (Viśva Cakra). This family brings the power of pacification.

2) *The Vajra Family: Akṣobhya and Māmakī*



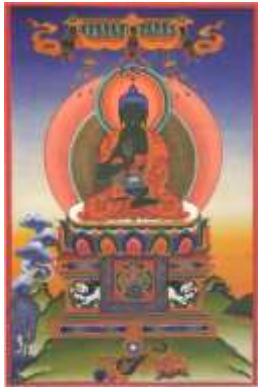
Akṣobhya's name means "Unshakable," as he is never untroubled by obscuring emotions. He is the Buddha of the Vajra Family, symbolized by the diamond scepter (vajra). He is blue, and his hands form the Earth Touching Gesture (Bhūmi Sparśa Mudrā). He transforms aversion into the Wisdom of the Dharmadhātu (Dharmadhātu Jñāna), the wisdom that accepts everything as pure and perfect. Akṣobhya presides over the heart cakra. He is the Buddha of the water element, the consciousness aggregate, and the nectar of urine. His consort is the all-embracing Māmakī (lit. My Own, as she lovingly regards all beings as her own children), the Buddhā of hearing. Family members include the fierce deities Hevajra and Cakrasamvara. He is the presiding Buddha of the Central direction, and his pure land is Abhirāti, literally meaning Intense Sexual Ecstasy. This family brings the power of destroying obstacles.

3) *The Lotus Family: Amitābha and Pāṇḍarā*



Amitābha means “Boundless Light.” He is known as the Impartial One, unaffected by differences but enjoying all of them. He represents enlightened speech. He is the Buddha of the Lotus (Padma) Family, symbolized by the lotus (padma). He is red in color, and holds with his hands the Gesture of Meditation (Dhyāna Mudrā). He is the Buddha who transforms the poison of craving into Discriminating Wisdom (Pratyavekṣaṇa Jñāna), the wisdom that appreciates and enjoys the differences in the play of appearances. Amitābha presides over the throat cakra. He is the Buddha of the fire element, the aggregate of perceptions, and the nectar of human flesh. His consort is the delightful Pāṇḍarā (White Dressed), the Buddhā of smell. Family members include the dancing erotic god Padmanarteśvara. He is the Buddha of the Western direction, and his pure land is the Land of Bliss (Sukhāvātī). This family brings the power of attraction.

4) *The Action Family: Amoghasiddhi and Samaya Tārā*



Amoghasiddhi means “Unfailing Accomplishment.” He is the Beneficial One, full of good actions. He represents enlightened activity. He is the Buddha of the Action (Karma) Family, symbolized by a sword (khaḍga). He is green in color, and holds the hand Gesture of Fearlessness (Abhaya Mudrā). He is the Buddha who transforms jealousy into All-Accomplishing Wisdom (Kṛitṃyānusthāna Jñāna), the wisdom determined to liberate all beings. Amoghasiddhi presides over the forehead cakra. He is the Buddha of the wind element, the aggregate of intentions, and the nectar of blood. His consort is the compassionate Green Samaya Tārā (Star of the Vow), the Buddhā of taste. Family members include Vajrapāṇi, the bodhisattva of power. He presides over the Northern direction, and his pure land is Perfected Good Actions (Uttarakuru). This family brings the power of success in all actions.

5) *The Jewel Family: Ratnasambhava and Dhātviśvarī*



Ratnasambhava means “Self-Born Jewel.” He is the Lord of Jewels, who holds the treasures of all the buddhas. He represents the Buddha of enlightened qualities. He is the Buddha of the Jewel (Ratna) Family, symbolized by a jewel (ratna). His color is yellow, and his hands form the Gesture of Generosity (Varada Mudrā). He transforms pride into the Wisdom of Equality (Samatā Jñāna), the wisdom that sees that all things consist of the same essence. Ratnasambhava presides over the Secret Cakra at the perineum. He is the Buddha of the element of space, the aggregate of sensations, and the nectar of semen. His consort is the ever-passionate Dhātviśvarī (Lady of All-Pervading Ultimate Reality), the Buddhā of touch. Family members include the wealth deities Jambhala

and Kubera. He presides over the Southern Direction, and his pure land is Glorious (Śrī). This family brings the power of abundance.

Essence

The Innate, as ultimate reality or Essence (Tattva), is real, pure, and erotic.

Essence is Real

Essence is *real*. The Innate is the infinite potential power of ultimate reality. Ultimate reality or Essence (Tattva) is the eternal and intractable Clear Light (Prabhāsvara) of primordial wisdom. The Yoginī Tantras teach that ultimate reality is a single primordial awareness. The *Hevajra Tantra* declares, “The Great Consciousness is in fact One.” This conscious oneness is comprised of an infinite field of bindus, indestructible points of light, the essence of wisdom and love that are primordially female and male. The *Hevajra Tantra* regards ultimate reality as an *active*, creative power of immense and awesome brilliance: “Wisdom is called Mother because *She gives birth to the universe*.” It adds that ultimate reality is not a remote creator, but the very aliveness found in all things, “It is the great life breath and the world pervader.”

Essence is Pure

Essence is *pure*. Among the infinite good and pure qualities of Essence are: bliss, clarity of awareness, nought, indestructibility, light, vital essence, and creative power.

Essence is Erotic

Essence is *erotic*. The red and white bindus are compact points of infinite erotic power, the female and male essences that unite to create the worlds, saturating all things with erotic energy. Kṛṣṇācārya praises eros as the nature of ultimate reality - “*This is a characteristic of the Innate*.”

Great Bliss

The Innate is the Great Bliss (Mahāsukha), the union of ultimate bliss and worldly bliss. It is the true nature of the Totality. It is called “Great Bliss” because it is greater than any worldly bliss you could ever know, and *greater even than the bliss of nirvāṇa* because it includes both the bliss of nirvāṇa *and* worldly bliss. Great Bliss is their final unity.

The *Hevajra Tantra* teaches, “The Great Bliss is in essence One.” It is the unchanging, unitary bliss of ultimate reality. But is *also* simultaneously the worldly bliss of changing appearances, and the *Hevajra Tantra* describes this world as simultaneously pervaded by bliss. Kṛṣṇācārya similarly adds, “This pure Innate Great Bliss pervades all phenomenal things, for it is the

accomplishment of all things.” Great Bliss does not *annihilate* appearances the way the bliss of nirvāṇa does, but *fulfills* them. Great Bliss encompasses both the wisdom of the essential sameness of things (the “one taste”), *and* the wisdom that delights in their differences. The Great Bliss is also the Great Compassion, because it spontaneously releases from suffering those who realize it. The Great Bliss transcends any teachings on bliss found in the sūtras, and reinterprets the Mahāyāna principle of non-abiding nirvāṇa as an *all-abiding* nirvāṇa, *the blissful embrace of everything*.

The Great Bliss is the fulfillment of the Great Passion:

The union of Wisdom and Compassion is Great Bliss.

The union of female and male bindus, channels and cakras is Great Bliss.

The union of female and male deities is Great Bliss.

The union of female and male practitioners is Great Bliss.

The union of female and male sexual fluids is Great Bliss.

All this is the Great Bliss.

The Great Bliss, free of all emotional and mental obscurations, is enlightenment.

Tantric Transformation

Tantra is the path of transformation (pariṇāma). You transform your weaknesses into strengths, your suffering into bliss, and right before your very eyes, you transform yourself into a buddha. Tantra teaches that nothing is thrown out – every part of you is embraced and transformed. Tantric Buddhism achieves its aims through four principles of transformation: 1) empowerment (ādiṣṭhāna), 2) alchemy (rasāyāna), 3) union (yoga), and 4) sympathetic vibration (niṣyanda).

Empowerment

Empowerment (ādiṣṭhāna) means to make sacred through the bestowal of divine power. In other religious traditions, it is called a sacrament or grace. It is a moment when you are blessed, purified, empowered, and transformed by primordial wisdom. The intense love that your guru, deity, consort, and primordial wisdom have for you, and your devotion to them, come together in a sacred moment to shift your consciousness profoundly. Through empowerment, your coarse karmic obscurations are purified, and you become “ripened” to attain the highest gift of all, enlightenment. Tantra uses many tools to create these moments of divine empowerment in order bring about extremely rapid transformation. They arise through the consecrations, singing, dancing, feasting, and other ritual activities. Empowerment is the main principle of deity yoga.

Alchemy

Alchemy (rasāyāna) is the transmutation of base substances into higher ones. The Tantric path is alchemical. The *Sarva Buddha Samāyoga (The Equiposed Union of All Buddhas)* says the practitioner, “by the bliss of alchemy, may achieve true bliss.” You generate the coarse physical

substances of female and male sexual fluids and transform them in your body into higher subtle energies that purify your subtle body where your root subtle karmic obscurations lie. Alchemy is the main principle of subtle energy yoga.

Union

Union (yoga) is the merging of your entire being with the eternal bliss of ultimate reality. You dissolve back into your original state as pure potency, and all your obscurations are cleared. *To attain union with Essence is to attain enlightenment.* Union is the main principle of sexual yoga.

The highest practice of the Vajrayāna is to meditate directly on primordial wisdom, because a single moment of directly experiencing ultimate reality is enough to cause rapid transformation. Once you attain union and make the breakthrough into the Clear Light of ultimate reality, you realize the ultimate nature. However, you may still have some remaining karmic obscurations. Within a short time depending upon a person's remaining karma but certainly by the end of your life, primordial wisdom spontaneously dissolves the rest of your karma and you attain perfection.

Union with Essence is attained through sexual yoga. Sexual yoga first creates an inner balance of female and male essences within you. On a physical level, when the vajra and yoni come together in a conscious, balanced union, your awareness shifts out of subject-object duality, and you establish the physical, emotional, mental, and subtle energy conditions for inner awakening. As the *Hevajra Tantra* explains, “Enlightened consciousness is generated in the lady's lotus by forming the *Evam*.” It adds that this *is* the state of the buddhas, for the buddhas “abide eternally in *Evam*.” The female and male essences are utterly equal in importance, like two wings of a bird. When in practice these two essences come together in balance and equality, and you generate the Great Passion for enlightenment, you attain union with ultimate reality, the bliss of *nirvāṇa*, and all obscurations are purified. *Through sexual yoga, sex transcends itself*, and becomes the ultimate path to permanent peace and bliss.

Since primordial wisdom is bi-gendered, the more you connect to and express your own female or male essence, the more you cultivate the power of that essence within you that you can use to attain enlightenment. *Gender is a path to liberation.* In the *Hevajra Tantra*, the goddess Nairātmyā describes the path for a woman like herself as “concentrating in myself the essence of woman.” As you concentrate the essence of your own gender within you, the more sexual power you can generate with your consort through sexual yoga and attain union with ultimate reality. At the same time, liberation ultimately transcends gender you must release all attachments to it.

Sympathetic Vibration

Sympathetic vibration (*niṣyanda* – lit. correspondence), an ancient Tantric principle, is the awareness of the power of the correspondence of microcosm and macrocosm. The universe is multilayered: entities on one level are correlated to higher cosmic powers and principles. The *Hevajra Tantra* observes, “As it is outside, so it is within” - in Western mystical traditions the phrase is “As above, so below.” As you become aware of these correspondences, you use them

in practice to create a sympathetic vibration so that *local events become cosmic ones*. Through your intention, having an orgasm becomes a cosmic orgasm. Loving your lover becomes loving the whole universe. And when you offer a kiss on your lover's cheek, all the worlds tremble with the Great Bliss. Sympathetic vibration is the main principle of nondual yoga.

Among the several important Tantric correspondences are:

1. The bodies of the practitioners and the bodies of the deities, which is activated through deity yoga. As you meditate on your own body as the body of the deity, your body transforms on the subtle level to become the body of the deity.
2. The Great Passion of the practitioners and the Great Passion of the female and male essences, which is activated through subtle energy yoga. By generating Great Passion, the female and male essences unite spontaneously within you, rapidly transforming you into a perfected being.
3. The sexual fluids of the practitioners and the Four Blisses, which is activated through sexual yoga. Regarding the power of sexual fluids (śukra - semen, and rakta – female sexual fluids), at the higher level of ultimate reality the Innate is all-pervasive bliss, and in the lower level of form the Innate manifests in its greatest potency as sexual fluids. One level of the Innate is *not* superior to the other – instead, they complement each other fully. Internalizing sexual fluids with intention lifts you out of dualistic awareness into union with ultimate reality.
4. The genitals of the practitioners and the Great Bliss, which is activated through nondual yoga. By charging your genitals with erotic power, you create a sympathetic vibration within your genitals that attains the Four Levels of Mahāmudrā, and you become a buddha.

The Innate and Its Place in Buddhist Philosophy

The philosophy of the Innate incorporates the teachings of the sūtras and transcends them. The Innate is founded most strongly on the teachings of Buddha Essence. The Tantras strongly support the position of the philosophy of Buddha Essence of ultimate reality as an indestructible, primordial wisdom that truly exists, whose nature is luminosity and bliss. They tend less to support the Middle Way philosophy of ultimate truth as simply an absence of inherent self-nature. In the Tantric belief, “the perfection of wisdom” actually becomes a synonym for, in Jamgön Kongtrul's words, the “primordial indestructible great vital essence” - a meaning never intended by the philosophers of Emptiness. The contemporary Tibetan master Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso writes that Buddha Essence is “the view that links the sūtras and the Tantras. It is taught in the sūtras and is the basis for all the Tantric practices.” The Innate is the *indestructible* nature of ultimate reality, and it is from this absolute indestructibility that the Vajrayāna takes its name. Since in the Middle Way philosophy nothing is indestructible, it is clear that the Tantras follow a very different philosophical standpoint.

While the position of the Innate on ultimate reality matches the philosophy of Buddha Essence, its position on appearances is dramatically different. The Innate steps well beyond the teachings on Buddha Essence to declare that not only is ultimate reality real and pure, but appearances and desire are real and pure as well. The Innate perceives ultimate reality as an all-good *creative power*, a view completely foreign to the sūtras.

Saraha decisively criticizes the Buddha Essence philosophy as incomplete, as mere attachment to nirvāṇa, and says that the true understanding of reality is *impossible* without understanding the Innate: “Without realizing the Innate, those who familiarize themselves with nirvāṇa will not accomplish the single ultimate by anything whatsoever.” This is because, unlike the traditional Mahāyāna philosophies, the Innate embraces both the bliss of nirvāṇa *and* the bliss of worldly existence as the practitioner’s goal.

Without rejecting its value as a tool for liberation, the Innate philosophy criticizes the Middle Way philosophy for its claim of ultimate reality and appearances as not truly existent and impure. The Innate criticizes the Mind Only philosophy because mind is not primordial wisdom. And the Innate criticizes the Buddha Essence philosophy as incomplete because the Innate sees primordial purity not only in ultimate reality but in appearances as real as well. These differences have profound implications for practice and realization, and fully justify the Innate being regarded as a separate philosophy - the philosophy of the Vajrayāna.

Any Buddhist philosophy must ultimately be judged not based on whether it conforms to any supposed “objective reality,” but by its liberating power. *The record of the Innate in serving to liberate thousands of beings over centuries is unparalleled by any other Buddhist path.*

The Two Truths

In the philosophy of the Innate, relative truth is, just as in the other Mahāyāna philosophies, the false perception of yourself and appearances as independently existing entities. The *Hevajra Tantra* notes sharply that suffering arises “because of subject and object.” When you perceive appearances through the distorting lens of subject and object, you experience attachment and suffering. However, unlike in the Mahāyāna sūtras, the Innate teaches that appearances are primordially real and pure because they arise from a real and pure Essence. Ultimate truth, then, is the correct perception of the unchanging ground of ultimate reality as primordial awareness *and* the co-arising of ultimate reality and appearances as real, pure, and erotic.

One of the core philosophical differences between the Mahāyāna sūtras and the Innate is in their idea of the nature of Essence. All three philosophies of the Mahāyāna sūtras accept the assumption that Essence cannot change and be Essence and form simultaneously. Nāgārjuna, who develops the logical case for the sūtras most strongly, asserts that since Essence is by definition eternal and unchanging, to say that Essence can in any way change temporarily into forms is illogical. If Essence changed, he says, it would no longer be Essence, but dependently originating and subject to suffering. Essence is the *opposite* of change, and since the world around you continually changes, this world cannot possibly be Essence.

This is exactly the point where the philosophy of the Innate disagrees. The Innate says *Essence has the capacity to change into form temporarily and still remain unchanging Essence.* Following Nāgārjuna’s logic, for example, if an ocean were Essence, it would be incapable of change, and incapable of producing waves which are ever-changing. Nāgārjuna would have to deny the existence of waves as expressions of the unchanging ocean - waves could only be something completely separate from the unchanging ocean. However, the ocean does produce

waves that are both temporary *and* pure expressions of the unchanging ocean that are never separate from it. The Innate teaches that Nāgārjuna’s logic is wrong.

That Essence can be simultaneously unchanging and changing is not contradictory but *paradoxical*. The true nature of reality is ultimately found not through exclusivistic logical proofs such as “A can never be B” that dominate Buddhist philosophy, but in paradox. “Unchanging” and “changing” are *not* contradictory opposites but simultaneous, dynamic aspects of Essence. A gyroscope remains stationary at its center while it spins, dynamically unchanging *and* changing. An atom is a particle *and* a wave. Paradox brings logic to silence as pure awareness dawns.

In the philosophy of the Innate, *even emotional and mental obscurations are expressions of pure and perfect buddha wisdom*. Suffering and liberation are created by the absolute reality. That may sound like the ultimate disempowering statement, but it is just the opposite – for *you are the absolute reality*. As the *Hevajra Tantra* says, “You are yourself the Destroyer, the Creator, the King and the Lord.” You create your bonds, and you free yourself. Buddhahood is up to you.

Buddhahood as Wisdom and Compassion

For the philosophy of the Innate, primordial wisdom goes beyond any words that could ever be spoken. Wisdom is a spontaneous arising of knowingness that guides you. The wisdom of the moment is fresh, ever-present, and perfectly responsive to your needs. Wisdom possesses the very characteristics that Nāgārjuna’s logic says is impossible: it is simultaneously eternal *and* changing. Attaining the bliss of primordial wisdom, all appearances become your friends.

The natural response to a world of beings in suffering is compassion. The orthodox Mahāyāna, because it sees this world as inherently filled with suffering, praises the compassion of the buddhas and bodhisattvas. There is really not much room for love, and the lack of love as a major theme in the sūtras is quite evident. In contrast, the natural response to a world that is pure and perfect is love. *Only in the philosophy of the Innate is love finally able to take its place as equal to compassion in Buddhism*. Realizing the Innate, a buddha not only liberates beings but also becomes their lover.

Path

“The emotions are the great wisdom. Like a jungle fire, they are the yogi’s helpers.”
- Nāropa, *The Summary of Mahāmudrā*

The Tantric Bodhisattva

The great Tantric masters of India, the siddhas, recognized that the Mahāyāna’s bodhisattva path of compassion, while trying to improve on the Buddha’s original teachings, is still based on the same deep false duality of self and other. Denying your own needs all the time to serve others can actually *reinforce* a sense of self, the very disease the Buddha was trying to cure. In the

Tantric path, your own desires are *equal in value* to others, not more or less important. The contemporary Tibetan teacher Traleg Kyabgon expresses path of the Tantric bodhisattva well when he writes, “Consideration of our own needs and the needs of others has to be kept in balance at all times,” an idea not found *anywhere* in the Mahāyāna sūtras.

The ultimate goals of the orthodox and Tantric Mahāyāna traditions are very different. The orthodox Mahāyāna’s goal is to *empty the earth* of beings, because the earth is a place of inherent and unchangeable suffering. The goal of the Tantric Mahāyāna is to bring all beings to awakening and *enjoy the earth* and its pleasures blissfully. An orthodox bodhisattva focuses continuously on the suffering of others and seeks ways to relieve them. As a Tantric bodhisattva, however, you see the world as pure and perfect and seek ways to encourage others to *play* in it. In Tantra, enlightenment is a dynamic aliveness in which you enjoy the world *and* help others.

Transforming Emotions

In the Vajrayāna, emotions are not rejected as obstacles to be overcome but warmly embraced. You take your emotions on the path. To “take something on the path” is to include the obscurations of saṃsāra and transform them into the powers of an enlightened being. Craving desire is transformed into pure desire. Jealousy is transformed into compassionate action. Anger is transformed into wrathful compassion. Pride is transformed into divine pride. These dark emotions become the fuel for elevating you into a higher state. If you simply suppressed your emotions, which is what the lower vehicles achieve, you would have no chance of attaining buddhahood. These lower emotions are not given free reign to control you, but are carefully harnessed through practice into enlightened buddha qualities.

Transforming the Senses and the Elements

The Five Elements - earth, water, fire, air, and space - limit the experiences an ordinary being to the Five Senses. Through Tantric practice, your five senses – sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch - are transformed so dramatically that they allow your perception to pierce beyond the veils of obscuration and find the true reality. As a result, you attain the ability to consciously control the Five Elements, and gain extraordinary magical powers. Saraha observes: “Perfect wisdom can only be attained while enjoying the pleasures of the senses.”

The Guru-Disciple Relationship

In the Common Vehicle and the Mahāyāna, a buddha is only a teacher, offering wisdom and inspiration. In the Vajrayāna, however, an even greater role is played by the guru. Mirroring the great Hindu gurus of medieval India, the Tantric Buddhist gurus were key players in bestowing enlightened energies onto their disciples. The functions of the guru are to give you the consecrations, gives you the instructions for practice, guides you in overcoming obstacles to practice, and may give you a consort. The student prays to the guru in the practices in the initial

practices as part of the Lineage Prayer, and in daily life you pray to your guru whenever you run into difficulties. Devotion to the guru brings swift success.

Tantric Relationship

In the Vajrayāna, the only person as important to you as your guru is your consort. A female consort is a yoginī (or karmamudrā, literally an “action consort”), and a male consort is a hero (vīra). The consort is the foundation for Tantric practice, because it is your consort who bestows the erotic bliss that leads to enlightenment. Kriṣṇācārya says, “Without the consort, it is not possible for bliss to arise.”

Just as the Mahāyāna practitioner follows the bodhisatta path, the Tantric practitioner is equally devoted to Tantric relationship with a consort. It is often a life-long partnership, seeking the mutual attainment of enlightenment. Tantric relationship is a bond far greater than marriage. Even the purest, most loving, mutually supportive marriages pale in comparison to the profound union created in Tantric relationship. You are creating as deep, authentic, and unguarded a relationship with each other as possible. Together, you purify your karmic obscurations, attain levels of bliss you never even dreamed of, merge into union with ultimate reality, and become perfected beings. Key principles for Tantric relationship are: 1) intention, 2) commitment to practice, 3) equality, 4) nonattachment 5) devotion, 6) erotic desire, 7) love, 8) communication, 9) intimacy, 10) mutual bestowal of bliss, 11) communion, and 12) transformation through bliss.

Intention

To be in Tantric relationship, both partners must be committed to the goal of attaining enlightenment swiftly. This shared intention binds you together. Without a passion for enlightenment, Tantric practice becomes merely ritual sex that may bring you little benefit. Nāropa says that to engage in sexual yoga you must be “free from doubts and wish to engage in vast activities for the benefit of the world.” He declares that sexual yoga, when properly practiced and with the right motivation, leads to buddhahood in a single lifetime.

Commitment to Practice

The Tantras are adamant that committed, long term relationships are the strongest foundation for success. Only together can you become experts in sexual yoga and lead yourselves to inner awakening. Not relying on your consort for long-term practice and engaging in practice with others in serial partnerships breaks one of your Tantric vows and leads to failure. This does not, however, require you to be monogamous. Aside from your commitment to each other to practice regularly, you both have the freedom to enjoy plenty of lovemaking with others if you desire. But you do not allow other people to interrupt the continuity of your practice with each other.

Equality

Equality establishes the necessary respect, cooperation, and responsiveness that leads to success in the Tantric path. Equality begins with establishing a mind set of mutual sacredness. You must avoid thinking of yourself or your lover as mere sex objects, always seeing each other as god and goddess. The *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra* praises the sacredness of men and women and equally, sharing “Every man is Vajrayogi and every woman is Vajrayoginī.” Equality also encompasses a spirit of cooperation and complementarity (pratyāsanna). Inequality of any kind is a false concept that leads to dependency, resentment, and suffering. Responsiveness must also be cultivated - if you aim either to please only yourself *or* your lover in your lovemaking, you will gain nothing.

Nonattachment

While building the depth and power of the connection between the two practitioners, you must avoid dependency. You cannot use your lover to try to fill an emotional lack within you - they can never fill the hole. Because Tantric practice is inherently healing, you become *less* dependent upon each other and more personally empowered. Through sexual yoga, you expand beyond the bliss of sex and attain the Great Bliss, in which you are eternally nourished and contented. Practicing sexual yoga with attachment to your consort is not even sexual yoga - just defiled sex. Nāropa warns, “The practitioner, without grasping at duality, should seek the consort in sexual embrace. If the yogi is drunk with mindlessness and attachment, he misses the essence and falls to the realms of misery.”

Devotion

Devotion draws you and your lover together and unites you in blissful meditative absorption. The man should see his woman as the goddess, who is, as the *Hevajra Tantra* delightfully describes, “the cause of the Innate Bliss. She is the great blissful one, the divine Yoginī. She is the maṇḍala circle. She is the embodiment of the Five Wisdoms.” Similarly, the woman sees her man as the god, “the Lord of the maṇḍala,” “the essence of the Innate.”

Erotic Desire

The two practitioners must have sexual desire for each other. Releasing yourself from the obscuring emotions of lust for sex, you let your erotic passions run strongly, which fuels your path with erotic power that transforms you into a perfected being.

Love

Love is the supreme expression of reality. To see reality clearly, as the awakened ones do, is to be in a continuous state of love. In sexual yoga, it is essential to hold strong feelings of love for each other. Love is the binding power between two people that does not lead to attachment but to

joy and bliss. Sahajayoginīcintā speaks of the love of the yogi towards his consort, saying, “With gentle and sincere speech, he draws her into her heart.” And the *Hevajra Tantra* says of the yoginī, “She must love the yogi.” Strikingly, the text uses a Sanskrit word for pure love, “priya,” rather than the more common word for erotic love, “kāma.” For Tantric practice to be successful, the love between you and your consort must be strong, pure, and heart-felt. Through Tantric practice, your love for each other blossoms. Erotic desire and love fuse into loving erotic power.

Communication

Tantric lovemaking gives each person the opportunity to share each other’s needs and desires, likes and dislikes. The more you know your own body’s pleasures and can communicate that with your lover, the more fulfilling lovemaking becomes. Embracing communication takes away any expectations of yourself or your lover that you are supposed to know how to please each other without saying anything. It takes the guesswork out of sex and gives you both the opportunity to delight each other skilfully. Communication, both verbal and nonverbal, is a continuous process that deepens your connection to each other.

Intimacy

As love grows, intimacy naturally develops. Tantric practice cuts lustful craving and grasping - each of you become more purified and transformed, your emotional and mental obscurations fall away, and you see yourself and your lover for who you really are. You become intuitively attuned, conscious of and responsive to each other’s needs and desires. Your eyes, breaths, movements, and subtle energies intertwine, and the power of your connection intensifies.

Mutual Bestowal of Bliss

In much of Tantric literature, the female consort is praised as the foundation from which enlightenment arises. Because of a woman’s natural capacity for bliss, she holds an especially exalted position in Tantra. Yet women and men remain *equally necessary* for each other’s liberation. The *Hevajra Tantra* describes both women and men as equal bestowers of bliss, celebrating the woman’s lotus as “the one who grants the bliss of Great Passion,” and honoring the man’s vajra in similar terms as “the one who gives the Four Blissess.” Honoring each other as wellsprings of bliss builds respect and devotion and binds you both together in practice.

Communion

Through practice, communion occurs, what Śabara calls the “Fusion of Identities” (Ātma Melaka). You attain a mutual harmony, an integrated connection, and an intuitive knowing of the other’s needs and desires. You and your lover are “one” and “not one,” “two” and “not two.” Communion is not the end of your differences but the celebration of them in a dynamic blending.

Transformation through Bliss

Bliss transforms awareness. *Erotic bliss is the single most powerful instrument for liberating obscuring emotions and thoughts*, and it does so very quickly. You create together a container of bliss, and within it your negative emotions and thoughts arise safely and are released. As negativities arise, you support each other with wisdom and unconditional love, and you witness with joy as they transform into light. Blissfully, you liberate each other into inner awakening.

Levels of Attainment

The path to bliss is bliss. As the *Cakrasamvara Tantra* instructs, “One whose goal is bliss should cultivate bliss.” Always devoted, over time you become a master of it. The Tantras commonly claim that a practitioner can attain enlightenment after twelve years of practice. Two levels of attainment in the Tantric Buddhist path are recognized:

1. Union with Learning

In Union with Learning (Śaikṣa Yoga), you have attained union with the Clear Light of ultimate reality and are greatly purified, but still have some remaining karmic obscurations. You are a high level bodhisattva.

2. Union with No More Learning

In Union with No More Learning (Aśaikṣa Yoga), you have attained union with the Clear Light and have released all karmic obscurations. You are a perfect buddha.

In addition, two levels of titles for practitioners and teachers are used:

1. Yogi/Yoginī

One who seeks or dwells in union. A yogi or yoginī is a person who practices the Tantric path, and may have gained some degree of inner transformation, magical abilities, meditative states, bliss, or nondual awareness. A person who teaches at this level of attainment is a vajrācārya/vajrācārinī (vajra teacher).

2. Siddha/Siddhā

An accomplished one. A siddha or siddhā is highly accomplished in the practices and may have attained significant inner transformation, magical abilities, profound meditative states, stabilized nondual awareness, or attained complete enlightenment. A person who teaches at this level of attainment is a siddhācārya/siddhācārinī (master teacher).

Benefits

Through the Tantric path, you transform your karma extremely rapidly. You are more peaceful and happy, filled with wisdom, love, and bliss. You honor yourself as a divine being, and you win the respect of others. Your love for your lover grows as you attain levels of ecstasy far beyond what is possible in a normal love relationship. You may develop magical powers that can help you create whatever you desire. And you know enlightenment is near.

Common Problems

If you follow the Vajrayāna with an impure intention, it will probably destroy you. To practice Tantra mainly to gain personal powers for selfish ends is the greatest danger, because it becomes so easy to harm yourself or others with them. Ritual sex, alcohol, mind-altering drugs, intentionally stirring up strong emotions, ecstatic singing and dancing - these are all directly opposed to the strict path laid out by the Buddha, yet they are all used purposefully to attain the same goal. Tantra is potentially dangerous, and its masters are quite conscious of this. The Tantras warn that activities like these are poisons to ordinary people. But to those who can use them skillfully, they lead quickly to enlightenment. Even the Vajrayāna philosophy itself is dangerous - adopting the ideas of the Innate and considering appearances as truly existing without practicing sexual yoga can lead you into trouble, because you may not have cultivated enough inner bliss to resist the sensual cravings that may arise and result in suffering.

Techniques

“If you rely on the path of the Innate, you will be liberated no matter what you do.”
- *Vajraḍāka Tantra*

Tantric practice comprises several core elements: 1) consecrations (abhiṣeka), 2) the Creation and Completion stages (Utpatti Krama and Niṣpanna Krama), 3) vows (samaya), and 4) sādhana.

Consecrations

Consecrations (abhiṣeka) are rituals that initiate you and mark your progress along the Tantric path. The *Hevajra Tantra* explains that through the consecrations, you are “sprinkled and cleansed” of your obscurations. With each of four Consecrations, you receive the erotic empowering blessings of the buddhas and the gurus of the lineage. Consecrations purify you, plant the seeds for your enlightenment, and qualify you for Tantric practice.

The Creation and Completion Stages

Tantric practice comprises two stages, the Creation Stage (Utpatti Krama) and the Completion Stage (Niṣpanna Krama). The first prepares you for enlightenment, and the second achieves it.

The Creation Stage

The Creation Stage (Utpatti Krama) practices begin your transformation from an ordinary human being into a buddha. In these practices, called deity yoga (deva yoga; also called jñānamudrā, lit. wisdom consort), the principle practice is to meditate on a visualized image of a deity created by your mind, invoke the actual deity who arises from primordial wisdom, and merge to *become* the deity. Deity yoga employs two principal techniques, visualization (bhāvanā) and mantra repetition (mantra japa). Kṛṣṇācārya, in *The Yoga of the Jewel Garland*, stresses the essential importance of generating a visualized form of the deity, writing, “It is impossible to realize the Innate without the perfection of generation.” Visualization lays the blueprint in your mind for buddhahood. Mantra repetition establishes the power of the deity within your mindstream.

Through the Creation Stage, your physical body is purified to prepare you for your eventual emanation as a nirmāṇakāya, the physical body of a buddha. It removes the coarse karmic obscurations of your physical body, purifies your afflictive desires and pacifies your mind. Your physical body becomes perfected, you are able to experience higher states of bliss, and you attain worldly magical powers. Your effort in the Creation Stage lays the groundwork, “ripening” you for actually attaining enlightenment in the Completion Stage. On its own the Creation Stage cannot achieve enlightenment, but it provides the essential purification, skill in meditative absorption, and empowerment needed for the Completion Stage.

The Completion Stage

The Completion Stage (Niṣpanna Krama) comprises the highest practices of Tantra. Kṛṣṇācārya regards the Completion Stage as the yogas of direct meditation on ultimate reality, and its result is “the attainment of the intrinsic nature itself.” The Completion Stage completes the work you began in the Creation Stage, transforming you into a buddha. Because its practices work on subtle levels, without attaining skill in the Creation Stage, the Completion Stage practices can bring you little benefit, like sanding down a block of wood before you first cut it into shape. The Completion Stage clears out subtle karmic obscurations that cannot be released through the Creation Stage practices alone. These include your subtle karmic obscurations of speech and mind, and karmic seeds from past lives that you cannot ordinarily consciously access.

While there are many Completion Stage practices found in the Tantras, Kṛṣṇācārya explains that the core practice of all of them is “*the generating of bliss.*” As you progressively intensify your bliss, you release the bonds of craving, aversion and ignorance. The higher Tantras are unanimous in declaring that of all Tantric practices, *only* sexual yoga (Karmamudrā) is capable of creating the intense and prolonged states of bliss that are necessary to attain liberation. The other yogas are mainly supports for it.

The Four Yogas

In the Yoginī Tantras, the Creation and Completion stages are called the Four Yogas (Catur Mudrā). These practices are called “yogas” or methods for union because their goal is to unite you with ultimate reality. The word “mudrā” means both “consort” and “seal.” A hand seal is a tool used to mark something, like a letter or a royal proclamation, as being complete and perfect. Each of the four “consorts” seals you with bliss, each one higher than the next. Success in Tantric practice means that you are progressively marked with the four seals of awakened bliss.

The four consorts or seals that mark you in bliss are the Creation and Completion stage practices of: 1) deity yoga (Jñānamudrā), the “wisdom consort,” which transforms you into a god or goddess, 2) subtle energy yoga (Samayamudrā), the “commitment consort,” which purifies subtle karmic imprints, 3) sexual yoga (Karmamudrā), the “action consort,” which floods your body with sexual bliss, and 4) nondual yoga (Mahāmudrā), the “Great Consort,” an intense and intimate embrace by the consciousness of the Totality. Saraha declares “When the Four Yogas are settled in one place, the sky cannot contain such supreme bliss.”

Vows

Tantric vows (samaya) are your commitment to following the path. Each consecration comes with a set of vows for ritual practice and daily conduct. They are not intended to be burdensome - in fact, *your vows serve to liberate you from all distractions to pleasure and bliss*. Following your vows dispels obstacles and quickens your path. Over time, all vows are spontaneously fulfilled in the nondual awareness of Mahāmudrā, your actions become pure.

Sādhana Vows

Sādhana vows (sādhana samaya) are your vows to practice your sādhana regularly. The most common format in medieval India was to recite your sādhana three to four times a day for sessions lasting a little over an hour each time, and to practice the complete sādhana with your consort four times a month. Your practice leads you to inner awakening.

Daily Conduct

Tantric Buddhism sees the everyday world as the best place for practice and realization. Many of the siddhas were seemingly ordinary people with jobs and families, who continually performed the highest practices of nondual yoga in each moment of their lives, whether fishing, swine herding, or ruling a kingdom. Every moment, they teach, can be a moving meditation, an opportunity for realization. Daily conduct (caryā) means strictly and mindfully adhering to all of your vows of behavior throughout your activities day and night. Kṛṣṇācārya observes, “There is no quicker means to enlightenment than by following the instructions for daily conduct.”

Ethical Behavior

Ethical behavior in Tantra is an active response as you embody divine wisdom in each moment, not a blind following of abstract rules. When you get out of your own way and unite with ever-present wisdom, you naturally behave ethically. When you are stifled by inner urges and selfish goals, however, you compulsively behave unethically. On the Tantric path, guided by your determination to liberate all beings, you may use whatever means are necessary, even breaking social rules or personal expectations. This type of action is called conduct of the left (*vāmācāra*).

Love and Compassion

The Tantras continuously affirm the importance of compassion (*karuṇa*) stressed in the Mahāyāna. But they also complement it with love (*priya*). In the *Hevajra Tantra*, the deity Lord Hevajra manifests not only out of compassion for all beings in suffering, but also because his consort is irresistibly delicious and *he loves her so dearly*. Love is just as boundless as compassion, and just as important a quality in Buddhism. Bliss arises whose nature is great love for all beings. In the Tantric path *you love everybody*.

Embracing the Senses

The *Hevajra Tantra* reveals, “The senses are worthy of adoration.” The senses (*indriyas*) are among your greatest friends and aids for attaining enlightenment. They bring you pleasures you can use to transform yourself, and they let you know where your blocks are so you can liberate yourself. Your senses allow you to enjoy the richness of this beautiful and magical world. At the same time, you must not attach to them. The root of suffering is *not* desire, it is the *grasping* that comes from neediness. A Tantric yogi, acutely aware of the dangers of *samsāra* and the ensnaring powers of sensual pleasure, applies the remedies of the Mahāyāna: mindfulness, perceiving the impermanent nature of appearances, and universal compassion. *And* the yogi enjoys the display of the senses without craving, aversion, or fixing on an idea of self and other.

Massage

Enlightenment happens in the body. In order to be enlightened, your mind, speech *and* body must each be prepared. Meditation clears your mind, mantras clear your speech, but neither of them clear your body very much. If your body is not a clear vessel, relaxed and open and without tension, it will not be able to hold the Great Bliss. To clear your body, massage (*aṅgamardana*), which was once a part of daily life in village India, is an essential practice. *The Kāma Sūtra* lists massage as one of the Sixty-Four Arts of Love, the basic skills of a good lover.

Psychoactive Plants and Alchemical Substances

Tantra embraces the power of psychoactive plants (auṣadhi) for expanding consciousness. Aphrodisiacs (vajikaraṇa) are also highly honored to empower sexual yoga. A specialized form of Tantric practice which focuses on ingesting chemical and herbal magical substances to attain enlightenment is called the Rasayāna (Essential Vehicle).

Sādhana

A sādhana (lit. means of attainment) is a ritual of practice. It is the main format for Tantric practice. There are many different kinds of sādhanas which follow the numerous types of Tantric rituals (vidhis). Sādhanas are written by spiritual masters based on the Tantras. A sādhana is given to a practitioner by the guru as part of the first consecration, and it becomes your main path to enlightenment. The most common type of Tantric ritual is a deity visualization ritual (bhāvanā vidhi). Sādhanas can be structured many different ways. A complete deity visualization sādhana from the Yoginī Tantras commonly includes an opening salutation, initial practices, Creation Stage, Completion Stage, vows and conduct, results of practice, and a closing colophon by the master who composed it. Among the many important elements in sādhanas include: 1) offerings (acara/pūjā), 2) ritual nudity (digambara), 3) sex (maithuna), 4) singing (gīta), 5) dancing (nāṭya), 6) Tantric feasts (gaṇacakras), and 7) magic rituals (indraajāla).

Offerings

Offerings (acara/pūjā) are made in rituals to the main deity and other spirits to invoke their blessings. Well pleased with heartfelt offerings, these beings bestow their powers. Tantric offerings are given on four different levels:

1. Outer (bāhya) - Food offerings (bali), which may be to the central deity, and to supporting worldly spirits, also all Tantric feast food and drink. Practicing deity yoga is the outer offering.
2. Inner (adhyātma) - Honoring the Five Senses as buddhas, and the the Five Nectars (Pañca Amṛita) of the nectar cup. Practicing subtle energy yoga is the inner offering.
3. Secret (guhya) – Sexual fluids, dedicated to the buddhas. Practicing sexual yoga is the secret offering.
4. Essence (tattva) - Nondual awareness, the ultimate offering to the buddhas. Practicing nondual yoga is the essence offering.

Ritual Nudity

The Sanskrit word for nudity, “digambara,” means literally “clothed with the sky.” Nudity is a way of being fully open to the sensuous experience of being alive. When you are clothed, your skin is partially shut down and you experience a dulled aliveness. Ritual nudity symbolizes the state of pure awareness “unclothed” by obscuring emotions and dualistic thoughts.

Sex

Sex (maithuna) is the great doorway to enlightenment. It is a sacred pleasure, the greatest life has to offer. *Sexual energy is the primordial power of reality*, and when you have sex with a strong and high intention, you connect to that primordial power very strongly. Sexual yoga cultivates intense sexual energies within you, and then channels those energies through disciplined practices that transform you on all levels, bringing you extraordinary magical powers and inner awakening. The Tantras teach that *success in sexual yoga is a requirement for attaining enlightenment*. The *Cakrasamvara Tantra* says that it is from “union with a consort” that “the true nature of mind arises.”

Singing

Singing (gīta) is not merely for entertainment, or even an act of reverence, but a form of deity yoga through which you become one with an enlightened god. In the fourth and final Tantric consecration, you seek to attain complete awakening inspired in part by a song of realization from your guru. And at the completion of a Tantric feast, you sing a song of realization.

Dancing

Dancing (nāṭya) is highly praised in the Tantras as a form of empowerment (ādiṣṭhāna). Dancing as the deity gives you all the powers of the deity, and wins your consort with your erotic energy.

Tantric Feasts

The Vajrayāna celebrates food as a sacred pleasure through Tantric feasts (gaṇacakras). Tantric feasts are orgiastic festivals in which you lose your self in the bliss of nonduality. They include dancing as the deity, singing, and freestyle revelry, and can last for hours, days, weeks, months, or even years. Because of the intensity of the group sexual energies that are generated over long periods of time, the *Hevajra Tantra* remarks that through Tantric feasts even the highest goal can be realized: “The accomplishment that is the fulfillment of all the objects of desire is attained.”

Magic Rituals

Magic (indrajāla – lit. Indra’s net) is a major Tantric practice, and the Tantras contain extensive instructions on it. By reciting mantras, making offerings to deities and performing rituals, you gain the four powers of 1) pacifying (śānti), 2) increasing (pauṣṭi), 3) attracting (ākarṣaṇa), and 4) destroying (māraṇa). Fire rituals (agni pūjā) are a popular ritual method for gaining magical powers. You then use these powers to attain your personal desires and those of others.

Results

“Seeing a delightful woman as enlightenment spontaneously appearing in embodied form, a buddha gazes with passion and playfulness, and desire for pleasure and bliss arises.”
- Sahajayoginīcintā, *Realization of Reality through the Body*

The Enlightened Master

Through the Vajrayāna, you become a siddha (an accomplished one), one who can fulfill all worldly and spiritual desires. You attain the Two Accomplishments (Dvi Siddhi): worldly magical powers (laukika siddhi), and the supreme accomplishment (lokottara siddhi) of nondual awareness, also called Mahāmudrā Siddhi. A siddha may attain the fully realized adamantine body (vajra kāya), also called the deathless body, in which your physical body becomes youthful and immortal. The *Cakrasamvara Tantra* observes that within the master’s body, “Nowhere is there old age or death.” Of your speech, the *Cakrasamvara Tantra* says, “You will come to know the divine speech.” And your mind is clear and open, and *you know everything*. The *Cakrasamvara Tantra* also reveals, “The practitioner of desire is given the fruit of all the powers.” It adds, “One becomes a yogi who does what one pleases and stays anywhere whatsoever” and is “the lord of all desires on earth.” You effortlessly manifest the wisdom and love of the buddhas. At the same time, the *Hevajra Tantra* cancels out all mental concepts like these and declares enlightenment itself, the greatest attainment of all, is “no accomplishment.”

The Innate

Attaining realization of the Innate (Sahaja), as the *integrated presence* of enlightened awareness (bodhi), you are peace *and* empowered activity. You are stillness *and* the fire of aliveness. You are nothing *and* everything. You are wholeness and well-being, completeness and contentment. You need nothing to be happy. Enlightenment is an oceanic sense of unity with the ultimate – like a wave discovering that it was part of the ocean after all. It is all so simple – *how could you have ever missed it?* Everyone you see is a friend. The false duality of self and other is released as you see reality clearly, and correctly perceive the creative and erotic love-play of the Innate. You respond fully, intelligently and spontaneously to everything around you. Saraha writes, “When body, speech and mind are integrated, the nature of the Innate is beautiful.”

Your Innermost Self

When you attain enlightenment, you do not become less you, but more you. Your inmost nature, your own Innermost Self (Nija), is the eternal essence of your own true being made manifest. You know you do not need to change in any way. Unconditioned by karma, social pressures, or coercive influences of any kind, you are finally, purely *you*. You are indestructible, like a vajra. It is the power of an enlightened being’s Innermost Self that makes him or her so unique and charming. Tilopa calls out daringly, “Fool! You must know your Innermost Self - then you’ll cut the net of ignorance, every strand.” Your Innermost Self is not an affirmation of your old, ego-

based existence - it is the final resolution of ego-centrism. It is your own personal true nature liberated after you release the limited identity of your ego. Your ego is your *false self* created by your false ideas of self and other and sustained by your emotional obscurations. Your Innermost Self is your own *real Self* that joyously emerges from ultimate reality. The *Guhyasamāja Tantra* calls the enlightened master “The one who is the Self of all buddhas.” In the sūtras, your self is your worst enemy. In the Tantras, your Innermost Self is your own best friend.

Love and Compassion

Enlightenment is pure love (*priya*), love without attachment that arises within you as an expression of ultimate reality. True love for others is the way of the enlightened ones, whose love extends to all beings. Kṛṣṇācārya describes this overflowing divine love as “offering the highest bliss to all living beings.” It is also a continuous state of compassion (*karuṇa*) for those in suffering. The *Cakrasamvara Tantra* speaks the immortal words of the enlightened ones: “I exist always in order to benefit beings.”

Emotions and Wisdom

Your obscuring emotions transform into the Five Wisdoms of a buddha. In enlightenment, it is not at all true that you stop having emotions and remain in a quiescent peace. All your emotions, purified and flow freely, are stronger than ever. Sahajayoginīcintā says, “Passion, anger, pride, greed and envy – all these emotions without exception are the perfected forms of pure, self-illuminating wisdom.” You joyously delight in them, and they serve you in liberating others.

Magical Powers

The Tantras portray enlightened beings as possessing inconceivable magical abilities (*siddhis*). The *Hevajra Tantra* speaks with great zeal: “Instantaneously with the arising of this wisdom, earth, water, fire, air and space do not restrain the yogi, and he knows his mind and the minds of others. At that moment his body is at one with the realms of heavens, humans, and hells. It is no longer possible for the yogi to be obstructed by the misconception that separates himself from others.” Extraordinary powers come effortlessly when you realize you are one with the Totality. Delighting in the world, you use these powers for pursuing your own personal pleasures and helping others.

Erotic Bliss

Enlightenment is erotic. This is an absolutely central teaching of the Tantras. The *Hevajra Tantra*, with all-seeing wisdom, states “*Erotic bliss is the Totality.*” Eros (*rata*) is primal creativity, the intuitive knowing that seeks pleasure and revels in sensual and aesthetic enjoyment. It is the juiciness of primordial awareness. The essential and unalterable qualities of ultimate reality are not only wisdom and compassion, but also erotic bliss. The *siddhas* often

describe ultimate reality as a female presence who liberates with orgasmic bliss. The ultimate embrace from the ultimate lover, She is the Great Consort, the Mahāmudrā. To see reality clearly as the siddhas do is to be in continuous, intimate, erotic union with primordial wisdom in your own body.

The three dimensions of a buddha, the nirmāṇakāya, saṃbhogakāya, and dharmakāya, are *erotic*. They flow with sensual and ecstatic energy and delight in the constant play of appearance and ultimate reality.

The nirmāṇakāya, the physical form of a buddha, is erotic. As an enlightened human being you have an inherently erotic presence about you. Your body is divine, you are the essence of passion (kāma tattva), and you attract beautiful consorts effortlessly. Your task is to purify the world through your enlightened awareness and to share your pure sexual fluids in lovemaking to bring others to inner awakening.

The saṃbhogakāya, the subtle body of a buddha, is centrally erotic. “Saṃbhoga” in Sanskrit actually means sexual enjoyment. A saṃbhogakāya form is blissfully emanated by a buddha to serve beings who dwell on the higher subtle planes of existence. You dwell in eternal sexual union with your consort, and the bliss created from this union is absorbed by countless beings for their transformation and enlightenment. Erotic bliss is in no way “just a metaphor” for higher bliss. The Tantras teach that as you open your awareness to the subtle realm of the saṃbhogakāya, you directly perceive female and male deities in continuous sexual union.

Finally, the dharmakāya, the ultimate source of reality, is also the ultimate source of erotic bliss. The female and male bindus reside here as infinite erotic potential power. Kṛṣṇācārya explains the ultimate meaning of erotic bliss (surata ānanda), saying “*This is a characteristic of the Innate.*” Awakening to this dimension, you live in an eternal state of cosmic sexual arousal.

The buddha realms are all immersed in sexual pleasures. Sukhāvātī, the buddha realm of Amitābha, is literally the Land of Bliss - it is also a land of erotic bliss. And Abhirātī, the heaven of Akṣobhya, means “Intense Sexual Ecstasy.” Through Tantra, you attain to all these realms and more. The *Cakrasamvara Tantra* speaks of the yogic traveler to these erotic places: “Held by the left hand, he will be lead by the ḍākinīs to their abodes. Through devotion and desire, one is lifted into the sky. Always delighting them, one will go to the Land of Bliss (Sukhāvātī).”

In enlightenment all desires are fulfilled, and among the most prized are erotic desires. The *Cakrasamvara Tantra* gives confidence to those who wish to fulfill their desires for love, saying, “The adept with his mantra will summon all beings. He will be like a lord of love on earth, one of glory and great fortune. He will become adept at pleasing the ḍākinīs, have no doubt.”

Chapter 4. Ready for Bliss: Consecration

“The Great Bliss is fully known through consecration.”
- *Hevajra Tantra*

Awakening through Consecration



Having been accepted by the guru, the young man still knew little of the practices that lay ahead of him, but he was extremely satisfied with his new consort. She was born from the most outcaste of all groups, the caṇḍālas, cremation ground workers. With no chance of bettering herself in the rigid world of Indian society, she studied the Dharma under a compassionate scholar in her village. Having seen much suffering, she was determined to attain enlightenment for the sake of all beings. She had joined the guru’s community just a few days before the young man arrived. Beautiful, sensuous, instinctively female, she knew she held within her the power to bestow bliss upon whomever she chose. As his “wife,” they would not take the first three consecrations together – only the last, but they would perform their sādhana together regularly four times a month. They busied themselves with

community chores, hunting, cooking, serving at feasts, Dharma discussion and meditation.

On the day of the first consecration, through Śabara’s initiating skill, the young man made love to the guru’s own consort Śabari, the power of the goddess Vajravilāsinī was bestowed upon him, and he received the oral transmission of *The Sādhana of Secret Vajravilāsinī*.

Introduction

“Consecration is the cleansing, with the waters of wisdom, of all the veils.”
- Kṛiṣṇācārya, *The Yoga of the Jewel Garland*



Tantra is a graded path to enlightenment. You pass from one level of knowledge, practice and realization to a new and higher one. Tantric Buddhism is based on a system of consecrations that qualify you for different levels of instruction and practice. Each consecration also includes vows that you must uphold in order to make rapid progress.

Consecration (abhiṣeka) is an event that marks you as a new, more pure and sacred person. It demonstrates your ongoing commitment to following a spiritual path to completion. The consecration ritual is a coronation - you release your ideas of yourself as an ordinary person and are ennobled and transformed, rising to become the king or queen of your own reality.

Tantric consecrations are extremely powerful, and are in no way “merely symbolic” acts. The Tibetan master Jigten Sumgön (1143-1217) remarks, “The difference between the sūtras and Tantras is the consecrations.” They lay the seeds for your quick transformation into a buddha. Without the consecrations, as a bodhisattva you must follow the most arduous

path to enlightenment that takes three incalculable eons. Yet *because of the consecrations, you can attain enlightenment in a single lifetime*. Each is a doorway into a potent new stage of your path. Integral to all consecrations is sexual yoga, and the level of bliss produced in each one marks your progress. Consecrations are extremely juicy, and bring you new love and zest for life.

At each consecration, you take vows (samaya) regarding practice and daily conduct. The vows are your stated commitment to success. They are not simply about making promises and keeping them - they guide you in every moment and support you in your path. Through continuous practice and maintaining your vows, your own spiritual advancement becomes clear. As you advance to the highest levels, however, you release your vows. Seeing them as mere conceptual constructs, more and more you are guided by the Innate presence of perfect wisdom.

In order to take a consecration, you must be qualified (adhikara). Qualification means that you are ready for a certain level of practice. You must demonstrate the proper motivation, keep up your practices and vows, and reach the necessary benchmarks that indicate you are ready.

Philosophy

“Alas! A person who does not have the consecrations that are like precious gems is like a lowly servant aspiring to be a king. They have been condemned by the ḍākas and fall into the deepest hell.”
- Saraha, *The Queen’s Song*

Consecration Ritually Transforms You and Marks Your Progress towards Buddhahood

Consecration

Ritual is a means of transforming consciousness. If you simply received instruction from a teacher on Tantric philosophy and practice, it would be merely intellectual knowledge - but a ritual sinks the instruction deep into your subconscious mind. The task of Tantric Buddhism is to shift your consciousness permanently out of its ordinary, limited sphere of awareness, and the most rapid means for achieving this is through consecration. In consecration, the powers of the buddhas are immediately bestowed upon you, and you eventually come to embody their bliss and wisdom. Ritual consecrations also mark your progress towards buddhahood; by taking them over time, you see clearly your own evolution, inspiring you on your path to inner awakening.

Consecration and the Innate

The four characteristics of the Innate are cultivated in the consecrations:

1. Pure Appearance (Evaṃ) – In the first consecration, you experience all things as Pure Appearance.
2. Great Passion (Mahāraga) – In the second consecration, you generate Great Passion for enlightenment.
3. Essence (Tattva) – In the third consecration, you attain union with Essence.
4. Great Bliss (Mahāsukha) – In the fourth consecration, you attain the Great Bliss.

Tantric Transformation

In the consecrations, the four principles of Tantric transformation are active in shifting your consciousness:

1. Empowerment (Ādhiṣṭhāna) – In the first consecration, you receive the empowerment of the deity.
2. Alchemy (Rasāyāna) – In the second consecration, you alchemically transform sexual fluids into subtle energies of bliss.
3. Union (Yoga) – In the third consecration, through orgasm you attain union with ultimate reality.
4. Sympathetic Vibration (Niṣyanda) – In the fourth consecration, your genitals experience a sympathetic vibration that spontaneously accomplishes nondual awareness.

Qualifications

“The well-equipped adept is successful with mantra repetition, meditative states, and with bliss, and always protects the vows.”

– *Cakrasamvara Tantra*

Qualifications of the Practitioner



Tantra is an advanced practice: the practitioner (a yogi/yoginī, a higher practitioner is a siddha/siddhā) must be qualified (adhikara) for it.

A student who takes on a teacher to lead them toward realization is a disciple (śiṣya). Through the ritual of a student being accepted by the guru as a disciple (Śiṣya Anugraha – Grace of the Disciple), you offer devotion (pūjā) to the guru and request teachings. Once the guru accepts you, you are given permission (anujñā) to take the first consecration.

The *Hevajra Tantra* provides a basic outline of instruction before you practice Tantra. You should learn: 1) the rules of conduct for your Tantric community, 2) basic moral precepts, 3) the doctrines of the Common Vehicle, 4) the Mahāyāna teachings, and 5) the basic principles of Tantra. The community rules of conduct (poṣada) are set by the guru, and

include whatever rules are in place for meals and other issues for daily living. Basic moral precepts are the Lay Precepts. The doctrines of the Common Vehicle comprise the path of renunciation. The Mahāyāna teachings comprise the bodhisattva path of purification. Basic instruction on Tantric philosophy and the path then follows. Having laid these foundations, the *Hevajra Tantra* says you can be ready to practice Tantra in a month.

The *Susiddhikara Tantra* advises that a student should be pure in body, speech and mind. You should continuously cultivate wisdom, generosity, fearlessness, practice the Mahāyāna, have faith in the teachings, and be content in your practice. You find the Tantric path irresistible.

Qualifications of the Teacher



A guru (lit. teacher) is a teacher who guides you in your path to inner awakening. It is someone in whom you place special confidence and trust and give your devotion.

The Tantras provide a vision of the ideal teacher. The *Cakrasamvara Tantra* points out, “The teacher who has all good qualities has the proper knowledge and understands Tantra and mantra. He is not angry, is pure and competent, understands yoga and is perfected in wisdom.” The *Susiddhikara Tantra* says the teacher should be of sound body, and have gained great merit. He or she holds both a worldly and an ultimate understanding of reality, acts according to the Dharma, is greatly compassionate, disciplined and gentle, intelligent, wise, eloquent, forbearing, has deep faith, wishes the Mahāyāna to spread, is successful in performing magical rites, and seeks enlightenment as the ultimate goal.

A guru may be a vajrācārya (vajra teacher) or a siddhācārya (accomplished teacher). A vajrācārya is a yogi who is competent in the practices, keeps the vows, leads consecrations, and provides instruction and personal guidance. A siddhācārya has strong direct experience of ultimate reality, knows the practices deeply, and offers exemplary wisdom and love.

A Tantric guru, though he or she may not be fully enlightened, transmits the powers of the buddhas and the masters of the lineage through the consecrations. Consecrations, vows, practices, and devotion all bind the student to the lineage masters who bestow inner awakening.

Vitally important is the devotion the student has to the teacher. You should see your teacher as a fully enlightened being even if that person is not. Do not focus on their flaws or this will impede your own progress. No one is perfect - but through your own eyes let your guru be perfect in their wisdom and skill. As a wise student, you know you have four gurus: 1) the outer guru, your physical teacher, 2) the inner guru, the deity, 3) the secret guru, your consort, and 4) the essential guru, the dharmakāya, primordial wisdom, equal to the true nature of your own mind. Guided by all your gurus, you make rapid progress on your path.

For those who do not have a qualified teacher to guide you in the Tantric Buddhist path, through prayer you can invite the siddhas of Śabara's lineage to bless you and guide you in your practice.

On the Guru in Indian Tantric Buddhism

The modern vision of an Eastern guru as “all knowing, all powerful, all wise” is heavily loaded – and does not always fit the richly varied, complex, human realities of Tantric teacher-student relationships. In India, these relationships ranged from the most severe, such as Tilopa's testing Nāropa with agonizing trials, to the most intimate imaginable - Kambala's own mother was his Tantric guru. Most siddhas were not full-time professional gurus, and comfortably integrated their lives and work with teaching as the moment arose. Gurus were “gurus” to their students as long as they needed to be - it was not a role by which they defined themselves, but simply a task that needed to be done. Gurus and students sometimes even switched roles - Lakṣmīṅkarā and Indrabhūti, for example, were both gurus and students for each other, taking turns teaching and learning. Indian Tantric Buddhism stresses the *profound equality* of all people, and this view could not help but permeate the gurus' relationships with their students. Because gurus often had sex with their students, and equality between partners is a *sine qua non* of Buddhist sexual yoga, their relationships were generally marked by deep intimacy, equality, and mutual empowerment. The final discovery on the path is that your real guru is never a person, but always your own heart-mind.

Qualifications of the Consort



Finding a well qualified consort is essential for Tantric practice. A female consort is a yoginī (or karmamudrā, literally an “action consort”), and a male consort is a hero (vīra). The consort is the foundation for Tantric practice, because it is the consort who bestows the erotic bliss that leads to enlightenment. Kriṣṇācārya affirms strongly, “Without the consort, it is not possible for bliss to arise.” The qualifications of a consort are physical, temperamental, and ritual.

On the physical qualities of a consort, what is important for both men and women is to choose a lover who excites you sexually. In terms of temperament, good consorts may range emotionally from peaceful to untamable. However, the consort should also be of the same Buddha Family as the practitioner, tasked with purifying the same predominant emotional obscuration. The *Hevajra Tantra* points out she should understand the Dharma, be

courageous, resolute and not fickle, love the yogi, be pleasant speaking and delightful. At the same time, she must be a free spirit willing to embrace the Tantric practices wholeheartedly.

The consort should also be ritually qualified. The *Hevajra Tantra* teaches that the consort should be consecrated in the practice, keep the Tantric vows, be well trained, and skillful. All the above is of course an ideal, and Tantra is both idealistic and pragmatic. Jayabhadra notes that “If a woman who is well educated in mantra and Tantra has not been found, then cultivating some other uncultivated woman, she should be worshipped.” You can train one yourself and, as the *Hevajra Tantra* observes, “She will without any doubt become suitable in one month.”

The Four Consecrations

“With your inwardly focused mind, give rise to the achievement of bliss.”
- *Cakrasamvara Tantra*

Tantric practice is performed within a system of four consecrations (abhiṣeka - lit. sprinkling). These are initiatory levels in which the blessings and powers of the buddhas are bestowed and you bind yourself to the path.

Through the four consecrations, you progressively learn the Four Yogas. The consecrations also establish within your experience the Four Blissess of sexual yoga (see Chapter 7: Sexual Yoga). These Four Blissess are closely tied to the consecrations - for the consecrations to be considered successful, you must experience each bliss with its corresponding consecration clearly in your awareness as they build upon each other successively.

The consecrations develop intense devotion to the guru, which brings even deeper bestowals of blessings by the guru and the lineage. Your four gurus are fully present in all four consecrations, but in each consecration a different guru plays the central role. In the first consecration, the most important guru is your human guru. In the second consecration, it is the deity. In the third consecration, it is the physical consort, and in the fourth it is the Great Yoginī of nondual awareness.

In each of these rites, the powers of sexual yoga are central to their success. Erotic power is the driving force of the path, and *through each consecration, you receive the bestowal of erotic power of your guru and the consort.* In one early tradition, for the first consecration you (assuming you are male and your guru is male) have sex with your guru’s consort, and she becomes your “mother” (jānānī). In the second consecration, your consort is the “daughter” (duhitā), a woman who is a teacher in the kula (the Tantric community of the guru’s followers). In the third consecration, your consort is the “sister” (bhaginī), a woman from the kula whom the guru has specially chosen for the ceremony. In the fourth consecration, your consort is the “wife” (patnī), your permanent consort with whom you regularly practice. As the *Guhyasamāja Tantra* advises, “The adept who makes love with his mother, sister, and daughter obtains the great power, the reality of the pinnacle of the Mahāyāna.” For a female disciple, your consorts are correspondingly the “father” (pita), “son” (putra), “brother” (bhāndava), and “husband” (pati). Those working with other gurus might unite with a single consort through all four consecrations, which is how the consecrations are presented in this chapter. Or, if your guru is of the opposite sex, the guru might act directly as your consort during the consecrations to intensify your erotic energies – a variety of formats were used. One later Indian tradition changed the consecrations to accommodate monks so that they might practice with a physical consort only in the last two consecrations, but this greatly weakens their power.

The First Consecration: Vase Consecration

The Vase Consecration (Kalaśa Abhiṣeka) initiates you into the Tantric path. It is called the Vase Consecration because you are sprinkled and cleansed with consecrated water. It includes three sets

of sub-consecrations: 1) the Five Consecrations (Pañca Abhiṣeka), 2) the Ritual of Entering the Maṇḍala (Maṇḍala Praveśa Vidhi), and 3) the Master Consecration (Ācārya Abhiṣeka). The Five Consecrations are given at the start of all further consecrations, while the other two are given only once.

The Five Consecrations

The Five Consecrations (Pañca Abhiṣeka) confer enlightened activity. As the guru transforms into the male buddhas of the Five Buddha Families, the Five Consecrations are bestowed by the five female buddhās, giving you the power to accomplish your own desires and help all beings:

1. Water Consecration (Toyāṣeka): Akṣobhya and Māmakī – You are given the power of meditation. You are sprinkled with the consecrated water of the deity. You are purified of the obscurations of aversion, and the seeds for Mirror-Like Wisdom are planted.
2. Diadem or Vermillion Consecration (Mauliṣeka/Sindūraṣeka): Ratnasambhava and Dhātviśvarī – You are given the power of listening. For a man, the diadem of the deity is placed upon your head, crowning you as a king. For a woman, you are given the Vermillion Consecration by placing sindūra on the top of your head, marking your state of highest spiritual marriage to your consort. You are purified of the obscurations of jealousy, and the seeds for the Wisdom of Equality are planted.
3. Vajra Consecration (Varjaṣeka): Amitābha and Pāṇḍarā – You are given the power of teaching. You receive the vajra, the diamond scepter of the deity, signifying compassionate and loving lordship over all beings. You are purified of the obscurations of compulsive desire, and the seeds for Discriminating Wisdom are planted.
4. Bell Consecration (Ghaṇṭāṣeka): Amoghasiddhi and Samaya Tārā – You are given the power of awakened activity. You receive the bell of the deity, signifying wisdom and bliss. You are purified of the obscurations of pride, and the seeds for All-Accomplishing Wisdom are planted.
5. Name Consecration (Nāmaṣeka): Vairocana and Locanā – You are given the power of acceptance. You receive a new Tantric name, which prophecies your becoming a buddha. You are purified of the obscurations of ignorance, and the seeds for the Wisdom of the Dharmadhātu are planted.

The Ritual of Entering the Maṇḍala

Through the Ritual of Entering the Maṇḍala (Maṇḍala Praveśa Vidhi), the maṇḍala of the deity is shown to the student. The maṇḍala is divinely revealed from the pure consciousness of ultimate reality, and is visualized as the three-dimensional world of the deity. Upon seeing it, it bestows awesome power upon you. The central deities and the supporting celestial yoginīs are consequently bound to support you. As you gaze at the maṇḍala, you throw a flower onto it to determine your destiny.

The Master Consecration

The Master Consecration (Ācārya Abhiṣeka) plants the seeds for you to teach the Tantric path and perform rituals. The *Hevajra Tantra* describes the Master Consecration: “Embracing a sixteen year old consort with the hands and uniting the bell and vajra is the Master Consecration.” The guru leads you to transform yourself into the deity and your consort into the consort of the deity. You then make love in the practice called Uniting the Bell and Vajra Equally (Ghaṇṭa Vajra Samā Yoga). What is most important in the first consecration is establishing in your mind the first of the Four Blissesses of sexual yoga, Bliss (Ānanda), the bliss of first contact with the genitals, and the first moment, Diverse (Vicitra), the awareness of many pleasurable sensations. Kṛiṣṇācārya notes that from the first consecration, an “ordinary bliss” arises from the union of the vajra and lotus. Your task is simply to be aware of the sexual bliss as it rises and falls away for you through the first moments of contact with your consort’s genitals – blissful, to be sure, but clearly *not* the everlasting Great Bliss of enlightenment.

You are given a sādhana for practice. To begin a sādhana you receive from the guru three ritual acts that bestow the powers of the lineage: 1) the consecration (abhiṣeka) of the deity, 2) the oral recitation (āgama) of the sādhana, in which the guru recites the entire sādhana aloud, and 3) the oral instructions (upadeśa) for practice. A sādhana is often a life-long practice, and usually only teachers learn more than one so they can meet the different needs of their students.

You are given instructions on deity yoga for the sādhana. Teachings on the philosophy of the Middle Way support you in your daily conduct by teaching you to perceive all appearances as empty of self-nature, liberating you swiftly from your attachments.

You are given the vows of the first consecration. Your main goal after the first consecration is to maintain your identity at all times as the deity, transforming yourself through your practice of deity yoga, releasing your coarse karmic obscurations and preparing you for the higher consecrations. After several months of practice, you complete the required number of repetitions of the deity’s mantra and keep your vows, and you are ready for the second consecration.

The Second Consecration: Secret Consecration

For the second consecration, called the Secret Consecration (Guhya Abhiṣeka), the *Hevajra Tantra* instructs that the guru and your consort make love “until her sexual fluids flow” as the student reverently watches. The student and consort are then blindfolded. From the fingers of the guru, you and your consort are given the mixed sexual fluids (śukra and rakta) of the guru and your consort - these are four drops into your mouths, one for each of the Four Blissesses. The guru’s thumb symbolizes the right channel (Rasanā) and the ring finger the left channel (Lalanā), the two side channels of the subtle body - they come together in blissful union into the disciple. These sexual fluids, which hold the pure manifest wisdom (called relative bodhicitta) of the guru and the consort, transform you alchemically from the inside, entering and purifying your subtle body.

This ritual is your first conscious “taste” of Innate bliss, in which all things have the same essential taste (*sama rasa*) of bliss. It is especially important to understand that sexual fluids are not “symbolic,” they actually *are* pure manifestations of Innate bliss, and have the power to bestow the bliss of enlightened awareness. It is called the Secret Consecration because it is a short, direct experience of ultimate reality which cannot be conceptualized but can only be directly known through the mixed sexual fluids. What arises is, as the *Hevajra Tantra* describes, a “wisdom, free of ideas of self and other, space-like, undefiled, empty, the essence of existence and nonexistence and the supreme.”

You are then additionally transformed by making love to your consort. You receive the sacred sexual vibrations of enlightened bliss from the guru - your consort passes these on to you, and acts as the messenger (*dūtī*) of bliss. With the blessings of the deities, you attain the first bliss of sexual yoga followed by the second bliss, the Bliss of Intensifying Passion (*Paramānanda*), increasing erotic pleasure, and the second moment, Ripening (*Vipāka*), the focused meditative absorption on rising bliss.

The guru gives you instructions on subtle energy yoga for you to incorporate into your practice of the *sādhana*. Teachings are also given on the Mind Only philosophy, which you integrate into your daily conduct, considering all appearances as arisings of your mind.

You take the vows of the Secret Consecration. Your goals after the second consecration are to practice subtle energy yoga until you gain some proficiency, ideally generating inner heat, and to focus on performing your ritual practices quietly in secret alone with your consort to begin to experience inwardly the transformation of your subtle body.

The Third Consecration: Wisdom/Method Consecration

The third consecration is called the Wisdom Consecration (*Prajñā Abhiṣeka*) when the student is a man, and the Method Consecration (*Upāya Abhiṣeka*) when the student is a woman, as the consecration is named after the practitioner’s consort, who may be female (*prajñā*) or male (*upāya*). Through uniting with the consort, you attain the bliss of *nirvāṇa*.

As in the second consecration, the guru first has sex with your consort, generating enlightened bliss. Returning the consort to you, with your consort you attain orgasm; through the power of your intention and the blessings of the buddhas and masters of the lineage you attain the first, second, and third bliss of sexual yoga. The third bliss, the Bliss of Cessation (*Viramānanda*), makes the leap from orgasmic bliss to a bliss oceanically greater, and the third moment, Dissolving (*Vimarda*), as you dissolve into the Clear Light of ultimate reality, are well established in your mind and body.

The third consecration, if most successful, gives you a short, direct experience of unchanging Essence. It is a state of Unity Consciousness in which all appearances are wiped out, and all experiences have the same taste (*sama rasa*) of pure bliss. All conceptuality is wiped out as it is directly experienced. The third consecration attains what can only be attained through the *Mahāyāna* after eons of practice – direct personal experience of ultimate reality. In the third

consecration you are considered as having attained the bliss of nirvāṇa, annihilating any sense of subject and object, and you are honored as an enlightened hero or heroine returning to the world of the senses out of love and compassion for others. If you do not actually experience nirvāṇa through the consecration (and even many great masters may not have, needing years of practice to attain it), you should hold the conviction that you did, because this will help pull you towards that experience in your subsequent practice.

The teacher then gives you instructions on sexual yoga, and you begin to add the sexual yoga elements to your practices of the sādhana. You are taught the philosophy of Buddha Essence, and allow yourself to perceive all appearances as completely illusory, as only the Clear Light exists.

You take the vows of the Wisdom/Method Consecration. Your principle goals after the third consecration are to maintain high and prolonged states of sexual ecstasy, especially in group sex practices, and to cultivate experiences of primordial awareness. After the third consecration, the combined power of deity yoga, subtle energy yoga, and sexual yoga is dramatically enhanced.

The Fourth Consecration

The final consecration, known simply as the Fourth Consecration (Caturtha Abhiṣeka), bestows the complete and permanent nondual awareness known as Mahāmudrā. Consecration is essential for attaining its realization. Having attained union with the Clear Light in the third consecration, the goal of the fourth consecration is to stabilize your awareness of Mahāmudrā as the union of both the Clear Light and Pure Appearance.

For the fourth consecration, you make love to your consort, performing all the practices of deity yoga, subtle energy yoga, and sexual yoga in which you have attained proficiency. The physical practice of the Fourth Consecration is through visualization to guide the sexual fluids down to the tip of your genitals, hold them, and then bring them back up to your forehead. To produce the “Innate Bliss,” Prajñāśrī (dates unknown, approx. 800s-1100s) observes in his text *The Consecration Ritual*, the sexual fluids must be held at the genitals. This is because *nondual awareness is realized in your genitals*. Advayaavajra (1007-1085) similarly explains in his *Oral Instructions on the Four Yogas* that for the wisdom of Mahāmudrā to arise, nondual awareness must be physically activated in your genitals through sexual yoga. As you meditate on the liberative potency of your genitals, by sympathetic vibration you are spontaneously elevated into nondual awareness.

You and your consort together attain the first three blisses of sexual yoga, leading you orgasmically into ultimate reality as you did in the previous consecration. From the state of union with the Clear Light, your guru sings you a spontaneous song of nondual awareness that expands your awareness even further. Songs are an ideal way of expressing the ineffable, leading your mind into the perfected state. Language cannot express the Innate - it can only be known through direct personal experience, and must be *embodied*. However, language *can* point towards what is beyond words, and this is what the guru’s words achieve. The guru conveys the nature of the Innate in words to the student - but these words are immediate, sacred revelations of the Divine. After the guru’s song is sung, you do not conceptualize what the Innate is, but remain open and

let nondual awareness arise spontaneously. The ultimate granter of the Fourth Consecration is the Great Yoginī, the Progenitor of Beings - also known as *you*.

You and your consort return from the undifferentiated bliss of nirvāṇa, and pass into the fourth bliss of sexual yoga, Innate Bliss (Sahajānanda), the union of all the blisses, and the fourth moment, Signless (Vilakṣaṇa), the experience of both peace and pure passion. Ideally, the fourth consecration bestows awareness of the Innate, and nondual awareness dawns permanently in your mind. You embody the wisdom that is both transcendent and imminent. Having attained the Wisdom of Sameness (Pratyavekṣaṇa Jñāna) that perceives all as one in the third consecration, you attain the Discriminating Wisdom (Samatā Jñāna) in the Fourth Consecration that allows you to enjoy the world of appearances fully without falling into suffering. Finally uniting all the Four Blissess of sexual yoga in your awareness simultaneously (Bliss, Bliss of Intensifying Passion, Bliss of Cessation, and Innate Bliss), you become the Great Bliss.

Your guru gives you instructions on nondual yoga (Mahāmudrā). You and your consort are finally ready to practice the complete sādhana comprising all the Four Yogas together. You also receive instructions in the philosophy of the Innate, understanding all things as possessing the Innate nature.

You take the vows of the Fourth Consecration. Your principle task after the fourth consecration is to stabilize the accomplishment of nonduality and maintain it at all times. The ability to perceive all the blisses simultaneously in all appearances is the full realization of Mahāmudrā. Eventually, all your obscurations are cleared and complete enlightenment dawns.

Tantric Vows

“The hero who follows the vows is the master of all yoginīs.”

- Cakrasamvara Tantra

The Power of Vows

During the consecrations, the student is given Tantric vows (samaya). These are commitments you make towards your practice and daily conduct. The vows sustain and deepen the meditative realizations gained in the consecrations, deepen your connection to the guru and the celestial yoginīs, and guide and support you in your path to enlightenment.

The main purpose of Buddhist vows is to help you keep your focus on attaining enlightenment and not become distracted. The Tantric vows are meant to support you in every way possible in creating a lifestyle of bliss, and are not meant as burdensome limitations. One of the most important vows is to see all appearances as bliss and to enjoy worldly pleasures fully. Sensual pleasure and inner purity are not opposites but complements – as the *Cakrasamvara Tantra* instructs, “One should cultivate purity with the pleasures of the path of yoga.” So rather than discipline being about the denial of pleasures, the vows say that if you are not developing pleasure and bliss in your daily life then you are actually *breaking* your vows.

These vows bring success. The *Cakrasamvara Tantra* says, “The protection of the vow is always the cause of the powers.” Following your vows brings worldly magical abilities leading to enlightenment. Breaking them brings the wrath of the *ḍākinīs*. Vows are also meant to protect you – from yourself. They protect you from doing things that might give you a guilty conscience. As Thrangu Rinpoche keenly points out, “Conceptual fixation on one’s moral choices” is itself breaking a vow to release conceptual fixation and be in truth and freedom. Part of the genius of Buddhism is that *the point of keeping moral rules is so that you will not obsess about moral rules*, a classic pitfall of Western ethics. By following these vows as best you can, you will be free of guilt which makes it easier for you to gain *meditative stability* in your practice - the real goal of ethical conduct.

The Three Levels of Buddhist Vows

As a Tantric practitioner, you follow three sets of vows. For beginners following at the level of the Common Vehicle, you maintain your vows to attain individual enlightenment (Prātimokṣa Samaya), study the Buddha’s sūtras, practice meditative absorption and insight, and follow the Lay Precepts. For those who follow the intermediate Mahāyāna path, you additionally affirm your Bodhisattva Vow (Prajñāpāramitā Samvara) to liberate all beings from suffering, and practice the Six Perfections and Mind Training.

For those following the highest Vajrayāna path, you add the Tantric Vows (Vajrayāna Samaya) that include practicing your sādhana with your consort regularly, and knowing yourself to be the deity day and night. For those who have attained a high level of realization, your vows are maintaining the view of Mahāmudrā, avoiding all judgements of good and bad, allowing yourself to be moved by spontaneous wisdom, and allowing desires to arise and be fulfilled or not fulfilled as they may, knowing all is utterly pure and perfect. The essence of the Tantric vows is to be in the experience of the Great Bliss, free of subject-object duality, one with primordial awareness, and to use sexual bliss skillfully to attain the highest bliss for yourself and others.

Sexual Ritual Vows

Your Tantric consort is much like a marriage partner. The *Cakrasamvara Tantra* stresses the importance of a dedicated consort for Tantric practice, and observes “You should not, deluded by lust, abandon your consort and mingle with another.” This means that you should stick with your principle long-term partner for practicing your sādhana. Switching consorts regularly, it is too easy for the practices to be reduced to mere exercises in lust rather than a long-term commitment to attain enlightenment. At the same time, the rule is flexible, and does not apply to Tantric feasts, festivals, or meeting up with wandering bands of yogis and yoginīs, where anything goes.

Daily Conduct Vows

Tantra is a continuous practice, which adds to its power as the most rapid means of transformation. Daily conduct (caryā) vows include knowing yourself to be the deity at all times.

They also include treating others as equals, never as superior or inferior. You may be instructed at times to follow socially transgressive behavior (vāmācāra), such as eating with the left hand (a major taboo in India), as a way of liberating yourself from limiting cultural constraints. For more advanced students, you may practice deliberately starting quarrels with people to test your own ability to remain tranquil, or performing magical activities to win the confidence of others in the Dharma. In this way, what “ethical conduct” is depends upon your level of realization. The highest practice, the *Hevajra Tantra* says, is that “The yogi must always, day and night, remain one with the Essence.” Although vows of daily conduct may not be easy to follow at first, success in your sādhana practice makes following the vows easier as you see for yourself the accomplishments the Tantric path brings. In this way, practice and vows mutually support each other.

Restoring Broken Vows

It is likely, if not inevitable, that times arise on your path when you break your vows. Breaking vows can lead to serious karmic repercussions. However, whenever you break any of your vows, the point is not to wallow in guilt - your vows can always be restored. The most common ways to restore broken vows (samaya bheda) for those who have taken the first two consecrations are: 1) by recognizing your errors through sincere confession to your deity, 2) performing purifying practices such as reciting the hundred syllable mantra of Vajrasattva (the buddha of purification) or the mantra of your principle deity an appropriate number of times (perhaps ten to a hundred or a thousand), 3) performing the ritual of self-consecration found in the sādhana, or 4) performing a fire pūjā (ritual offering). For a broken root vow, entering the maṇḍala through retaking the first consecration is advised. After the third consecration, broken vows are restored through Tantric practice, especially subtle energy yoga and sexual yoga. After the fourth consecration, broken vows are restored through absorption in nondual awareness.

Transcending Vows

Vows are like training wheels on a bicycle – they take you a certain distance when you are learning the path, but eventually you let go of them in order to be free of all conceptual constructs and follow in the ways of primordial awareness. Dwelling in a state of nonduality, guided in each moment with perfect awareness, as a buddha all vows are spontaneously fulfilled.

Vows of the First Consecration

The vows of the first consecration are: 1) the Common Vows (Sādhāraṇa Samaya) of the Five Buddha Families, 2) the Entrance Vow (Praveśa Samvara), 3) the Master Consecration Vows (Ācārya Abhiṣeka Samaya), 4) Sādhana Vows (Sādhana Samaya), 5) the Uncommon Vows (Asādhāraṇa Samaya) of the Five Buddha Families, 6) the Fourteen Root Downfalls (Mūlā Patti), 7) the Eight Secondary Downfalls (Sthūlā Patti), and 8) the Daily Conduct Vows (Caryā).

The Common Vows

You take the Common Vows (Sādhāraṇa Samaya), in which you vow to perform the activities of the Five Buddha Families for the benefit of all beings:

1. Vairocana – To ingest the Five Nectars (Pañca Amṛita) at Tantric rituals.
2. Akṣobhya – To recognize your body, speech, and mind as the instruments of enlightenment.
3. Amitābha – To follow higher conduct in rituals: not to have sex with other consorts during sādhana practice, and to withhold sexual fluids until the proper time.
4. Amoghasiddhi – To make offerings to the buddhas.
5. Ratnasambhava – To give generously to others.

The Entrance Vow

To see the maṇḍala of the deity and receive its powers you must take the Entrance Vow (Praveśa Samvara):

1. To attain buddhahood for the benefit of all beings.

The Master Consecration Vows

The Master Consecration Vows (Ācārya Abhiṣeka Samaya) consist of three vows:

1. The Vajra Vow (Vajra Samaya) - “I am the Vow.” To liberate yourself and others.
2. The Bell Vow (Ghaṇṭā Samaya) - “I vow to proclaim the 84,000 teachings of the Dharma.”
3. The Seal Vow (Mudrā Samaya) - “I am the self-nature of the deity.”

Sādhana Vows

When you receive a sādhana for practice, it may come with its own vows (Sādhana Samaya). The three sādhana vows stated in *The Sādhana of Secret Vajravilāsinī* are:

1. To practice the sādhana with your consort 4x a month on the four lunar juncture nights.
2. To recite the sādhana 3x a day.
3. To recite the seed mantra of the deity many times, at least 100,000x, and the seed mantra of the consort of the deity 50,000x, within the sādhana.

The Uncommon Vows

You take the Uncommon Vows (Sādhāraṇa Samaya), which liberate you from slavish adherence to standard ethical rules, and require you to act for the highest good of yourself and others at all times. They are called Uncommon Vows because they are unique to the Vajrayāna:

1. Vairocana – To consume meat and alcohol to destroy your pride in your own social status.
2. Akṣobhya – To take the lives of beings untamable by peaceful methods.
3. Amitābha – To take away the consorts of beings who lustfully crave sex.
4. Ratnasambhava – To steal the possessions of beings who crave wealth and give them to others.
5. Amoghasiddhi – To speak lies to beings in order to benefit them.

The Fourteen Root Downfalls

Committing any of the Fourteen Root Downfalls (Mūlā Patti) can destroy your progress. You vow never to break them at any time:

1. To act disrespectfully toward the guru.
2. To violate the Lay Precepts.
3. To criticize vajra brothers and sisters.
4. To give up love for beings.
5. To give up the Bodhisattva Vow of attaining enlightenment for yourself and all beings.
6. To criticize the teachings of the sūtras or Tantras.
7. To reveal secret teachings to those who are immature.
8. To mistreat your physical body.
9. To doubt the teachings on ultimate reality.
10. To befriend harmful persons.
11. To attach obscuring thoughts to the inconceivable reality.
12. To think negative thoughts about followers of the Dharma.
13. To not keep the vow of ingesting the Five Nectars.
14. To criticize women, who hold the Great Bliss.

The Eight Secondary Downfalls

Though less serious than the root downfalls, committing any of the Eight Secondary Downfalls (Sthūlā Patti) can seriously impede your path to buddhahood:

1. To rely on an unqualified consort.
2. To fight or argue during a Tantric feast.
3. To receive ritual offerings from an unqualified consort.
4. To fail to teach Tantric knowledge to those with a sincere interest.
5. To fail to answer questions on the teachings.
6. To stay more than seven days with those who have contempt for the Mahāyāna.
7. To falsely and arrogantly portray yourself as a realized yogi.
8. To teach the Dharma to those who lack faith.

Daily Conduct Vows

The Daily Conduct Vows (Caryā) ensure you remain in a state of continuous practice:

1. To visualize yourself as the deity in sexual union with the deity's consort at all times.
2. To recite the seed mantra of the deity 108x at night before sunrise.
3. To perform the Vajra-Lotus Recitation each day.
4. To keep the mantras of the deity secret.
5. To massage your consort while reciting the dhāraṇī mantra of the deity each day.

Several additional daily conduct vows support your practice:

6. To practice sacred outlook (Deva Dṛiṣṭi), perceiving all appearances as emptiness and Bliss.
7. To practice the Yoga of Passion (Rāga Yoga), making love to your physical consort as the deity.
8. To practice Dream Yoga (Svapna Yoga), remaining as the deity in the dream state.

Vows of the Second Consecration

The vows of the second consecration include sādhana vows and daily conduct vows.

Sādhana Vows

1. To practice subtle energy yoga with the sādhana.

Daily Conduct Vows

1. To never denigrate the vajra master.
2. To perceive all appearances as mind only and Supreme Bliss.

Vows of the Third Consecration

The vows of the third consecration include sādhana vows, the Eight Supreme Vows (Aṣṭa Samaya Parā), daily conduct vows, and the Lineage Vow (Sampradaya Samaya).

Sādhana Vows

1. To practice sexual yoga with the sādhana.

The Eight Supreme Vows

You vow to follow the Eight Supreme Vows (Aṣṭa Samaya Parā) during sexual yoga rituals:

1. To not be lustful.
2. To avoid union with another consort.
3. To be free of dualistic thought and behavior.
4. To keep the practices secret.
5. To remember your vows.
6. To have mastery with the vajra and yoni.
7. To withhold sexual fluids during rituals until the appropriate time.
8. To not be angry while in sexual union.

Daily Conduct Vows

1. To perceive all appearances as Essence and the Bliss of Cessation.

Lineage Vow

A guru may instruct you to take vows that are unique to the lineage. During the third consecration, you may take the special Lineage Vow (Sampradaya Samaya) of the lineage of Śabara:

1. To make love continuously to all beings of the opposite sex throughout all the worlds until they reach the Great Bliss.

Vows of the Fourth Consecration

The fourth consecration includes sādhana vows, the Six Vows (Ṣat Samaya), and daily conduct vows. As nondual awareness is stabilized, the yogi releases attachment to all vows.

Sādhana Vows

1. To practice nondual yoga with the sādhana.

The Six Vows

The *Ḍākinī Vajra Pañjara Tantra (The Indestructible Tent Tantra)* gives the Six Vows (Ṣat Samaya) to follow after the fourth consecration:

1. To not perform sacred hand gestures.

2. To not build stūpas.
3. To not bow to representations of the body, speech and mind of the buddhas.
4. To not perform outer rituals.
5. To not do these even in your dreams.
6. To honor your Tantric guru, your lineage, and members of your Tantric community, but to not honor other teachers.

Daily Conduct Vows

1. To perceive all appearances as the Innate nature and the Great Bliss.

Results

“Consecration is of primary importance – all the attainments rest constantly within it.”
- *Vajra Mālā Tantra*

Through the consecrations, deep changes occur. The first consecration transforms the coarse karmic obscurations of your physical body; you perceive everything as pure and sacred, and you attain the state of irreversibility. The second transforms the subtle karmic obscurations of your speech, and you attain profound inner peace and clarity. The third transforms the most subtle karmic obscurations of your mind, and you are released into nirvāṇa - in a state of complete unity consciousness, you attain the essence of enlightenment, and as you arise from this state and return to the world, you gain a first experience of nondual awareness. The fourth consecration stabilizes your nondual awareness, establishing you in the Great Bliss, and leading quickly to complete and perfect enlightenment as your remaining karmic obscurations dissolve. Your actions are sacred hand gestures, your words are mantras, and your thoughts are the mind of all the buddhas. The *Hevajra Tantra* proclaims, the consecrated yogi “wanders like a lion.”

Consecrations

Introduction

You can either find a teacher or friend who can consecrate you, or you can consecrate yourself. The following consecration rituals are written from the view that both a male and female student are receiving the consecrations together (at certain points the student who is of the opposite sex of the guru is referred to as “the consort”), but you can always perform them in whatever way suits you. After each consecration, try to spend at least 6 months in practice before you take the next one. While traditional Tantric vows are presented, it is up to you whether or how you might follow them. As always in Tantra, you are your own master.

Time: 2 days for each consecration, totaling 8 hours: 2 hours for preparation on the first day, 2 hours for the rituals for each day, and 2 hours for the Tantric feast at the end of the second day.

Ritual of Accepting a New Disciple - Śiṣya Anugraha

As a preliminary to the first consecration, the student and the guru perform the ritual of accepting a new disciple:

1. With the student's hands folded in Añjali Mudrā, the student circumambulates the guru clockwise 3x.



2. Kneeling before the guru, the student makes the Gesture of Offering (Maṇḍala Mudrā), as a way of giving the entire universe to the teacher. The student says, "Guru, please instruct me."



3. The guru, seeing the student as a worthy vessel fit for the Vajrayāna, says "I will instruct you."
4. The student says, "I request permission to take the first consecration."
5. The guru says, "I give you permission to take the first consecration."

Benefits: Establishes the bond of devotion and commitment between guru and disciple.

Time: 1 minute.

Pre-Consecration

The guru prepares the ritual implements, the site, and him or herself for the ritual. The students prepare themselves as necessary.

Benefits: A strong outer and inner environment is established for the consecration ritual.

Time: 2 hours.

Suggested Items

The following items are suggested. You can visualize any ritual items that you do not have.

The Maṇḍala

Powdered or very small semi-precious stones (or rice, whole or powdered), colored red and white to draw the maṇḍala, or use a permanent cloth maṇḍala of Vajravilāsinī.

The Five Offerings

The Five Offerings (Pañca Upacāra) are made to the deities of the maṇḍala during the Ritual of Empowering the Maṇḍala (Maṇḍala Adhiṣṭhāna):

1. Flowers (puṣpa) - Flowers that represent the female essence, such as bandhūka (Engl. ixora) or red hibiscus (jabā), and the male essence, white lotus (kumuda) or yellow lotus (pita padma).
2. Incense (dhūpa) – Cones are ideal. Incense sticks should be avoided for burning because the wood on the stick burns, adding a less refined element to the aroma. You can also mix your own powders and place them on a charcoal pellet for burning. Sandalwood (candana) is the most spiritual, frankincense (sihlaka) is gently invigorating, while jasmine (mallikā) or musk (kastūrī) are good for setting romantic moods. Marijuana (gañja) incense with no THC is also available. Psychoactive incenses that are all legal in the United States include areca nut (tāmbūla), aśvagandha (an aphrodisiac), fly agaric (Lat. Amanita muscaria; soma), and morning glory seeds (dhātura), and should be used with caution.
3. Oil lamp (dīpa) – The light of the Dharma dispelling ignorance. You can also use a candle.
4. Perfume (gandha) - Anything pleasant-smelling, in an oil, cream, or perfumed water, or a powdered or granular perfume. A traditional blend is a mix of fragrant tree bark, sandalwood, dried fragrant fruits, nutmeg, cardamom, saffron, camphor, and musk.
5. Food (naivedya) – A simple food offering that will not spoil quickly like fruit or nuts. One popular combination is to use three round fruits such as an apple, orange, and peach, representing the Three Jewels.



Altar

To set up an altar for the consecrations, see Chapter 9: Preparing for Practice.

Ritual Implements

The Victorious Vase (Vijaya Kalaśa) – A vase used for holding the power of the deity in the sacred space during consecrations. It may be made of gold, silver, copper, or clay, and is without a pouring spout. The ingredients of the vase (substitutions are common) are:

1. The Twenty-Five Essences (Tattvas), holding the essential powers of the natural world:
 - a. The Five Nectars: 1) feces, 2) urine, 3) human flesh, 4) female sexual fluids, and 5) male sexual fluids.

b. Five Fragrant Substances: 1) sandalwood, 2) aloe wood, 3) juniper, 4) camphor, and 5) uśira root (or other fragrant natural substance).

c. The Five Jewels: 1) coral, 2) pearl, 3) diamond, 4) gold, and 5) silver.

d. The Five Medicinal Herbs: 1) myrobalan, 2) aśvaghanda, 3) red lotus, 4) blue lotus, and 5) aśoka.

e. The Five Grains: 1) mustard seed, 2) rice, 3) pulses, 4) barley, and 5) sesame seed.

Crush them and mix them together, and place a small amount of the mixture at the bottom of the vase.

2. Uncooked white rice, symbolizing abundance. Fill the vase one-third with rice.

3. Water boiled with saffron (kumkuma), possessing the nectar of immortality and the three dimensions of a buddha. Fill the vase two-thirds with saffron water.

Top the Victorious Vase with fresh branches and leaves or a peacock feather, and plug it with a strip of cloth. Surround the neck with a red colored cloth ribbon, with the insignia image of a red lotus flower, symbolizing Amitābha, the Buddha of the Lotus Family of Vajravilāsinī.



The Action Vase (Karma Kalaśa) – A vase used for pouring saffron water in performing the consecrations. Except for it having a pouring spout, it is identical in appearance and ingredients to the Victorious Vase.



Five Buddha Crown (Pañca Kula Mukuta) – Symbol of the Five Buddha Families, with the image of Amitābha placed in the center. One each for the guru and students.



Khaṭvaṅga (Staff) – Represents the union of primordial wisdom and Great Bliss, and the cosmic protective power of the deity. When held by the guru it is the deity's consort. One for the guru.



Vajra – Symbol of the indestructible power of the Vajrayāna. One for the guru.



Bell (ghaṇṭā) – Symbol of primordial wisdom. One for the guru.



Damaru (monkey drum) – Symbol of Great Bliss that summons the yoginīs. One for the guru.



Flower petals (puṣpa) – For sprinkling the site. A small amount for the guru.



A bowl of flower petals (puṣpa patra) – For sprinkling the site. One for the guru.

A conch shell cup (śaṅka patra) – For sprinkling consecrated saffron water. One for the guru.

Sandalwood incense (candana) – A small amount in a cup, brazier, or incense stick holder. For consecrating the ritual items. For the guru.



Sindūra (vermillion) - A small amount in a cup or bottle. For the Sindūra Consecration of the female student. For added safety, you can replace this with red wine paste. One for the guru.

Sindura cup (sindura patra) – To hold the sindūra. One for the guru.

Blindfolds (netraṭa) – One for each the student (first three consecrations only).

Large drums (muraṅga and mṛidaṅga) – For the kula to play at the end of the consecration.

Conch shells (śaṅka) – For the kula to play at the end of the consecration.

Food Offerings

Food offering to the main deities (bali) – A small offering of food on a dish directly for the main deities, and the main dishes of food, for the Tantric feast (gaṇacakra). The food offering is commonly a piece of flatbread decorated with a parasol or ribbon on top.

The Five Nectars

A nectar cup (patra) – A bowl or cup filled with alcohol, like red wine or rice wine, and small amounts of the consecrated inner offerings of the Five Nectars (Pañca Amṛita):

1. Feces (Vairocana) – Earth element.
2. Urine (mūtra) – Water element.

3. Human flesh (mamsa) – Fire element.
4. Female sexual fluids (rakta) – Air element.
5. Male sexual fluids (śukra) – Space element.



Gifts from Each Student to the Guru

Offerings (bali) - Food and alcoholic drinks. To the main deity for the Tantric feast following the consecration.

Gifts (dakṣiṇā) - Money, clothing, or ritual items. In gratitude to the guru.

Other Items

Cushions (āsanas) – For the guru and the guru’s consort in the center, for the two students facing them in the center, and for the kula, in pairs, formed in a circle.

Other items as listed under each consecration.

Preparation of the Guru

1. The guru bathes, and is clean and fresh-smelling.
2. The guru dresses as Vajravilāsinī or Padmanarteśvara, wearing the Five or Three Symbolic Ornaments respectively, depending on the guru’s gender. See Chapter 9: Preparing for Practice.
3. The guru cultivates a positive mental state.
4. The guru transforms into the deity.

Preparation of the Students

For the first consecration, students arrive topless, wearing wrap-around skirts. For the remaining consecrations, the female student dresses as Vajravilāsinī and the male student as Padmanarteśvara. For additional preparation, see Chapter 9: Preparing for Practice.

Blessing the Ritual Implements – Prokṣana

Arising from emptiness as the deity, the guru blesses all the ritual items needed for the ritual, by waving sandalwood incense over them and reciting the dhāranī mantra of Vajravilāsinī 10x for all of them together.

The Ritual of Establishing the Site - Bhū Parigraha Vidhi

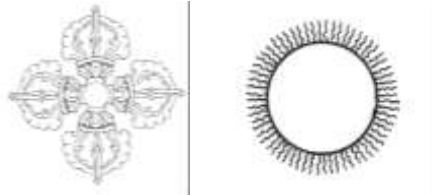
Site Selection

1. The guru selects the site for the consecration. For worshipping peaceful deities such as Vajravilāsinī, the selected site should be clean, pure, and inspiring.
2. From a state of emptiness, the guru visualizes himself or herself as Vajravilāsinī or Padmanarteśvara, and enters the site dancing majestically, wearing the crown of the deity and the symbolic ornaments of the deity (Pañca/Tri Mudrā), holding the khaṭvaṅga, and reciting the seed mantra of Vajravilāsinī many times while doing so.
3. The guru requests permission from the earth goddess Pṛithivī to use the site. The guru says, “I, (say your name), draw this maṇḍala with you as my witness, Oh Goddess who is the bearer of many jewels and worshipped by the love of Vajravilāsinī.” Once the guru is confident that the earth goddess has granted her permission, the guru plants the khaṭvaṅga in the ground. If the guru determines that the earth goddess has not given approval, the guru moves on and selects another site.



The Site Protection Ritual - Hūṃvajrī Vidhi

1. The guru cleans the site as necessary and purifies it by sprinkling flower petals and the Five Nectars, while reciting the seed mantra of Vajravilāsinī many times while doing so.
2. From emptiness, the guru visualizes a red sun maṇḍala, a red *raṃ* seed syllable, a blue *hūṃ* seed syllable, and a red crossed vajra. From this image emanates around the ritual site an impenetrable protection sphere: 1) vajra ground (vajra bhūmi), 2) vajra roof (vajra pañjara), 3) vajra canopy (vajra vitāna), 4) shield of arrows (vajra śarajāla), 5) vajra walls (vajra prakara), surrounded by a 6) vajra circle of flames (vajra jvāla). The guru empowers the protection sphere by reciting the Protection Mantra (Rakṣa Mantra) 108x: *oṃ rakṣa rakṣa hūṃ hūṃ phaṭ svāhā*.



raṃ hūṃ



Empowering the Maṇḍala - Maṇḍala Adhiṣṭhāna

1. The guru recites the Refuge Vow.

*buddham śaraṇam gacchāmi
dharmam śaraṇam gacchāmi
saṅgham śaraṇam gacchāmi*

“I go for refuge to the Buddha.”
“I go for refuge to the Dharma.”
“I go for refuge to the Saṅgha.”

Recite 3x.



2. The guru recites the Bodhisattva Vow.

*viśuddhaṃ dhārayiṣyāmi yathā buddhena deśitaṃ
tena jītvā śaṭhamāraṃ prāpya buddhatvam uttamaṃ
bhaveyaṃ bhavakhinnānāṃ śaraṇaṃ sarvadehināṃ*

“I will maintain purity, as taught by the Buddha.
Conquering the demon Mara, and attaining supreme buddhahood,
I vow to be a refuge for all beings, weary of saṃsāra.”

Recite 3x.



3. The guru recites the Lineage Prayer (Sampradaya Praṇaya):

oṃ namo gurubhyaḥ
“oṃ Homage to the gurus.”

“To all the ones who know the true reality, I offer a maṇḍala (Maṇḍala Mudrā) of the Three Worlds:



From the vast expanse of the ocean of primordial wisdom, I invoke Vajradhara and his precious consort Vajradhātviśvarī.

From the Buddhafield of Sukhāvātī, I call upon the great buddhas Amitābha and Pāṇḍarā.

From his celestial paradise Potala, I invoke the noble Lord of erotic passion Lokanātha.

From the pure mind of Saraha to the great master Śabara, the noble teachings were given.

From Lokanātha to the great master Śabara, these words of practice were heard as an imperishable sound.

Masters of the lineage, Saraha and Hedarmā, Śabara and Śabarī, I invoke you all. For the benefit of all beings, I will attain enlightenment in this very life. Guide me in the path that leads to the Great Bliss.”

Visualize that you are surrounded by countless buddhas, bodhisattvas, yogis and yoginīs, Dharma protectors, and masters of the lineage who pledge to support your practice. They dissolve into your heart, bringing you inner awakening.

4. The guru places the Five-Buddha Crown on his or her own head, a vajra in the right hand and a bell in the left hand. The guru recites the Emptiness Mantra, in Sanskrit and in English:

oṃ svabhāva śuddhāḥ sarva dharmāḥ svabhāva śuddho 'ham

“oṃ I and all appearances are naturally pure, with no inherent existence, emptiness.”

5. From a state of emptiness, the guru arises as the deity, Vajravilāsinī or Padmanarteśvara, and forms the Gesture of Indestructible Embrace (Vajra Hūṃkāra Mudrā - lit. Adamantine Hūṃ Syllable Gesture), hands in front facing inward, right hand over left, holding the vajra and bell.



6. From the guru’s blue *hūṃ* heart syllable, the guru visualizes rays of light emanate in all directions, satisfying the needs of all beings. The light rays return and pull all buddhas and bodhisattvas into the guru’s body. The guru puts down the vajra and bell.

hūṃ

7. With red and white stones, rice, or other materials, the guru lays out the maṇḍala of Vajravilāsinī on the ground, reciting the seed mantra of Vajravilāsinī many times while doing so. The maṇḍala may be 1 to 5 cubits (the length of a forearm) in diameter, or other suitable size. It may also be painted on cloth and kept permanently, and rolled out on the ground. For the first consecration only, it is placed where the students cannot see it.

Drawing the Maṇḍala of Vajravilāsinī – A gold, silver or black-lined Dharmodaya (double triangle). Her principle attribute, a red vajra, is drawn vertically in the center, with the five red seed syllables of Vajravilāsinī’s seed mantra drawn around the vajra in the center, in a counter-clockwise direction forming a circle, with the first seed syllable starting in the East. The principle attribute of her consort, Padmanarteśvara, in the center crosses hers horizontally, also a

red vajra. In the four outer triangles of the Dharmodaya are four bliss wheels, red and white, each with two red and one white swirls, representing the Four Blisses. The Dharmodaya is surrounded by a circle. The interior portions of the Dharmodaya are red, and the exterior is white. An outer circle equidistant from the inner circle is drawn around the center. Decorate each of the outer corners with: upper left - a victory banner, upper right - a wish-granting (aśoka) tree, lower left - a victorious vase, and lower right - a parasol. These represent their worldly activities.



8. The guru invokes the guardians of the directions to bless and guard the maṇḍala. These are the the Vedic worldly gods who are the eight deities of the cardinal and intercardinal directions: 1) East – Indra, 2) South – Yama, 3) West – Jala (aka Varuna), 4) North - Yakṣa (aka Kubera), 5) Southeast – Bhūta (aka Agni), 6) Southwest – Vahnī (aka Nairritī), 7) Northwest – Vāyu, and 8) Northeast - Rakṣa (aka Ísana). The invocation from the *Hevajra Tantra* is in Old Bengali rather than Sanskrit:

*inda jama jala jakkha bhūta vahnī vāyu rakkha canda sujja māda bappa talapatale
aṭṭhasappa svāhā
idaṃ baliṃ bhuūja jighra phulla dhūpa mānsa viṅgha aṃbha kajja savva sādha khanti
kuṇi pheḍa gāda*

“Indra, Yama, Jala, Yakṣa, Bhūta, Vahnī, Vāyu and Rakṣa; Moon, Sun, Mother, Father, and the serpents of the lower realms, so be it! Taste and smell this offering of flowers, incense, and meat and flourish. Fulfill all our desires and remove all our bodily afflictions!”



9. The guru empowers the maṇḍala by reciting the dhāraṇī mantra of Vajravilāsinī 1000x, and the seed mantra of Padmanarteśvara 108x, visualizing all deities in the space sealed with the image of Amitābha on their foreheads.



10. The guru makes offerings to the principal deities of the maṇḍala by reciting the mantras of the Five Offerings ((Pañca Upacāra) while placing physical offerings on the eastern side: 1) flowers – *oṃ vajra puṣpe pratīccha svāhā*, 2) incense - *oṃ vajra dhūpe pratīccha svāhā*, 3) lamp – *oṃ vajra dīpe pratīccha svāhā*, 4) perfume or fragrant oil – *oṃ vajra gandhe pratīccha svāhā*, and 5) food – *oṃ vajra naivedye pratīccha svāhā*.



The food offerings to the worldly deities made, the guru recites the multiplying mantra to expand infinitely these offerings and dedicates them to all beings throughout the universe:

oṃ akāro mukhaṃ sarvadharmāṇaṃ ādyanutpannatvāt oṃ āḥ hūṃ phaṭ svāhā

“Increase in quantity the forms of all appearances arising from the original source. *oṃ āḥ hūṃ* So be it.”

11. The guru prepares the ingredients of the Victorious Vase and the Action Vase. The guru consecrates the two vases: the guru visualizes all the deities of the consecration in the water in the two vases, and recites the dhāraṇī mantra of Vajravilāsinī 108x. The Victorious Vase (Vijaya Kalaśa) establishes the presence of the deity in the ritual site, and is placed in front of the maṇḍala in the eastern direction. The Action Vase (Karma Kalaśa) is used for sprinkling the site, the maṇḍala, the offering materials, the guru and the students, and is placed in front of the maṇḍala in the northeastern direction.



12. The guru covers the maṇḍala with a curtain (first consecration only).

13. The guru’s consort visualizes herself as dissolving into emptiness and arising as Vajravilāsinī or Padmanarteśvara.

14. The guru and the guru’s consort make love next to the maṇḍala to bless it.

15. The guru declares the ritual site ready by playing a ḍamaru and bell and making the terrifying sound *ha ha* to clear away any remaining obstructing spirits.

Time: 2 hours.



First Consecration: The Vase Consecration – Kalaśa Abhiṣeka

Suggested Items

Ritual Items

Vajravilāsinī - The Five Symbolic Ornaments (Pañca Mudrā): 1) a long pearl necklace (muktāhāra), 2) a forehead lac streak (lac), 3) an ashoka flower (aśoka), 4) a forehead vermilion mark (sindūra, or red wine paste), and 5) black eye make-up (añjana). For the guru to give to the female student.

Padmanarteśvara - The Three Symbolic Ornaments (Tri Mudrā): 1) a long pearl necklace (muktāhāra), 2) a forehead saffron powder streak (kuṃkuma), and 3) an ashoka flower (aśoka). For the guru to give to the male student.

Saffron powder (kuṃkuma; or turmeric - haldi) – To mark the forehead of the male student.

Lac (or red wine, oil and flour mixed into a paste) – To mark the forehead of the female student.

A curtain – To place around the maṇḍala.

Flowers – Lotus or aśoka flowers are best. For the guru to give to the students, one for each.

Vajra – For the guru to give to the students, one for each student.

Bell – For the guru to give to each student, one for each student.

The Sādhana of Secret Vajravilāsinī – One copy for the guru, one for each student, and one for each member of the kula.

Gifts from the Guru to Each Student

A deity image card (pratimā) – An aid for visualizing Vajravilāsinī and Padmanarteśvara.

Blessing the Ritual Items

From emptiness, the guru arises as the deity, consecrates any unconsecrated ritual items to be used in the consecration with the Action Vase while reciting the dhāraṇī mantra of the deity 10x.



Consecration

First Day - Morning

Preliminaries

1. The guru transforms into the deity, puts on the crown of the deity, and recites the seed mantra of the deity 1000x. The guru wears the crown of the deity for the duration of the consecration.

2. The kula plays musical instruments and sings a song of praise to the guru.

Those who do not drink the ambrosia of their guru's instructions
die of thirst in the desert of many texts.
Abandon thought and be just as a child.
Be devoted to your master's teaching and the Innate will be realized.
- Saraha, *The People's Song*

3. The students recite the Refuge Vow.

buddham śaraṇam gacchāmi
dharmam śaraṇam gacchāmi
saṅgham śaraṇam gacchāmi

“I go for refuge to the Buddha.”
“I go for refuge to the Dharma.”
“I go for refuge to the Saṅgha.”

Recite 3x.



4. The students recite the Bodhisattva Vow.

viśuddhaṃ dhārayiṣyāmi yathā buddhena deśitam
tena jitvā śaṭhamāraṃ prāpya buddhatvam uttamaṃ
bhaveyaṃ bhavakhinnānāṃ śaraṇam sarvadehināṃ

“I will maintain purity, as taught by the Buddha.
Conquering the demon Mara, and attaining supreme buddhahood,
I vow to be a refuge for all beings, weary of saṃsāra.”

Recite 3x.



5. The students recite the Lineage Prayer.

oṃ namo gurubhyaḥ
“oṃ Homage to the gurus.”

“To all the ones who know the true reality, I offer a maṇḍala (Maṇḍala Mudrā) of the Three Worlds:



From the vast expanse of the ocean of primordial wisdom, I invoke Vajradhara and his precious consort Vajradhātviśvarī.

From the Buddhafield of Sukhāvātī, I call upon the great buddhas Amitābha and Pāṇḍarā.

From his celestial paradise Potala, I invoke the noble Lord of erotic passion Lokanātha.

From the pure mind of Saraha to the great master Śabara, the noble teachings were given.

From Lokanātha to the great master Śabara, these words of practice were heard as an imperishable sound.

Masters of the lineage, Saraha and Hedarmā, Śabara and Śabarī, I invoke you all. For the benefit of all beings, I will attain enlightenment in this very life. Guide me in the path that leads to the Great Bliss.”

Visualize that you are surrounded by countless buddhas, bodhisattvas, yogis and yoginīs, Dharma protectors, and masters of the lineage who pledge to support your practice. They dissolve into your heart, bringing you inner awakening.

6. The guru says, “Visualize the vajra master as the deity (Vajravilāsinī or Padmanarteśvara), in union with the consort.”



Requesting Consecration

1. With the students’ hands in Añjali Mudrā, the students request consecration from the guru. The students say, “Grant me, Oh excellent one, the Five Consecrations of the Vase Consecration.” They repeat 3x.



2. The guru accepts their request for consecration. The guru says, “I will grant you the Five Consecrations of the Vase Consecration, so that you and all beings may attain the Great Bliss of enlightenment. This teaching is rare and precious. As a gesture of total offering to the deity, please offer a maṇḍala.”

3. The students offer the Maṇḍala Mudrā to the goddess.



The Five Consecrations

1. The guru recites verses 36-66 of the *sādhana* - the students visualize themselves as and become the actual deities, Vajravilāsinī or Padmanarteśvara.
2. The guru says, “The female buddhās of the Five Buddha Families give you the water, crown, vajra, bell, and name consecrations, which bestow upon you the enlightened activities of the Five Buddha Families.”
3. The guru gives the water consecration to the students. The guru sprinkles vase water over their heads to purify them. The guru becomes Akṣobhya. The guru envisions light emanating from the seed syllables *oṃ*, *āḥ*, and *hūṃ* in his/her own forehead, throat, and heart cakras, filling the universe. Māmakī arises and bestows the water over the heads of the students. The guru recites in Sanskrit: *oṃ vajra toya abhiṣiñca hūṃ*. “*oṃ* adamantine water consecration *hūṃ*.” The guru sprinkles more vase water over their heads and says, “The water consecration bestows upon you the enlightened activities of the Vajra Family of Akṣobhya, and purifies the Five Elements of earth, water, fire, wind, and space. It plants the seeds for the awakening of enlightened Mirror-Like Wisdom.” The guru and students recite the consecrating mantra together 108x in Sanskrit: *oṃ vajra toya abhiṣiñca hūṃ*.
4. The guru places the crown of the deity (both students) and sindūra (the female student) on their heads. The guru becomes Ratnasambhava. The guru envisions light emanating from the seed syllables *oṃ*, *āḥ*, and *hūṃ* in his/her own forehead, throat, and heart cakras filling the universe. Dhātviśvarī arises and bestows the crown and sindūra over the heads of the students. The guru recites in Sanskrit: *oṃ vajra mauli abhiṣiñca hūṃ* and/or *oṃ vajra sindūra abhiṣiñca hūṃ*. “*oṃ* adamantine crown consecration *hūṃ*.” “*oṃ* adamantine vermilion consecration *hūṃ*.” The guru sprinkles vase water over their heads and says, “The crown and/or sindūra consecration(s) bestow(s) upon you the enlightened activities of the Jewel Family of Ratnasambhava, and purifies the Five Aggregates of form, sensations, perceptions, intentions, and consciousness. It plants the seeds for the awakening of the enlightened Wisdom of Equality.” Recite together 108x in Sanskrit: *oṃ vajra mauli abhiṣiñca hūṃ/oṃ vajra sindūra abhiṣiñca hūṃ*.
5. The guru gives them each a vajra and places them in their right hands. The guru becomes Amitābha. The guru envisions light emanating from the seed syllables *oṃ*, *āḥ*, and *hūṃ* in his/her own forehead, throat, and heart cakras filling the universe. Pāṇḍarā arises and bestows the vajra over the heads of the students. The guru recites in Sanskrit: *oṃ vajra vajra abhiṣiñca hūṃ*. “*oṃ* adamantine vajra consecration *hūṃ*.” The guru sprinkles vase water over their heads and says, “The vajra consecration bestows upon you the enlightened activities of the Lotus Family of Amitābha, and symbolizes compassionate action and purifies the right channels of the subtle body. It plants the seeds for the awakening of enlightened Discriminating Wisdom.” Recite together 108x in Sanskrit: *oṃ vajra vajra abhiṣiñca hūṃ*.
6. The guru gives them each a bell and places them in their left hands. The guru becomes Amoghasiddhi. The guru envisions light emanating from the seed syllables *oṃ*, *āḥ*, and *hūṃ* in his/her own forehead, throat, and heart cakras filling the universe. Samaya Tārā arises and

bestows the bell over the heads of the students. The guru recites in Sanskrit: *oṃ vajra ghaṇṭā ābhiṣiñca hūṃ*. “*oṃ* adamantine bell consecration *hūṃ*.” The guru sprinkles vase water over their heads and says, “The bell consecration bestows upon you the enlightened activities of the Action Family of Amoghasiddhi, and symbolizes wisdom and purifies the left channels of the subtle body. It plants the seeds for the awakening of enlightened All-Accomplishing Wisdom.” Recite together 108x in Sanskrit: *oṃ vajra ghaṇṭā ābhiṣiñca hūṃ*.

7. The guru says, “Cross the vajra and bell in front of you.” The students cross themselves, hands facing inwards. The guru says, “This is the union of vajra and bell, which is the Great Bliss of enlightenment.” The guru recites: *oṃ vajra ghaṇṭā samayoga āḥ hūṃ*. “*oṃ* uniting the vajra and bell equally *āḥ hūṃ*.” The guru gives the students new Tantric names. (See Appendix for Buddhist names.) The guru becomes Vairocana. The guru envisions light emanating from the seed syllables *oṃ*, *āḥ*, and *hūṃ* in his/her own forehead, throat, and heart cakras filling the universe. Locanā arises and bestows the bell over the heads of the students. The guru recites in Sanskrit: *oṃ vajra nāma ābhiṣiñca hūṃ*. “*oṃ* adamantine name consecration *hūṃ*.” The guru sprinkles vase water over their heads and says, “The name consecration bestows upon you the enlightened activities of the Buddha Family of Vairocana, and purifies the six action functions of your body: mouth, arms, legs, anus, urination, and the sexual faculty. It plants the seeds for the awakening of the enlight-ened wisdom of the Dharmadhātu.” Recite together 108x in Sanskrit: *oṃ vajra nāma ābhiṣiñca hūṃ*.

oṃ āḥ hūṃ



The Common Vows

1. The guru once again becomes Vajravilāsinī or Padmanarteśvara.
2. The guru gives the Common Vows of the Five Buddha Families. The students kneel and recite each vow 3x, saying “I vow...”
 - a. Vairocana – To ingest the Five Nectars at Tantric rituals.
 - b. Akṣobhya – To recognize my body, speech, and mind as the instruments of enlightenment.
 - c. Amitābha – To follow higher conduct in rituals: to have no sex with other consorts during sādhana practice, and to withhold sexual fluids until the proper time.
 - d. Amoghasiddhi – To make offerings to the buddhas.
 - e. Ratnasambhava – To give generously to others.



3. The kula plays musical instruments and sings a song of praise to the students.

Oh great being, hold the Great Bliss.

Until the attainment of enlightenment, act for the benefit of beings.
This is the Great Wisdom located in all bodies.
By utilizing these practices, the eternal state is attained without doubt.
- *Hevajra Tantra*

Closing

1. The guru says, “From the Five Consecrations of the Vase Consecration, your body has been purified so that the seeds of the physical body of a buddha, the *nirmāṇakāya*, may ripen.”
2. The guru and students close the consecration by reciting the Dedication of Merit.

puṇyaṃ prabhūtaṃ yad ihāpi sarvaṃ saṃbodhaye tat pariṇāmayāmi
“I dedicate all merit arisen here for the goal of complete and perfect enlightenment.”



3. The guru instructs the students to observe their dreams that night. “Observe your dreams tonight.”
4. The students offer Anjali Mudrā to the guru.



5. The kula plays musical instruments and sings a song of praise to the deity.

Bhagavatī Vajravilāsini, radiant as golden leaves,
most beautiful of beings, who kindles the blaze of passion,
I worship and adore her most excellent world-conquering feet,
and perform the great practice of eternal bliss, full of wonder and joyful devotion.
- Śābara, *The Sādhana of Secret Vajravilāsini*

Time: 2 hours.

Second Day - Night

Preliminaries

1. The guru and students repeat the preliminaries from the first day (steps 1-6).
2. The students tell the guru their dreams, if any, and the guru interprets their meaning in terms of their auspiciousness for consecration. If inauspicious, the guru asks them to recite the seed mantra of the deity 1000x to purify themselves before beginning. Inauspicious dreams may also

be a sign from the gods that the students do not have their blessings for the consecration, and the guru must consider postponing the consecration.

3. With the students' hands in Añjali Mudrā, the students request consecration from the guru. The students say, "Grant me, excellent one, the Ritual of Entering the Maṇḍala and the Master Consecration of the Vase Consecration." The students repeat their request 3x.



4. The guru accepts their request for consecration. The guru says, "I will grant you the Ritual of Entering the Maṇḍala and the Master Consecration, so that you and all beings may attain the Great Bliss of enlightenment."

The Ritual of Entering the Maṇḍala

1. The guru recites the self-consecration verses in the sādhana (verses 36 to 66) - the guru and students are transformed into Vajravilāsinī and Padmanarteśvara. The guru puts on the crown of the deity, and gives each student a crown that they wear for the remainder of the consecration.



2. The guru gives the students blindfolds, and they put them on. The students stand up, and the guru leads them to the maṇḍala of Vajravilāsinī at the eastern direction. The students kneel and recite the Entrance Vow (Praveśa Samvara) to gain access to the maṇḍala, "I vow to attain buddhahood for the benefit of all beings, and never to give up until I succeed." They recite the vow 3x.



3. The guru gives the students each a flower. The students throw their flowers onto the maṇḍala. The students take off their blindfolds, see the maṇḍala, and by this vision they receive the empowerment of the deities of the maṇḍala. The students see where their flowers landed. The guru explains the divinatory meaning of the direction of the flowers: 1) pointing east means abundance, 2) pointing south means success over obstacles, 3) pointing west means attraction, 4) pointing north means peace, and 5) pointing to the center means liberation.

4. With hands folded in Añjali Mudrā, the students circumambulate the maṇḍala clockwise 3x, return to their cushions, and sit down.



5. The guru gives the students the symbolic ornaments of the deities: to the woman the Five Symbolic Ornaments of Vajravilāsinī, and to the man the Three Symbolic Ornaments of Padmanarteśvara. The guru explains their meaning: the Five Symbolic Ornaments represent the Five Wisdoms, and the Three Symbolic Ornaments the body, speech and mind of the buddhas.



The Master Consecration

1. The guru focuses very strongly on being the deity, then allows the deity to release itself into the space to empower the students. The guru and students hold the vajra at the top of their heads and the bells at the secret cakra. The guru says, “The Master Empowerment actualizes the vajra mind. You are planting the seeds to teach and liberate others.” The guru sprinkles vase water over their heads.

The guru gives the Vows of the Master Consecration: 1) the Vajra Vow (Vajra Samaya), 2) the Bell Vow (Ghaṇṭā Samaya), and 3) the Seal Vow (Mudrā Samaya). For the Vajra Vow, the students hold a vajra in their right hand and meditate on the vision of the deity, and say, “I am the Vow.” For the Bell Vow, the students hold a bell in their left hand and contemplate primordial wisdom, and say, “I vow to proclaim the 84,000 teachings of the Dharma.” For the Seal Vow, the students cross the vajra and bell in the Gesture of Indestructible Embrace (Vajra Hūṃkāra Mudrā) and say, “I am the self-nature of the deity.”



2. The guru invites the students to make love. “Oh you who are firmly established in the Vajra, take hold of the great Vajra and the great Bell and perform the admission of the disciple into the family of the Vajra Master. Oh great being, take this consort who will give you bliss. As you join in union, pay attention to the first bliss, Bliss, and the first moment, Diverse.”

3. The students salute each other with Añjali Mudrā, arouse each other sexually, and make love. Together, they achieve the first bliss and the first moment.



4. The students continue to make love until the students attain the bliss of orgasm. When they are finished, the man and woman salute each other with Añjali Mudrā.



5. The kula sings a song of praise to the consort.

Ah! His/her vajra/lotus contains all pleasures.
He/She grants accomplishment to the one who serves it.
Within his/her vajra/lotus, with a concentrated mind, perform the union.
Here is located the Great Bliss.
- Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra

Oral Recitation of the Sādhana

1. The guru grants the students permission to practice the sādhanā. The guru says, “I grant you permission to practice *The Sādhana of Secret Vajravilāsinī*.”
2. The guru gives a copy of *The Sādhana of Secret Vajravilāsinī* to each of the students.
3. The guru orally recites the complete sādhanā to the students in Sanskrit (about 45 minutes).
4. The guru gives the students the dhāraṇī mantra of Vajravilāsinī, which the guru and students recite together 10x:

*rate surate eṃ
nitya klinne mada drave āṃ
sukhena sukha yone rīṃ
subale vihvale raṃ
liṅga vajraṃ brīṃ
grasa grasa ha ha ha āṃ āṃ āṃ
mama sarva sattvānāṃ sarva siddhiṃ
dehi dehi saḥ*

5. The guru gives the seed mantra of Vajravilāsinī to the students, which the guru and students recite together 108x: *eṃ āṃ rīṃ raṃ brīṃ*.
6. The guru gives the seed mantra of the consort to Padmanarteśvara, which the guru and students recite together 108x: *oṃ padmanarteśvara hūṃ*.



Oral Instructions

1. The guru gives the students instructions on deity yoga for their sādhana practice.
2. The guru gives the students instructions on the philosophy of Emptiness for daily conduct.

Sādhana Vows

The guru gives the sadhāna vows for *The Sādhana of Vajravilāsinī*. The students kneel and recite each vow, beginning with “I vow...” 3x.

1. To practice the sādhana with my consort 4x a month on the four lunar juncture nights.
2. To recite the sādhana 4x a day.
3. To recite the seed mantra of the deity many times, at least 100,000x, and the seed mantra of the consort of the deity 50,000x, within the sādhana.



The Uncommon Vows

The guru gives the students the Uncommon Vows of the Five Buddha Families. The students kneel and recite each vow, beginning with “I vow...” 3x.

1. Vairocana – To consume meat and alcohol to destroy my pride in my own social status.
2. Akṣobhya – To take the lives of beings untamable by peaceful methods.
3. Amitābha – To take away the consorts of beings who lustfully crave sex.
4. Ratnasambhava – To steal the possessions of beings who crave wealth and give them to others.
5. Amoghasiddhi – To speak lies to beings in order to benefit them.



The Fourteen Root Downfalls

The students kneel and recite each vow 3x, “I vow never...”

1. To act disrespectfully toward the guru.
2. To violate the Lay Precepts.
3. To criticize vajra brothers and sisters.
4. To give up love for beings.
5. To give up the Bodhisattva Vow of attaining enlightenment for myself and all beings.
6. To criticize the teachings of the sūtras or Tantras.
7. To reveal secret teachings to those who are immature.

8. To mistreat my physical body.
9. To doubt the teachings on ultimate reality.
10. To befriend harmful persons.
11. To attach obscuring thoughts to the inconceivable reality.
12. To think negative thoughts about followers of the Dharma.
13. To not keep the vow of ingesting the Five Nectars.
14. To criticize women, who bestow the Great Bliss.

The students kneel and recite the concluding vow 3x:

“I shall avoid committing these Fourteen Root Downfalls, even if it costs my life.”



The Eight Secondary Downfalls

The students kneel and recite each vow 3x, “I vow never...”

1. To rely on an unqualified consort.
2. To fight or argue during a Tantric feast.
3. To receive ritual offerings from an unqualified consort.
4. To fail to teach Tantric knowledge to those with a sincere interest.
5. To fail to answer questions on the teachings.
6. To stay more than seven days with those who have contempt for the Mahāyāna.
7. To falsely and arrogantly portray myself as a realized yogi/yoginī.
8. To teach the Dharma to those who lack faith.



Daily Conduct Vows

The students kneel and recite each vow 3x, “I vow...”

1. To visualize myself as the deity in sexual union with the deity’s consort at all times.
2. To recite the seed mantra of the deity 108x at night before sunrise.
3. To perform the Vajra-Lotus Recitation each day.
4. To keep the mantras of the deity secret.
5. To massage my consort while reciting the dhāraṇī mantra of the deity each day.
6. To practice Sacred Outlook, perceiving all appearances as emptiness and Bliss.
7. To practice the Yoga of Passion, making love to my physical consort as the deity.
8. To practice Dream Yoga, remaining as the deity in the dream state.



Closing

1. The kula plays musical instruments and sings a song of praise to the student.

Oh great being, hold the Great Bliss.
Until the attainment of enlightenment, act for the benefit of beings.
This is the Great Wisdom located in all bodies.
By utilizing these practices, the eternal state is attained without doubt.
- *Hevajra Tantra*

2. The guru says to the students, “Through the Ritual of Entering the Maṇḍala, you have obtained the unbreakable vow of the deity and consort to support you in your path to enlightenment. Through the Master Consecration, you have established the irreversibility of your path and planted the seeds for you to teach and liberate others.”
3. The guru silently displays to the students the coded sign language (chomā) that expresses the ineffability of ultimate reality. These hand symbols communicate beyond the student’s conceptual mind to repattern their mind symbolically towards enlightenment. These are: Yoni Mudrā, Liṅgaṃ Mudrā, and Padma Mudrā.



4. The students offer Añjali Mudrā to the guru, and the guru gives them each a deity image card.



5. The students give a donation in gratitude to the guru.
6. The guru and students close the consecration by reciting the Dedication of Merit.

puṇyaṃ prabhūtaṃ yad ihāpi sarvaṃ saṃbodhaye tat pariṇāmayāmi
“I dedicate all merit arisen here for the goal of complete and perfect enlightenment.”



7. The kula plays musical instruments and sings a song of praise to the deity.

Bhagavatī Vajravilāsinī, radiant as golden leaves,
most beautiful of beings, who kindles the blaze of passion,
I worship and adore her most excellent world-conquering feet,
and perform the great practice of eternal bliss, full of wonder and joyful devotion.
- Śābara, *The Sādhana of Secret Vajravilāsinī*

Congratulations! You have now received the Vase Consecration.

Time: 2 hours.

Second Consecration: The Secret Consecration – Guhya Abhiṣeka

Suggested Items

An open shell (śaṅka) – To collect the mixed sexual fluids of the guru and consort.



Gifts from the Guru to Each Student

A protection cord (pāśa) – Made of colored thread. For the students to wear around their necks at all times for protection from harm. One for each student.

Blessing the Ritual Items

From emptiness, the guru arises as the deity, consecrates any unconsecrated ritual items with the Action Vase while reciting the dhāraṇī mantra of the deity 10x.



Consecration

First Day - Morning

The guru and students perform all the steps of the first day in the first consecration.

Second Day - Night

Preliminaries

1. The guru and students repeat the preliminaries from the first day (steps 1-6).
2. The students tell the guru their dreams, if any, and the guru interprets their meaning in terms of their auspiciousness for consecration. If inauspicious, the guru asks them to recite the seed mantra of the deity 1000x to purify themselves before beginning. Inauspicious dreams may also be a sign from the gods that the students do not have their blessings for the consecration, and the guru must consider postponing the consecration.
3. With the students' hands in Añjali Mudrā, the students request consecration from the guru. The students say, "Grant me, excellent one, the Secret Consecration." The students repeat their request 3x.



4. The guru accepts their request for consecration. The guru says, "I will grant you the Secret Consecration, so that you and all beings may attain the Great Bliss of enlightenment."

The Secret Consecration

1. The guru recites the self-consecration verses in the sādhana (verses 36 to 66) - the guru and students are transformed into Vajravilāsinī and Padmanarteśvara. The guru puts on the crown of the deity, and gives each student a crown that they wear for the remainder of the consecration.



2. The students offer food and drinks to the guru, and the student of the same sex as the guru offers their consort to the guru.
3. The guru consecrates the consort. Through armoring, the guru places the mantras of Vajravilāsinī on the consort's body 3x as per the sādhana (verses 68 to 72).
4. The guru and the consort make love in front of the student until the consort's sexual fluids flow. As they flow, the guru recites the seed mantra of Vajravilāsinī several times. The guru focuses very strongly on being the deity, then allows the deity to release itself into the consort to empower the consort.
The student reverently observes them making love, and praises and honors the guru, saying, "Truly, I witness Vajravilāsinī and Padmanarteśvara in union."
5. The guru blindfolds the student and the consort.
6. The guru collects the combined sexual fluids of the guru and consort in an open shell cup.
7. The guru dips into the shell cup with the left thumb and ring finger, and recites the dhāraṇī mantra of Vajravilāsinī 3x.



8. The guru says, “Today I have generated for you the wisdom of a buddha through which the buddhas of the past, present and future attain the complete essence of release.” The guru places the wisdom drops of the combined sexual fluids, each onto the crown, forehead, throat, heart cakra, navel cakra, and genitals of each of the students, then into their mouths 4x, while the guru and students recite the dhāraṇī mantra of Vajravilāsinī. The students cry out “Bliss!” The guru instructs the students, and says “Visualize that you have received the consecration from the main deities Vajravilāsinī and Padmanarteśvara, and that your bodies are completely filled with the brilliant, sparkling nectar of immortality. Reflect on the essential one taste of all things as bliss.”

9. The guru gives the students a basic visualization exercise in the Four Bliss of subtle energy yoga. The guru instructs the students, saying “Visualize in your own bodies a white *haṃ* at the forehead cakra, a red *oṃ* at the throat, a white *hūṃ* at the heart, and a red *āḥ* at the navel. At the point four-fingerwidths below the navel, a flame burns. The navel cakra fire burns the red *oṃ* at the throat, and the white *oṃ* at the forehead, and melts white bindus from the forehead cakra. As the white bindus slowly melt down, at the forehead you attain Bliss, at the throat Supreme Bliss, at the heart the Bliss of Cessation, and at the navel Innate Bliss. Visualize that all obscurations are cleared and you radiate the Great Bliss.”

haṃ oṃ
hūṃ āḥ

10. The guru invites the students to make love. The guru says, “Just as the buddhas of previous times consecrated the sons and daughters of enlightenment, so are you consecrated by me with the flow of enlightened consciousness in this Secret Consecration. Oh great being, take this consort who will give you bliss. As you join in union, pay attention to the second bliss, Supreme Bliss, and the second moment, Ripening.”

11. The students salute each other in Añjali Mudrā, arouse each other sexually, and make love. Together, they achieve the first and second bliss, and first and second moment of the Four Bliss of sexual yoga.



12. The students finish by achieving orgasm, and salute each other with Añjali Mudrā.



13. The kula plays musical instruments and sings a song of praise to the consort.

Ah! His/her vajra/lotus contains all pleasures.
He/She grants accomplishment to the one who serves it.
Within his/her vajra/lotus, with a concentrated mind, perform the union.
Here is located the Great Bliss.
- *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra*

Oral Instructions

1. The guru gives the students instructions on subtle energy yoga.
2. The guru gives the students instructions on the Mind Only philosophy for daily conduct.

Sādhana Vows

The students kneel and recite each vow 3x, saying “I vow...”

1. To practice subtle energy yoga with the sādhana.
2. To strive to attain the signs of success in Inner Heat Yoga.



Daily Conduct Vows

The students kneel and recite each vow 3x, saying “I vow...”

1. To never denigrate the vajra master.
2. To view all appearances as mind only and Supreme Bliss.



Closing

1. The kula plays musical instruments and sings a song of praise to the student.

Oh great being, hold the Great Bliss.
Until the attainment of enlightenment, act for the benefit of beings.
This is the Great Wisdom located in all bodies.
By utilizing these practices, the eternal state is attained without doubt.
- *Hevajra Tantra*

2. The guru says to the students, “Through the Secret Consecration, your speech has been purified and transformed so that the seeds of the sexual enjoyment body of a buddha, the saṃbhogakāya, may ripen.”

3. The students give Añjali Mudrā to the guru, and the guru gives the students each a protection cord to wear around their necks.



4. The students give a donation in gratitude to the guru.

5. The guru and students close the consecration by reciting the Dedication of Merit.

puṇyaṃ prabhūtaṃ yad ihāpi sarvaṃ saṃbodhaye tat pariṇāmayāmi

“I dedicate all merit arisen here for the goal of complete and perfect enlightenment.”



6. The kula plays musical instruments and sings a song of praise to the deity.

Bhagavatī Vajravilāsinī, radiant as golden leaves,
most beautiful of beings, who kindles the blaze of passion,
I worship and adore her most excellent world-conquering feet,
and perform the great practice of eternal bliss, full of wonder and joyful devotion.
- Śabara, *The Sādhana of Secret Vajravilāsinī*

Congratulations! You have completed the Secret Consecration.

Time: 2 hours.

**Third Consecration: The Wisdom/Method Consecration –
Prajñā/Upāya Abhiṣeka**

Suggested Items

Gifts from the Guru to Each Student

A pouch of blessing pills (rasa) – One pouch for each student. Basic blessing pills may be made of a base of wheat or barley flour, butter, and water. Aphrodisiac substances added to the mixture may include aśvagandhā powder (Lat. *Vithania somnifera*) and aśoka tree root powder (Lat. *Saraca indica*). Additional common aphrodisiac ingredients can include garlic, cloves, cardamom, nutmeg, and saffron. The Five Nectars may also be added. Since the blessing pills can get moldy, you need to consume them within a day or two. Female and male sexual fluids

(rakta and śukra) may be dried and stored separately, and added to the pills just before giving them to the students.

Blessing the Ritual Items

From emptiness, the guru arises as the deity, consecrates any unconsecrated ritual items with the Action Vase while reciting the dhāraṇī mantra of the deity 10x.

Consecration

First Day - Morning

The guru and students perform all the rituals from the first day of the first consecration.

Second Day - Night

Preliminaries

1. The guru and students repeat the preliminaries from the first day (steps 1-6).
2. The students tell the guru their dreams, if any, and the guru interprets their meaning in terms of their auspiciousness for consecration. If inauspicious, the guru asks them to recite the seed mantra of the deity 1000x to purify themselves before beginning. Inauspicious dreams may also be a sign from the gods that the students do not have their blessings for the consecration, and the guru must consider postponing the consecration.
3. With the students' hands in Añjali Mudrā, the students request consecration from the guru. The students say, "Grant me, excellent one, the Wisdom/Method Consecration." The students repeat their request 3x.



4. The guru accepts their request for consecration. The guru says, "I will grant you the Wisdom/Method Consecration, so that you and all beings may attain the Great Bliss of enlightenment."

The Wisdom/Method Consecration

1. The guru recites the self-consecration verses in the sādhana (verses 36 to 66) - the guru and students are transformed into Vajravilāsinī and Padmanarteśvara. The guru puts on the crown of the deity, and gives each student a crown that they wear for the remainder of the consecration.



2. The students offer food and drinks to the guru, and the student of the same sex as the guru offers their consort to the guru.
3. The guru consecrates the consort. Through armoring, the guru places the mantras of Vajravilāsinī on the consort's body 3x as per the sādhana (verses 68 to 72).
4. The guru and the consort make love in front of the student until the consort's sexual fluids flow. As they flow, the guru recites the seed mantra of Vajravilāsinī several times. The guru focuses very strongly on being the deity, then allows the deity to release itself into the consort to empower the consort. The student reverently observes them making love, and praises and honors the guru, saying, "Truly, I witness Vajravilāsinī and Padmanarteśvara in union."
5. The guru blindfolds the student and the consort.
6. The guru invites the students to make love. "Take, oh great beings, take this delightful god and goddess who is beautiful, the bestower of erotic delight and the bestower of the state of Enlightened Consciousness. Take this consort who will give you bliss. As you join in union, pay attention to the third bliss, the Bliss of Cessation, and the third moment, Dissolving."
7. The students salute each other in Añjali Mudrā. The woman says to the man, "Ah! My lotus contains all pleasures. I grant accomplishment to the one who serves it. Within the lotus, with a concentrated mind, perform the union. Here is found the Great Bliss."



8. The students arouse each other sexually, and make love. Together, they achieve the first, second, and third bliss of the Four Blissess of sexual yoga, and the first, second, and third moment. The students are regarded by all as having attained the bliss of nirvāṇa.
9. The guru instructs the students to take off their blindfolds. The students perceive all appearances as pure Essence.
10. The students offer each other Añjali Mudrā, and give each other words of praise for returning from nirvāṇa into the world of appearances. They say to each other: "I honor you, as you return to this world, to fulfill your desires and serve others out of love and bliss."



11. The kula plays musical instruments and sings a song of praise to the consort.

Ah! His/her vajra/lotus contains all pleasures.
He/She grants accomplishment to the one who serves it.
Within his/her vajra/lotus, with a concentrated mind, perform the union.
Here is located the Great Bliss.
- Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra

Oral Instructions

1. The guru gives the students instruction on sexual yoga.
2. The guru gives the students instruction on the Buddha Essence philosophy for daily conduct.

Sādhana Vows

The students kneel and recite 3x, “I vow...”

- 1 To practice sexual yoga with the sādhanā.



The Eight Supreme Vows

The students kneel and recite 3x, “I vow...”

1. To not be lustful.
2. To avoid union with another consort.
3. To be free of dualistic thought and behavior.
4. To keep the practices secret.
5. To remember my vows.
6. To have mastery with the vajra and yoni.
7. To withhold sexual fluids during rituals until the appropriate time.
8. To not be angry while in sexual union.



The Lineage Vow

The students kneel and recite 3x, “I vow...”

1. To make love continuously to all beings of the opposite sex throughout all the worlds until they reach the Great Bliss.



Daily Conduct Vows

The students kneel and recite 3x, “I vow...”

1. To perceive all appearances as Essence and the Bliss of Cessation.



Closing

1. The kula plays musical instruments and sings a song of praise to the student.

Oh great being, hold the Great Bliss.
Until the attainment of enlightenment, act for the benefit of beings.
This is the Great Wisdom located in all bodies.
By utilizing these practices, the eternal state is attained without doubt.
- *Hevajra Tantra*

2. The guru says, “Through the Wisdom/Method Consecration, your mind has been purified so that the seeds of the mind of a buddha, the dharmakāya, may ripen.”
3. The students give Añjali Mudrā to the guru, and the guru gives them each a pouch of blessing pills.



4. The students give a donation in gratitude to the guru.
5. The guru and students close the consecration by reciting the Dedication of Merit.

puṇyaṃ prabhūtaṃ yad ihāpi sarvaṃ sambodhaye tat pariṇāmayāmi
“I dedicate all merit arisen here for the goal of complete and perfect enlightenment.”



6. The kula plays musical instruments and sings a song of praise to the deity.

Bhagavatī Vajravilāsini, radiant as golden leaves,
most beautiful of beings, who kindles the blaze of passion,
I worship and adore her most excellent world-conquering feet,
and perform the great practice of eternal bliss, full of wonder and joyful devotion.
- Śabara, *The Sādhana of Secret Vajravilāsini*

Congratulations! You have completed the Wisdom/Method Consecration.

Time: 2 hours.

Fourth Consecration: The Fourth Consecration - Caturtha Abhiṣeka

Suggested Items

Gifts of the Guru to the Students

A pouch of blessing pills – One pouch for each student.

Blessing the Ritual Items

From emptiness, the guru arises as the deity, consecrates any unconsecrated ritual items with the Action Vase while reciting the dhāraṇī mantra of the deity 10x.



Consecration

First Day - Morning

The guru and students perform all the steps for the first day in the first consecration.

Second Day - Night

Preliminaries

1. The guru and students repeat the preliminaries from the first day (steps 1-6).
2. The students tell the guru their dreams, if any, and the guru interprets their meaning in terms of their auspiciousness for consecration. If inauspicious, the guru asks them to recite the seed mantra of the deity 1000x to purify themselves before beginning. Inauspicious dreams may also be a sign from the gods that the students do not have their blessings for the consecration, and the guru must consider postponing the consecration.
3. With the students' hands in Añjali Mudrā, the students request consecration from the guru. The students say, "Grant me, excellent one, the Fourth Consecration." The students repeat their request 3x.



4. The guru accepts their request for consecration. The guru says, “I will grant you the Fourth Consecration, so that you and all beings may attain the Great Bliss of enlightenment.”

The Fourth Consecration

1. The guru recites the self-consecration verses in the sādhana (verses 36 to 66) - the guru and students are transformed into Vajravilāsinī and Padmanarteśvara. The guru puts on the crown of the deity, and gives each student a crown that they wear for the remainder of the consecration.



2. The guru invites the students to make love. The guru says, “This wisdom, which is most subtle, the essence of the vajra, space-like, undefiled, bestows liberation and is tranquility. You are yourselves your own self-creators. Oh bearers of the Great Bliss of Vajravilāsinī and Padmarteśvara, perform the union.”

3. The guru gives the mantras to empower the yoni and vajra of the students:

The Yoni Mantra: *oṃ padma sukhādhāra mahārāga sukhaṃdada
catur ānanda svabhāga viśva hūṃ hūṃ hūṃ kāryaṃ kuruṣva me*

“oṃ Lotus, receptacle of bliss, the one who grants the bliss of Great Passion, many are the blessings of your Four Blisses, *hūṃ hūṃ hūṃ*, please fulfill my desires.”

The guru and students recite the Yoni Mantra 3x.

The Vajra Mantra: *oṃ vajra mahādveṣa catur ānanda dāyaka
khaga mukhaikaraso nātha hūṃ hūṃ hūṃ kāryaṃ kuruṣva me*

“oṃ Vajra, oh one of great wrath, the one who gives the Four Blisses, the one taste of the entrance to space, oh Lord, *hūṃ hūṃ hūṃ*, please fulfill my desires.”

The guru and students recite the Vajra Mantra 3x.

4. The students salute each other in Añjali Mudrā, and arouse each other sexually.



5. As the students begin to make love, guru says, “As you make love, pay attention to the fourth bliss, Innate Bliss, and the fourth moment, Signlessness.”

6. The guru instructs the practitioners “Visualize bringing a white bindu from the head cakra down to the genitals, hold it, then bring it back up to the head - this produces non-conceptual bliss.” For complete instructions, see Chapter 7: Sexual Yoga: Meditation at the Tip. The guru says, “The Great Bliss descends to the Palace of Wisdom. Reverse it upward to the level of

nonconceptuality, and hold it there.” The students perform this for as long as they have intercourse.

7. Together, the students achieve the first three blisses and three moments, achieving orgasm. They dissolve into the unitive state of nirvāṇa, the Clear Light.

8. In a state of orgasmic bliss, the guru sings a spontaneous song of realization (dohā) to establish an enduring awakening of Mahāmudrā, and from the guru’s own union with the dharmakāya, the guru directs his or her subtle energies to empower the students. The guru instructs the students, “As you hear my song, you release your attachment to your conceptualizing minds and allow the song to liberate you.” The guru may sing to them this song:

There is no negating, no constructing,
and no apprehending. It is inconceivable.
The ignorant are bound by mental categories.
The inseparable, the Innate, is utterly pure.
- Saraha

9. The guru says, “Motivated by love and compassion, you return from the bliss of nirvāṇa. Retaining its singular bliss, you also experience the bliss of worldly appearances as the bliss of your own lovemaking in the forms of the deity and consort. In this way, you attain the fourth bliss and the fourth moment, the Great Bliss that is the union of all the blisses.”

10. After the students attain the fourth bliss, the guru says to the students: “Oh great beings, hold the Great Bliss. Until the attainment of enlightenment, oh bearers of the vajra, act for the benefit of beings. This is in fact the great awareness located in all bodies, which is inconceivable in nature, and is the Lady and Lord whose Essence is both existence and non-existence. It dwells pervading both fixed and moving things, and manifests as many forms. By utilizing the practices of the Yoginī Tantras, the eternal state is attained without doubt.”

11. When the students are finished, they offer each other Añjali Mudrā.



12. The kula plays musical instruments and sings a song of praise to the consort.

Ah! His/her vajra/lotus contains all pleasures.
He/She grants accomplishment to the one who serves it.
Within his/her vajra/lotus, with a concentrated mind, perform the union.
Here is located the Great Bliss.
- Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra

13. The guru says to the students, “Rest in Mahāmudrā.”

Oral Instructions

1. The guru gives the students instructions on nondual yoga.

2. The guru gives the students instructions on the philosophy of the Innate for daily conduct.

Sādhana Vows

The students kneel and recite their vows 3x, saying “I vow...”

1. To practice nondual yoga with the sādhana.



The Six Vows

The students kneel and recite their vows 3x, saying “I vow...”

1. To not perform sacred hand gestures.

2. To not build stūpas.

3. To not bow to representations of the body, speech and mind of the buddhas.

4. To not perform outer rituals.

5. To not do these even in your dreams.

6. To honor my Tantric guru, my lineage, and members of my Tantric community, but to not honor other teachers.



Daily Conduct Vows

The students kneel and recite their vows 3x, saying “I vow...”

1. To perceive all appearances as the Innate nature and the Great Bliss.



Closing

1. The kula plays musical instruments and sings a song of praise to the student.

Oh great being, hold the Great Bliss.
Until the attainment of enlightenment, act for the benefit of beings.
This is the Great Wisdom located in all bodies.

By utilizing these practices, the eternal state is attained without doubt.
- *Hevajra Tantra*

2. The guru says, “Through the Fourth Consecration, your body, speech and mind have been purified and transformed, so that the seeds of the complete body and activities of a buddha, the Svabhāvikakāya, may ripen.”
3. The students give Añjali Mudrā to the guru, and the guru gives them each a pouch of blessing pills.



4. The students give a donation in gratitude to the guru.
5. The guru and students close the consecration by reciting the Dedication of Merit.

puṇyaṃ prabhūtaṃ yad ihāpi sarvaṃ saṃbodhaye tat pariṇāmayāmi
“I dedicate all merit arisen here for the goal of complete and perfect enlightenment.”



6. The kula plays musical instruments and sings a song of praise to the deity.

Bhagavatī Vajravilāsinī, radiant as golden leaves,
most beautiful of beings, kindles the blaze of passion,
I worship and adore her most excellent world-conquering feet,
and perform the great practice of eternal bliss, full of wonder and joyful devotion.
- Śābara, *The Sādhana of Secret Vajravilāsinī*

Congratulations! You have completed the Fourth Consecration.

Time: 2 hours.

Tantric Feast - Gaṇacakra

A Tantric feast (gaṇacakra) is performed after consecrations and sādhana practices, and may be performed by a group, couple, or solo. Perform the Tantric feast in a place that is pleasing and delightful to the goddess Vajravilāsinī.

Benefits: The heightened sexual energies and the magic of the celestial yoginīs bring the bliss that bestows inner awakening.

Time: 2 hours.

Suggested Items

Feast food (bali) - Including meat (mamsa), on large plates (paṭṭikā), placed on the altar.

Alcoholic drinks (madya) - In vases, placed on the altar.

Ḍamaru – One for each person.

Bell – One for each person.

Vajra – One for each person.

A nectar cup (patra) - Filled with alcohol and the Five Nectars (Pañca Amṛita).

Cushions (āsanas) - For everyone on the floor placed in a circle in pairs, with the cushions for the guru and the guru's consort (or the couple leading the ritual), in the center.

Any additional items you might want to add from Chapter 9: Preparing for Practice.

Preliminaries

If you have not already done so, place the maṇḍala of the deity on the ground and consecrate it using the Ritual of Empowering the Mandala (Maṇḍala Adhiṣṭhāna) before the start of the feast.

The Outer Offering – Bāhya Pūjā

The outer offering is a single plate for the main deities, and all the food for the Tantric feast.

1. Recite the Emptiness Mantra.

oṃ svabhāva śuddhāḥ sarva dharmāḥ svabhāva śuddho 'ham

“oṃ I and all appearances are naturally pure, with no inherent existence, emptiness.”



2. Generate the deity and the consort.

“Aho! From emptiness, Vajravilāsinī arises, in Great Passion with her consort.”



3. Perform the self-consecration of the deity.

“Instantly, I transform into Vajravilāsinī.”

oṃ vajravilāsinī mahāyoginī ātmako 'haṃ

“*oṃ* I am Vajravilāsinī, the great yoginī!”



4. Perform mantra repetition of the seed mantra of the deity.

eṃ āṃ rīṃ raṃ brīṃ

Recite 108x.



5. Consecrate the food offerings to the main deities as well as the Tantric feast food and drink.

“*Eṃ!* From Emptiness, and the deity’s red seed syllable *eṃ*, emerges a nectar cup as big as the universe. A blazing red Sun disk and a red seed syllable *eṃ* emerge over the nectar cup. Above it, a revolving red and white bliss swirl, and the red five seed syllables *eṃ āṃ rīṃ raṃ brīṃ* appear, blazing with fire.”

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“Streaks of fire pervade the Three Worlds. They become fluid, extinguished in the maṇḍala of the cup. The Sun disk, bliss swirl, seed syllables, and all the worlds melt into the cup.”

Recite the dhāraṇī mantra of Vajravilāsinī, in Sanskrit and in English 3x:

*rate surate eṃ
nitya klinne mada drave āṃ
sukhena sukha yone rīṃ
subale vihvale raṃ
līṅga vajraṃ brīṃ
grasa grasa ha ha ha āṃ āṃ āṃ
mama sarva sattvānāṃ sarva siddhiṃ
dehi dehi saḥ*

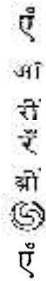
“Delight! Great delight! Summon!
Eternally moist. Rapture overflowing. Quickly!
Pleasing the pleasure-giving yoni. Go!
Very powerful. Until exhausted. Make love!
Erect vajra succumb!
Swallow! Swallow! Blood! Blood! Blood! Quickly! Quickly! Quickly!
I am the most powerful of all beings!
Consecrate! Consecrate! Accomplished.”

Take a little bit of the substances from the nectar cup and sprinkle them with your fingers on the outer offerings.

The Inner Offering – Adhyātma Pūjā

1. Consecrate the nectar cup.

“*Eṃ!* From Emptiness, and the deity’s red seed syllable *eṃ*, emerges a nectar cup as big as the universe. A blazing red Sun disk and a red seed syllable *eṃ* emerge over the nectar cup. Above it, a revolving red and white bliss swirl, and the red five seed syllables *eṃ āṃ rīṃ raṃ brīṃ* appear, blazing with fire.”





“Streaks of fire pervade the Three Worlds. They become fluid, extinguished in the maṇḍala of the cup. The Sun disk, bliss swirl, seed syllables, and all the worlds melt into the cup.”

Recite the dhāraṇī mantra of Vajravilāsinī, in Sanskrit and in English 3x:

*rate surate eṃ
nitya klinne mada drave āṃ
sukhena sukha yone rīṃ
subale vihvale raṃ
liṅga vajraṃ brīṃ
grasa grasa ha ha ha āṃ āṃ āṃ
mama sarva sattvānāṃ sarva siddhiṃ
dehi dehi saḥ*

“Delight! Great delight! Summon!
Eternally moist. Rapture overflowing. Quickly!
Pleasing the pleasure-giving yoni. Go!
Very powerful. Until exhausted. Make love!
Erect vajra succumb!
Swallow! Swallow! Blood! Blood! Blood! Quickly! Quickly! Quickly!
I am the most powerful of all beings!
Consecrate! Consecrate! Accomplished.”

Dip your left ring finger into the nectar cup and taste the consecrated nectar.



2. Request the presence of all the buddhas, enlightened deities, and bodhisattvas.

“From the blue seed syllable *hūṃ* in my heart, light rays go out, inviting the vast assembly of buddhas and other beings gather together. Invite the Great Bliss wisdom yoginīs, the celestial net of the yoginīs.”

3. Request the assembly to accept the bali offering.

vajra samaya

“Remember your unbreakable vow!”

nāma sarva tathāgata jñāna avalokite oṃ sambara sambara hūṃ

“Homage to all the Tathāgatas, Wisdom and Compassion, *oṃ Sambara Sambara hūṃ*.” 3x.

om guru deva sarva buddha ḍākinī saparivara imam baliṅga kha kha khahi khahi
“*om* Gurus, gods, all buddhas and ḍākinīs, please accept this offering. *kha kha khahi khahi.*”
3x.

“May all the buddhas, devas, and siddhas be satisfied with this offering. Accept this offering of red and white amṛita.”

Taste the amṛita in the nectar cup with your ring finger.

4. Make requests to the deities to accomplish all worldly and ultimate attainments.

“Goddess who grants all desires, accomplish your Samaya and bring the Great Bliss!”

5. Take the food and drink down from the altar table. Eat the food, drink the alcohol, and leave some food as leftovers.

The Secret Offering – Guhya Pūjā

1. Recite the aspiration prayer for the Secret Offering.

om vajra āralli hoḥ
“*om* Adamantine divine erotic play! *hoḥ*”

“May the union of vajra and lotus be undefiled. May all beings delight endlessly in the Great Bliss! May our lovemaking be our pure offering to the goddess of love and her majestic consort, master of dance. We play in the Great Bliss!”



om sarva tathāgata anurāgana vajra svabhāva atmako 'ham
“*om* I am adamantine, primordially self-existent, the pure love of all the buddhas.”

2. Enjoy the company of your neighbors and eat, sing, dance, and make love as you wish.

The Essence Offering - Tattva Pūjā

1. Gather together on your cushions and sit and rest in Mahāmudrā.

2. Offer spontaneous songs of realization.

As the revelries wind down, gather in a circle to sing songs of praise to the deities, vajra songs of the siddhas, or speak your own words of spontaneously arising wisdom. Below are two verses, one for each of you to sing:

When I realized my original nature as the Buddha,
the Buddha became the nature of every reality.
Through the empowerment of the Innate,
I am permeated by the unborn Vajradhara.
- Taila

At the propitious peak moment, if you lack awareness of the Innate,
no internal or external activity can induce your awakening.
Between the Four Blissesses and the Buddha there is no distinction at all.
Cut the strings of attachment and realize the blissful nature of reality.
- King Indrabhūti

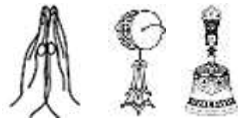
Closing Practices - Visarjana

1. Recite the Ucchiṣṭavajra Mantra to bless the leftovers.

om āh ucchiṣṭavajra adhiṣṭhemaṃ baliṃ hūṃ hūṃ hūṃ phaṭ svāhā
“*om āh* Ucchiṣṭavajra, preside over this offering. *hūṃ hūṃ hūṃ phaṭ* So be it.”

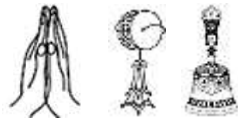
2. Request forgiveness for mistakes in practice.

“Whatever mistakes in practice I may have made, please forgive them.”



3. Make requests to the deities to accomplish all attainments.

“Aho! Please accept this offering. Remember your unbreakable vow to help me accomplish all my desires! Grant me all worldly and ultimate attainments! Liberate all beings! May the Dharma ever spread and flourish, bringing all beings to the Great Bliss! Take me to your pure land of Sukhāvātī after death! May I attain complete and perfect enlightenment in this lifetime!”



4. Offer praise to the deity.

“Goddess of all goodness, remember your vow to liberate all beings without exception!”



5. Dissolve the deity.

Perform the Earth Touching Gesture (Bhūmi Sparśa Mudrā), with left hand cupped in front of the body, right hand over the knee with fingers touching the earth, and recite the Dissolution Mantra (Anubheda Mantra).

oṃ āḥ hūṃ vajra muḥ



6. Offer a long life prayer to the guru.

“May the skill of the guru ever increase! Live long and bring others to the Great Bliss!”



7. Recite the Dedication of Merit.

punyaṃ prabhūtaṃ yad ihāpi sarvaṃ saṃbodhaye tat pariṇāmayāmi
“I dedicate all merit arisen here for the goal of complete and perfect enlightenment.”



8. Offer a prayer of auspiciousness.

sarva maṅgalaṃ
“May all be auspicious!”



9. Take the leftover food outside and give it to the animals.

Chapter 5. Sacred Outlook: Deity Yoga

“The man sees the woman as a goddess, the woman sees the man as a god.”
- *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra*

One with the Deities



Having recited the opening verses of their sādhanā, the young man and his consort visualized the seed essence of the goddess: a red seed syllable *eṃ* within his consort’s yoni. Above the seed syllable arose a revolving bliss wheel, and above that the deity’s five seed syllables: *eṃ āṃ rīṃ raṃ brīṃ*. From this vision, streaks of light emanated, melting the Three Worlds, which were all extinguished in the maṇḍala of his consort’s yoni. Vajravilāsinī was then visualized in all her glory – radiant as a bandhūka flower, brilliant as red-glowing gold, wearing little more than a long pearl necklace hanging down. In union with her beloved, Padmanarteśvara was simultaneously generated. He too arose in the shape of a sixteen year-old,

clothed with the sky, complete with ritual signs. Joined with the goddess, the god became the lord of sexual enjoyment, manifest as Great Bliss. Golden rays emanated from the goddess, and again the Three Worlds became a single sea of fluidity. Meditating on this vision, the two practitioners, with their hearts and minds purified and expanded, rested in the womb of the Three Worlds.

Introduction

“The antidote for the misfortune of beings is to generate the deity.”
- Kṛiṣṇācārya, *The Yoga of the Jewel Garland*

You are a god. Your whole being holds the potential to radiate effortlessly the light of ultimate reality, and deity yoga awakens you to your own inborn divinity. Deity yoga is an encounter with ecstasy, union with a higher dimensional being who bestows wisdom, love, power, and bliss. It is an awesome and life-changing encounter, deeply personal and heartfelt. Your direct knowing that there really is more to this world than meets the eye brings trust and devotion. Taste your deity. Know it through all your senses. The deity pierces the veils of misperception for you, because it loves you, and releases you into higher levels of realization. Deity yoga is an initial breakthrough into the light. It is nourishment for those who thirst for the Great Bliss.

The main purpose of deity yoga is to transform the coarse karmic obscurations, produced from negative physical karmic actions, of your physical body. Deity yoga also develops magical powers that you can use to attain worldly pleasures. It is most well known for its use of visualization, a very powerful tool for personal change, but visualization is only one of a large range of practices. Deity yoga is very erotic, and its practitioners are known to become so filled with sexual bliss from the visualizations that special techniques are taught to control ejaculation.

The great trick of saṃsāra is that there appears to be no way out – everything you see around you seems to be a part of it. Deity yoga gives you a glorious image to focus on that is not part of the world of ordinary appearances – a vision of a pure and perfect god or goddess, a stainless emanation of ultimate reality. Deity yoga is a doorway to freedom; the deity lights your way.

Deity yoga comprises the Creation Stage of the Tantric Buddhist path. It is the first practice of the Four Yogas of the Yoginī Tantras, and once you have trained in them, is intended to be performed with the other three yogas through integrated practice. Deity yoga is an absolutely vital step on the path. As the *Hevajra Tantra* reveals starkly, “There is no other means than this in the whole of existence for accomplishing the goals of oneself and others.” On its own, deity yoga is not powerful enough to attain enlightenment, but prepares you well for later practices.

Philosophy

“The yogi is in essence the deity.”
- *Hevajra Tantra*

Deity Yoga Transforms You into the Bliss of a Deity

The Deity

A Tantric deity (deva; or jñāna sattva – lit. wisdom being) is a pure emanation of ultimate reality into the world of appearances. The *Hevajra Tantra* says, “The deity is the enlightened consciousness.”

Although a god can be either an enlightened being or a high worldly being still caught in saṃsāra, in Tantric Buddhism you practice only with an enlightened one. A deity is inconceivably perfect, free of all emotional and mental obscurations, holds limitless capacities, and is intensely wise, loving, and powerful. It manifests to bring its gifts of love and enlightened passion, called Great Passion (mahārāga), to others. Seeing only primordial purity, it delights in the magical display of appearances while recognizing their true nature as pristine awareness. A deity possesses divine pride (devatā garva); this precious quality cures you of your ego imbalances of arrogance and self-doubt, and liberates you into authentic, sacred self-confidence.

A deity is not merely a product of your mind - nor is it something external to you. It is both and neither. You are an arising of primordial awareness, but unconsciously so. A deity arises conscious of its true nature. That is the *only* difference. A deity is a blueprint for inner awakening – it shows you an image of what you will be like when you are perfect. Its powers, wisdom and love are vast beyond imagination, but they are realizable within *you*, because your true nature is identical to the nature of the deity. Upon your enlightenment, the powers of all deities are realized within you.

The form of a deity is its form in the subtle dimension of sexual enjoyment, the saṃbhogakāya. There are many hundreds of Tantric Buddhist meditation deities, each of which arose at one time in the mindstreams of masters to support the needs of practitioners. While each one has its own unique qualities and gifts that it bestows, they all have the same essence, and all liberate beings into enlightenment. The deity you use, your chosen deity for practice (iṣṭadeva), holds the antidote to your own principal emotional affliction. Wrathful deities transform anger into peace, passionate deities transform craving desire into pure desire, and peaceful deities transform ignorance into wisdom. Their graceful presence and liberating power is overwhelming and intensely inspiring. The attributes of a deity, such as its color, clothing, jewelry, and hand implements are especially significant, demonstrating its unique enlightened qualities and powers to help others. While Mahāyāna deities typically wear silk clothing, Tantric deities are nearly or completely nude. A deity's entire appearance is designed to captivate your attention so it can seal your awareness with its powers.

Two types of deities are commonly used in practice: 1) the visualized pledge deity (samaya sattva), and 2) the actual wisdom deity (jñāna sattva). The pledge deity is the imagined deity that you vow to become. It is your own imagination's creation of the deity, and it is what you begin with in your practice. Visualization is a powerful tool in its own right - however, a visualized deity is *not* the actual deity. The wisdom deity is the actual deity who emerges when you invoke it. It is the appearance of the pure nature of primordial consciousness in the form of a deity, and has the capacity to bestow wisdom and power. The wisdom deity is *real*. The difference between the pledge deity and the wisdom deity is as different as imagining you are with a friend and actually being with that friend. The pledge deity lacks the enlightened self-nature (svabhāva) that the wisdom deity possesses, and so the experience of working with the two is very different.

Yoginīs are Tantric goddesses, spirits, and women practitioners. Because of the Tantric respect for feminine power that bestows bliss and enlightenment, they are especially celebrated. Ḍākinīs are magical females like yoginīs, but generally wrathful in form. A dancing Ḍākinī represents the erotic and playful elements of ultimate reality as it manifests in the realm of appearances.

The Maṇḍala

A maṇḍala (lit. containing the essence) is a vision of a perfect world. The *Hevajra Tantra* calls the maṇḍala “the abode of the essence of all the buddhas.” It is an image of the world of the deity, in which all appearances are pure, a representation of the blissful higher dimensional buddhafield that radiates from that particular deity. It is also this very world as seen through the eyes of a buddha. Deities are often depicted with enormous celestial palaces and extensive retinues of supporting deities, along with beautiful gardens, trees, and countless beings who dwell in it in peace and happiness.

A maṇḍala is a divinely revealed instrument that expresses both the perfection of the primal oneness of all things and its creative power as it emanates pure and perfect appearances. Your body, your speech and mind, the world, your sacred site for practice, the yoni of the female consort, the circle of yogi and yoginī practitioners, the Dharmadhātu – *all this is the maṇḍala*. Maṇḍalas are drawn for consecrations and Tantric feasts, and may be constructed in daily practice or just visualized. Although drawn two-dimensionally, maṇḍalas are actually visualized as three-dimensional. Some sādhanas have simple maṇḍala visualizations, while others are more complex, and may include hundreds of deities.

A maṇḍala serves as a blueprint for establishing perfection in your life. It sets a visual template from which your own inner Buddha Essence can manifest. Through the maṇḍala, you set the potential of the Great Bliss to arise within you. As you meditate on its harmonious qualities, your life attunes to it and manifests those qualities. You retrain your mind to see your world as perfect. The *Samvara Udaya Tantra* advises, “The Three Worlds are by nature the maṇḍala’s inconceivable mansion, and all living beings of the world are by nature the maṇḍala’s deities.” Meditating on the maṇḍala also strengthens your identification as the deity, which further purifies you and prepares you for enlightenment. Your relationship to the maṇḍala is one of intense devotion, as you honor it like a wish-fulfilling gem.

In the Yoginī Tantras, the maṇḍala represents especially the power of feminine energies to liberate you. It is the universal yoginī net or network (yoginī jāla) of all female deities, buddhas and bodhisattvas. This magical net of the yoginīs (or ḍākinīs), a kind of “cosmic sisterhood,” holds the power to bestow bliss and grant all desires. You invoke their own vows to liberate all beings, and they race to your presence to bring inner awakening. The *Cakrasamvara Tantra* notes intently, “The vow of the ḍākinīs is indeed the transformative meditation.”

Deity Yoga

Deity yoga (deva yoga; also Jñānamudrā, lit. Wisdom Consort) is the practice of uniting your whole being with a deity and transforming yourself into it. The *Hevajra Tantra* explains that deity yoga is to “remain at one in union” with the deity. It is not just *thinking* that you are the deity, but being meditatively absorbed in its essence. As a *yoga*, union is attained through maintaining a stabilized meditative state with the deity. At the highest level, you recognize that the deity in all its perfection is identical to your mind’s true nature.

The main techniques of deity yoga are visualization and mantra recitation. Meditative concentration, devotion, and continuous practice insure your success in practice. As you discover the deity's own devotion to you, you develop in your devotion to the deity. However, the relationship is much more than devotional. While in other spiritual traditions you are taught to *worship* a deity, in Tantric Buddhism you actually *become* the deity. As you do so, great power is bestowed upon you. You invite the consciousness of an enlightened being directly into your mind and body, becoming one with it, allowing it to transform you, and maintaining a blissful union through day and night.

Through deity yoga, you recognize that the visualizations of the deity that you create have no more or less reality than any other appearances. This discovery breaks down your attachment to the substantiality of appearances and allows you to see them as empty of an independent nature. You release your attachments to your personality as having any substantive or permanent nature. Released from concepts of self and other, you dance in the empty display of appearances. While from the philosophy of the Innate the deity is regarded as real, as a beginning practice deity yoga is often tied to the philosophy of Emptiness as a tool for releasing attachment. Seeing the deity repeatedly arise and dissolve as a display of emptiness, you are liberated from suffering.

The *Hevajra Tantra* delightfully shares, "Bliss arises from sexual union with the deity." Deity yoga is also called *Jñānamudrā*, the practice of the wisdom consort, because you visualize yourself as the deity making love to the deity's consort. In this way, you discover the blissful, erotic nature of reality. Deity yoga is classed as a Creation Stage rather than a Completion Stage practice because you are not yet performing sexual yoga with a physical consort – and sex with a visualized consort does *not* hold the power to attain enlightenment. Deity yoga is not an abstract mental exercise, but an intensely intimate practice. Tantric deities are beings of great light, wisdom, joy, and erotic power, and uniting with them can bring unexpected and deeply treasured moments of ecstasy and bliss.

Deity Yoga and the Innate

The four characteristics of the Innate are present in deity yoga:

1. Pure Appearance (*Evam*) - The deity is a Pure Appearance of ultimate reality into the world, and by meditating on the deity's form as pure and the world as the maṇḍala of the deity, you are transformed. Pure Appearance is the most prominent characteristic of the Innate cultivated your awareness in deity yoga.
2. Great Passion (*Mahārāga*) – The deity feels Great Passion for its consort and for you to attain liberation. As you experience the Great Passion the deity and its consort have for each other as well as for you, your own Great Passion for enlightenment intensifies.
3. Essence (*Tattva*) - The true nature of the deity is unchanging Essence. As you meditate on the deity, you develop your potential to perceive ultimate reality directly.
4. Great Bliss (*Mahāsukha*) - The deity in sexual union with its consort is an emanation of the Great Bliss, and guides you in attaining the Great Bliss also.

Tantric Transformation

The four means of Tantric transformation are utilized in deity yoga:

1. Empowerment (Ādhiṣṭhāna) - The principle means of Tantric transformation in deity yoga is the empowerment by the deity, which can occur at any time through meditative absorption on it.
2. Alchemy (Rasāyāna) – There is no alchemy in deity yoga, because alchemy requires the generation of mixed female and male sexual fluids that are not produced in the practice. However, deity yoga does train you in practices so that alchemy can be achieved with your physical consort in sexual yoga.
3. Union (Yoga) - The practitioner cannot attain union with Essence through deity yoga, because the practice is not powerful enough on its own to achieve it. You can, however, enter into a lesser stage of nondual union with the deity’s mind, letting go of subject/object distinctions.
4. Sympathetic Vibration (Niṣyanda) - The form of the deity corresponds to the wisdom and bliss of ultimate reality, so by meditating on the deity, a slight sympathetic vibration is created. The perfection of the deity’s maṇḍala corresponds to the world of appearances, and by meditating on the maṇḍala, you transform your perceptions and awaken to your world as perfect.

Because deity yoga is principally an act of empowerment rather than union with Essence, it cannot attain enlightenment. It is union with Essence that brings Buddhahood – and that occurs only through sexual yoga.

Path

“Union with the deity must be accomplished by the person who desires the Great Bliss.”
- Kṛiṣṇācārya, *The Yoga of the Jewel Garland*

Levels of Attainment

Attaining success in practice is called the realization of the deity. It may take the form of seeing a vision of the deity or receiving a message of wisdom from it. But the highest goal of deity yoga is to recognize that your true nature is identical to the deity – perfect bliss and wisdom. Three levels can be attained:

1. Initial Union

In Initial Union (Prathama Prayoga), you attain a general visualization of the deity and the maṇḍala. The image is clear and stable.

2. Triumphant Maṇḍala

In Triumphant Maṇḍala (Vijaya Maṇḍala), you attain a vivid appearance of the deity and the maṇḍala. The image is clear and stable, and as *real* as anything else. Image and reality become equalized in your practice.

3. Triumphant Act

In the final stage, Triumphant Act (Karma Vijaya), you attain conscious union with the deity and act as the deity for the benefit of all beings. You *are* the actual deity. As the body of the deity, you do not grasp at your own body. Knowing your speech to be the mantra of the deity, you do not grasp at sounds. Knowing your mind to be the mind of the deity, you do not grasp at concepts. Your mind is open and free. This final stage in deity yoga, however, can only be attained from union with Essence, achieved through sexual yoga.

Benefits

The grace of the deity brings you closer to enlightenment. Deity yoga purifies your karma, especially the coarse karmic obscurations of your physical body, its illnesses and imbalances. It purifies your Five Aggregates and obscuring emotions. You are happier, healthier, and more peaceful. You love effortlessly, and wish the very best for everyone. Your body becomes vigorous, your voice melodious, and your mind clear. You lose your ordinary sense of pride, not by being humbled, but by being elevated to the status of a god. You honor yourself and your own sacredness so intensely that it burns away the negative effects of your ego pride. You shift out of your ordinary idea of a self (prākṛitā ahaṃkāra) into a divine sense of self (devya ahaṃkāra). You do not even think of yourself as a human being any more. You absorb the erotic energies of the deity, and become a “sex god.” Making love to the consort of the deity, you dwell in bliss.

You let go of viewing your world as ordinary, and step into a world of sacredness, awe, delight and greatly heightened pleasure. Your desire for worldly things arises, but it is pure desire from your heart. As you visualize the deity purifying all the realms and all beings, deity yoga brings you great merit. It is a virtuous act of a true bodhisattva in which you generously give to all the worlds. You may develop worldly magical powers that you can use to enjoy your life, help others, and support your path to inner awakening. You develop a deep appreciation for the multi-dimensionality of reality. After a deity gives you your first orgasm, your understanding of reality will never be the same again. They bring very high vibrational energies that bathe you in bliss.

Common Problems

One risk of deity yoga is that you might confuse divine pride (devatā garva) with ego pride (abhimāna), and your ego would be strengthened, leading you to greater suffering. Another risk is that, if your practice remains purely devotional, you might miss the main teaching that you are at all times the equal of, and not separate from, the deity. Although deity yoga can bring you the ability to create effortlessly whatever you desire, if you use this power for selfish reasons or to harm others, the karmic stains can be very strong. Furthermore, if you practice only deity yoga and do not eventually combine it with the Completion Stage practices, you will benefit but not reach your highest goal. On the other hand, if you practice deity yoga too little or not at all before you begin the Completion Stage, you may not be pure enough to perform those practices effectively, and gain little benefit from them.

Techniques

“I am in erotic union with my consort, my essential nature peace and bliss.”
- Hevajra Tantra

Deity yoga comprises a large number of many different practices. The presentation in this chapter principally follows *The Sādhana of Secret Vajravilāsinī*, but also expands upon it. The main deity yoga practices include: 1) sādhana practice (sādhana), 2) the fire pūjā (Agni pūjā), and 3) daily conduct (caryā). Together, these practices transform you into a deity and invite you to see everything around you as perfect, the pure realm of the deity.

Sādhana Practice

Sādhana practice (sādhana) commonly includes: 1) praise (pūjā), 2) dissolving and arising from emptiness (śūnyatā), 3) armoring (kavaca), 4) visualizing the pledge deity (samaya sattva), 5) becoming the wisdom deity (jñāna sattva), 6) self-consecration (svādhiṣṭhāna), 7) dancing (nāṭya), 8) Mantra Repetition with Wisdom Consort (mantra japa Jñānamudrā), 9) the Four Blissesses of Sexual Yoga with Wisdom Consort (Catur Ānanda Jñānamudrā), and 10) dissolution (visarjana).

Praise

You recite words of praise (pūjā) to the deity, which develops your devotion. In *The Sādhana of Secret Vajravilāsinī*, the praise is offered twice, at the start of the sādhana and at the end of the deity yoga section. The first set of praise verses serves a preparatory role to shift your mind devotionally for the rest of the practice. It is through the strength of your heart connection that the deity transforms you and you attain union with it. The second set of praise verses is offered after you have become the deity at the end of the deity yoga section, so they are self-praises, honoring the greatness of yourself as the deity who ends all suffering. The vibrational power of the song of praise reverberates through the universe, and is received as a divine gift to all beings.

Dissolving and Arising from Emptiness

Dissolving yourself into emptiness (śūnyatā), you realize your own emptiness and the emptiness of all appearances. Nothing possesses substantial reality, and this liberates you from attachment. For those whose practice may be on perceiving all things as Mind, Essence, or the Innate, you perform this step with that view in mind instead.

Armoring

In armoring (kavaca), you place the power of the deity’s mantra seed syllables into your own body to prepare and strengthen your body to receive the awesome power of the deity within you.

In *The Sādhana of Secret Vajravilāsinī* you perform armoring twice, once before the visualization of the pledge deities, and - in place of the usual practice of extended mantra repetition - armoring is repeated after the self-consecration.

Visualizing the Pledge Deity

General Techniques

You may practice visualization with your eyes open or closed. The deities are ideally visualized very small, the size of a hair tip, to develop intensely focused concentration, but it is easier for most people to begin with them as much larger and then make them smaller over time.



The two techniques for where to visualize the pledge deity (samaya sattva) are: 1) in front of you (anu smṛiti), and 2) envisioning yourself as the deity, called self-generation (ātma utpatti). Some sādhanas include only generation of the deity in front, others have both, while still others give only self-generation. The value of generating the deity in front of you is so that you can know the power of the deity as distinct from yourself and develop devotion to it. If you only practiced self-generation, you might confuse your own power and the power of the deity and think there is no outside help to call upon.

Two general methods of generating a visualized deity from emptiness may be used: 1) gradual (krama), in which you visualize the deity in several stages beginning with its seed syllable, or 2) all at once (jhaṭiti), where you visualize the deity arising completely in an instant. There are also two methods of holding the visualization of the deity: 1) concentration (dhyāna) – focusing on the visualization in a sequence of images, such as the face, body, and accoutrements, and 2) meditative stabilization (samādhi) – holding the full image of the deity firmly in your mind. Some people find it easier to begin their practice by building the image of the deity's body in parts, while others may be more comfortable holding the entire image all at once.

Three principal qualities are sought in the visualization: 1) clear appearance (vispaṣṭatara) – holding a clear, bright, and steady visualization, 2) divine pride (devatā garva) – having confidence in and knowing you are the wisdom, love and power of the deity, and 3) remembering purity (adhimuñca) – being aware of the symbolic meanings of the visual attributes of the deity. When sealed with awareness of emptiness, these three qualities awaken your wisdom. In visualization, you do not want the deity to appear to you as too solid, but more like a rainbow or a reflection on a mirror – empty of self-nature. You can use a physical image of a deity such as an illustration or a statue to support your practice.

The Five Awakenings

In the Yoginī Tantras, one method for generating the pledge deity is called the Five Awakenings (Pañca Abhisambodhi Krama). In this system you visualize the deity arising from emptiness beginning with: 1) a Moon disk (candra maṇḍala), representing the white masculine essence of compassion, 2) a sun disk (sūrya maṇḍala), representing the red feminine essence of wisdom, 3) a seed syllable (akṣara), a visual symbol of the essence of the deity, 4) emanating (sṛṣṭi) and returning (smṛiti), rays of light flowing from the seed syllable that bless and fulfill the needs of all beings, and in return you receive the blessings of the buddhas, and 5) transforming the seed syllable into the image of the deity (deva). Each of the Five Awakenings corresponds to one of the Five Wisdoms (see Chapter 3: The Vajrayāna); as you meditate on them, you awaken the Five Wisdoms within you. In *The Sādhana of Secret Vajravilāsinī*, as a way of emphasizing the power of the feminine essence of the deity, the first step is omitted to create four-steps.

Instruments of Tantra – Vajra and Bell

Tantric Buddhist ritual uses two powerful instruments in practice, the vajra and bell. Though they carry rich symbolic meaning, they are not merely symbols - they are instruments that actually generate enlightened power and wisdom:

The vajra (lit. diamond scepter) is the principle instrument of Tantric Buddhism. It represents the power of enlightened activity. The vajra represents your infinite creative capacity to fulfill all your worldly desires and attain inner awakening. It is the male principle that cuts through all obstacles and engages in loving and compassionate action. It is the power of the male deity and the male sexual organ.

The bell (ghaṇṭā) is the instrument of enlightened wisdom. It is the female principle that sees reality clearly. The bell symbolizes your ability to perceive directly without any emotional or mental obscurations - as people say, “clear as a bell.” It is the power of the female deity and the female sexual organ.

Visualizing the Maṇḍala

Once you have successfully generated the pledge deity, the next step is to generate the maṇḍala of the deity, its buddhafiield of pure awareness. The maṇḍala is the sacred site (vajra pīṭha) where enlightenment occurs. The maṇḍala may be generated either from the outside in or the inside out. The most important element of the maṇḍala is usually the consort of the deity, with whom the deity remains eternally in blissful nondual union.

With the consort visualized, the inner circle of supporting deities may be visualized. In the Yoginī Tantras, the supporting deities are principally female - passionate yoginīs and ḍākinīs that come to serve you. Some sādhanas include extensive visualizations with rich palaces. Supporting retinue deities, when part of a maṇḍala, help to transform your Five Aggregates and the Five Poisons into the Five Wisdoms. *The Sādhana of Secret Vajravilāsinī* provides a very simple maṇḍala, making it easy to practice and keeping the focus on sexual yoga.

Becoming the Wisdom Deity

Once you have established your visualization of the pledge deity, you invoke the actual wisdom deity (jñāna sattva) to merge with the pledge deity and then with you. The wisdom deity is invoked with the mantra *vajra samaya*, literally the “indestructible vow” that your deity has taken to bring you to enlightenment. Union with the deity is attained with four mantra seed syllables: *jaḥ hūṃ vaṃ hoḥ*. The first seed syllable invites the wisdom deity into the space, the second worships it, the third brings it to enter into the pledge deity, and the final seed syllable merges the wisdom deity and pledge deity together into one. The wisdom deity dissolves into light and merges into you. You are now the actual wisdom deity. You visualize and know yourself to be the physical embodiment of the deity, and your lover as the embodiment of the consort of the deity, luminescent forms arising from emptiness. You have attained complete union with the deity when all appearances are seen as the form of the deity, all sounds are its mantra, and your wisdom mind is the play of the Dharmadhātu, the vast expanse of true reality.

Self-Consecration

In self-consecration (svādhiṣṭhāna, lit. self-empowerment), the consecrating deities, who in the Yoginī Tantras are usually female buddhās, honor you as the deity, carry vases filled with the nectar of immortality (amṛita), and pour it into your body. Self-consecration purifies you and empowers you, strengthens your identity as the actual deity, seals you with the consciousness of the buddhas, and awakens your potential for enlightenment.

Sealing

Once you are consecrated, you and all the deities of the self-consecration are spontaneously crowned or sealed (mudrā) by the image of the buddha of the family that the deity represents. Sealing marks all the participants as part of that family. It is ideal, though not always possible, to

practice only with practitioners and deities who are of the same buddha family - people who share the same root obscuration, and the deities who apply the right wisdom for liberation.

Divine Pride

Knowing yourself as the actual deity in sexual union with the consort, you well up with divine pride (devatā garva). The greatness of your own divine glory is beyond your wildest dreams. You effortlessly radiate its magnificence. In attaining the presence of the wisdom deity, you vow to take on the physical appearance of the deity. Tantric deities are ritually naked (digambara), dressed in their jewelry and other ritual marks. As you are yourself ritually naked, you deepen your awareness of the deity's erotic power within you. The mantra for generating divine pride is *hā hā he he*.

Emanating and Returning

Through emanating (sṛṣṭi) and returning (smṛiti), you emanate light to all beings throughout space, meeting all their needs and bringing them to enlightenment. Then you retract that light back into you, pulling in all the powers of the buddhas, bodhisattvas, and celestial yoginīs. This practice is accomplished in *The Sādhana of Secret Vajravilāsinī* through emanating streaks of fire, melting the Three Worlds, and dancing.

Dancing

Dancing (nāṭya) is a highly regarded method for receiving the sacred power of a deity, a form of empowerment (adhiṣṭhāna). The *Cakrasamvara Tantra* calls dance “the action of appearance that is the Essence,” and adds “The self-generating worship should be performed with offerings of gestures and dance.” To dance as the deity grounds enlightened consciousness into your body in a joyful way. In *The Sādhana of Secret Vajravilāsinī*, you dance as an offering to your consort. As the ultimate offering, you generate infinite replicas of the deity and consort dancing across the universe. With light of great intensity emanating from each one, you release all beings from the bondage of ignorance and bring them to inner awakening. Your practice of deity yoga becomes a *cosmic event* that helps limitless beings.

Mantra Repetition with Wisdom Consort

For Mantra Repetition with Wisdom Consort (Mantra Japa Jñānamudrā), the method of the siddha Jayabhadra, you hold yourself in your awareness as the deity in sexual union with the consort of the deity, and recite the mantra of the deity many times as you make love, erotically empowering your practice.

Mantras

Mantra is the pure form of the deity in sound. It is a miraculous revelation of divine reality. In dark times, the mantra lights the path. The word “mantra” means literally “mind protection.” The *Vajra Śekhara Tantra (The Adamantine Peak Tantra)* says “The nature of all mantras is the mind of all the buddhas.” It is a wish-fulfilling jewel, and brings the accomplishment of all desires. Mantras are praised as the givers of all that is desired, known and honored by the siddhas.

Among the many different types of mantras include: 1) seed mantras (bīja mantra), which are also called root mantras (mūla mantra), and 2) dhāraṇī mantras. The seed mantra is composed of the seed syllable or syllables of the deity, the deity’s most compact sounds. It is used for accomplishing union with the deity and for extensive mantra repetition. The dhāraṇī mantra is longer, and is a mantra of empowerment, protection and magical transformation, used especially in consecrating objects or for purification in fire pūjās.

Mantra Repetition

By repeating the mantra (mantra japa), you attain union with the deity. Your obscurations are purified, especially your obscurations of speech, and you attain the divine speech of the deity. Mantra repetition provides a foundation of inner purity for the Completion Stage practices that lead ultimately to realizing the mind of the deity, the accomplishment of nondual awareness (Mahāmudrā siddhi). Mantra repetition also leads to developing worldly magical powers (laukika siddhi). Furthermore, by concentrating the essence of the deity’s gender within you, you empower yourself with the enlightened erotic power of the deity and strengthen your capacity for success in sexual yoga.

In Tantric ritual practice, mantras are repeated at a certain point within a sādhana. They are generally recited softly and quietly, at a moderate pace. It is best to chant mantras aloud because of the strong vibrational power of the sound. Silent mantra repetition (vajra japa) is also highly praised in the Tantras, but it is a more advanced practice that works on subtler levels. As you recite, you do not let your mind wander; when it does, gently bring it back to focus. You breathe from your belly and diaphragm rather than your upper chest, and allow your belly and chest to vibrate. When you chant, the slightly nasalized sounds in Sanskrit add resonance, and your whole body becomes a humming, sacred musical instrument. Chant with devotion and you attract the blessings of the gods.

To fully empower the mantra is to transform it into a valuable tool for purifying your mindstream and accomplishing worldly goals. This is accomplished through reciting the seed mantra 100,000 times and the dhāraṇī mantra 10,000 times. You can use a mālā (rosary) to keep count, but numbers matter less than intention, devotion, focused meditative absorption, and length of time in practice. When you recite with a mālā of 108 beads, you count each set of 108 repetitions as only 100, allowing for mistakes in your repetition. At the end of each count, you reverse the mālā in your hand and count in reverse order rather than leaping over the central bead (called the guru bead) with your fingers.

Mantra repetition is usually one of the most central practices in a sādhana, and can take up a long period of time. In keeping the focus of *The Sādhana of Secret Vajravilāsinī* on sexual yoga, however, Śabara transforms mantra repetition into a short armoring practice. Those wishing to practice extended mantra repetition may do so.

Hand Mudrās

Hand mudrās (sacred hand gestures) support you as you recite certain mantras, engaging your body in pure ritual activity, and training your body in the perfected actions of the enlightened ones. The Yoginī Tantras praise hand mudrās as essential tools for inner awakening.

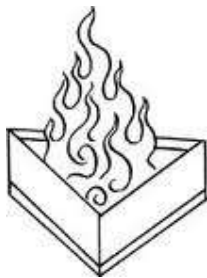
The Four Blissess of Sexual Yoga with Wisdom Consort

In *The Sādhana of Secret Vajravilāsinī*, making love to the visualized deity can be performed at three points: 1) as part of mantra repetition, 2) during practicing the Four Blissess of Sexual Yoga, and 3) with the Swing Recitation. Through the practice of the Four Blissess of Sexual Yoga with Wisdom Consort (Catur Ānanda Jñānamudrā), you partially induce the Four Blissess, the gateway to realization. The wisdom consort brings a taste of bliss, but it cannot permanently establish you in the Great Bliss. If you have not yet learned the techniques of sexual yoga, you simply imagine yourself in sexual union with the consort of your deity and enjoy the pleasures as they arise.

Dissolving the Deity

After you complete your sādhana session, you dissolve the deity (visarjana) into you. This is an especially important practice as you realize that the vivid appearance of the deity has no independent existence, its true nature beyond conceptuality. You perceive that all appearances arise and fall away in the same way. For those whose main deity practice is Vajravilāsinī, you dissolve yourself into emptiness, arise in the form of Vajravilāsinī if you are female or Padmanarteśvara if you are male, and continue your practice of daily conduct.

Fire Pūjā



Once you have completed the required number of mantra repetitions of the deity through weeks or months of practice, you perform a fire pūjā (Agni pūjā, offering; also called a homa). This ritual purifies you, develops devotion, and brings worldly magical powers. You add either white, yellow, red, or black substances, such as seeds or flowers, as offerings into the fire depending upon whether you want to perform one of the magical four actions (catur karma) that are 1) pacifying, 2) increasing, 3) attracting, or 4) destroying. You recite the main deity's dhāraṇī mantra and the mantra of the consort for ten percent of the total number of mantra repetitions you accumulated in your sādhana practice.

Daily Conduct

Daily conduct (caryā) is an essential part of deity yoga, a continuous practice day and night. Each morning as you wake up, you recognize yourself as the deity. At night, your dreams are the deity's dreams. You know that you are the deity, your world is the maṇḍala of the deity, and all appearances are empty of self-nature. The *Hevajra Tantra* instructs you to “remain at one with the deity's form” at all times, and all blessings will come to you. Deity yoga daily conduct is a balance of clear perception and compassionate activity. The Daily Conduct Vows (Caryā) ensure you remain in a state of continuous practice: 1) deity yoga (deva yoga), to visualize yourself as the deity making love to its consort at all times, 2) mantra recitation at night (mantra japa), to recite the seed mantra of the deity 108x at night before sunrise, 3) Vajra-Lotus Recitation (Vajra Abja Japa), to perform the Vajra-Lotus Recitation each day, 4) mantra secrecy (mantra guhya), to keep the mantras of the deity secret, 5) massaging your consort (aṅgamardana), to massage your consort while reciting the dhāraṇī mantra of the deity each day, 6) sacred outlook (deva dṛiṣṭi), perceiving all appearances as emptiness and Bliss, 7) the Yoga of Passion (Rāga Yoga), making love to your consort as the deity, and 8) dream yoga (svapna yoga), remaining as the deity in the dream state.

Deity Yoga – Deva Yoga

Visualize yourself as the deity making love to its consort at all times. This strengthens your connection with the deity, allowing you to receive its blessings and power each day.

Mantra Repetition at Night – Mantra Japa

In order to deepen the mantra in your mindstream, *The Sādhana of Secret Vajravilāsinī* instructs you to repeat the seed mantra of the deity (mantra japa) each night 108 times just before sunrise.

Vajra-Lotus Recitation

In *The Sādhana of Secret Vajravilāsinī*, one daily daytime practice is an erotic self-pleasuring ritual called Vajra-Lotus Recitation (Vajra Abja Japa). As the deity, while reciting the seed mantra, a man uses his fingers as a ring to massage his vajra, while a woman uses her fingers as a vajra to pleasure her yoni. This strengthens your erotic connection with the deity and its consort.

Mantra Secrecy – Mantra Guhya

Never reveal the mantra to anyone. This protects the mantra from people who might want to use it for black magic.

Massaging Your Consort

Massaging (aṅgamardana) your physical consort with fragrant massage oil, you recite the dhāraṇī mantra of the deity. Your consort then massages you. This ritual transforms massage, an important practice for preparing the body for the bliss of enlightenment, into a sacred activity.

Sacred Outlook

You see all appearances as emanations of the deity, all sounds as its mantra, and all thoughts as its mind. You continually re-create circumstances that you would have seen as impure, and through your practice of sacred outlook (deva dṛiṣṭi), you see everything as pure. Serenely perfect, *you move in every moment like you are a work of art in motion*. Joy, wonder, and awe arise within you. Whatever you do, you train yourself to meditate on your actions as activities of buddhahood.

The Yoga of Passion

As the deity, you make love to your own physical consort. The Yoga of Passion (Rāga Yoga) is not considered sexual yoga, because it assumes you have not yet learned its techniques, or that you are practicing with a consort who does not know sexual yoga, but it is sex performed in a sacred context. This practice prepares you for the Completion Stage practices of sexual yoga.

Dream Yoga

You maintain your awareness as the deity as you go to sleep, uniting the consciousness of the deity with your sleeping consciousness through dream yoga (svapna yoga). As you awake, you focus immediately on yourself as the deity so that deity yoga becomes an uninterrupted practice of absorbing the enlightened qualities of the deity. Dream yoga enhances the power of deity yoga, purifies your throat cakra, liberates you from suffering in the dream state, strengthens your ability to die consciously, and prepares you for enlightenment.

Results

“In this beautiful world, you and I play together filled with erotic delight.”
- Hevajra Tantra

Through deity yoga, you are purified of your coarse karmic stains. Your body and speech are clearer. Your mind is infused with the mind of the deity, you honor yourself with divine pride, and abandon the ego pride that can never bring you lasting happiness. Your whole being is imprinted, repatterned and organized around enlightenment. You put in place a new blueprint for your life of perfection, peace and bliss. As you abandon ordinary appearances, your world is magically transformed into the sacred maṇḍala of the deity. You see all beings as gods and

goddesses, pure and perfect, yet without independent self-existence. You gain access to the infinite power of the celestial yoginīs who are bound by their vows to support you.

Accomplished in deity yoga, your level of realization is nearly comparable to an eighth level bodhisattva. The principle achievement in deity yoga is a stabilized meditative state of union with the deity. Once you attain this awareness and can maintain it throughout your day, you are ready to begin subtle energy yoga. Deity yoga is a stepping stone to higher practices - it does not bring ultimate attainment, but fully prepares you for the Completion Stage. Deity yoga increases your capacity for meditative absorption, which then gives strength to the higher yogas. The actual body of the deity is attained through union with the Clear Light - until then you are working with visualization and the empowering blessings of the deity. While the results of deity yoga are profound, only sexual yoga brings enlightenment.

Vows

Your vows for deity yoga are the vows of the first consecration - to practice the sādhana regularly and abide by the vows of daily conduct. Once you have completed the required number of mantra recitations and are comfortable with the practices of deity yoga, you may take the second consecration and begin to practice subtle energy yoga as well.

Sādhana Vows – Sādhana Samaya

Your sādhana vows are: 1) to practice the sādhana with full ritual activities with your lover on the four juncture nights of the lunar month, 2) to recite the sādhana each day, and 3) to recite the seed mantra of the deity many times. With your consort, you perform only the deity yoga practices. You can make love as you practice the sādhana, however, using the Yoga of Passion. As you recite the sādhana daily, recite it 3 times each day, and accumulate over time mantra repetitions as you recite the seed mantra of Vajravilāsinī 100,000 times, her dhāraṇī mantra 10,000 times, and the seed mantra of her consort Padmanarteśvara 50,000 times. At the completion of your recitations, complete the fourth sādhana vow, perform a fire pūjā.

Fire Pūjā – Agni Pūjā

Once you have completed the required number of recitations of the deities, perform a fire pūjā (agni pūjā). Recite the deity's dhāraṇī mantra 10,000 times, and 5,000 times for the seed mantra of the consort, while feeding a fire with offerings of seeds, rice, flowers, or incense.

Benefits: You are purified from ritual errors, your broken vows are restored, and you win the favor of the deities who bestow worldly magical powers.

Time: 3 days.

Suggested Items

A fire hearth (agni kunda) – A hole dug into the earth, shaped in a triangle, lined with bricks.

The maṇḍala of Vajravilāsinī – On cloth or paper, to place at the bottom of the fire hearth.

Wood (kāṣṭha) - For burning for the duration of your fire pūjā.

Flowers (puṣpa) – To place flower petals around the fire hearth to sanctify it.

Fire offerings (bali): Varies depending upon what you wish to create: white offerings (white sesame seeds or rice) for pacifying inner and outer obstacles, yellow offerings (yellow mustard seeds or clarified butter) for creating material abundance, red offerings (red flowers) for attracting, and black offerings (black sesame seeds) for destroying obstacles. It is also common to add some additional items to the fire offerings in a mix to make it special, like incense, herbs, aromatic wood, dried fruits, nuts, and flowers. 10 lbs.

Offering bowl (bali patra) – To hold the fire offerings for the day, large enough for about 3 lbs.

Fire sticks (upaveṣa) – A stick of wood about 12-18” long, one end dipped in ghee. One for each day to start the fire.

Ghee (ghṛita) – An offering to the fire deity that keeps the flames strong. 3 gallons.

Ghee Bowl (ghṛita patra) – To hold 1 gallon of ghee for a day.

A ladle (sruva) – A long spoon for feeding ghee to the fire.

A bandana (śirṣapaṭṭaka) – A white cotton cloth strip worn around the forehead and tied in the back protects your hair from catching fire.

A mālā – To count mantra repetitions.



Matches (agniśalākā) – To start the fire.

Preparing the Site

To make the fire pit, dig a triangular hole in the ground one cubit wide and one cubit deep. Line it with bricks, with some the bricks above the ground about one cubit. Place an image of the maṇḍala of Vajravilāsinī in the bottom, and set up some fire wood in the center, and pour ghee on the fire wood. Sprinkle flower petals around the fire pit.

Initial Practices - Sevā

Standing near the fire pit, pour some ghee on the wood, light the fire with a fire stick, and begin your fire pūjā with the initial practices, and maintain a state of meditative absorption, with great devotion and gratitude to the deity, and an awareness of emptiness, throughout the ritual. During the fire pūjā, add a little ghee from time to time: use the ladle, put some ghee into the ladle, pour the ghee from the ladle into the fire, using about 1 gallon of ghee per day. Do not leave the fire unattended.

1. Recite the Refuge Vow.

*buddham śaraṇam gacchāmi
dharmam śaraṇam gacchāmi
saṅgham śaraṇam gacchāmi*

“I go for refuge to the Buddha.”
“I go for refuge to the Dharma.”
“I go for refuge to the Saṅgha.”

Recite 3x.



2. Recite the Bodhisattva Vow.

*viśuddhaṃ dhārayiṣyāmi yathā buddhena deśitam
tena jivā śaṭhamāraṃ prāpya buddhatvam uttamaṃ
bhaveyaṃ bhavakhinnānāṃ śaraṇaṃ sarvadehināṃ*

“I will maintain purity, as taught by the Buddha.
Conquering the demon Mara, and attaining supreme buddhahood,
I vow to be a refuge for all beings, weary of saṃsāra.”

Recite 3x.



3. Recite the Lineage Prayer.

oṃ namo gurubhyah
“oṃ Homage to the gurus.”

“To all the ones who know the true reality, I offer a maṇḍala (Maṇḍala Mudrā) of the Three Worlds:



From the vast expanse of the ocean of primordial wisdom, I invoke Vajradhara and his precious consort Vajradhātviśvarī.

From the Buddhafield of Sukhāvātī, I call upon the great buddhas Amitābha and Pāṇḍarā.
From his celestial paradise Potala, I invoke the noble Lord of erotic passion Lokanātha.
From the pure mind of Saraha to the great master Śābara, the noble teachings were given.
From Lokanātha to the great master Śābara, these words of practice were heard as an imperishable sound.

Masters of the lineage, Saraha and Hedarmā, Śābara and Śabarī, I invoke you all. For the benefit of all beings, I will attain enlightenment in this very life. Guide me in the path that leads to the Great Bliss.”

Visualize that you are surrounded by countless buddhas, bodhisattvas, yogis and yoginīs, Dharma protectors, and masters of the lineage who pledge to support your practice. They dissolve into your heart, bringing you inner awakening.

Emptiness Prayer – Śūnyatā Mantra

oṃ svabhāva śuddhāḥ sarva dharmāḥ svabhāva śuddho ’ham

“oṃ I and all appearances are naturally pure, with no inherent existence, emptiness.”

Deity Yoga – Deva Yoga

“Instantly, I transform into Vajravilāsinī.”

Recite the following mantra 1x in Sanskrit and English:

oṃ vajravilāsinī mahāyoginī ātmako ’ham

“oṃ I am Vajravilāsinī, the great yoginī!”

Prayer to Worldly Protective Deities – Devatā Pūjā

“To the worldly protective deities of this place, I honor you and request your support at this time for this sacred offering. Dispel all obstacles to success!”

Prayer to Agni - Agni Pūjā

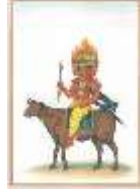
Invoke the presence of Agni the Vedic fire god, and recite in Sanskrit and in English:

*oṃ agne mahātejaḥ sarva kāma prasādhaka
kāruṇya kṛita satvārtha asmin sannihito bhava*

“oṃ Agni! Fire of great brightness, fulfiller of all desires, compassionate for the benefit of beings, be present here!”

*svārthañ caiva parārtham ca sādhituṃ gaccha havyabhuk
āgamiṣyāmi yathākāle sarvasiddhiṃ kuruṣva me*

“Consumer of the sacrificial offerings, go and accomplish your desires as well as others, and return in time of need. Accomplish everything for me!”



Prayer to the Main Deity – Deva Pūjā

“Vajravilāsinī, ever in union with your consort Padmanarteśvara, your Great Passion spreads throughout the universe, bring all beings to the Great Bliss! Cleanse me and purify me, restore my broken vows, forgive my errors in practice, release me of karmic bonds, dispel all illusions, honor your vows and bring me to the Great Bliss!”

Mantra Repetition – Mantra Jāpa

As you recite each mantra, throw a small amount of your offerings into the fire with your right hand. Use your left hand to count mantra repetitions.

1. Recite the dhāraṇī mantra of Vajravilāsinī in Sanskrit 10,000 times.

*rate surate eṃ
nitya klinne mada drave āṃ
sukhena sukha yone rīṃ
subale vihvale raṃ
liṅga vajraṃ brīṃ
grasa grasa ha ha ha āṃ āṃ āṃ
mama sarva sattvānāṃ sarva siddhiṃ
dehi dehi saḥ*

2. Recite the seed mantra of Padmanarteśvara in Sanskrit 5,000 times.

oṃ āḥ padmanarteśvara hūṃ

3. When you finish your mantra recitations for the day, offer words of praise: “I offer my deepest gratitude to you, goddess of erotic play, who blissfully bestows inner awakening.”



Closing Practices - Visarjana

1. Request forgiveness for any mistakes in practice.
2. Dissolve the deities with the Dissolution Mantra.

Perform the Earth Touching Gesture (Bhūmi Sparśa Mudrā), and recite the Dissolution Mantra.

oṃ āḥ hūṃ vajra muḥ



3. Recite the Dedication of Merit.

puṇyaṃ prabhūtaṃ yad ihāpi sarvaṃ saṃbodhaye tat pariṇāmayāmi
“I dedicate all merit arisen here for the goal of complete and perfect enlightenment.”



4. Put out the fire at the end of the day, and start the fire again the next morning until completed.

Daily Conduct - Caryā

Deity Yoga - Jñānamudrā

All day long, you visualize yourself as the deity, your mindstream identical to that of the deity. While there is no instruction in the sādhana to recite the mantra of Vajravilāsinī throughout the day you may do so, though only mantras repeated within the practice of the sādhana count towards your total mantra accumulations. At night go about ritually naked, a female practitioner dressed as Vajravilāsinī and a male practitioner as Padmanarteśvara.

Mantra Repetition at Night – Mantra Japa

Just before sunrise, recite the seed mantra of Vajravilāsinī 108x. You strengthen your identification as the deity.

Vajra-Lotus Recitation – Vajra Abja Japa

Once each day during sādhana recitation, the male practitioner uses his right-hand thumb and finger as a “lotus” to massage his vajra, while meditating and reciting Vajravilāsinī’s seed mantra 1000x. The female practitioner uses her right-hand fingers as a “vajra” into her lotus while meditating and reciting her seed mantra.

Mantra Secrecy – Mantra Guhya

Never reveal the mantras of the deity to others. This protects others from misusing the mantras.

Massaging Your Consort – Aṅgamardana

Massage your physical consort with massage oil (sesame or coconut oil), recite the dhāraṇī mantra of the deity 108x, and offer a garland of flowers to him or her. Your consort does the same.



Sacred Outlook - Deva Dṛiṣṭhi

See everything around you as pure and perfect. Continually view and know yourself as the deity, and your world as a celestial paradise. Gaze in wonder and awe at the ever-changing play of appearances. All people and events occur within the deity’s maṇḍala. Your visualizations become real, and your reality becomes a visualization. Your emphasis in daily practice is on emptiness. Unable to comprehend reality, you dance with it. You spontaneously accomplish the actions of the deity. As your practice deepens, you visualize what you desire, and it spontaneously comes to you.

The Yoga of Passion - Rāga Yoga

Hold your awareness of the deity while making love to your physical consort. This practice is performed without any of the techniques of sexual yoga.

Dream Yoga – Svapna Yoga

Go to sleep knowing you are the deity. Before you sleep, meditate at your throat cakra and pray to the celestial yoginīs to come to you and make love with you in your sleep, and help bring you to enlightenment. Ask them to help you be fully conscious in your dreams, and act as the deity, helping others with your wisdom and compassion, always avoiding attachment and aversion. When you arise in the morning, know you are the deity. Experience all appearances as empty of self-nature like a dream.

Exercises

During your weekly practice sessions, keep your mind strongly focused and in meditative absorption. Eventually the whole visualization will come to you strongly in an instant. Practice the mantra recitations with strong devotion. Because the sādhana is long, you can use a concise version given below to give yourself time for accumulating the required mantra repetitions. After a few months, you will be ready to add subtle energy yoga into your sessions.

Benefits: Empowers you with the qualities of the deity, purifies coarse karmic obscurations.

Time: 2 hours.

Suggested Items

A mālā



Deity image (pratimā)

Initial Practices – Sevā

1. Recite the Refuge Vow.

buddham śaraṇam gacchāmi
dharmam śaraṇam gacchāmi
saṅgham śaraṇam gacchāmi

“I go for refuge to the Buddha.”

“I go for refuge to the Dharma.”

“I go for refuge to the Saṅgha.”

Recite 3x.



2. Recite the Bodhisattva Vow.

*viśuddhaṃ dhārayiṣyāmi yathā buddhena deśitaṃ
tena jītvā śaṭhamāraṃ prāpya buddhatvam uttamaṃ
bhaveyaṃ bhavakhinnānāṃ śaraṇaṃ sarvadehināṃ*

“I will maintain purity, as taught by the Buddha.
Conquering the demon Mara, and attaining supreme buddhahood,
I vow to be a refuge for all beings, weary of saṃsāra.”

Recite 3x.



3. Recite the Lineage Prayer.

oṃ namo gurubhyaḥ
“oṃ Homage to the gurus.”

“To all the ones who know the true reality, I offer a maṇḍala (Maṇḍala Mudrā) of the Three Worlds:



From the vast expanse of the ocean of primordial wisdom, I invoke Vajradhara and his precious consort Vajradhātviśvarī.

From the Buddhafield of Sukhāvātī, I call upon the great buddhas Amitābha and Pāṇḍarā.

From his celestial paradise Potala, I invoke the noble Lord of erotic passion Lokanātha.

From the pure mind of Saraha to the great master Śābara, the noble teachings were given.

From Lokanātha to the great master Śābara, these words of practice were heard as an imperishable sound.

Masters of the lineage, Saraha and Hedarmā, Śābara and Śābarī, I invoke you all. For the benefit of all beings, I will attain enlightenment in this very life. Guide me in the path that leads to the Great Bliss.”

Visualize that you are surrounded by countless buddhas, bodhisattvas, yogis and yoginīs, Dharma protectors, and masters of the lineage who pledge to support your practice. They dissolve into your heart, bringing you inner awakening.

Deity Yoga – Deva Yoga

1. Praise - Pūjā

Recite the opening verse of praise and verse 1 to 10 of the sādhana.

Benefits: Shifts your awareness into a profound state of devotion towards the deity.

Time: 1 minute.

2. Dissolving and Arising from Emptiness - Śūnyatā

Recite verses 36a and 37b of the sādhana.

Benefits: Releases mental attachment to ordinary appearances.

Time: 1 minute.

3. Visualizing the Pledge Deity - Samaya Sattva

Recite verses 46 to 53 of the sādhana.

Benefits: Establishes in your mindstream a blueprint for your own perfection.

Time: 5 minutes.

4. Becoming the Wisdom Deity - Jñāna Sattva

Perform the activities as instructed between verses 64 to 65, transforming yourself into the deity.

Benefits: Purifies the coarse karmic obscurations of your body.

Time: 2 minutes.

5. Self-Consecration - Svādhiṣṭhāna

Recite verses 65 to 66 in the sādhana.

Benefits: Anchors into your awareness the reality that you are the deity.

Time: 2 minutes.

6. Mantra Repetition with Wisdom Consort - Mantra Japa Jñānamudrā

1. Visualize yourself as the deity in sexual union with your visualized consort.
2. Recite the seed mantra or dhāraṇī mantra of Vajravilāsinī, and/or the seed mantra of Padmanarteśvara, many times.

Benefits: Strengthens the empowerment of the deity to you. Purifies coarse karmic obscurations.

Time: 86 minutes.



7. The Four Blissess of Sexual Yoga with Wisdom Consort - Catur Ānanda Jñānamudrā

Recite verses 90 to 93 of the sādhana.

Perform these verses as instructed, attaining near experiences of the Four Blissess of sexual yoga.

Benefits: Strengthens the empowerment of the deity to you. Purifies coarse karmic obscurations.

Time: 20 minutes.

Closing Practices - Visarjana

Perform the closing practices of the sādhana.

1. Dissolve the deity.

Perform the Earth Touching Gesture (Bhūmi Sparśa Mudrā), and recite the Dissolution Mantra (Anubheda Mantra).

oṃ āḥ hūṃ vajra muḥ



2. Recite the Dedication of Merit.

puṇyaṃ prabhūtaṃ yad ihāpi sarvaṃ saṃbodhaye tat pariṇāmayāmi
“I dedicate all merit arisen here for the goal of complete and perfect enlightenment.”



Chapter 6. Inner Bliss: Subtle Energy Yoga

“The union of these two, Moon and Sun, is Great Bliss.”
- Hevajra Tantra

The Inner Fire



After completing their identification as goddess and god through the self-consecration, ever conscious of their enlightened purpose, the young man and his consort united sexually.

Through coordinated breathing and visualization, they attained the inner Four Blisses. The first bliss, called Bliss, they experienced as the bliss of the white bindus from the forehead cakra melted down to the throat cakra. The second bliss, Supreme Bliss, they delighted in as the bliss of the bindus from the forehead cakra melted further and reached the heart cakra. The third bliss, the Bliss of Cessation, they knew as the bliss of the bindus from the forehead cakra continued to melt and reached the navel cakra. The fourth and final bliss, Innate Bliss, they reveled in as the bliss of the bindus from the forehead cakra melted down and finally reached the tips of their genitals. The intensity of the bliss was beyond anything they knew before, and it continued to build as they practiced.

Introduction

“Inner heat blazes up in the navel with the fire of Great Passion.”

- Kriṣṇācārya, *The Yoga of the Jewel Garland*

Deity yoga is a first touch of spiritual bliss. It comes from outside, as a gift the deity bestows upon you. In contrast, subtle energy yoga is like drilling for oil in your own house. You hit a gusher of bliss and it comes from within. It is infinite and oceanic.

The Tantras reveal a glorious discovery – a subtle level of energies that compose a human being, the subtle body. You are not only your physical body but a being of light and consciousness. Left on its own, however, the subtle body unconsciously perpetuates the endless cycle of suffering by storing and releasing your karmic seeds. Yet by purifying and charging the subtle body with pristine awareness, you are rapidly transformed into a buddha. All the parts of the subtle yogic anatomy are not inanimate constituents but life-empowering forms of consciousness – they know you well. Ask for their help, and they will support you.

Subtle energy yoga (sūkṣma yoga – lit. subtle yoga), also called in the Yoginī Tantras Samayamudrā (lit. Commitment Consort or Seal) is the practice of alchemically transforming your subtle body. It purifies your subtle body of its karmic obscurations, and clears away subtle obscurations of speech. Subtle energy yoga “yokes together” your subtle winds (prāṇa) scattered about in your body and concentrates them together into a single point. The fire of Great Passion blazes as the winds are united. The winds are purified of their subtle karmic stains, nondual awareness spontaneously arises, and you are “sealed” or marked with peace and bliss. Never again will you think that anything outside of you is more blissful than anything inside you, and your craving for bliss falls away. These practices directly support you in attaining the subtle body of a buddha, the sambhogakāya.

Subtle energy yoga is sometimes used as an independent path to enlightenment. In the Yoginī Tantras, however, it is fully intertwined with the other three yogas. You practice subtle energy yoga as the deity while making love to the deity’s wisdom consort, so you are practicing deity yoga. Your physical consort gives added power and passion to the practices as you make love, which is sexual yoga. You focus on attaining blissful union with all levels of reality, so you are practicing nondual yoga. Without deity yoga, subtle energy yoga cannot purify your subtle karmic obscurations, because the coarse obscurations of your physical body have not yet been cleared. Without sexual yoga, subtle energy yoga is too weak. Without nondual yoga, subtle energy yoga loses sight of its goal. Subtle energy yoga is a highly erotic and orgasmic practice, and the sexual energies that are released can be intense. Throw everything into the fire - an ocean of bliss is waiting for you.

Philosophy

**“The Lalanā is the bearer of male essence, and the Rasanā of female essence.
Between them is the Avadhūtī, free from the duality of subject and object.”
- Hevajra Tantra**

Subtle Energy Yoga Transforms Your Subtle Body into Bliss

Living in a Multi-Dimensional Universe

All that exists is consciousness. It is an oceanic play of conscious creativity, comprising coarse and subtle levels of mind. What appears as matter is composed of the coarse elements of earth, water, fire, wind and space. These elements emerge from increasingly more subtle spheres of creative energy, until you discover the most subtle level as pristine awareness, the Clear Light (Prabhāsvara) of ultimate reality. All appearances arise from the intense love and bliss of Essence. Kṛiṣṇācārya explains that Wisdom (Prajñā), the active, *creative power* of ultimate reality, “is known as Mother because she gives birth to the universe by means of Great Bliss,” and adds, “She delights all beings with the Supreme Bliss.”

You are a multidimensional being living in a multidimensional universe, infinitely greater than your physical body and mind. By understanding the subtle body, you realize this as a factual reality. The subtle body is a map for understanding the interconnectedness of life. Once you know that “you” are actually “everything,” the whole idea of a separate self and objects dissolves. And yet paradoxically, *you become more you than ever before*. The false ego self is released and your eternal, Innermost Self (Nija) arises from the union of the *āḥ* (I) seed syllable at the navel and the *haṃ* (Am) seed syllable at the forehead to create “I Am.”

Subtle energy yoga harnesses the energies of your subtle body for transformation and enlightenment. These energies, unconscious to most people, remain in a state of imbalance due to karmic influences, and create the dualistic awareness that disturbs your mind and keeps you in suffering. By clearing the karmic blockages of your subtle body through body postures, breathing techniques, and visualization, your physical, emotional, and mental health is restored, and the subtle energies that secretly sustain suffering are dispelled. Because ignorance has its origin on the subtle level, in order to attain enlightenment, the simple methods of the Common Vehicle or the Mahāyāna are not enough to attain enlightenment - *you must use profound methods that directly clear the subtle body*. By transforming the karmic imprints in your subtle body, the Innate radiance of pristine awareness shines through and you become a buddha.

The Foundation and the Actual Path

Of the many types of subtle energy yoga revealed in the Tantras, the two most important are Inner Heat Yoga and Clear Light Yoga. Inner Heat Yoga is called “the foundation” because it is the base for all other subtle energy yoga practices. Subtle karmic obscurations are powerfully transformed. Clear Light Yoga is called “the actual path” because it leads directly to enlightenment. The red and white bindus of the navel and forehead cakras are united at the heart

cakra, your mind unites with the Clear Light, and you attain enlightenment. Of all the subtle energy yoga practices, only Clear Light Yoga has the capacity to attain enlightenment, but it is the most subtle and most difficult – all the others prepare you for Clear Light Yoga. Inner Heat Yoga and Clear Light Yoga together comprise a complete system, while the other methods of subtle energy yoga that make up the famous system called The Six Yogas of Nāropa are subsidiary. Two other methods of the Six Yogas of Naropa, Dream Yoga (Svapna Yoga) and Illusory Body Yoga (Maya Deha Yoga), and incorporated in *Great Bliss* into the deity yoga and subtle energy yoga practices. The two auxiliary practices, Transference of Consciousness (Samkranti) and Intermediate State (Antara Bhava Yoga), are not essential to attaining enlightenment. Instructions for these branch practices can be found in other books.

Subtle energy yoga is the practice of generating Great Passion. And yet on its own it lacks the very power of Great Passion actually needed to attain union with the Clear Light. Kṛṣṇācārya cautions that without generating sexual fluids from making love, “There is no possibility of generating the same kind of bliss” as the eternal bliss of Essence through practice with a wisdom consort alone. The profound activity of subtle energy yoga is alchemical - it transforms sexual fluids into subtle energies that purify your subtle body. Working only with a wisdom consort, you can gain only partial near-experiences of what Inner Heat Yoga or Clear Light Yoga can attain. Only sexual yoga can generate enough passion to achieve enlightenment.

You perform your subtle energy yoga practice and daily conduct focusing on appearances as manifestations of your mind, based on the Mind Only philosophy. This liberates you from attachment to self and appearances as you discover yourself as the maker of your world.

The Subtle Body: The Channel Wheel System

The human body, honored as the “vajra body” (vajra deha), is composed of the coarse physical body (sthula deha) and the subtle body (sūkṣma deha). The subtle body is a network of energy that exists in the subtle dimensions and influences your physical body, speech and mind. From the universal, uncreated subtle energy field called the Clear Light (Prabhāsvara) emanates three fields of created light called the Three Lights (Tri Āloka) that sustain as well as obscure your subtle body. Your subtle body, which is indestructible, is also called the Channel Wheel System (Nāḍī Cakra). It is composed of points of indestructible light called bindus, winds (prāṇa), channels (nāḍīs), and wheels (cakras). When the light and wisdom of the bindus flow freely, you are filled with peace and bliss. When these energies are blocked, you experience suffering. All the constituents of the subtle body are forms of consciousness. You can talk to them and they will understand and respond. Love them, and they will drench you with their blessings. Work with them, and they will guide you to inner awakening.

The Clear Light

The Clear Light (Prabhāsvara) is the universal field of cosmic primordial consciousness. It is ultimate reality or Essence (Tattva). It is unchanging, self-illuminating light, composed entirely of indestructible points of light called bindus. It is pure and stainless, perfect wisdom and love.

Ever creative, all appearances arise from it and fall away into it, always remaining part of it. The Clear Light is the vast expanse nonconceptual awareness. It is nondual, uncompounded, unchanging, and everlasting. The *Hevajra Tantra* uses the equivalent terms Wisdom (Jñāna), the Innate (Sahaja), Essence (Tattva), and Intrinsic Self-Existence (Svarūpa/Svabhāva). *To attain union with the Clear Light is to attain the essence of enlightenment.*

The Bindus

The Clear Light is composed of bindus (lit. drop or point). A bindu is a droplet of ultimate reality – pure, pristine awareness. Bindus have a brilliant, iridescent color of red or white, are hot or buoyant, blissful, and possess the nature of ultimate reality. They are shimmering, bright spherical lights, sparkling with infinite potency. Of diamond-like radiance, they are the eternal, indivisible vital Essence of reality, pure pristine consciousness. Beyond conceptuality, bindus are infinite wisdom, love, and creativity. They are also called bodhicitta or Essence (Tattva). Bindus are the seeds of the Great Bliss. They know you and love you, and have the power to utterly transform and empower you. Bindus are pure, creative potential. They are the source from which all life energies arise. The *Mahāmudrā Tilaka Tantra (The Essence of Nondual Awareness Tantra)* describes these bindus as *indestructible*, which demonstrates that Tantric philosophy lies beyond the teachings of the Middle Way, and as *creative*, which demonstrates that its philosophy lies beyond the teachings of Buddha Essence.

The Bi-Gendered Nature of Ultimate Reality

Bindus can be female (red) or male (white). Since bindus are identical to the nature of the Clear Light, ultimate reality is *bi-gendered*. This bi-gendered nature of ultimate reality is *indestructible*. And ultimate reality simultaneously *transcends gender* as it transcends all conceptual limitations. The essential qualities of these female and male aspects of ultimate reality are described in the *Hevajra Tantra*. Of the female essence, Lady (Bhagavatī) Wisdom, it is written: 1) She gives birth to the universe by means of Great Bliss, 2) She reveals the diverse distinctions between relative and absolute reality, 3) She delights with the supreme bliss, 4) She possesses the supreme enlightened qualities, 5) She is very fickle – for, as Kriṣṇācārya points out, “Novices are unable to stabilize her, ” and 6) She is untouchable - so profound that, as Kriṣṇācārya explains, “She is outside the realm of the senses.” Similarly, the male essence, “the Lord” (Bhagavān), possesses the Six Auspicious Qualities (Ṣaḍ Bhagāni): 1) Lordliness, 2) Abundance, 3) Grace, 4) Excellence, 5) Splendor, and 6) Meaningful Activity.

When red and white bindus unite to form a tetrahedron called Evaṃ, the love and erotic bliss released produces all the worlds as pure and perfect emanations. All appearances are a result of their erotic union, and are pure and delightful. When these bindus are separated through karmic stains, appearances arise in a distorted fashion that is experienced as suffering. You possess two principal bindus in your body, called the Root White Bindu and Root Red Bindu. From these, vital energy pours out, forming first your subtle body and then your physical body. The Root Red Bindu resides at the navel cakra (Nirmāṇa Cakra). The Root White Bindu resides at the forehead cakra (Mahāsukha Cakra). These two bindus love and yearn for each other. The red bindus of the

navel produce heat and movement, and are the essence of female sexual fluids (rakta). Women have mainly red bindus. The white bindus of the forehead cakra produce light and buoyancy, and are the essence of male sexual fluids (śukra). Men have mainly white bindus.

The Three Subtle Dimensions of the Mind

Arising from the creative play of the Clear Light and its bindus are subtle winds that flow to form three levels or dimensions of consciousness (Tri Sūkṣma Cittā), in the order that they arise are the eighth through sixth consciousnesses (presented in the Mind Only teachings) respectively. These dimensions of mind are also called: 1) the very subtle mind, the mind of black near-attainment, Black Light (Āloka Upalabdhi – lit. Culmination of Light), produced by the total unity of the red and white bindus, 2) the second subtle mind, the mind of red appearance, Red Light (Āloka Ābhāsa – lit. Increased Light), produced by the union of predominantly red bindus, and 3) the first subtle mind, the mind of white appearance, White Light (Āloka – lit. Light), produced by the union of predominantly white bindus. At these subtle levels of mind, you can directly perceive buddhas and buddhafi elds.

The Winds

The winds (prāṇa – lit. life-breath) are subtle energy currents that flow from the bindus of the Clear Light, down through the Three Subtle Dimensions of the Mind, and support your body and mind with life-sustaining energies. The winds create and move through the channels and cakras, forming and nourishing your Five Elements and Five Senses with subtle energies that support your physical body. Your breathing sustains the strength and movement of the winds. The winds are comprised of: 1) the Three Subtle Winds (Tri Sūkṣma Prāṇa), 2) the Five Root Winds (Pañca Mūla Prāṇa), and 3) the Five Branch Winds (Pañca Kāṇḍa Prāṇa). The winds are by nature pure, but because of karmic obscurations they are stained and produce suffering. Your mind rides on them like a horse and rider, and when your winds are unstable because of karmic blockages, your mind is unstable.

The Three Subtle Winds

The Three Subtle Winds (Tri Sūkṣma Prāṇa) support the three subtle dimensions of the mind that are the eighth through sixth consciousnesses. These are respectively: 1) the very subtle wind mounted by the very subtle mind, 2) the subtle wind mounted by the mind of red appearance, and 3) the subtle wind mounted by the mind of white appearance.

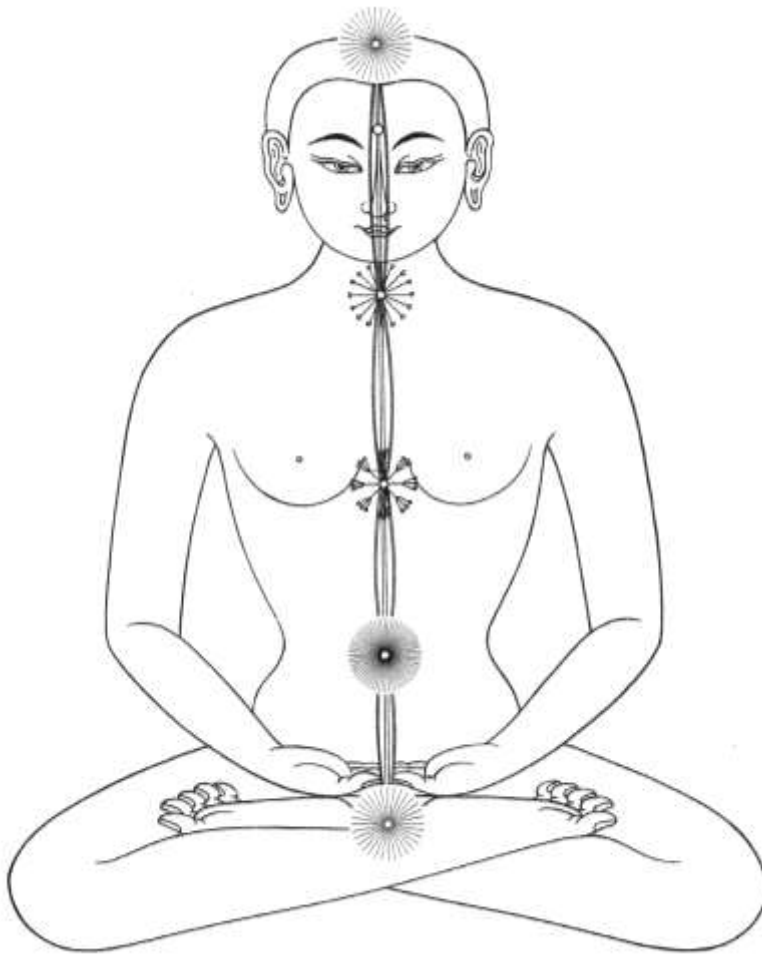
The Five Root Winds

The Five Root Winds (Pañca Mūla Prāṇa) sustain the subtle energies of the Five Elements that compose your physical body. They control various body organs, and most importantly, the Five Elements that form and influence your body and mind: 1) the Life Sustaining Wind (also called

Prāṇa), 2) the Ascending Wind (Udāna), 3) the Pervading Wind (Vyāna), 4) the Equally Abiding Wind (Samāna), and 5) the Downward Voiding Wind (Apāna). The Life Sustaining Wind permeates your body and is centered in the heart cakra - it controls the heart and the space element, and its color is dark blue. The Ascending Wind is located at the throat cakra – it controls the throat and the wind element, and its color is green. The Equally Abiding Wind is located at the navel cakra - it controls the stomach and the processes of digestion and nourishment, and the fire element, and its color is red. The Pervading Wind is located at the joints - it gives the power of stretching and contracting, controls the water element, and its color is white. The Downward Voiding Wind is located at the anus and the genitals - it controls your lower body below the navel and the earth element, and its color is yellow.

The Five Branch Winds

The Five Branch Winds (Pañca Kāṇḍa Prāṇa) support the Five Senses. These subtle winds are connected to and branch off from the Life Supporting Wind: 1) Serpent (Nāga), the eyes, red in color, 2) Turtle (Kūrma), the ears, blue in color, 3) Lizard (Kṛikara), the nose, yellow in color, 4) Gift of the Gods (Devadatta), the tongue, white in color, and 5) Victorious in Wealth (Dhanamjaya), the skin, green in color.



The Channels

The channels (nāḍīs) are energy currents that run through your subtle body. The *Hevajra Tantra* praises them as “the bearers of the

enlightened consciousness.” The flow begins from the winds, which are brought in through the breath, pass into the main channels, and move outwards, supporting your subtle body, your mind and your physical body with vitality. Altogether, there are 72,000 channels in the body. The channels are red or white in color (except the blue central channel), soft and flexible, and carry red and white bindus, the winds, and female and male sexual fluids. There are three main channels, the central channel and the two side channels, which run through the cakras. For an

enlightened being, the subtle energies flow from the two side channels into the central channel, and then flow directly out to the smaller channels. For those whose minds are obscured with dualistic thought, however, the winds flow from the two side channels throughout the body without entering the central channel – this misdirected flow creates dualistic experiences.

Central Channel (Avadhūtī, lit. Cast Off) - It is dark blue, and holds nonconceptual and nondualistic awareness. It is “cast off” in the sense of being purified, having cast off all impure elements and existing without attachments. It carries the essence of united female and male sexual fluids and energies. In the Mind Only philosophy, it represents the Perfected Nature of the mind.

The central channel is located in the center of your body, and does not pass up your spine. It runs from the crown cakra at the top of the head (Uṣṇīṣa Cakra) to the Secret Cakra at the perineum. It is the thickness of a pencil or a thick straw of wheat, about ¼ inch in width. It is vast, beyond the universe, and contains all phenomena. It is primordial heart space. When the winds enter the central channel, your heart opens and you love infinitely.

Left Channel (Lalanā, lit. Caressing Woman) - It is white, and holds the male, enlightened activity, the lunar principle, the essence of semen (śukra) and compassionate action. It carries the karmically stained energies of believing in yourself as a separate subject. In the Mind Only philosophy, it represents the Dependent Nature of the mind.

Right Channel (Rasanā, lit. Tongue) - It is red, and holds the female, enlightened wisdom, the solar principle, the essence of menstrual blood and ova (rakta), and wisdom. It carries the karmically stained energies of believing in appearances as separate objects. In the Mind Only philosophy, it represents the Imaginary Nature of the mind.

The left and right channels start four fingerwidths below the navel where they merge into the central channel. They run parallel to the central channel, travelling up to the head to just below the inside top of the skull, curve at a ninety-degree angle in the head, and come out each nostril. They are narrower than the central channel, as thin as a thin straw of wheat. Winds that run through the left and right channels without passing into the central channel before spreading through the body create suffering, while winds that pass into the central channel create bliss.

The Cakras

The cakras (lit. wheels) are swirling pools of subtle energy centers, formed as the winds pass through the three main channels into them. The cakras are alive, transparent and glowing, floating and moving. They pulse with primal female and male energies, and have a fluid presence. They love you, and they love each other. The cakras support your subtle body and your physical body, transporting the winds from the very subtle dimensions into your body. Cakras are also formed and sustained by the bindus, and the cakras are either mostly red or white depending upon which bindus predominate. Each cakra has a certain number of subsidiary channels or “petals” that sustain your physical body as vital energy pours out of them. The awakening of each major cakra corresponds to the awakening of a dimension of a buddha.

Major Cakras

Forehead Cakra (Mahāsukha Cakra, lit. Wheel of Great Bliss) - It resides in the center of the head at the level of the forehead, horizontal to the point between the eyebrows. This cakra governs the physical body, the state of orgasmic bliss, the intentions aggregate, and the wind element. It is the principle source for generating white bindus and male sexual fluids in the body. It is white and has thirty-two subsidiary channels. Its presiding buddhas are Amoghasiddhi and Green Tārā. Its purification leads to the Mahāsukhakāya, the dimension of Great Bliss that is the union of all worldly and ultimate bliss.

Throat Cakra (Saṃbhoga Cakra, lit. Wheel of Sexual Enjoyment) - It resides at the throat. This cakra governs speech, the state of dreaming sleep, the perceptions aggregate, and the fire element. It is red and has sixteen subsidiary channels. Its presiding buddhas are Amitābha and Pāṇḍarā. Its purification leads to the saṃbhogakāya, the subtle dimension of sexual enjoyment.

Heart Cakra (Dharma Cakra, lit. Wheel of Truth). It resides at the heart of your body, the point in the center of your chest. This cakra governs the mind, the state of dreamless sleep, the consciousness aggregate, and the water element. It is white and has eight subsidiary channels. Its presiding buddhas are Akṣobhya and Māmakī. Its purification leads to the dharmakāya, the dimension of ultimate reality that is nirvāṇa.

Navel Cakra (Nirmāṇa Cakra, lit. Wheel of Emanation) - It resides at the navel. This cakra governs the mind, the state of waking, the form aggregate, and the earth element. It is the principle source for generating the red bindus and female sexual fluids. It is red and has sixty-four subsidiary channels. Its presiding buddhas are Vairocana and Locanā. Its purification leads to the nirmāṇakāya, the physical emanation of a buddha.

The Four Seals

Each major cakra contains a seed syllable (bīja akṣara), the size of a mustard seed, which lies within the central channel at the center of each cakra. These seed syllables, called the Four Seals (Catur Mudrā), regulate your ability to perceive beyond the ordinary world of the senses into the Clear Light of ultimate reality:

ham - Resides in the forehead cakra. It is white, and is the seal of the wind element.

om – Resides in the throat cakra. It is red, and is the seal of the fire element.

hūm – Resides in the heart cakra. It is white, and is the seal of the water element.

āḥ - Resides in the navel cakra. It is red, and is the seal of the earth element.

Lesser Cakras

There are also several lesser but important additional cakras:

Crown Cakra (Uṣṇīṣa Cakra, lit. Crown Protuberance Cakra) - It is located in between the skull and the skin on top of the head, and is also known as the Brahmā Aperture (Brahmārandra). It is white and has four subsidiary channels. The upper end of the central channel extends partially

into the Uṣṇīṣa Cakra. Its seed syllable is a white *om*. It is the ideal passageway for your consciousness to pass through at death, leading to auspicious rebirth.

Secret Cakra (Guhya Cakra) – Also called the Secret Place. It is located at the perineum, and includes the area of the base of the spine and the genitals. It is red and has thirty-two subsidiary channels. Its seed syllable is a red *hā*. It governs the state of dreaming (as it does along with the throat cakra), the sensations aggregate, and the space element. For Buddhist subtle energy yoga systems that use five cakras (most use four), its activation achieves the dimension of ultimate reality, the Svabhāvikakāya (lit. Dimension of Self-Existent Being), which unites all the dimensions. Its presiding buddhas are Ratnasambhava, and Dhātviśvarī.

Vajra Cakra (Vajra Cakra) – The tip of the penis. It is white and has eight subsidiary channels. Its seed syllable is a white *om*. It governs the state of orgasmic bliss in a man.

Jewel Cakra (Maṇi Cakra) – The cervix. It is red and has eight subsidiary channels. Its seed syllable is a red *āḥ*. It governs the state of orgasmic bliss in a woman.

The point four fingerwidths below the navel – This point, which does not have a name, is where the three main channels converge. It is used to draw in the winds and generate inner heat.

Minor Cakras

Many smaller cakras are located throughout your body, particularly at the joints. They each have four subsidiary channels. The cakras in the arms and hands are white, and the cakras in the legs and feet are red.

The Five Elements

Your physical body is composed of the Five Elements: 1) earth, 2) water, 3) fire, 4) wind, and 5) space. These coarse elements that comprise your physical body are sustained by the Five Root Winds. The Five Elements physically support the fifth through first consciousnesses of the Five Senses in the Mind Only philosophy.

How the Subtle Body Becomes Obscured

The Clear Light is the primal cause of saṃsāra. It generates the subtle winds that carry the very subtle mind, the subtle mind, and the coarse mind that become karmically stained through ignorance. The inability to perceive the Clear Light directly is suffering. You are the buddha that created yourself, and put yourself in bondage - the *Hevajra Tantra* declares unambiguously, “You are your own procreator.” Suffering and liberation are the inconceivable play of the buddhas, and you are painfully enmeshed in your own inconceivable play.

The red and white bindus, which are pure and perfect and produce pure and endless flows of light and energy, create everything as Great Bliss. All beings possess these essences. At the same time, ignorance is created by the bindus as well. This primal ignorance, your mistaken belief in self and other, so subtle you are not even aware of it, is the foundation of ignorance on the subtle energy level.

White bindus disturbed by karmically stained winds create your ego self, and red bindus disturbed by karmically stained winds create appearances that you incorrectly perceive as objects separate from yourself. As your dualistic thoughts and afflictive emotions obscure your subtle body, you lose your own inner radiance. As a result, you long for people, objects and experiences outside of you that appear more radiant than you are - but your attachment to them only entangles you deeper in saṃsāra.

The karmic obscuration of the bindus is the root cause of suffering. Their brilliant power is obscured by several factors at each level of your being:

1. The bindus. The red and white bindus become separated (abheda) in your body, resulting in their unstable movement through the channels, which results in energetic imbalances. You can also lose bindus; they are released from the body through the orifices and pores of your skin, and through over-indulgent ejaculation in sexual intercourse.
2. The Three Subtle Dimensions of the Mind. These subtle levels of mind become stained (āsava) and pervade all your experiences. Every time you think, speak or act based on dualistic concepts or get wrapped up in negative emotions, you create or strengthen a stain in your subtle body that disrupts the proper flow of energy. These stains can lodge throughout your subtle body. They progressively weaken you, and you become more and more unhappy with life. At certain times, the stains are released on their own, and arise as uncomfortable karmic experiences. These stains are marked by the qualities of dark stagnancy (tamasic, aversion), craving passionate activity (rajasic, compulsive desire), and peacefulness stained by dualistic awareness (sattvic, ignorance).
3. The Winds. Though pure and composed of primordial consciousness, the winds become karmically stained, and produce your saṃsāric experiences. Stains force the separation of the winds in the side channels away from the central channel, breaking your experiences into subject and object, and produce knots in the channels, creating internal discomfort. In addition, every ten years in a person's life the potency of one of the ten winds in the body is lost, and you become weaker with age.
4. The Channels. Knots (granthis) are karmically formed twists in the channels that restrict the flow of the subtle winds through your body. The knots that form at the points where the channels and cakras intersect are the most critical. The channels become knotted and undernourished, and the winds passing through the left and right channels directly separate out into the body instead of first meeting in the central channel. Your mind is obscured and you perceive appearances dualistically. The left and right channels love and sadly long for each other with desire.
5. The Cakras. Knots in the channels form in the cakras, weakening you significantly. When the Four Seals in the cakras are stained, they limit the range of your perception to the Five Elements, preventing you from directly perceiving the all-embracing Clear Light. In addition, the unfulfilled longing of the cakras for union with each other results in imbalances in your body and mind: the forehead and the throat cakras love each other, and the heart and navel cakras also love each other and languish in sorrow.
6. The Five Elements. Karmic stains over the Five Elements that comprise your physical body prevent you from directly perceiving the Clear Light, and keep you under the spell of thinking that the material world is all there is. The Five Elements become particularly obscured through lustful sexual intercourse, which produces coarse karmic stains, as well as by the Four Seals.
7. The Five Aggregates. These are obscured by stains on the Four Seals, and deepen your attachment to belief in a separate self.

8. The Five Senses. The senses, though intrinsically pure, become karmically obscured by negative actions of the physical body, preventing you from directly perceiving subtle energies, higher dimensions, and the Clear Light.

9. The Four States. The four states of consciousness are: 1) ordinary, 2) dreaming sleep, 3) dreamless sleep, and 4) sexual union (orgasm). Each of these is obscured by your false belief in a separate self, and the Four States in turn obscure your ability to perceive the Clear Light.

Subtle Energy Yoga and the Innate

Subtle energy yoga is founded on the key principles of reality as the Innate, most importantly the quality of Great Passion:

1. Pure Appearance (Evaṃ) - Pure Appearance is the subtle body that is real, pure, and erotic.
2. Great Passion (Mahārāga) - The fire of inner heat is Great Passion. Practice activates the Great Passion of the female and male essences that are separated in the navel and forehead cakras. Kambala (c. 800s) notes that the true “fire” of transformation is in the central channel, in which all your karma is released. You put all your subtle obscurations into the fire, and they burn away.
3. Essence (Tattva) - The bindus, used in practice, and the Clear Light that is attained, is Essence.
4. Great Bliss (Mahāsukha) - Great Bliss is the union of worldly and ultimate bliss attained in the Four Blissesses of subtle energy yoga.

Tantric Transformation

Subtle energy yoga operates on the four principles of Tantric transformation, most importantly the principle of alchemy:

1. Empowerment (Ādhiṣṭhāna) - Through Inner Heat Yoga, inner heat is not just an inert phenomena that you generate but a goddess, named Caṇḍālī (Fiery Woman), who bestows empowerment. The *Hevajra Tantra* observes, “The enlightened ones conceive her as Wisdom personified.”
2. Alchemy (Rasāyāna) - When practicing subtle energy yoga with a physical consort, sexual fluids are alchemically transformed into subtle energies. As Kṛiṣṇācārya instructs, you “Pervade the sexual fluids through every part of the body by way of the channels.” The sexual fluids, generated from the forehead cakra, are increased in lovemaking to a high degree, and then alchemically transformed into blissful subtle energy throughout the body to purify it. In addition, in sexual union the female and male organs (penis and cervix) touch, producing not only a physical connection but a subtle energy connection as well. At the point of their union, the red female and white male essences unite, and the bliss from this union is drawn up into the subtle body to attain higher states of bliss and wisdom. Strong flows of sexual energy clear stains and karmic knots in the subtle body, most importantly in the heart cakra, push the winds into union in the central channel, and a partial nondual awareness is realized. When subtle energy yoga is practiced without a physical consort, however, alchemy cannot be achieved.
3. Union (Yoga) - Clear Light Yoga attains union with ultimate reality. The *āḥ* (I) seed syllable from the white bindu at the forehead and the *haṃ* (Am) seed syllable at the navel unite to create “I Am,” the Self, the indestructible reality of eternal bliss.

4. Sympathetic Vibration (Niṣyanda) - The erotic bliss of the practitioners sympathically vibrates with the erotic bliss of the female and male bindus, channels, and cakras in your subtle body to attain the Great Bliss.

Path

“Wisdom is fierce when destroying afflictions.”
- Kṛiṣṇācārya, *The Yoga of the Jewel Garland*

Inner Heat Yoga and Clear Light Yoga

Inner Heat Yoga establishes the foundation for practice, purifying your subtle body. Clear Light Yoga achieves actual union with the Clear Light, which is enlightenment. It must be kept in mind that *true Inner Heat Yoga and Clear Light Yoga cannot be practiced except with a physical consort*. Without a physical consort, these are approximate practices that yield approximate results.

Levels of Attainment

Inner Heat Yoga

Signs of success for Inner Heat Yoga are the ability to generate heat and bliss, an awareness that your subtle karmic obscurations are clearing, and a light sense of nondual awareness. Once you can successfully bring the Five Root Winds strongly into the central channel in practice, the levels of realization in Inner Heat Yoga are called the Three Degrees (Tri Uṣma):

1. Lesser Heat

Lesser Heat (Upa Uṣma) is a mild degree of heat (uṣma) and bliss (ānanda). The heat and bliss is concentrated at the central point of focus in the central channel.

2. Heat

Heat (Uṣma) is a middling degree of heat and bliss. Heat and bliss gently pervade your entire body.

3. Great Heat

Great Heat (Mahā Uṣma) is a strong degree of heat and bliss. Heat and bliss thoroughly pervade your entire body, and your skin becomes hot to the touch.

Clear Light Yoga

Signs of success in Clear Light Yoga are that you have blissful experiences of subtle dimensions of reality that come ever closer to the Clear Light:

1. Path Clear Light

Your initial experiences are called Path Clear Light (Prabhāsvara Marga) because you are lighting small but growing experiences of the Clear Light within you along your path. In post meditation you are not able to maintain an experience of the Clear Light. Partial realization in Clear Light Yoga is also called Near Attainment (Upa Siddhi).

2. Mother and Son Clear Light

After years of practice, the experience becomes infinitely more profound. In Mother and Son Clear Light (Jananī Putra Prabhāsvara), you receive the embrace of the Clear Light that is union, and you are permanently transformed. It is so strong that you may lose consciousness, your mind completely absorbed in the Clear Light. As you return to the world of appearances, you retain direct perception of luminosity. You most likely still have residual karma that you are clearing, but you will definitely gain complete enlightenment by the end of your life. Also called Union with Learning (Śaikṣa Yoga), you eventually attain the state of Union with No More Learning (Aśaikṣa Yoga), or enlightenment.

Benefits

The fire of subtle energy yoga produces heat and bliss, burns away emotional and mental obscurations, and transforms the Five Root Winds, the Five Aggregates, the Five Elements, and the Five Senses. You attain a deeper and more profound meditative experience. You discover that bliss, which you thought you could only find outside yourself, you can find within, and this reduces your grasping at appearances. Your body becomes youthful, luminous, and free of illness. A woman becomes more orgasmic, intensifying bliss for herself and her lover. A man is able to hold his semen during lovemaking, giving more bliss to his lover; he gains the ability to have orgasms without ejaculating, and can consciously choose when to ejaculate. You gain extraordinary magical powers, such as the ability to fly in the air.

Common Problems

The risks of subtle energy yoga are that you may do it too forcefully or with a distracted mind, which leads to subtle energy imbalances called wind disease, or too lightly and too intermittently, and you will not gain from it. You can also become attached to the experiences of heat and bliss, and lose sight of your goal. At first, subtle energy yoga may bring up dark, repressed emotions that are uncomfortable. Then, it may arouse you sexually very intensely. As you continue, you will experience more refined and blissful energies. Whatever arises,

attachment to any experience at all will impede your progress. Pride in success is a great danger, and the psychic powers that may develop could be used to harm others. For subtle energy yoga to be effective, it must be united with a correct understanding of reality and love and compassion for all beings, or you will gain merely momentary blissful experiences with no transformation.



Techniques

“Inner Heat is performed, which binds the subtle winds, igniting the inner heat which blazes within the navel cakra.

The practitioner who brings these winds into the empty central channel mixes together the Three Worlds. In that very instant, conceptions and perceptions of self and other, and similarly of earth, water, wind, fire, and space, are all not conceived.

You experience bliss.”

- Kambala, *The Practice for Generating Glorious Cakrasamvara*

Subtle energy yoga consists of preparatory practices and main practices. Haṭha yoga, which is a shared Hindu and Buddhist tradition, consists of preparatory poses and breathing exercises that purify and prepare you. The main methods of subtle energy yoga each have the capacity to transform your subtle body greatly. In this chapter they are presented as being performed with a visualized consort only, in preparation for the practices in Chapter 7: Sexual Yoga. They are divided into beginning, intermediate, and advanced practices.

The Sādhana of Secret Vajravilāsinī does not directly teach any techniques for the stage of subtle energy yoga. However, since the practitioner is exhorted to practice all of the Four Yogas in verse 127, it is explicit that Śabara expects his students to incorporate subtle energy yoga into the sādhana. This arrangement gives students the ability to add in the subtle energy yoga practices according to their level of development. Most likely, the main practice was Inner Heat Yoga (Caṇḍālī Yoga Jñānamudrā) for

beginners, and more advanced practices could be added as students progressed. However, Śabara does teach one technique, the Swing Recitation (Dolā Japa Jñānamudrā), creating a mantra “ring of fire” between you and your consort, which is a subtle energy yoga method, but he teaches it as

a nondual yoga. Swing Recitation is also presented in this chapter for students to learn. This chapter also presents eight other main practices. The most important of all the practices are Inner Heat Yoga and Clear Light Yoga; the others are enjoyable and profound and prepare you for specific practices in sexual yoga, but it is not necessary to attain proficiency in them.

Preparatory Practices

Haṭha yoga (lit. forceful union) comprises yogic methods for purifying your physical and subtle bodies as preparatory practices (ādi yoga). These include breathing techniques (prāṇāyāma) and poses (āsana). These exercises enliven and strengthen your physical and subtle body, and give you greater capacity to charge your body with subtle sexual energies. The main practices should be preceded by this preliminary step of preparing your physical and subtle body for practice. These are not simply stretching and breathing exercises, but true “yogas” that sanctify your body and mind; they are performed in a state of meditative absorption and with great devotion. This of set exercises was selected specifically to support the practices of sexual yoga. The most important of the preparatory practices is Vase Breath (Kumbhaka), the breath used to perform the main practices. It is also the first step in Inner Heat Yoga, and is presented below.

Main Practices

Beginning Practices

1. Inner Heat Yoga

Inner Heat Yoga (Caṇḍālī Yoga Jñānamudrā – lit. Fiery Woman Yoga with Wisdom Consort) is the foundation of subtle energy yoga. It is presented in the *Hevajra Tantra*, and is taught by Saraha. By pulling the Five Root Winds into the central channel at the point below the navel cakra, and generating subtle heat, it purifies your physical and subtle body, releases tremendous heat and orgasmic bliss, and burns away subtle karmic obscurations. Without proficiency in Inner Heat Yoga, the more advanced practices of subtle energy yoga are less effective. Inner Heat includes four steps: 1) Vase Breath (Kumbhaka), the subtle breath winds and the Five Root Winds enter partially into the central channel at the point below the navel, 2) Blazing (Jvala), flames from the point below the navel burn upwards and purify the seed syllables of the Four Seals at the cakras that prevent you from perceiving beyond the Five Elements, 3) Vajra Recitation (Varja Japa), the Five Root Winds (Pañca Mūla Prāṇa) enter strongly into the central channel, triggering the flame in the central channel to become much hotter, and 4) Dripping (Sravate Śaṣī), a stream of white bindus from the forehead cakra pours down into the four cakras and permeates you with bliss.

Benefits of the inner Four Blissess are that it purifies your subtle body of subtle karmic obscurations and fills you with bliss for long periods of time, preparing you for the oceanic bliss of the Clear Light. By holding your breath as part of the Vase Breath, the winds that you concentrated and purified in the central channel are dispersed throughout the body where they continue to transform you, bringing you tremendous erotic bliss. Only by practicing Inner Heat

Yoga with a physical consort is it possible to attain the inner Four Blissess, which is also a precondition for Clear Light Yoga. The inner Four Blissess are subtle meditative states (dhyāna) that you cultivate over time, not momentary ecstatic bursts like a normal orgasm. By burning and restoring the Four Seals, you perceive beyond the Five Elements alone to perceive the Clear Light and the Five Elements simultaneously. This practice gives both men and women the ability to control their sexual fluids without ejaculating, essential for sexual yoga.

Vase Breath

The first step in Inner Heat Yoga is to pull the Five Root Winds into the central channel. This may be achieved for beginners through Vase Breath (Kumbhaka), while more advanced practitioners may develop the ability to draw the Five Root Winds in through visualization alone. Through Vase Breath (Kumbhaka), in a four step process, 1) the winds from the inhalation breath *enter* into the side channels and pass down to the navel cakra, 2) the winds *fill* the two side channels and then fill the central channel, 3) the Five Root Winds from all the channels in your body are pulled into a red *āḥ* stroke seed syllable visualized below the navel cakra from the upper and lower parts of your body (the upper winds are pulled in through the throat lock and the lower winds are pulled in through tightening the pelvic floor and visualizing them passing up through the two lower doors, the genitals and anus), and *retain* them through holding the breath, and 4) the Five Root Winds partially *dissolve* into the *āḥ* stroke. Tremendous subtle energy is concentrated in the central channel, and the Five Root Winds are purified of their karmic stains.

Blazing

In the second step, Blazing (Jvala), you meditate on the tip of the red *āḥ* stroke seed syllable, the potency of the female essence, at the point four fingerwidths below the navel, from which a flame arises. Continually regulating your breath through the Vase Breath, a red flame travels up the central channel, burning the *āḥ* seed syllable at the navel cakra, liberating you from the obscurations of the earth element and the form aggregate. It continues up to the heart cakra, burning the *hūṃ* seed syllable at the heart cakra, liberating you from the obscurations of the water element and the consciousness aggregate. It goes up to the throat cakra, burning the *om* seed syllable at the throat cakra, liberating you from the obscurations of the fire element and the perceptions aggregate. The flame reaches the male, white *ham* syllable at the forehead cakra. The *ham* seed syllable at the forehead cakra melts, liberating you from the obscurations of the wind element and the intentions aggregate. Through this practice, the winds in the Lalanā and Rasanā remain firmly in the central channel, supporting the awakening of enlightened awareness.

Vajra Recitation

In the third step, Vajra Recitation (Vajra Japa), you draw the Five Root Winds (Pañca Mūla Prāṇa) strongly into the navel cakra, which gets the fire blazing even hotter. You hold the winds in the central channel at the *āḥ* stroke by reciting *silently* the seed mantra of the deity many times. A sign that the Five Root Winds are ready to pass into the central channel is that you can

breathe freely and equally through both nostrils. A sign that the Five Root Winds have strongly entered the central channel is that your breath slows and stops. When the Five Root Winds are brought strongly into the point below the navel, the Five Signs may appear. For this step to be actually fully successful, it must be performed in sexual union with a physical consort.

Dripping

The fourth and final step, Dripping (Sravate Śaśī – lit. The Moon Flows), induces the Four Bliss (Catur Ānanda) of subtle energy yoga. The *Vajra Mālā Tantra (The Adamantine Rosary Tantra)* teaches these inner Four Bliss, increasing states of bliss that are far more powerful than ordinary orgasmic bliss, and even more enjoyable as you train yourself to extend their bliss over long periods of time. The Four Bliss begin from the forehead cakra as the *ham* syllable melts (but does not burn). White bindus fall slowly like a stream of honey, restoring the *ham* syllable, from which pure white light streams out, allowing you to perceive all formations of the wind element and your intentions aggregate as pure, and the subtle experience of Bliss (Ānanda) is attained. They then fall until they reach the throat cakra, restoring the *om* seed syllable, from which pure red light streams out, allowing you to perceive all formations of the fire element and your perceptions aggregate as pure, and an even stronger experience, Supreme Bliss (Paramānanda), is attained. They continue to fall down to the heart cakra, restoring the *hūm* seed syllable, from which pure white light streams out, allowing you to perceive all formations of the water element and your consciousness aggregate as pure, and the Bliss of Cessation (Viramānanda) is attained. Finally, they fall down to the navel cakra, restoring the *āh* seed syllable, from which pure red light streams out, allowing you to perceive all formations of the earth element and your form aggregate as pure, and the totality of subtle bliss, Innate Bliss (Sahajānanda) is attained. Although this last bliss is called “Innate Bliss,” without a physical consort it is still a near-experience of the bliss of true reality. The Four Bliss are then performed in reverse order, going from the navel cakra back up to the forehead cakra. The final step is to emanate all your heat and bliss out from your physical body across the universe, engulfing all in flames that burn obscurations and bring all beings to enlightenment.

2. Swing Recitation

The Swing Recitation (Dolā Japa Jñānamudrā), the method of Śabara, is the visualization of a deity’s mantra moving in a circle many times between yourself and your visualized lover as you are united in lovemaking. The mantra, with the seed syllables formed into a string or “garland,” moves up the practitioner’s central channel (if you are a man) and down the central channel (if you are a woman), and creates a “circle of fire” in which heat and bliss are created, clearing subtle obscurations and leading to the Fusion of Identities (Ātma Melaka) between yourselves. You visualize the seed mantra of the deity passing through from your central channel up through your nose into your consort’s nose and down their central channel, down into their genitals and returning into your own genitals. While the Swing Recitation does not have the capacity to bring you to the Clear Light, it purifies subtle obscurations in the subtle body strongly, and creates a deep bond between you.

3. Crest Jewel of the Bindu

In Crest Jewel of the Bindu (Bindu Cūḍāmaṇir Jñānamudrā), the method of Sahajāvalokana, the practitioner generates an image of the deity as a bindu from a seed syllable at the navel - a female practitioner generates a female deity as a red bindu, and a male practitioner a male deity as a white bindu. The practitioner visualizes the wisdom consort doing the same. The practitioner then moves the deity-bindu up and down the central channel, purifying the channel, finally resting it at the tip of his or her Vajra Cakra (tip of the penis) or Maṇi Cakra (cervix), and the visualized consort mirrors the same actions. The practitioner and the visualized consort unite sexually, uniting the two deities sexually at the genitals in lovemaking as well. The practitioner generates Great Passion for enlightenment while maintaining the visualization of the deities in sexual union at the genitals. This purifies subtle obscurations and creates bliss.

4. Meditation on the Five Senses

Meditation on the Five Senses (Pañca Indriya Samādhi Jñānamudrā) is to concentrate on your Five Senses as the five female buddhās as you make love with your visualized consort. Though beings are bound by passion for the senses, it is through enlightened passion for the senses that beings are released. As Kṛiṣṇācārya's warmly shares, "All of these families originate from the family of supreme bliss." You attain liberation from attachment to the Five Senses, and gain worldly magical powers.

5. Meditation on Your Own Body as Bliss

In this method of Maitrīgupta, Meditation on Your Own Body as Bliss (Mahāsukha Deha Jñānamudrā), after prolonged visualized lovemaking in a state of bliss, with you and your wisdom consort either remaining sexually joined or separated, you meditate in stillness and silence in a high state of bliss until nondual awareness spontaneously emerges. You perceive all forms and sounds as having the nature of bliss. Your subtle obscurations to enlightened awareness are cleared.

6. Melting into a Moon Disk

Melting into a Moon Disk (Candra Anubheda Jñānamudrā), the method of Vitapāda (c. 800s), prepares you for Clear Light Yoga. In sexual embrace as the deity with your visualized lover, you imagine in front of you three vertical seed syllables radiating light: a white *om*, a red *āḥ*, and a blue *hūṃ*. In intervals between these three are two red *ho* seed syllables. As you make love, the practitioner visualizes these seed syllables entering his or her mouth, passing down to his vajra/her yoni, and into the yoni/vajra of the wisdom consort. In the yoni, these five seed syllables melt into blazing red light. You and your visualized consort melt into a horizontal white Moon disk of white seminal fluid. Visualizing yourself once again as the deity in union with the consort, you return to this world in the form of the deity in sexual embrace. You recite the

mantra: *oṃ dharmadhātu svabhavātmāko 'ham* “*oṃ* I am the intrinsic nature of the Dharmadhātu.”

Intermediate Practices

The intermediate practices require some degree of proficiency in Inner Heat Yoga.

7. Great Worship

In the method of Great Worship (Mahāpūjā Jñānamudrā), you visualize yourself with your wisdom consort with seed syllables placed in your sexual organs as you make love. Milarepa provides guidance: “In the woman’s secret wisdom lotus lies the red bīja *vaṃ*. The male gem is likened to a blue bīja *hūṃ*; and, when combined with *pad*, fixes the bindu well. When wisdom and method together join, the bliss of two-in-one is best.” When the practitioner is a man, he visualizes a blue seed syllable *hūṃ* in his vajra, and visualizes in his wisdom consort the corresponding female seed syllable. When the practitioner is a woman, she visualizes a red seed syllable *vaṃ* in her yoni, and visualizes in her wisdom consort the corresponding male seed syllable. Joining together in lovemaking, you envision a white seed syllable *pad* emanating from the union of the two. As you make love, you continue to focus on these seed syllables, and this focus “fixes the bindu well,” meaning that it prevents the man from ejaculating and allows for sustained pleasure to rise. The *pad* seed syllable then travels up to your navel. The *pad* seed syllable ignites the inner heat at the point below the navel cakra, which triggers the complete cycle of Inner Heat Yoga. The power of these seed syllables purifies the subtle body with bliss.

8. Meditation at the Tip

Meditation at the Tip (Dhyāna Bindu Jñānamudrā) is a highly celebrated practice by many masters, including Lakṣmīkarā in her text *The Elucidation of the Meaning of the Five Stages*. This is considered a more advanced form of Inner Heat Yoga. As the deity in sexual union with the wisdom consort, at the Vajra Cakra (the tip of the penis), you visualize a blue *phaṭ* blocks the opening to prevent the male from ejaculation. You visualize a red flame from your navel cakra rising up the central channel and melting the white bindus in the forehead cakra. You attain the Four Bliss of subtle energy yoga, which are slightly redefined for this practice. As the white bindus descend they are:

1. Bliss (Ānanda) - The bliss of the bindus falling from the forehead cakra to the throat cakra. You attain the loss of the coarse sense of self and other.
2. Supreme Bliss (Paramānanda) – The bliss of the bindus falling from the throat cakra to the heart cakra. You attain the loss of self.
3. Bliss of Cessation (Viramānanda) – The bliss of the bindus falling from the heart cakra to the navel cakra. You attain the loss of other.
4. Innate Bliss (Sahajānanda) - The bliss of the bindus falling from the navel cakra to the tip of the sexual organ. With focus, discriminating wisdom of the perfection of all appearances arises.

It is recommended to use strong concentration to hold the bindus at the tip of the genitals to prevent ejaculation in a man, while this practice makes a woman more orgasmic as well. When the bliss becomes too intense for a man and feels he is about to ejaculate, or when a woman is ready to complete the session, he or she brings the white bindus back up the central channel and experiences the Four Blisses again slowly in ascending order. You then spread the bliss throughout your whole body. This exercise gives ejaculation control to men and makes women more orgasmic, preparing you for long sessions of sexual yoga. Meditation at the Tip is used to stabilize the view of Mahāmudrā in the fourth consecration.

9. Reverse Urethral Suction

Vīravajra (c. 800s) instructs on Reverse Urethral Suction (Vajrolī Mudrā Jñānamudrā – lit. Reverse Vajra Seal with Wisdom Consort) - after the practitioner ejaculates, you imagine that your sexual fluids and your wisdom consort's fluids are mixed together. You then meditate on visualizing the upward flow of the subtle energies of the mixed female and male fluids back and up into your central channel. You recite the Eightfold Mantra (Mantra Aṣṭavidham) to drive the subtle energies up into the central channel: *hā hā he he ho ho hūṃ hūṃ*. This method purifies your subtle body and prepares you for alchemically transforming sexual fluids into subtle energies with a physical consort.

Advanced Practices

The advanced practice requires a strong degree of proficiency in Inner Heat Yoga.

10. Clear Light Yoga

Clear Light Yoga (Prabhāsvara Yoga Jñānamudrā) is the highest and most important of all subtle energy yogas, because it leads you most directly into the field of ultimate reality, which results in enlightenment. It originates from the *Guhyasamāja Tantra*, and was a major practice of many Indian masters. Because of its great subtlety, you begin your sessions with Inner Heat Yoga to prepare your subtle body for inner awakening. Attaining the Clear Light produces a permanent shift of nondual awareness in your consciousness. If after returning from the Clear Light you are not completely purified of all your karmic stains, you have not yet attained complete enlightenment. Your subtle body in this state of partial transformation is called an illusory body, which you continue to purify through Clear Light Yoga until you attain complete perfection.

Dissolving Appearances

Clear Light Yoga is practiced at the heart cakra. In the method taught by Vyādhali (c. 1000s), you visualize a sphere of white light in the center of your heart cakra, which is the union of your mind and the primordial mind of the Clear Light. Just outside and surrounding the sphere is a tetrahedron that emits five-colored light throughout the Three Worlds. The five-colored light

returns and dissolves all appearances of the Three Worlds into yourself. You dissolve your wisdom consort into yourself. You dissolve your physical body and your subtle body into the sphere of white light in the heart cakra.

Drawing the Five Root Winds into the Heart Cakra

You draw the Five Root Winds into the central channel at the heart cakra. Holding your awareness with a strong intention to attain the Clear Light, you may see what are called the Five Signs (Pañca Lakṣaṇa). These visions are indications that the Five Root Winds that support the elements that sustain you physically are passing and dissolving into your central channel at the heart cakra. These winds, which are karmically stained, are purified in the central channel. They dissolve in succession as your mind is released from its attachment to the sense world and transcends it: 1) The Downward Voiding Wind that carries the earth element, which creates an appearance that looks like a mirage, 2) The Life Sustaining Wind that carries the water element, which creates an appearance that looks like smoke, 3) The Upward Wind that carries the fire element, which creates an appearance that looks like fire flies, 4) The Equally Abiding Wind that carries the wind element, which creates an appearance that looks like the flame of an oil lamp, and 5) The Pervading Wind that carries the space element, which is a field of white radiance like Moonlight. The Five Signs are approximate descriptions, and you may get foggy vision or you may see flashes of light. These are ideally very strong experiences attained in a deep state of meditative absorption, but they are so subtle that even masters such as Tsongkapa say you may not actually perceive them. At their most intense, however, these dissolutions are identical in power to those experienced by a dying person who is leaving their body, and in meditation an advanced practitioner may experience them in the same way.

Passing through the Three Lights

You visualize that the white bindus in your forehead cakra move down and enter your heart cakra. You then visualize that the red bindus in your navel cakra move up and enter your heart cakra. Finally, the white and red bindus collapse into each other completely without distinction. Through the power of your meditative concentration on the red and white bindus at the heart cakra, the white essence, the red essence, and mind itself concentrate into it. Each of these three steps corresponds to one of the Three Lights: 1) White Light, a field of white radiance, 2) Red Light, a field of red radiance, and 3) Black Light, a field of black radiance. In this way you pass beyond the higher levels of consciousness, the sixth through eighth consciousnesses, and the subtle winds that support them. These are attained within a profound concentrative experience.

The knots in the heart cakra typically block the ability of the red and white bindus to unite in it. Because these knots are difficult to clear and require a high degree of bliss to pass through you to clear them, you need a physical consort to help you clear these knots before you can attain the Clear Light. Until the knots in the heart cakra are cleared through sexual yoga practice, subtle energy yoga, though greatly beneficial, is fundamentally a “dry run” before the real activity.

Entering the Clear Light

The white and red bindus arise from their collapsed state into a nondual unity, forming the perfect bliss of Evaṃ. Meditating on them, they lead you into the Clear Light (Prabhāsvara), the bliss of nirvāṇa where your obscurations are purified. From within the Clear Light, you have attained the wisdom of the dharmakāya. It is an all-pervasive, shimmering white light, clear and vibrant, an infinite field of sparkling indestructible bindus, with an almost silken texture.

Returning to Appearances

Out of supreme love and compassion, you resolve not to stay solely in this dimension of perfect peace, but to expand your awareness out into the world of appearances as well, to enjoy the world and liberate all beings from suffering. You emerge from the dharmakāya, the Three Lights appear in reverse order, and you spontaneously manifest a saṃbhogakāya form that dwells in the subtle dimensions, the deity in sexual union with the consort. The Five Signs then appear in reverse order, and you manifest a nirmāṇakāya, a physical form, to enjoy the world of the senses and liberate beings on earth. You do not leave the unchanging bliss of the dharmakāya behind, but unite it with worldly erotic blisses. In doing so, you experience the Great Bliss (Mahāsukha), far more blissful than nirvāṇa, far more blissful than an orgasm, and *permanent*.

On Wind Disease

Wind (prāṇa) disease is a subtle energy disturbance that can be very uncomfortable: its usual symptoms are light-headedness, dizziness, weakness and depression. It is caused by practicing Inner Heat Yoga when you are mentally distracted by emotional and mental tension or overly forceful practice. Wind disease can be prevented and also cured by relaxed and non-forceful performance of Inner Heat Yoga. Practicing Filling the Body Like a Vase can help, and Vase Breath on its own is especially regarded as healing and purifying. Be joyful as you practice, or ease up and practice a little bit less. Eating healthy, and heavier foods, will also help to ground your awareness into your body and prevent light-headedness.

Results

“The winds and mind enter into the central channel: the Innate mind beyond conceptuality arises, distorted emotions are self-pacified, and an unbroken stream of bliss and radiance flows forth.”

- Nāropa, *The Vajra Verses of the Whispered Tradition*

The principal result of subtle energy yoga is an increase in Great Passion. You are closer to enlightenment than ever before, and you want it more than ever. Your progress is stronger, your confidence in achieving it is growing, but the final attainment remains tantalizingly out of reach. With a visualized consort, among the highest results of subtle energy yoga are blissful erotic near-experiences of the inner Four Blissess and the Clear Light, clearing subtle karmic obscurations, and leading you towards the ability to consciously choose your death and rebirth.

It is the experience of the masters that subtle energy yoga on its own is not strong enough to attain enlightenment. Tsongkapa stresses that subtle energy yoga alone cannot induce a full experience of the inner Four Blissess, only a partial one. The *main* achievement in subtle energy yoga, Tsongkapa explains to his male audience, is that *it gives the man control over his sexual fluids* - so that he can then practice sexual yoga for extended periods of time with his consort. Tsongkapa says: “When one trains well in this technique, it gives one control over the loss of sexual fluids. Then, based on this power, one can rely upon a consort as a conducive condition to arouse the Four Blissess. On this foundation, Innate Bliss is aroused.”

These practices make both men and women more orgasmic, giving you both much greater power for sexual yoga. A normal orgasm is purely local, occurring in the genitals. By bringing sexual energies up the central channel, you fill your whole body with orgasmic bliss and are able to have full body orgasms. This ability becomes especially valuable in sexual yoga, through which the Clear Light is attained. Subtle energy yoga prepares you for combining these practices with a physical consort in sexual yoga. You gain the basic skills of being able to practice subtle energy yoga with a physical consort without getting overexcited and losing your focus and intention, or losing sexual fluids without conscious control.

It is, finally, the *combination* of subtle energy yoga and sexual yoga that brings enlightenment most swiftly, because sexual yoga gives the greatest possible power to subtle energy yoga, and subtle energy yoga elevates sexual yoga from a coarse physical activity into a refined path. Subtle energy yoga ripens the development of the dimension of sexual enjoyment, the saṃbhogakāya, in which you manifest on the subtle plane of existence in a perfected form to benefit beings. The results of subtle energy yoga combined with sexual yoga are: 1) your body is majestic and dignified, 2) your body is glossy, 3) your body is very bright, 4) your body is light, 5) your body casts no shadow, 6) you attain the power of invisibility, 7) your eyes are always open without blinking, and 8) you continuously manifest the Clear Light. The Great Bliss pervades your being, and you are happy forever.

Vows

Your vows are the vows of the second consecration: to practice subtle energy yoga until you are able to demonstrate signs of heat and bliss, or after at least six months of practice.

Sādhana Vows – Sādhana Samaya

Practice the sādhana four times a month with your consort, uniting deity yoga with subtle energy yoga.

Daily Conduct - Caryā

Subtle energy yoga daily conduct is to cultivate the experience of bliss generated from your practice sessions throughout your day, and perceive all appearances as creations of your mind. When practicing Clear Light Yoga, in post meditation during the day visualize a tetrahedron, alternatively at the mid-point between your eyebrows and at your heart cakra, each for equal periods of time. At night before going to sleep, visualize a tetrahedron alternatively at your heart cakra and at your Secret Cakra, each for equal periods of time. This strengthens your ability to attain union with the Clear Light.

Exercises

There are two ways of performing the Completion Stage practices - outside a sādhana and within one. Practicing outside a sādhana allows you to focus your time on the practices themselves, while the continuity of the sādhana brings added power to your practices. It is suggested to practice subtle energy yoga and other Completion Stage practices outside of the sādhana during your first weekly practice session, and then perform the Completion Stage practices as part of the sādhana in the second weekly practice session. When practicing subtle energy yoga within *The Sādhana of Secret Vajravilāsinī*, beginning students can practice the inner Four Blissess on verses 90-93, and the Swing Recitation on verses 95b-111. It is important to gain proficiency in these two main practices first, and then you can learn the other practices as you desire and perform them during these times in the sādhana.

It is very important to imagine and believe that you are doing these practices as a buddha, and that you are benefitting greatly. Because of their subtlety, progress at first may be slow, and you may feel little benefit. And as you do progress, you will still know that these are only partial results of the practices until you are ready to combine them with sexual yoga.

Subtle energy yoga is best performed on an empty stomach, at least two hours after a meal.

Time: 2 hours.

Initial Practices - Sevā

Perform the opening practices.

1. Recite the Refuge Vow.

*buddham śaraṇam gacchāmi
dharmam śaraṇam gacchāmi
saṅgham śaraṇam gacchāmi*

“I go for refuge to the Buddha.”

“I go for refuge to the Dharma.”

“I go for refuge to the Saṅgha.”

Recite 3x.



2. Recite the Bodhisattva Vow.

*viśuddhaṃ dhārayiṣyāmi yathā buddhena deśitaṃ
tena jītvā śaṭhamāraṃ prāpya buddhatvam uttamaṃ
bhaveyaṃ bhavakhinnānāṃ śaraṇam sarvadehināṃ*

“I will maintain purity, as taught by the Buddha.

Conquering the demon Mara, and attaining supreme buddhahood,
I vow to be a refuge for all beings, weary of saṃsāra.”

Recite 3x.



3. Recite the Lineage Prayer.

oṃ namo gurubhyaḥ

“oṃ Homage to the gurus.”

“To all the ones who know the true reality, I offer a maṇḍala (Maṇḍala Mudrā) of the Three Worlds:



From the vast expanse of the ocean of primordial wisdom, I invoke Vajradhara and his precious consort Vajradhātviśvarī.

From the Buddhafield of Sukhāvātī, I call upon the great buddhas Amitābha and Pāṇḍarā.

From his celestial paradise Potala, I invoke the noble Lord of erotic passion Lokanātha.

From the pure mind of Saraha to the great master Śabara, the noble teachings were given.

From Lokanātha to the great master Śabara, these words of practice were heard as an imperishable sound.

Masters of the lineage, Saraha and Hedarmā, Śabara and Śabarī, I invoke you all. For the benefit of all beings, I will attain enlightenment in this very life. Guide me in the path that leads to the Great Bliss.”

Visualize that you are surrounded by countless buddhas, bodhisattvas, yogis and yoginīs, Dharma protectors, and masters of the lineage who pledge to support your practice. They dissolve into your heart, bringing you inner awakening.

Benefits: Clarifies your commitment to the path, strengthens your intention for inner awakening, shifts your mindstream into a state of meditative absorption to attain enlightenment.

Time: 2 minutes.

Preparatory Practices – Ādi Yoga

The following preparatory practices (ādi yoga) of 30 haṭha yoga exercises are basic warm-ups to further practices or rituals. They include breath control (prāṇāyāma) and poses (āsanas).

Benefits: Your physical body becomes strong and flexible, and you are able to sit comfortably and meditate for long periods of time. You purify your subtle body to prepare it for stronger and higher vibrational energies to come into you and transform you.

Time: 50 minutes.

Deity Yoga – Deva Yoga

All preparatory and main practices are performed visualizing yourself as the deity in sexual union with the consort, Vajravilāsinī if you are female and Padmanartēśvara if you are male. From a state of emptiness, become the deity, and meditate.

Benefits: You embody the purity of the deity, and perceive all appearances as creations of mind.

Time: 4 minutes.



Breath Control - Prānāyāma

1. Filling the Body Like a Vase - Deha Kumbhaka

1. Your body is in the Vajra Posture (Vajra Āsana, also called the Seven-Point Posture of Vairocana, or Dhyāna Āsana), hands resting on your knees with palms down. Use your right forefinger to control the breathing by closing the opposite nostril. Inhale slowly through the right nostril, gaze to the left, and exhale slowly through the left nostril. When you inhale, visualize all the power of the buddhas drawing into you. When you exhale, visualize all your impurities leaving your body.
2. Inhale slowly through the left nostril, gaze to the right, and exhale slowly through the right nostril. Use your left forefinger to control the breathing by closing the opposite nostril.
3. Return your hands to your knees. Inhale slowly through both nostrils, gaze forward, and exhale slowly through both nostrils. Repeat steps 1-3 3x.

Do not breathe through the mouth at any time during this exercise, which could lead to wind disease.

Benefits: Purifies your physical breathing passages, subtle winds and channels.

Time: 1 minute.

2. Purification Breath - Kapāla Bhāti

1. Purification Breath (Kapāla Bhāti) – lit. Skull shine. Sitting in the Vajra Posture, exhale sharply at the solar plexus, and then allow the in-breath to occur effortlessly. Start with 40 repetitions of Kapāla Bhāti per session until you can work up to 100x in a session.

Benefits: Kapāla Bhāti charges your subtle body with energy and strengthens your solar plexus muscles.

Time: 1 minute.

3. Anal Pump - Aśvini Mudrā

1. Anal Pump (Aśvini Mudrā) - lit. Horse gesture. With Kapāla Bhāti, squeeze the ring of your anal sphincter muscle, and let it contract. One round should last ½ to 1 second. Begin with 20 squeezes per session in the beginning, and work up to 100x per session comfortably.

Benefits: Aśvini Mudrā brings energy from the Secret Cakra up the central channel, charging your whole body. Strengthening these muscles assists in becoming more orgasmic.

Time: 1 minute.

4. Secret Pump - Guhya Pīḍayati

1. Secret Pump (Guhya Pīḍayati) – The PC (Pubococcygeus) muscle is the muscle used to control the flow of urination. To find your PC muscle, when you urinate, stop and start your flow of urine – that is the PC muscle. With Kapāla Bhāti, squeeze the PC muscle. One round should last ½ to 1 second. Begin with 20 squeezes per session in the beginning, and work up to 100x per session comfortably.

Benefits: Secret Pump brings energy from the Secret Cakra up the central channel, charging your whole body. Strengthening these muscles assists in becoming more orgasmic. In the beginning, it may be difficult for you to separately control your anal sphincter and PC muscles, but this will improve with practice.

Time: 1 minute.

5. Bellows Breath - Bhastrika

1. Sitting in Vajra Posture, from the diaphragm, breath in and out strongly, deeply and quickly 25x, with equal emphasis on the in-breath and out-breath.

2. Take in a deep three-part breath, inhaling first from the belly, then the diaphragm, and last the upper chest), close the lower gate by tightening the lower pelvis (Mūla Bandha – lit. Root Lock) and upper gate using the chin lock (Jālandhara Bandha – lit. Stopping the Net of Illusion Lock), and hold your breath for a count of 25. As you hold your breath, hold the focus of your awareness at your heart cakra.

3. Open the lower and upper gates and release the breath, and breathe normally for 1 minute. Repeat.

You may experience some dizziness as you do this, which is normal.

Benefits: Bhastrika is the most powerful of all yogic breaths, purifying and greatly charging your subtle body with light, strengthening the nervous system, and clearing karma. It is also an excellent preparatory practice for Vase Breath.

Time: 5 minutes.

6. Cakra Purification - Cakra Śuddhi

Sitting in Vajra Posture, purify the four principal cakras with 108 mantra repetitions each. Bring your awareness to each cakra as you chant:

1. Navel Cakra – *om āḥ hūṃ*
2. Heart Cakra – *om hūṃ hūṃ*
3. Throat Cakra – *om om hūṃ*
4. Forehead Chakra – *om haṃ hūṃ*

Benefits: Purifies your cakras of subtle karmic obscurations. You gain control over the elements of earth, water, fire, and wind as the Four Seals within the cakras are purified.

Time: 2 minutes.



7. Channel Purification - Nāḍī Śuddhi

Sitting in Vajra Posture, breathe slowly as you perform the following:

1. Inhale: Visualize a single white bindu at the forehead at the point between your eyebrows.
2. Exhale: Visualize the bindu travels in a diagonal line to the Crown Cakra at the top of the head.
3. Inhale: Visualize the bindu travels down to the Secret Cakra at your perineum.
4. Exhale: Visualize the bindu travels back up to the Crown Cakra at the top of the head.
5. Inhale: Visualize the bindu travels back to your forehead.
6. Breathe normally as desired, rest, and begin the sequence again.

Breathing for this exercise is Vase Breath or normal. With Vase Breath, hold your breath through all the steps and then exhale at the end.

Benefits: Purifies your central channel.

Time: 2 minutes.

8. Pelvic Rocking – Dolā Cālana

Sitting in Vajra Posture or standing, rock your pelvis slowly forward and back, breathing deeply and in rhythm with your movements, with diaphragmatic breathing:

1. Inhale, rock your pelvis moving forward.

2. Exhale, rock your pelvis moving back.
Repeat 20-50x each session.

Benefits: Opens up your pelvic area and strengthens these muscles for sexual yoga.

Time: 2 minute.

9. Undulations - Ulālu

1. Standing with your feet shoulder width apart, allow your body to undulate slowly like a wave in the ocean.
2. Over time you will attain a fluid motion with your body from your toes to your head.
Repeat 20-50x.

Benefits: Opens your whole body up to allow subtle energy to flow freely.

Time: 2 minutes.

10. Hip Rotations – Kaṭi Brahmaṇa

Standing with your hands on your hips, and your knees slightly bent, your legs should width apart, breathe deeply as you rotate your hips, slowly, sensuously, and erotically in each direction.
Repeat 10-25x.

Benefits: Opens up your hips and brings them subtle energies, empowering you sexually.

Time: 2 minutes.

11. Rocking Breath - Prāṇa Cālana

Standing, beginning with the pelvic rock, breathe in with the forward pelvic rock, and out with the backward pelvic rock. The inhale is a full, three-part breath that starts from the belly, expands the diaphragm, and into the upper chest. Perform this sensuously and erotically.
Repeat 20-50x.

Benefits: Allows subtle energies to fill your body with erotic energies.

Time: 2 minutes.

12. Opening the Central Channel – Vivara Avadhūtī

1. Standing with your legs shoulder length apart, with the inbreath, visualize red energy coming up from the earth into your perineum at your Secret Cakra.
2. Visualize sending red subtle energy up your central channel and spreading throughout your whole body.

Benefits: Opens the central channel, purifies your subtle body, empowers your physical body.

Time: 2 minutes.

13. Vase Breath – Kumbhaka

Vase Breath (Kumbhaka) is the central breathing practice for most subtle energy yoga methods. It can be practiced on its own or as part of the other subtle energy yoga techniques, most especially Inner Heat Yoga. It is performed in four main steps: 1) inhaling, 2) holding, 3) compressing, and 4) exhaling. In synchronizing the visualizations with the Vase Breaths, the visualizations are usually created during the inhaling, and then held in place during the steps of holding, compressing, and exhaling. Any changes to the visualization occur on the next inhale. Do not stop the visualization as you shift your breathing. It is ideal to practice Vase Breath continually in a session of subtle energy yoga, but you may also take a few normal breaths in between, or breathe normally throughout your session as you desire. Hold the breath for as long as is comfortable, about 1-3 minutes is common – if the practice is tiring you rather than energizing you then you are probably holding the breath too long. Try to keep a comfortable, rhythmic control of your breath, and slowly increase their length over time.

1. Sit in Vajra Posture (Vajra Āsana), or a comfortable seated position with your spine erect. Make your hands into fists with your thumbs inside your hands pressing against the base of the ring finger, lock your arms at the elbows, and place the hands on your knees.
2. Inhale slowly and deeply in a long breath through your nose, and fill your lower belly with air. Do not overfill your belly; your belly should remain reasonably comfortable. As you inhale, visualize your breath passing down through the side channels and filling them with subtle winds.
3. Hold your breath. Seal your lower gates (perineum, PC muscles, and buttocks) through the Root Lock by tightening these muscles slightly.
4. Seal your upper gate (throat) through the Chin Lock by bringing your head down toward your chest.
5. Visualize the four upper root winds and their colors, white Life Supporting, red Upward, blue Pervading, and green Equally Abiding, pulled downward into the left and right side channels and into the central channel, into a red *āḥ* stroke seed syllable at the point four-fingerwidths below the navel.
6. Visualize the lower root wind, the yellow Downward Voiding wind, passing upward from the genitals and anus, where they meet the upper winds in a “kiss” at the *āḥ* stroke seed syllable.
7. Compress the breath into the central channel by maintaining your awareness at the point at the red *āḥ* stroke seed syllable.

8. Observe as the winds dissolve slowly into the uppermost top of the *āḥ* stroke seed syllable, from the crescent (*candra*), the bindu (*surya*), and into the squiggle (*nāḍa*). A sign that the winds are ready to enter the central channel is that your breath flows evenly through both nostrils.



9. Continuing to hold your breath for as long as you comfortably can, bring your awareness to the nature of appearances as a projection of your mind. Focus on extending the time of your breath, not on tensing your breath. If you start to feel some of your breath escaping through your nose or mouth while you are holding it, breathe out fully and start again with a new Vase Breath.
10. Exhale slowly, silently, and fully through your nose, and extend your fingers out forward at your knees. As you exhale, visualize the breath exiting upwards through your central channel.
11. Relax your body, and begin another round.

Never exhale just a little bit to leak air out – this can lead to subtle energy imbalances called wind disease that may result in physical illness.

As a more advanced practice, especially in conjunction with Clear Light Yoga, pull the winds into the heart cakra rather than the *āḥ* stroke seed syllable, and maintain the focus of your awareness at your heart cakra.

Benefits: Develops health and longevity, peace and bliss, and stills conceptual thought. Brings the Five Root Winds partially into the central channel. The more strongly the winds are brought in, the hotter and more powerful the fireh blazes in Inner Heat Yoga.

Time: 10 minutes.

Poses – Āsanas

Perform the 17 poses listed below, slowly and meditatively.

Benefits: Brings strength and flexibility to your physical body and prepares it for subtle energy yoga.

Time: 15 minutes.

Standing Poses

1. Tree Pose – Vrikṣa Āsana



Stand with your feet together, holding your hands in front of your heart cakra in Añjali Mudrā. Gaze forward. Slide your right leg up to wherever it can comfortably rest it on your left leg, balancing your body with great stillness and peace on one leg. Your right foot points downward, and your knee is out to the side of your body. Feel yourself as a tree, rooted into the earth, receiving nourishment, and standing elegantly. Breathe deeply but comfortably, holding the pose for about 20-30 seconds. Allow your right leg to fall down slowly. Switch leg positions, and stand on your right leg. Return your left leg to the ground with your feet together, and release your hands from Añjali Mudrā comfortably to the sides of your body. Over time, you may be able to

bring your heel high enough onto your leg to touch your perineum. Perform this pose for about 1 minute.

2. Garuda Pose – Garuda Āsana



Stand with your feet together, facing forward, your gaze straight ahead. Feel like a garuda, an eagle-like bird of great wisdom and power. Inhaling, bend your knees and bring your right leg in front of your left leg, wrapping it around until the inside of your right foot touches the outside of your left leg. Pull your shoulders forward, bend your arms and pull them into your chest, with the right elbow resting in the inside of your left elbow. Your hands meet in front of your face as in Añjali Mudrā. Your back remains straight, and your gaze is just slightly upward. Holding the pose comfortably, inhale and exhale evenly for about 20-30 seconds. On an exhale, release the pose and return to a simple standing pose. Repeat the pose again, this time reversing your arms and legs.

Lying Poses



3. Cobra Pose – Bhujaṅga Āsana

Lie on your stomach, with your face touching the ground. Place your hands flat on the ground, even with your shoulders, with your arms close in to your body. Gaze downward. Feel yourself as a cobra. Inhaling, raise your head up, and from your lower back slowly raise your upper body off the ground. Keep your hands in position on the ground very lightly only to stabilize your body. Gaze upward, and hold your breath for about 10 seconds. Exhaling, bring your upper body back down, and return your forehead to the ground. Perform this pose for about 20-30 seconds. Rest

for a moment, and repeat the pose a second time.

4. Half-Locust Pose – Ardha Śalabha Āsana

Lie on your stomach on the ground. The tops of your feet rest straight along the ground, your chin rests on the ground, and your arms lie down by the sides of your body with the palms of your hands facing upward. Gaze downward. Feel yourself as a locust, which finds its power through interconnectedness. Inhaling, bring the palms of your hands to the sides of your body, and raise your left leg up straight behind you about 1 to 2 feet off the ground. Your gaze remains downward. Hold your breath and the pose for about 10 seconds. Exhaling, bring your left leg back down to the ground. Rest for a moment. Perform this pose with your right leg. Repeat the pose for about 1 minute.



5. Yoni Pose – Bhaga Āsana

Lie on your back on the ground. Bend your knees, and touch the insides of your left and right feet together with your feet touching the floor, creating a diamond shape with your legs. Place your hands above the top of your head, meeting as in Añjali Mudrā. Feel yourself as the earth goddess, Pṛithivī, giving birth to the world. Perform this pose for about 1 minute.

Kneeling and Squatting Poses



6. Lion Pose – Simha Āsana

Sit in a kneeling position, with the tops of your feet resting on the ground and your buttocks resting on your feet. Rest your hands on your knees, and gaze forward. Feel yourself as a lion, with all its courage and power. Exhaling fully with a *hā* sound, stick your tongue out of your mouth pointing downward, and roll your eyes to the top of your eyelids. Spread and separate your fingers outwards from your knees. Inhaling, return your tongue back into your mouth, your eyes to gaze forward, and your fingers resting comfortably on your knees. Perform this practice for about 20-30 seconds. Relax and repeat 2-3x.

7. Child Pose – Bala Āsana



Sit in a kneeling posture on your calves, with the tops of your feet resting behind you on the ground. Keep your upper body erect, with your arms hanging loosely at your sides and the palms of your hands facing behind you. Gaze forward. Exhaling, slowly bring your upper body down towards the ground. Your arms move close to your sides, and the palms of your hands face upwards. Rest your forehead on the ground. Feel yourself as relaxed as a child.

Inhaling, slowly move your upper body upward, and return to a kneeling sitting posture. Your gaze follows your body and returns to a forward direction. Perform the pose for 1 minute.

8. Cat Pose – Mārjārī Āsana



Place your hands and knees to the ground, and keep your back and head straight. Separate your knees slightly so they are directly under your hips. Gaze downward. Feel yourself as a cat in its luxury. Exhaling, gently curve your spine upwards and pull your head in towards your body. Inhaling, gently curve your spine down toward the ground and lift your head up, gazing upwards. Relax and repeat 2-3x.

9. Squatting Pose – Utkāṭa Āsana



For the Squatting Pose (Utkāṭa Āsana - lit. Extreme Pose), with your body resting on the balls of your feet, your heels about 6 inches apart and pointed outwards at a 90° angle, sit with your knees bent in a squatting position. Bring your hands to your heart in Añjali Mudrā. Gaze forward. Feel yourself as a god or goddess, and feel the erotic power in your hips. Hold for 30-60 seconds. If you have problems with your knees, be careful when performing squatting poses.

Reverse Poses

10. Shoulder Stand - Salamba Sarvaṅga Āsana



For Salamba Sarvaṅga Āsana (lit. Supported All Limbs Pose), lie down on your back with your legs extended. Your arms are to the sides of your body, and your palms face your body. Inhaling, lift your legs together straight up, then lift your upper body until your body is vertical, with your toes pointed upward. Your weight rests on your shoulders and the back of your head. Your arms may stay flat on the ground, hands down, or you may place your hands touching your back to help support your weight. Inhale and exhale evenly, and hold the pose for 30-60 seconds. Exhaling, slowly bring your upper body down, followed by your legs. Keep your legs stiffly extended as they come down.

11. Plow Pose – Hala Āsana



Lie down on your back with your legs extended, your arms to your sides, with your palms facing down. Gaze upward. Feel yourself as a plow, that fertilizes the earth. Inhaling, and keeping your legs straight, raise the lower part of your back, and slowly and gently swing your legs over your head. Keep your legs parallel to the ground with your body, or with

practice you can bring your legs down so that the tops of your feet touch the ground. Hold the pose and your breath for about 15 seconds. Exhaling, slowly bring your back and legs back down to the ground. Repeat 2-3x.

12. Bridge Lock Pose - Setu Bandha Āsana



While still lying down on the ground after the plow pose, your arms rest gently on the sides of your body. Gaze upward. Inhaling, lift your upper torso off the ground, placing your hands and arms on either side of your hips. Keep your heels on the ground, with your toes pointed straight away from you. Feel yourself as a bridge between heaven and earth. Inhale and exhale

evenly for about 20-30 seconds, holding the pose. Exhaling, bring your upper body back down to the ground, and return your arms and hands to your sides. Rest and repeat.

Rocking Poses

13. Bow Pose – Dhanva Āsana



Lie with your stomach on the ground, resting your head with your left cheek on the ground. Gaze to the right. Inhaling, bend your knees and bring your feet back towards the back of your head. Raise up your upper body, reach back with your hands to touch the ankles with your hands, grasping the ankles with your hands if you can. Gaze forward. Feel yourself as a bow of elegance and power. Hold your breath and the pose for 15 seconds. Exhaling, release your arms from your ankles, and return your upper body to lying down on the ground, resting your head with your right cheek on the ground. Gaze to the left. Rest and repeat.

Sitting Poses

14. Head to Knee Pose - Paschimothan Āsana



Paschimothan means back extension bend. Sit up with your legs straight forward, touching and parallel to each other. Your arms are relaxed, and fall to the side of your body. Gaze forward. Inhaling, slowly bend your upper body forward, leading with your arms. Bring your hands to rest comfortably along your legs, touching your toes if you comfortably can. Gaze downward. Inhale and exhale evenly, relaxing into the pose for about 1 minute. Exhaling, slowly move your upper body back to sitting up. Your arms return to your sides, and your gaze returns forward.

15. Spinal Twist Pose – Matsyendra Āsana



Matsyendra Āsana means Matsyendra's Pose - Matsyendra (Lord of Fish; c. 900s) was a great Buddhist and Hindu Tantric master and teacher of haṭha yoga. Sit up with your legs forward and parallel with each other. Gaze forward. Be one with Siddha Matsyendra. Inhaling, bend your right leg in until your right heel touches your perineum. Lift and bend your left leg, and place your left foot on the outside of your right knee. Twist your upper body slightly to the right, and place your right arm along the outside of your left leg. Place your left arm behind the middle of your back, and turn your head to look behind you. Gaze behind you. Hold the pose for

about 15 seconds. Release the pose, and return to the sitting pose. Relax and repeat, switching directions for your legs, arms, head and upper body.

Closing Poses

16. Yogic Seal - Yoga Mudrā

Sit in a comfortable cross-legged posture, such as Lotus Pose (Padma Āsana). Move your hands behind your back, and hold your right wrist gently with your left hand. Exhale very slowly, taking about 20 seconds to exhale. Bend your upper body forward and downward very slowly until your forehead touches the ground. Keep your forehead on the ground for about 20 seconds as you hold your breath. Inhale slowly, taking 20 seconds to inhale. Bring your body very slowly back to your original sitting posture. Yoga Mudrā is performed only once per session, and seals in the subtle energies of the practices into your body.

17. Integrated Presence - Sahaja



You exist on many levels. The more you release your ego attachment to your body, speech and mind, and connect to your own deepest aspects of your being, the more you can connect to your lover when making love. Sitting in Vajra Posture, with your eyes open, bring your awareness throughout your physical body. Concentrate your awareness on your physical body. Say, “I am a nirmāṇakāya.” Next, be aware that you are a conscious being who exists beyond time and space, and who incarnates in many lifetimes, who dwells blissfully with your consort on the subtle plane. Say, “I am a saṃbhogakāya.” Then, with a strong intention, bring your awareness to your Buddha Essence. This is you: Pure, Self-Aware Omniscient Wisdom, Blissful, and Permanent, beyond limitations. It goes by many names: Divine Self, God, etc. It is the deepest part of you. Say, “I am the dharmakāya, the Source of All.” Finally, feel the blissful unity of all dimensions. Say, “I am the Great Bliss.” Meditate quietly for a few minutes.

Main Practices - Karaṇa

Beginning Methods

1. Inner Heat Yoga with Wisdom Consort - Caṇḍālī Yoga Jñānamudrā

Inner Heat Yoga is the foundation for all subtle energy yoga practices.

Breathing is Vase Breath. You can also practice with a normal breath if you desire – this would be less powerful for a beginner, but could be even more powerful for an advanced practitioner.

Benefits: By practicing Inner Heat Yoga with a visualized consort, although you cannot actually attain the Four Blissesses of subtle energy yoga, you can attain blissful states that approximate them. Purifies coarse karmic obscurations of the physical body, purifies subtle obscurations in the subtle body, generates intense heat and orgasmic bliss, stills your mind, and develops extraordinary magical powers. Prepares you for entering the pure bliss of nirvāṇa.

Time: 50 minutes.

Exercise #1: Deity Yoga – Jñānamudrā

1. Sit in the Vajra Posture or a comfortable seated position.
2. Visualize yourself as Vajravilāsinī or Padmanarteśvara in sexual union with her or his wisdom consort.
3. Maintain the clarity of your visualization, divine pride, understanding of the meaning of the attributes, and the nature of the deity as a projection of your mind. Relax in the awareness that you *are* the deity, and be aware of its power. Feel the Great Passion of the two deities in sexual union and allow erotic bliss to rise.

Benefits: Clears your mind, prevents ordinary appearances from arising so that you see all things as sacred, develops good visualization skills, and generates erotic passion.

Time: 5 minutes.



Exercise #2: Visualizing the Subtle Body – Bhāvanā Vajra Deha

1. Retaining your form as the deity, visualize the four major cakras at the forehead, throat, heart, and navel.
2. Visualize the three major channels: the central channel and the two side channels.
3. Visualize the Four Seals: the red *āḥ* at the navel cakra, the white *hūṃ* in the heart cakra, the red *om* at the throat cakra, and the white *ham* at the forehead cakra. Four fingerwidths below the navel, visualize a red *āḥ* stroke seed syllable, with a short flame rising from the top of it.
4. Visualize the inside of your physical body as hollow as an empty shell, insubstantial like a rainbow.
5. Blend your awareness fully into your subtle body, until you become one with it.
6. Bring your focus strongly to the *āḥ* stroke seed syllable at the point below the navel, and dissolve your mind into it in deep meditative absorption of nondual awareness.

Benefits: Brings mental clarity, prevents drowsiness, gives a strong mental image of the subtle body needed for success in Inner Heat Yoga, and clears subtle obstacles to practice.

Time: 5 minutes.



āḥ hūṃ
oṃ haṃ



Exercise #3: Blazing - Jvala

1. Four fingerwidths below the navel, visualize a red *āḥ* stroke seed syllable, with a short flame. Concentrate your awareness at its uppermost tip. Visualize the Five Root Winds fanning the flame, causing it to become intensely hot.
2. Visualize the flame rises slowly, and reaches the navel cakra, where it burns the red *āḥ* seed syllable, liberating you from the obscurations of the earth element and the form aggregate. At each cakra, keep your focus on the seed syllable at the center of the cakra.
3. Visualize the flame rises slowly, and reaches the heart cakra, where it burns the white *hūṃ* seed syllable, liberating you from the obscurations of the water element and the consciousness aggregate.
4. Visualize the flame rises slowly, and reaches the throat cakra, where it burns the red *oṃ* seed syllable, liberating you from the obscurations of fire element and the perceptions aggregate.
5. Visualize the flame rises slowly, and reaches the forehead cakra, where it melts the white *haṃ* seed syllable, liberating you from the obscurations of the wind element and the intentions aggregate.
6. Visualize the subtle winds in the side channels moving strongly into the central channel at the navel cakra. A sign that the Five Root Winds are ready to enter into the central channel is that your breath becomes even between the two nostrils.

Benefits: Purifies the obscurations of the Five Aggregates and the Five Elements. Gives you the power through strong meditative absorption in the central channel to draw in the Five Root Winds strongly for the next step.

Time: 10 minutes.



āḥ hūṃ
oṃ haṃ

Exercise #4: Vajra Recitation – Vajra Japa

1. With a strong intention, draw in the Five Root Winds. From above, draw in the four upper root winds one at a time, colored white, red, green, and blue, strongly into the central channel at the point four-fingerwidths below the navel cakra at the tip of the *āḥ* stroke.
2. From below, draw in the yellow-colored lower wind strongly into the central channel at the same point below the navel.
3. Maintain your visualization of the Five Root Winds in central channel at the point below the navel.
4. Hold the winds in the central channel at the *āḥ* stroke by reciting *silently* the seed mantra of Vajravilāsinī, *eṃ āṃ rīṃ raṃ brīṃ*, 300-500x. A sign that the Five Root Winds have strongly entered the central channel is that your breath stops, and the power of your meditative absorption becomes even stronger.

Benefits: The winds intensify the fire of the inner heat in the central channel. Loosens the knots in the navel cakra, allowing the inner heat to build.

Time: 5 minutes.



Exercise #5: Retaining the Winds - Prāṇāyama

1. Without reciting the mantra but with pure focus, retain your awareness strongly at the *āḥ* stroke at the point four-fingerwidths below the navel.
2. The breath slows or stops. If you have brought the Five Root Winds strongly into the central channel, you may see the Five Signs.

Benefits: The illusory awareness of subject and object dissolves, and a lesser stage of nondual wisdom arises.

Time: 10 minutes.

Exercise #6: Dripping - Sravate Śaṣṭī

1. Bringing your awareness to the forehead cakra, visualize the white *haṃ* seed syllable, from the intense heat of the flame rising in the central channel, begins to melt. The white *haṃ* seed syllable slowly releases white bindus down into the central channel like a stream of honey. Bindus can be visualized either as very small or very large, and it is up to you to choose what size they are. As the white bindus slowly reach each major cakra, the inner Four Bliss are successively realized. Take note of the qualities and increasing intensity of the blisses. As you reach each cakra, hold your awareness at that point for 1-2 minutes.
2. The first bliss, Bliss, is attained as the bliss of the white bindus from the forehead cakra melt within the forehead cakra.
3. The second bliss, Supreme Bliss, is attained as the bliss of the white bindus from the forehead cakra slowly melt down and reach and mix with the throat cakra.
4. The third bliss, the Bliss of Cessation, is attained as the bliss of the white bindus from the forehead cakra slowly melt down and reach and mix with the heart cakra.
5. The fourth and final bliss, Innate Bliss, is attained as the bliss of the white bindus from the forehead cakra slowly melt down and reach and mix with the navel cakra. The white drops falling on the flames in the navel cakra greatly increase the heat and flame in the navel cakra, and you are engulfed in heat, bliss, and nonconceptual awareness.
6. The white bindus in the navel cakra move back upwards, and the inner Four Bliss are experienced in reverse order, with Bliss starting at the navel cakra and Great Bliss at the forehead cakra. As the white bindus pass upwards, the seed syllables at the cakras are restored and light blazes from each one, matching the color of the seed syllable.

Benefits: Pervades the body with heat and bliss, purifies the subtle body of subtle karmic obscurations. Prepares you for actually attaining the inner Four Bliss with a physical consort.

Time: 10 minutes.



haṃ āḥ
oṃ hūṃ

Exercise #7: Bath of Bliss - Snana Sukha

With the Five Root Winds strongly present at the *āḥ* stroke in the central channel, rest in the bliss of nondual awareness. Allow your heat and bliss to pervade the entire universe. When practiced with a physical consort, you may see the Five Signs.

Benefits: You cultivate nondual awareness as your obscuring thoughts and emotions are transformed, and you are filled with bliss and light. Prepares you for Inner Heat Yoga with a physical consort.

Time: 5 minutes.

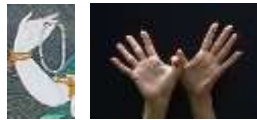
2. Swing Recitation with Wisdom Consort - Dolā Japa Jñānamudrā

1. Visualizing yourself as the deity in sexual union with the wisdom consort, imagine the six red and white cakras: the perineum, navel, heart, throat, forehead, and crown.
2. Visualize the mantra syllables *eṃ āṃ rīṃ raṃ brīṃ* in the female's yoni maṇḍala, vertical with the first syllable on top, forming a mantra garland with a small space between each syllable, red with golden glow and flames.
3. Visualize the seed syllables as they pass from the female's yoni maṇḍala to the male's vajra, revolving through your four main cakras like a firebrand creating a continual ring of fire.
4. Inhale, then recite the mantra as you exhale, visualizing one circle in each exhalation. Inhale to start again. Each recitation of the seed syllables is made with one swing through both your bodies, and each swing is performed in one breath. As the mantra moves from the female's yoni to the male's vajra, begin the recitation with the seed syllable *eṃ*; move the mantra garland up his body to his right nostril and chant the syllable *āṃ*; chant *rīṃ* as the mantra passes from his nostril to hers; chant *raṃ* as it descends through her body to her lotus; finally, as the syllables return to her yoni, chant *brīṃ*. Count each swing as one bead on the mālās in your left hands, completing 108 recitations. Perform the first repetition slowly, and the remaining repetitions very quickly.
6. After completing one set of 108 Swing Recitations, display the Garuda Mudrā hand seal to your wisdom consort to seal in the enlightened subtle energies.
7. Repeat the practice many times.

Benefits: Purifies subtle obscurations, creates bliss, and attains the Fusion of Identities between you and the wisdom consort.

Time: 50 minutes.

ॐ
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ॐ
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3. Crest Jewel of the Bindu with Wisdom Consort - Bindu Cūḍāmaṇir Jñānamudrā

1. Visualize yourself as the deity in front of, but not in sexual union with, your wisdom consort. A female practitioner generates a small image of Vajravilāsinī as a red bindu from a red *oṃ* seed syllable at her navel, then moves the deity-bindu up and down her central channel, finally resting it at the tip of her cervix. She visualizes in front of herself a small image of Padmanarteśvara as a white bindu from a seed syllable at Padmanarteśvara's navel; she moves the deity-bindu up and down his central channel, coming to rest at the tip of his liṅgaṃ. A male practitioner does the same, visualizing himself as Padmanarteśvara, in front of the wisdom consort as Vajravilāsinī, and performing the same visualized actions with the small images of the deities.
2. Unite sexually with your visualized consort, uniting the two small deity images at the tips of the genitals in lovemaking as well.
3. Generate Great Passion while maintaining the visualization of the deities in sexual union.

Benefits: Purifies subtle obscurations, creates bliss.

Time: 50 minutes.



4. Meditation on the Five Senses with Wisdom Consort - Pañca Indriya Samādhi Jñānamudrā

Visualizing yourself as the deity in sexual union with your wisdom consort, meditate on the Five Senses as the forms of the female buddhās of the Five Buddha Families. Recite the mantra of the first buddhā many times in Sanskrit for 5-10 minutes, then move on to the next one:

1. Sight: Locanā – *oṃ mahāsiddhi oṃ*. “*oṃ* Great Success! *oṃ*”
2. Hearing: Māmakī – *oṃ vajra siddhi oṃ*. “*oṃ* Vajra Success! *oṃ*”
3. Smell: Dhātviśvarī – *oṃ samaya abhiṣeka siddhi oṃ*. “*oṃ* Pledge Consrecreation Success! *oṃ*”
4. Taste: Pāṇḍarā – *oṃ dharma siddhi oṃ*. “*oṃ* Dharma Success! *oṃ*”
5. Touch: Samaya Tārā – *oṃ karma siddhi oṃ*. “*oṃ* Action Success! *oṃ*”
6. Sit in peaceful equipoise and experience all senses as pure arisings of the buddhās.

Benefits: You liberate yourself from attachment to the senses as you learn to enjoy them as sacred, and gain the worldly powers of each Buddha Family.

Time: 50 minutes.



5. Meditation on Your Own Body as Bliss with Wisdom Consort – Mahāsukha Deha Jñānamudrā

1. Visualizing yourself as the deity in sexual union with your wisdom consort, make love, bringing yourself to a high state of bliss, and attain orgasm.
2. Meditate silently in a high state of post-orgasmic bliss. Allow yourself to open to nonconceptual awareness, and directly perceive all appearances as projections of your mind.
3. Nonconceptuality spontaneously emerges. Meditate on all forms and sounds as having the nature of bliss and illusory mental projection.

Benefits: Purifies the subtle body, supports prolonged states of bliss, prepares for nondual yoga.

Time: 50 minutes.

6. Melting into a Moon Disk with Wisdom Consort - Candra Anubheda Jñānamudrā

1. Visualizing yourself as the deity in sexual union with the wisdom consort, imagine in front of you three vertical seed syllables radiating light: a white *om*, a red *āḥ*, and a blue *hūṃ*. In intervals between these three seed syllables, visualize two red *ho* seed syllables to form a mantra garland.
2. As you make love, a female practitioner visualizes the seed syllables passing out of her yoni, into the vajra of the visualized consort, up his central channel, out through his mouth to her mouth, and back down to her yoni. A male practitioner visualizes these seed syllables entering his mouth, passing down to his vajra, and into the yoni of the visualized consort. Perform this many times.
3. In the yoni, visualize the seed syllables melt into blazing red light.
4. Visualize you and your wisdom consort melt into a horizontal white Moon disk of white seminal fluid. You attain a high state of formless bliss.
5. Return once again to form, visualizing yourself once again as the deity in sexual union with the consort.
6. Upon returning to form, recite the mantra in Sanskrit:
om dharmadhātu svabhavātmāko 'ham
“*om* I am the intrinsic nature of the Dharmādhātu.”

Benefits: Purifies subtle obscurations, creates bliss.

Time: 50 minutes.

om
ho
ho
āḥ
ho
ho
hūṃ



Intermediate Practices

7. Great Worship with Wisdom Consort - Mahāpūjā Jñānamudrā

For an intermediate practitioner, this practice quickly and spontaneously triggers inner heat without performing all the steps of Inner Heat Yoga.

1. Visualizing yourself as the deity in sexual union with the wisdom consort, imagine a seed syllable in your genitals, a blue *hūṃ* at the tip of a man's vajra, or a red *vaṃ* in woman's yoni at the cervix, and the corresponding seed syllable in the genitals of the visualized consort.
2. As you visualize making love, continue to focus on these mantras.
3. Envision a white seed syllable *pad* emanates from the "kiss" of the union of the Maṇi Cakra (cervix) and the Vajra Cakra (tip of the Vajra).
4. Visualize the white *pad* travels up the central channel to the point four-fingerwidths below your navel cakra.
5. Visualize the *pad* ignites a flame at the *āḥ* stroke seed syllable at the point below the navel, which starts the complete cycle of Inner Heat Yoga. Remain with the experience of inner heat.

Benefits: Purifies subtle obscurations, creates bliss, develops ejaculation control, supports sustained erotic pleasure to rise, and generates inner heat quickly.

Time: 50 minutes.

hūṃ vaṃ

pad



8. Meditation at the Tip with Wisdom Consort - Dhyāna Bindu Jñānamudrā

After inhaling the breath, hold the breath for a minute or more, and hold the visualization of the bindu at the tip of the genitals until you feel you are about to ejaculate, then return the bindu to the top of the head.

1. Visualize yourself as the deity in sexual union with the wisdom consort.

2. If you are male, at the Vajra Cakra (Vajra Cakra), the tip of the penis, visualize a blue *phaṭ* blocks the opening. This seed syllable helpd prevent the man from ejaculating.
3. Visualize a red flame from the *āḥ* stroke at the point four-fingerwidths below the navel, rising up the central channel and melting the white bindus in the forehead cakra.
4. The white bindus from the forehead cakra melt downwards, and reach your throat cakra. You experience Bliss, the bliss of the bindus at the throat cakra. You attain the loss of the coarse sense of self and other.
5. The white bindus melt downwards, and reach your heart cakra. You experience Supreme Bliss, the bliss of the bindus at the heart cakra. You attain the loss of self.
6. The white bindus melt downwards, and reach your navel cakra. You experience the Bliss of Cessation, the bliss of the bindus at the navel cakra. You attain the loss of other, and a semblance of the Wisdom of the One Taste of primordial wisdom as the pure bliss of nirvāṇa.
7. The white bindus melt downwards, and reach the tip of your genitals. You experience Innate Bliss, at the tip of the sexual organ – a semblance of Discriminating Wisdom that enjoys all sensory pleasures. Hold your awareness with great focus at this point for as long as you can.
8. When the bliss becomes too intense for a male practitioner and he feels he is about to ejaculate, or when a woman is ready to complete the session, he or she brings the white bindus back up the central channel and experiences the Four Blissess again slowly in ascending order, returning the bindus to the forehead cakra. Spread the bliss throughout your whole body.

Benefits: A stronger form of Inner Heat Yoga. Purifies subtle obscurations, brings bliss, and stronger orgasms, and gives ejaculation control for men.

Time: 50 minutes

phaṭ



9. Reverse Urethral Suction with Wisdom Consort – Vajrolī Mudrā Jñānamudrā

1. Visualizing yourself as the deity in sexual union with the wisdom consort, and make love.
2. After you ejaculate, visualize and meditate on the mixed female and male fluids.
3. Draw up the subtle energies from these mixed fluids back into your yoni or liṅgam and up into your central channel. Recite the Eightfold Mantra many times to drive the seminal essence up into the central channel: *hā hā he he ho ho hūṃ hūṃ*.

Benefits: Teaches how to alchemically transform physical sexual fluids into blissful subtle energy for later practice with a physical consort. Purifies subtle obscurations, creates bliss.

Time: 50 minutes.



Advanced Methods

10. Clear Light Yoga with Wisdom Consort - Prabhāsvara Yoga Jñānamudrā

This is the highest practice of subtle energy yoga.

Vase breathing with Clear Light Yoga is optional – it can strengthen your practice, or you may find it a distraction, while a more advanced practice is to let go of control over the breath at all.

Benefits: Gives increasing near experiences of the Clear Light, purifies subtle obscurations, creates bliss, and prepares you for Clear Light Yoga with a physical consort.

Time: 50 minutes.

Exercise #1: Deity Yoga - Jñānamudrā

Visualize yourself as the deity in sexual union with the wisdom consort.

Benefits: Establishes your mind as the deity and appearances as pure.

Time: 5 minutes.

Exercise #2: Visualising the Subtle Body - Bhāvanā Vajra Deha

Maintaining your visualization of yourself as the deity in sexual embrace, visualize the Five Root Winds, channels, cakras, and the seed syllables of the cakras.

Benefits: Establishes mental stability, provides a strong visual base to perform the subsequent exercises.

Time: 5 minutes.



Exercise #3: Inner Heat Yoga - Caṇḍālī

Practice Inner Heat Yoga, generating inner heat, bringing in the Five Root Winds strongly into the navel cakra, and inducing the inner Four Bliss.

Benefits: Purifies subtle obscurations, creates bliss.

Time: 5 minutes.

Exercise #4: Vajra Repetition – Vajra Japa

1. Bring your awareness into your heart cakra. Practice mantra repetition of Vajravilāsinī's seed mantra, *em āṃ rīṃ raṃ brīṃ*. Recite 300-500x.

Benefits: Loosens the knots in the heart cakra that prepares you for experiencing the Five Signs, the Three Lights, and the Clear Light.

Time: 10 minutes.



Exercise #5: Clear Light Yoga – Prabhāsvara Yoga

1. Bring your awareness to your heart cakra. Visualize a sphere of white light in the center of your heart cakra, which is the union of your mind and the primordial mind of the Clear Light. Meditate on the sphere of primordial white light.
2. Just outside and surrounding the sphere visualize a tetrahedron (a Dharmodaya). It emits five-colored light throughout the universe: white, blue, red, yellow, and green.
3. Visualize the five-colored light returns and dissolves all appearances of the Three Worlds into yourself.
4. Visualize your wisdom consort dissolves into yourself.
5. Visualize yourself as the deity as it dissolves into the sphere of white light at the heart cakra.
6. Draw the Five Root Winds *completely* into your heart cakra. You may see the Five Signs of the Five Root Winds as they dissolve in succession into your heart cakra: 1) the yellow Downward Voiding Wind that carries the earth element - a mirage, 2) the white Life Supporting Wind that carries the water element – like smoke, 3) the red Upward Wind that carries the fire element – like fire flies, 4) the green Equally Abiding Wind that carries the wind element – like the flame of an oil lamp, and 5) the blue Pervading Wind that carries the space element - a field of white radiance like Moonlight.
7. Visualize the Root White Bindu moves down from your forehead cakra into the sphere at the heart cakra. You may see the first of the Three Lights: White Light, a field of white radiance like Moonlight. This results from the dissolution of your consciousness in the first subtle mind.

8. Visualize the Root Red Bindu moves up from your navel cakra into the sphere at the heart cakra. You may see the second of the Three Lights: Red Light, a field of red radiance like sunlight. This results from the dissolution of your consciousness in the second subtle mind.
9. Visualize the Root White and Root Red bindus in your heart cakra collapse together in the sphere. You may see the third of the Three Lights: Black Light, a field of black radiance, all-pervasive darkness. This results from the dissolution of your consciousness in the very subtle mind.
10. Visualize the Root White and Root Red bindus stabilizing and attaining balanced nondual union, forming the Evaṃ, and focus on it intently. Your mind, guided by the Root White and Root Red bindus in blissful union, dissolves into the Evaṃ in your heart cakra.
11. The Clear Light, like a clear sky at dawn, whose nature is Purity, Self, Bliss, and Permanence, emerges fully and purely within you and around you. Nonconceptual awareness arises, and you experience the undifferentiated peace and bliss of nirvāṇa. Maintain your awareness directly within the Clear Light. You are the dharmakāya.
12. While retaining your unity with the dharmakāya, out of love and compassion for all beings, you see your Root White and Root Red bindus form the Evaṃ once again. You return to the subtle dimensions in reverse order through the Three Lights. In these dimensions you perceive yourself as the saṃbhogakāya of the deity in blissful sexual union with the deity's consort. Visualize that you see celestial yoginis all around you. You directly perceive buddhas in sexual embrace with their enlightened consorts.
13. You return to this world in reverse order through the Five Signs into physical form as the deity in sexual union with the wisdom consort. You experience simultaneously both the undifferentiated bliss of nirvāṇa *and* the varieties of worldly bliss, known as the Great Bliss. Rest in all-encompassing bliss.

Benefits: Prepares you for Clear Light Yoga with a physical consort, which attains actual union with the Clear Light and eventual enlightenment.

Time: 25 minutes.



Closing Practices - Visarjana

1. Dissolve the deity.

Perform the Earth Touching Gesture (Bhūmi Sparśa Mudrā), and recite the Dissolution Mantra (Anubheda Mantra).

oṃ āḥ hūṃ vajra muḥ



2. Recite the Dedication of Merit.

puṇyaṃ prabhūtaṃ yad ihāpi sarvaṃ sambodhaye tat pariṇāmayāmi
“I dedicate all merit arisen here for the goal of complete and perfect enlightenment.”



Benefits: Releases attachment to the deity while deepening your connection, benefits all beings.

Time: 1 minute.

Chapter 7. Intimate Rapture: Sexual Yoga

“Enjoy all the pleasures of love fearlessly, for the sake of liberation.”
- Āryadeva, *Creating Purity of Mind*

Orgasm as a Doorway of Infinite Potency



Having transformed themselves into radiant deities on fire with unbounded passion, the young man and his consort made love. They aroused each other, savoring the awakening of their senses, while remaining clear in their true purpose, the liberation of all beings from suffering. She took the squatting position, her yoni over his vajra, the position emblematic of her chosen deity Vajravilāsinī, the goddess of love. Undulating in love play, her wondrous yoni by yogic concentration vibrating and contracting, they remained absorbed in the depth of their embrace.

Together, they attained the first bliss, called Bliss, the bliss of first contact, as their genitals connected and they were overwhelmed with many pleasurable sensations. As their meditative focus on erotic bliss intensified, they attained the second bliss, the Bliss of Rising Passion. Clear in their awareness that the bliss of orgasm is a doorway of infinite potency, and committed as ever to their enlightenment, they attained the third bliss, the Bliss of Cessation, in which all their desires were annihilated in the oceanic bliss of ultimate reality. They entered the Clear Light, the vast expanse of pure luminous wisdom and bliss, the origin of all things. In this absolute purity, they were cleared of many of their karmic obscurations. Their thoughts fell away, and their sense of self and other disintegrated. All distinctions were dissolved into cosmic unity.

Determined with great love and compassion, they emerged from the bliss of nirvāṇa to embrace the world of the senses once again. Nondual awareness arose as they attained the fourth and highest bliss, Innate Bliss, the Great Bliss which combined all the blisses in ceaseless delight.

Introduction

**“It is said in the supreme Tantras that of all offerings, the best is sexual yoga.”
- Five visiting ḍākinīs to Milarepa**

While most of the world’s spiritual paths are traveled alone, sexual yoga is a path that loving couples can follow joyously together. Sexual yoga (maithuna yoga, or karmamudrā – lit. Action consort or seal) is the union of sexual bliss with the bliss of ultimate reality. In these practices, you are sealed in bliss by the erotic power of you and your lover to attain inner awakening.

Sexual yoga is the third practice of the Four Yogas, and by far the most important. The first two yogas support it, and the fourth is the result of it. In particular, sexual yoga super-empowers subtle energy yoga by bringing the winds strongly into the central channel at the heart cakra, allowing you to attain union with the Clear Light, resulting in enlightenment. Sexual yoga is ideally practiced in a way that is integrated with the other three yogas. Among the siddhas, sexual yoga is universally considered necessary for attaining the final state of nonduality. Kṛṣṇācārya writes that sexual bliss “is the cause for the manifestation of Mahāmudrā.” And the *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra* praises the power of sexual yoga, saying “By this repeated practice, Great Bliss is attained.” When practiced for the benefit of other beings, it becomes a gift to all.

On the physical level, the lovemaking practices of Buddhist sexual yoga are drawn from ancient Indian texts such as *The Kāma Sūtra*. These texts give extensive instructions on sexual pleasure, but only the Tantras explain how to transform sex into a higher spiritual experience.

Philosophy

**“If he joins together the vajra and lotus, I will give him enlightenment.”
- The Goddess Vajrayoginī, *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra***

Sexual Yoga Transforms Sexual Bliss into the Bliss of Ultimate Reality

The Secret of Tantra

Sexuality does not originate in your body, but emanates from the infinite field of pure primordial consciousness. It is an essential quality of ultimate reality, and permeates appearances with its rich, exultant power. The secret of Tantra is that by understanding the power of sex, it becomes the greatest tool in the universe for enlightenment.

Sexual yoga harnesses the blissful power of sex for liberation. A classic axiom reveals that through Tantric practice, “Passion is used to destroy passion” - but this point is quite often misunderstood. It is not that you indulge in defiled, lustful passions to tire yourself of them so you can attain a passionless state. Instead, you generate the pure passion of sexual desire to destroy defiled, craving desires so that pure passion can run free. According to the Tantras, it is through sexual yoga that buddhahood is attained. The buddhas are intensely erotic, and sexual yoga emulates their indissoluble unity of wisdom and erotic power. Sexual yoga is enjoyable on

so many levels: the physical pleasure, the loving, intimate communion you establish with your partner, and the excitement you feel as you witness yourself progress towards inner awakening.

Sex

The Power of Sex

Sex (kāma) is a dazzlingly rich and magical experience. Its delights range from warmth to intoxication, ecstasy, and bliss. As the erotic charge builds within your body, it heightens your sensory awareness. Intense desire arises, to touch and be touched, and to release the build-up of energy that is both exciting and pleasantly frustrating. Your body becomes flushed, you rise in confidence and lose self-control. The erotic impulse (kāma samvega) overtakes you like a tidal wave, and you joyously drown in it. From the first spark of excitement through the swirl of rising passion, the drive is finally released into the bliss of orgasm, a glorious sensual thrill. With desire's fulfillment completed, a warm smile rises across your face. As a rush of intense aliveness, sex is life's greatest pleasure.

The Potential of Sex to Become Sexual Yoga

During sex, several activities naturally occur that make it a possible foundation for meditative practice and realization: 1) you are flooded with many pleasurable sensations, and you become joyful and happy, 2) your mind becomes focused, your breath and consciousness shift into a higher state, and you lose your ego boundaries, 3) in orgasm your thoughts are silenced, and you experience a brief moment of the Clear Light, and 4) you relax afterwards into a state of peace and bliss. However, even really good sex most often falls short of its potential as sexual yoga. Instead of becoming a path to permanent peace and bliss, it fades, and leads to attachment and suffering. Unaware of the higher principles of Tantric philosophy, and performed without a high intention, sex becomes at best a temporary experience of love. At its worst, it degenerates into an ego-centric pleasure that intensifies your sensual cravings and drags you deeper into saṃsāra.

Ordinary sex fails to become sexual yoga in the following ways:

1. Seeing each other as ordinary instead of invoking and becoming the god and goddess to attain the view of Pure Appearance, it fails as an act of empowerment.
2. Allowing the subtle sexual energies to remain in your genitals rather than spreading them in Great Passion throughout your body, it fails as an act of alchemy.
3. Creating quick excitement and orgasmic release instead of using it as a doorway to unchanging Essence, it fails as an act of union.
4. Thinking of sexual bliss as a mere worldly pleasure rather than a microcosm of the bliss of the Totality, it fails as an act of sympathetic vibration that spontaneously realizes the Great Bliss.

Sexual Yoga



Sexual yoga (maithuna yoga, karmamudrā) is the practice of using sexual energies to attain enlightenment. Through sex, you transform your most subtle root mental obscurations of self and other, and attain union (yoga) with primordial wisdom and bliss. To someone untrained in Tantra, this might sound odd – sex is, after all, mainly a physical activity, so how can it transform your *mind*? It is because you attain levels of bliss so deep and intense that your mind becomes “blissed out,” shuts down, and you attain profound mental clarity. This pure and clear awareness, so difficult to achieve through ordinary

methods of meditation, is then cultivated to attain enlightenment. As a yogi or yoginī, your orgasmic potential has already been greatly increased through the practices of deity yoga and subtle energy yoga. After much training, you are ready for the vital step that will take you directly into the pure bliss of nirvāṇa.

Sexual Yoga as Meditative Absorption

Unlike ordinary sex, sexual yoga is a form of meditation (samādhi) in which you focus one-pointedly on pleasurable erotic sensations while at the same time remaining intently focused on your goal of enlightenment. The bliss, deep breathing, and strength of focus lift you out of your ordinary awareness and into a dreamy state of meditative absorption. Through sexual yoga, you can attain levels and intensities of meditative absorption that cannot be attained through solitary practice. Meditative focus transforms sex into a true path to inner awakening. The stronger your capacity for meditative absorption, the stronger your experiences in sexual yoga will be. It is ideal to have a good foundation in meditation before you begin sexual yoga.

The challenge and delight of sexual yoga is that, unlike simple sitting meditation, you must maintain your meditative awareness while enjoying the continuous movements of love play and lovemaking. Sahajayoginīcintā stresses the importance of holding a strong meditative focus: “The Innermost Self, intent upon its purpose, should remain mentally concentrated while engaging in the different styles of kissing for the sake of the one taste, engaging in all the

specialties of love making.” Breathing is central to meditation, and as sexual yoga is a moving meditation, you also focus on your breath while keeping mindfulness of your body, emotions and thoughts. You begin your practice session slowly, deepening your breath and synchronizing it with your lover for as long as is comfortable. Breathing meditatively opens your body to experiencing sensations more fully, and your emotions become more consciously present to you. *You become more alive.* By keeping your awareness focused at your heart cakra as you practice, you do not fall into lust, and build a strong love connection with your precious consort.

Sexual Yoga and the Innate

Sexual yoga rests on the four characteristics of the Innate (Sahaja):

1. Pure Appearance (Evaṃ) - Pure Appearance is the awareness of sexual pleasure as sacred.
2. Great Passion (Mahārāga) - Great Passion is the rising sexual desire for your lover combined with your intention to attain enlightenment.
3. Essence (Tattva) - The goal of making love is Essence.
4. Great Bliss (Mahāsukha) - The fusion of worldly sexual pleasures with the erotic pleasure of ultimate reality is Great Bliss.

Pure Appearance

Sex is a power arising from ultimate reality. Its true nature is inherently pure, its sensations highly pleasurable, and it emerges from the erotic desire of the primordial female and male essences of the bindus. Through sexual yoga, appearances arise in your awareness no longer as ordinary, but as a co-arising of both sacred Pure Appearance (Evaṃ) and unchanging Essence. The female and male essences of ultimate reality arise together through you and your lover. You recognize that you are the embodiment of Evaṃ, the eternal creative play of cosmic erotic union.

Making love brings your whole world into balance. The realization of Evaṃ, the direct perception of the purity of appearances, is attained through the genitals. Kṛṣṇācārya writes, “*E* is the female sexual organ, and *vaṃ* is the male sexual organ.” When these divine essences come into balance through sexual union, appearances arise unobstructed in your awareness as pure and blissful. The *Hevajra Tantra* says, and means literally, “Wisdom is the woman and Method is the man.” You are each the embodiment of the universal female and male principles, and to attain the goal of enlightenment, defined as the union of Wisdom and Method, these two must first be brought together physically.

As a way of expressing the pure nature of sex, Tantra has its own language (sandhyā bhāṣa – lit. twilight language) for sexual body parts that lifts you beyond your ordinary sense experiences and into the extraordinary. Words like “penis” and “vagina” may be anatomically correct, but they do little to inspire your imagination. A penis, from the Tantric viewpoint, cannot be reduced to a simple protrusion of flesh. It is a magical revelation of the divine male principle, which words like “vajra” (lit. scepter) and “liṅgaṃ” (lit. the mark) successfully convey. Similarly, a vagina is not just a hole to be inserted and filled with semen. It is a doorway to paradise, which words like “yoni” (lit. source) and “bhaga” (lit. auspicious) assist you in recognizing. Finally, the

act of “sex” is transformed into beautiful words like “yuga naddha,” meaning “union of the two,” and “ghaṇṭā vajra sama yoga,” meaning “uniting the bell and vajra equally.” Words have power. Words are mantra. When you use mundane mantras like “penis” and “vagina,” your world remains ordinary. When you use awe-inducing mantras like “vajra” and “yoni,” you elevate yourself into a realm of sacred power.

Great Passion

Great Passion (Mahārāga) is the sacredness of erotic desire. This desire arises from ultimate reality as pure, a primordial impulse to enjoy everything around you. It intensifies the experience of worldly bliss, and leads to union with ultimate reality. The more desire you have, the more bliss you will know. Cultivating physical erotic pleasures with profound meditative states of absorption, you burn away all emotional and mental obscurations. Desire is generated slowly, building throughout your body and mind. A sudden rush, while exciting, is usually only a very partial experience, and the goal is to engage your whole being in the lovemaking to create an inner fire hotter than anything you could know from a quick sexual encounter with your lover. Eventually you become maddened with desire, yet remain perfectly clear in your higher purpose.

Erotic play (vilāsa) is a treasured element of Great Passion, mirroring the erotic play of the buddhas and their consorts. Kṛiṣṇācārya points to its power, noting “Erotic play destroys the sorrows arising from all the afflictions.” While sexual yoga is performed with great devotion and sense of purpose, inspiring a mood of creative love-play and avoiding becoming too serious is equally important. The *Cakrasamvara Tantra* expresses, “The great hero is always playful.”

Essence

At orgasm, a brief moment of awareness opens in which you experience the Clear Light of ultimate reality or Essence (Tattva). This moment is a doorway to the bliss of nirvāṇa, which is pure, creative, erotic potency. All too easily missed in ordinary sex, through sexual yoga this moment is expanded until appearances are wiped out in an oceanic experience of unchanging bliss. You rest in the primordial womb.

Great Bliss

Great Bliss (Mahāsukha) is the union of worldly erotic blisses and the erotic bliss of ultimate reality. The Great Bliss is inherently erotic, and as Kṛiṣṇācārya observes, “Erotic bliss *is* the experience of the Great Bliss.” Sexual yoga cultivates four distinct blisses that a practitioner carefully cultivates over time: 1) the bliss of first contact with the genitals (Ānanda), 2) the bliss of rising sexual passion (Paramānanda), 3) the bliss of nirvāṇa (Viramānanda), and 4) the Great Bliss (Mahāsukha), which binds all the blisses together.

Tantric Transformation

Sexual yoga works through the four principles of Tantric transformation:

1. Empowerment (Adiṣṭhāna) – The bestowal of divine erotic power by your lover is empowerment.
2. Alchemy (Rasāyāna) – The transformation of sexual fluids into pure subtle energies is alchemy.
3. Union (Yoga) – Through making love, you attain union with Essence.
4. Sympathetic Vibration (Niṣyanda) – Allowing orgasm to elevate you spontaneously into the bliss of ultimate reality is sympathetic vibration.

Empowerment

Through empowerment (adiṣṭhāna) by your lover, you are bestowed with the power of a god or goddess. As you make love, your lover grants sexual bliss so magnificent it raises you to the glory of a deity. The *Cakrasamvara Tantra* advises that during lovemaking “Your aim is to be like the wealth giver,” generously giving sacred erotic bliss to your partner.

Alchemy

Sexual fluids are sublimated into the subtle body through alchemy (rasāyāna). Strong flows of sexual energy directed into the subtle body bring the subtle winds completely into the central channel, and clear the karmic knots most especially at the heart chakra, so that nondual awareness can be attained. Although alchemy is the main principle in subtle energy yoga, it is only in sexual yoga that its true potential can be realized because subtle energy yoga without a physical consort is unable to combine the female and male sexual fluids needed for it to succeed. The *Hevajra Tantra* reveals, “Without sexual fluids there would be no bliss,” as they are the physical foundation for bliss that is achieved on the coarse and subtle levels.

Through the alchemical process of combining subtle energy yoga and sexual yoga, your karmic knots are quickly cleared. In order to attain union with the Clear Light, the Five Root Winds must enter completely into the heart chakra, but they are blocked by the karmic knots in it. Subtle energy yoga on its own is not powerful enough to clear these knots. By directing strong subtle sexual energies into the central channel through sexual yoga, these knots are released and the path to the Clear Light is opened.

Female sexual fluids (rakta) are called “red bodhicitta,” the female element of enlightened awareness. Female fluids include lubricating sexual fluids, menstrual fluids (rakta), urine (mūtra), and female ejaculate (yoni tattva). Semen (śukra) is similarly called “white bodhicitta,” literally awakened mind, because it holds the male element of enlightened awareness. Sexual fluids are rich in the potency of the female and male divine essences. As the concentrated power of life, they nourish your body and mind, and enliven your subtle body as well.

Through sexual yoga, the united potential of the female and male essences is alchemically awakened within you. This alchemical change occurs through:

1. Ingesting sexual fluids orally - Oral ingestion is a common and simple practice. The *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra* counsels, “This is the best diet, eaten by all the buddhas.”
2. Sublimating sexual fluids internally – When a woman is strongly aroused in sexual union, her cervix descends to meet the man’s vajra and “kiss,” creating a current of subtle energy between them and connecting their two central channels together. At the point of their subtle union, the red female and white male essences unite. In sexual yoga, the strong, combined sexual energies that are generated are then directed internally to transform your subtle body and attain higher states of bliss and wisdom. Through visualization, the yogi and yoginī each draw up the potency of these essences into their subtle bodies, into their central channels, and may either spread the bliss throughout their bodies or concentrate it at a certain point such as a cakra to purify it.
3. Ejaculating and reabsorbing the fluids - While in sexual intercourse a woman naturally absorbs the man’s essence, Tantric techniques are especially designed so that a man can absorb the woman’s sexual fluids internally also.

Union

Through sexual yoga, the union (yoga) of your mind with unchanging Essence, the field of infinite potency, brings you the bliss of nirvāṇa that purifies your obscurations and transforms you rapidly into a buddha. Union with Essence is achieved through the Four Blissess of sexual yoga. The *Hevajra Tantra* shares, “In the Completion Stage, the Innate is revealed in a fourfold manner as the Four Blissess.” They are the path to uniting worldly bliss with the bliss of Essence, thereby achieving the Great Bliss. The Four Blissess are *the road home*. Each of the Four Blissess is not just an enjoyable feeling but a deep meditative absorption, similar to the Buddha’s teachings on the levels of absorption in Tranquility Meditation. What makes the Four Blissess strikingly different from the Buddha’s teachings is that, rather than experiencing each bliss and discarding it for a higher bliss, all the levels of bliss are equally important and are finally joined together into the Great Bliss.

The First Bliss: The Bliss of Many Pleasurable Sensations

The first bliss is the bliss of first contact with the genitals. It creates a blissful awareness that is the first step on the path towards inner awakening. It is union (yoga) with your partner at the level of the physical. You begin by generating worldly sexual bliss, because as Kṛiṣṇācārya remarks, “Worldly bliss is the very means which makes the achievement of the goal, the Great Bliss, possible.” You become meditatively absorbed in these sensations, which are many and delightful. In these first moments, you are no longer distracted by thoughts of other things, but are deeply and fully present in the moment with your lover, whom you honor as a buddha.

The Second Bliss: Intensifying Bliss

In the second bliss, you deepen and intensify your meditative connection with your lover. As this occurs, you attain a second level of union and dissolve (anubheda) into each other. At first, you and your lover sit before each other as god and goddess, sacred emanations of wisdom and love. But because of your karmic obscurations you still see each other as separate beings, and the illusion of self and other dominates your perceptions. As you make love yogically, your bodies, emotions, minds, and subtle energies mingle and synchronize with each other. The intensifying bliss shifts you out of the duality of subject and object. You dissolve, losing your boundaries, and begin to directly experience each other as not *separate* but as *interdependent*.

Sahajayoginīcintā describes this profound shift, saying, “In stages, because of the taste of desire, you cease to know who is the other and what has happened to yourself. The lovers experience an inexpressible bliss they never experienced before.” In most beautiful language, *The Sādhana of Secret Vajravilāsini* speaks of attaining the Fusion of Identities (Ātma Melaka). Self and other are defeated, and an egoless, nondual awareness dawns. Once the spell of dualistic awareness is broken, all experiences shift into a nondual framework. In a state of deep attunement, your energies blissfully fused, you support each other in reaching higher states of awareness.

The Third Bliss: The Bliss of Nirvāṇa

In the third bliss, the bliss of orgasm (drava) becomes your focus for meditation. Orgasm brings you to the edge of ultimate awareness. It clears away conceptual thoughts, and on the subtle level triggers the union of red and white essences in your central channel. Tantric lovemaking intensifies the power and lengthens the time and number of your orgasms. By setting a strong intention for enlightenment, and developing the skills for maintaining high states of ecstatic pleasure over long periods of time, you walk through the doorway of orgasm into the bliss of nirvāṇa. Remaining meditatively absorbed in the ocean of pure bliss, appearances swept away, your karmic obscurations are quickly released and you attain perfection. In this way, you transform orgasm from a quick thrill into the most potent instrument for spiritual transformation.

The Fourth Bliss: Great Bliss

Having attained the pure, undifferentiated bliss of nirvāṇa - the dream of dreams of saints and sages through the ages - you realize that it is incomplete. Out of love and compassion for yourself, your lover, and all beings, you vow to return to the world of appearances. In doing so, you return not to a state of suffering, but to the erotic bliss of the first three blisses. This union of the three blisses is the fourth bliss, Great Bliss (Mahāsukha). Great Bliss is both transcendent and immanent; it transcends the worldly blisses, but it also includes them all. One bliss is never discounted in favor of another - they all have their place in the Great Bliss.

Remaining eternally in the Great Bliss, your task is the blissful liberation of others. Sahajayoginīcintā speaks highly of the bond between sexual yoga and compassion. She says, “Holy bliss is stabilized by erotic pleasure, and by supreme delight in bringing others happiness.”

After lovemaking, you return to the world and, maintaining your awareness in the Great Bliss, out of love and supreme delight you help others reach the same bliss too. Your body glows, your whole being radiates love and joy, and all your efforts to liberate beings from suffering are transformed from a task once born of compassionate sorrow to a task of effortless delight. To the pure all acts are pure, and your every action is pure, blissful, and liberating.

Sympathetic Vibration

The Tantric principal of sympathetic vibration (niṣyanda – lit. correspondence) operates in sexual yoga as the correspondence between the bliss of orgasm and the bliss of ultimate reality. With a strong intention, you and your lover are spontaneously elevated together into the Four Bliss, eventually attain the Great Bliss.

Path

**“Free from attachment, devoted solely to the Four Bliss,
I have abandoned all habitual tendencies.”
- Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra**

Levels of Attainment

The levels of attainment in sexual yoga are the levels of Clear Light Yoga, to which it is most strongly allied. Signs of success in sexual yoga are that you have blissful experiences of subtle dimensions of reality that come ever closer to the Clear Light:

1. Path Clear Light

Your initial experiences are called Path Clear Light (Prabhāsvara Marga) because you are lighting small but growing experiences of the Clear Light within you along your path. In post meditation you are not able to maintain an experience of the Clear Light. Partial realization in Clear Light Yoga is also called Near Attainment (Upa Siddhi).

2. Mother and Son Clear Light

After years of practice, the experience becomes infinitely more profound. In Mother and Son Clear Light (Jananī Putra Prabhāsvara), you receive the embrace of the Clear Light that is union, and you are permanently transformed. It is so strong that you may lose consciousness, your mind completely absorbed in the Clear Light. As you return to the world of appearances, you retain direct perception of luminosity. You most likely still have residual karma that you are clearing, but you will definitely gain complete enlightenment by the end of your life. Also called Union with Learning (Śaikṣa Yoga), you eventually attain the state of Union with No More Learning (Aśaikṣa Yoga), or enlightenment.

Benefits

The intensity of the bliss of sexual yoga is so great that it is literally ego shattering. You are not your old self any more, but someone infinitely greater. You become happy and peaceful, and radiate joy and bliss. You are purified, especially of your most subtle karmic obscurations. You become so satisfied with life that your inner concerns fall away. You become more empowered, and your life is easy - a fluid, moving meditation. Your heart blossoms, and you overflow with love and joy. You stop seeing the world as ordinary and see it as bliss itself. Jamgön Kongtrul enthusiastically describes the benefits of sexual yoga: “By relying properly on another’s body, the immediate effects will be an unfolding of physical strength and radiance, longevity, attracting *ḍākinīs*, and an increase in mental clarity and meditative absorption.”

Your relationship with your lover deepens as you connect fully with each other. As an emanation of the divine mystery, your lover becomes infinitely interesting to you, making long term relationship easier to sustain and more fulfilling. They become a part of you, and you develop a mature relationship inspired by higher spiritual goals. Released from lustful craving, sex is not rushed, because you are not the slave of sexual passion but its master, content in who you are. Sex is elevated to true lovemaking. Your feelings of shame in your body are released, and fears around sexuality dissolve. You experience full body orgasms beyond what you ever imagined.

Common Problems

Sexual yoga runs the risk of being just lustful sex. You may become so distracted by its ordinary pleasures that it does not transform you into a higher being. The *Hevajra Tantra* calls sexual yoga “very dangerous” because it can feed lustful habits and sense cravings that enmesh you deeper in the desire realm and lead you to lower rebirth. Viewing your lover as a sex object or someone to dominate guarantees that you will make no progress. If you seek only to please yourself *or* only your lover, the equality that is a foundation for practice is not present and the fusion of your energies cannot occur. Neediness and attachment toward your lover must also be avoided. Just as a mirage cannot quench your thirst, the bliss of sexual union by itself cannot bring you realization. Advayavajra warns that if you think sexual yoga means simply having really great sex, or that orgasm is the highest goal of practice, you will not awaken to truth.

Techniques

“The adamantine one along with his consort dissolved into a state of orgasmic flow.”
- *Hevajra Tantra*

The main techniques of sexual yoga include: 1) sexual arousal (*rata avasthāpana*), 2) worship of the female (*yonī pūjā*), 3) worship of the male (*vajra pūjā*), 4) the central methods of sexual yoga (*karāṇa*), 5) meditative lovemaking (*maithuna*), 6) controlling male ejaculation (*śukra stambhādi*), 7) expanding orgasm (*drava samādhi*), 8) sexual positions (*saṃbhoga āsana*), 9) anal sex (*adhorata*), 10) group practice (*gaṇa maṇḍala*), and 11) concluding lovemaking (*samāpti*).

Sexual Arousal

You begin the sacred play of sexual yoga with sexual arousal (rata avasthāpana). Recognizing each other as god and goddess, you awaken your senses, and fill your body with erotic pleasure, building a foundation for inner awakening. Sexual arousal includes: 1) eye gazing (dṛiṣṭi), 2) meditative breathing (vāyu yoga), 3) stimulating the Five Senses (Pañca Indriya), 4) dancing (nāṭya), and 5) foreplay (Nava Puṣpa and Krama).

Eye Gazing

When you gaze (dṛiṣṭi) into each other's eyes with love and devotion, you establish a deep personal connection from the outset. Delighting in the senses, you penetrate beyond them into your partner's true self, and make your connection sacred. The *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra* instructs joyfully, "Gaze steadily at each other with mutual desire." Eye gazing is a meditative practice that bonds you together in sacredness and helps prevent falling into lust.

Meditative Breathing

Meditative breathing (vāyu yoga) practices with your lover support you in transforming foreplay into sexual yoga. These include: 1) deep breathing, taking slow and deep breaths, and 2) synchronized breathing, breathing at the same time as your lover. While you try to hold these practices as long as you comfortably can, they work well even for just a few minutes for initial attunement. Deep breathing increases your presence of awareness, meditative focus, and heightened sensitivity. Synchronized breathing begins the process of deeper physical, emotional, mental and spiritual union with your lover, and lifts your minds into meditative absorption.

Stimulating the Five Senses

You want to stimulate all your Five Senses (Pañca Indriya): 1) touch, 2) hearing, 3) smell, 4) taste, and 5) sight, allowing them to soak in pure erotic love. Sensuously touch each other's whole bodies. Say sweet words to each other. Take in your lover's scent or offer fragrant flowers. Feed each other small delicious bites of food, and kiss each other with your tongues. Dazzle each other with the beauty of your bodies. These acts awaken each sense, heightening its potential for pleasure during lovemaking. Sahajayoginīcintā writes, "When one enters the palaces of the sense organs, experiencing abundant delights, this very world attains the one taste of Great Bliss." While Westerners would normally think of stimulating the senses as part of foreplay, in Tantric traditions it is a preparatory step to foreplay.

Dancing

Dancing (nāṭya) is a joyous expression of your divine sexual powers. In dancing for each other, you incite in your imaginations the limitless possibilities of ecstatic embrace. Dance is a magical

act. From it the empowerment of the deity arises, and all that you desire can be created. Through your movements, you emanate your own pure realm of pleasure and bliss. For the woman, Jayabhadra argues, “Dance is the primordial act of the Goddess,” inspiring devotion and excitement. The male Tantric gods dance powerfully as well. Amitābha is the primordial buddha of dance, and his erotic form is Padmanartesvara, Lord Lotus Dancer. The man’s dance excites the passions of his lover. Āryadeva notes, “The Lord, glorious Great Bliss, in order to demonstrate the nature of the erotic play of ultimate reality, performs the buddha dance.”

Foreplay

Your entire body is an erogenous zone. Knowing this, you erotically stimulate your body and senses, and your whole being becomes an instrument of pleasure that holds the Great Bliss. These practices ensure that all of you is turned on, not just your genitals, so you can be fully present and engaged in lovemaking. Two methods are presented below:

In *The Sādhana of Secret Vajravilāsinī*, Śabara uses the term Nine-Fold Blossoming (Nava Puṣpa) for the acts of foreplay: 1) embracing (āliṅgana), 2) kissing (cumbana), 3) gently rubbing the breasts (stanayor mardana śanaiḥ), 4) gazing (darśana), 5) touching (sparśana), 6) opening the yoni (yoni vikāśa), 7) rubbing the liṅgaṃ (liṅgaṃ gharṣaṇa), 8) arising for entering (praveśollāsana), the man’s liṅgaṃ becoming erect, and 9) revealing the three regions for entering the lotus (praveśas traya bhāgataḥ), clitoris, lips, and perineum.

The *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra* offers many techniques (krama) for arousal. It encourages you to give attention to every part of your lover’s body:

- 1) To her whole body: “He should kiss the forehead, eyes, neck, ears, sides, armpits, hands, and breasts; and pinch them, with the exception of the woman’s eyes.”
- 2) To her breasts: “He should rub the nipples with the hand, suck, then bite.”
- 3) To her belly: “Having the woman lie on her back, he should kiss her lovely belly, remembering again and again, ‘Here I once was.’”
- 4) To her lotus: “He should touch her lotus with his hand. He should kiss and pinch, looking there drawing down with the hand. He should then say these kinds of words: ‘As I have entered through this, so too have I emerged numerous times.’”
- 5) To her thighs and feet: “After pinching her thighs, he should rub her feet like a slave.”

Then she does the same for him, offering similar words of profound praise.

Yoni Worship

After pleasing each other’s bodies and senses with various delights, you and your lover shift your focus inwards to worship each other’s sexual organs. First is the woman’s turn to be worshipped. In Tantric Buddhism, the female is the essence of wisdom. Enlightenment happens in the yoni maṇḍala - the yoni of the woman. The *Cakrasamvara Tantra* advises that “A skillful one worships a yoginī’s stainless lotus of light.” You both worship together the woman’s center of feminine power through Yoni Pūjā (Yoni Worship), which includes: 1) Entering the Maṇḍala (Maṇḍala Avatara), gazing, 2) armoring (kavaca), protecting with mantras, 3) Mantra Repetition

(Mantra Japa), blessing with mantras, 4) Massaging the Bird Face (Khaga Mukhā), stroking, 5) Kissing the Yoni (Cumba Bhaga), oral sex, and 6) offering incense (gandha vidhi).

Entering the Maṇḍala

To enter the maṇḍala (Maṇḍala Avatara) is to meditate visually on the woman's yoni. The term "yoni" is best understood on multiple, simultaneous levels. To gaze at a woman's yoni is to see not just flesh, but the inconceivable presence of buddhahood: 1) the nirmāṇakāya - the physical form of the sacred feminine, 2) the saṃbhogakāya - the yoni of a goddess who resides in the subtle dimensions, and 3) the dharmakāya - the source of eternal bliss. All this is directly perceived as her yoni. Bringing conscious awareness to her yoni charges it with sacred power and bright blessings. You meditate together on it, and as the woman slowly opens her yoni petals, you see it as a doorway to nirvāṇa. The challenge for both of you is to balance sexual arousal with mindful awareness, never falling into either lustful desire or meditative indifference.

Armoring

The Sādhana of Secret Vajravilāsinī offers a ritual of empowering the woman's yoni with a mantra called armoring (kavaca), in which the man visually places sacred seed syllables in her yoni. This purifies and transforms her yoni into a sacred instrument.

Mantra Repetition

In Mantra Repetition (Mantra Japa), you bless the female practitioner's yoni with mantras, by reciting the seed mantra of the deity many times.

Massaging the Bird Face

Massaging the Bird Face (Khaga Mukhā – lit. bird face) is a practice of stimulating the clitoris (khaga mukhā, bhāgānkurā, lit. pleasing sprout) and its subtle energy channel. The man places the tips of his ring and middle fingers together, and with the space between the fingers, massages her clitoris gently and continuously until she releases her sacred fluids. Generating these fluids brings bliss and charges her body with strong sexual energies, and the fluids are then ingested or used in other ritual activities.

Kissing the Yoni

Pleasing a yoni with your mouth is called Kissing the Yoni (Cumba Bhaga). *The Hevajra Tantra* notes, "The yoni should be aroused and the nectar of her lips should be drunk." The yoni's magical juices (amṛita) flow, alchemically bestowing youth upon the man who drinks it. When performed with devotion and nondual awareness, the yoni's juices blissfully support awakening.

Offering Incense

The Sādhana of Secret Vajravilāsinī ends the section on yoni and vajra worship with a simple incense offering ritual (gandha vidhi). Incense is an instrument of spiritual purification and a sacred gift of pleasure. When offered with great devotion, it brings you and your lover closer together.

Vajra Worship

The man's penis (vajra) is the emanation of love in action. His semen (śukra) is a most sacred substance, honored as "bodhicitta," which means "the mind of enlightenment." It is the male essence in physical form, and holds within it the purity of enlightened awareness. The vajra is worshipped (Vajra Pūjā) as an utterly pure expression of ultimate reality, unbound by karmic conditioning. Important methods of vajra worship include: 1) Vajra Gazing (Vajra dṛiṣṭi), 2) armoring (kavaca), protecting with mantras, 3) Mantra Repetition (Mantra Japa), blessing with mantras, 3) Vajra Massage (Vajra Aṅgamardana), 4) oral pleasure (aupariṣṭaka), and 5) offering incense (gandha vidhi).

Vajra Gazing

In Vajra Gazing (Vajra Dṛiṣṭi), the woman gazes with deep love and devotion at his vajra, deepening her meditative focus as erotic passion rises.

Armoring

For armoring (kavaca), the woman honors the man's vajra with a mantra, as the woman visually places sacred seed syllables in his vajra. This empowers his vajra.

Mantra Repetition

In Mantra Repetition (Mantra Japa), you bless the male practitioner's vajra with mantras, by reciting the seed mantra of the deity many times.

Vajra Massage

Through Vajra Massage (Vajra Aṅgamardana), the woman's goal is to arouse her man's desire while maintaining a continuous meditative focus, keeping the heart connection between each of you strong, never falling into lust or other lower emotional states, ever aware of all appearances as bliss. To make the vajra hard is to worship it - to make it adamantine.

Oral Pleasure

With great devotion, the woman gives oral pleasure (aupariṣṭaka) to delight her man endlessly. She is creative in applying pressure and speed, and he guides her in what pleases him. This brings both of you intense bliss. The *Hevajra Tantra* describes playfully, “All the ḍākinīs worship the Lord, the adamantine being. They amorously drink the juicy nectar of the vajra.”

Offering Incense

Through the ritual of offering incense (gandha vidhi), his vajra is purified and honored as a sacred emanation of the divine male principle. Her offering reinforces their awareness as deities.

The Central Methods of Sexual Yoga

Sexual yoga includes many central methods (karaṇa), and each one can lead you to the Great Bliss of enlightenment. These include beginning, intermediate, and advanced methods. The beginning methods do not require proficiency in subtle energy yoga to practice, the intermediate methods require some proficiency in it, and the advanced methods require some proficiency in both subtle energy yoga and the Four Blisses of sexual yoga. Sixteen methods are presented, of which the first two are found in *The Sādhana of Secret Vajravilāsinī*:

Beginning Methods

1. The Four Blisses of Sexual Yoga

The single most important sexual yoga practice is the Four Blisses of sexual yoga (Catur Ānandā Karmamudrā). Revealed in the *Hevajra Tantra*, it is the ladder to enlightenment. Saraha refers to the practice with strong praise in his set of poems called *The Queen's Song*, and it is the main practice for Śabara in *The Sādhana of Secret Vajravilāsinī*. The Four Blisses mark four critical stages in Tantric lovemaking. As you make love, you maintain a deep meditative absorption (samādhi) and become aware of the Four Blisses as they arise within you: 1) Ordinary Bliss (Ānanda), the bliss of first contact with the genitals, 2) Supreme Bliss (Paramānanda), the bliss of increasing arousal, 3) the Bliss of Cessation (Viramānanda), the bliss of orgasm and the peace of nirvāṇa that follows, and 4) Great Bliss (Mahāsukha), the bliss of nirvāṇa *and* the delight in all appearances as the union of all the blisses.

The First Bliss

As you and your lover first begin to make love, your genitals connect and you both experience the first bliss, simply called Bliss (Ānanda). This first stage is very pleasurable, and is to be enjoyed fully and richly. Through yogic meditative concentration, you and your lover take note of and delight in it. At this level, however, your awareness can be easily scattered by lots of

sensory excitement, and you may compulsively think about what is coming next, so your awareness in this bliss can easily become unfocused and shallow. “From ordinary Bliss there is some bliss,” the *Hevajra Tantra* remarks in hesitant praise. You also recognize the most fundamental limitation of the first bliss – *it fades*. Drinking in the pleasures of the first bliss while maintaining meditative absorption and avoiding attachment, perceiving all sensations as Pure Appearance, you move on to a deeper experience.

The Second Bliss

Having thoroughly enjoyed the first bliss, you and your lover continue to make love. Your awareness becomes more focused, and together you develop a stronger, more intense and sustained lovemaking experience. Reaching ever higher levels of ecstasy over an extended period of time, you keep your meditative focus ardent and undistracted, and your sense of self and other dissolves. This is the second bliss, Supreme Bliss (Paramānanda). Kṛṣṇācārya praises this stage, writing, “The second bliss is called Supreme Bliss because it is an excellently refined experience.” Though of high quality when generated with yogic awareness, it is still a mere ordinary pleasure because it cannot bring you permanent bliss. The *Hevajra Tantra* calls the second bliss “bound existence” - still bound by the senses, subject to the realm of saṃsāra. Motivated by Great Passion, you enjoy its delights and move on to attain your highest goal.

The Third Bliss

From orgasm, the third bliss, the Bliss of Cessation (Viramānanda), is reached. Desire is blown out and peace and bliss are all-pervasive. Kṛṣṇācārya explains the meaning of the third bliss, noting: “The Bliss of Cessation is from the destruction of passion, for it is a passionless state.” After orgasm, *you are no longer striving to achieve bliss because you are bliss itself*. Attaining the third bliss is an unbodily experience - your awareness *pervades the universe*. You have attained union with Essence. You have nothing in this world to desire, and your mind is fluid and open - perfect conditions for an even higher shift in consciousness. The bliss of orgasm, empowered by yogic practice and combined with your strong intention to attain enlightenment, elevate you and your lover, shifting your minds from their locked attention on the world of appearances into the limitless bliss of ultimate reality. Your most subtle attachment to a belief in a separate self, the final obstacle to eternal peace and bliss, is released.

The Fourth Bliss

It is from the third bliss that the fourth bliss, Great Bliss (Mahāsukha) is finally attained. While remaining in union with Essence, out of love for all beings you return to the world of the senses. The fourth bliss, also called Innate Bliss (Sahajānanda), is both eternal *and* ever-changing. You experience the perfect, all-encompassing erotic bliss of nirvāṇa *and* the sensual, erotic blisses of sexual union with your lover. Through the integration of all the blisses, you clear your final karmic obscurations. The *Hevajra Tantra* says for the fourth bliss, “This is that supreme Great

Bliss where there is no self or other.” Your awareness simultaneously pervades the universe and is intimately focused on your lover, and you joyfully liberate those in suffering.

The Four Moments

Along with the Four Blissess come the Four Moments (Catvāra Kṣaṇā), specific moments of awareness that train your mind to observe them. Kṛiṣṇācārya writes, “It is only by knowing the nature of the moments that the understanding of the distinctions regarding the blisses is possible.” The Four Moments directly indicate your actual achievement of the Four Blissess, and allow you to recognize easily the attainment of each bliss, anchoring them in your awareness. Without the Four Moments, the Four Blissess could become merely theoretical for you. The Four Moments follow your awareness of the Four Blissess, with one arising per stage of bliss:

1. Diverse (Vicitra) – Delight in the initial moment of sexual union. The *Hevajra Tantra* relates the first moment as “a variety of sensual experiences such as kissing and so on.”
2. Ripening (Vipāka) – The focused experience of bliss through lovemaking activity. The *Hevajra Tantra* stresses that the second moment is “devoid of all ideas of diversity.” It is concentrated awareness, intensifying meditative absorption on rising sexual bliss.
3. Dissolving (Vimarda) – The *Hevajra Tantra* calls this moment “the reflective thought ‘I have experienced bliss.’” It is the expansive awareness of peace and bliss after orgasm, the doorway through which you seek intently to attain the bliss of nirvāṇa.
4. Signless (Vilakṣaṇa) – The *Hevajra Tantra* describes it as “free from both passion and absence of passion.” The fourth moment is free from the obscured passion of sexual craving, but it is also free of the limitations of the quiescent peace after orgasm. It is both the transcendent bliss of ultimate reality *and* the embodied bliss of being in the world. It is an ever-present awareness, without any single experience or appearance that can point to it, so it is called Signless.

2. Swing Recitation

In the Swing Recitation with Physical Consort (Dolā Japa Karmamudrā), while in the embrace of sexual union, you and your lover envision a mantra formed like a garland that moves through both of your central channels, creating a circle of fire as you coordinate breath, mantra, and visualization with rapid speed. Powered by the bliss of your lovemaking, your subtle karmic obscurations are blissfully dissolved. Śabara teaches this method in *The Sādhana of Secret Vajravilāsinī*, where he uses it as a nondual yoga to stabilize nondual awareness after you attain the Clear Light. It can also be used as a sexual yoga practice.

3. Spontaneous Awakening

The method of King Indrabhūti, Spontaneous Awakening (Sahaja Bodhi) is the simplest of all sexual yogas. It requires no special practices, and is exclusively a sexual yoga not combined with the other Four Yogas and not performed in the context of a sādhana. It is essentially a simplified form of the Four Blissess of sexual yoga. After setting a strong intention to attain enlightenment, you and your lover make love together, slowly and meditatively, allowing bliss to fill you and

keeping the pleasure building over time. After the bliss of orgasm, allow nondual awareness to dawn spontaneously, and rest in it peacefully.

4. Mantra Repetition

In this simple technique taught by Jayabhadra, Mantra Repetition (Mantra Japa Karmamudrā), as you make love, you hold your awareness as the deity and your lover as its consort, and recite the mantra of the deity together many times. The *Cakrasamvara Tantra* asserts, “If the practitioner repeats the mantra while engaging in sexual intercourse, there will be no fixed limit to his lifespan.”

5. Meditation on the Five Senses

Meditation on the Five Senses (Pañca Indriya Samādhi Karmamudrā) is to meditate on each of the Five Senses as emanations of the five female buddhās as you make love: 1) sight, 2) hearing, 3) smell, 4) taste, and 5) touch. Though beings are bound in saṃsāra by their passion for the senses, it is through their passion for the senses that they are liberated. The senses are especially associated with the female heads of the buddha families, and so it is upon them that you meditate and recite their mantras, as you remember their ultimate origin. This method is revealed in the *Sarva Tathagata Tattva Saṃgraha*, and Vīravajra adds that you can continue this practice even after you attain orgasm. Your senses are opened to perceive beyond the limits of physical form, and you gain the worldly magical powers of the Five Buddha Families.

6. Meditation on the Five Elements

For Meditation on the Five Elements (Pañca Bhūta Samādhi Karmamudrā), the method revealed in the *Hevajra Tantra*, as you make love you focus on the Five Elements as the five buddhas: 1) earth, hardness, as Vairocana, 2) water, sexual fluids, as Akṣobhya, 3) fire, friction, as Amitābha, 4) wind, movement, as Amoghasiddhi, and 5) space, passion and orgasm, as Ratnasambhava. Your five elements are transformed into the pure nature of primordial awareness.

7. Meditation on Your Own Body as Bliss

In this method of Maitrīgupta, Meditation on Your Own Body as Bliss (Mahāsukha Deha Karmamudrā), after prolonged lovemaking in a state of bliss, with you and lover either remaining physically joined or separated, you meditate silently in a high state of bliss until nondual awareness spontaneously emerges. Meditating on all forms and sounds as having the nature of bliss, the Great Bliss is revealed.

8. Nondual Lovemaking

As you make love, you focus on yourself and your lover as equal and existing nondually with each other, letting go of any sense of separateness. As your bliss intensifies, all physical boundaries of self and other are released, and the nondual awareness of Mahāmudrā dawns. Nondual Lovemaking (Advaya Maithuna Karmamudrā) is the method of Sahajayoginīcintā. A key quality in this practice is equipoise (samāpatti). Neither the man nor the woman may dominate, nor can the other be submissive. All your actions and powers of awareness must be of equal flavor and one taste.

9. Melting into a Moon Disk

For the method of Vitapāda, Melting into Moon Disk (Candra Anubheda Karmamudrā), while in sexual embrace with your lover, knowing yourselves as god and goddess, you imagine in between the two of you three vertical seed syllables radiating light: a white *om*, a red *āḥ*, and a blue *hūṃ*. In intervals between these three are two red *ho* seed syllables. As you make love, the man visualizes these five seed syllables entering his mouth, passing down to his vajra, and into the yoni of the woman. In her yoni, the seed syllables melt into blazing red light. You and your lover then melt into a horizontal white Moon disk of white seminal fluid, the pure bliss of nirvāṇa. Motivated by great love and compassion, you return to the forms of the deity and consort in sexual embrace. Upon returning to form, you recite a mantra together: *om dharmadhātu svabhavātmāko 'ham* “I am the intrinsic nature of the Dharmādhātu.”

10. Crest Jewel of the Bindu

In Crest Jewel of the Bindu (Bindu Cūḍāmaṇir Karmamudrā), the method of Sahajāvalokana, the couple begins sitting across from each other but not in sexual union. The woman generates an image of the female deity as a red bindu from a seed syllable at her navel, then moves the deity-bindu up and down her central channel, finally resting it at the tip of her Maṇi Cakra (cervix). The man simultaneously generates the male deity as a white bindu from a seed syllable at his navel, moves the deity-bindu up and down his central channel, and down to the tip of his Vajra. The practitioners then unite sexually, uniting the two deities in lovemaking as well. The couple generates sexual passion while maintaining the visualization of the deities in sexual union.

Intermediate Methods

11. Great Worship

In the method called Great Worship (Mahāpūjā Karmamudrā), you and your lover visualize mantras in your sexual organs as you make love. The Tibetan yogi Milarepa provides guidance: “In your secret wisdom lotus lies the red seed syllable *vaṃ*. The male gem is like a blue seed syllable *hūṃ*; and, when combined with the white seed syllable *pad*, fixes the bindu well. When wisdom and method join together, the bliss of two-in-one becomes the best offering.” The man

visualizes a blue *hūṃ* in his vajra at the tip, and the woman a red *vaṃ* in her yoni at the Maṇi Cakra. Joining together in lovemaking, you both envision a white *pad* emanating from the union of the two. As you make love, you focus on these mantras, and this meditative absorption “fixes the bindu well,” meaning that it prevents the man from ejaculating semen (bindu), developing ejaculation control in the man, and making the woman more orgasmic, and allows for sustained pleasure to rise. The *pad* travels up each of your central channels, where it ignites the fires at the point below the navel cakra, which spontaneously starts the cycle of Inner Heat Yoga.

12. Reverse Urethral Suction

For Reverse Urethral Suction (Vajrolī Mudrā Karmamudrā), the method of Vīravajra, after the practitioners ejaculate, you both meditate on visualizing the upward flow of the subtle energy of mixed female and male fluids from your genitals back up into your central channels. You recite the Eightfold Mantra (Mantra Aṣṭavidham), *hā hā he he ho ho hūṃ hūṃ*, to help draw up the subtle energies. This method triggers an alchemical transformation of subtle sexual fluids in your subtle body, purifying subtle obscurations and leading to enlightenment.

Advanced Methods

13. Inner Heat Yoga

Inner Heat Yoga with Physical Consort (Caṇḍālī Yoga Karmamudrā) combines the Four Blissess of subtle energy yoga with the Four Blissess of sexual yoga. This advanced technique, the method of Nāropa, is the most complete way to practice the Four Blissess. The practice of Inner Heat Yoga is called the “inner condition” for attaining enlightenment, and the physical consort is called the “outer condition.” When Inner Heat Yoga is practiced with a physical consort, the subtle sexual energies generated are brought up the central channel to intensify the power of concentrating the Five Root Winds within it. The final result of practice, the ultimate inner heat, is the fire of the Great Bliss that burns all obscurations. Together with your consort, you attain inner awakening. For this practice, you perform the exercises of Inner Heat Yoga with Wisdom Consort (Caṇḍālī Yoga Jñānamudrā) as taught in Chapter 6: Subtle Energy Yoga, but with a physical consort. For Inner Heat Yoga with Physical Consort, the Four Blissess are as follows:

1. Bliss or Ordinary Bliss (Ānanda) - The bliss of the bindus melting in the forehead cakra.
2. Supreme Bliss (Paramānanda) - The bliss of the bindus melting at the throat cakra.
3. Bliss of Cessation (Viramānanda) - The bliss of the bindus melting at the heart cakra.
4. Spontaneous Bliss (Sahajānanda) - The bliss of the bindus melting at the navel cakra.

14. Meditation at the Tip

Meditation at the Tip (Dhyāna Bindu Karmamudrā) is a highly celebrated practice by many masters including Lakṣmīkarā. You each hold a bindu with your focused awareness at the tip of your genitals, and allow erotic bliss to arise without the man ejaculating, and making the woman more orgasmic. This practice is used to stabilize the view of Mahāmudrā in the fourth

consecration. In sexual union with your lover, the male practitioner visualizes, at the Vajra Cakra (Vajra Cakra), the tip of his penis, a blue *phaṭ* blocks the opening to prevent ejaculation. Each of you visualize a red flame from the point just below the navel cakra rising up your central channel and melting the white bindus in the forehead cakra. The Four Blissesses of subtle energy yoga, increasing states of bliss on the subtle energy level, are attained:

1. Bliss - The bliss of the bindus falling from the forehead cakra to the throat cakra. You attain the loss of the coarse sense of self and other.
2. Supreme Bliss – The bliss of the bindus falling from the throat cakra to the heart cakra. You attain the subtle loss of self.
3. Bliss of Cessation – The bliss of the bindus falling from the heart cakra to the navel cakra. You attain the subtle loss of other.
4. Innate Bliss - The bliss of the bindus falling from the navel cakra to the tip of the sexual organ. You must use tremendous concentration to hold the bindus at the tip of the genitals to prevent ejaculation. Maintaining your awareness at the tip of the genitals, you attain the Five Signs, the Three Lights, and the Clear Light, and Discriminating Wisdom that delights in all appearances.

When the bliss at the tip of the genitals becomes so intense you feel you are about to ejaculate, you bring the white bindus back up your central channel and experience the inner Four Blissesses slowly in ascending order, and spread the bliss throughout your whole body.

15. Clear Light Yoga

After attaining success in the Four Blissesses through Inner Heat Yoga with Physical Consort, you practice Clear Light Yoga (Prabhāsvara Yoga Karmamudrā), the method of Vyāḍhali. Each of you brings your awareness into your heart cakra, which pulls the Five Root Winds into it. Holding your awareness at this point, and with a strong intention to attain the Clear Light, the coarse winds of the Five Root Winds that support the four elements and coarse consciousness in your body pass into the central channel and dissolve. As the coarse winds dissolve, the Five Signs arise, and you may see appearances similar to: 1) a mirage, 2) smoke, 3) fire flies, 4) the flame of an oil lamp, and 5) Moonlight. The Five Signs are approximate descriptions, and you may get foggy vision or you may see flashes of light. Next, as the subtle winds dissolve, you may see fields of subtle light called the Three Lights: 1) White Light, 2) Red Light, and 3) Black Light. These are successive levels of increasingly coarse to subtle created light that emerge from the uncreated field of the Clear Light. After you pass through these subtle levels in your awareness, the Clear Light of nirvāṇa, a field of infinite bindus of shimmering, uncreated light, dawns fully and purely within and around you. Maintaining your awareness in this field of pure wisdom, love, and creative power, your karmic stains are quickly transformed. Out of love and compassion for yourself and all beings, you return to the world of appearances, and attain the Great Bliss.

16. Dissolution into the Great Bliss

In Dissolution into the Great Bliss (Mahāsukha Anubhedha), the method of Āryadeva, you shift your awareness after orgasm to a simple meditative focus that leads you directly and strongly

into an expanded experience of the Clear Light. You can use either of two images. The first is to focus together on yourselves dissolving like the waning of breath on a mirror, called Evaporating (Piṇḍagrāha). The second is to meditate on yourselves like a drop of water dissolving into a flowing stream, called Dissolving (Anubheda). You then return from the Clear Light into the Great Bliss. This technique is a shorter, more advanced version of Clear Light Yoga.

Meditative Lovemaking

Meditative Lovemaking (Maithuna) is the foundation of sexual yoga. Although it can be practiced as a separate technique, its principles are intended to be followed with all sexual yoga lovemaking methods. It is a continuous state of open, spacious, and relaxed awareness. Your task is to keep your focus on pleasure as you make love, without losing your focus. The *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra* teaches, “Concentrate upon the pleasure arising from desire.” The text also praises spending time in motionless meditation while making love, advising, “Become motionless, with one-pointed mind. Without moving, meditate on the pleasure arising from that with a fixed mind.” Finally, this Tantra stresses the importance of extended practice over long periods of time. It guides the woman to say to her man, “Give me a thousand strokes, one hundred thousand, ten million, one hundred million, in my three-petaled lotus, bound round with flesh.” Meditative absorption is a crucial basis for realization, without which all actions of making love fail as a yoga.

Recognizing each other as sacred partners, as pure emanations of the dharmakāya freely choosing to delight in each other, you begin to make love. You keep your awareness meditative, breathing deeply and slowly, focusing on pleasurable sensations and the joy of being together. You do not try to make each other have an orgasm, just focus on deepening your pleasure and your heart connection. You move together as a spontaneous, moving meditation for two. Be creative and avoid getting stuck in habitual patterns of pleasure. Making love is an art form and you are the artist. You follow the subtle energy currents with your awareness in and around your bodies as the sexual energy builds, and support each other as a team in reaching deeper states of meditative absorption.

Controlling Male Ejaculation

Male ejaculation (rūṣya) is one of the great miracles of lovemaking. The power generated is strong enough to shift a man’s entire body and mind along with his lover into intense bliss. And it is a doorway to enlightenment. But in order to generate high and prolonged states of bliss, a man must learn to control his ejaculation. With practice, he can penetrate his lover for hours without ejaculating, and choose when he wants to, leaving his lover fully satisfied.

A common misunderstanding of sexual yoga is the idea that the male practitioner is not supposed to ejaculate. Some statements in the Tantras and commentaries do say this. However, they do not refer to not ejaculating at all, but consciously *controlling* and *delaying* ejaculation to extend sexual pleasure and saturate your body and mind with bliss. To be able to practice the Four Blissess successfully, for example, the man must be able to maintain his erection through the first

and second blisses to reach the third bliss, which is the bliss from ejaculation. Bhavabaṭṭa actually suggests a man should ejaculate three times a day - he writes, “One should release seminal essence for the sake of worship in the consort. This worship should be observed at the three junctures of the day, dawn, noon and dusk.” Tantric rituals also call for semen to be ingested, so it must naturally first be generated to do so. Furthermore, in the Tantric feast that follows the rituals, there are no rules of right or wrong, which gives men the freedom to ejaculate or not as they choose. The *Hevajra Tantra* advises not to throw away the man’s fluids, but to ingest them: “The yogi should make the consorts drink the semen and he will quickly gain accomplishment.”

In Tantric practice, controlled ejaculation (śukra stambhādi) is essential, but can be difficult to achieve. For beginners, the *Cakrasamvara Tantra* provides a mantra for ejaculation control. Before a man feels he is about to ejaculate, he recites the mantra until he has retained control. The mantra, called the Eightfold Mantra (Mantra Aṣṭavidham), *hā hā he he ho ho hūṃ hūṃ*, directs the subtle winds that produce ejaculation back up into the central channel. Tsongkapa also recommends using the mantra *phaṭ* to prevent ejaculation. For a more advanced practice, the subtle energy yoga techniques give a man the ability to control his ejaculation firmly. The man visualizes pulling his semen and sexual energies in a reverse direction up his spine, which transmutes them into bliss. The man’s bliss becomes greater, he can last as long as he wants, please his lover for hours, and consciously ejaculate whenever he chooses.



Expanding Orgasm

Orgasm (drava) is a moment in which you experience, usually most fleetingly, the Clear Light of ultimate reality. Because of this, it holds the greatest potential for attaining enlightenment. According to the Tantras, it is solely through orgasm that you can attain enlightenment, and not through any other means. Only orgasm has the potential to realize the four levels of Mahāmudrā (See Chapter 8: Nondual Yoga). The final fruition of orgasm is the Great Bliss.

Orgasm covers a vast range of experiences in dramatically different intensities and lengths of time. While most people are only aware of orgasms that occur in the genitals, other orgasms can fill your whole body, while still others may literally ripple across the universe. Orgasms are important because they are the highest intensity experience of pleasure a human being can ordinarily know. They clear your mind stream and silence your thoughts, release obscuring emotions, and bring you peace and bliss. They deepen the bonds of love and contentment between you and your lover, and with conscious focus, they lead to enlightenment.

Through Tantric practice, orgasms expand vastly in their power and duration. An orgasm can expand to such an extent that it becomes a meditative practice in its own right. You and your lover can have full body orgasms, and learn to hold and maintain a single orgasm for minutes or even hours - the *Hevajra Tantra* calls this Orgasmic Meditative Absorption (Drava Samādhi), a stable and continuous meditative flow of orgasmic energy. Some basic practices for becoming more fully orgasmic include deep meditative breathing, haṭha yoga, massage, dancing, and living a healthy and happy lifestyle, while the most profound path is lots of sexual yoga practice.

In the hands of a skilled practitioner, orgasm becomes a tool for liberation. A sharp inhaling breath called a Charging Breath (Vīra Prāṇa) fills your subtle body with subtle orgasmic energy, allowing you to have a quick energy orgasm through your entire body. By directing orgasmic energies up your body for a central channel orgasm (Avadhūti Drava), orgasm occurs no longer as a purely genital orgasm (upastha drava) but also throughout your entire body, producing greater power and satisfaction, and transforming karma at the subtle level, freeing you into bliss. Directing your orgasms into the cakras to create cakra orgasms (cakra drava) activates their subtle powers. Orgasms centered in the cakras produces different effects: 1) forehead – nonconceptual bliss, 2) throat – blissful dreams, 3) heart – blissful love, and 4) navel – blissful inner heat. You attain profound happiness, and gain magical powers that you use wisely.

Over time, the man develops the exceptional ability to have orgasms without ejaculating. Through ejaculation control, combined with subtle energy yoga techniques and long sessions of lovemaking, a man begins to experience spontaneous orgasms that occur without him ejaculating at all, and that can occur through his whole body. This transforms a man from a very limited instrument of sexual power into a sex god who can please his lover beyond her dreams. Once a couple becomes multi-orgasmic, they can use each orgasm to enter the Clear Light.

Sexual Positions

The Tantras present a variety of sexual positions (saṃbhoga āsana) for ritual practice. Each position is a yogic posture (āsana) which, when practiced in a state of meditative absorption, purifies the subtle body. The stronger the sexual bliss you can generate and the longer you can hold the positions, the more you are transformed. Practicing sexual positions while holding a strong intention for realization brings swift success. As you practice these positions, you hold the focus of your awareness throughout your body and enjoy the symphony of pleasures and the rising of desire, becoming meditatively absorbed in them. Sexual positions are the main practice of the second of the Four Blissesses of sexual yoga, in which you concentrate on intensifying bliss. You ride the waves of meditative absorption, experiencing them together, as inner and outer

experience become one. Sexual positions are used in sexual yoga as you enjoy them along with the central methods of lovemaking.

In the exercises section in this chapter, forty-one sexual positions are presented, deriving from *The Sādhana of Secret Vajravilāsinī* (positions 1-2), Tantric Buddhist art (positions 3-4), the *Hevajra Tantra* (positions 5-8), the *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra* (9-21), and the *Kāma Sūtra* (22-41). *The Sādhana of Secret Vajravilāsinī*, which is principally a text of sexual yoga, describes only two positions, Squatting Position (Utkaṭā Āsana) and Bliss Position (Sukha Āsana). The true power of sexual yoga is found not in the physical pleasures of the positions themselves, but in the inner realization that is achieved through them. Tantric Buddhists rely heavily on instruction books from the a class of Indian texts on the erotic arts called the *kāma śāstras* (books on love), such as *The Kāma Sūtra*, for learning the arts of making love. In addition to many delightful practices for seduction and foreplay, *The Kāma Sūtra* teaches numerous positions for intercourse, all of which greatly empower sexual yoga.

The Kāma Sūtra and Tantra

The Kāma Sūtra (*The Book of Love*; c. 300s CE) is the world's oldest and greatest book of erotic love. With its cherished verses often memorized and studied under a teacher, the book's central message is that sexual love is a serious art form to be cultivated over a lifetime. Yet *The Kāma Sūtra* and the Tantras, though allied, are of two different worlds. *The Kāma Sūtra* is a book of erotic pleasure, not a Tantra. It focuses on fulfilling the desire for pleasuring the senses through sex, and celebrates the love that arises from it. But it contains none of the philosophy or ritual materials found in the Tantras. It does not state that its goal is to attain spiritual realization, but rather that "Eroticism is an experience that finds its finality in itself." In contrast, in *The Yoga of the Jewel Garland*, Kṛiṣṇācārya reminds Tantric Buddhist practitioners on the true transcendent purpose of the sexual arts: "Surely all this pleasure which is to be experienced is of the bound phenomenal realm of existence. *But we are seekers of liberation.*" However, *The Kāma Sūtra*'s practices, when performed in a context of sacred intent, become greatly Tantric. Confidence and skill in the fundamentals of erotic practice are among a Tantric practitioner's greatest assets.

Anal Sex

When you attain a high state of bliss, everything becomes blissful, including things that in an ordinary state of consciousness might appear repulsive. As with all sensual pleasures, anal sex (adhorata) can be richly enjoyed by those who are drawn to it as a meditative practice that brings inner awakening. The *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra* refers to anal pleasure in this way: "He should have his face fall in the middle of her anus (guda). He also strokes her anus with his nose. He envisions that the pleasure produced by that is from the joining with the deity. Then the yogi is liberated." The text adds, "He should eat feces as he likes," "And, taking the wash-water of her anus, the practitioner should wash his mouth, etc." This Tantra explains, "Just as when manure is applied, a tree becomes abundantly fruitful, so does a person gain the true fruits of pleasure by

eating unclean things.” A relief sculpture of one person joyfully eating the feces of another also decorates a Tantric Buddhist temple in Orissa.

Group Practice

The Tantras are in part manuals for orgiastic practice. Since much of medieval Indian culture was already orgiastic, orgies were not a Tantric innovation. However, the Tantras took these popular practices and transformed them into opportunities for rapid spiritual growth. Tantric feasts (gaṇacakras) in particular are group sacred sex rituals. The Tibetan master Jamgön Kongtrul calls group sexual yoga the Circle of the Assembly (Gaṇa Maṇḍala), and especially recommends it. For group sex practice, the *Hevajra Tantra* provides a ritual in which the male practitioner stands in the center of a maṇḍala, surrounded by eight consorts: “Into this maṇḍala enter the eight great blissful consorts who are twelve to sixteen years of age and are adorned with garlands and jewelry. With intense embraces and kisses the yogi serves these consorts. Removing all their clothes, kiss their lotuses again and again. By uniting the sexual organs, the erotic play arises.” The Tibetan master Marpa performed his Hevajra sādhana in this way. If you are drawn to these practices, you can form your own maṇḍala group, or join one near you.

Concluding Lovemaking

For the conclusion (samāpti) of lovemaking, *The Kāma Sūtra* advises, “After making love, one’s behavior should be affectionate. A solid attachment is established through friendly conversation.” It is a good time for hugging and kissing, with gentle, kind, and humorous words, and bounteous cuddling. A few bites to eat and sips of alcohol can ground you after the intensity of practice. Your connection, gratitude, love, and passion increase. The value of your long term relationship reveals itself to you both, and you cherish the journey you set out together on to attain inner awakening. It is customary in India to take a bath after lovemaking to cleanse your body, or you can just bask in the mix of your energies. You may also want to give each other a short massage. Afterwards you may enjoy a nice meal and then rest, telling lighthearted stories.

Results

**“Setting the two organs in equipoise,
the wise one’s happy accomplishment is known as the Great Bliss.”
- *Sarva Deva Samāgama Tantra***

From your overflowing of love and bliss, inner awakening is attained. Sexual yoga brings the subtle winds into the central channel, clears the most subtle obscurations of your root ignorance of self and other, and unites you with the Clear Light. *You see reality clearly.* You gain radiant and awe-inspiring beauty, youthful vigor, worldly magical powers and omniscience. You overflow with wisdom, light and love, and your actions are graceful and delightful. You dwell eternally in the Great Bliss. The *Hevajra Tantra* reveals the result of sexual yoga is that “The

yogi will attain numerous powers and become equal to all the buddhas.” Jamgön Kongtrul is especially compelling in describing the final results of sexual yoga:

The ultimate attainment is that the quintessence of the channels, winds, and bindus will increase, gradually consuming the stains and transforming the body into the actual rainbow body of inseparable form-emptiness, the sambhogakāya. The mind becomes as the luminous clarity of inseparable bliss-emptiness, the enlightened intention of the dharmakāya. *That is enlightenment – and that is what this does.*

Once you attain the Clear Light, the bulk of your karmic obscurations are washed away. Your final task is to continue to enter into this field of pristine awareness in your practice until all your obscurations have been released and you attain perfect buddhahood.

Vows

Your vows are the vows of the third consecration: to practice sexual yoga until you can attain high and prolonged states of sexual arousal while maintaining meditative stability, or at least six months practice, before moving on to nondual yoga.

Sādhana Vows – Sādhana Samaya

You take the all important vows toward your consort, pledging honor and commitment while practicing the sādhana. By incorporating sexual yoga into your sādhana practice with your consort, your bliss becomes strong, lasts longer, and you attain enlightenment quickly.

Daily Conduct - Caryā

Between sessions of Tantric practice, a field of bliss emanates from your body, a pure realm emerges from you and spreads out into your home, work place, community, and across the universe. It is a tremendous yet effortless gift you give to others. Your vow is to remain in the undifferentiated bliss of nirvāṇa – there are no appearances whatsoever. Sexual yoga with many consorts during holy days and in group Tantric feasts (gaṇacakra) can also support your path.

Exercises

The exercises below can be performed independently during your first weekly session, and again as part of *The Sādhana of Secret Vajravilāsinī* during your second weekly session. During sessions in which you are performing the sādhana, when you reach the verses instructing you to practice the Four Blissesses of sexual yoga, you should perform that practice for at least a few months, and then experiment with substituting other methods of sexual yoga.

Time: 2 hours.

Preparing for Practice

Prepare yourselves as necessary, and gather any items you may need for yourselves and your ritual space as necessary, as described in Chapter 9: Preparing for Practice.

Initial Practices – Sevā

Begin by following the initial practices.

1. Recite the Refuge Vow.

*buddham śaraṇam gacchāmi
dharmam śaraṇam gacchāmi
saṅgham śaraṇam gacchāmi*

“I go for refuge to the Buddha.”

“I go for refuge to the Dharma.”

“I go for refuge to the Saṅgha.”

Recite 3x.



2. Recite the Bodhisattva Vow.

*viśuddhaṃ dhārayiṣyāmi yathā buddhena deśitaṃ
tena jītvā śaṭhamāraṃ prāpya buddhatvam uttamaṃ
bhaveyaṃ bhavakhinnānāṃ śaraṇaṃ sarvadehināṃ*

“I will maintain purity, as taught by the Buddha.

Conquering the demon Mara, and attaining supreme buddhahood,
I vow to be a refuge for all beings, weary of saṃsāra.”

Recite 3x.



3. Recite the Lineage Prayer.

oṃ namo gurubhyaḥ

“*oṃ* Homage to the gurus.”

“To all the ones who know the true reality, I offer a maṇḍala (Maṇḍala Mudrā) of the Three Worlds:



From the vast expanse of the ocean of primordial wisdom, I invoke Vajradhara and his precious consort Vajradhātviśvarī.

From the Buddhafield of Sukhāvatī, I call upon the great buddhas Amitābha and Pāṇḍarā.

From his celestial paradise Potala, I invoke the noble Lord of erotic passion Lokanātha.

From the pure mind of Saraha to the great master Śabara, the noble teachings were given.

From Lokanātha to the great master Śabara, these words of practice were heard as an imperishable sound.

Masters of the lineage, Saraha and Hedarmā, Śabara and Śabarī, I invoke you all. For the benefit of all beings, I will attain enlightenment in this very life. Guide me in the path that leads to the Great Bliss.”

Visualize that you are surrounded by countless buddhas, bodhisattvas, yogis and yoginīs, Dharma protectors, and masters of the lineage who pledge to support your practice. They dissolve into your heart, bringing you inner awakening.

Benefits: Establishes meditative absorption, dispels obstacles, wins the favor of the buddhas.

Time: 2 minutes.

Sexual Arousal – Rata Avasthāpana

Arouse each other fully, taking your time and enjoying each moment as deeply as you can. Be aware of how the quality of your lovemaking changes after these simple but profound sacred meditative exercises.

Benefits: Brings sensual pleasure, connects you with your lover, and opens your body and mind for higher states of bliss.

Time: 38 minutes.

Eye Gazing - Dṛiṣṭi

Gaze with sacred devotion into each other’s eyes, and connect to each other’s Essence.

Benefits: Establishes a deep inner connection so that your lovemaking transcends the senses.

Time: 2 minutes.

Meditative Breathing – Vāyu Yoga

After eye gazing, practice one or both of these breathing techniques for a few minutes or through the length of your session.

Deep Breathing (Pūrṇa Prāṇa):

1. Breathe slowly and deeply.
2. Continue this practice as long as you comfortably can, through the exercises of Sexual Arousal, Yoni Worship and Vajra Worship, and the Central Methods of Sexual Yoga.

Benefits: Establishes and maintains deep connection and meditative absorption.

Time: 2 minutes. At first you may only be able to hold this practice for a couple minutes, but over time you may be able to do it for the entire length of your sexual yoga session.

Synchronized Breathing (Sama Prāṇa):

1. Synchronize your breathing, inhaling and exhaling at the same time.
2. Continue this practice as long as you comfortably can, through the exercises of Sexual Arousal, Yoni Worship and Vajra Worship, and the Central Methods of Sexual Yoga.

Benefits: Builds very deep connection and meditative absorption, leading to the Fusion of Identities.

Time: 2 minutes. For the first few minutes of your practice session, and then intermittently for the rest of it.

Stimulating the Five Senses - Pañca Indriya

Stimulate all your Five Senses, enjoying their pleasures while avoiding attachment:

1. Touch each other's whole bodies.
2. Say sweet words to each other and hear them intently.
3. Take in your lover's scent or offer fragrant flowers.
4. Feed each other small delicious bites of food and give each other tasty kisses.
5. Dazzle each other with the beauty of your bodies.

Benefits: Awakens each sense, heightening its potential for pleasure during lovemaking.

Time: 5 minutes.

Dance - Nāṭya

Knowing yourselves as god and goddess, dance for each other erotically. Allow the deity to dance through you. You can use spiritually uplifting music to support your dance as you like.

1. She gets up from her seat, dances for him, and sits down.
2. He gets up from his seat, dances for her, and sits down.

Benefits: Empowers you in the essence of your gender, bestows the divine power of the deity, and sexually arouses your partner.

Time: 5 minutes.

Foreplay

Select one of the two methods of foreplay below.

Ninefold Blossoming – Nava Puṣpa

Enjoy the Ninefold Blossoming with your lover:

1. Embracing.
2. Kissing.
3. Gently rubbing the two breasts.
4. Gazing.
5. Touching.
6. Opening the yoni.
7. Rubbing the liṅgaṃ.
8. Arising for entering (his liṅgaṃ becomes erect).
9. Revealing the three regions for entering the lotus (clitoris, lips, and perineum) – the man gazes at the woman's yoni.

Benefits: Brings strong sexual arousal while maintaining meditative awareness.

Time: 24 minutes.

Erotic Techniques of the *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra* - Krama

Practice the following activities of foreplay:

1. To her whole body: The man kisses the forehead, eyes, neck, ears, sides, armpits, hands, and breasts; and pinches them, with the exception of the woman's eyes.

2. To her breasts: The man rubs her nipples with the hands, sucks, then bites.
3. To her belly: Having the woman lie on her back, the man kisses her lovely belly, remembering again and again, "Here I once was."
4. To her lotus: The man touches her lotus with his hand. He kisses and pinches, looking there drawing down with the hand. He then says these kinds of words: "As I have entered through this, so too have I emerged numerous times."
5. To her thighs and feet: After pinching her thighs, the man rubs her feet like a slave.
6. Then she does the same for him, offering similar words of profound praise and reflection for his belly and vajra, saying "I came from here," and "By this vajra, I was born many times."

Benefits: Awakens your body's sense of touch, making it extra sensitive for lovemaking.

Time: 24 minutes.

Yoni Worship – Yoni Pūjā

Honor and worship the female practitioner's yoni.

Benefits: She is prepared for lovemaking as a sacred emanation of a goddess.

Time: 10 minutes.

Entering the Maṇḍala - Maṇḍala Avatara

1. The female practitioner sits with her legs open and the male practitioner gazes at her yoni. Become meditatively absorbed, and allow desire with no lustful thoughts to arise. She keeps her awareness on her yoni and receives his devotional and heartfelt gazes with love and gratitude. They experience her yoni simultaneously as: 1) a physical yoni of an enlightened being, 2) the yoni of a goddess in the subtle realm, and 3) as an expression of ultimate reality.
2. She opens and closes her yoni petals as he gazes at them, deepening arousal and absorption.
3. She speaks sweet words of love and devotion to him. "By this yoni, you will become an enlightened one."

Benefits: Builds arousal while maintaining a pure mind without craving desire.

Time: 1 minute.

Armoring - Kavaca

Armoring is a ritual of empowering the woman's yoni with a mantra, in which the man visually places the sacred seed syllables of the goddess in her yoni.

1. He recites “*eṃ āṃ rīṃ raṃ brīṃ Vajravilāsinī*” 3x. He finishes by touching her yoni and reciting “sa,” “accomplished,” once.
2. He recites the seed syllables, “*eṃ āṃ rīṃ raṃ brīṃ,*” as he touches each part of her body with his right hand, honoring her forehead, eyes, nose, throat, heart, breasts, armpits, navel, and her lip-shaped interior lotus hole, and using both his hands where there are double parts. He performs this 2x.

Benefits: Purifies and transforms her yoni into a sacred instrument.

Time: 1 minute.

Mantra Repetition – Mantra Japa

Worship the yoni by offering many mantra repetitions of the deity.

1. He recites the seed syllables “*eṃ āṃ rīṃ raṃ brīṃ*” 108x.
2. The man offers flower petals to her yoni.

Benefits: Blesses and empowers her yoni.

Time: 2 minutes.



Kissing the Yoni – Cumba Bhaga

1. The male practitioner kisses his lover’s yoni many times.
2. As she has one or more orgasms, he drinks the nectar of her lips.

Benefits: By ingesting her sexual fluids with high intention, the woman’s fluids are alchemically transformed in the man’s body and his subtle body is purified. Intensifies arousal.

Time: 2 minutes.

Stimulating the Bird Face – Khaga Mukhā

1. The man places the tips of his ring and middle fingers together, and the space between the fingers, massage the woman’s bhāgānkurā (clitoris) gently and continuously.
2. As she has one or more orgasms, he drinks the nectar of her lips.

Benefits: Greatly intensifies arousal. By ingesting her sexual fluids with high intention, her fluids are alchemically transformed in his body and his subtle body is purified.

Time: 3 minutes.

Offering Incense - Gandha Vidhi

The man lights some incense, and passes it around the woman in a circular motion 3x.

Benefits: Incense spiritually purifies and is a sacred gift of pleasure. When offered with great devotion, it brings you and your lover closer together.

Time: 1 minute.



Vajra Worship – Vajra Pūjā

The woman worships the man's vajra.

Benefits: Builds arousal while infusing your awareness with sacredness.

Time: 10 minutes.

Vajra Gazing – Vajra Dṛiṣṭi

1. The male practitioner sits with his legs open and the female practitioner gazes at his vajra. Become meditatively absorbed, and allow desire with no lustful thoughts to arise. He keeps his awareness on his vajra and receives her devotional and heartfelt gazes with love and gratitude. They experience his vajra simultaneously as: 1) a physical vajra of an enlightened being, 2) the vajra a god in the subtle realm, and 3) as an expression of ultimate reality.
2. He lightly strokes his vajra as she gazes at it, deepening arousal and absorption.
3. He speaks sweet words of love and devotion to her. "By this vajra, you will become an enlightened one."

Benefits: Builds arousal while maintaining a pure mind without craving desire.

Time: 1 minute.

Armoring - Kavaca

The woman visually places sacred seed syllables of Vajravilāsinī in his vajra.

1. She recites “*eṃ āṃ rīṃ raṃ brīṃ Padmanarteśvara*” 3x. She finishes by caressing his vajra while reciting “*sa,*” “accomplished,” once.
2. She recites the seed syllables, “*eṃ āṃ rīṃ raṃ brīṃ,*” as she touches each part of his body with her right hand, honoring his forehead, eyes, nose, throat, heart, breasts, armpits, navel, and his vajra, and using both her hands where there are double parts. She performs this 2x.

Benefits: Purifies and transforms his body and vajra into a sacred instrument.

Time: 2 minutes.

Mantra Repetition – Mantra Japa

Worship the vajra by offering many mantra repetitions of the deity.

1. The woman recites the seed syllables “*eṃ āṃ rīṃ raṃ brīṃ*” 108x.
2. The woman offers flower petals to his vajra.

Benefits: Blesses and empowers his vajra.

Time: 2 minutes.



Vajra Massage – Vajra Aṅgamardana

The woman sensuously and pleurably massages her lover’s vajra with light strokes.

Benefits: Cultivates sacred arousal while maintaining meditative absorption.

Time: 1 minute.

Sucking the Vajra – Aupariṣṭaka

The woman sucks the man’s vajra with great devotion, and drinks any sexual fluids that arise from it.

Benefits: Greatly increases arousal while maintaining sacred view and nonattachment. If the man's sexual fluids are released, the woman drinks them and alchemically transforms them in her own body.

Time: 3 minutes.

Offering Incense - Gandha Vidhi

The woman lights some incense, and passes it around the man in a circular motion 3x.

Benefits: Incense spiritually purifies and is a sacred gift of pleasure. When offered with great devotion, it brings you and your lover closer together.

Time: 1 minute.



The Central Methods of Sexual Yoga - Karaṇa

For the remainder of your session, practice one or two of the Central Methods of Sexual Yoga. Breathe deeply and meditatively with your lover, maintaining your purpose and clear focus.

Benefits: Purifies karmic obscurations, brings bliss, and leads to enlightenment.

Time: 1 hour.

Beginning Methods

1. The Four Blisses of Sexual Yoga – Catur Ānanda Karmamudrā

It is a good idea to begin this exercise by talking each step through with your lover so that you know what to focus on. Be very clear and strong in your awareness as you attain each bliss. Cultivate increasing strength of meditative absorption while maintaining love and devotion.

Visualizing yourselves as the deity and its consort:

1. Bliss (Ānanda) - The man enters the woman. As your genitals touch, both practitioners observe the many pleasurable sensations. Become meditatively absorbed in these sensations, while avoiding attachment to them, recognizing that it is a sacred pleasure that fades. Together the practitioners attain the first bliss, the Bliss of worldly pleasures, and the first moment, Diverse (Vicitra), the moment of many diverse sensations.

2. Supreme Bliss (Paramānanda) - As the practitioners continue to make love, the meditative awareness becomes deeper, more focused on sexual arousal, and more sustained pleasure builds. Continuing to avoid craving desire, ever-conscious as of the sensations are pure and impermanent, the practitioners slowly lose their sense of self and other. This is the second bliss, Supreme Bliss, marked by the second moment of Ripening (Vipāka), the intensifying bliss of lovemaking.

3. The Bliss of Cessation (Viramānanda) – While maintaining a very strong intention to attain enlightenment, both reach orgasm. A desireless bliss pervades your body and mind. For the third moment, Dissolving (Vimarda), you reflect on the thought, “I have experienced bliss.” Nirvāṇa is attained, the one taste, the pure bliss of ultimate reality, and to the best of your ability you perceive an infinite field of the Clear Light with no arising of appearances at all.

4. Great Bliss (Mahāsukha) – Recognizing that nirvāṇa is incomplete, and motivated by love and compassion for all beings, the practitioners choose to return to the world of appearances to delight in them. Uniting the erotic bliss created from the first two blisses with the permanent bliss of nirvāṇa, the practitioners attain the Great Bliss. The fourth moment, the Signless (Vilakṣaṇa) or nonconceptual moment, is the awareness that the Great Bliss is ever-present.

It is ideal, though not essential, that the man and woman achieve orgasm at the same time. Once the man learns to have orgasms without ejaculating, this practice becomes greatly enhanced with many opportunities in a session for the practitioners to attain union with the Clear Light.

Benefits: Your karmic obscurations are quickly released, and you attain enlightenment.

Time: 1 hour.

2. Swing Recitation with Physical Consort – Dolā Japa Karmamudrā

1. Visualizing yourselves as the deity and its consort, sit with your lover in sexual union, in a mutual sitting pose like Vajra Pose or Bliss Pose.

2. Visualize the six glowing red and white marks on your bodies: the four major cakras, the Secret Cakra, and the Crown Cakra.

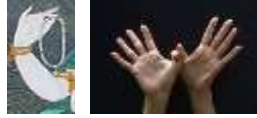
3. Visualize the seed mantra of Vajravilāsinī, *eṃ āṃ rīṃ raṃ brīṃ*, as a mantra garland in the woman’s yoni.

4. While slowly reciting the mantra once, visualize the mantra moving from her yoni to the man’s vajra, up to his heart, up his central channel to his right nostril, into her left nostril, down to her heart, and down to her yoni. This is one repetition.

5. Complete 108 repetitions, performing them with great speed, and seal each other with the protective Garuda Mudrā hand seal.

6. Recite up to 5 complete sets of repetitions, or as many as you desire.

ॐ आँ रीँ रँ ब्रीँ



Benefits: Unites your awareness with your lover, attaining the Fusion of Identities.

Time: 1 hour.

3. Spontaneous Awakening with Physical Consort - Sahaja Bodhi Karmamudrā

This method is practiced without any deity visualization, subtle energy yoga practices, or sādhana – just you and your lover in union:

1. Holding a strong intention for enlightenment, and with great reverence and devotion, you and your physical consort begin to make love. The male practitioner enters the female, and you observe the first bliss and the first moment.
2. Slowly and meditatively, develop the second bliss and the second moment.
3. Both practitioners have orgasms. Observe the third bliss and the third moment.
4. The practitioners allow their awareness to remain very open and relaxed. Observe the fourth bliss and the fourth moment, the Great Bliss that is the union of all the blisses.

Benefits: Nondual awareness of Mahāmudrā dawns spontaneously.

Time: 1 hour.

4. Mantra Repetition with Physical Consort – Mantra Japa Karmamudrā

1. Visualize yourselves as the deity and its consort, and make love.
2. In sexual union, recite the seed mantra of Vajravilāsinī, *eṃ āṃ rīṃ raṃ brīṃ*, many times.
3. Near the end of your practice, the practitioners both attain orgasm, and rest in the Clear Light.
4. Returning from the Clear Light motivated by love and compassion, attain the Great Bliss.

Benefits: The deity bestows empowerment, and you attain nondual awareness.

Time: 1 hour.

ॐ आँ रीँ रँ ब्रीँ



5. Meditation on the Five Senses with Physical Consort – Pañca Indriya Samādhi Karmamudrā

Meditate on the Five Senses as expressions of the female buddhās of the Five Buddha Families as you make love. Spend a few minutes as the first buddhā reciting the mantra many times, then shift to the next one. Experience all senses as pure arisings of the buddhās.

1. Visualize yourselves as the deity and its consort.
2. You both transform into Locanā, the Buddhā of sight. Perceive all sights as expressions of her. Recite the mantra in Sanskrit many times: *oṃ mahāsiddhi oṃ. oṃ Great Success! oṃ*
3. You both transform into Māmakī, the Buddhā of hearing. Perceive all sights as expressions of her. Recite the mantra in Sanskrit many times: *oṃ vajra siddhi oṃ. oṃ Vajra Success! oṃ*
4. You both transform Dhātviśvarī, the Buddhā of smell. Perceive all sights as expressions of her. Recite the mantra in Sanskrit many times: *oṃ samaya abhiṣeka siddhi oṃ. oṃ Pledge Consrecreation Success! oṃ*
5. You both transform into Pāṇḍarā, the Buddhā of taste. Perceive all sights as expressions of her. Recite the mantra in Sanskrit many times: *oṃ dharma siddhi oṃ. oṃ Dharma Success! oṃ*
6. You both transform into Samaya Tārā, the Buddhā of touch. Perceive all sights as expressions of her. Recite the mantra in Sanskrit many times: *oṃ karma siddhi oṃ. oṃ Action Success! oṃ*
7. Sit in peaceful equipoise and experience the Five Senses as pure arisings of the buddhās.

Benefits: You gain the worldly magical powers of the Five Buddha Families. Guided by the buddhās, your awareness transcends the limits of the senses into the Great Bliss.

Time: 1 hour.



6. Meditation on the Five Elements with Physical Consort - Pañca Bhūta Samādhi Karmamudrā

Visualize yourselves as the deity and its consort. As you make love, focus on all appearances of the Five Elements as the buddhas of the Five Buddha Families:

1. Earth: Vairocana, hardness.
2. Water: Akṣobhya, sexual fluids.
3. Fire: Amitābha, friction.
4. Wind: Amoghasiddhi, movement.
5. Space: Ratnasambhava, passion and orgasm.

Benefits: Your Five Elements are transformed into the pure nature of primordial awareness.

Time: 1 hour.

7. Meditation on Your Own Body as Bliss with Physical Consort – Mahāsukha Deha Karmamudrā

1. Visualize yourselves as the deity and its consort. Make love, reaching a high state of bliss, and together attain orgasm.
2. Either remaining physically joined or separating, meditate silently in a state of orgasmic bliss, opening to nondual awareness.
3. Meditate on all forms and sounds as having the nature of bliss.

Benefits: Attains nondual awareness.

Time: 1 hour.

8. Nondual Lovemaking – Advaya Maithuna

1. Visualize yourselves as the deity and its consort. Sit in front of your lover, and view each other as completely equal. Let go of any sense of separateness from each other, and release any concept of yourselves or any appearances as possessing an independent, inherent existence.
2. Maintain this awareness as you make love. Maintain a lovemaking experience of equals, not allowing one partner to dominate or the other to be submissive. Slowly allow yourselves to lose your sense of self and other as deeply as you can.
3. Attain orgasm together, and enter the bliss of the Clear Light.
4. Remaining in the Clear Light, return to the bliss of form, and attain the Great Bliss.

Benefits: Creates a strong bond of equality between lovers, and attains nondual awareness.

Time: 1 hour.

9. Melting into a Moon Disk with Physical Consort - Candra Anubheda Karmamudrā

1. Visualize yourselves as the deity and its consort. In sexual embrace with your lover, imagine in between the two of you three vertical seed syllables radiating light: a white *om*, a red *āḥ*, a blue *hūm*. In between these three are two red *ho* seed syllables, forming a mantra garland.
2. Visualize the mantra garland enters the man's mouth, passes down his central channel to his vajra, and into the yoni of the woman. Repeat this step many times.
3. In her yoni, visualize the mantra garland melts into blazing red light.
4. You both attain orgasm. Visualize you both melt into a horizontal Moon disk seat of white seminal fluids. Together you enter the Clear Light, the pure bliss of nirvāṇa.
5. Motivated by love and compassion, visualize yourselves as the deity and consort in sexual embrace once again. Return to the world of appearances and attain the Great Bliss.

Benefits: Strengthens your ability to enter into the Clear Light and attain enlightenment.

Time: 1 hour.

oṃ
ho
ho
āḥ
ho
ho
hūṃ



10. Crest Jewel of the Bindu with Physical Consort – Bindu Cūḍāmaṇir Karmamudrā

1. Visualize yourselves as the deity and its consort. Sitting facing each other but not in sexual union, the woman generates a small image of Vajravilāsinī as a red bindu from a red seed syllable *eṃ* at her navel, then moves the deity up and down her central channel, finally resting at the tip of her yoni at the cervix. The man simultaneously generates a small image of Padmanarteśvara as a white bindu from a red seed syllable *eṃ* at his navel, moves the deity up and down his central channel, finally resting at the tip of his vajra.
2. The practitioners unite sexually, uniting the two deities at the practitioner's genitals in lovemaking as well. The man and woman make love while maintaining the visualization of the deities in sexual union. The subtle sexual fluids of the man and woman blend together.
3. Attain orgasm and release your awareness together into the Clear Light.
4. Motivated by love and compassion for all beings, return joyfully to the world of appearances and attain the Great Bliss.

Benefits: Purifies the subtle body through alchemically transforming subtle sexual fluids. In more advanced practitioners, the focus of the bindus at the genitals triggers a spontaneous vibration of the four levels of Mahāmudrā, and enlightenment is achieved.

Time: 1 hour.



Intermediate Methods

11. Great Worship with Physical Consort – Mahāpūjā Karmamudrā

1. Visualize yourselves as the deity and its consort. The male practitioner visualizes a blue *hūṃ* in the tip of his vajra at the Vajra Cakra. The female practitioner visualizes a red *vaṃ* in her yoni at her Mani Cakra (cervix).

2. While making love, both partners visualize the two seed syllables touching in a “kiss,” generating a white *pad* between their seed syllables.
3. The white *pad* travels up each of your central channels to the navel.
4. The *pad* ignites the fires of your navel cakras, which starts the cycle of Inner Heat Yoga.
5. Remaining in sexual union, continue the practices of Inner Heat Yoga with Physical Consort.

Benefits: Generates peace and bliss, and purifies the subtle body.

Time: 1 hour.

hūṃ vaṃ
pad

12. Reverse Urethral Suction with Physical Consort - Vajrolī Mudrā Karmamudrā

1. Visualize yourselves as the deity and its consort. The man and woman make love with Great Passion, attain orgasm, and ejaculate together.
2. Both practitioners meditate on the mixed sexual fluids, visualizing the upward flow of the subtle energy of mixed female and male fluids back and up into your central channels.
3. Recite the Eightfold Mantra, *hā hā he he ho ho hūṃ hūṃ*, many times to help drive the subtle energy of the mixed sexual fluids up into your central channels.

Benefits: Alchemically unites the male and female subtle energies and purifies the subtle body. Develops ejaculation control and full body orgasms.

Time: 1 hour.



Advanced Methods

13. Inner Heat Yoga with Physical Consort - Caṇḍālī Yoga Karmamudrā

Inner Heat Yoga with Physical Consort gives the power of sexual energies needed to achieve the Four Blissess of subtle energy yoga.

Benefits: Attains the Four Blissess of subtle energy yoga. Purifies obscurations, brings intense heat and orgasmic bliss, stills your mind, and brings worldly magical powers. Gives many blissful experiences that prepare you for entering the Clear Light. Clears the navel cakra knots and gives the ability to draw in strongly the Five Root Winds.

Time: 1 hour.

Exercise #1: The Action Consort – Karmamudrā

1. Visualize yourselves as the deity and its consort.
2. Join together in sexual union.
3. Maintain the clarity of your visualization, divine pride, understanding of the meaning of the attributes, and the ultimate nature of the deity. Relax in the awareness that you *are* the deity. Feel the Great Passion of the two deities in sexual union and allow erotic bliss to rise.

Benefits: Clears your mind, prevents ordinary appearances from arising, develops good visualization of the deity, and generates erotic passion.

Time: 4 minutes.

Exercise #2: Visualizing the Subtle Body – Bhāvanā Vajra Deha

1. Retaining your visualized form as the deity, visualize the four major cakras at the forehead, throat, heart, and navel.
2. Visualize the three major channels: the central channel and the two side channels.
3. Visualize the Four Seals: the red *āḥ* at the navel cakra, the white *hūṃ* in the heart cakra, the red *oṃ* at the throat cakra, and the white *haṃ* at the forehead cakra.
4. Four fingerwidths below the navel, visualize a red *āḥ* stroke seed syllable, with a short flame.
5. Visualize the inside of your body as hollow like an empty shell, your body insubstantial like a rainbow.
6. Blend your awareness fully into your subtle body, until you become one with it.
7. Bring your focus strongly to the short *āḥ* seed syllable at the point below the navel and dissolve your mind into it in the meditative absorption of nondual awareness.

Benefits: Brings mental clarity, prevents drowsiness, gives a strong mental image of the subtle body needed for success in Inner Heat Yoga, and clears inner obstacles to practice.

Time: 5 minutes.



āḥ hūṃ
oṃ haṃ



Exercise #3: Blazing - Jvala

1. Four fingerwidths below the navel, visualize a red *āḥ* stroke seed syllable with a short flame. Concentrate your awareness at its uppermost tip. The flame becomes hotter as the Five Root Winds are partially drawn in by your concentration and fan the flames, causing the flame to become intensely hot.
2. The flame rises slowly, and reaches the navel cakra, where it burns the red *āḥ* seed syllable, liberating you from attachment to the earth element and the form aggregate. At each cakra, keep your focus on the seed syllable at the center of the cakra.
3. The flame rises slowly, and reaches the heart cakra, where it burns the white *hūṃ* seed syllable, liberating you from attachment to the water element and the consciousness aggregate.
4. The flame rises slowly, and reaches the throat cakra, where it burns the red *oṃ* seed syllable, liberating you from attachment to the fire element and the perceptions aggregate.
5. The flame rises slowly, and reaches the forehead cakra, where it melts the white *haṃ* seed syllable, liberating you from attachment to the wind element and the intentions aggregate.
6. Visualize the subtle winds in the side channels moving strongly into the central channel at the navel cakra. A sign that the Five Root Winds are ready to enter into the central channel strongly is that your breath becomes even between the two nostrils.

Benefits: Purifies the Five Elements and Five Aggregates. Gives you the power to draw in the Five Root Winds strongly.

Time: 20 minutes.



āḥ hūṃ
oṃ haṃ

Exercise #4: Vajra Recitation – Vajra Japa

1. Draw in the Five Root Winds. From above, draw in the four upper root winds, colored white, red, green, and blue, one at a time strongly into the central channel at the navel cakra.

2. From below, draw in the lower wind, colored yellow, strongly into the central channel at the point below the navel.
3. Maintain your visualization of the Five Root Winds in the central channel, at the point below the navel, at the uppermost point of the *āh* stroke.
4. Hold the winds in the central channel above the *āh* stroke by reciting *silently* the seed mantra of Vajravilāsinī, *eṃ āṃ rīṃ raṃ brīṃ*, 300-500x. A sign that the Five Root Winds have strongly entered the central channel is that your breath stops, and the power of your meditative absorption becomes even stronger.

Benefits: The winds in the central channel intensify the fire of the inner heat. Loosens the knots in the navel cakra, allowing the inner heat to build.

Time: 5-10 minutes.



Exercise #5: Retaining the Winds - Prāṇāyama

1. Without the mantra but with pure focus, retain your awareness strongly at the *āh* stroke at the point below the navel.
2. The breath slows or stops.

Benefits: The illusory awareness of subject and object dissolves, and nondual wisdom arises. If you have brought the Five Root Winds strongly into the central channel, you may see the Five Signs, which prepares you for Clear Light Yoga.

Time: 5-10 minutes.



Exercise #6: Dripping - Sravate Śaśī

1. Bringing your awareness to the forehead cakra, the white *ham* seed syllable begins to melt.

2. The white *ham* seed syllable releases white bindus downwards into the central channel like a stream of honey. As the white bindus slowly reach each cakra, you successeively realize the inner Four Blissess. Take note of the qualities and increasing intensity of the blisses. As you reach each bliss, hold your awareness at that point for 1-2 minutes.
3. The first bliss, Bliss, the bliss of the white bindus from the head cakra melting within the forehead cakra, is attained.
4. The second bliss, Supreme Bliss, the bliss of the white bindus from the forehead cakra slowly melting down and reaching and mixing with the throat cakra, is attained.
5. The third bliss, the Bliss of Cessation, the bliss of the white bindus from the forehead cakra slowly melting down and reaching and mixing with the heart cakra, is attained.
6. The fourth and final bliss, Innate Bliss, the bliss of the white bindus from the forehead cakra slowly melting down and reaching and mixing with the navel cakra, is attained.
7. The white bindus in the navel cakra move back upwards, and the inner Four Blissess are experienced in reverse order, with Bliss starting at the navel cakra and Innate Bliss at the forehead cakra. As the white bindus pass upwards, the seed syllable at each cakra is restored and light blazes from each one, matching the color of the seed syllable.

Benefits: Pervades the body with heat and bliss, purifies the subtle body of subtle karmic obscurations.

Time: 10-20 minutes.



ham om
hūm āḥ

Exercise #7: Bath of Bliss - Snana Sukha

With the Five Root Winds strongly present in the central channel, rest in the bliss of nondual awareness. You may see the Five Signs.

Benefits: Transforms your obscuring thoughts and emotions, cultivates peace, bliss, heat, light, and nondual awareness. Gives you the ability to dissolve your attachment to the Five Elements, resulting in the arising of the Five Signs, necessary to attain union with the Clear Light.

Time: 5-10 minutes.

14. Meditation at the Tip with Physical Consort - Dhyāna Bindu Karmamudrā

After inhaling the breath, hold the breath for a minute or more, and hold the visualization of the bindu at the tip of the genitals until you feel you are about to ejaculate, then return the bindu to the top of the head.

1. Visualize yourselves as the deity and its consort. Join in sexual union.
2. The male practitioner visualizes at the Vajra Cakra (Vajra Cakra), the tip of the penis, a blue *phaṭ* blocks the opening. This seed syllable helps prevent the man from ejaculating.
3. You both visualize red flames from the *āḥ* stroke seed syllable at the point four-fingerwidths below your navel cakra rising up the central channel and melting the white bindus in the forehead cakra.
4. The white bindus melt downwards, and reach your throat cakras. You experience Bliss, the bliss of the bindus at the throat cakra. You attain the loss of the coarse sense of self and other.
5. The white bindus melt downwards, and reach your heart cakras. You experience Supreme Bliss, the bliss of the bindus at the heart cakra. You attain the loss of self.
6. The white bindus melt downwards, and reach your navel cakras. You experience the Bliss of Cessation, the bliss of the bindus at the navel cakra. You attain the loss of other, and the wisdom of the one taste of primordial wisdom as the pure bliss of nirvāṇa.
7. The white bindus melt downwards, and reach the tips of your genitals. You experience Innate Bliss – the Discriminating Wisdom that enjoys all sensory pleasures without attachment arises. Hold your awareness with great concentration at this point for as long as you can.
8. When the bliss becomes too intense for a man and feels he is about to ejaculate, or when you are ready to complete the session, you both bring the white bindus back up the central channel and experiences the Four Bliss again slowly in ascending order and back to the forehead cakra. Spread the bliss throughout your whole bodies.

Benefits: A stronger form of Inner Heat Yoga that leads you into the Clear Light. Purifies subtle obscurations, brings bliss, and gives ejaculation control.

Time: 1 hour.



15. Clear Light Yoga with Physical Consort – Prabhāsvara Yoga Karmamudrā

Clear Light Yoga with Physical Consort is the pinnacle of all sexual yoga practices. Those of the very highest capacity can remain fully conscious through Clear Light Yoga. Prepare your body for going unconscious when you attain union with the Clear Light, which it most probably will, until you become a master of the highest capacity. Over time your experiences of the Clear Light grows until it overtakes you and you know you have attained union with it.

Benefits: Purifies your emotional and mental obscurations. You attain the union of the bliss of ultimate reality and the bliss of worldly appearances - the Great Bliss.

Time: 1 hour.

Exercise #1: The Action Consort - Karmamudrā

1. Visualize yourselves as the deity and its consort, completely surrounded by the deity's maṇḍala.
2. Perceive all appearances as part of the deity's maṇḍala.

Benefits: Generates pure appearances and bliss.

Time: 5 minutes.



Exercise #2: Visualising the Subtle Body - Bhāvanā Vajra Deha

Visualize the Five Root Winds, channels, cakras, and seed syllables.

Benefits: Brings mental clarity, prevents drowsiness, gives a strong mental image of the subtle body needed for success in Clear Light Yoga, and clears inner obstacles to practice.

Time: 5 minutes.



Exercise #3: Inner Heat Yoga - Caṇḍālī Karmamudrā

Practice all the steps of Inner Heat Yoga, generating inner heat, bringing in the Five Root Winds strongly into the navel cakra, and induce the Four Bliss. See Exercise 13 above.

Benefits: Loosens the knots at the navel cakra, which is required to attain union with the Clear Light.

Time: 10 minutes.

Exercise #4: Vajra Repetition – Vajra Japa

1. Bring your awareness into your heart cakra.
2. Practice silent mantra repetition of the deity's seed mantra *em āṃ rīṃ raṃ brīṃ*. Recite 500x.

Benefits: Loosens the knots in the heart cakra.

Time: 10 minutes.



Exercise #5: Clear Light Yoga – Prabhāsvara Yoga

1. Bring your awareness into your heart cakra. Visualize a sphere of white light in the center of your heart cakra, which is the union of your mind and the primordial mind of the Clear Light. Meditate on the sphere of primordial white light.
2. Just outside and surrounding the sphere visualize a tetrahedron, the *Evam*, that emits five-colored light: white, blue, red, yellow, and green. Meditate on the tetrahedron.
3. Visualize the five-colored light returns and dissolves all appearances of the Three Worlds into yourself.
4. Visualize your physical consort dissolves into yourself.
5. Visualize your form as the deity dissolves into the sphere of white light at the heart cakra.
6. Draw the Five Root Winds *completely* into your heart cakra. You may see the Five Signs of the Five Root Winds as they dissolve in succession into your heart cakra: 1) the yellow Downward Voiding Wind that carries the earth element - a mirage, 2) the white Life Sustaining Wind that carries the water element – like smoke, 3) the red Upward Wind that carries the fire element – like fire flies, 4) the green Equally Abiding Wind that carries the wind element – like the flame of an oil lamp, and 5) the blue Pervading Wind that carries the element - a field of white radiance like Moonlight.

7. Visualize the Root White Bindu moves down from your forehead cakra into the sphere at the heart cakra. You may see the first of the Three Lights: White Light, a field of white radiance like Moonlight. This results from the dissolution of your consciousness in the first subtle mind.
8. Visualize the Root Red Bindu moves up from your navel cakra into the sphere at the heart cakra. You may see the second of the Three Lights: Red Light, a field of red radiance like sunlight. This results from the dissolution of your consciousness in the second subtle mind.
9. Visualize the Root Red and Root White bindus in your body collapse together in the sphere. You may see the third of the Three Lights: Black Light, a field of black radiance, all-pervasive darkness. This results from the dissolution of your consciousness in the very subtle mind.
10. Visualize the Root Red and Root White bindus stabilizing and attaining nondual union. Your mind, guided by the red and white bindus in the blissful union of *Evaṃ*, dissolves into your heart cakra, and the Clear Light, like a clear sky at dawn, whose nature is Purity, Self, Bliss, and Permanence, emerges fully and purely within you and around you. Nonconceptual awareness arises, and you experience the undifferentiated peace and bliss of *nirvāṇa*. Maintain your awareness directly within the Clear Light. You are the *dharmakāya*.
11. While retaining your unity with the *dharmakāya*, out of love and compassion for all beings, you see your Root White and Root Red bindus form the *Evaṃ* once again. You return to the subtle dimensions in reverse order through the Three Lights, and perceive yourself as the *saṃbhogakāya* of the deity in sexual union with the consort.
12. You return to this world in reverse order through the Five Signs in physical form as the deity in sexual union with the consort to the world of appearances. You experience simultaneously both the undifferentiated bliss of *nirvāṇa* and the varieties of worldly bliss, known as the Great Bliss. Rest in this all-encompassing bliss.

Benefits: Clears the knots in the heart cakra, attains union with the Clear Light, leading to enlightenment.

Time: 30 minutes.



16. Dissolution into the Great Bliss with Physical Consort – Mahāsukha Anubheda Karmamudrā

This method assumes you are advanced enough that you can attain union with the Clear Light with your physical consort without orgasm. However, if you are not that advanced, you can attain orgasm and then use the visualization as an aid to attaining the Clear Light.

1. Visualize yourselves as the deity and its consort. Join in sexual union. Make love, slowly and meditatively, keeping your minds and subtle energies well synchronized.
2. Together, make your bodies still, and use a visualization: see yourselves as a breath on a mirror that slowly dissolves, or a drop of water falling into a pool of stainless water.
3. The visualization leads you both into the Clear Light of ultimate reality.
4. Return from the bliss of ultimate reality, into the Great Bliss.
5. Continue to make love, passing in and out of appearances and ultimate reality many times.

Benefits: Leads to union with the Clear Light, the Great Bliss, and stabilizes enlightenment.

Time: 1 hour.

Meditative Lovemaking - Maithuna

1. Visualize yourselves as the deity and its consort. Sit in front of your lover, and hold your intention to focus strongly and meditatively on sensual pleasure. Allow your awareness to be open, spacious, and relaxed. Gaze into each other's eyes, breathe slowly and deeply. Perform the practices of Deep Breathing and Synchronized Breathing as you like.
2. Make love freely and spontaneously, and focus your awareness on rising pleasure. Do not try to have an orgasm, just allow whatever happens to occur, creating a moving meditation for two. The man may wish to make an effort to hold back his ejaculation using the methods of controlling male ejaculation as this prolongs the lovemaking for both of you.

Benefits: Gains the ability to maintain and intensify heightened states of sexual arousal for long periods of time, strengthens meditative absorption, preparing you for the practices that lead to enlightenment.

Time: 1 hour.

Controlling Male Ejaculation – Śukra Stambhādi

1. As the man makes love, he feels himself nearing ejaculation.
2. The man recites a mantra many times until his rising feeling of ejaculation falls back: the Eightfold Mantra *hā hā he he ho ho hūṃ hūṃ*, or the mantra *phaṭ*.
3. As a more advanced practice, perform the Reverse Urethral Suction technique where the man draws the sexual energies from the tip of his vajra up his spine.

Benefits: The man is able to make love for as long as he desires, consciously control ejaculation, and have multiple orgasms, bringing greatly increased pleasure to his lover.

Time: 1 minute.

Expanding Orgasm – Drava Sāmadhi

Charging Breath - Vīra Prāṇa

1. Take a series of short, quick, sharp inhales through your nose.
2. Allow a spontaneous orgasm to arise without ejaculating.

Benefits: Floods the body with a burst of high intensity bliss. As you become adept in the practice, at a certain point your body will automatically begin to breathe in ways that allow you to prolong your orgasm for as long as you like.

Time: 5 minutes.

Central Channel Orgasm – Avadhūti Drava

1. As you make love with your lover, breathe deeply and visualize drawing the subtle erotic energies up the central channel and spreading them throughout your body.
2. Allow a spontaneous full body orgasm to arise from the central channel.

Benefits: Karmic obscurations in the subtle body are rapidly transformed. You attain deeper, more sustained states of bliss.

Time: 10 minutes.



Cakra Orgasm – Cakra Drava

1. As you make love with your lover, breathe deeply and visualize drawing the subtle erotic energies from the genitals up the central channel and directing them to one of your cakras.
2. Allow a spontaneous orgasm in that cakra to arise.

Benefits: Rapidly clears the karmic obscurations in the cakras. Additional benefits vary depending upon the cakra used.

Time: 10 minutes.



Sexual Positions – Saṃbhoga Āsana

Perform all 41 of the sexual positions listed below, spending 5 minutes per position to gain the experience of the qualities of that position. Focus on the different sensations of pleasure while maintaining meditative focus. When you have completed them over many sessions, perform them again spending 10 minutes per position.

Benefits: Transforms karmic obscurations, cultivates worldly blisses, leads to the Great Bliss.

Time: 1 hour.

1. Squatting Position - Utkāṭā Āsana

The man sits up with his left leg bent in a little, his right leg stretched out a little. The woman squats over the man's vajra, and wraps her arms around his neck. He embraces her at her waist with his arms. This position (Utkāṭā Āsana - lit. Extreme Lotus Pose) is the emblematic lovemaking position of Vajravilāsinī and Padmanarteśvara. It can be difficult for women to hold for long periods of time, as it may stress the legs and knees.

Benefits: Good control for the woman, with lots of freedom for love play, exciting for the man.

2. Bliss Position - Sukha Āsana



The man sits up with his left leg bent in a little, his right leg stretched out a little. The woman sits in front, wraps her legs around his waist and her arms around his neck. He embraces her at her waist with his arms. This position can be difficult to hold for long periods of time because it may put a lot of pressure on the man's thighs.

Benefits: Intimacy. Excellent for combined sexual yoga and subtle energy yoga practices such as the Four Blisses and Swing Recitation.

3. Vajra Position - Vajra Āsana



The man sits on a cushion, in the full lotus pose with his right foot on top of the left leg (the leg position is called Vajra Paryāṅka). The woman straddles him from the front with her legs and faces him, placing her arms around his neck for support. Although this is the most celebrated position for Tantric lovemaking, it is often difficult for modern practitioners to hold this pose for very long because modern bodies are larger and heavier than medieval Indian bodies and the pose may put a lot of pressure on the man's thighs.

Benefits: Intimacy. Excellent for combined sexual yoga and subtle energy yoga practices such as the Four Blisses and Swing Recitation.

4. Archer Position - Ālīḍha Āsana



The man stands with his right leg extended in a lunging position (ālīḍha), his arms around her neck. The woman faces him, and places her left leg around his waist, the ball of her right foot on the ground touching his left foot, and her arms around his neck. He enters her. An exciting but difficult position for both partners to maintain. The emblematic pose of the fierce deities Cakrasamvara and Vajrayoginī.

Benefits: Intimacy.

5. Swing Position - Dolā Āsana



The man lies down on his back, the woman is on top and straddles him with her legs in a squatting pose. The woman envelops his vajra and swings her hips back and forth.

Benefits: Good control for the woman, the man can relax easily into higher states of bliss.

6. Knee Position - Kūrpara Āsana

The woman lies on her back, and brings her knees up. The man lies on top facing her. The man's right hand clasps the woman's left hand, and he enters her.

Benefits: Good penetration.



7. Wide Open Position - Suprasārīta Āsana

The woman lies on her back with her legs spread out widely. The man lies on top and enters her.

Benefits: Good penetration.



8. Needle Position - Sūcī Āsana

The woman lies down on her front with her legs straight like a needle. The man enters her from behind.

Benefits: Good rear penetration, tight friction for the man.

9. Pleasure Arising Position - Sukha Udaya Āsana

The *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra* instructs, “With the woman assuming the squatting seat, he should have her clasp her arms firmly together on his shoulders. His own two arms should be joined, emerging from the middle of her girth, and with the vajra inserted in the lotus.”

Benefits: Intimacy.

10. Swing Rocking Position - Dolā Cālana Āsana

“With the two arms of both of them joined to each other like braids of hair, the two should rock slowly.”

Benefits: Intimacy.

11. Knee Holding Position - Jānu Graha Āsana

“Embracing, with her two knees against his heart, and with the hands in the same position as in the ‘swing rocking.’”

Benefits: Intimacy.

12. Thigh Rubbing Position - Ūru Mardana Āsana

“He should place the soles of her feet on the base of his thighs, and with the hands in the same position as in the ‘pleasure evoking.’”

Benefits: Intimacy.

13. Foot Moving Position - Pāda Cālana Āsana

“With the soles of her feet on the navel, heart, and the two flanks also, and with the hands placed according to the ‘swing rocking.’”

Benefits: Intimacy.

14. Ground Pressing Position - Bhūmi Cāpita Āsana

“With her buttocks placed on the ground, hollow-chested, with the hands placed in the same position as in the ‘pleasure arising.’”

Benefits: Intimacy.

15. Equal Summit Position - Sama Dantaka Āsana

“Placing her in the squatting seat, he should have her stretch out her two legs.”

Benefits: Intimacy.

16. Variegated Position - Citra Saṃjñaka Āsana

“With her two legs bent, with his heart against her back, he should join on the left, on the right, and in front, massaging her, beginning with her hands.”

Benefits: Intimacy.

17. Honeycomb Position - Bhramarī Jāla Āsana

“Again taking the ‘pleasure evoking’ position, he should have her fall on her back. Then he should insert the vajra into the lotus with the right hand, and catching the crooks of his elbows behind the knees, he should join her; and with each other’s arms like braids of hair.”

Benefits: Penetration and intimacy.

18 Mounted on the Machine Position - Yantra Ārūḍha Urdhva Padaka Āsana



“With her two legs placed firmly on his shoulders, this position should be performed with passionate entrance.”

Benefits: Deep penetration and strong passion.

19. One Leg Up Position - Urdhva Pado Āsana

“With her right leg on his shoulder, and her left leg on the base of his thigh.”

Benefits: Intimacy.

20. Tortoise Position - Kūrma Āsana

“He should have her place the two soles of her feet together in the middle of his chest. He should press the knee with his two arms.”

Benefits: Intimacy.

21. In Every Way Auspicious Position - Sarvato Bhadra Āsana

“He should place the soles of her feet over her eye, ear, and head.” With her legs over her eyes or even behind her head, he lies over her and takes her.

Benefits: “This position grants the pleasure of all desires.”

22. Blossoming Position - Utphalaka Āsana

The woman lies on her back. Her knees are up and her feet lie flat against the ground. She lifts her pelvis upwards, resting her hands on her buttocks. Her yoni is raised higher than her head. The man kneels before her and enters her. The woman can use her thighs to thrust against her lover. Some women may want to use pillows to support their backs.

Benefits: Deep penetration of the yoni.

23. Expanding Position - Vijṛimbhitaka Āsana

The woman lies on her back, and raises and spreads her thighs. The man kneels in front of her, spreads her legs and enters her.

Benefits: Deep penetration of the yoni.



24. Indrāṇī Position - Indrāṇīka Āsana

The woman lies on her back, and draws in her legs. Her legs are bent at the knees, with her thighs either on his sides or pressed against his chest. The man lies over her and enters her. The position is named after Indrāṇī, the queen of the gods.

Benefits: Deep penetration, good stimulation

of the G-spot.

25. Claspng Position - Saṃpuṭaka Āsana

The Claspng Position has two versions:

Lateral Box – Pārśva Saṃpuṭa: The couple lies on their sides facing each other. The woman is on her right side and the man is on his left side.

Closed Box – Uttana Saṃpuṭa: The woman lies on her back with her legs touching each other and stretched out straight on the ground. The man lies on top of her and enters her.

A variation of this position is to extend your arms above your heads and clasp your hands together.

Benefits: Intimacy.

26. Pressing Position - Pīḍita Āsana

The Pressing Position is not a separate pose, but a variation of the Clasp Position in which the man takes her lover with greater force, and the woman presses her thighs together to provide increased pressure against his liṅgaṃ.

Benefits: Adds tension and pleasure for both lovers.

27. Twining Position - Veṣṭitaka Āsana

The woman lies down on her back, lifts her knees up and crosses her calves in the air. He lies on top of her and enters her. An alternative position is for the woman's legs to surround the man's body instead of being in front of him.

Benefits: Good penetration with intimacy.

28. Mare's Position - Vādāvaka Āsana

This is a variation of the Twining Position, in which the woman tightens her yoni muscles around her lover's liṅgaṃ. This position requires the woman's skill in using her PC muscles.

Benefits: The woman's milking his liṅgaṃ sends waves of bliss throughout their bodies.

29. Rising Position - Bhagnaka Āsana

The woman lies on her back, lifts her legs up and bends her knees. She holds her arms around her knees. The man kneels before her and enters her.

Benefits: Deep penetration.

30. Gaping Position - Jrimbhitaka Āsana

The woman lies on her back, and the man kneels before her. She lifts her legs onto the man's shoulders, resting her legs or the inside of her knees on his shoulders.

Benefits: Good penetration.

31. High Pressed Position - Utpīḍitaka Āsana

The woman lies on her back, and lifts her legs up and knees back against her. He takes her with either a kneeling or squatting position, and she presses the bottoms of her feet against his chest.

Benefits: Good penetration.

32. Half-Pressed Position - Ardha Pīḍitaka Āsana

From the High Pressed Position, the woman keeps one of her legs against his chest, and extends the other leg past his side. With slight movements of her leg the woman can vary the sensations in her yoni.

Benefits: Good penetration.

33. Splitting Bamboo Position - Venu Dāritaka Āsana

This is a variation of the Half-Pressed Position. The woman shifts her legs back and forth from straight out to resting against his chest. The woman continually shifts between one of her legs forward on her lover and the other leg back alongside him.

Benefits: The woman can create a variety of sensations for her and her lover by moving her legs.

34. Piercing with a Lance Position - Śūlācitaka Āsana

The woman lies on her back, and spreads her legs. The man kneels between her thighs and enters her. She raises one of her legs, placing one foot on his forehead, while stretching the other foot out alongside and behind him.

Benefits: Penetration, good meditative pose.

35. Crab Position - Kārkataka Āsana

This is a variation of the High Pressed Position: she lies on her back, and holds her feet together below his chest. The man kneels before her and enters her.

Benefits: Penetration.

36. Tight Position - Pīditaka Āsana



The woman lies on her back, bends her knees and crosses her legs. The man kneels or squats before her and enters her.

Benefits: Penetration.

37. Lotus Position - Padma Āsana

The woman lies on her back, places her left foot in the inside of her right knee, and her right foot in the inside of her left knee. She may cross her legs in whatever way is comfortable. The man kneels before her and enters her.

Benefits: Deep penetration of the yoni.

38. Spinning Position - Parā Vṛittaka Āsana



The Spinning Position has two versions:

Man on top - The woman lies on her back with her legs stretched out, and the man lies on top of the woman and enters her. The woman remains stationary, and man then rotates his body around her while keeping his liṅgaṃ inside her yoni.

Woman on top – The man lies on her back with his legs stretched out. The woman sits on him with her legs to either side of him, facing him, and envelops his liṅgaṃ with her yoni. She moves her body around him while keeping the connection between her yoni and his liṅgaṃ.

Benefits: A challenging, playful acrobatic position that brings pleasure in its accomplishment.

39. Standing Position - Sthitarata Āsana



The couple stands facing each other and leans against a wall. He enters her. The woman may need to use a footstool to stand on, or the man may need to spread his legs wide to lower his height depending upon the height of each partner.

Benefits: Intimacy.

40. Hanging Position- Avalāmbitaka Āsana



The man stands and lifts the woman up so that her legs wrap around his waist and her hands grasp him around his neck. He enters her, and supports her with his arms.

Benefits: Intimacy and good penetration.

41. Cow Position - Dhenuka Āsana



The woman stands and bends over at the waist, her hands pressed against the ground. The man, standing, enters her from behind. She can also support her arms by placing a large cushion or table top between her hands and the ground.

Benefits: Penetration.

Anal Sex - Adhorata

During love making you can add anal sex. Gently massage outside your lover's anus (guda), with great care and love. With a finger well covered in massage oil, slowly penetrate your lover's guda, and let your partner guide you in what brings him or her pleasure. The male practitioner then slowly penetrates his lover's guda with his vajra while maintaining meditative focus and the intention to liberate all beings from suffering. A woman can also penetrate her lover with a dildo (apadravya).

Time: 30 minutes.

Concluding Lovemaking - Samāpti

After lovemaking, spend time cuddling with each other. Have a little bit to eat and drink and share your experiences.

Benefits: Creates a relaxing and intimate cool down time after intense practice.

Time: 10 minutes.

Closing Practices - Visarjana

1. Dissolve the deity.

Perform the Earth Touching Gesture (Bhūmi Sparśa Mudrā), and recite the Dissolution Mantra (Anubheda Mantra).

oṃ āḥ hūṃ vajra muḥ



2. Recite the Dedication of Merit.

puṇyaṃ prabhūtaṃ yad ihāpi sarvaṃ saṃbodhaye tat pariṇāmayāmi
“I dedicate all merit arisen here for the goal of complete and perfect enlightenment.”



In your afterglow, lie quietly together to enjoy the peace and bliss, knowing that your bliss is nourishing all beings throughout the Three Worlds. Take a warm bath, enjoy a good meal, and gently delight in each other's company.

Benefits: Builds a deep, joyous and lasting connection with your lover.

Time: 1 hour.

Group Sexual Yoga – Gaṇa Maṇḍala

Perform the Mahāyāna group sacred sex ritual presented in Chapter 2: The Mahāyāna, adding the practices of the Four Yogas, the Four Blisses of sexual yoga, or practicing the sādhana with sexual yoga.

Benefits: Generates very high intensity sexual energies, draws in the power of the celestial yoginīs, and leads rapidly to inner awakening.

Time: About 4 hours; 2 hours to prepare and 2 hours to practice.

Chapter 8. Embrace of the Beloved: Nondual Yoga

**“The bliss experienced by the sexual organ is Mahāmudrā.”
- Hevajra Tantra**

Effortlessly Dissolved



As the couple reached the end of the sādhana, they were in a high state of bliss from their practices of deity yoga, subtle energy yoga, and sexual yoga. Having completed the Four Blisses, they dwelled in the Great Bliss of nondual awareness, Mahāmudrā. All appearances glistened with primordial light. Nothing was seen as separate, all an erotic dance of cosmic unity and diversity. Determined to stabilize this view and make it permanent, they were ready for the final step in their practice.

The young man and his consort performed the Swing Recitation. He returned his vajra to her lotus, and they

continued in their love-play, always in meditative awareness. They imagined the five seed syllables of Vajravilāsinī, *em āṃ rīṃ raṃ brīṃ*, passing through their subtle bodies. Coordinating their breathing with the visualization, they saw a ring of fire burning brightly, connecting their central channels, purifying and empowering them. With immense excitement, they practiced this Swing Recitation many times. Seeing themselves as no longer separate from each other, they attained the Fusion of Identities.

The young man and his consort were forever transformed by the knowledge that they abided in the bliss of enlightenment. They sat together in utmost silence and peace, and yet, aroused with passion, they continued their amorous love play. As they practiced throughout the night, rising waves of bliss brought their awareness higher and higher. Ignorance faded, and the dream-like nature of appearances became ever clearer to them. Awakening shined forth. Resting effortlessly in the perfection of Mahāmudrā, together they formed a great whole.

Introduction

“Erotic bliss is the Totality.”
- Hevajra Tantra

Nondual yoga (Mahāmudrā, lit. Great Consort or Seal) is the crown jewel of the Tantric Buddhist path. It is the essence of Buddhism, the ultimate realization. No need to look outside yourself, or go anywhere, because that jewel is your very own heart-mind. Each step you take towards it seals your awareness with bliss. The vast, brilliant reality that you are but have never known yourself to be, you discover yourself to be.

Mahāmudrā refers to both a practice and its result. It is the highest practice of the Four Yogas of the Yoginī Tantras. Once you understand Buddhist philosophy, receive the consecrations, and attain proficiency in the first three yogas, you are ready to integrate those practices with the most subtle, direct and profound practice of all. The state of Mahāmudrā, the ever-present awareness that you are not separate from anything, is also the final fruit of its practice. Mahāmudrā is called “Mahā,” Great, because nothing is greater. It is called “Mudrā,” the Consort or Seal, because in erotic union with both primordial consciousness and appearances, you are forever marked or “sealed” with the Great Bliss of enlightenment.

Mahāmudrā means nondual awareness – pure awareness without the conceptual obscuration of subject and object, and the direct experience of both ultimate reality and appearances. The Yoginī Tantras define Mahāmudrā as the union of the bliss of the Clear Light with the bliss of worldly appearances - the Great Bliss. Saraha, the greatest master of Mahāmudrā, defines it as the direct perception of reality through four progressive stages, his Four Levels (Catur Krama): 1) emptiness, 2) mind only, 3) the Clear Light, and 4) the union of the Clear Light and pure appearance. He describes knowing the Clear Light directly as recognizing “the true nature of mind” that has always been yours. Nondual awareness gradually sifts into you through these four levels until you attain the Great Bliss of complete and perfect enlightenment.

The core practice is extremely simple. It begins with directly perceiving appearances as emptiness, followed by seeing them as mind only. Its later levels arise from attaining the Clear Light, for as Kṛṣṇācārya explains, “Mahāmudrā is characterized by the Clear Light.” Having saturated your mind in the Clear Light, you then focus on reality as the Innate, the co-arising of the unchanging bliss of the Clear Light and the bliss of changing appearances as Great Bliss.

Mahāmudrā is thoroughly and entirely based on sexual yoga. According to the Tantras, you cannot attain *any* level of Mahāmudrā without sexual yoga. Extended orgasmic states are the necessary foundation for success. Having reached each stage of Mahāmudrā through sexual yoga, you continue to relax your mind, and focus on the Clear Light nature of mind. Your emotional and mental obscurations fall away easefully and spontaneously, and you are liberated.

At its heart, Māhamudrā is the direct awareness of the *true nature* of your mind (cittatā). The true nature of your mind is Essence – primordial, unchanging awareness. What you normally think of as your mind - the endless stream of thoughts and anxieties that pass through it – is the *false nature* of your mind. To be merely self-aware of your own afflicted mindstream, which is

what most people usually identify as their mind, is not Mahāmudrā. Mahāmudrā teaches that while thoughts arise, they are not essential to primordial awareness. You do not need thoughts to define who you are, because your true nature is beyond them. With focused awareness, you concentrate on your own consciousness so deeply that you pass beyond your identification with the outer displays of your mind into its inner essence.

As your troubling thoughts fall to the side, your mind's own inner completeness and your Innate perfection gradually arises. From the state of thought-free awareness, your mind sees its own original nature as infinite light and wisdom. And, once you recognize the true nature of your own mind, you recognize all appearances as having that very same true nature. Mahāmudrā is the direct awareness of ultimate reality – the primal source of wisdom, love, and power – and at the very same time seeing all appearances as its sacred, erotic and creative play. By seeing reality clearly, you attain inner awakening.

Part of the greatness of Mahāmudrā is the sheer speed in which you can realize it. In the Mahāyāna path, attaining the direct perception of reality takes *eons*. In Mahāmudrā, however, it happens very quickly, arising as a result of sexual yoga. You can then cultivate this direct perception within a single lifetime into complete enlightenment. Once you attain the view, Mahāmudrā is also easy, and can be practiced while doing any activity. It is an exciting and utterly life-changing practice. Saraha shares with delight, “Through mere recognition, living beings are utterly freed.” It is the fastest solution to all your problems.

And, Mahāmudrā is juicy! As Saraha explains, Mahāmudrā is not just a dry perceptual shift in your awareness, but an opportunity to “savor yourself fully in the Innate.” It is the most intimate of embraces. Your troubling thought patterns are released, and the divine nectar of immortality flows blissfully. Mahāmudrā is called the Great Consort - Saraha calls Her the “Yoginī” and the “Lady of Erotic Play” (Vilāsinī), because *She really loves you*. She is waiting patiently for your flirtatious advances. Mahāmudrā is the ecstatic embrace of the Totality, and She embraces you lovingly and blissfully. She is the best of all lovers, the source of all eroticism. She is inner wholeness and well being, the unity of tranquility and creative, dynamic power. In Her embrace, you know vivaciously who you really are. She gives you the ultimate gift: you see before your own eyes that *everything is sacred*, and *you embrace everything*.

Mahāmudrā is falling in love with reality. Reality is alive, it pulses with glory, it has nothing to do with the unreality of suffering. Mahāmudrā returns you to the all-nurturing juiciness of what is real. Buddhism is often regarded as a system for “taming” the mind. But in Mahāmudrā you “untame” it, and release its raw and wild power. Mahāmudrā is the final step on the Tantric path – *it is the return and integration*. Once you attain union with the Clear Light, you return to the world of appearances motivated by great love and erotic passion. You enjoy the world fully, and joyously liberate all beings.

The *Hevajra Tantra* is the fundamental text for Mahāmudrā, and it is upon this work that one must rely to understand fully the original path of the Indian siddhas. These teachings are utterly different from the teachings later created in Tibet, which were thoroughly desexualized to serve the needs of the monastic communities. In doing so, however, the Tibetans created a method that is so weakened that the Indian siddhas would not have recognized it as Mahāmudrā at all.

Philosophy

“The moment when each partner’s potency of the Four Levels of Mahāmudrā is activated in the female and male sexual organs, the Great Bliss is achieved.”
- Advayavajra, *Oral Instructions on the Four Yogas*

Nondual Yoga is the union of the Bliss of Ultimate Reality and the Bliss of Appearances into the Great Bliss

Nondual Yoga as Integrated Awareness

Nondual yoga rests upon the direct perception of *both* ultimate reality as primordial wisdom *and* the creative play of pure appearances. Maitrīgupta notes that at its highest stage, “Mahāmudrā is the *integrated state* of the Clear Light” with your daily awareness.

Consciousness, Thought, and Primordial Awareness

One of the great afflictions Westerners face is that they are trained to think that consciousness (citta, the heart-mind) is thought (vijñāna – lit. divided awareness). Consciousness is *not* thought, though thoughts arise from it. Consciousness is *awareness*. Awareness takes a vast range of forms, from physical sensations, emotions, thoughts, love, intuitions, visions, dreams, dreamless sleep, and higher wisdom. Equating thoughts with consciousness is like equating clouds with the sky. Thought is what obscures consciousness in unenlightened individuals, as you continually overlay your intrinsically pure experiences with mental categories like “good” and “bad,” “self” and “other,” and lead yourself into a false understanding of reality that results in suffering.

Your mind itself is something deeper than thinking - its true nature is primordial awareness (jñāna), unchanging and all-pervasive, and transcends all thoughts and appearances. The true nature of your mind is Essence, the radiant Clear Light of ultimate reality. When you release your attachment to thought and seek your mind’s true nature, you discover it is identical to cosmic, primordial awareness. When this truth is realized, no words can adequately describe the majesty of the experience. As Śābara shares triumphantly, “It is beyond any other conceptual possibility you might come up with.”

Duality

Duality is suffering. Duality (Dvaya) is experience divided by dualistic thoughts (vijñāna), obscuring emotions, misguided intentions, and habitual behavior patterns. It is life stained by karma from this and previous lifetimes that prevents you from being fully present in bliss. Duality is a mind-set that structures you so that no matter what you do or do not do, you are never permanently happy. It separates out all life experiences into mental categories that you think have a substantive reality to them: you and not you, success and failure, and on and on. It is at its root the unreal separation of appearances from the bliss and wisdom of ultimate reality. Duality is tragic, painful, and utterly unnecessary. It leads to anger, frustration, addictive

behaviors, violence, and occasional moments of fleeting happiness. Duality is what you never wanted to be in, and yet you have been - since beginningless time. The *Hevajra Tantra* observes simply that the cause of suffering is “because of subject and object.” Saraha adds, “The flaw is in duality – there is no yogi who meditates upon it.” *Duality is an incorrect view of reality, and it makes you discontent.*

Unity

Unity is nirvāṇa. Unity (Eka) is an experience of total Oneness, without any distinctions at all. It is the complete opposite experience of duality – pure, absolute peace and bliss. Because it is eternal and unchanging, and no experiences of appearances ever arise and fall away, it is called “Unborn” (Ajāta). It is the bliss of nirvāṇa. When it is reached in meditation, this state is often called Niṣprapañca (Non-Conceptuality) or Nirvikalpa Samādhi (Nonconceptual Absorption) because thoughts are wiped away, but it is far more than merely the silencing of thoughts. The *Hevajra Tantra* warmly embraces the view of the Unity of all things as primordial wisdom, saying: “The Great Consciousness is in fact One,” and remarks that it may properly be called Brahmā, Viṣṇu or Śiva as in other religions. David Snellgrove adds that the Buddhist Tantras “display no inhibitions in using the term Self (Ātman) for the Absolute,” and Saraha follows in the same vein, revealing, “A single God is seen in the many scriptures.” At the same time, the Tantras reveal, *Unity is not the most complete view. The Totality is something even more wonderful than One.*

Nonduality

Nonduality is the blissful union of ultimate reality and appearances. From the highest view, ultimate reality and appearances are not “One,” a singular, all-embracing Unity without any distinctions at all, and not “Two,” permanently separated from each other. Instead, they are “Nondual” (Advaya). Nonduality describes the direct experience of all of reality, which includes *both* the eternal presence of formless primordial awareness *and* its joyful play as appearances. It is called Nonduality because it never divides experiences between categories of “you” and “not you,” and at the same time it is not a pure unitary Oneness that is unaware of any distinctions. Nonduality describes the dynamic, creative play of oneness and manyness, unity-in-diversity. When your awareness is fully grounded in changeless ultimate awareness, it is peaceful and blissful. And when your awareness is *also* present in the play of appearances, it is exhilarating and delightful. Unblocked by emotional and mental obscurations, your life is eternally blissful *and* vitally engaging. The *Hevajra Tantra* notes, “This is the Great Wisdom located in all bodies which is nondual, and is the Essence that is both appearance and ultimate reality. It dwells pervading both fixed and moving things, and manifests as many forms.” It adds, “The Innate is contained in all as well as free of all.” *Nonduality is not nirvāṇa. It is better than nirvāṇa.*

Nondual Yoga

Nondual yoga (advaya yoga) includes all practices that lead to the ultimate state of nondual awareness. In the Yoginī Tantras, nondual yoga is called Mahāmudrā, the Great Embrace. Its practices purify your most subtle karmic obscurations and result in complete enlightenment.

Mahāmudrā is not a philosophy - it is a “view” of directly perceiving the nondual nature of reality. In nondual awareness, the *Hevajra Tantra* points out, “It is no longer possible for the yogi to be obstructed by the misconception of self from other.” When your awareness shifts into this view, it cuts through the fixation in your awareness on outer appearances and liberates you into perceiving directly both ultimate reality and pure appearance. Pristine awareness dawns and your karmic obscurations are cleared, leaving only pure enlightened awareness. Mahāmudrā is the practice of your mind meditating on its own true nature, and discovering that your mind’s own nature is identical to ultimate reality. The moment you recognize the view, you know that you never need to suffer again.

Mahāmudrā is not a conventional practice – it is a continual surrendering to a spontaneous process. In Mahāmudrā, you rest in open awareness, keeping your focus on the true nature of reality, and gently allow its stages of realization to occur. The *Hevajra Tantra* describes the practice, at all times focusing on Essence (Tattva) while remaining simultaneously in blissful worldly activity. Constant meditative absorption on both unchanging Essence *and* its changing forms is Mahāmudrā.

Mahāmudrā is not an intellectual exercise - it is experiential, and can never be attained through logic or conceptual contemplation. At the same time, it is not simply a quiet, undistracted, thought-free state. Unlike Tranquility meditation, which can only temporarily suppress thought, *Mahāmudrā is your mind focusing on itself*, and seeing its own true nature as luminous, clear, and blissful.

Mahāmudrā is not a high, transcendental meditative state of absorption - you are not leaving somewhere with your consciousness and traveling to a higher dimension. Instead, you relax into your mind, and, using your own mind as its focal point, the view spontaneously dawns. It is a state of perfect awareness - you do not need to change it, add to it or remove from it, just see it as it is. The beauty and light of your own mind’s true nature is revealed to you as vast and inconceivable. Mahāmudrā is not an “attainment” of something new, just a simple realization of what is always fully present, but it is the ultimate liberating power.

In the Indian Tantric Buddhist tradition, Mahāmudrā is generally not practiced as an independent path. It is especially dependent on sexual yoga because, according to the masters, *only sexual yoga can generate the high states of bliss necessary to realize Mahāmudrā*. Sexual yoga wipes away conceptual thought strongly, and you easefully find the true reality. There are some references to the siddhas teaching Mahāmudrā without relying upon a physical consort. Lakṣmīnkarā, for example, explains that for students with strong desire, practicing Mahāmudrā with a physical consort is ideal, while for students with strong aversion, Mahāmudrā without a physical consort is best for them. However, no Indian siddha *ever* claimed attaining enlightenment without a physical consort.

The Great Consort

Mahāmudrā is a very intimate experience, and this is why it is called the Great Consort. You unite your own mind with the primordial mind of ultimate reality, which knows you and loves you intensely. When you are ready, you are embraced by Her, and the illusion that led you to think you were ever separate from it simply falls away. It is an experience of the “one taste” of all things as unchanging bliss, and the vast expanse of reality also possesses many flavors, ranging from peacefulness and contentment to luscious, erotic love play. Mahāmudrā is the happiest experience you will ever know, and it lasts forever.

The Erotic Nature of Mahāmudrā

Mahāmudrā is *erotic*. The *Hevajra Tantra* proclaims, “Erotic bliss is the Totality.” Many religions regard God or Source as utterly lacking in erotic desire. Yet according to the Tantras, primordial awareness is inherently erotic. As Kṛiṣṇācārya writes, “Erotic bliss is a characteristic of the Innate.” As you attune yourself to the true reality, you realize its erotic nature. Mahāmudrā is extremely juicy because, as the Great Bliss (Mahāsukha), you integrate and continuously hold all the blissful states attained in sexual yoga of the Four Blisses. You are in a state of continuous erotic union on all levels. The Great Bliss is the union of the worldly, erotic blisses and the erotic bliss of nirvāṇa. Kṛiṣṇācārya notes, “Erotic bliss *is* the experience of the Great Bliss.”

In today’s world it is common to ponder “the untapped powers of the brain,” but this is not a teaching found in the Tantras. They teach the untapped powers of the *genitals*. The *Hevajra Tantra* makes clear that Mahāmudrā is not a lofty meditative state in which you leave your body, but occurs directly in and arises from the genitals: “The bliss experienced by the sexual organ *is* Mahāmudrā.” *Mahāmudrā is attained through the genitals*. It is not an abstract conceptual change of perception, but a richly embodied erotic experience. The Siddha Prajñāśrī praises the genitals using the same words as some praise the brain today, as “the Palace of Wisdom.”

Advayavajra, in his *Oral Instructions on the Four Yogas*, explains that the Four Levels of Mahāmudrā exist as a potency within the genitals. He finds, “The moment *when each partner’s potency of the Four Levels of Mahāmudrā is activated in the female and male sexual organs, the Great Bliss is achieved.*” Until this activation of the latent potential in the genitals occurs, *Mahāmudrā is unattainable*. To activate and stabilize these potencies of nondual awareness in the genitals is the great achievement of nondual yoga. Śabara affirms this most central principle in *The Sādhana of Secret Vajravilāsinī* when he states that practitioners *must* possess genitals as a requirement for practice – *no genitals, no Mahāmudrā*.

The method for attaining Mahāmudrā, then, is simple and clear. The *Hevajra Tantra*, in a very short chapter distinctly titled *The Means to Attain the Innate*, teaches, “Making the consort for Mahāmudrā naked, the wise yogi always serves her. The adamant yogi repeatedly makes love. Then the yogi attains numerous powers and becomes equal to all the buddhas.” *That is the path to inner awakening*.

Nothing in the Yoginī Tantras teaches Mahāmudrā as a pure solo sitting meditation, which it became in Tibet and is followed by many Westerners today. All the great Indian masters of Mahāmudrā, such as Saraha, Śabara, Tilopa, Nāropa, and countless others, attained Mahāmudrā as a spontaneous realization through sexual yoga. Enlightenment is such an extraordinary accomplishment, you naturally wonder - how could they have ever possibly achieved it? But when you put together the intensity of all the blissful erotic practices the Tantras teach, you can only wonder how they could have ever possibly *not* achieved it.

The Innate and Nondual Yoga

Nondual yoga is founded on the key characteristics of reality as the Innate, most importantly the quality of Great Bliss:

1. Pure Appearance (Evaṃ) – In nondual awareness, all appearances are perceived in their true nature as real, pure, and erotic.
2. Great Passion (Mahāraga) - Great Passion for your lover and for all beings fuels your desire to attain nondual awareness. The Innate’s own Great Passion for you to attain enlightenment supports you.
3. Essence (Tattva) - Primordial wisdom is realized in nondual awareness.
4. Great Bliss (Mahāsukha) - Great Bliss is the union of the bliss of ultimate reality and the bliss of appearances. Kṛṣṇācārya observes, “The Great Bliss is generated in Mahāmudrā.”

Tantric Transformation

Nondual yoga operates on the four principles of Tantric transformation, most importantly the principle of sympathetic vibration:

1. Empowerment (Ādhiṣṭhāna) - The guru, deity, consort, and the Great Yoginī empower you, and transform your coarse karmic obscurations, in support of attaining nondual awareness.
2. Alchemy (Rasāyāna) - The alchemy of transforming sexual fluids into subtle energies through combining subtle energy yoga and sexual yoga transforms your subtle karmic obscurations, and leads to nondual awareness.
3. Union (Yoga) - Union with the Clear Light of ultimate reality occurs through sexual yoga, transforms your most subtle karma, and results in nondual awareness.
4. Sympathetic Vibration (Niṣyanda) - Utilizing two critically important correspondences leads to the spontaneous realization of nondual awareness: sexual fluids with the Great Bliss, and the genitals with the Great Bliss. Regarding sexual fluids, the *Hevajra Tantra* states, “The Innate is of two kinds,” the relative Innate which is sexual fluids, and the absolute Innate which is the Great Bliss. Ingesting sexual fluids consciously lifts you out of dualistic awareness into nondual awareness. Similarly, activating the inner potential of the genitals through sexual yoga and a strong intention to attain enlightenment accomplishes nondual awareness.

Path

**“Making the consort for Mahāmudrā naked, the wise yogi always serves her.
The adamant yogi repeatedly makes love.
Then the yogi attains numerous powers and becomes equal to all the buddhas.”
- Hevajra Tantra**

Mahāmudrā is not really a “path,” although it can be experienced that way - it is simply recognizing the true nature of your own mind on progressively deeper levels, which has always been present with you but obscured. The clouds part, the sun shines, and then you are happy – that is the path. Attaining the view of Mahāmudrā is *not* the same as enlightenment - it is the beginning of enlightenment, realizing the essence of enlightenment. After attaining the view, it takes years of practice to perfect yourself, deepen your realization, and clear your remaining karmic obscurations. As your attachment to negative emotional states are released, bliss dawns. As your attachment to dualistic thoughts are released, omniscience dawns. Once all your obscurations are cleared, you are a buddha.

Levels of Attainment

Saraha describes four progressive levels of realization as a guide for understanding the path. It is a process of deep inner relaxation, in which you release your mind’s attachment to thoughts and beliefs, and your mind naturally “unwinds” into its own original nature. Each of these levels is spontaneously realized - you cannot force yourself have these experiences, and any thoughts of hoping for them or fearing they will not arise can only distract you. With strong intention, you just rest in natural awareness to whatever degree that you can. Within each level, you experience the stages of recognizing the view, stabilizing it, and deepening your awareness. Through the Four Levels (Catur Krama), you progressively perceive: 1) emptiness, 2) mind only, 3) Essence, and 4) the Innate. These levels are not simply passing blissful states of awareness or moments of inner silence, but profound shifts in which your entire perception of everything radically changes. Most importantly, these levels must be physically embodied in your genitals as a result of sexual yoga in order for them to occur at all. You cannot attain *any* level of Mahāmudrā without success in sexual yoga. Devacandra sums this point up sharply: “Without Karmamudrā, no Mahāmudrā.”

1. Mindfulness

In level one, Mindfulness (Smṛiti), you activate the potential in your genitals for this level of awareness, and attain mental stability by recognizing appearances as emptiness (śūnyatā). You consider through thoughtful reflection, and finally perceive directly, the illusory nature of appearances - they have no independent, inherent existence as they so easily seem to. The first level of Mahāmudrā is the same as the first level of a bodhisattva. Of the first level, Saraha probingly observes, “Mindfulness sees with certainty that all things are like an illusion.” An initial, startled experience of erotic bliss arises, the first of the Four Blissess of Mahāmudrā, called

Bliss (Ānanda). The *Hevajra Tantra* describes the initial level of realization as “like a cloud” because, like the sun among clouds, ultimate reality is present but unclearly so.

2. Beyond Mindfulness

In level two, Beyond Mindfulness (Vismaraṇa), you activate the latent power in your genitals and recognize your mind’s own nature not as your stream of thoughts, but as the faculty of consciousness. Saraha calls the mind “the single seed of everything,” because it generates all appearances. Seeing your mind’s own purity, your emotional and mental afflictions are spontaneously purified. You see more deeply the nature of your own mind without any conceptual overlays, and know that all appearances are mind only (citta mātra). By habituating on your awareness on your mind’s true nature, a stronger experience of erotic bliss, Supreme Bliss (Paramānanda), arises within you, and you learn to stop grasping at others to feel bliss. As you stabilize your awareness, your mind remains pure at all times.

3. The Unborn

In level three, the Unborn (Ajāta), the hidden power in your genitals is triggered once again and your realization deepens beyond the recognition of your mind alone as the power of consciousness (citta), and passes into the direct knowing that it is the infinite field of ultimate reality – Essence (Tattva), or primordial wisdom (jñāna). You see everything as “Unborn,” because only the primal, uncreated Clear Light (Prabhāsvara) exists. You perceive that nothing ever truly arises, because it always remains as primordial awareness. Saraha says, “These empty appearances have the nature of clarity,” which means you directly perceive all appearances as nothing more than the Clear Light itself, and the four qualities of Buddha Essence are revealed to you: Purity (Śuddha), Self (Ātman), Bliss (Sukha), and Permanence (Nitya). The primordially erotic Bliss of Cessation (Viramānanda), nirvāṇa, the equality of all experiences, arises within you, and you attain fearlessness. You reside in a state of pure Unity consciousness.

4. Beyond the Intellect

In the final level, Beyond the Intellect (Acintya), your genitals are activated to their highest potential. From the state of the Unborn at the third level, in which you saw everything as unchanging ultimate reality with no appearances at all, you see in level four that appearances do arise, but they arise simultaneously *as* ultimate reality. Appearances arise in your awareness - but they are not karmically conditioned by causes, and arise only from the creative play of ultimate reality. This is the Innate, Sahaja (lit. Born Together), Co-Arising, the real, nondual presence of ultimate reality and appearances. You delight in all appearances, you love everything, while simultaneously recognizing them as nondual expressions of ultimate reality. The union of all the erotic blisses, Innate Bliss (Sahajānanda), the Great Bliss, arises within you, your mind abides like space, and you are eternally blissful while enjoying all appearances. Saraha delights that “Bliss free of emotional and mental constructs is the fruition itself.” Kṛiṣṇācārya notes that when the final level is reached, ultimate reality and appearances are “indivisibly united.”

Benefits

The initial benefits of Mahāmudrā are peace of mind and the freeing of emotional and mental obscurations. Your mind is quiet and exceptionally clear, your emotions are released of their negative qualities, and your thoughts become your friends. You are physically healthier, you glow, and your inner power is immense. You experience each moment as clear and fresh, and you possess the “beginner’s mind” that leaves you open to new possibilities. You are fearless, because you know that everything is pure and perfect, and nothing is in any way separate from yourself. You experience life more richly, as all appearances take on a precious, jewel-like quality. Mahāmudrā is so magnificent that even a partial realization of it dramatically enhances the pleasure and fulfillment in everything you do.

Common Problems

Mahāmudrā is the most direct path to enlightenment - that is its great strength. But it is also the most subtle, which makes it easy to miss the mark or attain only partial success. Mahāmudrā must be correctly understood and practiced. By keeping in mind these possible errors, you can steer a swift path to enlightenment.

Common mistakes to avoid in understanding Mahāmudrā:

It is *not* merely quieting your mind or silencing your thoughts.

It is *not* holding a mental understanding of what it is, without practicing it as a meditation.

It is *not* shifting into a high meditative state.

It is *not* mindful awareness of your own thoughts and emotions.

Common mistakes to avoid in practicing Mahāmudrā:

You might practice Mahāmudrā on its own instead of as part of the Four Yogas which, according to the Yoginī Tantras, cannot succeed.

You might practice other Completion Stage practices without Mahāmudrā, and fail to achieve the highest results.

You might practice Mahāmudrā before you have developed skill in Tranquility Meditation or the preceding Tantric practices, before your mind is pliable enough to benefit from its subtleties.

You might get attached to extraordinary experiences and magical powers as they arise.

You might not attain the view and mistake lesser experiences as the view.

You might attain an initial experience (vetana) of the view, and mistake it for its final, permanent realization (adhigama).

You might try to control your mind through your thoughts or your will.

You might try to alter your mind to generate high meditative states.

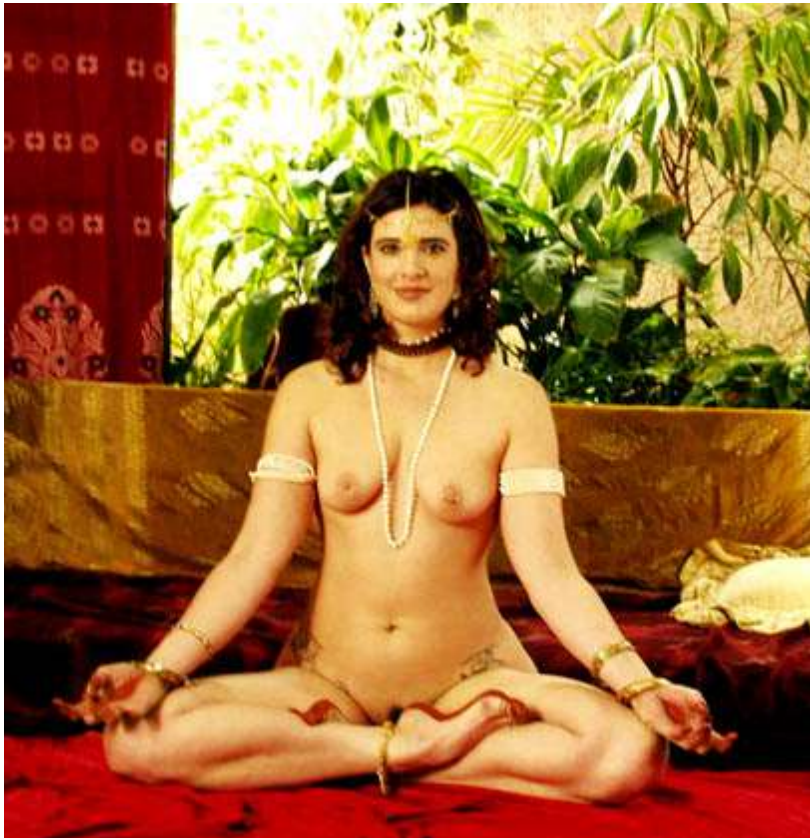
You might become attached to one level of Mahāmudrā, and stop without attaining the highest level that is the true and complete end to suffering.

Techniques

**“To perform the erotic union is the attainment of the state of Mahāmudrā.”
- Kṛiṣṇācārya, *The Yoga of the Jewel Garland***

Mahāmudrā is not properly a technique, it is a result. For this reason, it cannot be “practiced,” only realized. Once this result is attained, however, the view can be cultivated, and there are techniques to deepen it. The Tantras rely exclusively on sexual yoga to attain Mahāmudrā, while the techniques to cultivate the view of Mahāmudrā once it is attained were developed by the siddhas, most especially Saraha and Tilopa, to nurture it to its full completion. You should feel free to use any of the central methods in Chapter 7: Sexual Yoga, as the foundation for nondual yoga. In *The Sādhana of Secret Vajravilāsinī*, Śabara instructs the practitioners to perform the practices of Tasting the Nectar of Immortality (Amṛita Āsvādana, described below under drinking sexual fluids), and the Swing Recitation (Dolā Japa), in order to maintain and deepen the view of Mahāmudrā that arises as a result of sexual yoga.

Mahāmudrā is a gradual process of cultivating the awareness that your own mind is identical to primordial awareness. Once you understand it correctly, it is not difficult – you maintain your focus at whatever level of realization you have while holding a strong intention to shift into the next level, and over time it spontaneously arises. Then you stay in that level and nurture it until you spontaneously realize the next level. The view of Mahāmudrā is typically attained at first in short flashes or bursts of awareness, like the sun shining between the clouds on a cloudy day.



The two later stages of Mahāmudrā arise from union with the Clear Light, which like all levels of Mahāmudrā are achieved through sexual yoga. It is most especially the sexual yoga practice of Meditation at the Tip that actualizes the potency of the genitals, shifting your awareness into the Clear Light and stabilizing your awareness as you return to the world of appearances and into the Great Bliss. The main principle of Tantric transformation in nondual yoga is spontaneous vibration, and making love while focusing on the bindu at the tip of the genitals triggers the inborn power of your genitals strongly to elevate you into nondual awareness.

Mahāmudrā may look easy, and it is, but its subtlety may elude you if you are not properly prepared. It is best to attain first some proficiency in Tranquility and Insight Meditation taught in the lower vehicles. Tranquility Meditation makes your mind peaceful, calm, clear, and pliable. Insight Meditation develops your understanding and awareness of ultimate reality so you can perceive it on deeper levels. In addition, the Tantras assume that you have received the consecrations, developed yourself in deity yoga, subtle energy yoga, and sexual yoga, and that you have already spontaneously attained the view *before* you begin Mahāmudrā practice. Most importantly, *the ability to maintain high and prolonged states of bliss in sexual yoga is the essential foundation for attaining success in Mahāmudrā.* The stronger and longer your orgasms, the greater the doorway to the Clear Light is opened.

There really are no techniques to master in Mahāmudrā, because you cannot make yourself realize it. Instead, what these practices do is place you in an open, spacious and relaxed awareness as you focus on your mind’s true nature, from which the view spontaneously dawns. She, the Great Consort, decides when you are ready, then She takes you. The embrace of Her love is so intense that it burns away your obscurations. You make love to Her, and then you attain inner awakening. Techniques include: 1) Attaining the View of Mahāmudrā, 2) Maintaining the View of Mahāmudrā, and 3) Deepening the View of Mahāmudrā.

Attaining the View of Mahāmudrā

The main techniques for attaining the view of Mahāmudrā are: 1) the third consecration (Prajñā/Upaya Abhiṣeka), 2) the Four Yogas (Catur Mudrā), 3) Tantric feasts (gaṇacakras), 4) drinking sexual fluids (rakta and śukra), and 5) guru devotion (guru yoga).

The Third Consecration

In the Yoginī Tantras, the third consecration (Prajñā/Upaya Abhiṣeka) is the initiating method for attaining a first experience of the view of Mahāmudrā. By attaining union with the Clear Light with your lover, you return blissfully to the world of appearances. With your awareness simultaneously in both the bliss of the Clear Light *and* the bliss of appearances, you attain for however long you can an experience of the third level of Mahāmudrā.

The Four Yogas

Integrated practice of the Four Yogas (Catur Mudrā) is the most proven method for attaining the view of Mahāmudrā as well as its final result, enlightenment. Deity yoga is a critical foundation for Mahāmudrā as it transforms your coarse karmic obscurations. Subtle energy yoga transforms your subtle karmic obscurations. Sexual yoga transforms your most subtle karmic obscurations and provides the true path to attaining Mahāmudrā. Kṛiṣṇācārya wisely observes, when practiced with a high intention, “To perform the erotic union *is* the attainment of the state of Mahāmudrā.” What drives success in Mahāmudrā is your intention to achieve it. With a weak intention, your orgasms will be enjoyable but will not elevate you. With a strong intention, you *will* succeed.

Tantric Feasts

The *Hevajra Tantra* advises, “Among the circle of the practitioners, the accomplishment that is the fulfillment of supreme desire is attained.” Supported by the concentrated erotic energies of the group, Tantric feasts (gaṇacakras) are a complete and time-honored means of practice. They bestow divine empowerment through deity yoga as they attract the attention of the celestial yoginīs, achieve alchemy through subtle energy yoga, attain union with ultimate reality through sexual yoga, and lift your awareness through sympathetic vibration through nondual yoga as you activate the latent power of your genitals with the kula, your Tantric community. Through wild abandon with your friends and lovers, you attain Mahāmudrā.

Drinking Sexual Fluids

Sexual fluids (rakta and śukra) are Mahāmudrā in physical form. When you ingest sexual fluids *consciously*, you set off the sympathetic vibrations between sexual fluids and Great Bliss, and you spontaneously attain nondual awareness. Accordingly, the *Hevajra Tantra* instructs practitioners of Mahāmudrā to drink sexual fluids daily. In addition, in the ritual of Tasting the Nectar of Immortality (Amṛita Āsvādana) taught by Śabara, you take the sexual fluids generated by your lovemaking and place them into a cup of alcohol containing the pure substances of the Five Nectars: 1) feces, 2) urine, 3) human flesh, 4) female sexual fluids, and 5) male sexual fluids. You mix them together, blessing the drink with the dhāraṇī mantra of the deity, and ingest them, triggering an experience of Mahāmudrā.

Guru Devotion

In realizing Mahāmudrā, devotion to your gurus (guru yoga) is critical. The *Hevajra Tantra* praises, “The one who is devoted to the guru definitely attains the accomplishment.” You may have as many as four gurus: 1) your human guru, 2) your chosen deity, 3) your physical consort, and 4) your Great Consort, the Yoginī Mahāmudrā. All these are the many forms of the one guru: the true nature of your own heart-mind. Offering devotional prayers to them pulls their power toward you and brings swift success. If through earnest practice you still have no experience of the view, remember that you are surrounded by primordial wisdom. You may not know what the view of Mahāmudrā is, but She does. The *Cakrasamvara Tantra* encouragingly instructs, “The primordially established Great Consort should be worshipped with great zeal.” Personify Her in your mind, and pray to Her for assistance. Continue in your practice, always holding a strong intention to attain the view. The view will eventually emerge.

Maintaining the View of Mahāmudrā

The main practice for maintaining the view of Mahāmudrā is keeping your mind’s awareness on itself as identical to primordial consciousness. The Tantras observe that stabilizing the view of Mahāmudrā once you have attained it can be difficult. Excitedly, your mind compulsively seeks to grasp onto the experience, which only pushes it away. Mahāmudrā is a very subtle but

profound shift in awareness, and it needs to be developed as a continuous practice or you can lose the connection. In this way, your sitting meditation practice, sexual yoga, and daily conduct practices merge into each other. The *Hevajra Tantra* advises, “The yogi must always, day and night, remain at one with the Essence.” As you maintain the view, you eventually achieve complete stability. The path remains not an effortful one of creating some new experience, but the delight of relaxing into and recognizing the glory of what is primordially, eternally you.

As you maintain the view of Mahāmudrā, your thoughts actually begin to *dissolve*. This does not usually happen in Tranquility Meditation, which mainly *suppresses* thoughts, but it can happen swiftly in Mahāmudrā. Maintaining the view puts you in a thought-free state, purifying your mind. Tilopa evocatively describes this process of spontaneous liberation, saying “As the snake uncoils, saṃsāra frees itself.” In addition to the practices for attaining the view, the main techniques for maintaining the view of Mahāmudrā are: 1) the Fourth Consecration (Caturtha Abhiṣeka), 2) one-pointed awareness on the true nature of your mind (cittatā), 3) Sky Meditation (Svarga Samādhi), 4) Vase Breath (Kumbhaka), and 5) Swing Recitation (Dolā Japa).

The Fourth Consecration

During the Fourth Consecration (Caturtha Abhiṣeka), while you are in a state of intense sexual rapture with your lover, practicing Meditation at the Tip to awaken the latent power of your genitals, your guru sings you a spontaneous song of nondual realization. The ultimate granter of realization is the Great Consort Herself, but you must be ripe for it. Ideally, the power of the fourth consecration is strong enough to shift your awareness by sympathetic vibration permanently so you can continuously maintain the view of Mahāmudrā.

One-Pointed Awareness on Your Mind’s True Nature

In Mahāmudrā, once you attain orgasm, your one-pointed focus of meditation is on your mind’s own natural awareness (cittatā), also called the Clear Light Nature of Mind (Prabhāsvara Citta). Its true nature is primordial and unchanging awareness (bodhi), luminosity or the Clear Light (Prabhāsvara), and Great Bliss (Mahāsukha). You focus your mind on its own Innate power of awareness without distraction. Your breathing is normal and uncontrolled. You do not fixate on thoughts or emotions, or on anything that happens. You do not label your meditative experiences as “good” or “bad,” as this leads to attachment and aversion, the very obscuring acts from which you are seeking release. You focus on the quality of the clear awareness of your own mind. As you attain it, your mind, finally freed into its own natural state, begins to purify itself automatically.

Saraha advises not meditate in a traditional or formal way, nor even contemplate anything - no breath control, no visualization, no mantra repetition. Sit and allow your thought and breath to be stilled, but in a gentle rather than a forceful way. Tilopa’s *The Six Words of Advice* on Māhamudrā are similarly simple and straightforward: 1) do not remember (the past), 2) do not imagine (the future), 3) do not think (about the present), 4) do not make judgements (about anything), 5) do not meditate (on any outer object), and 6) relax your mind in its own nature.

When you do sit in a meditative posture, you keep your body and mind balanced between tension and relaxation. Your body is relaxed, but maintains the position. Similarly, your mind is relaxed, but it is also focused on itself, and does not wander. Do not try to modify or condition your mind, or to reach some high, temporary, meditative state or samādhi. You do not try to make your mind do anything other than relax and be gently focused on itself. Everything else in the practice happens spontaneously as the mind's natural clarity arises. Mahāmudrā is mindfulness – not of your emotions and thoughts, but of your mind as identical to the blissful nature of ultimate reality.

Relax Your Mind

As you maintain your focus on the true nature of your mind, you relax your mind (śānti citta), allowing your awareness to be open, spacious, and relaxed. Without forcing it, you allow your mind to gently unwind its attachment to thoughts and emotions and compulsively fixating on appearances. Faith in the reality of Mahāmudrā is vitally important, confidence and trust that its teachings are true and that something is really going to happen. Like a spark that turns into a fire, suddenly your mind attains true self-awareness.

As you rest your awareness, your mind becomes naturally stabilized. Saraha gives two analogies: “If water is undisturbed, it is clear; if it is agitated, it is unclear. If a lamp flame is undisturbed by the wind, it is bright. But if it is blown about by the wind it is unclear.” When you relax your mind with focus into its true nature, all your obscurations start to fall away on their own. Like clouds parting, the sun of primordial wisdom begins to shine through.

Make Thoughts Your Friends

You do not need to fight against your thoughts, but simply accept them as they arise. As you practice, disturbing thoughts and emotions naturally come up. But since you recognize your true self as the primordial consciousness *behind* these, this awareness cuts off the power to your disturbing thoughts and emotions at the root, and they dissipate, leaving you unharmed. Unlike in other forms of meditation, in Mahāmudrā *you make thoughts your friends*. Tilopa says playfully, “Let thought go where it wishes - it can't go wrong there.” Thoughts as they arise are fine - you regard them as a pure and perfect arising of appearances. Simply maintain your meditative focus on your mind's own nature, and they dissolve. Part of the genius of the practice is the realization that *thoughts are not the problem*. Your problem is that because you do not see your mind's true nature, you do not see the true nature of your own thoughts either – and your mistaken perception of them as unwelcome intruders troubles you. In Mahāmudrā, you attain a thought-free state indirectly - not by trying to *control* thoughts, but by *recognizing* your mind as primordial awareness, thoughts fall away on their own. While Mahāmudrā is not simply thought-free meditation, achieving a thought-free state is part of an important stage you pass through as you deepen your realization of the view.

Allow the View to Arise Spontaneously

The main practice for attaining Mahāmudrā is, after orgasm with your physical consort, simply letting go and allowing it to arise on its own. Mahāmudrā is the true nature of your mind, which actually arises in every moment of your perception, but it is continuously obscured by dualistic thoughts. The initial experience of Mahāmudrā occurs spontaneously as your attachment to dualistic thoughts and obscuring emotions is released. As a beginner, you start with a mental certainty of what the view is, then rest your mind in that awareness until the actual view spontaneously dawns. In the beginning, your meditation practice is usually mostly Tranquility Meditation with a little bit of Mahāmudrā mixed in. As you develop your ability to maintain the view, your practice becomes more purely Mahāmudrā. Once you attain the view of the mind looking at itself, a light literally goes on inside you, because the true nature of your mind *is* luminous clarity. Your mind shifts from dullness to bright clarity, bliss, and the joy of your own certainty that you have attained it.

Sky Meditation

Tilopa suggests supporting maintaining the view of Mahāmudrā by gazing up at the sky through the Sky Meditation (Svarga Samādhi). This gives you a vision with no visual objects that might distract you, and also reflects the vast, infinite spaciousness that your mind in its true nature is.

Vase Breath

Tilopa advises if you are struggling to maintain the view, you can use Vase Breath (Kumbhaka) to support your Mahāmudrā meditation practice.

Swing Recitation

Śabara uses the Swing Recitation (Dolā Japa), the subtle energy yoga practice of generating a mantra passing continuously through you and your lover, to stabilize the view of Mahāmudrā after you have returned from the Clear Light through the Four Blissess with your lover. In this way, you blissfully support each other in maintaining the view.

Deepening the View of Mahāmudrā

Having attained the view, and developed an ability to maintain it throughout your day, your next step is to focus on deepening the view. This is achieved over time through four profound levels of realization elaborated by Saraha: 1) Mindfulness (Smṛiti), 2) Beyond Mindfulness (Vismaraṇa), 3) Unborn (Ajāta), and 4) Beyond the Intellect (Acintya). As the power of your Mahāmudrā practice improves through sexual yoga, these levels progressively arise:

Level 1

**“Mindfulness sees with certainty that all things are like an illusion.”
- Saraha, *The King’s Song***

See the Empty Nature of Appearances

After years of sexual yoga practice, through sympathetic vibration you activate the potency in your genitals for higher levels of realization. By reflecting upon and holding confidence in the empty nature of appearances as you maintain the view of Mahāmudrā, you directly perceive emptiness. You discover, Saraha says, that “Emptiness is inseparable from appearance.” As a result, your thoughts and emotions are naturally pacified. At the first level, Mindfulness (Smṛiti), you pacify your mind while maintaining the view of Mahāmudrā. You quiet your mind chatter through meditation, while regarding all appearances as illusory. In this way, you stabilize and deepen your recognition of your mind’s own true nature as beyond thoughts. Avoiding agitation and drowsiness, you cut through your obscuring thoughts and emotions on subtle levels. The practice of this level is called the Samādhi of Illusion-Like Appearances (Śūnyatā Samādhi) because you perceive all appearances as empty and illusory.

Level Two

**“The mind itself is not affected by the faults arising from saṃsāra,
nor by the excellent qualities found in the Buddha.”
- Saraha, *The King’s Song***

See Appearances as Mind

Deepening the power of your sexual yoga practice with your consort over time, you initiate a second level of enlightened potency within your genitals. Once you can perceive directly all appearances as empty, the next step is to see them all as mind. In the second level, Beyond Mindfulness (Vismaraṇa), you question the nature of your own mind. You begin with Mind Only insight meditation: through deep analytical questioning, you ask yourself, “What is the relationship between your mind and body? Do they exist as separate from each other? Does your mind inhabit the body, is it enclosed by it? Is the body simply another mental projection of the mind?” You determine with certainty that your body is a mental projection. Then in a state of deep meditative tranquility, you spontaneously and directly perceive your body as a projection of your mind. The second level of meditation is called the Samādhi of the Lion’s Play (Siṃha Līla Samādhi) because its power dispels emotional and mental obscurations, you perceive their inherent nature as mind, and your obscurations disappear because you see they never really existed in the first place. They are conquered by seeing their true nature as projections of your own mind. Once you perceive your obscurations as projections, you effortlessly perceive all appearances in the same way.

Determine the True Nature of Your Mind

Having perceived all appearances as arising from your mind, the next technique is to determine the true nature of your mind. You begin with a personal investigation of the nature of your own mind. You ask yourself, “What *is* your mind?” “What shape is it?” “What color?” “Where do thoughts come from, where they go?” Finding nothing, you determine that your mind has no characteristics. You see the emptiness of the mind’s nature. But emptiness is not nothingness. It is not as though it has no existence at all. You determine that your mind is clarity and wisdom. Knowing that you have found conceptually your mind’s true nature, you rest in that awareness.

Your mind cannot see itself, because your mind has no characteristics to see. But it can be aware of itself, and aware of its own true nature, and that is what the view of Mahāmudrā is. The true nature of your mind is clarity, luminosity, and self-aware wisdom. It is love and compassion. It is infinite creative power. Even a buddha cannot improve upon the stainless clarity of your mind’s true nature. It is not difficult to find, because it is fully and eternally present with you. As Saraha proclaims, “This mind, which is naturally pure, requires no alteration.” When you can directly perceive both your mind’s own emptiness of characteristics *and* its clarity of awareness, *you have successfully found the true nature of your mind*. When the mind sees itself in this way, that is the critical shift in awareness that is Mahāmudrā. You continue to meditate on your mind’s true nature, and as you do your obscurations are spontaneously purified.

Level Three

**“These empty appearances have the nature of clarity.
From the very first they are unborn.”
- Saraha, *The King’s Song***

Release Attachment to Conceptual Thought

Level Three is called Unborn (Ajāta). Activating the third level of the enlightened potential of your genitals through sexual yoga, once you possess a perceptual certainty of the true nature of your mind, you let go of your mind, its activity of thinking, and allow your mind to be open, spacious, and relaxed. You keep your awareness centered in the present moment, undistracted by thoughts of past and future. Thoughts are simply a part of the natural display of your own mind. Allow them to arise and fall away like clouds. Slowly and indirectly, you attain a thought-free state, and you rest in that state while meditating on your mind’s true nature. This is called the Heroic Samādhi (Vīra Samādhi) because you are in a state of complete fearlessness. Tilopa calls this practice “unthinking” (amanasikāra).

Perceive Your Mind and Appearances as the Clear Light of Ultimate Reality

From the thought-free state, ever-resting in your mind’s own true nature as your focus, another dramatic shift in your awareness spontaneously arises - you directly perceive your mind as the unchanging Essence of ultimate reality. Your mind is flooded with oceanic power, as you begin

to tap into the infinite wisdom, love and creativity of the all-pervasive field of uncreated light. Primordial wisdom may dawn at first as an unseen presence, but as you deepen your awareness you perceive it directly as the field of the Clear Light, the Dharmatā, Buddha Essence. You are not creating something new, you are not even changing your mind in any way. Like digging up a lost treasure, you reveal the primordial light within you.

In no way is Mahāmudrā a meditative “state” in the usual sense of the term. All meditative states are regarded as conditioned by external factors - they arise and fall away as the necessary external factors are either present or absent for you – some free time, a quiet place to meditate, etc. Mahāmudrā, however, does not arise from *any* external causes at all. It is simply the recognition of what is eternally present. Āryadeva describes it most succinctly - “The practice *is* ultimate reality.” Directly perceiving the Clear Light is so totally comprehensive that you see all appearances as having no separate existence at all. This is the meaning of “unborn” - primordial awareness, which you directly perceive as ever-present and eternal, never had a moment of birth, and no separate appearances are ever born from it. You perceive the *pure unity* of reality, and it is overwhelming and intensely blissful. Everything has the one taste of nirvāṇa. Realizing the third level of Mahāmudrā is identical to attaining union with the Clear Light through the third bliss in the Four Bliss of sexual yoga.

Level Four

**“Intellect, mind, and mental appearances have this very nature.
All the worlds in their appearing have this very nature.”
- Saraha, *The King’s Song***

See the Clear Light as Pure Appearance

To attain the final level, Beyond the Intellect (Acintya), you continually rest your mind in its true nature as the Clear Light. In sexual union with your physical consort, you then trigger through sympathetic vibration the fourth and highest level of potency within your genitals. This creates an extraordinary new shift in your awareness - you directly perceive the unchanging unity of ultimate reality *and* the changing play of appearances as pure, real, and perfect. This level is called the Vajra Samādhi (Vajra Samādhi), because it is brilliant and *indestructible*. To discover your mind’s true nature is to see the true nature not only of ultimate reality but of all appearances as well. From the unitary ocean of pure and perfect consciousness, true nondual awareness arises. You no longer perceive appearances in an exclusive Oneness that wipes out distinctions, nor do you see appearances as separate or karmically conditioned. Instead, you see appearances rise and fall away as pure, blissful expressions of the creative power of primordial wisdom.

Allow Your Remaining Obscurations to Self-Liberate

In *The King’s Song*, Saraha observes that in the final stage of Mahāmudrā “The poison of objects turns into healing nectar.” You allow all your obscuring thoughts and emotions to self-liberate. To self-liberate (Sahaja) means to perceive anything that arises in your awareness unobscured,

by directly perceiving its essential nature as primordial wisdom and bliss. As you perceive this, all appearances take on their true qualities of wisdom and bliss. Each of the levels of Mahāmudrā give you some degree of ability to self-liberate obscurations. But at the fourth and highest level this ability becomes intensely strong, continuous, and effortless.

Thoughts and emotions no longer vex you - they are seen themselves as possessing the pure nature of your own mind. You discover that everything is pure and perfect just as it is. Emotions and thoughts are welcome arisings that you warmly delight in. You use them to see the power of the Clear Light within them - not to abandon them as mere delusion, but to embrace them as primordially pure and perfect. While clouds covering the sun is a common metaphor for suffering in the philosophy of Buddha Essence, the Tantric view is that *the clouds themselves are pure*. Ānandavajra shares wisely, “In the pure expanse of sky, pure clouds arise and dissolve.” The clouds are already pure - *just see them as so*.

When you see into the true nature of whatever emotions or thoughts you suffer from, they naturally self-liberate. In this way, all bondage (bandhana) is its own release (nivṛiti). The poisons become their own remedy.” Every emotion and thought that rises is seen as a buddha, and this very act liberates it into its own perfection. In the Mahāyāna, poison is purified by its antidote. In the Vajrayāna, poison, seen in its true nature as bliss and wisdom, *is* the antidote.

The Universality of Nondual Yoga

Nondual yoga is by no means exclusive to Tantric Buddhism. In Hinduism, it is found in the Vedas, the Upaniṣads, Vedānta and Kashmir Śaivism. In Buddhism, the teachings of the Middle Way, Mind Only, Buddha Essence, and Zen are all nondual yogas. In Taoism, the essence of the path is nondual yoga. The Western mystical systems are often the same, as the writings of the Christian Gnostics, Meister Eckhart, Al-Hallaj, and Jewish Kabbalah teach nondual yoga. Nonduality is a universal path and goal.

Dance in the Great Bliss

Seeing reality clearly, you spontaneously act as primordial wisdom arises through you. Everything you do is pure and perfect. The Great Bliss burns away your remaining karmic obscurations, which never had any substantive reality anyway as they arose purely from ignorance and illusion. You realize that *you are both unchanging ultimate reality and a miraculous display of its creative power*. The bliss of your mind’s true nature greatly intensifies the enjoyment of appearances. The final step is to meditate while remaining in the Great Bliss. The master Saraha advises, “Purify in utmost Great Bliss, and perfection will follow.” His disciple Śābara spent twelve years maintaining a blissful, thought-free state before he fully accomplished Mahāmudrā and attained complete enlightenment. You bathe your awareness in the vast expanse of pure appearances as they arise from pure primordial wisdom. Seeing

simultaneously both Essence and the blissful play of appearances, you become “one who walks in the sky” (khecara/khecarī). You dance in the Great Bliss.

Results

**“When one attains realization, everything is spontaneously accomplished.”
- Niguma**

Kṛiṣṇācārya firmly declares that through the path of nondual yoga, “Enlightenment is definitely attained in this very life.” In the final phase of Mahāmudrā you attain conscious union with ultimate reality while remaining in the world of appearances. *You see reality clearly*, and delight in the creative, erotic love-play of Essence and appearance. The release of dualistic thought ends your fixation on a self that does not independently exist, and your confusion falls away. The release of obscuring emotions ends your emotional turmoil as you discover that you are primal bliss itself. Love and compassion for others naturally arise, and you seek joyfully to liberate them. Through Mahāmudrā, you attain the union of the three dimensions of a buddha: the dharmakāya, the sambhogakāya, and the nirmāṇakāya. You are stainless and perfect.

The Enlightened Body

Your body, liberated from old age and death, is healthy, strong, and erotically beautiful.
You walk fearlessly like a lion.
In delight, you enjoy everything and grasp at nothing.
You effortlessly create what you desire.
Your actions spontaneously liberate others.
Your movements are Pure Appearance.
Your body is the Great Bliss.

The Enlightened Speech

Your speech, liberated from obscuring emotions, is full of wisdom and erotic love for life.
Your words radiate brilliance.
Eloquent, you astonish those along the path.
Your language inspires the magical net of the celestial yoginīs to gather.
Your silence is even more profound than your words.
Your gentle whispers are the Great Passion.
Your speech is the Great Bliss.

The Enlightened Mind

Your mind, liberated from subject and object, dwells in the erotic adamantine samādhi.
You love everything.

Clear and brilliant, you are inconceivable.
Your thoughts delight the buddhas.
You are omniscient and supreme.
Your awareness is unchanging Essence.
Your mind is the Great Bliss.

The State of Vajradhara

As an enlightened being, you attain the state of Vajradhara, comprising seven qualities:

1. Your saṃbhogakāya form possesses the all major and minor marks of a buddha.
2. Your saṃbhogakāya form sexually embraces an enlightened consort.
3. Your mind is always in a state of Great Bliss.
4. Your mind directly perceives the unity of the Clear Light and worldly appearances.
5. Your mind is eternally in a state of great love and compassion for all beings.
6. Your nirmāṇakāya form is eternal.
7. Your buddha activities of enjoying worldly pleasures and benefitting beings are ceaseless.

Vows

Your vows are the vows of the fourth consecration: to perceive everything as the union of Essence and Pure Appearance, and to allow all your actions to be guided by primordial, spontaneous wisdom.

Sādhana Vows – Sādhana Samaya

As you practice the nondual yoga portion of the sādhana, allow the view of Mahāmudrā to spontaneously emerge, and observe as the four levels of realization progressively arise.

Daily Conduct - Caryā

While most meditative practices make a strong distinction between the meditative state and post-meditative state, Mahāmudrā does not. You maintain the view at all times. Share your bliss with others, be loving and compassionate, and serve them effortlessly. Whatever your level of realization is, maintain it and just be natural. Live your life, however that may be, with family, work, and other activities, and blend your view of Mahāmudrā into all that you do. This is not so easy to do at first. As you develop in the Four Levels, eventually it becomes *impossible* for anything in your awareness to distract you – your realization becomes indestructible. Your vows (samayas) from the fourth consecration elevate you into attaining and maintaining the view of Mahāmudrā. Over time, as primordial wisdom directs you, you rely less on your vows and finally let go of them. Attend Tantric feasts (gaṇacakra) as you desire and soar in the intensity of the group erotic energies. “Blissed out,” you become profoundly contented as you effortlessly

maintain the view. The following daily conduct special practices are recommended to deepen your realization:

The Conduct of the One Cast Off - Avadhūti

In the beginning practice of the Conduct of the One Cast Off, you purposely take actions that might stir your emotions or the emotions of others to develop your equanimity and perception of the essential sameness of all appearances.

Ever-Perfect Conduct - Samanta Bhadra

In the intermediate practice of Ever-Perfect Conduct, you openly perform magical feats in front of others to inspire them to follow the Tantric Buddhist path.

Victorious in All Directions Conduct - Viśva Vijaya

In the advanced practice, Victorious in All Directions, you strengthen your consciousness of Great Bliss by practicing sexual yoga with high disincarnate gods or goddesses such as apsarās (female water spirits), gandharvas (male sky spirits), and the enlightened consorts of the buddhas, who bestow intense bliss upon you and purify your most subtle obscurations.

Exercises

Perform these exercises in your first weekly session, while practicing the sādhanā in your second weekly session, emphasizing the practices of nondual yoga.

Benefits: Develops awareness of the Four Levels of Mahāmudrā, leading to complete and perfect enlightenment.

Time: 2 hours.

Initial Practices - Sevā

Begin with the initial practices.

1. Recite the Refuge Vow.

buddham śaraṇam gacchāmi
dharmam śaraṇam gacchāmi
saṅgham śaraṇam gacchāmi

“I go for refuge to the Buddha.”
“I go for refuge to the Dharma.”
“I go for refuge to the Saṅgha.”

Recite 3x.



2. Recite the Bodhisattva Vow.

*viśuddhaṃ dhārayiṣyāmi yathā buddhena deśitaṃ
tena jītvā śaṭhamāraṃ prāpya buddhatvam uttamaṃ
bhaveyaṃ bhavakhinnānāṃ śaraṇaṃ sarvadehināṃ*

“I will maintain purity, as taught by the Buddha.
Conquering the demon Mara, and attaining supreme buddhahood,
I vow to be a refuge for all beings, weary of saṃsāra.”

Recite 3x.



3. Recite the Lineage Prayer.

oṃ namo gurubhyaḥ
“oṃ Homage to the gurus.”

“To all the ones who know the true reality, I offer a maṇḍala (Maṇḍala Mudrā) of the Three Worlds:



From the vast expanse of the ocean of primordial wisdom, I invoke Vajradhara and his precious consort Vajradhātviśvarī.

From the Buddhafield of Sukhāvātī, I call upon the great buddhas Amitābha and Pāṇḍarā.

From his celestial paradise Potala, I invoke the noble Lord of erotic passion Lokanātha.

From the pure mind of Saraha to the great master Śābara, the noble teachings were given.

From Lokanātha to the great master Śābara, these words of practice were heard as an imperishable sound.

Masters of the lineage, Saraha and Hedarmā, Śabara and Śabarī, I invoke you all. For the benefit of all beings, I will attain enlightenment in this very life. Guide me in the path that leads to the Great Bliss.”

Visualize that you are surrounded by countless buddhas, bodhisattvas, yogis and yoginīs, Dharma protectors, and masters of the lineage who pledge to support your practice. They dissolve into your heart, bringing you inner awakening.

Benefits: Clarifies your commitment to the path, strengthens your intention for inner awakening, shifts your mindstream into a state of meditative absorption to attain enlightenment.

Time: 2 minutes.

Preparatory Practice – Ādi Yoga

Begin your session with some of the subtle energy yoga exercises from Chapter 6: Subtle Energy Yoga.

Benefits: Clears subtle karmic obscurations in your subtle body, preparing you for profound realization through nondual yoga.

Time: 30 minutes.

Sexual Yoga – Karma Mudrā

1. In sexual union with your physical consort, as the deity and its consort, make love.
2. Achieve orgasm together.
3. Together you attain the view of Mahāmudrā.

Benefits: Attains the view of Mahāmudrā, to be cultivated during the remainder of the session.

Time: 30 minutes.

Mahāmudrā Sitting Meditation

The basic instructions for all Mahāmudrā sitting meditation practice are as follows. Practitioners should aim to perform sitting practice after the conclusion of sexual yoga.

1. Sit comfortably in the Vajra Posture, and breathe normally. To find the right balance between physical and mental tension and relaxation, you can tighten all the muscles in your body for a few moments, and then release them.
2. Keep your awareness focused on itself, its own Innate clarity and faculty of awareness, without distraction, with your mind open, spacious and relaxed. Let Tilopa’s *The Six Words of*

Advice on Mahāmudrā guide you: 1) Do not remember (the past), 2) Do not imagine (the future), 3) Do not think (about the present), 4) Do not make judgements (about anything), 5) Do not meditate (on any object), and 6) Relax your mind in its own nature.

3. Make your thoughts your friends. As you practice, disturbing thoughts and emotions will come up. But as you recognize your true self as the consciousness *behind* these, this cuts off the power to your disturbing thoughts and emotions at the root, and they fall away leaving you unharmed. Thoughts as they arise are fine, but you maintain your perception of your mind's own nature. As you maintain your focus on the true nature of your mind, allow your mind to be open, spacious, and relaxed. Without forcing it, allow your mind to relax gently and unwind, accepting thoughts or nonthought as they are.

4. Keep your awareness from falling into drowsiness or agitation. When you become drowsy, raise your gaze. When you become agitated, lower your gaze. Practicing yogic poses and yogic breathing are also excellent methods for dispelling drowsiness and agitation.

5. When you complete a sitting session, do not simply arise abruptly, but carry the clarity of awareness into your post meditation.

Benefits: Establishes the physical, emotional and mental foundation for attaining, maintaining, and deepening the view of Mahāmudrā.

Time: 1 hour. Because of the tremendous subtlety of the practice, it is best to begin your Mahāmudrā sitting practice with very short meditation sessions of just a few minutes, interspersed with breaks, and then lengthen them as you gain confidence in the view.

Attaining the View of Mahāmudrā

You can attain the view of Mahāmudrā spontaneously through any or all of the following rituals or practices.

The Third Consecration – Prajñā/Upāya Abhiṣeka

To take the third consecration, see Chapter 4: Consecration.

The Four Yogas – Catur Mudrā

Practice the Four Yogas together with your physical consort. Perform this through the sādhana or on your own. Emphasize nondual yoga in the time during your practice session.

Benefits: Clears coarse, subtle, and very subtle karmic obscurations, leading to attaining the view of Mahāmudrā.

Time: 1 hour.

Drinking Sexual Fluids – Rakta and Śukra

While holding the highest intention to attain enlightenment, keenly aware that sexual fluids are Mahāmudrā in physical form, drink sexual fluids. You can also practice the ritual of Tasting the Nectar of Immortality (Amṛita Āsvādana) in *The Sādhana of Secret Vajravilāsinī* (verses 94-95).

Benefits: Through sympathetic vibration, you are elevated into the view of Mahāmudrā.

Time: 2 minutes.

Guru Devotion – Guru Yoga

1. At the beginning of your meditation session, pray with devotion to your gurus. Ask them to bring you the attainment of the view of Mahāmudrā.
2. Ask the all-knowing Yoginī Mahāmudrā for help.
3. Let Her envelop you in it.

Benefits: Brings the liberating powers of the gurus who bestow the view of Mahāmudrā.

Time: 2 minutes.

Maintaining the View of Mahāmudrā

Once you have attained the view of Mahāmudrā, use these rituals and exercises to develop your ability to maintain the view throughout your day.

The Fourth Consecration – Caturtha Abhiṣeka

To take the fourth consecration, see Chapter 4: Consecration.

One-Pointed Awareness on Your Mind’s True Nature – Cittatā

1. Start with a mental certainty of what the view of Mahāmudrā is.
2. Witness as your mind gently relaxes and unwinds.
3. Maintain your focus on your mind’s own true nature.
4. Make thoughts your friends, recognizing their own true nature.
5. At first you will have thoughts, but over time as you maintain your meditative focus on your mind’s true nature, you eventually come to a thought-free state.

Benefits: Clears very subtle karmic obscurations, allows you to maintain the view of Mahāmudrā.

Time: 1 hour.

Sky Meditation - Svarga Dhyāna

As you meditate, maintain the view of Mahāmudrā while gazing up at the sky.

Benefits: Assists in relaxing the mind and letting go of conceptual thought.

Time: 1 hour.

Vase Breath - Kumbhaka

Use Vase Breath to support your Mahāmudrā meditation practice. Instructions are in Chapter 6: Subtle Energy Yoga.

Benefits: Clears subtle karmic obscurations that supports maintaining the view of Mahāmudrā.

Time: 1 hour.

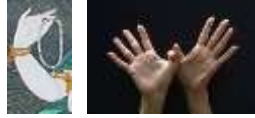
Swing Recitation with Physical Consort – Dolā Japa Karmamudrā

1. Sit with your lover in sexual union, in a mutual sitting pose like Vajra Pose or Bliss Pose.
2. Visualize the six glowing red and white marks on your bodies: the four major cakras, the Secret Cakra, and the Crown Cakra.
3. Visualize the seed mantra of Vajravilāsīnī, *em āṃ rīṃ raṃ brīṃ*, as a mantra garland in the woman's yoni.
4. While slowly reciting the mantra once, visualize the mantra moving from her yoni to the man's vajra, up to his heart, up his central channel to his right nostril, into her left nostril, down to her heart, and down to her yoni. This is one repetition.
5. Complete 108 repetitions, performing them with great speed, and seal each other with the protective Garuda Mudrā hand seal. This is one set.
6. Recite up to 5 complete sets of repetitions, or as many as you desire.

Benefits: Clears subtle and very subtle karmic obscurations that allows you to maintain the view of Mahāmudrā.

Time: 1 hour.

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Deepening the View of Mahāmudrā

Practice these exercises once you are able to maintain the view of Mahāmudrā continuously.

Level One: Mindfulness - Smṛiti

Emptiness Insight Meditation: See the Empty Nature of Appearances

1. Reflect on the empty nature of appearances, confident in it, and maintain the view of Mahāmudrā as you keep your mind meditatively absorbed on its own nature.
2. You spontaneously and directly perceive the emptiness of appearances.

Benefits: Your thoughts and emotions are naturally pacified, and you experience the first bliss of Mahāmudrā, Bliss.

Time: 1 hour.

Level Two: Beyond Mindfulness - Asmṛiti

Mind Only Insight Meditation: See Appearances as Mind Only

1. Through analytical questioning, ask yourself about the relationship between your mind and body. Do they exist as separate from each other? Does the mind inhabit the body, enclosed by it? Is the body simply another mental projection of the mind? Determine with certainty that your body is a mental projection.
2. In meditative tranquility, you spontaneously and directly perceive your body as a projection of your mind.
3. Look at an object. See that it is simply a vivid appearance within your own mind.
4. Meditate on your thoughts and emotions. You discover that they arise and fall away; they have no inherent self-existence but are simply vivid appearances within your own mind.
5. Eventually, you directly experience all appearances as projections of your own mind.

Benefits: Your karmic obscurations are released, and you experience the second bliss of Mahāmudrā, Supreme Bliss.

Time: 1 hour.

Buddha Essence Insight Meditation: Determine the True Nature of Your Mind

1. Begin with a deep personal investigation of the nature of your own mind. What color is it? What shape? Where do thoughts come from? Where they go? Determine that your mind has no characteristics. See it as empty, and everything you experience is a projection of your mind. Yet your mind does not *not* exist at all. Your mind is the radiant clarity of ultimate reality, and all appearances are pure emanations of ultimate reality.
2. Directly perceive both your mind's own emptiness of characteristics *and* its clarity of awareness.

Benefits: You discover the true nature of your mind, and your karmic obscurations are released.

Time: 1 hour.

Level Three: The Unborn - Ajāta

Buddha Essence Insight Meditation: Release Attachment to Conceptual Thought

1. Once you have attained a direct perception of the true nature of your mind, let go of your mind. Allow your mind to be open, spacious, and relaxed. Keep your awareness centered in the present moment, and do not be distracted by thoughts of past and future. Thoughts are simply a part of the natural display of your own mind. Allow them to arise and fall away like clouds.
2. Eventually, you attain a thought-free state.

Benefits: Clears obscuring thoughts, allows you eventually to directly perceive the Clear Light of your mind's true nature.

Time: 1 hour.

Buddha Essence Insight Meditation: Perceive Your Mind and Appearances as the Clear Light

1. From the thought-free state, meditating on your mind's own true nature as your focus, perceive your mind as unchanging ultimate reality. See that your mind, and all appearances, are unborn, the Clear Light of ultimate reality, pure Oneness, the bliss of nirvāṇa.
2. Resting in that awareness, you are purified as you open into the infinite wisdom, love and creative power of the field of uncreated light. Over time, you may fully perceive the shimmering light of the Clear Light directly.

Benefits: Your karmic obscurations are released, and you experience the third bliss of Mahāmudrā, the Bliss of Cessation.

Time: 1 hour.

Level Four: Beyond the Intellect - Acintya

The Innate Insight Meditation: See the Clear Light as Spontaneous Play

From deep within your own unitive experience of the Clear Light of primordial wisdom, you spontaneously discover the true nature of all appearances. Nondual awareness arises - you no longer perceive appearances as only pure blissful Oneness, nor do you perceive them as separate or karmically conditioned. You see appearances rise and fall away as pure expressions of the spontaneous play of the ocean of consciousness. The true nature of all phenomena is bliss, and you perceive this directly in everything around you.

Benefits: Your karmic obscurations are purified, and you attain the fourth bliss of Mahāmudrā, Innate Bliss, also called the Great Bliss.

Time: 1 hour.

The Innate Insight Meditation: Allow Your Remaining Obscurations to Self-Liberate

1. Allow all your obscuring thoughts and emotions to “self-liberate,” to see anything that arises without attachment by directly perceiving its essential nature as the creative display of primordial bliss. As you turn the poison of objects into healing nectar, all appearances take on their true qualities of wisdom and bliss. Your thoughts and emotions no longer trouble you, because you see them directly as the pure nature of the mind itself. You discover that everything is pure and perfect just as it is.

2. As you perceive into each thought and emotions’s true nature, the thought and emotion falls away on its own, without affecting your inner peace. Your thoughts become weaker, diminish in volume, and your mind is quieted. You enjoy the richness and purity of your emotions.

Benefits: Your remaining obscuring thoughts and emotions are released.

Time: 1 hour.

The Innate Insight Meditation: Dance in the Great Bliss

1. See your own emotional and mental obscurations as empty of self-existence as obscurations, but as the very nature of wisdom and bliss.

2. The fires of the Great Bliss burn away your remaining karmic obscurations.

3. Realize that you are unchanging, ultimate reality *and* an expression of its perfect, dynamic play.

4. Dance in the Great Bliss. Everything you think, feel, and do is pure and perfect.

Benefits: All your activities spontaneously become the natural display of primordial wisdom. Seeing reality clearly, you spontaneously act as primordial wisdom arises through you. You attain complete and perfect enlightenment.

Time: 1 hour.

Closing Practices - Visarjana

1. Dissolve the deity.

Perform the Earth Touching Gesture (Bhūmi Sparśa Mudrā), and recite the Dissolution Mantra (Anubheda Mantra).

oṃ āḥ hūṃ vajra muḥ



2. Recite the Dedication of Merit.

puṇyaṃ prabhūtaṃ yad ihāpi sarvaṃ sambodhaye tat pariṇāmayāmi
“I dedicate all merit arisen here for the goal of complete and perfect enlightenment.”



Chapter 9. The Sacred Site of Enlightenment: Preparing for Practice

**“In a pleasing place where there are no disturbances,
in secret, take a woman who has desire.”**

– Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra

Introduction



Learning the Practice

The sādhana is ideally learned in four stages. Traditionally, before you begin to practice it, you take the Refuge Vow, Lay Precepts, and the Bodhisattva Vow, and then take the first consecration and the appropriate Tantric vows. Then you can practice the deity yoga portions of the sādhana. After six months, take the second consecration and add to your sādhana practice the exercises of subtle energy yoga. After an additional six months, take the third consecration and add to your sādhana practice the exercises of sexual yoga. After another six months of practice, take the fourth consecration and add the nondual yoga of Mahāmudrā. In this way, you always recite the entire sādhana, but you only perform the practices for which you have received the consecrations. It is best if you can memorize the sādhana, at

least up to the first 117 verses - this makes it much easier to practice.

Solo Practice

For reciting the sādhanā solo, select any ritual items you may need for your practice listed in this chapter. Note that when a man practices the sādhanā solo, he dresses like and visualizes himself as Padmanartheśvara, and visualizes himself in union with Vajravilāsinī. Whatever actions in the sādhanā you can perform physically on your own, you may do so. For practices you cannot perform without a physical consort, you visualize yourself with your wisdom deity consort.

Time

When performing the complete sādhanā with your lover, plan to spend about three hours per session: an hour to prepare yourself and the space, and two hours performing the sādhanā. Feel free to take a little break time in between major sections. It is inauspicious to start a sādhanā and not finish, so make sure you have enough time for the whole practice. A straight recitation of the sādhanā without doing any accompanying practices takes about forty-five minutes.

Auspicious Times to Practice

Reciting a sādhanā is traditionally performed four times per day, although longer sādhanās were probably practiced only three times a day, but in the modern world once or twice a week is a good goal. The sādhanā is ideally performed in its complete form with your lover at night, four times a month, on the four juncture (parvan) nights of the waxing Half Moon, Full Moon, waning Half Moon, and New Moon. Practicing a sādhanā on auspicious lunar nights is an effective way to tap into the increased power of the celestial yoginīs who bestow their gifts.

Chanting the Sādhanā

Chanting the sādhanā in English is done simply by creating your own simple tune for each verse and then repeating it until the end. At some point you may feel drawn to chant the original Sanskrit verses to enjoy their beauty and sacred power. The meter of most verses is called śloka (lit. verse), which is slow and lyrical, two phrases per line and two lines per verse, the classical meter of most Sanskrit poetry.

Suggested Items

To purchase all the items for the sādhanā should not be too expensive, as it is intentionally minimalistic. A yogi or yoginī is always wealthy: you can visualize what you need.

Ritual Space

A ritual space (vajra pīṭha – lit. adamantine seat) is a sacred site suitable for enlightenment. As you create your own site, you make a space inviting for two practitioners to dance and delight in creative loveplay. The sādhana should be performed in a well-lit space, preferably with oil lamps or candles that provide a soft, romantic glow. As you will be ritually naked for the sādhana, be sure to keep the temperature of the room high enough to be comfortable. At the same time, the exercises can be physically vigorous, so you do not want the room to be too hot either. If you know a space outdoors where you can practice in isolation and the temperature is agreeable, that is ideal. Anaṅgavajra, in *The Attainment of the Realization of Wisdom and Method*, describes the perfect setting: “It is a delightful place filled with flowers and incense, blissful with garlands and divine perfumes, the resort of deities, wonderful indeed.”

Decoration

The following are some suggestions for decorating your ritual space:

Colors

Principal Tantric colors are medium red and white. Secondary colors are gold and silver.

Śabara and Śabarī

In honor of Śabara and his forest-dwelling consort Śabarī, you may decorate your ritual space with his attributes:

Deerskin (kṛiṣṇasara) - lit. Black antelope hide. The hide worn by Avalokiteśvara. Victory over ignorance.

Arrow and bow (iṣu kārmuka) - The power to cut through dualistic thought.

Peacock feathers (mayura tilaka) – Transforming the Three Poisons into transcendent wisdom. The peacock is the vehicle of Amitābha, a symbol of royal power, and a symbol of the Śabara tribe, whose members often wore peacock feathers as belts around their waists.

A vine necklace (latā rucaka) – Elegant harmony with the powers of nature.

Vajravilāsinī and Padmanarteśvara

An image (pratimā) of the deity – Such as a cloth scroll painting (pata) or a statue (rūpa).

Diamond scepter (vajra) - Indestructible power, lordship, and compassionate activity. The principal attribute (cihna) of both Vajravilāsinī and Padmanarteśvara.

White noose (sita pāśa) – A noose represents binding yourself to practice, and demonstrates Vajravilāsinī’s power to transform desire through disciplined play. It is white because her methods are peaceful. The two ends of the noose are sealed with a gold ring and a small hook.

Yellow lotus (pīta padma) – The ability to manifest abundance. Padmanarteśvara’s secondary attribute.

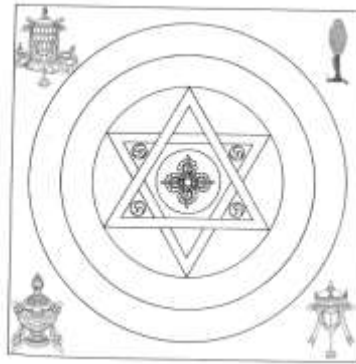
Emplacing the Maṇḍala

Placing the maṇḍala of the deity on the ground draws the powers of the deities into your space strongly:

Solo and Couples Practice: Since the practitioners draw the deity’s maṇḍala on the female practitioner’s yoni during the sādhana, it is not necessary for couples to draw the deity’s maṇḍala on the ground before the ritual. For solo practitioners, it is ideal, but also not required, to draw the maṇḍala on the ground. If you wish to do so, it is performed according to the instructions in Chapter 4: Consecration. Recite the mantra 1000x to empower the mantra before practice.

Tantric Feasts: A maṇḍala is drawn on the ground before a Tantric feast. For the ritual of the Tantric Feast (Gaṇacakra), see Chapter 4: Consecration.

Consecration: A maṇḍala is drawn on the ground before a consecration. For the Ritual of Empowering the Maṇḍala (Maṇḍala Adhiṣṭhāna), see Chapter 4: Consecration.



Lotus Family – Padma Kula

Amitābha – Supreme Buddha of the Lotus Family.

Pāṇḍarā - Consort of Amitābha.

Avalokiteśvara – Bodhisattva of compassion. Śābara’s principal deity.

Red Tārā – Bodhisattvā of compassion.

Red Jambhala – God of wealth.

Amitāyus – Buddha of long life.

Hayagrīva – God of protection.

Red lotus flower (padma) - Lotus flowers of all colors are the symbol of the Lotus Family and divine erotic power: red (padma), white (kumuda), blue (nīla utpala), and yellow (pīta padma).

The Altar - Vedi

An altar (vedi) is recommended but not required for sādhana practice. You may add additional items as desired to make it appealing. An altar ideally includes at least: 1) an image (pratimā) of the deity, and 2) the outer offerings (bāhya pūjā). A separate offering table may be used to place the outer offerings if they cannot fit on your altar.

An Image of the Deity

Place an image (pratimā) such as a statue (rūpa), illustration (pratimā), or attribute symbol (cihna) of Vajravilāsinī, Padmanarteśvara, or Amitābha in the center of your altar. You can also place images of other deities as you desire.

The Outer Offerings

1. Food offerings (bali) - To the main deity and worldly spirits. A small plate of food, or a simple offering flatbread “cake,” made of wheat, rice, or barley, and can be decorated with a ribbon or parasol.
2. Food (naivedya) - For a Tantric feast after the sādhana. These are placed on the altar and first offered to the main deity you are worshipping.

Consecrating a Statue

To consecrate a statue (Rūpa Ādiṣṭhāna), first fill the inside of the statue (metal statues are usually hollow) with small semi-precious stones like quartz; red stones like garnet, carnelian or ruby are particularly good for deities of the Lotus Family. Write the mantra of the deity on a small piece of paper and roll it and place it inside the statue, and then seal the bottom of the statue closed with glue. You can either recite the mantra of the deity 108x, or recite a sādhana to that deity. Make the Five Offerings (Pañca Upacāra) to the deity in the statue physically (See Chapter 4: Consecration). At the end of your repetition or practice, request that the deity reside permanently in your statue, and visualize it dissolving into your statue. The statue is now alive with the powers of the deity. Consecration is only performed once.

On the Floor

The Maṇḍala

If you are placing a maṇḍala on the floor for your ritual, see items needed in Chapter 4: Consecration.

Rugs, Blankets and Cushions

A 4' x 6' Indian cotton rug mat (kaṭa).

A large wool or cotton blanket (kambala).

Two large cushioned meditation mats (kaṭa), or a large animal skin hide (kriṣṇasara) like deerskin or sheepskin.

Two firm meditation cushions (āsana).

Pillows (āsana) – Get lots of pillows to support you. Bolster pillows are especially useful for the woman. She can sit on a vertical cushion - this lifts her up higher, is very comfortable, and still exposes her yoni.

Serving Tray

A large serving tray (paṭṭikā) – For carrying food and drinks into and out of the sacred space.

Two large cups (patra) – For drinking water or fruit juice, made of copper or coconut shell.

A pitcher (kumbha) - For drinking water or fruit juice.

Mats

Two mats (kaṭa) or altar cloths (vastra) about 15" x 15" - To place your ritual items on. Place these to the left of the cushions that you will sit on together facing each other. Half of these items will be placed on her mat and half on his:

Two vajras – Instruments of divine power.



Two hand drums (ḍamaru) – A ḍamaru is the sound of enlightened activity.



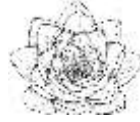
Two bells (ghaṅṭā) - A bell is the sound of enlightened wisdom.



Two mālās – Rosaries. Ideal is a light material like sandalwood.



Two bowls for flowers (puṣpa patra) – For flowers or flower petals.
Flowers and/or flower petals (puṣpa) – Purity. To offer to each other.



An incense burner (dāhaka) – For burning incense as an offering to each other.



Incense (dhūpa) - Incense paste or incense, sweet-smelling, such as sandalwood or jasmine.

Matches (kāṇḍa) – For the lamps, candles and incense.

Charcoal lighter disks (aṅgāra) - For burning pure incense powders or resins that are not mixed with saltpeter.

A bowl for food treats (tāmbūla patra) – To feed each other.

Food treats (tāmbūla) – Use freshly sliced mango or other fruit, or the traditional betel leaf and areca nut treats (tāmbūla).

The cup of the nectar of immortality (amṛita patra) – To hold the sexual fluids. The *Hevajra Tantra* recommends a shell of mother-of-pearl.



The Five Nectars (Pañca Amṛita) – Tantric nectar traditionally includes small amounts of excrement, urine, human meat, and female and male sexual fluids. This is mixed with fermented honey (mādhvī), molasses (gaudī), or red wine (madya) to fill the cup, and ritually consecrated. You may make substitutions as you wish.

A vase (kumbha) – To hold the red wine or other alcoholic beverage for drinking.

Wine (madya) – Try a red Indian wine, rice wine or Indian beer.

Two bowls of wash water (padya patra) – Filled with water for washing your hands.

Two hand towels (vastra) - For drying your hands.

A small bowl for kuṃkuma (kuṃkuma patra) – For ritual marking.

Kuṃkuma - Saffron powder (or a cheaper option turmeric - haldi). For ritual marking.

A small bowl for sindūra (sindūra patra) – For ritual marking.

Sindūra - Vermillion (or its alternative sandalwood - candana) powder. Because sindūra contains lead, and candana is wood powder that can irritate your skin, a safer and still traditional option is red wine mixed with a little sesame oil and flour. For ritual marking.

A small bowl for lime juice (cuna patra) - For mixing the kuṃkuma and sindūra powders into a paste.

Lime juice (cuna) – To mix into the kuṃkuma and sindūra powders to make them stick.

Two aśoka flowers - (Lat. *Saraca indica*; Engl. ashoka). Alternatives are red hibiscus (jabā) or ixora (bandhūka), or any beautiful red flower. Placed above the ear.

Black powder (añjana) – For her. During the sādhana, she puts on collyrium (black powder or lamp black) as eye shadow and black eyeliner around her eyes.

Fragrance (gandha) – This includes aromatic perfumes, ointments, oils, or creams. You can mix sesame oil with fragrant essential oils such as sandalwood or jasmine. For massage.

A garland of flowers (puṣpa mālā) – For giving as a gift after massaging each other before or after the sādhana. These can be made of ixora (bandhūka), jasmine (mālatī), champā (Lat. *Michelia champaka*), or white ixora (jūhī).

A hand brush (kūrca) – For her. To beautify herself.

A hand mirror (darpaṇa) – For her. To beautify herself.

Oil lamp(s) (dīpa) - Filled with oil. Candles are a good alternative, those made of clean-burning beeswax are especially recommended. Tealight candles run out in just a few hours so larger pillar candles are recommended. Place all candles in secure candleholders for safety. Never leave lamps or candles unattended.

Oil (tila) - For lamps. Traditional lamp oils are ghee and sesame oil. Avoid petroleum-based lamp oils like paraffin.

The Sādhana of Secret Vajravilāsinī – Two copies, one for each practitioner.

Music player – Bring a CD player if you are going to play recorded music.

Music CDs – Such as traditional Indian music, belly dance music, or Buddhist Sanskrit chants.

Blessing the Nectar Cup

Blessing the Nectar Cup (Amṛita Prokṣana) should be done before the start of your practice session. Recite and perform the ritual of Blessing the Nectar Cup in the Tantric Feast in Chapter 4: Consecration. Use the nectar to bless any unconsecrated objects.



Feast Food and Drink

When celebrating a Tantric feast (gaṇacakra) after the sādhana, you can try some Oriya (from Orissa) feast food. Indian meals are served with the food altogether at once in small portions.

Five Spices (Pañca Phutana) – The key ingredient to light and healthy Oriya cuisine is this spice mix, with equal parts ground cumin seeds, black mustard seeds, fennel seeds, fenugreek seeds, and black caraway seeds. Because it does not

contain turmeric, it tastes quite a bit different from standard Indian food.

Two banana leaves – To eat your meal on like a plate. Use your hands instead of utensils.

Curry: Radish (white radish) curry.

Soup: Onion soup.

Meat or fish: Ocean or river fish cooked in coconut milk.

Vegetable: Stir-fried vegetables, lightly seasoned with Pañca Phutana seasoning mix.

Legume: Mung bean dal.

Grain: White rice.

Sweet: Fresh-cut mango, figs, or rice pudding. Fruit syrups are especially popular and can be added to almost any sweet.

Drinks: Indian wine, beer, yogurt drink, or spice tea. A simple Indian aphrodisiac drink is coconut milk flavored with honey and cinnamon.

Blessing pills (rasa) – To empower the food. Add sexual fluids (rakta and śukra) to the pills just before the feast. For making blessing pills, see Chapter 4: Consecration.

Background Music

Music (śabda) in the background adds a nice ambience to put you in the mood for the sādhana, or you can play your own with instruments as you desire. Some options are listed below:

Styles

South Indian - What is now called classical South Indian music is closer to the period than North Indian.

Odissi – The traditional music of Orissa is lively and joyous.

Belly dance music – Belly dance is by no means exclusively Middle Eastern - it is the primordial dance of the Goddess, and has roots in tribal Indian cultures.

Chanting (kīrtina) - Buddhist Sanskrit chants set a potent energy to your sacred space.

Instruments

Vīṇā – A lute. Vīṇā is ideal, as it is authentic for the period, enjoyable and danceable.

Sitar – Sitar has a more refined sound than the vīṇā, but it is a later instrument (starting c. 1500s) whose play has been heavily influenced by Islamic culture. Most sitar music is meditative rather than danceable. It is often accompanied by its companion drum, the tabla.

Clay drum (mṛidaṅgā) – Double-sided drum. Common in South Indian music.

Murajā – A large kettle drum.

Flute (vaṃṣā) – Made of wood.

Cymbals (jhallaka) – Made of metal.

Conch shells (śaṅka) – Horns announce victory over suffering.

Personal Preparation



Take your time to prepare yourself as necessary by: 1) cleaning (śauca), 2) massage (aṅgamardana), 3) bathing (snāna), 4) donning ritual nudity (digambara), and 5) haṭha yoga poses (haṭha yoga). Making your body fresh, sweet-smelling, relaxed, and sacred supports you greatly in your practice.

Cleaning

For cleaning (śauca), use the toilet, clean your teeth, rinse your mouth with scented water, and trim and prepare your hair as desired.

Massage

You and your lover can massage (aṅgamardana) each other until your bodies

are lightly covered in oil. Sesame or coconut are traditional, or some other natural oil you like. You can also add some musk oil or other pleasant-smelling ingredient into your massage oil.

Bathing

Bathing (snāna) is a spiritual practice, deeply rooted in ancient cultures. Long, hot baths can bring your energy down, so if you take a hot bath be sure to make it short, about ten minutes or less, while a warm bath can be a little longer. Use natural soaps. Pleasant scents can be added to the bath water. Prajñāśri in his text *The Consecration Ritual* suggests bathing in water with sandalwood extract (candana), saffron (kuṃkuma), and camphor (karpūra).

Ritual Nudity

The sādhanā calls for you to be ritually naked (digambara) at the start of the practice. Neither the man nor the woman wears earrings (though you may if you wish), and your hair is down. You don the Five Ornaments (Pañca Mudrā) of Vajravilāsinī, which symbolize the Five Buddha Families, and the Three Ornaments (Tri Mudrā) of Padmanarteśvara, which symbolize victory over the Three Worlds. Optional perfumes include musk (kastūrī) and sandalwood (candana).

For Her



The woman dresses as Vajravilāsinī:

1. A long pearl necklace (muktāhāra) – Natural, cultured or plastic.
2. Forehead streak (lac) - She wears a streak of lac horizontally across her forehead. If you have trouble obtaining lac, which is not readily available outside of India and Southeast Asia, you can use sindūra, candana, or red wine mixed with flour and oil.
3. Aśoka Flower (Aśoka) – She puts this on during the sādhanā.
4. Forehead mark (Sindūra) - She wears a red mark of sindūra (vermillion) powder or candana (red sandalwood) powder just above and between her eyebrows, about the size of a fingertip. You can also use red wine mixed with a little sesame oil and flour to make it safer and enjoyably edible.
5. Black eye make-up (Añjana) - Eye pencil or liquid eyeliner, and mascara. She puts these on during the sādhanā.



For Him

The man dresses as Padmanarteśvara:

1. A long pearl necklace (muktāhāra) – Natural, cultured or plastic.
2. Forehead streak (kuṃkuma) - A mark of gold made of saffron powder horizontally across his forehead. Saffron powder is very expensive, and some commercially sold “kuṃkuma” is actually red candana (sandalwood) powder, which is not edible. Turmeric (haldi) powder mixed with a little lime juice to make it stick is a common substitute - it is orange and also edible.
3. Aśoka Flower (Aśoka) – He puts this on during the sādhanā.

Haṭha Yoga

Do a few poses together for a few minutes to limber up your bodies.

Chapter 10.

Revered by All the Yoginīs: The Sādhana of Secret Vajravilāsinī

Introduction

After preparing yourselves and the ritual space, take a moment to contemplate the extraordinary opportunity you now have to attain inner awakening and bring the Great Bliss to all beings. Then chant the salutation, followed by Śabara's words as he takes refuge, honors the deities, relates how he received the sādhana, reveres his consort, and requests that he become fully enlightened through this practice. As you recite his words, make them your words also:

Opening Verses

Salutation

Bring your hands together in front of you as you offer the deity Añjali Mudrā, and recite the salutation in Sanskrit and English:

oṃ namo ś rī vajravilā sinyai

oṃ Homage to the auspicious Adamantine Lady of Erotic Play



Praise

Continue to hold your hands in Añjali Mudrā as you recite these praise verses:

1 (1). I go for refuge at the feet of Śrī Lokanātha,
yasmin surāsura surendra narendra vṛndās

*great ocean-holding treasure of complete perfection,
tat pāda padma patitā bhramarāḥ śirobhiḥ*

*upon whose lotus feet hosts of gods and asuras,
taṃ siddhi sādhana payodhi mahānidhānaṃ*

*lords of gods and lords of humans respectfully bow their heads.
śrī lokanātha caraṇaṃ śaraṇaṃ vrajāmi*

- 2 (2). Bhagavatī Vajravilāsini, radiant as golden leaves,
yā śrī vajravilāsini bhagavatī saṃbhoga bhaktyādbhutaṃ
- most beautiful of beings, who kindles the blaze of passion,
nityānanda mahotsavaṃ vitanute nirvāka pītāṃśukā
- I worship and adore her most excellent world-conquering feet,
sattvānāṃ tathataiva vighrahavatī cātīva rāgojvalā
- and perform the great practice of eternal bliss, full of wonder and joyful devotion.
tasyāḥ pāda-yugaṃ jagaj jayakaraṃ vande 'bhi vandyottamaṃ
- 3 (3). On the mountain with Lokanātha, I did not hear or read these verses,
na śrutaṃ na paṭhitaṃ kiñcic chabareṇādri cāriṇā
- but received them from the Lord, as an imperishable sound.
lokanāthādhipatyena vadeyaṃ kiyadakṣaram
- 4 (4). Having found a home for my troubled mind, on Quiet Mind Mountain,
sarva ratnamaye ramye gandha mṛga sughandini
- which abounds with delightful jewels, and smells sweet from musk deer,
mano bhaṅga padaṃ dattvā citta viśrāma parvate
- 5 (5). in a greatly beautiful place, with aśoka trees and fragrant flowers,
tat pradeśe mahāramye sugandhi kusumāśraye
- glistening mango trees, and the gentle hum of cuckoos,
lasat sundara mākaṇḍā manda kūjita kokile
- 6 (6). I found refuge in a pleasure garden. On the eighth day of the month of Aśoka,
raktāśoka ghanodyāne mamāśokāṣṭamī tithau
- my compassionate Guru taught me the practice of Vilāsini.
guruṇā karuṇāṅkena deśiteyaṃ vilāsini
- 7 (7). Following the practice, with my consort Śabarī,
yathā vidhi samācārair eka citta samādhinā
- we reached the union of One-Mind Samādhi.

śabaryāṃ saha caryāyāṃ mayā sā 'bhimukhī kṛtā

- 8 (8). Having developed many siddhis, such as controlling,
vaśyākaraṣaṇa stambhana māraṇoccātanāni ca
- preventing, attracting, and invisibility,
añjanaṃ guḍikā siddhistathānyāni bahūni ca
- 9 (9). and attained a sign of Mahāmudrā, requested by me of my Lord,
mahāmudrā padaṃ labdhvā vācā saṃyācitam mayā
- may I now enjoy the fruit of this divine practice.
vidhinā bhāvayed yastvāṃ tasmai dāsyasi tatphalam
- 10 (10). Blessed Lady, show me that I have obtained
bhagavatā yathod drṣtam sādhanam bodhi sādhanam
- the fruit of the essence of enlightenment.
tasyāḥ saṃkṣepataḥ sāraṃ likhel labdha nimittakaḥ

Play the ḍamaru and ring the bell to signify the end of the section, and end the music with a final flourish of the ḍamaru. Play the instruments in this way in joyous celebration whenever the pictures are shown.



Qualifications for Practice

Recite verses 11 through 16:

- 11 (11). For those not separated from greed, for ascetics,
lobha kāya diyuktānāṃ tīrthikānāṃ viśeṣataḥ
- for those who are cruel-minded, this highest practice is not to be given.
hiṃsābhiḥ krūra cittānāṃ na deyaṃ sādhanottamam
- 12 (12). For those on the path to enlightenment, but whose minds are not ripened,
buddha tīrthika sattvānāṃ aparipācita cetasām
- who cannot see the world as divine, this highest practice is not to be given.
vigama divyonmattānāṃ na deyaṃ sādhanottamam

- 13 (13). For those who are crippled, hunchbacked or impotent,
khañja kubjādi ṣaṇḍānāṃ vyādhi duḥkhita cetasām
- whose minds are on suffering, this highest practice is not to be given.
eteṣāṃ nara-nārīṇāṃ na deyaṃ sādhanottamam
- 14 (14). To those made pure by consecration, full of understanding and kindness,
labdhābhiṣeka śuddhāya bahu jñāya kṛpālave
- who are happy and peaceful, this divine practice is to be given.
śānta kānta kṛta jñāya pradeyaṃ divya sādhanam
- 15 (15). To those devoted to guru, protectors of all that is secret,
gurvārādhana tuṣṭāya guhya viṣvāsa rakṣiṇe
- whose minds are free from deficiency, this divine practice is to be given.
hīnoddaraṇa cittāya pradeyam divya sādhanam
- 16 (16). To one who strives after goodness, benefiting others,
sattvārtha hita yuktāya kāruṇya bodhi kāṅkṣiṇe
- whose goal is wisdom and compassion, this divine practice is to be given.
nara nārī janāyedaṃ pradeyam divya sādhanam



Setting for Practice

Recite verses 17 through 23:

- 17 (18). In a hidden mountain place, fragrant with flowers,
parvatādi guhya madhye sugandhi kusumāśraye
- Secret Vajravilāsinī is to be meditated upon.
bhāvanīyā sakāntena guhya vajravilāsinī
- 18 (19). In an empty dwelling, in a pleasure garden or a forest,
śūnya veśmani svacchandam udyāne vijane vane

devī is to be honored, and sought in proper ritual.
pūjanīyā sadā devī sādhanīyā yathā viddhi

- 19 (26). On the nights of the four phases of the Moon,
dvayor dvayoś catur daśyāṃ tathāṣṭamyām vidhānataḥ

thus four times a month, devī is to be worshipped.
rātrāvevarcayed devīm māse vāra catuṣṭayam

This is the first sādhana vow of the sādhana.

- 20 (27). Light a lamp radiant like the Sun, so that everything,
pradīpaṃ jvālayet tatra prabhā kara sama prabham

and every part of the body, is especially illumined.
yathā prakāśate viśvaṃ pratyāṅgaṃ ca viśeṣataḥ

- 21 (28). With wisdom as your goal, and with pure awareness,
siddhyartham upaviśyātha sattvārtha kṛta cetasā

seek the Mahāmudrā Seal, enter into the minds of the buddhas.
mahāmudrā padaṃ gantuṃ sarva buddha samāhitaḥ

- 22 (29). Having abandoned modesty, in this way exciting desire,
lajjādikaṃ parityajya kopalobhādhikaṃ tathā

leave doubt and revulsion far away from you.
aṇumātrāṃ ghrnāṃ śaṅkāṃ dūrataḥ parivarjayet

- 23 (17). Realizing the path to success begins with devotion to guru,
ādau siddhi vidhiṃ jñātvā gurvārādhana pūrvakam

drinking in the guru's deathless words, you may begin the practice.
guru vākyāmṛtais tṛptas tataḥ sādhanam ārabhet



Preparatory Practices

Sexual Arousal

Prepare yourselves individually for union, with the knowledge that you will be practicing the s̄a dhana as the deities - she as Vajravilā sinī and he as Padmanarteś vara.

- 24 (20). First he anoints and purifies his secret vajra,
ādāvudvartanaṃ kuryāt sugandha kusumādinā
- with fragrant flowers, while reciting the devī mantra.
kśālayed guhya vajraṃ ca mantra vidyā viśeṣataḥ

He recites the devī mantra, eṃ āṃ rīṃ raṃ brīṃ, 3x while he rubs his vajra with fragrant flowers, and gazes at his lover with rising passion.



- 25 (21). She paints her eyes with black powder, and beautifies her hair,
netrayor añjanam karyam keśa veśam ca śobhanam
- while fully recognizing the Inner Source of her beauty.
vidyayā tacca kartavyam nija lāvanya hetave

She puts on dark eye shadow using a hand mirror, and then brushes her hair gazing seductively at her lover.

When she is finished, honor each other with Añjali Mudrā.



Begin the preliminaries of lovemaking by delighting each other with sensual touching. Recite and then perform, with gentle devotion and rising passion, verses 26-29.

- 26 (22). Always with delight and pleasure, bringing her happiness,
padma pāṇi talaṃ kuryād bāhu mūla yugaṃ tathā
- with the root of his lotus hands on her shoulders,
sukha sparṣam sada modi sukha saubhāgya hetave

- 27 (23). he touches her on the lower lip, sweet as a young shoot,
pravāla kāntam adharaṃ bhālaṃ sindūra rājitam
- her forehead with a red mark and lac streak, on her ear an aśoka flower.
lalāṭe lāksakā rekhāṃ kaṛṇa vā'śoka bhūsitam
- 28 (24). Having released other garments, their pearl necklaces hanging down,
tyaktvā 'nyā bharaṇānyeṣā muktāhāra pralambinī
- they regard each other as the Lord of Dance and Lady of Erotic Play.
sādhako 'pi varam rūpaṃ padmanarteśvarasya ca
- 29 (25). They cultivate passion and pleasure, in union with wisdom,
krṣṭaṃ madanam āsādyā sukhādyaṃ vidyayā saha
- for as long as their minds remain clear.
tāvan mātraṃ tu kartavyaṃ na mano vikalaṃ yathā

Continue to sensually and reverently touch and kiss each other for as long as you wish. When ready, salute each other with Añjali Mudrā, and continue to the next verse.



- 30 (30). Sitting naked in the Bliss Position, with flowing hair,
sukhāsana samāsīno vivāsā mukta kuntalaḥ
- drawing in his left leg, he extends his right.
svajāṅghāṃ kiñcad ākuñcya dakṣiṇāṅgulaṃ prasārayet
- 31 (31). As she comes towards his two legs, full of loveliness,
tayor madhya gatāṃ vidyāṃ nivasanāṃ mukta kuntalām
- he says softly how he wants to join with her.
tathā lāvanya sampannāṃ kuryāt tu supericitām

He whispers:
maithunam kuruṣva
 “Let’s make love.”

32 (32). Her hair no longer in a top-knot, she takes a squatting position.
madhyama cūlakam dattvā tyakta padmotkaṭāsanām

He moves her arms to his shoulders, the same posture as the goddess.
devī bāhu dvayam iva tasyā bāhu dvayaṃ caret

Having already made himself look like the god, she moves in closer and he begins to position his lover in the squatting posture of the goddess, and she holds it either until the end of the end of verse 111, or for as long as is comfortable.

Drawing the Maṇḍala

33 (33). Approaching her yoni, as the source of all appearances,
tasyā dharmodayāpanne kṛtvā vartula maṇḍalaṃ

he draws a maṇḍala, with the finger of his left hand.
vāma karāmṛtāṅgulyā kuṅkumai rakta candanaiḥ

He uses the ring finger of his left hand to draw a maṇḍala circle around her yoni in a counterclockwise direction with red wine paste. Within the circle he draws a double triangle, visualized as a three-dimensional tetrahedron, using saffron powder for the upward triangle and red wine paste for the downward triangle.



34 (34). Forming the Dharmodaya, her yoni as a maṇḍala,
tadanu dharmodayākāraṃ tatreiva maṇḍalaṃ caret

marked with the maṇḍala mantra, they recite the mantra.
etan maṇḍala mantraṃ tu mantroddhāre 'sti bhāṣitam

The maṇḍala mantra is eṃ āṃ rīṃ raṃ brīṃ, visualized as an inward-facing circle counter-clockwise within the maṇḍala circle. Recite the mantra 3x together as you focus on visualizing the maṇḍala.

ॐ अं रीं रं ब्रीं

Gaze at each other as you recite and perform the next verse:

35 (35). Having repeated the mantra, they utter the pleasure sound *sīt*.
etan mantraṃ sammuccārya sītākāraṃ ca samuccaret

With this mantra syllable, he gives a flower to her yoni.
ādya kṣareṇa manreṇa dadyāt puṣpaṃ su-madhyake

After they both recite “sīt,” he touches a flower to her yoni to bless her.



He returns the flower to his side, her hands come down from his shoulders, and they offer Añjali Mudrā.



The Four Immeasurables

36a (36a). They speak the Four Immeasurables,
śūnyatāṃ bhāvayed yogī catur brahma vihāriṇaḥ

Gaze into each other’s eyes as you recite the Four Immeasurables together, pausing a moment after each aspiration to generate each quality and contemplate its meaning:

“With profound love, may I and all beings live lives of perfect happiness.
With profound compassion, may I and all beings live lives free from sorrow.
With profound joy, may I and all beings live lives of perfect joy.
With profound equanimity, may I and all beings live lives of perfect peace.”



The Emptiness Mantra

36b (36b). and the Emptiness Mantra. Then meditate on emptiness.
oṃ śūnyatādikāṃ mantraṃ manasoccārayet tataḥ

Recite the Emptiness Mantra together, in Sanskrit and in English:

oṃ svabhāva śuddhāḥ sarva dharmāḥ svabhāva śuddho 'ham
“oṃ I and all appearances are naturally pure, with no inherent existence, emptiness.”

Like a fading mist, dissolve into emptiness, and remain until a thought arises.

She rings the bell to end the meditation.



Creation Stage

Deity Yoga

Arising from Emptiness

37a (38a). After meditating, they both arise from emptiness.
pañca sthāneṣu vidyāyā yathā ropitam ātmanaḥ

The practitioners arise from emptiness.

Armoring

Armor yourselves to strengthen your bodies to receive the power of the deities within you:

37b (38b). The mantra knowers honor each other with mantras:
tathā mantrārcanaṃ kuryād dhivā śūnyatādi mantrakam

38 (37). Place devī's seed syllables on each other's bodies -
devyāḥ pañcākṣaram mantram pañca sthāneṣu vinyaset

on the head, throat, heart, and navel, and vajra or yoni.
śiro vadana citteṣu nābhau vajre tridhā kramam

Place all five seed syllables of the deity, eṃ āṃ rīṃ raṃ brīṃ, on each of the five places with the palm of the left hand on each other's bodies 3x with great devotion - she first places them, then he.

ॐ आँ रीँ रँ ब्रीँ

Generating the Seed Syllables of the Goddess

39 (39). Then visualize Great Passion, arising as a solar disk,
athodaya mahārāgaṃ bhāvayet sūrya maṇḍalaṃ

with flames of passion's red color, lovely and pleasing.
vitataṃ sumano ramaṃ raktākāraṃ samuj jvalam

Visualize a red horizontal Sun disk with blazing red flames in the center of the female practitioner's yoni maṇḍala.



40 (40). Meditating on the yoni, on the yellow fluid that delights the mind,
tatra dharmodayāṃ dhyātva raktādyakṣara sambhavām

and the bright flowing red fluid, the first seed syllable appears.
mano hlāda karīṃ pītāṃ kṣarai lākṣā dravojjvalām

Visualize the red seed syllable eṃ on top of the solar disk.



41 (41). From the seat of all desire, lotus of vibrant power,
sarva kāma sukhādhārāṃ sphura daṃśvabja vibhramām

all forms of the Three Kāyas arising from her yoni,
dharmā sambhoga nirmāṇa sarvākāra vilakṣaṇām

42 (42). above the red seed syllable, a revolving bliss wheel,
abhiṇayād ayo raktam jagaccandrārka miśritam

the red female seed essence, blended with the white male essence.
bhaga garbha sthitam paśyeta bhramantaṃ cakra sannibham

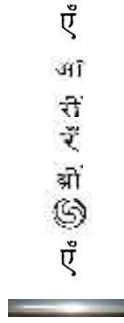
Visualize a revolving counter-clockwise red and white bliss wheel lying horizontally on top of the eṃ seed syllable.



- 43 (43). Over the wheel lies the great seed, the five-syllable great mantra,
tasyopari mahā-bījaṃ tapta kāñcana vigrahaṃ

a shape glowing as molten gold, blazing with the fire of the world.
pañcākṣara mahā mantraṃ jvalantaṃ kalpa vahnivat

The five red seed syllables over the bliss wheel are vertical, not touching each other, with the first syllable on top. The entire image sets fire to all the worlds.



- 44 (44). Contemplate the Three Worlds, pervaded by streaks of red fire,
raktaṃ cānala mālābhir vyāpayantaṃ jagat trayam

the image reaching even the smallest spaces.
vyāptākaniṣṭa lokābhiścintayed bimbaṃ vilakṣaṇaṃ

- 45 (45). All the worlds become fluid, extinguished in the maṇḍala,
dravī bhūtaṃ jagat sarvaṃ viśantaṃ tatra maṇḍale

visible to clear-minded beings of perfected consciousness.
draṣṭavyam vaśagam viśvaṃ sattvānāṃ kṛta cetasām

The worlds become liquid and are then extinguished into a red sea of blood, and shrink into her yoni. Meditate here for a moment.

Visualizing the Pledge Goddess

As the essence of your minds, from the seed syllables the god and goddess in union appear simultaneously, as small as a hair tip, in the maṇḍala in the female practitioner's yoni. Recite verses 46-53, visualizing as you recite.

- 46 (46). This perfected goddess, bright as a bandhūka flower,
etat pariṇatāṃ devīm bandhūka kusuma prabhām
- brilliant as red-glowing gold, with the Inborn loveliness of Gaurī,
rakta-hemojvalāṃ gaurīm nija-lāvaṇya-bhūṣitām
- 47 (47). possessing the first bloom of youth, an aśoka bloom on her ear,
nava yauvana sampannāṃ karṇe cāśoka śobhitām
- a red lac streak on her forehead, with a pearl necklace hanging down,
lalāṭe lākṣa kārekhāṃ muktāhāra vilambinīm
- 48 (48). complete with all ritual marks, her other ornaments removed,
sarva-lakṣaṇa-sampūrṇām-anyālaṅkāra-varjitām
- her naked beauty desirous, with both her earrings abandoned,
abhivāñchita saubhāgyāṃ nagnāṃ vimukta kuṇḍalām
- 49 (49). mounted on the lotus dancer, her lotus on his risen banner,
padma narte dhvajocchāya samā ropita paṅkajām
- she dances in the Squatting Position, with beautiful side-glancing smiles.
utkāṣana nrtya sthām kaṭākṣa smita bhaṅgurām
- 50 (50). With her lovely arms raised and bent, she holds an uplifted vajra,
vakrī kṛtoddhṛta bhujām vajra kartikarodyatām
- and a white swinging lasso, her hips undulating in play,
vāme pāsadhara sārāṃ līlāndolita mekhalām
- 51 (51). in union with rising delights, with Nartasvara as her own,
parirambha karā hlādaiḥ padmanartasvarātmikām
- with playful, amorous touches, moving with her flowing lotus,
ullasad bhidura parśaiḥ kṣarat kamala vibramām

52 (52). resplendent with her buttocks spread, in delight at being patted,
nitamba jaghanāsphāla raṇaj jṛmbhita rājitām

her wondrous yoni, vibrating and contracting,
sphuradā kuñca yogena vaḍavāva 'camat kṛtām

53 (53). with multitudes of red rays enveloping the Three Worlds,
rakta raśmi ghaṭā jālai rañja yantīm jagat trayam

you remain absorbed in this image of Vilāsinī.
tām evāgra sthitām vidyāṃ dhyāyād vajravilāsinīm



Visualizing the Pledge God

Recite verses 54 through 64, visualizing as you recite.

54 (54). Her consort is generated, Narteśvara a blissful sprout,
ekadaiva samudbhūtaṃ sama bīja sukhāṅkuram

from the same red seed syllables, with the passion of a lotus,
padmanarteśvaraṃ bīja padma rāga rajo balam

55 (55). the size of a tiny hair-tip, produced by a concentrated mind,
abhi vyāñjita romāgraṃ sahajā sakta cetasaṃ

the shape of a sixteen year-old, complete with ritual signs,
sarva lakṣana sampūrṇaṃ dvirāṣṭa varṣa vighram

56 (56). possessing the first bloom of youth, an aśoka bloom on his ear,
nava yauvana sampannaṃ karne cāśoka śobhitam

a golden mark on his forehead, with a pearl necklace hanging down,
svarṇa tilaka rekhaṃ muktāhārāmbitam

- 57 (57). with his Inborn loveliness, his other accoutrements removed,
nija lāvāṇya sampannam anyālaṅkāra varjitam
- holder of Great Passion's fluid, hair loosened and clothed with the sky,
mahārāga rasādhāraṃ mukta keśāṃ digambaram
- 58 (58). with both his legs resting open, his left leg bent in a little,
vāma kuñcitayā kiñcid vitataṃ dakṣiṇāṅgayā
- his right leg stretched out a little, guided by sexual delight,
jaṅghayā suratācāryaṃ kiñcid uttāna śāyinaṃ
- 59 (59). with his arms placed on her hips, and crossed around his consort,
svakatyārpita bāhubhyāṃ bhaktyā liṅgana mudrakam
- the secret vajra arisen, causing Vilāsinī to dance,
suyaktaṃ guhya vajreṇa nartayantaṃ vilāsinīm
- 60 (60). his left hand with a yellow lotus, and a red vajra in the right,
pīta padma dharaṃ vāme dakṣiṇe vajra dhāriṇam
- kissing and embracing, bound in play every moment,
ālīṅgayantaṃ ācumbaṃ muhur ābaddha līlayā
- 61 (61). he makes love with strong passion, with spirited pleasure sounds,
kurvantaṃ atirāgeṇa surataṃ vāji kūjitam
- his eyes gazing half-open, with the flavors of Innate Bliss.
sahajānanda sukhāsvādair ardhonmīlita locanam
- 62 (62). United with his beloved, lord of sexual desire,
ityevaṃ bhūtam ātmānaṃ bhāvayet surateśvaram
- the Lord Padmanarteśvara manifest as Great Bliss.
mahāsukham ivāvyaktaṃ padmanarteśvaraṃ vibhum

Dissolving the Three Worlds

- 63 (63). Then with the glowing golden rays of the great goddess,
ato 'syā mahādevyās tapta kāñcana raśmibhiḥ

the Three Worlds become fluid, an ocean of blood.
mithaḥ sama rasī bhūya trailokyam rudhir-ambudhīm

64 (64). Remaining in the middle of this powerful divine world,
tan madhye sthitam ātmānaṃ devyā saha vinodinam

with Great Passion and bliss, they rest in the womb of the Three Worlds.
mahārāga sukhāyātaṃ trailokyodara vartinam



Hold the visualization of the god and goddess in the maṇḍala of the female practitioner's yoni for as long as you wish.

Invoking and Becoming the Wisdom Deities

Invoke the wisdom deities, Padmanarteśvara and Vajravalāsini, with the mantra of invocation. As you recite the mantra, perform Vajra Hūmkāra Mudrā (Gesture of Indestructible Embrace) by crossing your arms with the right arm over the left, the palms of your hands facing inwards towards you as you hold the vajra and bell. Recite the mantra boldly in Sanskrit and in English:

vajra samaya

“Come here and honor your vow!”



Think that the actual god and goddess appear in the sky in front of you in sexual union. To command the actual wisdom deities to dissolve into the visualized pledge deities, recite the four mantra syllables “jah hūṃ vaṃ hoḥ” and perform the corresponding hand gestures. With elbows bent, arms at the waist, hands in vajra fists, place the right forefinger over the left pinky for “jah,” place the left forefinger over the right pinky for “hūṃ,” place the right forefinger over the left pinky and hook the forefinger with the pinky for “vaṃ,” and keeping the fingers hooked, pull both arms upwards towards you from the elbows for “hoḥ.”

jah hūṃ vaṃ hoḥ



“jah” means “may the adamantine hook attract” - the wisdom deities are invited.

“hūṃ” means “may the adamantine noose draw in” - the wisdom deities are worshipped.
“vaṃ” means “may the adamantine chain tie” - the wisdom deities enter into the pledge deities.
“hoḥ” means “may the adamantine hook satisfy” - the wisdom deities are merged into one.

The wisdom deities dissolve into light, and pass into both practitioners. Filled with bliss, you are now the actual deities, she as Vajravilāsinī and he as Padmanarteśvara. Generate divine pride by thinking to yourselves, “I am the deity.”

Self-Consecration

Recite the next two verses together, visualizing the consecration:

65 (65). Then instantly appearing in the sky before you -
tad anu cintayet tūrṇaṃ abhiśiñcanti māṃ puraḥ

buddhas and lokapālas, kinnaras, asuras, and humans.
tathāgatā lokapālāḥ kinnarāsura mānavāḥ

66 (66). The apsaras Rambhā and Tilottamā consecrate you and offer you
rambhā tilottamā caiva nānā cāpsaraso-gaṇāḥ

flowers, incense, and music, all dance in a great festival.
puṣpa dhūpādibhir vādyair nānā nṛta mahotsavaiḥ



Visualize that the assembly appears instantly in the sky in front of you. The two consecration goddesses, Rambhā and Tilottamā, holding jeweled vases, come from the assembly to the tops of your heads. As the goddesses pour sparkling nectar from the vases down the tops of your crowns and fill your bodies, you experience Great Bliss. Recite the verse of consecration, in Sanskrit and in English:



oṃ abhiśiñcantu māṃ sarva tathāgata
“oṃ Consecrate me all you buddhas!”

Recite the vow of the buddhas, in Sanskrit and in English:

oṃ sarva tathāgata abhiṣeka samaya śriye hūṃ
“oṃ All buddhas vow to honor your consecration! hūṃ”

All the assembly, surrounding you as the goddess and god in the center, play music, dance, and sing in joyous celebration of your consecration.

Sealing

Visualize yourselves and all the beings present before you sealed on the foreheads with an image of Amitābha, the buddha of the Lotus Family of Vajravilāsinī.



Dancing

Join the festival by offering the dances of the god and goddess to each other. The woman arises and performs the spontaneous dance of Vajravilāsinī. She sits back down flush with excitement. The man rises to delight the goddess by performing the spontaneous dance of Padmanarteśvara. He then returns to sit on his cushion, keeping the seated position of his left leg bent in and his right leg around her. With deep clarity and understanding, you both know you will be practicing the rest of the sādhana with strong awareness as god and goddess.



Dissolution of the Deities of the Consecration

When you are ready, visualize the gathering dissolving into a sphere of white light which dissolves into you through the tops of your heads.

Armoring/Mantra Recitation

Recite verses 67 through 72b and purify your bodies through touch, your speech through mantras, and your minds by recognizing the union of wisdom and compassion.

67 (67). Then perform yogically the three-fold maṇḍala pūjā
atha maṇḍala pūjāṃ ca kārayet traya yogataḥ

of body, speech and mind, purifying karmic conditions:
kāya vāk citta pūjābhis trayam karma viśodhoyet

68 (68). he recites the root mantra, speaking her name,
mūla mantram samuccārya devyā nāma samuccaret

then blesses her secret maṇḍala, with his hand while reciting *sa*.
sa ityuccāraṇaṃ kṛtvā pūjayed guhya maṇḍalaṃ

He recites “eṃ āṃ rīṃ raṃ brīṃ Vajravilāsini” 3x. He finishes by touching her yoni and reciting “sa,” “accomplished,” once.

69 (69). Unlike a crooked old woman, whose gifts fail to please the lord of death,
vāma vṛddhāmṛtābhyām tu dhṛtvā puṣpa phalādikam

the goddess cleanses deceptive views, savoring all as one taste,
dātavyaṃ sama rasaṃ sarvaṃ vāra trayam anāvilam

70a (70a). she honors his vajra as well.
svakāyaṃ kuliśaṃ tadvat saṃpūjya lalitonnatam

She recites “eṃ āṃ rīṃ raṃ brīṃ Padmanarteśvara” 3x. She finishes by caressing his vajra while reciting “sa,” “accomplished,” once.

70b (70b). His vajra risen up and throbbing, he repeats her mantra two times,
tenaiva mantra jāpena devyā mantram prapūjayet

71 (71). honoring her forehead, her eyes, nose, and throat,
lalāṭaṃ locane kaṅṭhaṃ ghrāṇaṃ galadvayam tathā

her heart, breasts, armpits, and navel,
auṣṭha kaṅṭhau hrdayam ca stanau kakṣau vicakṣaṇaḥ

72a (72a). and her lip-shaped inner lotus. Having honored her thusly,
nābhi padaṃ ca saṃpūjya svakāyaṃ cārpayet tathā

He recites the seed syllables, “eṃ āṃ rīṃ raṃ brīṃ,” as he touches each part of her body with his right hand, and using both his hands where there are double parts. He performs this 2x.

72b (72b). he gives himself in the same way.
dhūpaṃ ca cārayet tatra

She recites the seed syllables, “eṃ āṃ rīṃ raṃ brīṃ,” as she touches each part of his body with her right hand, and using both her hands where there are double parts. She performs this 2x.

If you are performing many mantra repetitions of the deity, you may practice them here. Otherwise, recite 108 mantra repetitions of the seed mantra together. As you do so, visualize yourself as the deity making love to the deity’s consort as you recite the mantra.



Praise

72c (72c). Then burn sweet smelling incense as an offering to each other.
yathā vidhi sugandhitam

She lights the incense and moves the incense burner in three circles of offering in front of him, bowing her head to him on the last circle. She then passes the incense burner to him, and he makes three circles of offering in front of her, bowing his head to her on the last circle.



73 (73). In good ritual order, perform the primal pūjā,
bhagavatyaśca kartavyā padmanartēśvarasya ca

vajra seat and vajra, the Lady and Nartēśvara.
vajra pīṭhādi pūjā' 'dau tenaiva krama yogataḥ

74 (74). Offering each other delights, feeding each other abundantly,
tāmbūlaṃ ca pradātavyaṃ karpūrādi supūritam

recite these verses:
anyonyaṃ bhakṣaṇaṃ kṛtvā gāthā pāṭhaṃ tataś caret

He sensuously offers her a treat directly into her mouth, and then she offers him a treat in his mouth.

She recites verse 75 with great devotion, and offers him Añjali Mudrā.

75 (75). she says, “Lord of Great Bliss, you are not separate from me.
mahāsukha prasannastvam-abhinno 'si mayā saha

Enjoying the embrace of love, Lord of Dance I adore you.”
rantum āliṅganaṃ dehi nartēśvara namo 'stu te



He recites verse 76 and offers her Añjali Mudrā.

76 (76). He says, “Lady of Great Bliss, you are not separate from me.
mahāsukha prasannā tvam abhinnāsi mayā saha

Enjoying the embrace of love, Great Lady I adore you.”
rantum āliṅganaṃ dehi vilāsinī namo ’stu te



Recite together verse 77:

77 (77). Having recited these verses, joining hands in salutation,
iti gāthāṃ samuccārya sampuṭāñjali karmaṇā

offer together your praise, with kind and sweet words:
anyonya vandanāṃ kuryāt madhurākṣara bhāṣaṇaiḥ



Recite verses 78 and 79 together 2x:

78 (78). “Rising from one seed is the world, of Wisdom and Compassion,
eka bīja samudbhūtaṃ prajñopāya mayāṃ jagat

Devī the wisdom of all women, the Lord the compassion of all men,
sarva nārī mayī devī sarvopāya mayāḥ prabhuḥ

79 (79). great king and queen we are not separable. We uplift the highest purpose.
abhinno ’si mahā rāja sahajārthaṃ samudyataḥ

We enact the vajra union, the focus of our prayer and praise.”
ehi melāpakaṃ kartuṃ vajra mudrām arhad dhīkaḥ



With the Creation Stage complete, move on to the Completion Stage, which leads to your complete and perfect enlightenment.

Completion Stage

Sexual Yoga

Foreplay

First recite verses 80-88, and then enjoy foreplay as the deities and as your passions lead you.

80 (80). Having recited these verses, two times and with full attention,
gāthā dvayam samuccārya citta smaraṇa pūrvakam

embrace each other fully, with Nine-Fold Blossoming:
mitha āliṅganaṃ kuryānna puṣpi prayogataḥ

81 (81). embracing and kissing, gently rubbing the two breasts,
āliṅganaṃ cumbanaṃ tu stanayor mardanaṃ śanaiḥ

looking, touching, opening the yoni, rubbing the liṅgaṃ,
darśanaṃ sparśanaṃ yoner vikāśaṃ liṅga gharṣanaṃ

82 (82). arising for entering, revealing the regions of the lotus –
praveśollāśanaṃ padme praveśas traya bhāgataḥ

bhāgānkurā, lips and perineum – all known as Nine-Fold Blossoming.
maṇi madhya sa mūlais ca nava puṣpi prakīrtitaḥ

83 (83). Give each other kisses, and offer flowers reverently,
cumbanaṃ tu pradātavyaṃ yatra puṣpaiḥ supūjitam

to every body part equally, completely from head to toe.
mastakādi pāda paryantaṃ viṃśatyaṅga samaṃ gatau



84 (84). Do not claw each other with nails, cause no later suffering.
nakha kṣataṃ na dātavyaṃ paścāt tāpa nivṛttaye

Please each other's body, with light touches of the nails and teeth.
karaja curcurā sparśaiḥ prīṇayed devī vigraham

- 85 (85). Offer love murmurs, using your teeth,
vaktrā savaṃ ca pātavyaṃ vāji kūjita pūrvakam
- as gently as a mother dog, holding and protecting her young.
śunīdantarapaṇa pātena tadvad daṃśanaṃ śanaiḥ
- 86 (86). Having become aroused, he moves as the god,
kiñcid uttānako bhutvā sthātavyam deva mudrayā
- and she as the goddess, before mingling is danced.
ātmīya mudrayā devī bhidurāgeṇa nṛtayate
- 87 (87). Feel steady and unchanging bliss, your minds dancing resolutely,
niścalāt tu sukhaṃ buddhayed ati cālanāccañcalaṃ manaḥ
- god and goddess swaying easefully, fixed on the Innate mind.
helayā khelayā devī sahajā sakta cetasaḥ
- 88 (88). To cross the water of passion’s red sea, he leaves on this good boat.
rāgāmbodhi jalaṃ tartuṃ sunaukeyam upasthitā
- May the guru’s words carry you with sounds that bring attainment.
guru vākyodayaṃ prāptaṃ vāhayed vāhaka svaraiḥ



Concluding Foreplay

- 89 (89). Contemplating the three conditions – craving, aversion and ignorance –
matvā sthāna trayam marma grāhotsarga gatāgatam
- sound out the descent of the mantra into this world.
sva svarente iyam āyur patam gilet khamam akṣaram

Reflect silently on the three conditions, understanding their root cause as ignorance, and allow compassion for all beings to arise in your hearts.

Recite the five seed syllables, “eṃ āṃ rīṃ raṃ brīṃ,” and visualize them ablaze with passion as they emerge into the world in the female practitioner’s yoni to remove the Three Conditions and bring the Great Bliss to all beings. Recite 10x.

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Subtle Energy Yoga

The Four Bliss

Recite verses 90 through 93 and then perform the practice as described.

90 (90). While not abandoning your purpose, focus on the various moments,
manthāna sthānaṃ tu boddhavyaṃ vilakṣana kṣanoditam

the holder of the churning stick makes the devī tremble with his vajra.
vajreṇa kṣobhayed devīm bodhicittaṃ na cotsrjet

91 (91). When enlightened purpose is abandoned, from where can Great Bliss arise?
utsrte bodhicitte tu kutas tatra mahāsukham

Churn and swing with desire for the elixir of the lotus sea.
manthayet kamalāmbodhi sahajāmṛta kāṅkṣayā

92 (92). The poison of saṃsāra will not arise by this method,
vairāgya kāla kūṭaṃ ca nottiṣṭhati yathā yathā

the god and goddess in union, their true nature flowing delight.
yathokta bhāvanā pūrvaṃ deva devyā rasātmakam

93 (93). By the yoga of the churning stick, with the releasing of the fluids,
tāṃ bhāvanāṃ bhāvayed dhīmāṃs trailokya kāriṇīm

you acquire the nature of the goddess, divine maker of the Three Worlds.
mantha manthāna yogena niḥ sṛtam kimapi golakam

Sitting in Bliss Pose, he enters with his vajra into her lotus with great love and passion. Practice the Four Bliss together, remaining clear in your union as the god and goddess:

The Four Bliss of Sexual Yoga:

Bliss – The bliss of first contact with the genitals. The moment of Diverse sensations.

Supreme Bliss – The bliss of intensifying pleasure and focused awareness. The Ripening moment of intensifying sexual bliss.

Bliss of Cessation – The bliss of the desireless peace of nirvāṇa after orgasm. The moment of Dissolving into the Clear Light.

Innate bliss – The Great Bliss of the union of ultimate reality and appearances. The Signless moment of nondual awareness.

Alternatively, you can practice:

The Four Bliss of Subtle Energy Yoga:

Bliss – The bliss of the bindus melting in the forehead cakra.

Supreme Bliss – The bliss of the bindus melting down into the throat cakra.

Bliss of Cessation – The bliss of the bindus melting down into the heart cakra.

Innate Bliss – The Great Bliss of the bindus melting down into the navel cakra.

Or whatever subtle energy yoga or sexual yoga practice you desire. You may perform this practice as long as you wish. When the couple is ready, release the mixed sexual fluids and enter together the Clear Light of nirvāṇa. You return from the Clear Light once again to the world of appearances, she as goddess and he as god.

Nondual Yoga

Tasting the Nectar of Immortality

Recite verses 94 through 95a and perform the Tasting of the Nectar of Immortality.

94 (94). He consecrates them both by ejecting his pure seed,
prokṣaṇaṃ tena kurvīta bījocāraṇa pūrvakam

mixing with her lotus fluid, and pours it into the nectar cup.
ye ye madyādi dravyeṣu prakṣipet kamala golakam

He removes his vajra from her yoni, and with his nectar finger he collects the mixed male and female fluids from their lovemaking, and mixes them with the fluids in the nectar cup.

Consecrate the ritual substances in the nectar cup. He lifts the cup in both his hands, and together and recite the dhāraṇī mantra of the devī, 3x in Sanskrit and in English:

*rate surate eṃ
nitya klinne mada drave āṃ
sukhena sukha yone rīṃ
subale vihvale raṃ
liṅga vajraṃ brīṃ
grasa grasa ha ha ha āṃ āṃ āṃ
mama sarva sattvānāṃ sarva siddhiṃ
dehi dehi saḥ*

Delight! Great delight! Summon!
 Eternally moist. Rapture overflowing. Quickly!
 Pleasing the pleasure-giving yoni. Go!
 Very powerful. Until exhausted. Make love!
 Erect vajra succumb!
 Swallow! Swallow! Blood! Blood! Blood! Quickly! Quickly! Quickly!
 I am the most powerful of all beings!
 Consecrate! Consecrate! Accomplished.

Offer the ritual substances to each other, he first to her, then she to him. Each takes a small sip.



95a (95a). That refreshing small portion satisfies the god and goddess.
tat santarpaṇa mātrena deva devyau pratusyataḥ



The Swing Recitation

Preparation for Practice

95b (95b). He re-enters her partway, his vajra inside her lotus.
kamala madhya gataṃ vajraṃ kiñcid ākuñcyā pāṇinā

He uses his hand to draw his vajra into her yoni.

Recite verses 96 to 99, and then perform them.

96 (96). Erect he caresses her, bringing devī pleasure,
stabdham ullālayen mantrī devī tuṣṭiḥ prajāyate

and gently with two fingers, opens the sides of her lotus.
kara vṛddhāṅgulibhyāṃ ca padma pakṣa dvayaṃ śanaiḥ

97 (97). He brings the sides together, and opens them again.
ghaṭitād ghaṭitaṃ kuryāt spharataśca yathā yatham

He delights with his churning motions, the lotus closing around him.
kuryād āndolanā hlādam ākuñcayecca pañkajam

98 (98). With your touching and side glances, as with a dance of waves,
kiñcin nṛtya prabhaṅgaiś ca sakaṭākṣasmitaiḥ karaiḥ

in the maṇḍala of the Three Worlds, pervaded by your radiance,
yugayos tu prabhā jālais trailokya vyāpi maṇḍale

99 (99). playing as goddess and consort, you take on the appearance of illusion,
krīdamānaṃ vilāsinyā bhāveyed -ātma vighrahaṃ

like a city of gandharvas, your movements like a mirage.
gandharva nagarākāraṃ mṛga trṣṇāmbu cañcalam

100 (101). The great five-syllable mantra, revered by all the buddhas,
pañcākṣaraṃ mahā bījaṃ sarva buddhair namaskṛtam

removes great offenses arisen through seven births.
sapta janma kṛtodbhūtaṃ mahā kilbiṣāśanam

101 (100). Cultivating your practice, always with strong discernment,
tatheti bhāvanābhyāsaṃ sadā kuryād vicakṣaṇaḥ

perform the inexhaustible yoga, and chant the mantra with your left hand.
bhāvanākhinna yogas tu japecca vāma pāṇinā

You each pick up your mālā in your left hand to count mantra repetitions.



102a (102a). Imagine six glowing marks on both of your subtle bodies.
devī padma sthitaṃ mantraṃ jvalantaṃ rakta ṣaḍ padam

The six red and white glowing marks are the subtle energy centers (cakras) at the crown, forehead, throat, heart, navel, and perineum. Three are red: the throat, navel, and perineum; and three are white: the crown, forehead, and heart.



Recite verses 102b-106, and then practice the Swing Recitation.

- 102b (102b). Starting with the five syllables in the devī's lotus,
the mantra passes to his vajra, up to his navel and heart,
svanābher uraḥ praviśyādaḥ ghrāṇa randhreṇa niḥ sṛtam
- 103 (103). and issues from his right nostril, entering devī's left nostril,
devī ghrāṇa puṭam caiva praviśya kamala vartmanā
down her heart, navel and lotus, and again entering his vajra.
punar vajre samāyātaṃ paśyed āyāta yātakam
- 104 (104). This Swing Recitation brings success. Without accomplishing
dolā jāpo 'yam ityāhuḥ kṣipra siddhi karo yataḥ
this yoga with your consort, you will not attain perfection.
etad yoga varapeto na siddho bhavati mudrayā
- 105 (105). Having practiced oneness, the sound united with the goddess,
eka daivam samuccārya vidyayā saha susvaram
absorbed through repetition in the vibration of the mantra,
nāda bindu layātītam idam jāpasya lakṣaṇam
- 106 (106). repeat this one hundred and eight times. Then bless one another,
śatam aṣṭhottaram japtvā kuryād anyonya bhūṣaṇam
the vajra and lotus pair, with the Garuda Mudrā seal.
vajrābjayoḥ samaṃ tatra muhur garuḍa mudrayā
- 107 (107). With joyous mindfulness, remaining in union,
daśa dhān dolanaṃ devān dadhyād āhlāda cetasā
devotedly practice again the ten-fold Swing Recitation.
punas tenaiva yogena jāpam ārabhate sudhīḥ
- 108 (108). With this method of accomplishment, repeat the Swing Recitation,
ityanena krameṇaiva su-japyo 'yaṃ yathā vidhi
as often as five hundred times, according to the ritual.
jāpaḥ pañca śatam yāvāt samaye tatra mantriṇā

Visualize the deity's five seed syllables in the female practitioner's yoni maṇḍala, red with golden glow and flames, vertical with the first syllable on top and a small space between each syllable.

ॐ
ॐ
ॐ
ॐ
ॐ

They pass as a mantra garland from her yoni maṇḍala to his vajra, in the order the verses describe below, revolving uninterruptedly through your central channel like a firebrand creating a continual ring of mantra fire. This generates and stabilizes Great Bliss.

Inhale, then recite the mantra as you exhale, visualizing one circle in each exhalation. Inhale to start again. Each recitation of the seed syllables is made with one swing through both your bodies: as the mantra garland moves from her yoni to his vajra, begin the recitation with the seed syllable “em;” move it up his body to his right nostril and chant the syllable “ām;” chant “rīm” as the mantra passes from his nostril to hers; chant “raṃ” as it descends through her body toward her lotus; finally, as the syllables return to her yoni, chant “brīm.” Each swing is done in one breath, moving the mantra garland along as you inhale and exhale. Count each swing as one bead on the mālās in your left hands, completing 108 recitations. Recite the first three mantra repetitions slowly, the rest quickly, and the final repetition very slowly.

After completing one set of 108 Swing Recitations, display to each other Garuda Mudrā. Repeat the practice as you wish, up to five sets of 108 repetitions each, completing each set with the gesture, hands out forward in front of your body facing your partner, the left thumb hooking over the right, fingers extended:



Closing of the Swing Recitation

109 (109). Completing this repetition, with the Fusion of Identities,
etaḥ jāpāvasāne tu bhāvayed ātma melakam

enter the sea of awakening, without concern for cause and effect.
bodhāmbhodhiṃ pravesyānuttara phala hetave

110 (110). United by Great Passion, with the attainment of wisdom,
yuga naddha mahārāgod bhūtāpannaṃ saprajñakam

fluid glowing gold, the world luminous with one taste,
tapta svarṇa dravākāraṃ jagat sama rasojjvalam

111 (111). like a wheel revolving, its form spinning rightwards,
dakṣiṇāvarta rūpeṇa bhramantaṃ cakra sannibham

the maṇḍala of seed syllables destroys all obscurations.
cheda yantam jagat kleśaṃ trailokyasyāpi maṇḍalam



Concluding Verses

Stay in close sexual embrace as you recite the following verses:

112 (112). From the roar of saṃsāra, whose root is the veil of duality,
aśeṣa viśaya kaksād vāsanā mūla br̥mhitāt

from the conflagration of the veil, the subtle winds are stilled.
api bhasmāṇu dagdhācca śāntim eti dravānilaḥ

113 (113). Like the colors of a rainbow, dissolving into the sky,
śakracāpa krameṇeiva tallinaṃ gaganāmbudhau

space dissolves into awakening, and great blessings are received.
gaganam saḥaje līnam bodhāmbhodhau mahodaye

114 (114). Through repeated practice, ignorance is abandoned.
avidyāvāsa nābhyāsād avidyeiva prahīyate

Great images arise with the knowledge that they are dream-born,
ataḥ pratītya jā bhāvāḥ swapna jāta mahopamāḥ

115 (115). their apparent arising is born from ignorant thinking,
utpāda sthiti nāśas tu vikalpāt kila jāyate

their formation is not real. Awakening shines forth.
tad ādau kalpanā nāsti tasmād bodhaḥ prakāśate

116 (116). Duality dissolves by itself, through knowing the supreme truth.
bhāvābhavau nīe līnau paramarthādi bodhataḥ

When that truth is perceived, there is no further division.
yathā vattā param nāsti satyāsatya vivarjitā

117 (117). Meditating with steady resolve, you are the yogi and yoginī,
ityevaṃ hi samādhi sthaḥ samyag abhyāsa niścalaḥ

accomplished in Mahāmudrā, together you form a great whole.
tadā yogī bhavet siddho mahāmudrā mahārdhikaḥ

Resting your mind in a supremely relaxed state, maintaining the view of Mahāmudrā, you observe as over years of practice you attain progressively the Four Levels of Mahāmudrā:

1) *Mindfulness – Your mind is clear and focused, and you realize emptiness.*

2) *Beyond Mindfulness – Your thoughts are stilled, and you realize all appearances are mind only.*

3) *The Unborn – You release all concepts of self and other, good and bad, and know the true nature of all experience as the unchanging bliss of primordial wisdom.*

4) *Beyond the Intellect – All your thoughts and actions are pure expressions of spontaneous Great Bliss.*

Finish with a long, exuberant flourish of the ḍamaru and bell and close with Añjali Mudrā to each other.



Concluding Lovemaking

Be sure to take some time out to cuddle with your lover.

When you are ready, recite the remainder of the sādhana. The following practices described are not performed as part of the sādhana, only recited as a reminder for their practice at other times.

Vows and Conduct

Vows

The following are the five vows of daily practice taken by the practitioner during the consecrations. You recite them to remember and honor your vows throughout your day.

Sādhana Recitation

118 (118). Possessing Innate wisdom, perform the actions of the maṇḍala,
vidyotpanne 'śanau pīṭhe kartavyaṃ maṇḍalādikaṃ

Narteśvara and Vilāsinī, arising from the vajra seat.
vajra pīṭhodbhavo deva ātmanā ca vilāsinī

The practitioner's second sādhana vow is to recite the sādhana each day.

Mantra Recitation

119 (119). Preceded by the practices of mantra recitation and others,
tayoś ca pūrvavat sarvaṃ dhāna jāpādikam tathā

with the two deities, union is methodically attained.
kartavyaṃ vidhinā yogaṃ prāpyāc caiva yathoditam

The practitioner's third sādhana vow is to repeat the seed mantra of the deity many times each day.

Deity Yoga

120 (120). Then samādhi is enjoyed, with dividing mind abandoned.
atha yathā vihartavyaṃ samādhi tyakta cetasā

You meditate on Narteśvara, in union with Vilāsinī.
svayaṃ narteśvaraṃ dhyātvā vidyayā ca vilāsinīm

The practitioner's first daily conduct vow is to visualize yourself as the deity in sexual union with the consort at all times.

121 (122). Your mind is on Vilāsinī, and yourself in the vajra seat,
vidhyāyāḥ sarvathā bhāvaḥ svasyaiva vajra pīṭhake

having drawn the maṇḍala, you worship her constantly.
pūrvavan maṇḍalam kṛtvā nitya pūjā vidhiṃ caret

122 (123). Undulating with pleasure, you meditate on the consort,
mudrāpi pūrvavat sarvaṃ sūrya dharmodayādikam

the complete union of the Sun with the origin of all things.
melakaṃ tādrśam devyā dhyāyan mantrī ratotsavam

Nightly Mantra Recitation

123 (121). The mantra knower, on the fourth watch of the night,
nityaṃ ca pūjyen mantrī rātrer yāme caturṭhake

always honors the mantra, repeating it one hundred and eight times.
pūrvavad vidhinā mantram śatam aṣṭottaram japet

The practitioner's second daily conduct vow is to recite the seed mantra of the devī each night 108x just before dawn.

Vajra-Lotus Recitation

124 (124). Holding one's own vajra, caress it with great gentleness,
vajraṃ kareṇa saṃgrhya lālayen mahā maṇḍa yogataḥ

engaged in mantra repetition, do not allow the mind to wander.
mantra jāpādikaṃ tadvad bodhicittaṃ na cotsṛjet

The practitioner's third daily conduct vow is to practice the Vajra-Lotus Recitation. At some point during the day, the male practitioner uses his right-hand thumb and finger as a "lotus" to massage his vajra, while meditating and reciting the five-syllable mantra. The female practitioner uses her right-hand fingers as a "vajra" into her lotus while meditating and reciting the five-syllable seed mantra. The practitioner recites the seed mantra 108x to 1000x.

125 (125). With this skillful means of union, arising in the lotus,
upāya melakaṃ bhāve vidyāpi svābja maṇḍale

you constantly honor the maṇḍala.
pūrvavan maṇḍalaṃ kṛtvā nitya pūjā vidhiṃ caret

126 (126). With forefinger and thumb, yoked together in a pair,
tarjanyaṅgusṭhāṅgulibhyām ekī kṛtya suyugmakam

he practices the recitation, with the "vajra and lotus."
tad vajrābja niyogena jāpa dhyānādikaṃ caret

127 (127). Then the teacher of great joy gains skill in the divine Four Yogas,
tadā ca suratācāryaś catur yoniṃ catur bhujām

with the Four Cakras, the Four Blissess and the Four Swings.
catur āndolanaṃ divyaṃ catur mudrā viśeṣakam

The results of following these vows is that you become skilfull in all your practices. You develop in the Four Yogas, in subtle energy yoga with its focus on the main Four Cakras, in the Four Blissess, and in the magical practice of the Four Swings of the Swing Recitation. As you perform the sādhana regularly, you come closer to inner awakening.



Mantras

Importance of Secrecy

128 (128). The seed mantra of the goddess, protected from being stolen,
gopanīyaṃ yathācāraṃ mayā tu khalu taskarāt

is not to be written in clear lettering.
sphuṭākṣara padair eva bīja mantrō na likhataḥ

The practitioner's fourth daily conduct vow is to keep the mantras of the deity secret.

Mantra for Attaining a Pure Realm after Death

129 (129). At the end of your life, aiming for the summit,
āvādi daśānto 'yaṃ līkāro anu mastakaḥ

chanting *rī* and chanting *ru*, you will be carried to a pure realm.
jñanto vahati rīkāraṃ rukāraṃ vaśca līyaraḥ

These two seed syllables are to be chanted at the end of your life to bring you to a pure realm.

The Five Syllable-Seed Mantra

130 (130). This five-syllable seed mantra, adorned with dot and crescent Moon,
eṣa pañcākṣaro mantra indu bindu vibhūṣitaḥ

when properly recited, bears the fruit of all desire.
īti mantraḥ sarva kāma phalado jāpyo yathā vidhi

The five syllable seed mantra is “eṃ āṃ rīṃ raṃ brīṃ.”

The Dhāraṇī Mantra

131 (131). The power of this royal mantra will become clear.
mantra rājasya sāmārthyam pratyakṣam vā bhaviṣyati

All success flows like the love of a great cow attached to her calf.
sarva siddhi mahā dhenor vatsalo hyati vatsalaḥ

In forming the complete dhāraṇī mantra of the devī, the main body of the mantra is as follows:

- 132 (132). “Delight! Great delight! Summon!
Eternally moist. Rapture overflowing. Quickly!
Pleasing the pleasure-giving yoni. Go!
Very powerful. Until exhausted. Make love!
Liṅga vajra succumb!
Swallow! Swallow! Blood! Blood! Blood! Quickly! Quickly! Quickly!
I am the most powerful of all beings!
Consecrate! Consecrate! Accomplished.”

*rate surate
nitya klinne mada drave
sukhena sukha yone
subale vihvale
liṅga vajraṃ
grasa grasa ha ha ha āṃ āṃ āṃ
mama sarva sattvānāṃ sarva siddhiṃ
dehi dehi saḥ*

To the main portion of the mantra the five seed syllables of the devī are added:

- 133 (133). In the first mantra verse, after *surata* chant *eṃ*.
tataḥ prathamākṣaram dattvā suratāntaṃ samuccaret

Then giving the second verse, after *drave* chant *āṃ*.
dvitīyākṣaram ādāya dravāntaṃ ca samuccaret

- 134 (134). Reciting the third mantra verse, after *sukha yone* chant *rīṃ*.
trītiyākṣaram udgīrya sukha yonyantaṃ subhanyate

Starting with the fourth mantra verse, after *vihvale* chant *raṃ*.
caturthākṣaram ādāya vihvalāntaṃ pragīyate

And speaking the fifth mantra verse, after *liṅga vajraṃ* chant *brīṃ*.
pañcam aṃ ca samuccārya liṅga vajrādikaṃ paṭhet

The complete dhāraṇī mantra of the devī is:

- 135 (135). *rate surate eṃ
nitya klinne mada drave āṃ
sukhena sukha yone rīṃ
subale vihvale raṃ
liṅga vajraṃ brīṃ
grasa grasa ha ha ha āṃ āṃ āṃ
mama sarva sattvānāṃ sarva siddhiṃ*

dehi dehi saḥ



Offering of the Garlands to Your Consort

136 (136). When massaging your consort with ointments, recite the devī's mantra.
mantra 'yaṃ validāne 'pi paṭhyate

With a beautiful garland, its colors from Indian madder,
nir aṃśu mālikā śreṣṭhā mañjiṣṭhādi suraṅjitā

a garland of young shoots, strung by a child,
pravāla mālikā putra jīvinā grathitā tathā

As a fifth daily conduct vow, when massaging your lover with fragrant ointments, recite the dhāraṇī mantra of the devī 108x.

137 (137). or with the fruits of the sandalwood tree, adorn your beloved.
rakta candana vṛkṣasya phalair vā racitā priyā

Reciting one hundred and eight times, a garland of syllables is formed.
śatam aṣṭottaraṃ kṛtvā racen mālikāṃ vidhā nataḥ

Once you finish giving your lover a massage, offer your lover a garland of flowers or a mālā of sandalwood. Your lover then gives you a massage with fragrant ointments while reciting mantras, and when finished offers you a garland or mālā in return.



Fruits of Practice

Recite verses 138 to 151:

138 (138). For those whose yoga is most excellent, for the highest yogi or yoginī,
ayaṃ yoga varenyasya yogīndrasya tathā striyaḥ

there are consorts. This practice must be done with honor.
karaṇīyaḥ sadācāro jñeyaḥ siddha vidhau sthitaḥ

- 139 (139). You should never doubt your own divine erotic nature.
svakaṃ śaṅken na vā bhāvaṃ kartavyo dica lakṣaṇam
- It is to be understood through practice by the all-knowing one.
sarva siddhi vidhau jñeyam sarva jñena yathoditam
- 140 (140). In a month you will attain breath control. In six months should be the fruit:
śvāsa lābho bhaven māse ṣaṇmāse vāñchitaṃ phalam
- prosperity and siddhis, and the power of attraction.
ṛddhi siddhir bhaved abde vaśyākṛṣṭa puraḥ sarā
- 141 (141). Gods, asuras, and humans enjoy sex with many consorts.
kiṅkarī bhūya sevante sadevāsura mānuṣāḥ
- But stained with craving desire, they all remain mortal.
urvaśyādi mukhāḥ sarve martya sthānāṃ tu kā kathā
- 142 (142). By unions with constant practice, after twelve years,
sadā 'bhyāsa rataiḥ samyak pūrṇe dvā daśa vatsare
- the practitioner becomes perfected, attaining the Mahāmudrā seal.
mahāmudrā padārūḍhaḥ siddho bhavati sādhaḥ
- 143 (143). Remembering these instructions, you should follow them constantly.
smṛtvā yathoditaṃ purvam abhyaset tad anantaram
- If it is not done properly, consort practice loses its value.
ayathākṛtārambho devī kṣobhaḥ paṭiṣyati
- 144 (144). From your extensive learning, you avoid lustful passion.
adhigamyāgamāt sarvam agamad rāga saṃkaṭam
- Without the feet of the guru, you will not find yoginī wisdom.
guru pādaṃ vinā vatsa mā gaccha yoginī nayam
- 145 (145). If Moon and Sun descend into Earth and wither away,
yadi candras tathā sūryo bhūmau patati śīryate

even then this counsel of the Lord of the World will not be in vain.
tathāpi loka nāthasya nedam vaco mṛṣā bhavet

146 (146). The secret origin of humans, the resting place of all perfection,
guhyodbhūta nara dharmah sarva siddhi nidhānakah

is shown to me by my Lord, the source of all compassion.
karuṇā kara nāthena kṛpayā deśito mama

147 (147). He is like a rutting elephant, dispersing teachers caught in illusion.
yathaiva matta mātāṅgo gurubhir jālakādibhiḥ

With wisdom he bestows happiness, pure desire with clear awareness.
pravaśī kriyate vijñair vijñānam ca mahodayaiḥ

148 (148). Like a great, sweet-tasting remedy, destroying disease,
yathā mahauśadham kiñcit susvādam vyādhi ghātakam

wisdom and bliss destroy suffering through amorous love play.
prajñopāyasukham tadvadd helayā kleśa nāśanam



149 (149). A beautiful lover, enamored and full of pure passion,
sarvasya ramaṇī ramyā rāgiṇām śuddha rāgiṇām

may be the noose of one person, or the restrainer of another.
ekasya gala pāsāḥ syād aparasya bandha kartikā



150 (150). Aho! The capacity of the means of the Mahāyāna!
aho upāya sāmartyam mahāyānānuyāyinām

Closely embracing a consort, enjoy the god of desire.
kāminīm gāḍham āliṅgya bhuñjanti makara dhvajam



151 (151). Having attained the one taste, even illnesses are a gift.
rasasyāṃśo vyāḍhir vividha dhana kāmeika phala dah

Always a lover is a source of joy, bringing Innate Bliss.
sadā sattvā rāmā ramaṇa sahaḥjānanda muditā

The more the mind is content in the fields of bliss, without pain's exertion,
to bhūyo bhūyo bhuvana sukha- santuṣṭa manaso

the more you obtain the whole world, the true nature of reality.
vinā kleśāyāsam jagad akhīlam āpnoti tathatām



Closing Practices

Tantric Feast

If you would like, you can offer yourselves a Tantric feast. See Chapter 4: Consecration.

Erasing the Maṇḍala

If you emplaced a maṇḍala on the ground before the practice, Erase the Maṇḍala (Maṇḍala Rekhāṃ Lumped) of Vajravilāsinī. Wipe the image out with your hands, and collect the materials into a small bag to use later for magical rites. If your maṇḍala is on cloth, roll it up for later use.

The secret vision of the maṇḍala is kept secure, and you gain magical substances.

Dissolving the Deity

Dissolve the deities into you. Perform the Earth Touching Gesture (Bhūmi Sparśa Mudrā), and recite the Dissolution Mantra (Anubheda Mantra).

oṃ āḥ hūṃ vajra muḥ



Dedication of Merit

Recite the following dedication prayer, in Sanskrit and in English:

puṇyaṃ prabhūtaṃ yad ihāpi sarvaṃ saṃbodhaye tat pariṇāmayāmi
“I dedicate all merit arisen here for the goal of complete and perfect enlightenment.”

The merit you gained from practice helps limitless beings.

This ends the sādhana. The colophon is not recited aloud.

Colophon

Thus, in accordance with the *Guhya Samaya Tantra* and the *Mahā Yoginī Jāla Tantra*, Revered by All the Yoginīs, Known as the Practice of the Secret Adamantine Lady of Amorous Play, revealed at the feet of Śrī Lokanātha, is concluded. It is the work of the Accomplished Teacher Śabarapāda.

iti guhya samaya tanre mahā yoginī jāla tanre śrimal lokanātha pādena
deśitaṃ yoginī sarvasvaṃ nāma guhya vajravilāsinī sādhanam samāptam
ktir iyaṃ siddhācārya śabarapādā nām

Chapter 11.

Inner Awakening:

The Commentary to *The Sādhana of Secret Vajravi Ā simī*

“In good ritual order, perform the primal pūjā,
vajra seat and vajra, the Lady and Nartésvara.”

- Śabara, *The Sādhana of Secret Vajravilāsini*

Introduction



Few facts are known for sure about this wondrous sādhana. But the master who received it says that none other than the Lord of Compassion gave it to him in a vision, and one night, on a mountain bountiful with red aśoka flowers, silent except for the beguiling call of the cuckoos, sweet with the scent of deer, perhaps under a lustrous Moon, naked, his hair bound high, and a gañja rope hanging down from his neck, heard in the depths of his own mind these clear and bold instructions, hardly containing his joy as he realized the great gift he was receiving, humbly realizing that here, now, with this simple practice, he and his beloved consort would finally be free, and in that inner awakening would be able to lead others to the same realization. That pure love, pure pleasure, pure compassion, need no other setting but a garden of pleasure, no other feeling but

respect and love for each other, no other instruction than to delight in their union with all their bodies, minds, and hearts, and no other desire but to celebrate the true joy of what it means to be human. And their reassuring message comes down to the modern day: practice this sādhana with joyous effort, true intention, and sweet and burning desire, and you will discover the Great Bliss.

Orissa and the Śabara Tribe

**“The ḍākinīs are all-pervasive, in all the sacred sites.
They are born in land after land, endowed with wisdom in their places of birth.
They are the ḍākinīs known as the mistresses of the vajra maṅḍala.
They are in Kuluta and Maru, in Sindhu and Nagara, in Kāmarūpa and Oḍra.”**
– *Cakrasamvara Tantra*



Orissa (ancient Oḍra) is the fertile forested ground from which *The Sādhana of Secret Vajravilāsinī* was born. Though less famous than Bengal and Udyāna, Orissa was a major region for Tantric Buddhism in medieval India. Located to the south of Bengal along the eastern coast, Orissa’s principal city, Pātaliputra (modern Patna), had been the capital of the great Buddhist Emperor Aśoka, who conquered the region in 261 BCE. It is also the city in which Vātsyāyana

skilfully composed *The Kāma Sūtra* in the 300s CE. The 1200s marked the end of Buddhism in India except for Orissa, where it flourished until the late 1500s. Over 130 Buddhist archaeological sites presently dot the landscape. Several important monasteries were centered there, including Ratnagiri, Solampur, Lalitāgiri, and Udayagiri. The first four kings of the regional Bhaumakara Dynasty (736-949) were Buddhist. In addition, Orissa was part of the larger Pāla Dynasty (750-1150) of northeastern India, ruled at the time by the great King Dharmapāla (r. 770-810). The Pālas heavily patronized Tantric Hindu and Buddhist culture, and supported a great cultural flowering whose influence on religion and the arts was widespread.

Thick forests lush with life, rolling hills, only lightly touched by the strictures of Brahmanic culture, made Orissa an irresistible home for many Tantric masters. Several siddhas were born in Orissa, including Saraha, Śabara, Kambala, and Kṛiṣṇācārya, while others spent time there in study and practice, such as Virūpa and Śāntideva. In the mid 800s, Lūipa, the principle disciple Śabara, converted King Vimalacandra of Orissa to the Vajrayāna. Both the *Hevajra Tantra* and *Cakrasamvara Tantra* praise the area as a sacred region ideal for practice.

The region’s rich tribal diversity also added to its appeal. One tribe, the Śabarās, lived over a large area of eastern and central India, including Orissa’s Vindhya Mountain range. They still live today in parts of these areas, and are known as the Saoras. The Śabarās were hunters, with long, matted hair, wearing peacock feathers and leaves around a vine or rope as a waist garment. They often wore marijuana (gañja) around their necks and smoked during rituals. Śabara women, free from sexual inhibitions, were especially honored as consorts.

Śabara

“For twelve years Śabara meditated upon undirected and unstructured sublime compassion in a thought-free state, and he attained the supreme realization of Mahāmudrā.”

- Abhayadatta, *The Legends of the Eighty-Four Siddhas*



The Sādhana of Secret Vajravilāsinī was first revealed to the Indian siddha Śabara (c. early 800s), who was born and lived in the mountainous forest region of Orissa. His name means “the Hunter,” and tradition remembers him as having taken the name of the tribe of his consort. It is clear from the high quality of the Sanskrit of the sādhana and his extensive knowledge of the Tantras that he was highly educated, and was probably a brahmin.

Because of his lifestyle, Śabara would have been an outcaste by the rigid caste standards of medieval India. In Tantric circles, however, he would have been held in high esteem for his tribal connections. Tribal peoples such as the Śabarās were praised by the siddhas as examples of living in joyful harmony with nature. Both Hindu and Buddhist yogis worshipped the nature goddess Parṇaśavarī, a personification of the Śabara tribe, as a giver of healing powers. Śabara is easily recognized in art by his identifying attributes of a bow and arrow and a belt of peacock feathers.

Śabara is known as one of the eighty-four siddhas, great Indian Buddhist spiritual masters whose life stories were compiled by the Indian master Abhayadatta (c. 1100-1150) in his book *The Legends of the Eighty-Four Siddhas*. There were, in fact, many hundreds more great Indian masters than these, but they became emblematic of the siddhas as a whole with their free and unconventional lifestyles, miraculous powers, spontaneous songs of realization, and often wild and erotic Tantric practices. In Abhayadatta’s story, Śabara was a hunter by trade.

Śabara was a disciple of Saraha, the greatest of all Indian siddhas. He received both his training in Mahāmudrā and Cakrasamvara deity practice directly from Saraha. The famous lineage of teachings on Mahāmudrā taught by Tilopa began with Saraha and passed through Śabara. Śabara, along with Saraha’s other principle disciple Nāgārjuna, was the one of the most important Tantric gurus of his day. Śabara’s principle deity practice was the eleven-headed, thousand-armed Avalokiteśvara. He is best known as one of the earliest masters of the Cakrasamvara tradition, the most popular of all Buddhist Tantric deity practices in India. Śabara’s most important students were Lūipa (c. 800), Saroruha (c. early 800s), Maitrīgupta (aka Advayavajra, Tib. Maitripa; 1007-1085), Vīṇā (c. early 800s), and Vibhūticandra (c. 1100s).

Śabara's Consorts: Śabarī, Padmalocanā and Jñānalocanā

“A dancer living on Śrī Parvata, by his two consorts he attained perfection.

Known as Śabara, to that teacher I pay homage.”

- Vajrāsana, *The Prayer of the Eighty-Four Siddhas*

Śabarī

In *The Sādhana of Secret Vajravilāsinī*, Śabara refers to his consort as Śabarī (the Huntress). A sādhana of hers survives in *The Garland of Sādhana*s, which marks her as a teacher of high regard. She is known as a siddhā who showed the Tibetan master Padampa Sangye the nature of his own mind. She was a dark-skinned tribal, and Śabara loved her so dearly that he took his own name from the name of her tribe. Śabarī was an early consort of his, because at the time he composed the Vajravilāsinī sādhana, he says he was still seeking enlightenment. It is through his two later consorts that Śabara finally attained complete realization.

Padmalocanā and Jñānalocanā

In Tārānātha's history *The Seven Instruction Lineages*, the scholar Maitrīgupta (Guardian of Compassion) traveled far to meet the great adept Śabara. When he encountered him, Maitrīgupta was disgusted to find him with his two female consorts, the adepts Padmalocanā (Lotus Eye) and Jñānalocanā (Wisdom Eye), both tribal hunters, picking lice from his head. Maitrīgupta considered these two unworthy of such a great being, and in his thoughts, he insulted the two women. As masters, they determined to teach him. Padmalocanā immediately picked up a bow and arrow and shot a wild boar. Maitrīgupta was stunned, and she sang this fierce song to him:

Shooting the arrow of clear understanding,
I slay the boar of ignorance –
Now eat the meat of nonduality!

She then pulled out a second arrow and shot a deer. She sang once more:

Shooting the arrow of ultimate experience,
I slay the deer of subject and object –
Now eat the meat of nonduality!

Śabara gave Maitrīgupta the Tantric name Advayavajra (Adamantine Nonduality), and he eventually became a great teacher. But because of his disrespect to these women he was karmically prevented from attaining enlightenment in that lifetime. A collection of songs of realization of which Padmalocanā is the compiler, and another collection compiled jointly by Padmalocanā, Locanā, and Śabara, are preserved in the Tibetan Tengyur.

Deities of *The Sādhana of Secret Vajravilāsinī*

**“This perfected goddess, bright as a bandhūka flower,
brilliant as red-glowing gold, with the loveliness of Gaurī...”**

- Śabara, *The Sādhana of Secret Vajravilāsinī*

Vajravilāsinī



Vajravilāsinī is a nonwrathful form of Vajrayoginī (Adamantine Goddess, aka Vajravārāhī - Adamantine Sow), one of the most popular deities in the Tantric Buddhist tradition. Vajrayoginī is the ultimate example of a Tantric yoginī: wise, erotic, and, in her wrathful form, ruthlessly compassionate. She is the leader of all yoginīs and dākinīs, those who hold the power to bestow the Great Bliss. Her form is likely derived from the ancient Indian sow goddess Vārāhī.

Vajravilāsinī’s full name means “the Secret Adamantine Lady of Amorous Play.” In *The Praise Verses of Vajravilāsinī* by Śabara’s student Vibhūticandra, Vajravilāsinī is envisioned as a form of Vajrayoginī, and as a Buddhist version of Śiva’s beloved consort Parvatī. As her counterpart, Vajravilāsinī is the ultimate Buddhist goddess of love and erotic passion.

Major Tantric Buddhist deities are usually developed from the Tantras that are devoted to them. Vajrayoginī,

however, has no Tantra of her own but is revealed through the *Cakrasamvara Tantra* as Cakrasamvara’s consort. Practices for her worship are derived from that text and other related Tantras. The many forms of Vajrayoginī including Vajravilāsinī were divinely revealed to Indian masters and passed on to their students.

Vajravilāsinī was worshipped by at least four Indian masters: Śabara, his disciple Vibhūticandra, Virūpa (c. 800s), and Śākyarakṣita (c. 1100s). The lineages of Śabara’s Vajravilāsinī sādhana and the extent to which it was practiced in India are not known. This sādhana may or may not have been practiced in Tibet, and it is not known to Western scholars if it was ever incorporated into the Tibetan canon, perhaps hidden in an untranslated sādhana collection.

Padmanarteśvara



Padmanarteśvara (Lord Lotus Dancer) is Vajravilāsinī's devoted consort. Handsome and youthful, he delights in her every move. He is an erotic emanation of the Lord of Compassion, who goes by many names, Avalokiteśvara (Lord who Looks On), Lokanātha (Lord of the World), Avalokita (Looking On), Lokeśvara (Lord of the World), and Mahākaruṇika (Great Compassionate One), and whose famous mantra is *oṃ maṇi padme hūṃ* (*oṃ jewel lotus hūṃ*). As Padmanarteśvara, he also is known by the names Jina Sāgara (Ocean of Victory), and Gyalwa Gyamtso (Tib., sometimes spelled Gyalwa Gyatso; Ocean of Victory). He is the “Lord of Dance,” similar to the Hindu god Śiva whose dances create and destroy the universe.

The first known reference to Padmanarteśvara is in an early Yoginī Tantra called the *Sarva Buddha Sama Yoga Ḍākinī Samvara Tantra* (*The All Buddha Yoga of Equipoise Ḍākinī Vow Tantra*), which may date from the mid-700s. Padmanarteśvara is also found in the *Cakrasamvara Tantra* as a member of Cakrasamvara's

maṇḍala retinue, and the leader of a clan of impassioned yoginīs. Some other Tantras where he is present include the *Lokeśvara Kalpa* (*The Ritual of the Lord of the World*), the *Ḍākinī Vajra Pañjara Tantra* (*The Ḍākinī Adamantine Teachings Tantra*), and the *Ḍāka Arnava Tantra* (*The Ocean of Ḍākas Tantra*). A subset of the Yoginī Tantras that focus on transforming passion is named after him.

The early cult of Padmanarteśvara was eventually overshadowed – Amoghapāśa (Unfailing Lasso) became the principle Tantric form of Avalokiteśvara worshipped in India, and the wrathful deity cults proved more popular. While Śābara's form of Padmanarteśvara is red and two-armed, a later and more popular form of the deity by the Siddhā Siddharājñī (c. 1100s), who established her own lineage of this practice, is red and four-armed, and his consort is named Guhyajñānā (Secret Wisdom), who is essentially identical to Vajravilāsinī. In Nepal, the role of Padmanarteśvara is incorporated into Avalokiteśvara, who is honored today as both the Lord of Compassion and an erotic fertility god. Other forms of Padmanarteśvara and his consort were brought to Tibet and widely practiced under the name Gyalwa Gyamtso.

Images of the Deities

No images from Asia of the two-armed form of Vajravilāsinī or Padmanarteśvara are known to exist, and no images of these deities in any form are known to survive from India. Only one early sculpture is known from Nepal, of an eighteen-armed form of Padmanarteśvara; it follows the imagery of one of the sādhanas in *The Garland of Sādhanas*. A few Tibetan works include images of the four-armed form of Padmanarteśvara with his consort Guhyaḍākinī.

The Text of the Sādhana

**“The more the mind is content in the fields of pleasure, without pain’s exertion,
the more you obtain the whole world, the true nature of reality.”**

– Śabara, *The Sādhana of Secret Vajravilāsinī*

The Sādhana of Secret Vajravilāsinī is a direct revelation from a deity to a master. It is regarded as equal in sacredness to a Tantra.

Translation

Two versions of the sādhanā are presently known. The first version, still available on palm leaves written around the 1100s, was partially translated by Elizabeth English in her book *Vajrayoginī* in 2002. The second version was edited and published by the Central Institute for Higher Tibetan Studies in 1984. Though mostly following each other, some differences are significant. This book uses the second of these two versions. A strong effort was made by the translators to provide a highly accurate translation, while at the same time making it easy to use for practitioners. The original instructions, which are written from the male “he should” point of view only, were changed so that the view and directions apply equally to both partners using the present tense, enhancing the power of this exceptional text. Although the translators resisted it, we moved a few verses around when we felt it was of value for the practice. The large verse numbers in the translation indicate the translators’ order of the verses, while the small numbers indicate Śabara’s original verse order. Most of the translated verses maintain a semblance of the rhythm of the original verses. All verse numbers, section breaks, notes to the sādhanā in italics, and notes for musical instruments were added by the translators to complete the sādhanā.

Outline

Following in a traditional format, the sādhanā consists of seven main parts: 1) Opening Verses (Pūjā), 2) Preparatory Practices (Ādi Yoga), 3) Creation Stage (Utpatti Krama), 4) Completion Stage (Niṣpanna Krama), 5) Vows and Conduct (Samayacara), 6) Fruits of Practice (Phala), and 7) Colophon (Abhilikhita). Note that while the most common order of learning the Four Yogas is to learn subtle energy yoga before sexual yoga, in the sādhanā, for the actual order of practice with a physical consort, sexual yoga precedes subtle energy yoga. This only affects practice when you have learned subtle energy yoga and not yet sexual yoga, in which case you unite only with a visualized consort.

Initial and Closing Practices

Some Indian traditions of sādhanā practice include a series initial practices (sevā, lit. offering) drawn from the Three Vehicles including prayers, invocations, and mantra repetitions, and deity offerings. In addition, a set of closing practices (visarjana) are commonly used as well. Many of the standard initial practices, such as going for refuge, the Four Immeasurables (Brahma Vihāra),

and guru yoga, are already in the opening verses of *The Sādhana of Secret Vajravilāsinī*, although none of the closing practices are. Because the sādhanā is essentially complete, as well as long, it is most likely that separate sets of initial and closing practices were never used with it. Two of the Vajrayāna initial practices, Drawing the Maṇḍala (Maṇḍala Vidhi) and Blessing the Nectar Cup (Amṛita Prokṣana), are included in Chapter 9: Preparing for Practice. In addition, two closing practices, Dissolving the Deity (Devatā Anubheda) and the Dedication of Merit (Pariṇamana), and two optional closing practices, the Tantric Feast (Gaṇacakra) and Erasing the Maṇḍala (Maṇḍala Rekhām Lumped), are added at the end. A good presentation of the initial and closing practices is in Elizabeth English's book *Vajrayoginī*.

Recitation

Sādhana is normally recited with a simple melody you can create on your own, or you can find and use a traditional Indian melody that corresponds to the meter of the sādhanā.

Playing Musical Instruments

Two instruments are integral to the sādhanā: the bell (ghaṇṭā) and ḍamaru (monkey drum). The bell is played in the left hand and the ḍamaru in the right hand. For most times where marked, play the instruments for three to five seconds. For the self-consecration, and at the end of the sādhanā, play them for about ten seconds.

Dancing

Each practitioner performs a spontaneous dance of the deity for their lover. If you have an interest in learning Indian dance, Odissi is the original dance of the Tantric temples of India. It is particularly practiced in Orissa, where Hindu Tantric traditions survive today. Bharata Natyam is the principle classical dance style of India and can also give you good ideas.

Opening Verses – Pūjā

Salutation - Vandana

The salutation honors the goddess Vajravilāsinī, the principal deity of the sādhanā.

Praises - Pūjā

Śabara describes how he obtained the sādhanā.

Verse 1: The two opening verses are praises to Śabara's principal deity Lokanātha (aka Avalokiteśvara) and to his deity's consort Vajravilāsinī. The first verse is a refuge vow before Lokanātha, "Lord of the World." All these beings, high and low, wandering in saṃsāra, show their reverence.

The asuras are jealous "anti-gods," like the Greek titans, who war eternally against the gods to obtain the secret nectar of immortality (amṛita).

"Lords of gods" refers to Indra and Indranī, the king and queen of the Vedic gods.

"Lords of humans" are human kings and queens.

Verse 2: Bhagavatī means "Lady Goddess." It is a title of divinity, rulership, and buddhahood.

The verse states Vajravilāsinī is golden in radiance (but not in skin color). A later verse says she has a golden-reddish glow. The sādhanā does not say what color she is, but the red color of her seed syllables indicates that she is red.

Feet represent impurity, and to take refuge at someone's feet is to recognize that you are even less pure than their feet are.

Verse 3: "The mountain" is where Śabara lives and practices, and received the sādhanā from Lokanātha.

"An imperishable sound" – The eternal sound emanates from ultimate reality. The sādhanā is a direct expression from ultimate wisdom, compassion, and love, divinely revealed to Śabara.

Verse 4: A mountain is symbolic for a heap of virtues. Śabara's two mountains, 1) *mano bhaṅga padam* - lit. Dividing Mind Mountain, and 2) *citta viśrāma parvate* – lit. Quiet Mind Mountain, are understood as literal mountains somewhere in the Vindhya range in Orissa. At the same time, it seems far too coincidental that Śabara begins by writing that he travels from a mountain called "dividing mind" to a mountain called "quiet mind." They can be usefully understood as figurative of inner travels on his spiritual path, and the completion of his pilgrimage signals his readiness to practice the sādhanā. Here only the second mountain is translated literally.

Jewels represent desire transformed into primordial wisdom.

Deer are a favorite animal in Buddhism, and represent peaceful awareness. Musk deer are famed for the sexual power of their glands, and show the Tantric fusion of tranquility and sexuality.

Verse 5: The aśoka tree (lit. Without Sorrow; Lat. *Saraca indica*; Engl. Ashoka) is a symbol of sexual power and fertility. It is a tall tree sacred to the Vedic god of love Kāma as well as Śiva. The Buddha was born under an aśoka tree. It is an emblem of Buddha Amitābha where it blooms in the charnel ground of his pure realm Sukhāvātī. It symbolizes erotic passion transformed into enlightened bliss. Aśoka trees grow in north India as well as Orissa, and bloom in March, producing red flowers. The tree emanates the power of the sacred feminine essence, and its parts have been scientifically proven to improve fertility in women. To this day, women who desire children pray to them. Both practitioners wear an aśoka flower on one of their ears.

Tree groves represent medicines and alchemy, magical places that support inner awakening.

Cuckoos represent wisdom.

Verse 6: A “pleasure garden” (udyāna) is a garden of beautiful trees and flowers, an ideal place in Indian eroticism for making love that naturally stimulates the senses and offers privacy.

Aśoka the Eighth (Aśoka Aṣṭamī) is a spring festival to Śiva in which devotees eat eight aśoka flowers to connect with him spiritually and attain his powers. The eighth day of the waxing Half Moon of each month is devoted to Śiva, but the spring day (March-April in the Indian month of Caitra) is especially sacred, a time traditionally for orgiastic fertility rituals. Aśoka the Eighth is still a major holy day in Eastern India, especially in Śabara’s region of Orissa. It is also mentioned in the *Hevajra Tantra* as an ideal day for attracting a consort. Śabara considers it an auspicious time for practice and celebration, and honors it as the day he received the sādhana.

“My compassionate Guru,” Karuṇa (Compassionate One), refers to the deity Lokanātha, about whom Śabara has been speaking and who gave him the sādhana. Karuṇa is an epithet for Lokanātha or Avalokiteśvara, Śabara’s deity-guru.

Verse 7: “The union of One-Mind Samādhi” means that through his own practice of this sādhana, Śabara attained the first and possibly the second level of Mahāmudrā, with his consort Sabarī.

Verse 8: Siddhis are the worldly magical powers that help in fulfilling personal desires and inspiring others towards enlightenment, and Śabara has already attained many.

Verse 9: “A sign of Mahāmudrā” refers to the first dawning of enlightened consciousness. Śabara, having attained the initial stage of Mahāmudrā, now wants to attain the full fruit of the practice: complete enlightenment.

Verse 10: “The fruit of the essence of enlightenment” means emotional clarity and omniscient, nondual awareness. Śabara prays to Vajravilāsinī for a sign that he has attained full enlightenment.

Qualifications for Practice - Adhikara

The verses in this section invite you to reflect on your motivations for practice, and to deepen your commitment to attain enlightenment for yourself and all beings.

Verse 11: “Tīrthikas” (lit. stream forders) is a term for non-Buddhists, especially Hindus – who mistakenly believe they can purify themselves merely by bathing in rivers - who are ineligible for practice. Here it is translated as ascetics, since an ascetic mindset is incompatible with the practices.

Verse 12: “On the path to enlightenment, but whose minds are not ripened” – Those who do not have maturity, clarity of mind, and achieved a degree of inner peace should not do the practice. It is for those who are committed to attaining enlightenment and can see the world itself as sacred.

“Buddha Tīrthikas” refers to Buddhists of the two lower vehicles, who are so lost they might as well be Hindus. Śabara says that being a Buddhist is necessary but not sufficient for practicing this sādhana, which requires commitment to the Vajrayāna.

Verse 13: By excluding certain people with physical limitations from the practice, Śabara is not making a moral judgment against them. He is actually setting the bar for practicing the sādhana fairly low. As long as your basic body functions work (the exercises are physically rigorous), you have functioning sexual organs and are not impotent (needed for the sexual practices), are not hunchbacked (an erect spine is essential for subtle energy yoga), and have a positive outlook on life, you may be qualified. The lack of functioning sexual organs makes a key point - *no functioning genitals, no Mahāmudrā*.

Verse 14: “Made pure by consecration” (abhiṣeka) means that consecration is a pre-requisite to begin.

Verse 15: “Protectors of all that is secret” – Practitioners must keep the Tantric practices secret and not share them with those who would disparage them or especially use them for ill purposes. This was a great concern during Śabara’s time because many people practiced black magic. In today’s world, however, sharing the practices is a virtue and keeping them secret is a moral fault.

“Whose minds are free from deficiency” – A pure and wholesome intention and disposition is essential for this gentle and passionate practice. Those who are less pure would be more suited

for a semi-wrathful deity practice such as Vajrayoginī to help transform lower emotional states into higher ones, or to develop first in the wisdom and compassion of the Mahāyāna.

Verse 16: “Benefiting others” – The sādhana is a practice for bodhisattvas, determined to help others. Śabara firmly grounds the Tantric practices in the Mahāyāna tradition.

Setting for Practice – Vajra Piṭha

You should practice the sādhana in a beautiful setting where you are comfortable. The space should be pure, and not require extensive rituals to purify it such as a cremation ground. You and your lover should purify yourselves through abandoning the inner impurities of modesty and other limiting habits of mind, and be in a state of profound devotion to each other.

Verse 17: “In a hidden mountain place” – A place that is quiet and undisturbed by humans.

Verse 18: The ideal place is secluded, pleasurable to the senses, and clear of harmful spirits.

Verse 19: This practice becomes the first of the practitioner’s sādhana vows.

The sādhana is ideally fully practiced with your consort at night, four times a month, on the four juncture (parvan) nights of the waxing Half Moon (eighth waxing night), Full Moon (fourteenth waxing night), waning Half Moon (eighth waning night), and the New Moon (fourteenth waning night). According to *The Kāma Sūtra*, night is the natural time for lovemaking when erotic desires are easily stirred.

Verse 20: The space should be well lit to enjoy the sight of each other’s bodies and increase arousal.

Verse 21: “Seek the Mahāmudrā seal” – Seek to attain nondual awareness, sealed with Great Bliss.

Verse 22: You must come to the practice with a pure mind, and here modesty is a mental impurity.

Verse 23: The blessings and guidance of the guru are vital for spiritual attainment.

Preparatory Practices – Ādi Yoga

Sexual Arousal – Rata Avasthāpana

The two practitioners gaze at each other as they prepare for practice. This is arousing for both of them, and also generates devotion, intimate connection, and a level of shared meditative absorption. Then they touch each other with gentleness and pleasure. These are important acts of sacred self-worship, but they are also playful and joyous.

Verse 24: “He anoints and purifies his secret vajra” – The male practitioner rubs his genitals with a flower.

Verse 25: Black powder (añjana) is also called collyrium or lamp black. She uses a hand mirror and brush applicator to apply the black powder to her eyelids. She beautifies her hair with a hair brush.

“The Inner Source of her beauty” (Nija) is your own true Self freed from karmic conditioning, a term used especially by Saraha. The use of this word demonstrates Saraha’s influence on Śabara and the strong influence of the Tantric philosophy of the Innate.

Verses 26 and 27: The lower lip is regarded as especially erogenous in Indian culture.

A red mark (sindūra) on the forehead is the mark of a married woman. The *Cakrasamvara Tantra* and *Hevajra Tantra* call the consort of a male practitioner the “wife.” By proudly wearing the mark of a married woman, even though she is technically not married, the female practitioner is both transgressing social rules and demonstrating that her devotion to her consort and to enlightenment is of an even higher spiritual order than standard marriage.

Lac is a red resin produced by insects in Asia. Here it is applied to the forehead as a horizontal streak, likely the defining mark of a female practitioner of the kula of Amitābha. Fresh lac is soft and applied directly to the skin. Once lac hardens, it is dissolved in warm water and then applied to the skin. As an alternative, you can use an edible red substance like red wine mixed with flour.

Both the man and woman wear an aśoka bloom on one ear - his on the right ear, hers on the left.

The man, following the deity visualization in verses 55-56, wears a gold mark (kuṃkuma) made of saffron (or turmeric - haldi) powder across his forehead. It is likely the mark of a male practitioner of the kula of Amitābha, who purifies passion into enlightened awareness.

Verse 28: A pearl necklace (muktāhāra) represents purity. As one of the Five Jewels (Pañca Ratnāni), pearls identify the practitioners as members of the Lotus Family of Amitābha.

“They regard each other as” – A reminder that the purpose of the practice is not simply to enjoy the pleasures of sex, but to attain inner awakening.

Verse 29: The two practitioners cultivate and enjoy sensual foreplay while fully conscious of and in union with nondual wisdom and bliss. Arousal, while enjoyable, is also a profound practice.

“As long as their minds remain clear” - If the practitioners fall into lust, they should stop, clear their minds for a minute through meditation, and start again.

Verse 30: The Bliss Position (Sukha Āsana) - He sits with his left leg in and his right leg out. Between his legs, he make an intimate space for her to join with him - in a later verse (119) Śabara calls this step “Divine Dwelling” (Dhāna). It is the emblematic position of the god Padmanarteśvara. The male practitioner is to hold this pose throughout the sādhana, but he can change it as he desires.

“With flowing hair” – The male practitioner is breaking the usual custom of keeping hair up, as humans do, and taking on the appearance of a god. Hair let down is erotic in Indian culture.

Verse 31 and 32: As in verse 30 for the man, the woman usually wears her hair up in a hair top-knot, but for the practice she lets her hair flow down like a goddess.

“Squatting Position” (Utkāṣa Āsana – lit. extreme lotus posture) - The female practitioner takes an erotic squatting posture, the emblematic pose of Vajravilāsinī. In pre-modern cultures before the use of chairs, squatting was the most common way to sit and would be effortless for the female practitioner. For modern practitioners, however, it can be difficult to hold for long periods. She can hold this as long as comfortable, and then take a more comfortable seated pose.

The man guides the woman to hold the pose of the goddess. Her hands are held behind his neck to support her and bring the two of them closer to each other.

Drawing the Maṇḍala – Maṇḍala Vidhi

Verse 33: Dharmodaya – lit. “The source of appearances,” means that her yoni is the source of all things in the universe. The Dharmodaya is formed by the union of female and male essences that creatively gives rise to all things, and the appearances that arise from it are real, pure, and erotic. The Dharmodaya represents the principle of Evaṃ.

A maṇḍala drawn on a practitioner’s body is called a body maṇḍala (kāya maṇḍala), and strongly establishes the presence of the deity in the space through the female practitioner.

He uses literally his “nectar finger,” the ring finger of his left hand, to draw a maṇḍala circle around her yoni. The practices in this verse are easier to perform if the woman has shaved her pubic area, an ancient Indian custom. The ring finger symbolizes the female essence. Using the left fingers is a way of intentionally inverting the Indian cultural principle that the left side is impure and the right side is pure to see all appearances as pure, and honoring the female principle symbolized by the left side.

The male practitioner first draws the maṇḍala of a circle, counter-clockwise, the direction of feminine power. He then draws a double triangle within the circle on the female practitioner’s yoni. Draw the downward triangle first, then the upward triangle. The double triangle is visualized as a three-dimensional tetrahedron.

The Sanskrit verses call for saffron (kuṃkuma) and red sandalwood (candana) for marking the body. Turmeric (haldi) is an inexpensive substitute for saffron, and red wine (madya) mixed with flour, especially for this exercise, is a much safer substitute for red sandalwood.

Verse 34: The seed syllables are visualized within the circle, resting on top of it, equally spaced from each other. Because the practice derives from the Yoginī Tantras, the seed syllables are arranged counter-clockwise, and face the male practitioner. The mantra blesses her yoni.

Verse 35: The pleasure-sound *sīt* is an onomatopoeic hissing sound of pleasure, common in India. It is used here to finish the round of mantra recitation.

Generating the Four Immeasurables – Brahma Vihara

Verse 36a: The Four Immeasurables, love (maitri), compassion (karuṇa), joy (mudita) and equanimity (upekṣa), are from the Common Vehicle, and reciting them sets the emotions in good qualities.

The Emptiness Mantra – Śūnyatā Mantra

Verse 36b: The Emptiness Mantra clears your mind of discursive thoughts, and creates an open space for pristine awareness to dawn within you. When you recite the Emptiness Mantra, you are not dissolving the world into nothing, nor are you purifying any thing. You are dissolving your conceptual stains of subject and object that prevent you from seeing reality clearly. All objects that appear to you are perceived as empty of self-nature from the view of emptiness, and eventually perceived as forms of primordial awareness arising from the Clear Light.

Creation Stage – Utpatti Krama

Deity Yoga – Jñānamudrā

You embrace your first consort (mudrā), the deity.

Arising from Emptiness - Ropitam Śūnyatā

Verse 37: The practitioners “arise from emptiness,” meaning they see themselves as presently appearing but as insubstantial as a reflection of the Moon on water. You see things clearly.

Armoring - Kavaca

Verse 38: Armoring (kavaca) prepares your physical body for bringing the actual deity into it, strengthening your body to withstand the intense power of the deity.

Generating the Seed Syllables of the Goddess – Bija Akṣara

Verse 39: In general, wrathful deities arise from a red solar disk (sūrya maṇḍala) and peaceful deities arise from a white lunar disk (candra maṇḍala). In the sādhana, however, the solar disk accurately represents the Vajravilāsinī’s intense passion and feminine essence. While the sādhana follows the system of steps to visualizing the deity called the Five Awakenings described in Chapter 5: Deity Yoga, the step of generating the lunar disk is omitted to focus on feminine power.

Verse 40: “The yellow fluid that delights the mind” is urine (mūtra), whose source is her yoni.

“The brilliant flowing red fluid” is menstrual blood (rakta), or female fluids in general.

The first of the five seed syllables to appear is *em*, her single innermost seed syllable. The seed syllable arises at the level of the Dharmodaya on the female practitioner’s yoni, not above it.

Verse 41: The Three Kāyas are three dimensions of a buddha: the ultimate dimension of truth (dharmakāya), the subtle dimension of sexual enjoyment (saṃbhogakāya), and the dimension of physical emanation (nirmāṇakāya). All appearances arise from the female practitioner’s yoni.

Verse 42: The revolving bliss wheel (ānanda cakra) is a symbol of the blissful nature of ultimate reality. The blending of the red female seed essence and the white male seed essence occurs from the counter-clockwise spinning of the bliss wheel.

Verse 43: Each practitioner visualizes the mantra separately, in front of the two of them, from their own viewpoint, not with one practitioner viewing it from the front and another from behind.

The great mantra is the five seed-syllable mantra of the goddess. The seed syllables are fiery red in color and glowing like gold. Vajravilāsinī’s mantra is the essence of all the buddhas and has the power to fulfill all desires. The correspondences for Vajravilāsinī’s seed syllables are:

Seed Syllable	Buddha	Aggregate	Element	Wisdom	Nectar
<i>eṃ</i>	Amitābha	Perceptions	Fire	Discriminating	Human Flesh
<i>āṃ</i>	Vairocana	Form	Earth	Dharmadhātu	Feces
<i>rīṃ</i>	Akṣobhya	Consciousness	Water	Mirror-Like	Urine
<i>raṃ</i>	Amoghasiddhi	Intentions	Wind	All-Accomplishing	Blood
<i>brīṃ</i>	Ratnasambhava	Sensations	Space	Equality	Semen

The entire visualization is small enough that it fits inside the female practitioner’s yoni.

Verse 44: “The Three Worlds” refers to the desire, form, and formless worlds – all the worlds. The desire world is the realms of beings who live driven by desire. The form world is the realms of beings who have given up attachment to desire but still have attachment to form. The formless world is the realms where beings have given up attachment to desire and form, but still retain a subtle idea of a permanent, independent ego self in their awareness.

The “streaks of red fire” coming from the maṇḍala are flames of passion that burn all appearances. The Three Worlds are on fire from the power of the seed syllables.

Verse 45: From verse 44 to 45, the visualization of the worlds shifts from fire to liquid. The Three Worlds that comprise the universe shrink into the maṇḍala of her yoni, but the maṇḍala itself is not extinguished. Everything is dissolved into her red sexual fluid. The practitioners visualize and meditate on all Three Worlds within the female practitioner’s yoni.

The act of emanating streaks of fire and dissolving the Three Worlds into the maṇḍala fulfills the step in the Five Awakenings of emanating (sṛiṣṭi) and returning (smṛiti) rays of light from the seed syllable, that bless and fulfill the needs of all beings.

Visualizing the Pledge Goddess – Samaya Sattvā

Once you begin to visualize the two deities in front of you, you no longer keep visualizing the seed syllables. You can visualize the deities as large as you like at first, and with practice eventually make them as small as a hair tip, which develops the powers of your concentration. The visualization is a dynamic image of two deities in passionate loveplay, not a frozen picture.

Verse 46: The bandhūka (Lat. *Pentapetes phoenicea*; Engl. scarlet mallow) is a red flower from a tree associated with goddesses, especially the goddess of love, Parvatī. Here it represents Vajravilāsinī's form. She is pale coral red in color, and radiates red-glowing golden light.

Inborn (Nija) loveliness is the essence of your own being, the Innermost Self.

Gaurī (White) is a name for the goddess Parvatī common in East India. This reflects the Bengal and Orissa regional influence on the sādhana where it was composed.

Verse 47: "Possessing the first bloom of youth" - Tantric deities are almost always visualized as being sixteen years old. In Tantra, the number of perfection and wholeness is four, and four fours is sixteen, when a person is at the height of youthful vigor.

The red aśoka is the flower of the divine feminine. Vajravilāsinī wears it over her left ear.

The red lac streak most likely symbolizes Vajravilāsinī's membership in the kula of Amitābha.

The pearl necklace represents peace, purity, and the Lotus Family of Amitābha.

Verse 48: "Complete with all ritual marks" such as her lac streak and pearl necklace. Presumably, Vajravilāsinī also has a round red sindūra point on her forehead as well, ritually marking her Tantric marriage to her consort.

Verse 49: "The lotus dancer" is Padmanarteśvara.

"Her lotus mounted on his arisen banner" refers to the two deities making love. The *Hevajra Tantra* instructs practitioners to visualize sexual organs of the deities clearly.

Squatting Position (Utkāṣṭa Āsana - lit. Extreme Pose) - The squatting lovemaking position. This yogic pose is an emblem of Vajravilāsinī who plays freely over her consort's erect liṅgam.

Side glances are considered very erotic in Indian culture.

Verse 50: Vajravilāsinī's principle attribute is the five-pointed, peaceful red vajra in her right hand.

Her white lasso (pāśa) moves loosely as she plays with it in her left hand. The lasso signifies binding - of the practitioners to the deities, the binding power of sexual desire, and the binding of the discipline and vows that lead to enlightenment. White stands for purity.

Verses 51 and 52: The Sanskrit line reads “by yogic concentration vibrating and contracting,” and refers to her yoni pulsating and throbbing, and orgasms intensified with deep meditative awareness.

Verse 53: “Enveloping the Three Worlds” – Her yoni shines infinite red rays throughout the Three Worlds, compassionately supporting all beings and bringing them to bliss.

Visualizing the Pledge God – Samaya Sattva

Verse 54: In the sādhana, as the consort of the central deity, Padmanarteśvara is generated through the seed syllables of the goddess, rather than through his own seed syllables. He is deep red in color.

Verse 55: “The size of a tiny hair tip” is very small, just a dot. The visualization is small as an aid to concentration. This may be difficult at first, so you can start bigger and reduce them over time.

The Sanskrit verse reads “produced Innately by a concentrated mind” – Padmanarteśvara arises out of your own mind, which has become so purified that the deity arises not out of your defiled mind but out of the clarity of your mind as an expression of primordial consciousness.

He arises as a sixteen year old as an expression of his physical perfection and youthful vigor.

“Complete with ritual signs” – The golden mark, pearl necklace, and flower in his hair.

Verse 56: Padmanarteśvara wears the aśoka flower over his right ear.

The horizontal “golden mark across his forehead” is probably the male mark of the kula of Amitābha, made with kuṃkuma (saffron powder).

The pearls represent his purity, and are a symbol of the Lotus Family of Amitābha.

Verse 57: “Inborn loveliness” (Nija) – This crucial Tantric term for the Innermost Self appears once again in the sādhana, here referring to Padmanarteśvara’s own inner beauty arising from the Innate.

“His other accoutrements removed” – The standard jewelry of a Tantric deity, such as top-knot hair pin, earrings, other necklaces, armlets, bracelets, and ankle bracelets.

“Great Passion’s fluid” refers to semen (śukra).

“Clothed with the sky” (digambara) means Padmanarteśvara is ritually naked.

Verse 58: He sits in Bliss Position (Sukha Āsana), a comfortable pose for sitting and lovemaking.

Verse 59: His arms touch her hips, and his hands are crossed behind her with the right arm over the left in the Gesture of Indestructible Embrace (Vajra Hūṃkāra Mudrā).

Verse 60: The yellow lotus (pīta padma) symbolizes purity and creative power.

His vajra is five-pointed, peaceful in form, and red in color.

Verse 61: Innate Bliss (Sahajānanda) is the fourth of the Four Blissess of sexual yoga, also called in the next verse the Great Bliss (Mahāsukha).

Verse 62: Great Bliss (Mahāsukha) is the ultimate state of perfection for all beings.

Dissolving the Three Worlds – Tri Loka Anubheda

Verse 63: All the Three Worlds become liquid in this verse for the second time, as they did in verse 45. The Three Worlds (desire, form, and formless worlds) melt by the power of her golden rays.

The ocean of blood (rudhir ambudhīm) is the second form of the maṇḍala of Vajravilāsinī. It represents the power of the magical net of the yoginīs who bestow inner awakening. The ocean swirls in a counterclockwise direction. Blood (rakta) is a positive, life-giving image, not a gruesome one, as it is sacred, full of magical blessings and creative power.

Verse 64: This “powerful divine world,” composed of primordial female sexual fluids, is a cosmic ocean of desire, the Great Passion that leads to the Great Bliss.

“The womb of the Three Worlds” refers to the yoni of Vajravilāsinī, as pure potential creation.

Invoking and Becoming the Wisdom Deities – Jñāna Sattva

Vajra samaya (adamantine vow) is the mantra used for invoking the actual deities. Spoken forcefully, it commands the actual deities to be present with you and fulfill their vow to help liberate you into the Great Bliss.

Invoking (ākṛiṣya) is the act of drawing down the deities from the heavens to be worshipped. Reciting the mantra *jaḥ hūṃ vaṃ hoḥ* calls in the actual deities, and the practitioners are transformed instantly into them. These four seed syllables achieve the actions of: 1) summoning (ākarṣaṇa), invoking it into the space, 2) drawing in (praveśana), moving the wisdom deity into the visualized deity, 3) binding (bandhana), uniting the wisdom deity within the visualized deity, and 4) worshipping (toṣaṇa) the deity, which brings the deity to pervade your being.

Self-Consecration – Svādhiṣṭhāna

Verse 65: This verse gives a large and unusual list of beings, which more typically consists of buddhas, bohdissattvas, and gurus. This reflects the life affirming quality of the sādhana, where beings of all kinds are honored as inherently pure. All the beings for the consecration are visualized as fully life size, and are visualized in front of the practitioners. The entire space around the practitioners in all directions is filled with countless beings in celebration. Although Vajavilāsinī does not have a formal retinue, her true retinue is the universal network of the yoginīs (yoginī jāla), extensive as space, who also are present for the consecration.

Lokapālas are world guardians, Vedic deities who protect the directions of the universe.

Kinnaras are joyous celestial musicians, with human bodies and the heads of animals.

Asuras are the jealous gods (lit. anti-gods). They protect the moral order of the earth. Asuras are also the eternal enemies of the gods, with whom they fight for the elixir of immortality.

Humans (manus) are the offspring of Manu, the first human created by the Vedic gods.

Verse 66: Apsaras are female water spirits, similar to the Greek nymphs. They are highly erotic and generally friendly to humans. Their lovers are the gandharvas, male celestial musicians who dwell in the sky. The fact that Vedic nature spirits are the consecrating deities in the sādhana demonstrates the strong connection between the ancient, animistic Vedic religion and Buddhism.

Rambhā (no known translation) is an apsara of great beauty, a courtesan, a master of dance and music who lives in Svarga, the heaven of the gods of the desire realm. She is the wife of Nalakuber, son of the god of wealth Kubera. She is found in the *Ramāyana* and *Hevajra Tantra*.

Tilottamā (Best Sesame Seed), is also an apsara of exceptional beauty, a heavenly courtesan, a dancer and musician who lives in Svarga. She originates in the Vedas, and is mentioned in the *Hevajra Tantra* as both an image of ultimate female beauty and as a consecrating goddess.

The goddesses, who are standing in front of the practitioners, pour the liquid into your bodies using their jeweled vases (kalaśa) full of nectar (amṛita). The amṛita completely fills you with brilliant liquid sparkling with primordial light, and you attain inner awakening.

Sealing - Mudrā

The next act of the Self-Consecration is sealing (mudrā), in which you visualize an image of the buddha of the family the principle deity represents on your forehead, and all the beings present before you sealed on their foreheads. For Vajravilāsinī, it is Amitābha, Lord of the Lotus Family.

Dancing - Nāṭya

You and your lover take turns spontaneously dancing (nāṭya) for each other. In the ancient world, men and women generally did not dance with each other, but for each other. As you dance, you visualize infinite numbers of Vajravilāsinīs dancing throughout time and space, dancing for their consorts who are infinite numbers of Padmanarteśvaras. Their light brings the entire universe to enlightenment. In this way, your dancing is the ultimate offering to all beings.

Dissolution of the Deities of the Consecration – Deva Anubhedā

The consecrating deities are dissolved into you.

Armoring/Mantra Repetition – Kavaca/Mantra Japa

This section would normally be the place within a sādhana to recite the mantra of the deity many times. However, because the sādhana is long, Śābara has sharply abbreviated this step into a second armoring exercise, in order to further strengthen your body for the coming exercises.

Verse 67: “Perform yogically the three-fold maṇḍala pūjā of body, speech and mind” – This verse introduces the activities you and your lover will perform for the remainder of the sādhana as the deities. It is an announcement of what is to come.

“The three-fold karmic conditions” are attraction, aversion and ignorance.

Verse 68: Here the five-syllable mantra is called the root mantra (mūla mantram).

The seed syllable *sa* means victorious or accomplished. It is simply an announcement, not a seed syllable to be placed in her yoni.

Verse 69: Yama is the Vedic “lord of death,” and the efforts of “a crooked old woman” to please him are pointless because she will soon die anyway. Vajravilāsinī, however, successfully purifies the obscurations of “deceptive views” of craving desire, aversion and ignorance, and transforms them into the one taste of bliss, leading to immortality.

Verses 70 and 71: The heart (hṛidaya) refers to the heart cakra at the center of your chest, not your physical heart.

Each eye, breast (stana), and armpit is armored with mantras individually.

Verse 72a and 72b: Upon reciting this verse, when you have an extended period of time to practice with your lover, or are practicing solo, you may recite the deity's seed mantra, her dhāraṇī mantra, or the mantra of Padmanarteśvara many times. As you do so, visualize the two deities in sexual union.

Praise – Pūjā

Verse 72c: Ritually offering incense to each other is a purifying gift.

Verse 73: “Perform the primal pūjā, vajra seat and vajra” is an announcement that the two practitioners will make love. It is two-fold because it is practiced with two instruments, the woman's “vajra seat” and the man's vajra. It is the “primal pūjā,” the original act of worship.

Verse 74: “Delights” refers specifically to areca nut (tāmbūla) rolled in betel leaf, with other spices like cardamom or camphor often added. You may substitute other sweets as you desire.

Verses 75 and 76: Verses 75 and 76 focus your awareness intently on yourselves as the deities, honoring each other with praise, pleasurably releasing yourselves from dualistic consciousness.

Verses 77, 78, and 79: The “vajra union” (vajra mudrām, lit. vajra gesture) is the indestructible union of female and male sexual organs.

Completion Stage – Niṣpanna Krama

Sexual Yoga - Karmamudrā

You embrace your second consort, your physical consort.

Foreplay – Nava Puṣpa

Verse 80: “Ninefold Blossoming” (Nava Puṣpa) is a term for foreplay. While verses 24 to 32 were intended for the sexual arousal of the two practitioners, these verses are for the sexual arousal of the actual deities that the two practitioners have become.

Verses 81 and 82: “Arising for entering” means the man gaining an erection.

The last line of the Sanskrit reads literally “jewel, middle, and root,” presumably her clitoris (bhāgānkurā), the two lips of her yoni, and her perineum.

Verse 83: “Every body part,” literally twenty body parts, is to be touched with sacredness.

Verse 84: “Do not claw each other with nails” (nakha) – A popular Indian erotic practice to which an entire chapter of *The Kāma Sūtra* is devoted. It is not to be done in such a gently passionate sādhana. While aggression and violent practices (khara vega) have their place in lovemaking, these are not appropriate here. The state of mind to be cultivated is cooperative (pratyāsanna).

Verses 85 and 86: “Before mingling is danced” means before the practitioners make love.

Verse 87: Sahaja refers to the Innate in its inherent nature as divine, erotic play.

Verse 88: “This good boat” is a common phrase for a goddess.

“May the rising memory of the guru’s words carry you” reminds you that the purpose of the practice is inner transformation, and invites you to awaken your guru devotion.

Concluding Foreplay

Verse 89: Just before intercourse, reflect on the fundamental conditions that create suffering. Then, with compassion and intention to liberate all beings, the two practitioners unite their bodies sexually.

Subtle Energy Yoga – Samayamudrā

You embrace your third consort, your inner bliss.

The Four Blisses – Catur Ānanda

Verse 90: Finally, the practitioners unite sexually.

Śabara does not give instructions for subtle energy yoga in the sādhana. Instead, they are to be added into the practice by the practitioners according to their level of development.

“Focus on the various moments as they arise” refers to the Four Blisses and the Four Moments. Vilakṣaṇa may mean “various moments,” referring either to all Four Moments in the practice of the Four Blisses, or “the Signless moment,” specifically to the fourth moment.

The churning stick (manthāna) is a common synonym for the man’s liṅgaṃ.

“He makes the devī tremble with his vajra” - The sādhana instructs the man to use the Bliss Position (Sukha Āsana) and the woman to use the Squatting Position (Utkāṭa Āsana). Use whatever sexual positions are comfortable and enjoyable.

Verse 91: Churning is the action of a man’s vajra, and swinging is the action of a woman’s yoni.

“The Innate elixir of the lotus sea” (sahaja amṛita) – The mixed female and male sexual fluids that bring immortality and enlightenment.

Verse 92: “The poison of saṃsāra” is a reference to the early Vedic sea-churning myth of the gods, from which many benefits, and a poison, were produced. But in this verse, the traditional story is inverted and the poison arises out of passionlessness, not passion.

Verse 93: “The yoga of the churning stick” refers to making love.

“Releasing of the fluids” (golaka) – This instructs the practitioners to ejaculate their fluids and attain the perfect pure consciousness of the Clear Light, in which you both dissolve your forms and acquire the ultimate stainless “nature of the goddess.”

“The Three Worlds” – The desire world, form world, and formless world.

Nondual Yoga - Mahāmudrā

You embrace your fourth consort, the Great Consort.

Tasting the Nectar of Immortality - Amṛita Āsvādana

Verse 94: Returning from the unchanging bliss of nirvāṇa, you and your lover re-establish yourselves in the worldly erotic blisses by drinking sexual fluids. In the ritual of Tasting the Nectar of Immortality (Amṛita Āsvādana), the sexual fluids of the two practitioners are mixed together and added to the amṛita cup for drinking. The couple must separate their sexual organs for a moment to collect the fluids, but then they reunite in verse 95b. As with any Tantric practice, you can perform this offering practice visualizing the actions rather than performing them literally as you prefer.

Śabara assumes the practitioners are quite young for the man to be able to ejaculate and then immediately begin the practice again. If the man is not able to do this, then he should delay ejaculation and keep his erection at least until the end of the sādhana so he and his lover can finish the practices. Use whatever fluids arise from your lovemaking and put them in the cup.

Verse 95a: “Satisfies the god and goddess” – The practitioners are themselves the god and goddess, so this is not an external offering but an internal one.

The Swing Recitation – Dolā Japa

Preparation

Verses 95b and 96: The “mantra knower” (mantrin) – One who is accomplished in mantra recitation and knows their powers. In this verse it is an epithet in praise of the male practitioner as Padmanarteśvara.

Verse 97 and 98: “The maṇḍala of the Three Worlds” are the desire, form, and formless worlds that are filled with and blessed by the light of the divine couple in their lovemaking.

Verse 99: “Like a city of gandharvas” is a common metaphor for emptiness. Appearances have no inherent existence, insubstantial and yet they appear.

“Like water in a mirage” is a common metaphor for emptiness. The water in a mirage appears real, but it has no enduring reality and quickly vanishes.

The Actual Practice

Swing Recitation (Dolā Japa) is a powerful practice, here used as a nondual yoga that stabilizes realization. After attaining the Clear Light through the Four Blisses, you and your lover have returned to the world of appearances. Through the Swing Recitation you complete your enlightenment by maintaining the bliss of nirvāṇa with worldly bliss, attaining the Great Bliss.

Verse 100: “Great offenses arisen through seven births” means all your past life karma can be cleared.

Verse 101: “Always with strong discernment” is a reminder to keep focused awareness and purpose.

Verse 102: This line literally reads “six red glowing marks” – The subtle yoga energy points of the 1) crown of the head, 2) forehead, 3) throat, 4) heart, 5) navel, and 6) perineum. In Śābara’s tradition, they are all envisioned as red. However, this misses out on the male-female polarities of the cakras, and later traditions see half of them as red and half as white.

“Five mantra syllables in the devī’s lotus” – The five mantra syllables are arranged in a vertical line, one on top of the other. The repeated movement through both your central channels creates a subtle energy “ring of fire” that runs through you and your lover.

Verses 103 and 104: Practicing the recitation with the mantra moving clockwise through the man in this manner helps the man to control ejaculation, and helps the woman to attain stronger orgasmic bliss. Practicing the recitation moving counterclockwise through the man helps the man to experience bliss, though he may lose his ejaculation, and helps the woman to attain bliss as well.

“You will not attain perfection” - Śābara uses the Swing Recitation as the final perfecting practice in the sādhana, uniting the Four Blisses in your bodies and leading to enlightenment.

Verse 105 and 106: The mantra repetitions are performed aloud but softly. The recitation automatically synchronizes the breath between you and your lover. You both recite on the exhale: he inhales with the mantra garland moving up, and exhales with it moving down; she inhales with the mantra garland moving down, and exhales with the mantra garland moving up. One full set of 108 takes about five minutes to complete, and five sets take about thirty minutes.

Garuda Mudrā – This hand gesture seals in the subtle energies generated by the couple.

Verse 107: “The ten-fold Swing Recitation” – The ten steps are: 1) visualize six glowing red and white marks on your bodies, 2) visualize the mantra in her lotus, 3) the mantra moves from her lotus to his vajra, 4) up to his navel, 5) up to his heart, 6) up to his right nostril, 7) enters her left nostril, 8) enters her heart, 9) moves down to her navel, and 10) to her lotus.

Verse 108: Perform complete sets of 108 recitations, up to five sets in a practice session. For extended practice sessions, you may do as many recitations as you wish.

Closing

Verse 109: From the practices, you and your lover attain the “Fusion of Identities” (Ātma Melaka – lit. Soul Fusion). You both step into a state of blissful nondual awareness in which “self” and “other” are concepts that bear no relationship to the depth and richness of your experiences.

“Without concern for cause and effect” means that practitioners attain a level of awareness beyond karmic conditioning. All your actions, arising from ultimate reality, are stainlessly pure.

Verse 110: Great Passion (Mahārāga) is the sacred desire that drives all beings to inner awakening.

“Fluid glowing gold” refers to the glowing golden rays of the goddess, who melts all the worlds into the one taste of nirvāṇa.

“The world luminous with one taste” – The one taste of the bliss of all-pervasive ultimate reality.

Verse 111: “Like a wheel revolving, its form spinning rightwards” refers to the seed syllables as a wheel going through the cakras. Rightwards means that the mantric ring of fire spins clockwise from the point of view of the man.

Concluding Verses - Pratipatti

You embrace your fourth consort, the Great Bliss, the all-pervasive wisdom of the Yoginī who transcends appearances and embodies them all. From the Swing Recitation (Dolā Japa), the practitioners expand their awareness from the Fusion of their Identities (Ātma Melaka) between themselves to the all-embracing cosmic view of Mahāmudrā.

Verse 112: Dualistic thinking is the root of suffering that produces the tragic “roar of saṃsāra.” Once this illusory veil is burned to ashes through Tantric practice “the subtle winds are stilled.” The subtle winds that sustain dualistic consciousness must be brought into the central channel and stilled for enlightenment to dawn. All this has been achieved through the Four Yogas.

Verse 113: Just as the colors of a rainbow effortlessly dissolve into the sky, the perception of space as a concrete experience dissolves in Innate awakened consciousness.

“Great blessings are received” by practitioners of the sādhana.

Verse 114: Repeated practice of the sādhana ensures that the ignorance of dualistic thought cannot be maintained. As a result, you continually experience all appearances without an independent existence, arising as if in a dream.

Verse 115: You recognize that all appearances are “not real,” in the sense that they have no independent and separate existence from anything else - any sensation of them having this kind of substantive reality at all comes only “from ignorant thinking.” Like waves on the ocean, you

see that there are no separate waves, but there is an ocean and there are waves that arise from it. You awaken to the true nature of reality, the ocean of primordial consciousness.

Verse 116: The seeming duality of arising (appearances) and non-arising (ultimate reality) is dissolved. Because all is dream-like bliss, you no longer experience anything at all as being “true” or “false,” which are merely conceptual overlays with no ultimate reality, and they fall away.

As the sādhana demonstrates, Mahāmudrā is fundamentally not a technique – it is an openness to possibilities that arises spontaneously from a clear and blissful mind and a strong intention. The sādhana’s “instructions” on Mahāmudrā are equally simple: “Duality dissolves by itself through understanding the whole truth.”

Verse 117: Once you can perceive the all the levels of nonduality directly, you have attained the highest state of awareness. You and your lover are eternally sealed with the Great Bliss of Mahāmudrā.

This verse ends the practice portion of the sādhana.

Concluding Lovemaking – Samāpti

Be sure to take a few minutes out to cuddle. See Chapter 7: Sexual Yoga.

Vows and Conduct – Samayacara

Vows - Samaya

Two more sādhana vows are given in addition to practicing at the lunar phases with your consort:

2. Recite the sādhana each day.
3. Recite the seed mantra of the deity many times each day.

Five daily conduct vows are presented for you to practice:

1. Visualize yourself as the deity in sexual union with the deity’s consort each day.
2. Recite the seed mantra of the deity at night.
3. Perform the Vajra-Lotus Recitation each day.
4. Keep the mantras of the deity secret.
5. Use the dhāraṇī mantra of the deity to massage your consort.

Sādhana Recitation - Sādhana

Verse 118: The second sādhana vow is to recite the sādhana each day.

Traditionally, the practitioner recites the sādhanā solo three to four times during the day.

“Possessing Innate wisdom” (vidyā) means you have either attained the view of Mahāmudrā and maintain it during these practices, or you generate the view as best you can until you attain it.

“Performs the activities of the maṇḍala” refers to reciting the sādhanā.

The vajra seat – The yoni of the goddess. This refers to the two deities arising from the maṇḍala.

Mantra Repetition – Mantra Japa

Verse 119: The third sādhanā vow is to recite the seed mantra of the deity each day.

This is the vow to accomplish 100,000 repetitions of the deity’s mantra and 50,000 repetitions of the mantra of the consort during the daily practice sessions with the sādhanā.

“Divine Dwelling” (Dhāna) refers to the practice of the male practitioner making a place for her between his legs, which is performed in verses 30 and 31. In pure recitation practice, this step is only visualized.

Mantra recitation (japa) – This practice with the seed mantra is performed in verse 72c.

“And others” refers to all the practices of the sādhanā which you practice with your lover. In straight daily recitation practice, all steps in the practice are only visualized.

Deity Yoga – Jñānamudrā

Verse 120: The first daily conduct vow is to visualize yourself as the deity in sexual union with its consort at all times.

If you are a male practitioner, you visualize yourself as Padmanarteśvara throughout your day, while if you are a female practitioner, you visualize yourself as Vajravilāsinī. This verse, addressed to a male practitioner, instructs that a male practitioner arises as Padmanarteśvara, not Vajravilāsinī, an unusual practice in Tantric Buddhism, but one that ties each practitioner to the genders of the deities to draw on their own male and female essences for inner awakening. Elizabeth English explains the verses in this section to mean that the male practitioner meditates on himself as Padmanarteśvara, not Vajravilāsinī. I also believe this is Śabara’s intent.

Verses 121 and 122: “The consort” – For male practitioners, the consort refers to Vajravilāsinī, for female practitioners it refers to Padmanarteśvara.

You are “the Sun,” and the dharmodaya is “the origin of all things.” Together, you attain “the complete union,” enlightenment.

Mantra Recitation at Night – Mantra Japa Brahma Muhūrta

Verse 123: Your second daily conduct vow is to recite the seed mantra of the deity each night.

“The fourth watch of the night” is called the Brahma Muhūrta (Period of Brahma). A muhūrta is a period of 48 minutes. The Brahma Muhūrta, honored for its stillness as the most auspicious time to practice, is just before dawn. Recite Vajravilāsini’s seed mantra 108 times each night.

Vajra-Lotus Recitation – Vajra Abja Japa

Verse 124: Your third daily conduct vow is to practice the Vajra-Lotus Recitation.

You arouse yourself sexually each day, knowing you are the deity, while visualizing making love to the deity’s consort.

Verses 125 and 126: The male practitioner uses his right-hand thumb and finger as a “lotus” to massage his vajra, while meditating and reciting the deity’s mantra. The female practitioner uses her right-hand fingers as a “vajra” into her lotus while meditating and reciting the mantra. As you perform this practice, recite the devī’s seed mantra 1000x. This be performed within the sādhana, as part of the mantra repetition at verse 72c, or separately as the practitioner chooses.

Results of Practice

Verse 127: The results of these sādhana and daily conduct practices is that you become skilfull in the Four Yogas, along with subtle energy yoga (the Four Cakras), the Four Blissess, and the magic of the Four Swings.

“The teacher of great joy” is you, the practitioner, who becomes accomplished in the practice.

Two terms in this verse, “Four Yonis” and “Four Bhujās,” are enigmatic and are not commonly found in other Tantric texts. However, these terms certainly refer to subtle energy yoga, and they offer clues about the richness of these practices.

Four Yogas (Catur Mudrā) – lit. The Four Seals or Consorts. The Four Yogas: deity yoga, subtle energy yoga, sexual yoga, and nondual yoga.

Four Cakras (Catur Yoni) – lit. The Four Sources. Unclear, but perhaps the four major cakras.

Four Blissess (Catur Bhujā) – lit. The Four Coils. This term may refer to the Four Blissess as they unfold like coils of energy in practice.

Four Swings (Catur Āndolana) – The Four Swings. This most likely refers to four different ways of practicing the Swing Recitation for achieving worldly goals through the magic ritual Four

Acts (Catur Karma): 1) pacifying (śānti), 2) increasing (pauṣṭi), 3) attracting (ākaraṣaṇa), and 4) destroying (māraṇa). For pacifying, visualize the mantra garland as a white pearl necklace emanating white rays of light. For increasing, see it as yellow lotus flowers emanating yellow rays of light. For attracting, as red aśoka flowers emanating red rays. For destroying, as a black iron chain emanating black rays of light. The mantra garland moves clockwise for pacifying and increasing, and counter-clockwise for attracting and destroying.

Mantras

Importance of Secrecy - Guhyatva

Verse 128: The fourth daily conduct vow is to keep the mantras of the deity secret.

The seed mantra (bīja mantra) of the deity is the five seed syllable mantra. Śabara established the practice as an oral tradition, and the sādhana was then written down sometime after he died. Secrecy was important in medieval India because people with bad intentions could use mantras like this to perform black magic. Yet the sādhana was ultimately deemed too important not to be written down out of danger of it being lost, and was wisely saved by one of Śabara's disciples.

Mantra for Attaining a Pure Realm after Death – Buddha Kṣetra Mantra

Verse 129: The Sanskrit verse does not say “to a pure realm,” but it is clearly implied.

The Five Syllable Seed Mantra – Pañca Akṣara Mantra

Verse 130: Vajravilāsinī's five-syllable seed mantra (pañca akṣara mantra) is *eṃ āṃ rīṃ raṃ brīṃ*. It is used for extensive mantra repetition.

“Adorned with a dot and crescent Moon” refers to the shape of the seed syllables written in Sanskrit lettering that places a male dot and a female crescent Moon at the top of each syllable.

The Dhāraṇī Mantra – Dhāraṇī Mantra

Verse 131: The dhāraṇī mantra of Vajravilāsinī brings the fulfillment of all desires.

Verse 132: In forming the complete dhāraṇī mantra of the devī, the main body of the mantra is given first.

The dhāraṇī mantra of Vajravilāsinī is used mostly for blessing ritual objects and fire pūjās.

Verses 133 and 134: To the main part of the dhāraṇī mantra, the five seed syllables of the devī are added.

The five seed syllables are not written in Sanskrit in verses 133 and 134, but were added by the translators in the English translation for clarity.

Verse 135: The complete dhāraṇī mantra of the devī is given.

In the Tantras, the language of dhāraṇī mantras is often very fierce and powerful, reflecting their ability to destroy all obstacles to realization. The mantra is broken up to protect its secrecy.

Offering of the Garlands to Your Consort - Aṅgamardana

Verse 136: The fifth daily conduct vow is to massage your consort while reciting the dhāraṇī mantra of the deity each day.

These two verses (136 and 137) offer a wonderful way to relax after practice with your consort, and integrate sensual massage into your path. In a play on words, they describe a ritual offering of “garlands,” one is a physical flower garland, and the other a verbal “garland” of the mantra.

It can be done as a warm-up or warm-down (or both) with ritual lovemaking, or any time on its own. Recite the “garland” of the dhāraṇī mantra 108x while massaging your consort with fragrant oils or ointments. Use any naturally fragrant massage oil or cream, like sesame or coconut oil. Then offer a second garland, of flowers, to your lover.

Indian madder (Mañjiṣṭhā, Lat. *Rubia manjishtha*) is an East Indian vine and herb used as a dye.

Young children, especially girls, are preferred for making sacred instruments like flower garlands because they are considered pure in intention and have not yet learned the once common skills of black magic that could be used to weaken the power of the garland.

Verse 137: The “fruits” of the red sandalwood tree refers to its flowers.

Śabara uses the word “priyā,” beloved, to express the strength and depth of pure love the practitioners have for each other, the same word used twice in the *Hevajra Tantra*.

Fruits of Practice - Phala

Verse 138: Sexual yoga is the highest practice for inner awakening. It is to be properly understood, performed with the highest intention, and practiced correctly according to the teachings.

Verse 139: The “all-knowing one” refers to you, the practitioner, successful in practice.

Verse 140: “You will attain breath control” is literally, “a breath knower.” Mind and breath are one, so as a “breath knower,” you know the nature of your own mind.

“In six months should be the desired fruit” - Śabara assumes you are practicing this sādhana with your consort four times a month, along with your daily practices. He is confident that you will attain significant inner transformation and worldly magical powers very quickly.

Verse 141: Sexual pleasure is found among those who live in the realms of the desire world – gods, asuras, and humans. But because they lack the right motivation and do not know how to practice properly, sex does not lead to enlightenment, but only perpetuates suffering.

Verse 142: The sādhana is so powerful that you can attain complete enlightenment in twelve years.

Verses 143 and 144: “Lustful passion” is dangerous because it feeds on and strengthens the craving that leads to rebirth in lower realms. Properly practiced, however, sex becomes the quick path to “yoginī wisdom” - peace, mental clarity, and bliss.

Verse 145: The power and value of the sādhana is eternal and unchanging.

Verse 146: “The secret origin of humans” – In the philosophy of the Innate, ultimate reality, primordial wisdom consciousness, which is utterly pure, is our true origin. It is also the end point.

Verse 147: “He is like a rutting elephant” - Śabara’s all-compassionate guide Avalokiteśvara shatters the illusory worlds of deluded teachers like an elephant running mad with sexual desire. This is the role of a crazy wisdom teacher, who loosens people from their comfortable ignorance.

Pure desire (pravaśī) – It is not desire that is impure, but the obscurations that make it so.

Verse 148: Literally “wisdom, method, and bliss” – This trio, instead of the usual pair of wisdom and method, celebrates the Tantric view of bliss as an essential quality and liberating power.

Amorous love play (helayā) - It is not by denying the world that suffering is destroyed, but passionate love play.

Verse 149: Śabara cautions that a lover is not always a liberator, but can sometimes limit and disempower you. You must be Dharmically skillful with your consort in order to benefit.

Verse 150: “Aho” means amazing, awesome, and wonderful beyond imagination.

This verse expresses the fierce loyalty the siddhas have for the Mahāyāna. Śabara clearly recognizes Tantra as a movement within the Mahāyāna rather than apart from it, even though the siddhas reject many orthodox Mahāyāna ideas found in the sūtras.

The last phrase literally reads “they utilize and enjoy makara-bannered god of desire.” This is Kāma, the Vedic god of love. A makara is a mythical creature composed of several animal body parts, including a fish tail and a mouth like a crocodile. Kāma’s banner holds an image of a makara, representing the power of emotions and sexuality associated with the water element.

Verse 151: “Having attained the one taste” is the one taste (eka rasa) of nirvāṇa. Once you attain the ability to see all things as pure uncreated bliss, you will experience even illnesses as the perfect play of divine wisdom. This is called the Wisdom of Equality (Samatā Jñāna).

“Bringing Innate Bliss” (Sahaja Ānanda) means that a skilfull consort bestows not only the unchanging bliss of ultimate reality, but also the erotic delights of worldly bliss, which together comprise Innate Bliss, a term for the Great Bliss.

Colophon – Abhilikhita

The *Guhya Samaya Tantra* (*The Secret Vow Tantra*) and the *Mahā Yoginī Jāla Tantra* (*The Great Yoginī Assembly Tantra*) - Śabara is tying the traditions and practices of these two Tantras to this sādhana. Since these texts are not presently available in English translation, the *Hevajra Tantra* and *Cakrasamvara Tantra* were relied upon to elucidate the sādhana.

Accomplished Teacher (Siddha Ācārya) – Śabara gives his title as a spiritually accomplished master. But as he stated at the beginning, he does not yet consider himself fully enlightened.

Śabarapāda – Pāda (lit. Feet) is a suffix added to names as a mark of respect.

Conclusion.

The Paradise of the Yoginīs: The Tantric Lifestyle

**“Enjoyment and magical powers are attained at the places where female adepts reside.
There you should stay, recite mantras, feast, and frolic with them.”**
- *Cakrasamvara Tantra*

Living in Tantric Community



The young man and his consort deeply enjoyed their lives in their Tantric community. The basic duties of living were easy when shared among the group. No one was wealthy, but the work was pleasurable. Their days were filled with practice, instruction, celebration, rest, and play. The community practiced meditation three times a day. They maintained their vows, and practiced the Six Perfections of a bodhisattva. They were kind and gentle with each other, and supported each other joyfully.

Within the community, men and women honored each other as equals, and created cooperative and supportive relationships that greatly accelerated their path. The young man's consort greatly appreciated the respect and reverence given to women, a

far cry from the limited place she found in her home village.

The energy of the group was peaceful but palpably erotic. These energies flowed strongly and freely throughout the day, nourishing and empowering the members of the group. Each day the young man felt closer to his extraordinary guru Śabara, to Vajravilāsinī and Padmanarteśvara, to his consort, and to his own perfection. He sensed the paradise of the yoginīs was right here after all. The more he practiced, the more he saw all things as pure and perfect, as bliss manifest. He knew he lived in the ocean of Great Bliss.

Introduction

**“At the center of the maṇḍala, oh beautiful one, I am together with you,
impassioned with Great Passion, the essence of Great Bliss.”**

- Hevajra Tantra



Tantra is not only a set of practices but a lifestyle. It is a way of living freely, passionately, and authentically, fully focused on the present yet with the ultimate goal of blissful perfection always in mind. Buddhism is to a great extent a group path. You take refuge in the Buddha, the Dharma *and* the Saṅgha, and rely on your fellow practitioners to support you following the path to inner awakening.

You live in a Tantric universe, but in your ordinary life you do not live Tantrically – *that’s why you suffer*. Living Tantrically means being richly engaged in the world, taking in all the beauty around you. Moving sensuously and erotically, you boldly say “Yes!” to life. You do not let your thoughts rule you, but expand your being into an inner wisdom. You allow your emotions arise fully without judgement, but always taking responsibility for them and not blaming others for what you feel. You do not allow anything ever to stop you

from loving strongly. You see all of life is an ocean of erotic heart energy, and you swim in it as the greatest gift you will ever know. The more you allow nature’s primal energies to flow through you, the more your own erotic and blissful energies flow too.

You perform all activities as the deity. You visualize yourself as the goddess Vajravilāsinī or the god Padmanarteśvara throughout the day, feeling one with her. Bathing is a consecration by the gods and goddesses. Eating is a sacrificial offering to your deity. Sleep is union with the Clear Light. You experience yourself and the world blissfully, and your work is to give bliss to others.

The Tantric lifestyle is ideally supported in community. The Tibetan master Jamgön Kongtrul honors the power of group practice, joyfully encouraging Tantric practitioners to see that, “The greatness for both self and others is to become enlightened together with the community of practitioners as one group.” *You* are the greatest gift that you could ever give to another person. Your wisdom, love, and powers are incalculable. But that gift of your own true self too often lies hidden behind your inner obstacles. As you purify yourself through Tantric practice, the gift that you are becomes manifest, and you can give yourself effortlessly. Supported in your practice as part of a Tantric community, the pleasure is greater and the rewards greater still.

Daily Conduct

Fifty Rules for Living Tantrically



1. Love fearlessly.
2. Live sensuously.
3. Be content.
4. Let your emotions and sexual energies run free.
5. Live by your own rules.
6. Recognize that the true nature of everything is bliss.
7. Let go of your attachment to thoughts.
8. Take responsibility for the welfare of all beings.
9. Open to universal wisdom.
10. Find your innermost passions and fulfill them.
11. Take care of the earth - she is your mother.
12. Honor yourself as a buddha and you will become one.
13. Take care of your body – it is your foundation.
14. Do the practices – they will lead you to perfection.
15. Let go, and enter into the harmony and magic of life.
16. Find your guru - your mind's true nature.
17. Do not grasp onto anything for happiness.
18. Do not take suffering too seriously.
19. It is all just a dream – do not take anything too seriously.
20. Do not grasp at a self, and your Innermost Self will emerge.
21. Be kind to others, and seek ways to bring them to a higher level of awareness.
22. Know that nothing outside of you will ever be more blissful than the Great Bliss inside you.
23. Do what brings you the most joy.
24. Moments are fleeting - pick the fruits of the sky.
25. You cannot comprehend reality, so dance with it.
26. Embrace your darkest fears.
27. Fear nothing.
28. Hope for nothing. Everything you need to be in bliss is here right now.
29. Recognize and free yourself of habits that limit you.
30. Find out what your limits to pleasure are, and go beyond them.
31. Renounce nothing but suffering.
32. Do not renounce suffering either - its true nature is bliss too.
33. Live life raw and unfiltered by your own or other people's expectations.

34. Do not reject your ego – bring it to buddhahood.
35. Never assume the path to enlightenment is so difficult that you cannot succeed.
36. Whenever you have an extraordinary spiritual experience, let go of it.
37. Avoid the greatest enemies to progress: selfishness, ego pride, and wishing to harm others.
38. Give all of yourself to others.
39. Enjoy your material possessions, but know they cannot bring you permanent happiness.
40. Let go of your attachment to everything.
41. See everything as sacred.
42. Embrace everything.
43. Have confidence in yourself: every buddha started out as an ordinary person just like you.
44. When you pray, ask for everything.
45. Call upon the support of the net of the yoginīs when you need it.
46. Blend the view of nondual awareness into your daily life.
47. Do good deeds for others without attachment to a self, an other, or a deed.
48. Let every moment be fresh and new.
49. See reality clearly, and you will be liberated.
50. Follow the path of bliss. It leads to the Great Bliss.

Festivals - Utsava

Buddhists have always celebrated both Buddhist and local non-Buddhist holy days, and Tantric Buddhists add a Tantric element to celebrating them. For Buddhist holy days, you can get a Buddhist lunar calendar to follow the festival season. For Western holidays, you can find creative ways to incorporate the themes of the holidays into your Tantric practice. For Indian holy days, you can Tantrically celebrate the gods and goddesses of nature.

Start Your Own Tantra Group

You can find people in your own area and start a Tantra group (maṇḍala) that meets for regular practice. Once a month makes for an enjoyable get-together, but weekly gatherings can really build strong bonds. Set rules for the gatherings that everybody is comfortable with. For those following the path of a shared lineage of teachings, your group is called a kula (family).

Exercises

1. Take a walk in the rain and revel in it.
2. Climb up a hilltop and meditate in awe at the beauty of nature.
3. Give yourself a sensuous self-massage.
4. Wear clothes that express your sacredness and your sexuality.
5. Spend time outdoors naked and feel the freedom and sensuality that comes with it.
6. When emotions arise, allow yourself to feel them intensely, and let them fall away.
7. Practice turning yourself on sexually just by touching yourself.
8. Be a good listener and a good sharer with your lover.

9. As you make love, allow yourself to express whatever emotions arise.
10. Let yourself fall in love with someone or something every day.
11. Meditate on all appearances as gifts of pure wisdom.
12. Find your innermost passion and fulfill it.



Appendix: Buddhist Names

After first taking the Refuge Vow, Bodhisattva Vow, and each of the four Consecrations, you take on a new Dharma name, commonly named after buddhas, bodhisattvas, or qualities of enlightenment. Below is a list of a hundred Sanskrit names you can use. You may also take on a second name selected by your guru and shared by others that identifies you as a member of a Tantric lineage. The Tantric names listed are specifically selected for those following in the kula of Amitābha, and are richly passionate.

Refuge and Bodhisattva Names

Men's Names

Acintya – Inconceivable.
Advaya – Nondual awareness.
Aja – Unborn.
Ānanda – Bliss.
Ārya – Noble.
Aśoka – Without sorrow.
Bhadra – Good.
Bodhi – Awake.
Bodhicitta – Aspiration for enlightenment.
Deva – God.
Dharma – Liberating truth.
Jinabuddha – Victorious awakened one.
Karūṇa – Compassion.
Kirtina – Chanting.
Maitri – Loving kindness.
Mani – Jewel.
Mudita – Joy.
Murti – Image of the deity.
Parāmīta – Perfection.
Rāja – King.
Śanta – Peace.
Sarvabuddha – All the buddhas.
Smṛiti – Remembrance.
Vimala – Stainless.
Yakṣa – Tree spirit.

Women's Names

Añjalī – Gesture of devotion.
Darpanā – Mirror of truth.
Dhyānā – Meditative concentration.
Devī – Goddess.
Gītā – Song.
Jñānā – Wisdom.
Mālā – Garland.
Manibhadrā – Good jewel.
Nairātmyā – Selfless.
Padmā – Lotus.
Prājñā – Wisdom.
Pratibhā – Inspiration.
Pūjā – Worship.
Punyā – Virtue.
Pūrṇā – Wholeness.
Puṣpā – Flower.
Puṣṭī – Wealth.
Ratnā – Jewel.
Samādhī – Meditation.
Śankā – Conch shell.
Śraddhā – Devotion.
Śrī – Auspicious.
Śuddhā – Pure.
Sūkṣmā – Subtle.
Yakṣī – Tree spirit.

Tantric Names

Men's Names

Āralli – Enlightened play.
Bhoga – Pleasure.
Drava – Orgasm.
Gañja – Truth.
Indriya – The senses.
Kāma – Erotic love.
Karaṇa – Erotic skill.
Karma – Enlightened activity.
Madana – Spiritually intoxicated.
Manthāna – Churning stick.
Narteśvara – Lord of dance.
Nija – True Self.
Prāṇa – Vital breath.
Rāga – Passion.
Rasa – Essential flavor.
Sahaja – Spontaneous enlightened activity.
Sambhoga – Sexual pleasure.
Siddhi – Accomplishment.
Soma – Ecstasy.
Sukhāvajra – Blissful diamond.
Śukra – Male essence.
Sura – Rapture.
Tattva – Essence.
Vajra – Indestructibly firm.
Vīra – Hero.

Women's Names

Amṛita – Nectar of immortality.
Āndolitā – Gently swaying hips.
Bhāgānkurā – Clitoris.
Bindu – Essence of reality.
Caṇḍālī – Fiery woman.
Dūtī – Bestower.
Kāmapuṣpā – Flower of passion.
Kāmadayinī – Giver of sexual pleasure.
Kāmeśī – Lady of sexual desire.
Kāminī – Impassioned.
Mekhalā – Hips.
Mudrā – Embrace.
Padmalocanā – Lotus eyes.
Raktā – Blood of life.
Ratī – Ecstasy.
Ratīpriyā – Love of sexual pleasure.
Samantabhadrī – All good.
Śrīsukhā – Holy bliss.
Siddharājñī – Accomplished queen.
Subhogā – High pleasure.
Sukhākarā – Mark of bliss.
Sukhāsiddhī – Blissful accomplishment.
Udyānā – Pleasure garden.
Vidyā – Wisdom.
Vilāsini – Lady of erotic play.

Notes

Since this book is for practitioners rather than scholars, some quotations have been slightly revised by the author for ease of reading. Those seeking exact quotations should consult the appropriate source.

Introduction. Juicy Buddhism: The Power of Sexual Yoga

“Buddhahood is obtained...” *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra (The Great Fierce Passionate One Tantra)*; Miranda Shaw, *Passionate Enlightenment*, p. 143.

On the secret history of Tantra: Katherine Harper, *Roots of Tantra*; Tom Crockett, *Stone Age Wisdom*; Marija Gimbutas, *Civilization of the Goddess*; Devangana Desai, *Erotic Sculpture of India*; Leonard Schlain, *Alphabet Versus the Goddess*; Joseph Campbell, *Masks of God*; Karen Armstrong, *Great Transformation*.

“My god, sweet...” *The Sacred Marriage Rite*; Samuel Kramer, *Sacred Marriage Rite*, p. 94.

“Let your heart...” *Rig Veda (The Hymns of the Way of Life)*; Wendy Doniger, *Rig Veda*, p. 247.

“continuum” *Guhyasamāja Tantra (The Secret Assembly Tantra)*; Herbert Guenther, *Life and Teaching of Nāropa*, p. 114.

“If you wish...” *The Perfect Discourse*, Marvin Meyer, *Nag Hammadi Scriptures*, p. 430.

“like a god” *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, Tablet I.

“The bliss experienced when...” Kṛiṣṇācārya, *The Yoga of the Jewel Garland (Yoga Ratna Mālā)*; G. W. Farrow, *Concealed Essence of the Hevajra Tantra*, p. 221.

“The world is pervaded...” *Hevajra Tantra (The Laughing Adamantine Tantra)*; *Ibid.*, p. 165.

“‘Play’ is an...” Shaw, *Passionate Enlightenment*, p. 185.

On sexual yoga only for highly advanced practitioners: Tsongkapa, *A Book of Three Inspirations*; Glenn Mullin, *Six Yogas of Naropa*, pp. 164-165; Thrangu Rinpoche, *Life of Tilopa and the Ganges Mahamudra*, p. 129; Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Clear Light of Bliss*, p. 220.

“Dull capacity” The First Dalai Lama; Shaw, *Passionate Enlightenment*, p. 147.

On Saraha teaching sexual yoga as the first of the Four Yogas: Herbert Guenther, *Ecstatic Spontaneity*, pp. 19-21; Guenther, *Tantric View*, p. 155 n. 108.

On Jayabhadra teaching sexual yoga as the last of the Four Yogas: Jayabhadra, *The Cakrasamvara Commentary (Cakrasamvara Pañjikā)*; David Gray, *Cakrasamvara Tantra*, p. 161 n. 21.

“Without Karmamudrā, no...” Devacandra, *Understanding the Light of Wisdom (Prajñā Jñāna Prakāśa)*; Herbert Guenther, *Nāropa*, p. 221; text attributed to Devacandra, Jamgön Kongtrul, *Systems of Buddhist Tantra*, p. 542.

“She must love...” *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 217.

“Be very loving...” Tsongkapa; Shaw, *Passionate Enlightenment*, p. 176.

“If liberation followed...” *Kularnava Tantra (The Ocean of Nonduality Tantra)*; Arthur Avalon, *Kularnava Tantra*, p. 36.

“Erotic love, enjoyed...” *Creating Purity of Mind (Citta Viśuddhi Prakaraṇa)*; Shaw, *Passionate Enlightenment*, p. 140; text attributed to Āryadeva; Christian Wedemeyer, *Āryadeva’s Lamp that Integrates the Practices*, p. 304 n. 193.

Chapter 1. The Path of Renunciation: The Common Vehicle

“Sensual pleasures have been...” The Buddha, *The Sūtra to Potaliya (Potaliya Sutta)*; Bhikkhu Bodhi, *Buddha’s Words*, p. 201.

“There are, householder...” The Buddha, *The Collection of Numerical Discourses (Aṅguttara Nikāya)*; *Ibid.*, p. 127.

“I attained the...” The Buddha, *The Wheel of the Dharma Sūtra (Dhamma Cakka Sutta)*; Sanderson Beck, trans., online at san.beck.org/buddha.

On the Buddha: Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli, *Life of the Buddha*.

“Venerable sir, I...” Śāriputra; The Buddha, *The Collection of Connected Discourses (Saṃyutta Nikāya)*; Bhikkhu Bodhi, *Buddha’s Words*, p. 415.

“Nirvāṇa, devoid of...” Buddhaghosa, *The Path of Purification (Visuddhi Magga)*; Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli, *Path of Purification*, p. 6.

On Vasubandhu: His main texts are *The Treasury of Further Doctrine (Abhidharma Kośa)*, *Creating the Five Aggregates (Pañca Skandha Prakaraṇa)*, *The Thirty Verses on Mind Only (Triṃśikā Vijñāpti Kārikā)*, and *The Twenty Verses on Mind Only (Viṃśatikā Vijñāpti Kārikā)*. Biography: Tārānātha, *The History of Buddhism in India*; Debiprasad Chattopadhyaya, *Tārānātha’s History*.

On Buddhaghosa: His main text is *The Path of Purification (Visuddhi Magga)*. Biography: Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli, *Path*.

“Even if bandits...” The Buddha, *The Sūtra to Kakacūpama (Kakacūpama Sutta)*; Bhikkhu Bodhi, *Buddha’s Words*, p. 278.

“In order to...” The Fourteenth Dalai Lama, *Essence of the Heart Sutra*, pp. 37-38.

On the Four Noble Truths: The Buddha, *The Collection of Connected Discourses*; Bhikkhu Bodhi, *Buddha’s Words*, pp. 359-360.

On the Noble Eightfold Path: The Buddha, *The Collection of Connected Discourses*; *Ibid.*, pp. 239-240.

“When a monk...” The Buddha, *The Relaxation of Thoughts Sūtra (Vitakka Saṅhāna Sutta)*; *Ibid.*, p. 277.

“We learn to...” Buddhadhāsa Bhikkhu, *Mindfulness with Breathing*, p. 21.

On early Buddhist veneration of Vedic goddesses: Miranda Shaw, *Buddhist Goddesses of India*.

“The noble disciple...” The Buddha, *The Collection of Numerical Discourses*; Bhikkhu Bodhi, *Buddha’s Words*, p. 127.

“Detached contemplation and...” Shaw, *Buddhist Goddesses*, p. 93.

“The most appropriate...” Buddhadhāsa Bhikkhu, *Mindfulness*, pp. 41-42.

On early Indian and Buddhist culture as orgiastic: Arthur Basham, *Wonder that was India*; Robert Briffault, *Mothers*; Herbert Guenther, *Tantric View of Life*; Garima Kaushik, *Symphonies in Stone*; David Snellgrove, *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism*, pp. 127-128, 160.

“Orgies have been...” Guenther, *Tantric View*, p. 97.

“revelry” and “debauchery” Kaushik, *Symphonies*, pp. 99-107.

“Abandoning sexual misconduct...” The Buddha, *The Sūtra to Cunda the Silversmith (Cunda Kammaraputta Sutta)*; Thanissaro Bhikkhu, trans., online at accesstoinight.org.

“I am one...” The Buddha, *The Noble Search Sūtra (Ariya Pariyesana Sutta)*; Bhikkhu Bodhi, *Buddha’s Words*, p. 73.

The Refuge Vow: “*buddham śaraṇam gacchāmi...*” “I go for refuge...”

The Lay Precepts: “*māraṇāṅ caurikāṅ cāpi...*” “Killing, stealing, the...” *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra*; Christopher George, *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra*, pp. 21, 53.

The Fast Day Precepts: *vikāle ’pi bhojanaṃ...* “I will not eat...” *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra*; *Ibid.*, pp. 21, 53.

“*Nāmo tasya bhagavāto...*” “Homage to the...” Opening verse of respect to the Buddha; Elgiriye Indaratana Maha Thera, *Vandanā*. In Pāli. Translated into Sanskrit and English by the author.

On the ritual of Honoring the Deities of Nature: This ritual is a reconstruction written by the author.

“Happy indeed are...” The Buddha, *The Collection of Connected Discourses*; Bhikkhu Bodhi, *Buddha’s Words*, p. 412.

“May I be...” Buddhagoṣa, *The Path of Purification*; Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli, *Path*, p. 289.

“May this good...” Buddhagoṣa, *The Path of Purification*; *Ibid.*, p. 290.

“This person, as...” Buddhagoṣa, *The Path of Purification*; *Ibid.*, p. 298.

“May all beings...” Buddhagoṣa, *The Path of Purification*; *Ibid.*, p. 302.

“My body will...” The Buddha, *The Foundations of Mindfulness Sūtra (Sati Paṭṭhāna Sutta)*; *Ibid.*, p. 284.

“There is a sensation.” The Buddha, *The Foundations of Mindfulness Sūtra*; *Ibid.*, p. 286.

“There is mind.” The Buddha, *The Foundations of Mindfulness Sūtra*; *Ibid.*, p. 286.

On the couples sacred sex ritual: This ritual is a reconstruction written by the author.

Reconstructed Sanskrit Terms:

Maithuna Vidhi - Couples Sacred Sex Ritual (term created by the author).

Chapter 2. The Path of Purification: The Mahāyāna

“All the suffering...” Śāntideva, *The Way of the Bodhisattva (Bodhi Caryā Avatara)*; Dalai Lama, *Commentary on the Thirty Seven Practices of a Bodhisattva*, p. 56.

“There is no wisdom...” *The Heart Sūtra (Prajñāpāramitā Hṛidaya)*; Dalai Lama, *Essence of the Heart Sutra*, p. 60.

“These Three Worlds...” *The Developing Direct Perception Sūtra (Pratyā Uṭpanna Sūtra)*; Gray, *Cakrasamvara Tantra*, p. 215 n. 5.

On Mahāyāna history: *The Perfection of Wisdom Sūtra in 8,000 Verses (Aṣṭa Sahasrika Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra)*; *The Unraveling the Mystery of Thought Sūtra (Saṃdhi Nirmocana Sūtra)*; *The Buddha Womb Sūtra (Tathāgata Garbha Sūtra)*; *The Flower Garland Sūtra (Avataṃsaka Sūtra)*.

“There is nothing to remove...” *The Supreme Continuum (Uttara Tantra)*; Thrangu Rinpoche, *The Uttaratantra*, p. 65.

On Nāgārjuna: His main text is *The Fundamental Verses of the Middle Way (Mūla Madhyamaka Kārikā)*. Biography: Abhayadatta, *The Legends of the Eighty-Four Siddhas (Caturaśīti Siddha Pravṛitti)*; Dowman, *Masters of Mahāmudrā*, pp. 112-122; Tārānātha, *A History of Buddhism in India*; Chattopadhyaya, *History of Buddhism*; Karl Brunnhölzl, *In Praise of Dharmadhātu*, pp. 21-30.

On Asaṅga: His main texts are *The Ornament of Clear Realization (Abhisamaya Alāṅkāra)*, *Distinguishing the Middle from the Extremes (Madhyānta Vibhāga)*, *Distinguishing Appearances and*

their True Nature (Dharma Dharmatā Vibhāga), The Ornament of the Mahāyāna Sūtras (Mahāyāna Sūtra Alaṅkāra), The Supreme Continuum (Uttara Tantra), The Compendium of Further Doctrine (Abhidharma Samuccaya), The Compendium of the Mahāyāna (Mahāyāna Saṃgraha), and The Bodhisattva Levels (Bodhisattva Bhūmi). Biography: Tārānātha, A History of Buddhism in India; Chattopadhyaya, History of Buddhism.

“As for the many...” *The King of Samādhi Sūtra (Samādhi Rāja Sūtra)*; Brunnhölzl, *Praise*, p. 304.

“This world is produced...” *The White Lotus Sūtra (Saddharma Puṇḍarīka Sūtra)*; Khenpo Konchog Gyaltsen, *Jewel Ornament*, p. 111.

“like honey smeared...” Mahāyāna saying; *Ibid.*, p. 218.

On the philosophy of the Middle Way: *The Heart Sūtra (Prajñā Pāramitā Hṛidaya Sūtra)*; Dalai Lama, *Essence of the Heart Sutra*; *The Teaching of Vimalakīrti Sūtra (Vimalakīrti Nirdeśa Sūtra)*; Robert Thurman, *Holy Teaching of Vimalakīrti*; Nāgārjuna, *The Fundamental Verses of the Middle Way*; Jay Garfield, *Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way*.

“Form is emptiness...” *The Heart Sūtra*; Dalai Lama, *Essence*, p. 60.

“Although ultimately all...” Kamalaśīla, *The Stages of Meditation (Bhavana Krama)*; Dalai Lama, *Stages of Meditation*, p. 142.

“Not dependent on...” Nāgārjuna, *The Fundamental Verses of the Middle Way*; Garfield, *Fundamental Wisdom*, p. 251.

“Since he is...” Nāgārjuna, *The Fundamental Verses of the Middle Way*; *Ibid.*, p. 62.

“When emptiness is...” *The Song of the Dharma Sūtra (Dharma Saṅgīti Sūtra)*; Khenpo Konchog Gyaltsen, *Jewel Ornament*, p. 249.

On the philosophy of Mind Only: *The Clarification of Thought Sūtra (Saṃdhi Nirmocana Sūtra)*; Vasubandhu, *The Thirty Verses on Mind Only, The Twenty Verses on Mind Only*; Thich Nhat Hanh, *Understanding Our Mind*; Brunnhölzl, *Praise*, pp. 57-63; Åke Boquist, *Trisvabhāva*.

“The Absolute Nature...” Vasubandhu, *The Twenty Verses on Mind Only*; Hanh, *Understanding*, p. 20.

“Store consciousness contains...” Vasubandhu, *The Thirty Verses on Mind Only*; *Ibid.*, p. 15.

On the philosophy of Buddha Essence: Asaṅga, *The Supreme Continuum*; Thrangu Rinpoche, *Uttaratantra*; Shenpen Hookham, *Buddha Within*.

“the faults are...” Asaṅga, *The Supreme Continuum*; Thrangu Rinpoche, *Uttaratantra*, p. 35.

“the obscurations are...” Asaṅga, *The Supreme Continuum*; *Ibid.*, p. 71.

“changeless like space” Asaṅga, *The Supreme Continuum*; *Ibid.*, p. 39.

“nondual,” “indestructible,” “unchanging,” “everlasting,” Asaṅga, *The Supreme Continuum*; *Ibid.*, pp. 43-45.

“It is the changeless...” Asaṅga, *The Supreme Continuum*; *Ibid.*, p. 37.

“It is true Self because...” Asaṅga, *The Supreme Continuum*; *Ibid.*, p. 33.

On Dolpopa: Hookham, *Buddha Within*.

“The destruction of appearances...” *The Ornament of the Light of Wisdom Sūtra (Jñāna Loka Ālaṅkāra Sūtra)*; *Ibid.*, p. 74.

“Buddhahood is the...” Asaṅga, *The Supreme Continuum*; Thrangu Rinpoche, *Uttaratantra*, p. 73.

“uncreated,” “the self-existent,” “the supreme nirvāna,” “the self-nature,” Asaṅga, *The Supreme Continuum*; *Ibid.*, pp. 23, 81.

“These are just...” Asaṅga, *The Supreme Continuum*; *Ibid.*, p. 107.

“Ordinary beings do not understand...” Asaṅga, *The Supreme Continuum*; *Ibid.*, p. 109.

“Just as a mother...” Kamalaśīla, *The Stages of Meditation*; Dalai Lama, *Stages*, p. 65.

“The wish for completely perfect...” Asaṅga, *The Ornament of Clear Realization (Abhisamaya Ālaṃkāra)*; Brunnhölzl, *Praise*, p. 270.

“One should understand that...” Asaṅga, *The Bodhisattva Levels*; Khenpo Konchog Gyaltsen, *Jewel Ornament*, p. 277.

“Purity is the...” Asaṅga, *The Supreme Continuum*; Thrangu Rinpoche, *Uttaratantra*, p. 73.

“Where there is perseverance...” *The Sāgaramati Requested Sūtra (Sāgaramati Paripṛicchā Sūtra)*; Khenpo Konchog Gyaltsen, *Jewel Ornament*, p. 214.

On devotion through sacred sex rituals: Asaṅga, *The Ornament of the Mahāyāna Sūtras (Mahāyāna Sūtra Alaṅkāra)*; Snellgrove, *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism*, p. 127.

“Supreme self-control is...” Asaṅga, *The Ornament of the Mahāyāna Sūtras*; *Ibid.*, pp. 128, 266.

“There are three types...” Gampopa, *The Jewel Ornament of Liberation*; Khenpo Konchog Gyaltsen, *Jewel Ornament*, p. 113.

“The complete, perfect...” *The Profound Play Sūtra (Lalita Vistara Sūtra)*; *Ibid.*, p. 284.

The Bodhisattva Vow: “*viśuddhaṃ dhārayiṣyāmi yathā...*” “I will maintain...” *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra*; George, *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra*, pp. 21, 53.

On Mind Training: Dalai Lama, *Essence of the Heart Sutra*; Dalai Lama, *Thirty Seven Practices*; Thrangu Rinpoche, *Seven Points of Mind Training*; Khenpo Konchog Gyaltsen, *Jewel Ornament*.

The Dedication of Merit: “*punyaṃ prabhūtaṃ yad...*” “I dedicate all merit...” Umāpatideva, *Śrī Vajravārāhī Sādhana*; Elizabeth English, *Vajrayoginī*, p. 501 n. 540.

Reconstructed Sanskrit Terms: Ārya putra - Noble son; Āryā duhitā - Noble daughter; Citta Patha – Mind Training; Sapta Krama Hetu Phala - Seven-Point Cause and Effect; Anupādāna Ātman – Giving Up Self-Cherishing; Dana Graha - Giving and Taking; Viṣa Pratipakṣa - Poison and Antidote; Nava Bhūmi - Nine Levels of Mental Stability; Bhrānti Samādhi - Illusion-Like Samādhi; Maithuna Maṇḍala Vidhi - Group Sacred Sex Ritual (term created by the author).

Chapter 3. The Path of Transformation: The Vajrayāna

“Delighting in the...” Saraha, *The People’s Song (Dohā Kośa)*; Roger Jackson, *Tantric Treasures*, p. 107.

“What is Tantra’s...” Vīravajra, *A Sign of the Lighted Goal (Padārtha Prakāśikā)*; Gray, *Cakrasamvara Tantra*, p. 28.

On the superiority of the Vajrayāna: Jamgön Kongtrul, *Buddhist Tantra*, pp. 71-87.

On the history of Tantric Buddhism in India: Tārānātha, *A History of Buddhism in India*; Chattopadhyaya, *Tārānātha’s History*; Williams, *Buddhist Thought*, pp. 192-244; Rob Linrothe, *Ruthless Compassion*.

“Thus have I...” *Guhyasamāja Tantra*; Gray, *Cakrasamvara Tantra*, p. 29.

On the Empty of Other philosophy in Tibet: Hookham, *Buddha Within*.

On the four classes of Buddhist Tantras: English, *Vajrayoginī*, pp. 1-9; Williams, *Buddhist Thought*, pp. 202-217.

“the yoga of...” *Sarva Durgati Parisodhana Tantra (The Elimination of All Evil Destinies Tantra)*; Snellgrove, *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism*, p. 266.

“Hindu and Buddhist...” *Ibid.*, p. 244.

“Desire is the...” The Buddha, *The Connected Collection*; Bhikkhu Bodhi, *Buddha’s Words*, p. 92.

“I never wanted...” King Indrabhūti; Debiprasad Chattopadhyaya, *Tārānātha’s History*, p. 24.

On the lives of the siddhas: Tārānātha, *A History of Buddhism in India*; Chattopadhyaya, *Tārānātha’s History*; Abhayadatta, *The Legends of the Eighty-Four Siddhas*; Keith Dowman, *Masters of Mahāmudrā*; Go Lotsawa, *The Blue Annals*; Tārānātha, *The Seven Instruction Lineages*; David Templeman, *Seven Instruction Lineages by Jo-nang-Tārānātha*; Shaw, *Passionate Enlightenment*.

On Lakṣmīnīkarā: English, *Vajrayoginī*, pp. 369 n. 29, 384 n. 4. Her principal text is *The Attainment of Nonduality (Advaya Siddhi)*.

On Indrabhūti: His principle text is *The Accomplishment of Wisdom (Jñāna Siddhi)*.

On Sahajayoginīcintā: Her principle text is *Realization of Reality through the Body (Vyakta Bhāvānugata Tattva Siddhi)*; Shaw, *Passionate Enlightenment*, pp. 182, 179-194.

On Saraha: Thrangu Rinpoche, *Song*, pp. 11-13; Kurtis Schaeffer, *Dreaming the Great Brahmin*.

On Tilopa: Thrangu Rinpoche, *Life*. On Dārimā: Shaw, *Passionate Enlightenment*, p. 240 n. 146.

On Nāropa: Tsunpa Rinchen Namgyal, *The Wondrous Life of the Great Scholar Nāropa*; Herbert Guenther, *Life and Teaching of Nāropa*.

“The way of...” *Cakrasamvara Tantra*; Gray, *Cakrasamvara Tantra*, p. 382.

On the Innate: *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, pp. 49-60, 93-94, 98, 124, 126, 128, 132, 134-135, 165-174, 264; *Mahāmudrā Tilaka Tantra (The Essence of Nondual Awareness Tantra)*; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Buddhist Tantra*, p. 196; Saraha, *The People’s Song*; Jackson, *Tantric Treasures*, pp. 53-115; Guenther, *Ecstatic Spontaneity*, pp. 21-23; Guenther, *Royal Song*; Guenther, *Tantric View*; Snellgrove, *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism*, pp. 245-246, 251, 285-290; Jamgön Kongtrul’s books in translation use the terms dharmakāya, the innate, pristine awareness, luminous clarity, the natural state, intrinsic awareness, “the indestructible vital essence of consciousness,” and the mind’s nature: *Tantric Practice, Esoteric Instructions*, and *Buddhist Tantra*.

On appearances as real: *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, pp. 57, 100-104, 111-115, 135, 170; Hookham, *Buddha Within*, p. 160.

“is the imperishable...” *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 122.

“intrinsic nature” *Hevajra Tantra*; *Ibid.*, p. 230.

On ultimate reality as real: *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, pp. 57, 121-123, 126, 132, 135, 174-175; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Buddhist Tantra*, pp. 149-200. The term “emptiness” to describe ultimate reality in the Tantras has a completely different meaning from its meaning in the sūtras. In the former it means the expanse of pristine awareness, luminosity, bliss, and compassion, in the latter it means merely “absence of self-nature;” Jamgön Kongtrul, *Tantric Practice*, p. 135.

On Wisdom and Method and the primordial bi-gendered nature of ultimate reality: *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, pp. 8, 94, 98, 104, 121, 161, 244-249; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Buddhist Tantra*, pp. 188-197.

“the Great Consciousness” *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 175.

On bindus as indestructible: *Mahāmudrā Tilaka Tantra (The Essence of Nondual Awareness Tantra)*; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Buddhist Tantra*, p. 196; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Esoteric Instructions*, p. 402 n. 93.

On Evam: *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, pp. 3-5, 167, 180-182, 215, 223, 235, 244-245; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Buddhist Tantra*, pp. 144-197; 429 n. 33.

On the Dharmodaya: *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, pp. 83-84, 104, 180-181; Beer, *Handbook*, pp. 209-211.

“It is in...” *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 104.

“the whole truth...” Snellgrove, *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism*, p. 248.

“The Innate is...” *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 126.

“of the nature...” Kṛṣṇācārya, *The Yoga of the Jewel Garland; Ibid.*, p. 166.

“In front, behind...” Saraha, *The People’s Song*; Brunhölzl, *Praise*, p. 251.

On Appearances are Pure: *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, pp. 57, 100-101, 111-118, 122-123, 132-133, 135, 165-167, 170, 193-194, 241, 244-245; Saraha, *The People’s Song*; Jackson, *Tantric Treasures*, p. 67; Tilopa, *Treasury of Verses (Dohā Koṣa)*; Jackson, *Tantric Treasures*, p. 137; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Esoteric Instructions*, p. 214; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Buddhist Tantra*, p. 163.

“Forms and whatever...” *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 195.

“Truly all beings...” *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Ibid.*, p. 228.

On the Innate as co-arising: *Hevajra Tantra; Ibid.*, pp. 57, 100-104, 122-123, 135, 170, 244-245, 302; *The Inconceivable Co-Emergence Tantra* (Sanskrit title unknown); Jamgön Kongtrul, *Esoteric Instructions*, pp. 219; Guenther, *Ecstatic Spontaneity*, pp. 21-23.

“I am the...” *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 167.

“I experience an...” *Hevajra Tantra; Ibid.*, p. 118.

“I have visited...” Saraha, *The People’s Song*; Jackson, *Tantric Treasures*, p. 48.

“The six sense...” *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, pp. 111-113.

“The fortunate toss...” Saraha, *The King’s Song (Dohā Koṣa Nāma Caryā Gīti)*; Thrangu, *Song*, p. 61.

On appearances are erotic: *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, pp. 244-249.

“The three worlds...” *Hevajra Tantra; Ibid.*, p. 104.

“the Father” *Hevajra Tantra; Ibid.*, p. 59.

“the omniscient one.” *Hevajra Tantra; Ibid.*, p. 96.

“the Mother” “delights all beings...” Kṛṣṇācārya, *The Yoga of the Jewel Garland; Ibid.*, p. 57.

“Erotic bliss is...” Kṛṣṇācārya, *The Yoga of the Jewel Garland; Ibid.*, p. 228.

“By the complete...” *Hevajra Tantra; Ibid.*, p. 98.

“In order that...” Sahajayoginīcintā, *Realization of Reality through the Body*; Shaw, *Passionate Enlightenment*, p. 183.

On Great Passion: *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, pp. 160, 172-174, 242-249, 294-295; Saraha, *The People’s Song*; Jackson, *Tantric Treasures*, p. 74; Shaw, *Passionate Enlightenment*, pp. 167, 169.

“The mighty lord...” *Cakrasamvara Tantra*; Gray, *Cakrasamvara Tantra*, p. 375.

“There is no...” *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra*; George, *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra*, p. 77.

“There will be...” *Cakrasamvara Tantra*; Gray, *Cakrasamvara Tantra*, p. 199.

“The yogi succeeds...” Bhavabhaṭṭa, *The Glorious Cakrasamvara Commentary (Śrī Cakrasamvara Pañjikā)*; *Ibid.*, p. 158 n. 12.

“Perfect wisdom can...” Saraha; Shaw, *Passionate Enlightenment*, p. 22.

“that delights the...” Kṛiṣṇācārya, *The Yoga of the Jewel Garland*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 175.

“By using the...” Kṛiṣṇācārya, *The Yoga of the Jewel Garland*; *Ibid.*, pp. 172-173.

“Those who are...” *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Ibid.*, p. 172.

On Desire is Erotic:

Wisdom and Compassion: Jamgön Kongtrul, *Buddhist Tantra*, pp. 188-197.

The female and male bindus: Jamgön Kongtrul, *Esoteric Instructions*, p. 214; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Buddhist Tantra*, p. 428 n. 26.

The female and male cakras: The First Panchen Lama, *The Golden Key*; Glenn Mullin, *Practice of the Six Yogas of Naropa*, p. 145.

The female and male subtle winds: *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, pp. 13, 85.

The female and male deities: *Hevajra Tantra*; *Ibid.*, pp. 244-249.

The female and male practitioners: *Hevajra Tantra*; *Ibid.*, pp. 257-258.

The female ovum and male semen: Jamgön Kongtrul, *Buddhist Tantra*, p. 167.

Enlightenment creates the worlds of bliss: *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, pp. 244-249.

On the Five Buddha Families of the Yoginī Tantras: The meanings of the names of the five buddhas and their wisdoms: Kṛiṣṇācārya, *The Yoga of the Jewel Garland*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 56; the enlightened aspects of the five buddhas: Jamgön Kongtrul, *Buddhist Ethics*, pp. 237-238; the Five Poisons: *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, pp. 174-175, 239; the Five Wisdoms: Ferdinand Lessing, *Tantric Systems*, p. 34 n. 22; the consorts and elements: Kṛiṣṇācārya, *The Yoga of the Jewel Garland*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, pp. 5, 227; George, *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra*, p. 68 nn. 61-62; the cakras: Kṛiṣṇācārya, *The Yoga of the Jewel Garland*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 5; the Five Aggregates: Kṛiṣṇācārya, *The Yoga of the Jewel Garland*; *Ibid.*, p. 54; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Buddhist Ethics*, p. 499 n. 271; the Five Nectars: George, *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra*, p. 68 nn. 61-62, English, *Vajrayoginī*, p. 210; the powers of the Five Buddha Families: *Sarva Tathāgata Tattva Saṃgraha*; Snellgrove, *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism*, p. 237.

“The Great Bliss, which...” *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 174.

On Essence: *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, pp. 40, 49, 54-57, 108, 116-118, 121-123, 132, 168-169, 174-176, 189, 230-231, 241, 258; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Tantric Practice, Esoteric Instructions*, and *Buddhist Tantra*.

On Essence is real: *Mahāmudrā Tilaka Tantra (The Essence of Nondual Awareness Tantra)*; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Buddhist Tantra*, p. 196; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Esoteric Instructions*, p. 402 n. 93; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Buddhist Tantra*, pp. 163, 165, 170, 196-197, 429 n. 29, 431 n. 38.

“The Great Consciousness...” *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 175.

“Wisdom is called...” *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Ibid.*, p. 57.

“It is the great...” *Hevajra Tantra*; *Ibid.*, p. 122.

On Essence is pure: *Hevajra Tantra*; *Ibid.*, pp. 57, 161; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Esoteric Instructions*, p. 169.

On Essence is erotic: Kṛiṣṇācārya, *The Yoga of the Jewel Garland*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 96.

“This is a...” Kṛiṣṇācārya, *The Yoga of the Jewel Garland*; *Ibid.*, p. 96.

On Great Bliss: *Hevajra Tantra*; *Ibid.*, pp. 164-165, 173-176; Saraha, *The People’s Song*; Jackson, *Tantric Treasures*, p. 109; Āryadeva, *The Lamp that Illuminates the Practices (Caryā Melāpaka*

Pradīpa); Christian Wedemeyer, *Āryadeva's Lamp*, pp. 283, 291; Vīra Prakāśa, *Vajra Songs (Caurāsi Siddhoṃkī Nāmāvali)*; Dowman, *Masters*; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Tantric Practice*, pp. 124-135; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Esoteric Instructions*, pp. 321-325, 337; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Buddhist Tantra*, p. 428 n. 25.

“The Great Bliss is in essence...” *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 176.

“This pure Innate...” Kṛiṣṇācārya, *The Yoga of the Jewel Garland*; *Ibid.*, p. 12.

On the Great Bliss as the Great Compassion: Jamgön Kongtrul, *Buddhist Tantra*, p. 431 n. 41; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Esoteric Instructions*, p. 135.

On the Great Bliss as the fulfillment of the Great Passion:

The union of Wisdom and Compassion: *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, pp. 121, 164; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Tantric Practice*, p. 135.

The union of female and male bindus: Jamgön Kongtrul, *Buddhist Tantra*, p. 428 n. 25.

The union of female and male primordial sounds: *Ibid.*, pp. 188-197.

The union of female and male channels: *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 85.

The union of female and male cakras: The First Panchen Lama, *The Golden Key*; Mullin, *Practice*, p. 145; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Buddhist Tantra*, p. 428 n. 23.

The union of female and male deities: *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, pp. 242-249.

The union of female and male practitioners: *Hevajra Tantra*; *Ibid.*, pp. 257-258; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Esoteric Instructions*, p. 214.

The union of female ovum and male semen: Jamgön Kongtrul, *Buddhist Tantra*, p. 167.

The union of the bliss of first contact, rising passion, and orgasm: *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 168.

On empowerment: *Hevajra Tantra*; *Ibid.*, pp. 48, 106, 210, 264, 284, 294, 297; Shaw, *Passionate Enlightenment*, pp. 45, 61; English, *Vajrayoginī*, pp. 165-166.

On alchemy: *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, pp. 65, 169, 198, 207, 217; *Cakrasamvara Tantra*; Gray, *Cakrasamvara Tantra*, pp. 175, 269, 302; *Sarva Buddha Samāyoga (The Equiposed Union of All Buddhas)*; Wedemeyer, *Āryadeva's Lamp*, p. 303; Kambala, *The Practice for Generating Glorious Cakrasamvara (Sādhana Nidāna Śrī Cakrasamvara)*; Gray, *Cakrasamvara Tantra*, p. 270 n. 29; Shaw, *Passionate Enlightenment*, pp. 146-147, 152-163; White, *Alchemical Body*.

“by the bliss...” *Guhyasamāja Tantra*; Wedemeyer, *Āryadeva's Lamp*, p. 303.

On union: *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, pp. 69, 97, 101, 126-129, 186-187, 223; *Guhyasamāja Tantra*; Wayman, *Yoga of the Guhyasamājatāntra*; Nāgārjuna, *The Five Stages (Pañca Krama)*; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Buddhist Tantra*, p. 268; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Esoteric Instructions*, pp. 190-191.

“Enlightened consciousness is...” *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 215.

“abide eternally in...” *Hevajra Tantra*; *Ibid.*, p. 235.

On gender as a path to liberation: Sahajayoginīcintā, *Realization of Reality through the Body*; Shaw, *Passionate Enlightenment*, pp. 183-184.

“concentrating in myself...” *Hevajra Tantra*; Shaw, *Passionate Enlightenment*, p. 250 n. 89.

On sympathetic vibration: *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, pp. 93, 105, 141-142, 198, 217, 220-223; Williams, *Buddhist Thought*, p. 201; English, *Vajrayoginī*, pp. 30-31.

“As it is...” *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 220.

The principle Tantric correspondences:

1. The bodies of the practitioners and the deities; Kṛiṣṇācārya, *The Yoga of the Jewel Garland*; *Ibid.*, p. 93.

2. The Great Passion of the practitioners and the female and male Essences; Shaw, *Passionate Enlightenment*, p. 166.
 3. The genitals of the practitioners and the Four Blissess; Advayavajra, *Oral Instructions on the Four Yogas (Catur Mudrā Upadeśa)*; Guenther, *Nāropa*, pp. 215, 274 n. J.
 4. The sexual fluids of the practitioners and the Great Bliss; *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, pp. 93, 105, 169.
- On sexual fluids: *Hevajra Tantra*; *Ibid.*, pp. 93-94, 105, 169; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Esoteric Instructions*, pp. 148, 395 n. 20; Shaw, *Passionate Enlightenment*, pp. 249-251.
- On sympathetic vibration, the genitals, and Mahāmudrā: Advayavajra, *Oral Instructions on the Four Yogas*; Guenther, *Nāropa*, pp. 215, 274 n. J.
- “the perfection of wisdom” as “primordial indestructible great vital essence,” Jamgön Kongtrul, *Buddhist Tantra*, p. 431 n. 38.
- “the view that...” Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso, *Progressive Stages*, p. 86.
- “Without realizing the...” Saraha, *The People’s Song*; Brunnhölzl, *Praise*, p. 241.
- “because of subject...” *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 113.
- On Nāgārjuna’s arguments against the existence of Essence: Nāgārjuna, *The Fundamental Verses of the Middle Way*; Garfield, *Fundamental Wisdom*, pp. 220-224.
- On suffering and liberation created by absolute reality: *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 103; *Cakrasamvara Tantra*; Gray, *Cakrasamvara Tantra*, p. 382; Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Clear Light*, p. 206.
- “You are yourself...” *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 103.
- “Consideration of our...” Traleg Kyabgon, *Mind at Ease*, p. 99.
- “Perfect wisdom can...” Saraha.
- “The emotions are...” Nāropa, *The Summary of Mahāmudrā (Mahāmudrā Pādametha)*; Thrangu Rinpoche, *Songs of Naropa*, p. 98.
- On transforming the emotions: *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, pp. 67, 117, 132, 134, 171-176, 277.
- On transforming the senses and elements: *Hevajra Tantra*; *Ibid.*, pp. 100, 111-118, 134, 171-176, 193-194, 199, 215-216.
- On the guru-disciple relationship: Saraha, *The People’s Song*; Jackson, *Tantric Treasures*, pp. 62-63, 68, 72, 84-85, 87, 93; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Esoteric Instructions*, pp. 227, 245-246.
- On Tantric relationship: Guenther, *Nāropa*, pp. 202-221; Shaw, *Passionate Enlightenment*, pp. 140-194; Judith Simmer-Brown, *Dakini’s Warm*, pp. 182-233.
- “Without the consort...” Kriṣṇācārya, *The Yoga of the Jewel Garland*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 96.
- “free from doubts...” Nāropa, *The Vajra Verses of the Whispered Tradition*; Mullin, *Practice*, p. 38.
- On equality: *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, pp. 62, 94-96, 100, 198, 230; *Cakrasamvara Tantra*; Gray, *Cakrasamvara Tantra*, pp. 272-273; *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra*; George, *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra*, pp. 63, 79-80; Advayavajra, *Oral Instructions on the Four Yogas*; Guenther, *Nāropa*, pp. 213-217; Shaw, *Passionate Enlightenment*, pp. 193-194.
- “Every man is...” *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra*; George, *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra*, p. 63.
- “The practitioner, without...” Nāropa, *The Vajra Verses of the Whispered Tradition*; Mullin, *Practice*, p. 38.

“the cause of...” *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 218.

“the Lord of...” *Hevajra Tantra*; *Ibid.*, p. 218.

“the essence of...” *Hevajra Tantra*; *Ibid.*, p. 264.

On erotic desire: *Hevajra Tantra*; *Ibid.*, pp. 169-176, 263; Sahajayoginīcintā, *Realization of Reality through the Body*; Shaw, *Passionate Enlightenment*, pp. 179-194.

On love: *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, pp. 217, 265; *Cakrasamvara Tantra*; Gray, *Cakrasamvara Tantra*, pp. 328, 342; Shaw, *Passionate Enlightenment*, pp. 147, 244 n. 30.

“With gentle and...” Sahajayoginīcintā, *Realization of Reality through the Body*; Shaw, *Passionate Enlightenment*, p. 185.

“She must love...” *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 217.

On communication: Margo Anand, *Art of Sexual Ecstasy*, pp. 214-219.

On mutual bestowal of bliss: *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, pp. 94-96, 291-295; *Cakrasamvara Tantra*; Gray, *Cakrasamvara Tantra*, pp. 276-277; Shaw, *Passionate Enlightenment*, p. 166.

“the one who grants...” and “the one who gives...” *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 295.

On transformation through bliss: *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, pp. 112, 294-295; *Cakrasamvara Tantra*; Gray, *Cakrasamvara Tantra*, pp. 158-159; Sahajayoginīcintā, *Realization of Reality through the Body*; Shaw, *Passionate Enlightenment*, pp. 179-194; Shaw, *Passionate Enlightenment*, pp. 140-178.

“One whose goal...” *Cakrasamvara Tantra*; Gray, *Cakrasamvara Tantra*, p. 278.

“If you rely...” *Vajradāka Tantra Vajradāka Tantra (The Adamantine Sky Traveler Tantra)*; Gray, *Cakrasamvara Tantra*, p. 76.

“sprinkled and cleansed” *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 184.

On the Creation and Completion Stages: *Hevajra Tantra*; *Ibid.*, pp. 92, 162-164, 218; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Tantric Practice*, pp. 49-66, 123-135.

“It is impossible...” Kṛiṣṇācārya, *The Yoga of the Jewel Garland*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 99.

“the attainment of...” Kṛiṣṇācārya, *The Yoga of the Jewel Garland*; *Ibid.*, p. 92.

“the generating of...” Kṛiṣṇācārya, *The Yoga of the Jewel Garland*; *Ibid.*, p. 96.

On the Four Yogas: *Hevajra Tantra*; *Ibid.*, pp. 94-97; *Cakrasamvara Tantra*; Gray, *Cakrasamvara Tantra*, p. 161; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Buddhist Tantra*, pp. 152, 245-247, 423-425 n. 11, 483-484 n. 21, 485 n. 31; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Tantric Practice*, pp. 163-165, 172-173; Guenther, *Ecstatic Spontaneity*, pp. 19-21.

On Evaṃ and the Four Blissess: *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 181.

“When the Four Yogas...” Saraha, *The People’s Song*; Schaeffer, *Great Brahmin*, p. 148.

On daily conduct: *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*; pp. 61-82, 101, 137, 155, 192, 198-199, 202-203, 273; *Cakrasamvara Tantra*; Gray, *Cakrasamvara Tantra*, pp. 286, 337; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Buddhist Ethics*, pp. 219-306; English, *Vajrayoginī*, pp. 41-43.

“There is no...” Kṛiṣṇācārya, *The Yoga of the Jewel Garland*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 61.

“The senses are worthy...” *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, pp. 113-114.

On massage: Śabara, *The Sādhana of Secret Vajravilāsinī*, verses 136-137; Vātsyāyana, *The Kāma Sūtra (Kāma Sūtra)*; Daniélou, *Kāma Sūtra*, pp. 54, 59.

On psychoactive plants and alchemical substances: Umāpatideva, *Śrī Vajravārāhī Sādhana*; English, *Vajrayoginī*, pp. 298-299; Dowman, *Masters*, p. 65; White, *Alchemical Body*.

On offerings: *Susiddhikara Tantra*; Rolf Giebel, *Two Esoteric Sutras*, chs. 8-12; *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, pp. 235-237; *Cakrasamvara Tantra*; Gray, *Cakrasamvara Tantra*, pp. 170, 281, 301, 359; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Tantric Practice*, p. 283 n. 17; Beer, *Handbook*, pp. 212-213.

On ritual nudity: *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, pp. 257, 291; *Cakrasamvara Tantra*; Gray, *Cakrasamvara Tantra*, pp. 277, 281, 336, 341, 343; *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra*, George, *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra*, pp. 56, 71.

On sex: *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*; *Cakrasamvara Tantra*; Gray, *Cakrasamvara Tantra*; *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra*, George, *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra*; Shaw, *Passionate Enlightenment*.

On sexual yoga as a requirement for enlightenment: *Guhyasamāja Tantra*; Shaw, *Passionate Enlightenment*, p. 58; *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 169; *Cakrasamvara Tantra*; Shaw, *Passionate Enlightenment*, p. 142; *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra*, George, *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra*, p. 83; Devacandra, *Understanding the Light of Wisdom (Prajñā Jñāna Prakāśa)*; Guenther, *Nāropa*, p. 221; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Systems of Buddhist Tantra*; pp. 244, 266; Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Clear Light*, pp. 98, 105, 137, 210, 218-220; Shaw, *Passionate Enlightenment*, pp. 142-148.

“union with a consort” *Cakrasamvara Tantra*; Gray, *Cakrasamvara Tantra*, p. 275.

“the true nature...” *Cakrasamvara Tantra*; *Ibid.*, p. 275.

On singing: *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, pp. 64-65, 207-210, 258.

On dancing: *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, pp. 207-210, 258; *Cakrasamvara Tantra*; Gray, *Cakrasamvara Tantra*, pp. 306, 337-341.

On Tantric feasts: *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, pp. 207-210, 268-270; *Cakrasamvara Tantra*; Gray, *Cakrasamvara Tantra*, pp. 297-304; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Buddhist Tantra*, pp. 478-479, n. 81; Snellgrove, *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism*, pp. 160-170; Shaw, *Passionate Enlightenment*, pp. 81-84; Simmer-Brown, *Dakini's Warm*, pp. 202-203, 256-259.

“The accomplishment that...” *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 268.

On magic rituals: *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Ibid.*, pp. 139-151, 237; *Cakrasamvara Tantra*; Gray, *Cakrasamvara Tantra*.

On results: *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, pp. 96-97, 106, 129, 248, 253; *Cakrasamvara Tantra*; Gray, *Cakrasamvara Tantra*; pp. 201, 213, 325-328, 344, 374, 378; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Buddhist Tantra*, pp. 249-272.

“Seeing a delightful...” Sahajayoginīcintā, *Realization of Reality through the Body*; Shaw, *Passionate Enlightenment*, p. 184.

“Nowhere is there...” *Cakrasamvara Tantra*; Gray, *Cakrasamvara Tantra*, p. 326.

“You will come...” *Cakrasamvara Tantra*; *Ibid.*, p. 344.

“The practitioner of...” *Cakrasamvara Tantra*; *Ibid.*, p. 201.

“One becomes a...” *Cakrasamvara Tantra*; *Ibid.*, p. 374.

“the lord of...” *Cakrasamvara Tantra*; *Ibid.*, p. 378.

“no accomplishment” *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 129.

“When body, speech...” Saraha, *The People’s Song*; Schaeffer, *Great Brahmin*, p. 162.

On your Innermost Self: Saraha, *The People’s Song*; Jackson, *Tantric Treasures*, pp. 65, 69, 70, 72; Sahajayoginīcintā, *Realization of Reality through the Body*; Shaw, *Passionate Enlightenment*, pp. 185-186; Tilopa, *Treasury of Verses*; Jackson, *Tantric Treasures*, p. 132; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Buddhist Tantra*, pp. 429-430 n. 33; Guenther, *Ecstatic Spontaneity*, pp. 25-27.

“Fool! You must...” Tilopa, *Treasury of Verses*; Jackson, *Tantric Treasures*, p. 132.

“The one who is the Self...” *Guhyasamāja Tantra*; Wedemeyer, *Āryadeva’s Lamp*, p. 303.

“offering the highest...” Kṛiṣṇācārya, *The Yoga of the Jewel Garland*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 37.

“I exist always...” *Cakrasamvara Tantra*; Gray, *Cakrasamvara Tantra*, p. 291.

“Passion, anger, pride...” Sahajayoginīcintā, *Realization of Reality through the Body*; Shaw, *Passionate Enlightenment*, pp. 189-190.

“Instantaneously with the...” *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 106.

On the erotic bliss of the buddhas: *Guhyasamāja Tantra*; Gray, *Cakrasamvara Tantra*, p. 29; *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, pp. 3, 96, 105, 289; *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra*; George, *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra*, p. 44.

“Erotic bliss is...” *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 96.

On an enlightened being purifying the world through sharing sexual fluids: *Hevajra Tantra*; *Ibid.*, p. 216.

On directly perceiving the buddhas in sexual embrace in the sambhogakāya: One of the seven characteristics of Vajradhara, to which all enlightened beings attain, is “embrace,” the eternal erotic embrace of one’s consort; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Buddhist Tantra*, p. 474 n. 68.

“This is a characteristic...” Kṛiṣṇācārya, *The Yoga of the Jewel Garland*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 96.

“Held by the...” *Cakrasamvara Tantra*; Gray, *Cakrasamvara Tantra*, pp. 325-326.

“The adept with...” *Cakrasamvara Tantra*; *Ibid.*, p. 328.

Chapter 4. Ready for Bliss: Consecration

“The Great Bliss is fully...” *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 180.

On consecrations: *Hevajra Tantra*; *Ibid.*, pp. 47-48, 119-138, 180-189, 254-261, 293-295; *Cakrasamvara Tantra*; Gray, *Cakrasamvara Tantra*, pp. 155-177; *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra*; George, *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra*, pp. 48-64; Khe Dorje, *Fundamentals of the Buddhist Tantras*; Lessing, *Tantric Systems*, pp. 271-337; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Buddhist Tantra*, pp. 217-237, 460-479 nn. 1-88; Snellgrove, *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism*, pp. 213-277.

“Consecration is the...” Kṛiṣṇācārya, *The Yoga of the Jewel Garland*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 47.

“The difference between...” Jigten Sumgön; quoted by His Holiness Chetsang Rinpoche, *Cakrasamvara Empowerment*, Garchen Buddhist Institute, Chino Valley, Arizona, 7/30/2010.

“Alas! A person...” Saraha, *The Queen’s Song (Dohā Koṣa Upadeśa Gīti)*; Guenther, *Ecstatic Spontaneity*, p. 128.

“The well-equipped adept...” *Cakrasamvara Tantra*; Gray, *Cakrasamvara Tantra*, p. 159.

On qualifications of the practitioner: *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 273.

“The teacher who...” *Cakrasamvara Tantra*; Gray, *Cakrasamvara Tantra*, p. 164.

“Without the consort...” Kṛiṣṇācārya, *The Yoga of the Jewel Garland*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 96.

“If a woman...” Jayabhadra, *The Cakrasamvara Commentary*; Gray, *Cakrasamvara Tantra*, p. 269 n. 29.

“She will without any...” *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 158.

“With your inwardly...” *Cakrasamvara Tantra*; Gray, *Cakrasamvara Tantra*, p. 158.

On the four Consecrations tied to the four philosophies of the Mahāyāna: This is Saraha’s progression of teachings; Saraha, *The King’s Song*; Thrangu Rinpoche, *Song*, pp. 98-107.

On the ritual of the guru accepting a disciple: Vijayavajra, *The Vajrayoginī Sādhana in the Tradition of Indrabhūti (Indrabhūti Krameṇa Vajrayoginī Sādhana)*; English, *Vajrayoginī*, p. 377; Āryadeva, *The Lamp that Illuminates the Practices*; Wedemeyer, *Āryadeva’s Lamp*, pp. 254-256.

On a physical consort required for all four Consecrations: *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, pp. 16-20, 183, 186; Snellgrove, *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism*, p. 260.

On different consorts assigned for consecrations: *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 257; Duryacandra, *The Jewel Gathering (Ratna Gaṇa)*; Gray, *Cakrasamvara Tantra*, pp. 115, 285 n. 16, 305 n. 2, 318 n. 6; Shaw, *Passionate Enlightenment*, p. 58.

“The adept who...” *Guhyasamāja Tantra*; Gray, *Cakrasamvara Tantra*, p. 87 n. 236.

On the success of the consecrations based on attaining the Four Blissess and Four Moments: Kṛiṣṇācārya, *The Yoga of the Jewel Garland*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 183.

“Embracing a sixteen...” *Hevajra Tantra*; *Ibid.*, p. 184.

On “ordinary bliss” and the first consecration: Kṛiṣṇācārya, *The Yoga of the Jewel Garland*; *Ibid.*, p. 124.

“until her sexual...” *Hevajra Tantra*; *Ibid.*, p. 121.

“wisdom, free of...” *Hevajra Tantra*; *Ibid.*, p. 121.

On the requirement for the guru to have sex with the consort in the third consecration: *Hevajra Tantra*; *Ibid.*, p. 186; Prajñāśri, *The Consecration Ritual (Abhiṣeka Vidhi)*; Snellgrove, *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism*, p. 259.

On attaining orgasm in the third consecration: *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, pp. 182-183.

On the initial experience of the Great Bliss from the third consecration: *Hevajra Tantra*; *Ibid.*, pp. 125, 163, 168; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Buddhist Tantra*, pp. 231, 473 n. 65.

“Innate Bliss,” Prajñāśri, *The Consecration Ritual*; Snellgrove, *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism*, p. 259.

Advayavajra, *Oral Instructions on the Four Yogas*; Guenther, *Nāropa*, pp. 215, 274 n. J.

On Tantric vows: Jamgön Kongtrul, *Buddhist Ethics*, pp. 219-306, 446-512 nn. 1-341; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Buddhist Tantra*, pp. 236-237, 506 n. 12.

“The hero who...” *Cakrasamvara Tantra*; Gray, *Cakrasamvara Tantra*, p. 271.

“One should cultivate...” *Cakrasamvara Tantra*; *Ibid.*, p. 280.

“The protection of...” *Cakrasamvara Tantra*; *Ibid.*, p. 267.

“conceptual fixation on...” Thrangu Rinpoche, *Life*, p. 85.

“You should not...” *Cakrasamvara Tantra*; Gray, *Cakrasamvara Tantra*, p. 284.

On Daily Conduct Vows: *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, pp. 153-157, 192, 198-199; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Tantric Practice*, pp. 368-369 n. 47.

On socially transgressive behavior and left-conduct: *Sarva Tathāgata Tattva Saṃgraha*; Snellgrove, *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism*, p. 268; *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, pp. 192, 198-199; *Cakrasamvara Tantra*; Gray, *Cakrasamvara Tantra*, pp. 229, 286, 322, 336-337; English, *Vajrayoginī*, pp. 41-43.

“The yogi must...” *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 108.

On restoring broken vows: Mañjuśrīyaśas, *The Essential Ornament of the General Procedure for All Secrets (Sarva Guhya Vidhi Garbha Alaṅkāra)*; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Buddhist Ethics*, pp. 275-278; Khe Dorje, *Fundamentals of the Buddhist Tantras*; Lessing, *Tantric Systems*, p. 331.

On transcending vows: *Hevajra Tantra*, Farrow & Menon, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 137; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Buddhist Ethics*, p. 273.

On the vows of the first consecration: *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, pp. 61-63, 153-157; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Buddhist Ethics*, pp. 249-256, 268.

On the Fourteen Root Downfalls: Aśvaghōṣa, *Compendium of Root Downfalls (Mūlāpatti Saṃgraha)*; Lessing, *Tantric Systems*, p. 328 n. 14; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Buddhist Ethics*, pp. 256-264.

On the Eight Secondary Downfalls: Aśvaghōṣa, *Compendium of Root Downfalls*; Lessing, *Tantric Systems*, p. 328 n. 15; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Buddhist Ethics*, pp. 265-266.

On Daily Conduct Vows: *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, pp. 153-157.

On the vows of the second consecration: Jamgön Kongtrul, *Buddhist Ethics*, pp. 268-269; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Buddhist Tantra*, p. 506 n. 12.

Sādhana Vows: Śābara, *The Sādhana of Secret Vajravilāsinī*, verses 19, 90-93, 127.

On the vows of the third consecration: *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, pp. 63-67; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Buddhist Ethics*, p. 269; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Buddhist Tantra*, p. 506 n. 12.

On the Eight Supreme Vows: *Cakrasamvara Tantra*; Gray, *Cakrasamvara Tantra*, pp. 267-269; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Buddhist Ethics*, pp. 270-271.

On the vows of the fourth consecration: *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, pp. 68-70; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Buddhist Ethics*, p. 269; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Buddhist Tantra*, p. 506 n. 12.

On the Six Vows: *Ḍākinī Vajra Pañjara Tantra (The Indestructible Tent Tantra)*; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Buddhist Ethics*, p. 273.

“Consecration is of...” *Vajra Mālā Tantra (The Adamantine Garland Tantra)*; Mullin, *Six Yogas*, p. 117.

On the results of consecration: Jamgön Kongtrul, *Buddhist Tantra*, pp. 234-236; Snellgrove, *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism*, p. 215.

“wanders like a...” *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 69.

“Guru, please instruct...” Nāropa; Guenther, *Nāropa*, p. 38.

On the Five Offerings: *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p.148; *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra*; George, *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra*, pp. 51, 57; English, *Vajrayoginī*, pp. 121, 424, 435 n. 258.

On the ritual preparation of the vases: *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, pp. 129-131; *Cakrasamvara Tantra*; Gray, *Cakrasamvara Tantra*, p. 169; Khe Dorje, *Fundamentals of the Buddhist Tantras*; Lessing, *Tantric Systems*, p. 287; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Buddhist Tantra*, pp. 222, 465-466 n. 26; Snellgrove, *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism*, pp. 223-225; Beer, *Handbook*, pp. 199-201. The ideal vase is made of gold, silver, copper, or clay, sixteen inches (aṅgula – lit finger breadth) wide at the belly, twenty inches high, the neck six inches wide, and the mouth six inches wide with the lips of the mouth one inch wide all around, and the base must not be black. The list of substances is an ideal and substitutions are a commonly accepted practice. The Five Medicinal Herbs is the author’s reconstruction.

The Five Nectars: *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, pp. 30, 141, 198; *Cakrasamvara Tantra*; Gray, *Cakrasamvara Tantra*, pp. 160, 305, 309; Beer, *Handbook*, pp. 217-220; English, *Vajrayoginī*, p. 210.

On preparation of the guru: The author follows English's interpretation of the *sādhana* that the practitioner becomes the deity of the same gender as the practitioner; English, *Vajrayoginī*, pp. 88-89.

On the Five Symbolic Ornaments: *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, pp. 65, 251, 263-264.

On the ritual of establishing the site: *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, pp. 119-120, 129-130; *Cakrasamvara Tantra*; Gray, *Cakrasamvara Tantra*, pp. 164-171; *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra*; George, *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra*, pp. 48-52; Khe Dorje, *Fundamentals of the Buddhist Tantras*; Lessing, *Tantric Systems*, pp. 291-303; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Buddhist Tantra*, pp. 218-222, 460-466 nn. 1-26.

On site selection and permission: *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, pp. 120, 150; *Cakrasamvara Tantra*; Gray, *Cakrasamvara Tantra*, p. 162; Khe Dorje, *Fundamentals of the Buddhist Tantras*; Lessing, *Tantric Systems*, pp. 279-281; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Buddhist Tantra*, pp. 218-222, 46-465 nn. 1-26.

"I, (say your name)..." *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 150.

On the site protection ritual: *Hevajra Tantra*; *Ibid.*, pp. 119, 130. *Cakrasamvara Tantra*; Gray, *Cakrasamvara Tantra*, pp. 166-167; English, *Vajrayoginī*, pp. 131-139.

The Protection Mantra (Rakṣa Mantra): *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 119.

On the ritual of empowering the maṇḍala: The *Hevajra Tantra* advises the guru should recite the mantra of the deity 100,000x, but this would take a week. More likely, the siddhas spent about a day reciting the mantra to empower the maṇḍala; *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra*; George, *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra*, pp. 51-52; *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 130; Khe Dorje, *Fundamentals of the Buddhist Tantras*; Lessing, *Tantric Systems*, pp. 223-224, 271-307; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Buddhist Tantra*, pp. 218-224.

The Emptiness Mantra (Śūnyatā Mantra): English, *Vajrayoginī*, pp. 125-129.

"inda jama jala..." "Indra, Yama, Jala, Yakṣa..." *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, pp. 235-236.

"oṃ akāro mukhaṃ sarva..." "Increase in quantity..." *Hevajra Tantra*; *Ibid.*, pp. 235-236.

On the guru and the guru's consort make love next to the maṇḍala: *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra*; George, *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra*, pp. 51-52.

Grant me, excellent..." Prajñāsri, *The Consecration Ritual*; Snellgrove, *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism*, p. 259.

"Those who do not..." Saraha; *Ibid.*, p. 180.

On the mantras for the Five Consecrations: The author composed these mantras, based on Prajñāsri, *The Consecration Ritual*; Snellgrove, *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism*, p. 254.

"I vow to attain..." Khe Dorje, *Fundamentals of the Buddhist Tantras*; Lessing, *Tantric Systems*, pp. 151-153. See also *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra*; George, *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra*, p. 55.

"I am the Vow." Advayavajra, *The Brief Account of the Process of Consecration (Sekatā Kārya Saṃgraha)*; Snellgrove, *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism*, p. 230.

"Oh you who are firmly..." *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 293.

"Oh great being, take this consort..." *Hevajra Tantra*; *Ibid.*, pp. 188-189.

"Ah! His/her vajra/lotus..." *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra*; George, *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra*, p. 56.

"I vow to..." Advayavajra, *The Brief Account of the Process of Consecration*; Snellgrove, *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism*, p. 230.

"I am the..." Advayavajra, *The Brief Account of the Process of Consecration*; *Ibid.*, p. 230.

“Oh great being, hold the Great Bliss.” *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, pp. 185-186.

On the secret hand symbols: The author selected these gestures for practice; *Hevajra Tantra*; *Ibid.*, pp. 71-82; Umāpatideva, *Śrī Vajravārāhī Sādhana*; English, *Vajrayoginī*, pp. 215, 297.

“Grant me, excellent...” Prajñāsri, *The Consecration Ritual*; Snellgrove, *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism*, p. 259.

On the guru consecrates the consort: Prajñāsri, *The Consecration Ritual*; *Ibid.*, p. 258.

“Today I have generated...” *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. xxxvi.

“Bliss!” Prajñāsri, *The Consecration Ritual*; Snellgrove, *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism*, p. 258.

“Just as the...” *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 293.

“Oh great being...” *Hevajra Tantra*; *Ibid.*, pp. 185-186.

“Ah! His/her vajra/lotus...” *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra*; George, *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra*, p. 56.

On blessing pills: Umāpatideva, *Śrī Vajravārāhī Sādhana*; English, *Vajrayoginī*, pp. 216, 298-299; Beer, *Handbook*, pp. 21, 100, 213. The author created this aphrodisiac recipe using authentic Indian ingredients.

“Grant me, excellent...” Prajñāsri, *The Consecration Ritual*; Snellgrove, *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism*, p. 259.

“Take, oh great beings, take...” *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 294.

“Ah! My lotus contains...” *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra*; George, *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra*, p. 56.

“Ah! His/her vajra/lotus...” *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra*; *Ibid.*, p. 56.

“Grant me, excellent...” Prajñāsri, *The Consecration Ritual*; Snellgrove, *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism*, p. 260.

“This wisdom, which is most subtle...” *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 294.

On the yoni and vajra mantra empowerment mantras: *Hevajra Tantra*; *Ibid.*, pp. 294-295.

“The Great Bliss...” Prajñāsri, *The Consecration Ritual*; Snellgrove, *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism*, p. 260.

“There is no negating...” Saraha, *The King’s Song*; Thrangu Rinpoche, *Song*, p. 109.

“Oh great beings, hold...” *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, pp. 188-189.

On the Tantric feast: This feast ritual was reconstructed by the author.

“oṃ akāro mukhaṃ...” *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 236.

“oṃ āh ucchiṣṭavajra...” Umāpatideva, *Śrī Vajravārāhī Sādhana*; English, *Vajrayoginī*, p. 309.

“When I realized...” Taila; Dowman, *Masters*, p. 303.

“At the propitious...” King Indrabhūti; *Ibid.*, p. 229.

Reconstructed Sanskrit Terms: Anuttara Sama Yoga – The Yoga of Ultimate Equipoise; Sādhana Samaya – Sādhana Vows (term created by the author); Vajrayāna Samaya - Tantric Vows; Sādhāraṇa Samaya - Common Vows; Asādhāraṇa Samaya - Uncommon Vows; Ācārya Abhiṣeka Samaya – Master Consecration Vows (term created by the author); Vajra Samaya - The Vajra Vow; Ghaṇṭā Samaya - The Bell Vow; Mudrā Samaya – The Seal Vow; Sampradaya Samaya – Lineage Vow; Ṣaṭ Samaya – The Six Vows; Tattvas – Twenty-Five Essences; Pañca Kula Mukuta - Five-Buddha Crown; Tri Mudrā - The Three Symbolic Ornaments (term created by the author).

Chapter 5. Sacred Outlook: Deity Yoga

“The man sees...” *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra*; Shaw, *Passionate Enlightenment*, p. 153.

“The antidote for...” Kṛiṣṇācārya, *The Yoga of the Jewel Garland*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 153.

“There is no...” *Hevajra Tantra; Ibid.*, p. 156.

“The yogi is...” *Hevajra Tantra; Ibid.*, p. 119.

On the deity: *Hevajra Tantra, Ibid.*, pp. 86, 119, 155-156, 241; Gyatrul Rinpoche, *Generating the Deity*, pp. 64-66; Vessantara, *Meeting the Buddhas*.

“The deity is...” *Hevajra Tantra; Farrow, Hevajra Tantra*, p. 93.

On the maṇḍala: *Hevajra Tantra; Ibid.*, pp. 163, 190; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Buddhist Tantra*, pp. 163-165, 190-191, 209-213; Snellgrove, *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism*, pp. 198-213; Gyatrul Rinpoche, *Generating*, pp. 51-58, 68-69.

“the abode of...” *Hevajra Tantra; Farrow, Hevajra Tantra*.

“The Three Worlds are...” *Samvara Udaya Tantra (Samvara Origin Tantra); Mullin, Six Yogas*, p. 125.

“The vow of the dākinīs...” *Cakrasamvara Tantra; Gray, Cakrasamvara Tantra*, p. 336.

On deity yoga: *Hevajra Tantra; Farrow, Hevajra Tantra*, pp. 153-157, 164-165, 253; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Tantric Practice*, pp. 59-121; Guenther, *Nāropa*, pp. 131-141; Gyatrul Rinpoche, *Generating*; Gyatrul Rinpoche, *Generation Stage in Buddhist Tantra*.

“remain at one in union” *Hevajra Tantra; Farrow, Hevajra Tantra*, p. 153.

“Bliss arises from sexual union...” *Hevajra Tantra; Ibid.*, p. 169.

On deity yoga and the Innate:

1. Pure Appearance: *Hevajra Tantra; Ibid.*, pp. 118, 167.

2. Great Passion: *Hevajra Tantra; Ibid.*, pp. 243, 253; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Tantric Practice*, p. 251 n. 57.

3. Essence: *Hevajra Tantra; Farrow, Hevajra Tantra*, p. 243.

4. Great Bliss: Kṛṣṇācārya, *The Yoga of the Jewel Garland; Ibid.*, p. 93.

On sympathetic vibration and deity yoga: Snellgrove, *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism*, p. 200.

“Union with the deity...” Kṛṣṇācārya, *The Yoga of the Jewel Garland; Farrow, Hevajra Tantra*, p. 169.

On deity yoga levels of attainment: Jamgön Kongtrul, *Buddhist Ethics*, p. 503 n. 315.

“I am in erotic union...” *Hevajra Tantra; Farrow, Hevajra Tantra*, p. 243.

On the instruments of Tantra - vajra and bell: Simmer-Brown, *Dakini's Warm*, p. 99.

The Divine Pride Mantra (Devatā Garva Mantra): *Cakrasamvara Tantra; Gray, Cakrasamvara Tantra*, p. 365.

On dancing: *Hevajra Tantra; Farrow, Hevajra Tantra*, pp. 64-65, 205-210, 243, 258, 297; *Cakrasamvara Tantra; Gray, Cakrasamvara Tantra*, p. 306.

“the action of appearance...” *Cakrasamvara Tantra; Ibid.*, p. 340.

“The self-generating worship...” *Cakrasamvara Tantra; Ibid.*, p. 337.

On Mantra Repetition with Visualized Consort: *Cakrasamvara Tantra; Gray, Cakrasamvara Tantra*, p. 290; Jayabhadra, *Cakrasamvara Commentary (Cakrasamvara Pañjikā)*; Gray, *Cakrasamvara Tantra*, p. 371 nn. 11-12.

“The nature of all mantras...” *Vajra Śekhara Tantra (The Adamantine Peak Tantra)*; Khenpo Gyaltzen Rinpoche, *Jewel Ornament*, p. 252.

On the Four Blissess of Sexual Yoga with Visualized Consort: Tsongkapa, *A Book of Three Inspirations*; Mullin, *Six Yogas*, p. 125; Kelsang Gyatso, *Clear Light*, pp. 138-139; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Esoteric Instructions*, p. 155; Shaw, *Passionate Enlightenment*, pp. 147-148.

On Dissolving the Deity: English, *Vajrayoginī*, pp. 215-216, 309.

On the Fire Pūjā: *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, pp. 147-151.

“remain at one with...” *Hevajra Tantra*; *Ibid.*, p. 48.

On the Yoga of Passion: Jamgön Kongtrul, *Tantric Practice*, pp. 105, 121, 273-280 n. 116, 368-369 n. 47.

On Dream Yoga: *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 162; *Vajradāka Tantra* and *Samvara Udaya Tantra*; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Esoteric Instructions*, p. 150; Nāropa, *Vajra Verses of the Whispered Tradition (Karnatantra Vajrapāda Nāma)*; Mullin, *Practice*, p. 37; Tsongkapa, *A Book of Three Inspirations*; Mullin, *Six Yogas*, pp. 175-184; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Tantric Practice*, pp. 368-369 n. 47, 280 n. 116 step 31; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Esoteric Instructions*, pp. 183-185, 407 n. 144.

“In this beautiful world...” *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 244.

On the fire pūjā ritual: This ritual was reconstructed by the author.

“om agne mahātejah...” “om Agni! Fire...” *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 150.

“svārthañ caiva parārtham...” “Consumer of the...” *Hevajra Tantra*; *Ibid.*, p. 150.

Reconstructed Sanskrit Terms: Mantra Guhya - Mantra Secrecy (term created by the author); Rāga Yoga - The Yoga of Passion.

Chapter 6. Inner Bliss: Subtle Energy Yoga

“The union of these two...” *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 85.

“Inner heat blazes...” Kriṣṇācārya, *The Yoga of the Jewel Garland*; *Ibid.*, pp. 21-22.

On subtle energy yoga as orgasmic: Mullin, *Practice*, p. 164 n. 7.

“The Lalanā is...” *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 13.

“is known as Mother...” Kriṣṇācārya, *The Yoga of the Jewel Garland*; *Ibid.*, p. 57.

“She delights all beings...” Kriṣṇācārya, *The Yoga of the Jewel Garland*; *Ibid.*, p. 57.

On the Innermost Self (Nija) arising from the union of *āḥ* and *haṃ* to create “I Am:” *Vajra Mālā Tantra*; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Esoteric Instructions*, pp. 166-167; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Buddhist Tantra*, pp. 429-430 n. 33; *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 226.

“There is no possibility...” Kriṣṇācārya, *The Yoga of the Jewel Garland*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 169.

On the subtle body: *Hevajra Tantra*; *Ibid.*, pp. 12-15; 21, 295; Tsongkapa, *A Book of Three Inspirations*; Mullin, *Six Yogas*, pp. 142-148; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Esoteric Instructions*, pp. 398 n. 49, 399 n. 52, 403 n. 98; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Tantric Practice*, pp. 338-339 nn. 24, 27, 29; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Buddhist Tantra*, pp. 172-184; Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Clear Light*, pp. 17-33; Beer, *Handbook*, p. 236.

On bindus as indestructible: *Mahāmudrā Tilaka Tantra (The Essence of Nondual Awareness Tantra)*; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Esoteric Instructions*, pp. 165-166, 311-313, 402 n. 93; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Buddhist Tantra*, p. 196; see also pp. 162-170, 197, 429 n. 29, 431 n. 38.

On the bi-gendered nature of ultimate reality: *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, pp. 57, 161; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Esoteric Instructions*, p. 166; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Buddhist Tantra*, pp. 194, 429 n. 33, 451 n. 3; Snellgrove, *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism*, pp. 278-288.

On the Six Auspicious Qualities and the Six Lordly Qualities: *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 57; Kriṣṇācārya, *The Yoga of the Jewel Garland*; *Ibid.*, pp. 4, 57.

On red and white bindus unite in Evaṃ: Snellgrove, *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism*, pp. 278-288.

“the bearers of...” *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 12.

On how the subtle body becomes obscured: *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Ibid.*, p. 134; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Buddhist Tantra*, pp. 149-185, 431 n. 31.

On the Clear Light as the primal *causal agent* of samsāra: *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 103; *Cakrasamvara Tantra*; Gray, *Cakrasamvara Tantra*, p. 382; Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Clear Light*, p. 206. This concept makes plain that the Tantras concur with theistic religions of an all-pervasive Creator.

“You are your own...” *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 103.

On the inconceivable play of the buddhas: *Cakrasamvara Tantra*; Gray, *Cakrasamvara Tantra*, p. 382.

On the Innate perfection of the bindus and their energy flows: Jamgön Kongtrul, *Buddhist Tantra*, pp. 163, 429 n. 29.

On the obscuration of the bindus as the root cause of suffering: *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 134; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Buddhist Tantra*, pp. 449-450 n. 89.

On the factors that obscure the bindus:

1. The bindus: On separation and loss of bindus: Jamgön Kongtrul, *Buddhist Tantra*, pp. 421 n. 8, 432-433 n. 1, 444 n. 59.

2. The Three Subtle Dimensions of the Mind: *Ibid.*, p. 170. on the stains: Jamgön Kongtrul, *Esoteric Instructions*, pp. 134, 166, 188, 210, 302, 409 n. 157; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Buddhist Tantra*, pp. 421 n. 8, 432 n. 1.

3. The Winds: *Ibid.*, pp. 165, 173; On the loss of winds every ten years: *Ibid.*, pp. 178, 443 n. 52.

4. The Channels: *Ibid.*, p. 172; Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Clear Light*, p. 48. On the knots: Nāropa, *The Vajra Verses of the Whispered Tradition*; Mullin, *Practice*, p. 40; Tsongkapa, *A Book of Three Inspirations*; Mullin, *Six Yogas*, p. 147; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Esoteric Instructions*, pp. 128-129, 166, 317, 330-337, 392 n. 31, 403 n. 96; Kelsang Gyatso, *Clear Light*, pp. 21, 30, 44-45, 92-93, 98; English, *Vajrayoginī*, p. 175.

5. The Cakras: The Four Seals of the Cakras, *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, pp. 15-16, 21-23; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Buddhist Tantra*, pp. 420 n. 5; Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Clear Light*, pp. 44-51.

6. The Five Elements: *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, pp. 21, 134; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Buddhist Tantra*, pp. 170-171.

7. The Five Aggregates: *Ibid.*, p. 171.

8. The Five Senses: *Ibid.*, p. 171.

9. The Four States: *Ibid.*, pp. 184-185, 420 n. 5, 449-450 n. 89.

On subtle energy yoga and Great Passion: *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, Ch. 1.

“The enlightened ones conceive her...” *Hevajra Tantra*; *Ibid.*, p. 218.

“Pervade the sexual...” Kṛiṣṇācārya, *The Yoga of the Jewel Garland*; *Ibid.*, p. 208.

On female and male organs and subtle energy: Tsongkapa; Shaw, *Passionate Enlightenment*, p. 160.

On sexual energy clearing the knots in the heart cakra: Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Clear Light*, pp. 126, 137.

“Wisdom is fierce...” Kṛiṣṇācārya, *The Yoga of the Jewel Garland*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 21.

On levels of attainment of subtle energy yoga: Jamgön Kongtrul, *Tantric Practice*, p. 392 n. 52.

On the benefits of subtle energy yoga: Kṛiṣṇācārya, *The Yoga of the Jewel Garland*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, pp. 21-23; Tsongkapa, *A Book of Three Inspirations*; Mullin, *Six Yogas*, pp. 125-126, 132; Marpa, *The Stream of Elixir*; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Esoteric Instructions*, pp. 172-173.

“For the sake...” Saraha, *The King’s Song*; Thrangu, *Song*, pp. 80-81.

“Inner Heat is performed...” Kambala, *The Practice for Generating Glorious Cakrasamvara*; Gray, *Cakrasamvara Tantra*, p. 253 n. 11.

On Buddhist haṭha yoga: Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, *Yantra Yoga*.

On Inner Heat Yoga: *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 21; Kṛṣṇācārya, *The Yoga of the Jewel Garland*; *Ibid.*, pp. 21-23, 208-209, 220; Tilopa, *The Oral Instructions of the Six Yogas (Śata Dharma Upadeśa Nāma)*; Mullin, *Practice*, p. 27; Nāropa, *The Vajra Verses of the Whispered Tradition*; *Ibid.*, pp. 36, 38; Tsongkapa, *A Book of Three Inspirations*; Mullin, *Six Yogas of Naropa*, pp. 36, 99-136, 154-166; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Esoteric Instructions*, pp. 155, 167-173, 214; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Tantric Practice*, pp. 173, 341 n. 38, 344 n. 50, 350-351 n. 61; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Buddhist Tantra*, pp. 152, 231, 244, 266, 422-423 n. 10, 473 n. 65, 500 n. 42; Kelsang Gyatso, *Clear Light*, pp. 38-71, 136-138.

On the Four Blissess of subtle energy yoga: *Vajra Mālā Tantra*; Mullin, *Six Yogas*, pp. 148, 159; Bhavabaṭṭa, *The Cakrasamvara Commentary (Cakrasamvara Vivṛitti)*; Gray, *Cakrasamvara Tantra*, p. 251 n. 5; Tilopa, *The Oral Instructions of the Six Yogas*; Mullin, *Practice*, p. 27; Nāropa, *The Vajra Verses of the Whispered Tradition*; Mullin, *Practice*, p. 36; Nāropa, *Brief Commentary on Kalacakra (Sekoddeśa Tika)*; Snellgrove, *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism*, pp. 263-264; Tsongkapa, *A Book of Three Inspirations*; Mullin, *Six Yogas*, pp. 159-163; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Tantric Practice*, pp. 304 n. 34, 195-198; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Esoteric Instructions*, pp. 72-73, 133, 214, 374 nn. 32-33; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Buddhist Tantra*, p. 420 n. 5; Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Clear Light*, pp. 101-107.

On a physical consort to attain the Four Blissess: Tsongkapa, *Inspirations*; Mullin, *Six Yogas*, p. 140.

On Swing Recitation: *Cakrasamvara Tantra*; Gray, *Cakrasamvara Tantra*, pp. 312-313; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Tantric Practice*, p. 278 n. 116 step 24.

On Crest Jewel of the Bindu: Sahajāvalokana, *The Self-Consecration Method Known as the Crest Jewel of the Bindu (Bindu Cūḍāmaṇir Nāma Svādiṣṭhāna Krama)*; English, *Vajrayoginī*, pp. 372-374.

On Meditation on the Five Senses: *Sarva Tathāgata Tattva Saṃgraha*; Snellgrove, *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism*, pp. 267-269; In this exercise the original text unites the Vajra and Tathāgata families into one; The author reconstructed the Sanskrit mantras from the English and composed the mantra for Akṣobhya. *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, pp. 51-53, 199, 269; *Cakrasamvara Tantra*; Gray, *Cakrasamvara Tantra*, p. 215; Kṛṣṇācārya, *The Yoga of the Jewel Garland*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, pp. 51-53, 199, 269; Vīravajra, *A Sign of the Lighted Goal*; Gray, *Cakrasamvara Tantra*, p. 337 n. 51.

“All of these families...” Kṛṣṇācārya, *The Yoga of the Jewel Garland*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 176.

On Melting into a Moon Disk: Vitapāda, *The Four Branches of the Sādhana of Samantabhadrī (Caturaṅga Sādhana Samantabhadrī Nāmaṭīkā)*; Ratnākaraśānti, *The Sādhana of Black Yamari (Kṛṣṇa Yamari Sādhana)*; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Tantric Practice*, pp. 258 n. 69, 264 n. 90.

oṃ dharmadhātu svabhavātmāko... “oṃ I am the...” Ratnākaraśānti, *The Sādhana of Black Yamari*; *Ibid.*, p. 264 n. 90.

On Great Worship: Milarepa; Garma Chang, *Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa*, p. 359; Tsongkapa; Shaw, *Passionate Enlightenment*, p. 246 n. 52.

“In the woman’s secret...” Milarepa; Chang, *Hundred Thousand*, p. 359.

On Meditation at the Tip: This practice is called the Stage of the Seal (Mudrā); Lakṣmīnkarā, *The Elucidation of the Meaning of the Five Stages (Pañca Krama Vṛittārthavirocana)*; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Tantric Practice*, pp. 317-318 n. 27; Tilopa, *The Oral Instructions on Mahāmudrā (Mahāmudrā Upadeśa)*; Keith Dowman, *Tilopa’s Instruction to Naropa in Twenty-Eight Verses*, p. 3, online at keithdowman.net; Nāropa, *The Varja Verses of the Whispered Tradition*; Mullin, *Practice*, p. 36; Tsunpa Rinchen Namgyal, *The Wondrous Life of the Great Scholar Nāropa*; Guenther, *Nāropa*, p. 78; Milarepa; Chang, *Hundred Thousand*, pp. 358-360; Tsongkapa, *A Book of Three Inspirations*; Mullin, *Six Yogas*,

pp. 132, 159-164; Pema Karpo; Guenther, *Nāropa*, pp. 211-212; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Tantric Practice*, p. 351 n. 62; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Esoteric Instructions*, pp. 321-323, 444 n. 84; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Buddhist Tantra*, pp. 175, 255; Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Clear Light*, pp. 54-55, 101-107; Simmer-Brown, *Dakini's Warm*, pp. 321-233.

On Reverse Urethral Suction: Vīravajra, *A Sign of the Lighted Goal*; Gray, *Cakrasamvara Tantra*, pp. 120-122, 317-318 n. 2, 326 n. 6, 339 n. 7. Vīravajra presents it here as a method of subtle energy Vajrolī Mudrā. Vīravajra also suggests male practitioners practicing physical Vajrolī Mudrā to suck in combined seminal fluids into their sexual organs up the spine, send it out through their subtle body, and then offer it to their consort through ejaculation. On physical Vajrolī Mudrā: Shaw, *Passionate Enlightenment*, pp. 250 n. 86, 254 n. 127; White, *Alchemical Body*, pp. 199-202; Swami Muktibodhananda, *Hatha Yoga*.

On the Eightfold Mantra (Mantra Aṣṭavidham): Vīravajra, *A Sign of the Lighted Goal*; Gray, *Cakrasamvara Tantra*, p. 326 n. 6.

On Clear Light Yoga: *Guhyasamāja Tantra*; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Esoteric Instructions*, pp. 149-150; 185-194; Nāgārjuna, *The Five Stages*; Lessing, *Tantric Systems*, p. 326 n. 13; The method of Vyādhali: Jamgön Kongtrul, *Tantric Practice*, pp. 164, 352-353 nn. 65-67; Tilopa, *The Oral Instructions of the Six Yogas*; Mullin, *Practice*, p. 28; Nāropa, *The Vajra Verses of the Whispered Tradition*; Mullin, *Practice*, p. 37; Nāgārjuna, *The Five Stages (Pañca Krama)*; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Tantric Practice*, pp. 210-211, 306 n. 42; Tsongkapa, *A Book of Three Inspirations*; Mullin, *Six Yogas*, pp. 198-208; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Buddhist Tantra*, pp. 267-269; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Esoteric Instructions*, pp. 149-150, 185-194; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Tantric Practice*, pp. 144-145, 162-164, 207-216, 348-349 n. 54, 320-322 nn. 33-35, 352-353 nn. 65-67, 296-297 n. 5, 352-353 n. 66, 407-409 nn. 1-24; Guenther, *Nāropa*, pp. 188-197; Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Clear Light*, pp. 73-107, 217-227.

On a physical consort required to loosen the knots in the heart cakra: Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Clear Light*, p. 137.

On Illusory Body Yoga: I have united this practice with Clear Light Yoga.

On wind disease: Tsongkapa, *A Book of Three Inspirations*; Mullin, *Six Yogas*, pp. 158-159, 162; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Tantric Practice*, pp. 373-374 n. 57; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Esoteric Instructions*, pp. 128, 402 n. 91; Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Clear Light*, pp. 37, 42-43.

“The winds and mind...” Nāropa, *The Vajra Verses of the Whispered Tradition*; Mullin, *Practice*, p. 36.

On the main achievement of subtle energy yoga as semen control: Tsongkapa, *A Book of Three Inspirations*; Mullin, *Six Yogas*, pp. 125-126, 140.

“When one trains well...” Tsongkapa, *A Book of Three Inspirations*; *Ibid.*, p. 140.

On the combined results of subtle energy yoga and sexual yoga: Jamgön Kongtrul, *Esoteric Instructions*, pp. 172-173.

On daily conduct: Tsongkapa, *A Book of Three Inspirations*; Mullin, *Six Yogas*, p. 164; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Tantric Practice*, pp. 352-353 n. 66.

On Vase Breath: *Samvara Udaya Tantra*; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Esoteric Instructions*, pp. 163-164; Tilopa, *The Oral Instruction of the Six Yogas*; Mullin, *Practice*, p. 27; Nāropa, *The Latter Authoritative Text (Pravacana Uttara Upamā)*; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Esoteric Instructions*, pp. 306-314; Tsongkapa, *A Book of Three Inspirations*; Mullin, *Six Yogas*, pp. 134, 150-153; Gyalwa Wensapa, *Handprints of the Profound Path of the Six Yogas of Naropa*; Mullin, *Practice*, p. 84; Jey Sherab Gyatso, *Notes on a Book of Three Inspirations*; *Ibid.*, p. 61; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Tantric Practice*, pp. 389-390 n. 37, 403 n. 7; Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Clear Light*, pp. 58-61, 63-64.

Reconstructed Sanskrit Terms: Tri Sūkṣma Cittā – Three Levels of Consciousness; Tri Sūkṣma Prāṇa – The Three Subtle Winds; Pañca Mūla Prāṇa - The Five Root Winds; Pañca Kāṇḍa Prāṇa – The Five

Branch Winds; Guhya Cakra - Secret Cakra; Maṇi Cakra - Jewel Cakra; Guhya Saṃhāra – Secret Place; Abheda – Separation; Tri Uṣma - The Three Degrees; Uṣma - Lesser Heat; Uṣma – Heat; Mahā Uṣma - Great Heat; Prabhāsvara Marga - Path Clear Light; Jananī Putra Prabhāsvara - Mother and Son Clear Light Mantra Japa Jñānamudrā – Mantra Repetition with Visualized Consort; Pañca Indriya Samādhi Jñānamudrā - Meditation on the Five Senses (term created by the author); Mahāsukha Deha Jñānamudrā - Meditation on Your Own Body as Bliss (term created by the author); Mahāpūjā Jñānamudrā - Great Worship with Visualized Consort; Candra Anubheda Jñānamudrā - Melting into a Moon Disk with Visualized Consort; Dhyāna Bindu Jñānamudrā – Meditation at the Tip with Visualized Consort; Pañca Lakṣaṇa – The Five Signs; Deha Kumbhaka - Filling the Body Like a Vase (term created by the author); Guhya Pīḍayati - Secret Pump (term created by the author); Cakra Śuddhi - Cakra Purification (term created by the author); Nāḍī Śuddhi - Nāḍī Purification (term created by the author); Dolā Cālana - Pelvic Rocking (term created by the author); Ulālu – Undulations (term created by the author); Kaṭī Brahmaṇa - Hip Rotations (term created by the author); Prāṇa Cālana - Rocking Breath (term created by the author); Vivara Avadhūti - Opening the Central Channel (term created by the author); Sahaja - Integrated Presence (term created by the author); Bhāvanā Vajra Deha - Visualizing the Subtle Body (term created by the author); Prāṇāyama - Retaining the Winds; Snana Sūkṣma - Bath of Bliss (term created by the author).

Chapter 7. Intimate Rapture: Sexual Yoga

“Enjoy all the pleasures...” *Creating Purity of Mind*; Shaw, *Passionate Enlightenment*, p. 140; text attributed to Āryadeva; Wedemeyer, *Āryadeva’s Lamp*, p. 304 n. 193.

“It is said in the supreme...” Five visiting ḍākinīs to Milarepa; Chang, *Hundred Thousand*, p. 358.

“is the cause for...” Kṛiṣṇācārya, *The Yoga of the Jewel Garland*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 221.

“By this repeated practice...” *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra*; George, *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra*, p. 75.

“If he joins together...” *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra*; *Ibid.*, p. 83.

On sexual yoga: *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, pp. 94-99, 124-128, 167-169, 244-249; Sahajayoginīcintā, *Realization of Reality through the Body*; Shaw, *Passionate Enlightenment*, pp. 179-194; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Esoteric Instructions*, pp. 171-172, 190-191 214, 404 n. 111; Guenther, *Tantric View*, pp.57-77; Guenther, *Nāropa*, pp. 202-221; Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Clear Light*, pp. 136-138; Simmer-Brown, *Dakini’s Warm*, pp. 216-223; Gray, *Cakrasamvara Tantra*, pp. 103-131.

“Passion is used to...” *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, pp. 117, 171-173.

“The Innermost Self...” Sahajayoginīcintā, *Realization of Reality through the Body*; Shaw, *Passionate Enlightenment*, p. 186.

“E is the female...” Kṛiṣṇācārya, *The Yoga of the Jewel Garland*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 4.

“Wisdom is the woman...” *Hevajra Tantra*; *Ibid.*, p. 94.

On erotic play: *Hevajra Tantra*; *Ibid.*, pp. 87, 174, 191, 208, 244-245, 258; *Cakrasamvara Tantra*; Gray, *Cakrasamvara Tantra*, pp. 274, 324; *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra*; George, *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra*; Saraha, *The People’s Song*; Jackson, *Tantric Treasures*, p. 101; Āryadeva, *The Lamp That Illuminates the Practices*; Wedemeyer, *Āryadeva’s Lamp*, pp. 289, 291, 299-300, 302-303, 305, 309, 311.

“Erotic play destroys...” Kṛiṣṇācārya, *The Yoga of the Jewel Garland*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 191.

“The great hero...” *Cakrasamvara Tantra*; Gray, *Cakrasamvara Tantra*, p. 324.

On the moment of awareness to the Clear Light opening at orgasm: Mullin, *Practice*, p. 75.

“Erotic bliss is the experience...” Kṛiṣṇācārya, *The Yoga of the Jewel Garland*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 228.

“your aim is...” *Cakrasamvara Tantra*; Gray, *Cakrasamvara Tantra*, p. 288.

“Without sexual fluids...” *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 169.

“This is the best diet...” *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra*; George, *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra*, p. 109.

On the “kiss” of vajra and yoni: Tsongkapa; Shaw, *Passionate Enlightenment*, p. 160.

“In the Completion Stage...” *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 94.

On the first bliss: *Hevajra Tantra*; *Ibid.*, pp. 96-97, 124-125, 183; *Cakrasamvara*; Gray, *Cakrasamvara Tantra*, p. 158; *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra*; George, *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra*, pp. 65-66, 83; Sahajayoginīcintā, *Realization of Reality through the Body*; Shaw, *Passionate Enlightenment*, p. 188.

“Worldly bliss is...” Kṛiṣṇācārya, *The Yoga of the Jewel Garland*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 168.

On the second bliss: *Hevajra Tantra*; *Ibid.*, pp. 96-97, 124-125, 168, 183, 258.

“In stages, because of...” Sahajayoginīcintā, *Realization of Reality through the Body*; Shaw, *Passionate Enlightenment*, p. 187.

On the third bliss: *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, pp. 96, 97, 124-126, 168, 183.

On the fourth bliss: *Hevajra Tantra*; *Ibid.*, pp. 124, 126, 168, 183, 218, 244-249; *Cakrasamvara*; Gray, *Cakrasamvara Tantra*, p. 282; *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra*; George, *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra*, pp. 60-61; Āryadeva, *The Lamp That Illuminates the Practices*; Wedemeyer, *Āryadeva’s Lamp*, pp. 263-275.

“Holy bliss is stabilized...” Sahajayoginīcintā, *Realization of Reality through the Body*; Shaw, *Passionate Enlightenment*, p. 189.

“Free from attachment...” *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra*; George, *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra*, p. 45.

On levels of attainment of sexual yoga: *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, pp. 124-127.

On benefits of sexual yoga: Saraha, *The People’s Song*; Jackson, *Tantric Treasures*, p. 107; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Esoteric Instructions*, p. 173.

“By relying properly on...” *Ibid.*, p. 173.

On sexual yoga as “very dangerous” *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 159.

“The adamant one along with...” *Hevajra Tantra*; *Ibid.*, p. 245.

“Gaze steadily at each other...” *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra*; George, *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra*, p. 67.

“When one enters the palaces...” Sahajayoginīcintā, *Realization of Reality through the Body*; Shaw, *Passionate Enlightenment*, pp. 188-189.

On meditative breathing for foreplay: Anand, *Sexual Ecstasy*, pp. 50-55, 350-351.

“Dance is the...” Jayabhadra, *The Cakrasamvara Commentary*; Gray, *Cakrasamvara Tantra*, p. 340 n. 16.

“The Lord, glorious...” Āryadeva, *The Lamp that Illuminates the Practices*; Wedemeyer, *Āryadeva’s Lamp*, pp. 299-300.

“He should kiss...” *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra*; George, *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra*, p. 74.

On Yoni Worship: This ritual was reconstructed by the author.

“A skilfull one...” *Cakrasamvara Tantra*; Shaw, *Passionate Enlightenment*, p. 155.

On Entering the Maṇḍala.

On Massaging the Bird Face: Bhavabaṭṭa, *The Glorious Cakrasamvara Commentary (Śrī Cakrasamvara Pañjikā)*; Gray, *Cakrasamvara Tantra*, p. 113.

“The yoni should be aroused...” *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, pp. 290-291.

On Vajra Worship: This ritual was reconstructed by the author.

“All the dākinīs worship...” *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 196.

On the central methods of sexual yoga: Most of the central sexual yoga techniques do not have recorded names, so the author has given most of them names.

On the Four Blisses of sexual yoga: *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, pp. 17, 94-99, 124-128, 163, 168-169, 294-295; *Cakrasamvara Tantra*; Gray, *Cakrasamvara Tantra*, pp. 161; *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra*; George, *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra*, pp. 45, 56, 57; Saraha, *The People’s Song*; Schaeffer, *Great Brahmin*, p. 148; Saraha, *The Queen’s Song*; Guenther, *Ecstatic Spontaneity*, p. 130; Snellgrove, *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism*, pp. 252-253.

“From ordinary Bliss there is...” *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 97.

“The second bliss is called...” Kṛiṣṇācārya, *The Yoga of the Jewel Garland*; *Ibid.*, pp. 124-125.

“bound existence” *Hevajra Tantra*; *Ibid.*, p. 97.

“The Bliss of Cessation is...” Kṛiṣṇācārya, *The Yoga of the Jewel Garland*; *Ibid.*, p. 97.

“This is that supreme...” *Hevajra Tantra*; *Ibid.*, p. 259.

On the Four Moments: *Hevajra Tantra*; *Ibid.*, pp. 16-17, 20, 181-183.

“It is only by knowing...” Kṛiṣṇācārya, *The Yoga of the Jewel Garland*; *Ibid.*, pp. 181-182.

“a variety of sensual...” *Hevajra Tantra*; *Ibid.*, p. 182.

“devoid of all ideas...” *Hevajra Tantra*; *Ibid.*, p. 188.

“the reflective thought...” *Hevajra Tantra*; *Ibid.*, p. 182.

“free from both passion...” *Hevajra Tantra*; *Ibid.*, p. 182.

On Swing Recitation: See notes to Chapter 6: Subtle Energy Yoga.

On Spontaneous Awakening: Jamgön Kongtrul, *Tantric Practice*, p. 351 n. 62; Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Clear Light*, pp. 137-138.

On Mantra Repetition: *Cakrasamvara Tantra*; Gray, *Cakrasamvara Tantra*, p. 290; Jayabhadra, *Cakrasamvara Commentary*; *Ibid.*, p. 371 nn. 11-12.

“If the practitioner repeats...” *Cakrasamvara Tantra*; *Ibid.*, p. 371.

On Meditation on the Five Senses: *Sarva Tathāgata Tattva Saṃgraha*; Snellgrove, *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism*, pp. 267-269; In this exercise the original text unites the Vajra and Tathāgata families into one; I reconstructed the Sanskrit mantras from the English and composed the mantra for Akṣobhya. *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, pp. 51-53, 199, 269; *Cakrasamvara Tantra*; Gray, *Cakrasamvara Tantra*, p. 215; Vīravajra, *A Sign of the Lighted Goal*; Gray, *Cakrasamvara Tantra*, p. 337 n. 51.

On Meditation on the Five Elements: *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, pp. 106, 111-112, 133-134, 171-176.

On Meditation on Your Own Body as Bliss: Maitrīgupta; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Tantric Practice*, p. 351 n. 62.

On Nondual Lovemaking: Sahajayoginīcintā, *Realization of Reality through the Body*; Shaw, *Passionate Enlightenment*, pp. 179-194; Advayavajra, *Oral Instructions on the Four Yogas*; Guenther, *Nāropa*, pp. 202-221; Pema Karpo; Guenther, *Tantric View*, pp. 69-70.

On Melting into a Moon Disk: See notes to Chapter 6: Subtle Energy Yoga.

On Crest Jewel of the Bindu: See notes to Chapter 6: Subtle Energy Yoga.

On Great Worship: See notes to Chapter 6: Subtle Energy Yoga.

On Reverse Urethral Suction: See notes to Chapter 6: Subtle Energy Yoga.

On Inner Heat Yoga: See notes to Chapter 6: Subtle Energy Yoga.

On Meditation at the Tip: See notes to Chapter 6: Subtle Energy Yoga.

On Clear Light Yoga: See notes to Chapter 6: Subtle Energy Yoga.

On Dissolution into the Great Bliss: Āryadeva, *The Lamp that Illuminates the Practices*; Wedemeyer, *Āryadeva's Lamp*, pp. 258, 308-309.

On meditative lovemaking: *Cakrasamvara Tantra*; Gray, *Cakrasamvara Tantra*, p. 158; *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra*; George, *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra*, pp. 69, 77.

“Concentrate upon the pleasure...” *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra*; *Ibid.*, p. 77.

“Become motionless, with...” *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra*; *Ibid.*, p. 69.

“Give me a thousand strokes...” *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra*; *Ibid.*, p. 69.

On controlling male ejaculation: *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, pp. 65, 169, 196, 207, 214, 217, 257; *Cakrasamvara Tantra*; Gray, *Cakrasamvara Tantra*, pp. 158, 198, 268, 283, 285, 288, 325; *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra*; George, *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra*, p. 75; Āryadeva, *The Lamp That Illuminates the Practices*; Wedemeyer, *Āryadeva's Lamp*, p. 256; Vīravajra, *A Sign of the Lighted Goal*; Gray, *Cakrasamvara Tantra*, pp. 317-318 nn. 2-4, 326 n. 6; Tsongkapa, *A Book of Three Inspirations*; Mullin, *Six Yogas*, pp. 125-126, 162.

“One should release seminal essence...” Bhavabaṭṭa, *The Cakrasamvara Commentary*; Gray, *Cakrasamvara Tantra*, p. 122.

“The yogi should make the consorts...” *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 257.

On expanding orgasm: *Hevajra Tantra*; *Ibid.*, pp. 245-249, 299.

On the potential of orgasm to attain Mahāmudrā: *Hevajra Tantra*; *Ibid.*, pp. 163, 168, 258; Advayavajra, *Oral Instructions on the Four Yogas*; Guenther, *Nāropa*, pp. 215, 274-275.

On orgasmic meditative absorption: *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, pp. 245-249, 299.

On sexual positions: *Hevajra Tantra*; *Ibid.*, pp. 291-292; *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra*; George, *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra*, pp. 28-29, 71-73; Śābara, *The Sādhana of Secret Vajravīlāsini*, verses 30 and 49; Āryadeva, *The Lamp that Illuminates the Practices*; Wedemeyer, *Āryadeva's Lamp*, pp. 298, 472; Vātsyāyana, *The Kāma Sūtra*; Daniélou, *Kāma Sūtra*, pp. 147-154.

On the Vajra Position: Āryadeva, *The Lamp that Illuminates the Practices*; Wedemeyer, *Āryadeva's Lamp*, pp. 298, 472.

On the Archer Position: This is the pose of Cakrasamvara and his consort Vajravārāhī described in the related explanatory Tantras of the *Cakrasamvara Tantra*; Gray, *Cakrasamvara Tantra*, p. 44 n. 142.

On the sexual positions of the *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra*: *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra*; George, *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra*, pp. 28-29, 71-73.

“Eroticism is an experience...” Vātsyāyana, *The Kāma Sūtra*; Daniélou, *Kāma Sūtra*, p. 29.

“Surely all this pleasure...” Kṛiṣṇācārya, *The Yoga of the Jewel Garland*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 215.

“He should have his face...” *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra*; George, *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra*, p. 77.

“He should eat feces...” *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra*; *Ibid.*, p. 64.

“And, taking the wash-water...” *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra; Ibid.*, p. 78.

“Just as when manure...” *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra; Ibid.*, p. 79.

On a relief of eating feces: Thomas Donaldson, *Iconography of the Buddhist Sculpture of Orissa*, fig. 528.

On group practice: *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, pp. 75, 77-78, 202, 205-211, 256-257; *Cakrasamvara Tantra*; Gray, *Cakrasamvara Tantra*, p. 244; *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra*; George, *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra*, pp. 62-64; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Buddhist Tantra*, p. 244; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Esoteric Instructions*, p. 322; Vātsyāyana, *The Kāma Sūtra*; Daniélou, *Kāma Sūtra*, pp. 154-156, 480-481; English, *Vajrayoginī*, p. 218.

“Into this maṇḍala enter...” *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, pp. 256-257.

On concluding lovemaking: Vātsyāyana, *The Kāma Sūtra*; Daniélou, *Kāma Sūtra*, pp. 100, 180, 197-203.

“After making love...” Vātsyāyana, *The Kāma Sūtra; Ibid.*, p. 201.

“Setting the two organs...” *Sarva Deva Samāgama Tantra (The Tantra of the Equal Teachings of All Deities)*; Wedemeyer, *Āryadeva’s Lamp*; pp. 315 nn. 56-57, 486.

On the results of sexual yoga: *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 291; *Cakrasamvara Tantra*, Gray, *Cakrasamvara Tantra*, pp. 77, 79, 83-84; *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra*; George, *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra*, pp. 75, 83-84; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Esoteric Instructions*, pp. 172-173; Shaw, *Passionate Enlightenment*, pp. 87-97.

“The yogi will attain...” *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 291.

“The ultimate attainment...” Jamgön Kongtrul, *Esoteric Instructions*, p. 173.

On vows: *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, pp. 65, 192, 198, 202-207, 217; *Cakrasamvara Tantra*; Gray, *Cakrasamvara Tantra*, pp. 267-269, 271; *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra*; George, *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra*, pp. 66-67, 77, 79; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Buddhist Ethics*, pp. 262-266; Shaw, *Passionate Enlightenment*, pp. 46-53, 171, 217 n. 37.

On daily conduct: *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, pp. 65, 192, 198, 202-203, 207, 217; *Cakrasamvara Tantra*; Gray, *Cakrasamvara Tantra*, 267-269; *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra*; George, *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra*, pp. 66-67, 77, 79.

Reconstructed Sanskrit Terms: Prabhāsvara Marga - Path Clear Light; Jananī Putra Prabhāsvara - Mother and Son Clear Light; Maṇḍala Avatara - Entering the Maṇḍala; Vajra Gazing - Vajra Dṛiṣṭi (term created by the author); (Vajra Aṅgamardana) - Vajra Massage (term created by the author); Sahaja Bodhi - Spontaneous Awakening; Mantra Japa Karmamudrā – Mantra Repetition with Physical Consort; Pāñca Indriya Samādhi Karmamudrā – Meditation on the Five Senses with Physical Consort (term created by the author); Mahāsukha Deha Karmamudrā - Meditation on Your Own Body as Bliss with Physical Consort (term created by the author); Advaya Maithuna - Nondual Lovemaking (term created by the author); Candra Anubheda Karmamudrā - Melting into a Moon Disk with Physical Consort; Mahāpūjā Karmamudrā - Great Worship with Physical Consort; Dhyāna Bindu Karmamudrā - Meditation at the Tip with Physical Consort; Mani Cakra – Jewel Cakra; Pāñca Lakṣaṇa - Five Signs; Mahāsukha Anubheda - Dissolution into the Great Bliss (term created by the author); Sādhana Samaya – Sādhana Vows; Pūrṇa Prāṇa - Deep Breathing (term created by the author); Sama Prāṇa - Synchronized Breathing (term created by the author); Bhāvanā Vajra Deha - Visualizing the Subtle Body (term created by the author); Prāṇāyama - Retaining the Winds; Snana Sukha - Bath of Bliss (term created by the author); Vīra Prāṇa - Charging Breath (term created by the author); Central Channel Orgasm – Avadhūti Drava (term created by the author); Cakra Orgasm – Cakra Drava (term created by the author).

Chapter 8. Embrace of the Beloved: Nondual Yoga

“The bliss experienced by the sexual organ... *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 220.

“Erotic bliss is the...” *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Ibid.*, p. 96.

“the true nature...” Saraha, *The King’s Song*; Thrangu, *Song*, p. 68.

“Mahāmudrā is characterized by...” Kṛiṣṇācārya, *The Yoga of the Jewel Garland*; *Ibid.*, p. 23.

On the Yoginī Tantras’ definition of Mahāmudrā: *Hevajra Tantra*; *Ibid.*, pp. 108; *Samṣṭa Tantra (The Sexual Intercourse Tantra)*; Traleg Kyabgon, *Mind at Ease*, p. 175.

“Through mere recognition...” Saraha, *The King’s Song*; *Ibid.*, p. 110.

“savor yourself fully...” Saraha, *The People’s Song*; Jackson, *Tantric Treasures*, p. 79.

The “Yoginī” Saraha, *The People’s Song*; *Ibid.*, p. 101.

The “lady of erotic play” Saraha, *The People’s Song*; *Ibid.*, p. 100.

On Mahāmudrā as return and integration: *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, pp. 244-249; *Cakrasamvara*; Gray, *Cakrasamvara Tantra*, p. 282; *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra*; George, *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra*, pp. 60-61; Āryadeva, *The Lamp That Illuminates the Practices*; Wedemeyer, *Āryadeva’s Lamp*, pp. 263-275.

On the philosophy of nondual yoga: *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, pp. 101, 113, 121-123, 128-129; *Cakrasamvara Tantra*; Gray, *Cakrasamvara Tantra*, pp. 275, 306, 325; Saraha, *The King’s Song*; Thrangu Rinpoche, *Song*; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Esoteric Instructions*, pp. 208-241; Guenther, *Ecstatic Spontaneity*; Guenther, *Nāropa*, pp. 222-235; Traleg Rinpoche, *Mind at Ease*.

“The moment when...” Advayavajra, *Oral Instructions on the Four Yogas*; Guenther, *Nāropa*, pp. 215, 274-275.

“Mahāmudrā is the integrated state...” Maitrīgupta; Guenther, *Tantric View*, p. 76.

“It is beyond any other...” Śabara; Khenpo Karthar Rinpoche, *2005 Ten-Day Teachings*, p. 89.

“because of subject...” *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 113.

“The flaw is in duality...” Saraha, *The People’s Song*; Jackson, *Tantric Treasures*, p. 111.

“The Great Consciousness is in fact...” *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 175.

“display no inhibitions in using...” Snellgrove, *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism*, p. 250, 264.

“A single God is seen...” Saraha; *The People’s Song*; Jackson, *Tantric Treasures*, p. 99.

“This is the Great Wisdom...” *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 189.

“The Innate is contained in all...” *Hevajra Tantra*; *Ibid.*, p. 126.

“It is no longer possible...” *Hevajra Tantra*; *Ibid.*, p. 106.

On Mahāmudrā with and without a consort: Lakṣmīnīkarā, *The Elucidation of the Meaning of the Five Stages (Pañca Krama Vṛittārtha Virocana)*; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Tantric Practice*, p. 320 n. 33.

“Erotic bliss is the...” *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 96.

“Erotic bliss is a characteristic...” Kṛiṣṇācārya, *The Yoga of the Jewel Garland*; *Ibid.*, p. 96.

“Erotic bliss is the experience...” Kṛiṣṇācārya, *The Yoga of the Jewel Garland*; *Ibid.*, p. 228.

“The bliss experienced by the sexual organ... *Hevajra Tantra*; *Ibid.*, p. 220.

“the Palace of Wisdom” Prajñāsri, *The Consecration Ritual*; Snellgrove, *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism*, p. 260.

“The moment when each partner’s potency...” Advayavajra, *Oral Instructions on the Four Yogas*; Guenther, *Nāropa*, pp. 215, 274-275.

“Making the consort for Mahāmudrā...” *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 291.

On the stages of Mahāmudrā and the genitals: Advayavajra, *Oral Instructions on the Four Yogas*; Guenther, *Nāropa*, pp. 215, 274-275.

“The Great Bliss is...” Kṛiṣṇācārya, *The Yoga of the Jewel Garland*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 95.

“The Innate is of two kinds...” *Hevajra Tantra*; *Ibid.*, p. 93.

On sexual fluids: *Hevajra Tantra*; *Ibid.*, pp. 93, 105.

“Making the consort for Mahāmudrā...” *Hevajra Tantra*; *Ibid.*, p. 291.

On levels of attainment of nondual yoga: Saraha, *The King’s Song*; Thrangu Rinpoche, *Song*, pp. 98-107.

“Without Karmamudrā, no...” Devacandra, *Understanding the Light of Wisdom*; Guenther, *Nāropa*, p. 221.

“Mindfulness sees with certainty...” Saraha, *The King’s Song*; *Ibid.*, p. 102.

“like a cloud” *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 128.

“the single seed of...” Saraha, *The People’s Song*; Jackson, *Tantric Treasures*, p. 73.

“These empty appearances have...” Saraha, *The King’s Song*; *Ibid.*, p. 103.

“Bliss free of emotional and mental constructs...” Saraha, *The King’s Song*; Thrangu, *Song*, p. 117.

“indivisibly united” Kṛiṣṇācārya, *The Yoga of the Jewel Garland*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 128.

“To perform the erotic union...” Kṛiṣṇācārya, *The Yoga of the Jewel Garland*; *Ibid.*, p. 186.

On the benefits of Mahāmudrā: Sahara, *The King’s Song*; Thrangu, *Song*, pp. 115-121; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Esoteric Instructions*, pp. 223-226.

On the siddhas, the Mahāyāna sūtras, and Mahāmudrā: Hookham, *Buddha Within*, p. 56.

On sexual yoga as necessary for success in Mahāmudrā: *Cakrasamvara Tantra*; Shaw, *Passionate Enlightenment*, p. 142; Devacandra, *Understanding the Light of Wisdom*; Guenther, *Nāropa*, p. 221.

On the third consecration and Mahāmudrā: *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, pp. 163, 168, 258.

“To perform the erotic union...” Kṛiṣṇācārya, *The Yoga of the Jewel Garland*; *Ibid.*, p. 186.

On Tantric feasts: *Hevajra Tantra*; *Ibid.*, pp. 206-211, 268-270.

“Among the circle of practitioners...” *Hevajra Tantra*; *Ibid.*, p. 268.

On drinking sexual fluids: *Hevajra Tantra*; *Ibid.*, pp. 65, 196, 202, 207, 217, 257, 291.

On Tasting the Nectar of Immortality: *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 269; *Cakrasamvara Tantra*; Gray, *Cakrasamvara Tantra*; Umāpatideva, *Śrī Vajravārāhī Sādhana*; English, *Vajrayoginī*, pp. 208-211, 289-293; Beer, *Handbook*, pp. 217-220.

On guru devotion: *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 15; Saraha, *The People’s Song*; Jackson, *Tantric Treasures*, pp. 62-63, 68, 72, 84-85, 87, 93; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Esoteric Instructions*, pp. 227, 245-246.

“The one who is devoted...” *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 157.

“The primordially established...” *Cakrasamvara Tantra*; Gray, *Cakrasamvara Tantra*, p. 306.

“The yogi must always...” *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 108.

“As the snake uncoils...” Tilopa; Tsunpa Rinchen Namgyal, *The Wondrous Life of the Great Scholar Nāropa*; Guenther, *Nāropa*, p. 41.

On the Fourth Consecration and maintaining the view: Kṛiṣṇācārya, *The Yoga of the Jewel Garland*; *Ibid.*, p. 127.

On the ultimate granter of the Fourth Consecration: *Hevajra Tantra*; *Ibid.*, p. 55; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Buddhist Tantra*, p. 475 n. 70.

On one-pointed awareness on your mind’s true nature: Saraha, *The King’s Song*; Thrangu Rinpoche, *Song*, pp. 102-103.

“Do not remember...” Tilopa, *The Six Words of Advice*; Khenpo Karthar Rinpoche, *2005 Ten-Day*, p. 176.

On allow the view to arise spontaneously: Tilopa, *Oral Instructions on Mahāmudrā*; Dowman, *Tilopa’s Mahamudra Instruction*, p. 1; online at keithdowman.net.

On relaxing your mind: Tilopa, *Oral Instructions on Mahāmudrā*; Dowman, *Tilopa’s Mahamudra Instruction*, p. 1; *Ibid.*

“If water is disturbed...” Saraha; Thrangu Rinpoche, *Ninth Karmapa’s*, p. 88.

“Let thought go where it wishes...” Tilopa, *The Treasury of Couplets*; Jackson, *Tantric Treasures*, p. 141.

On allow the view to arise spontaneously: Hookham, *Buddha Within*, p. 61.

On Sky Meditation: Tilopa, *Oral Instructions on Mahāmudrā*; Dowman, *Tilopa’s Mahamudra*, p. 1; online at keithdowman.net.

On Vase Breath: Tilopa, *Oral Instructions on Mahāmudrā*; *Ibid.*, p. 3.

On Swing Recitation: See notes to Chapter 6: Subtle Energy Yoga.

On Deepening the View: Saraha, *The King’s Song*; Thrangu Rinpoche, *Song*, pp. 98-113.

“Mindfulness sees with certainty...” Saraha, *The King’s Song*; *Ibid.*, p. 102.

“Emptiness is inseparable...” Saraha, *The King’s Song*; *Ibid.*, p. 119.

“The mind itself is not affected...” Saraha, *The King’s Song*; Thrangu Rinpoche, *Song*, p. 101.

“This mind, which is naturally...” Saraha; Khenpo Karthar Rinpoche, *2005 Ten-Day*, p. 160.

“These empty appearances have the nature...” Saraha, *The King’s Song*; Thrangu Rinpoche, *Song*, p. 103.

“unthinking” Tilopa, *Treasury of Couplets*; Jackson, *Tantric Treasures*, p. 130.

“The practice is ultimate...” Āryadeva, *The Lamp that Integrates the Practices*; Wedemeyer, *Āryadeva’s Lamp*, p. 279.

“Intellect, mind, and mental...” Saraha, *The King’s Song*; Thrangu Rinpoche, *Song*, p. 105.

“The poison of objects turns...” Saraha, *The King’s Song*; *Ibid.*, p. 55.

“In the pure expanse of sky...” Ānandavajra; Shaw, *Passionate Enlightenment*, p. 103.

“Purify in utmost...” Saraha, *The People’s Song*; Jackson, *Tantric Treasures*, p. 109.

On the results of Nondual Yoga: *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, pp. 57, 76, 101, 105-106, 121, 128-129; Saraha, *The King’s Song*, Thrangu Rinpoche, *Song*, pp. 115-121; Kṛiṣṇācārya, *The Yoga of the Jewel Garland*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, pp. 105-106, 121-122; Abhayadatta, *The Legends of the Eighty-Four Siddhas*; Dowman, *Masters*; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Buddhist Tantra*, pp. 269, 474 n. 68; Jamgön

Kongtrul, *Tantric Practice*, pp. 128-135; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Esoteric Instructions*, pp. 214, 223-225, 415 n. 221.

“When one attains realization...” Niguma, *Herein the Mahāmudrā of Natural Liberation* (Tib. *Rang grol phyag rgya chen po zhes bya ba*), Peking 4641; Shaw, *Passionate Enlightenment*, p. 94.

“Enlightenment is definitely attained...” Kṛiṣṇācārya, *The Yoga of the Jewel Garland*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 109.

On the state of Vajradhara: Nāropa, *Vajra Verses of the Whispered Tradition*; Mullin, *Practice*, p. 40; Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Clear Light*, pp. 237-239.

On daily conduct: *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, pp. 101, 108.

On Mahāmudrā Daily Conduct Special Practices: Jamgön Kongtrul, *Buddhist Ethics*, p. 505 n. 324; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Esoteric Instructions*, pp. 70, 372 n. 14, 432 n. 37, 445 n. 95.

Reconstructed Sanskrit Terms: Catur Krama - Four Levels; Śānti Citta - Relax Your Mind; Svarga Dhyāna - Sky Meditation; Śūnyatā Samādhi - Illusion-Like Appearances; Siṃha Līla Samādhi - Samādhi of the Lion’s Play; Vira Samādhi - Heroic Samādhi; Vajra Samādhi - Vajra Samādhi; Sādhana Samaya - Sādhana Vows; Samanta Bhadra - Ever-Perfect Conduct; Viśva Vijaya - Victorious in All Directions Conduct; Dṛiṣṭi Sahaja – Allow the View to Arise Naturally (term created by the author); Aja - The Unborn; Acintya - Beyond the Intellect.

Chapter 9. The Sacred Site of Enlightenment: Preparing for Practice

“In a pleasing place...” *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra*; George, *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra*, p. 67.

“It is a delightful place...” Anaṅgavajra, *The Attainment of the Realization of Wisdom and Method* (*Prajñā Upāya Vinīścaya Siddhi*); Snellgrove, *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism*, p. 272.

On the maṇḍala of Vajravilāsinī: The maṇḍala was reconstructed by the author. The surrounding symbols come from Beer, *Handbook*, p. 211.

On altar offerings: *Susiddhikara Tantra*; Giebel, *Two Esoteric*, chs. 8-12.

On food treats: The sādhana calls for areca nut, a breath freshener and slight narcotic stimulant, as a gesture of devotion. The nut is very hard – hold it in your mouth for an hour, and the saliva mixes with it to produce its effects. It also leaves a red stain in your mouth that can be washed out later.

On Indian cuisine: Om Prakash, *Food and Drinks in Ancient India*.

On massage: Vātsyāyana, *The Kāma Sūtra*; Daniélou, *Kāma Sūtra*, pp. 59-60.

On bathing: *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 131; Vātsyāyana, *The Kāma Sūtra*; Daniélou, *Kāma Sūtra*, pp. 59-60; Prajñāsri, *The Consecration Ritual*; Snellgrove, *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism*, p. 258; Rosita Arvigo, *Spiritual Bathing*; Tamar Love, *The Sensual Bath*.

Chapter 10. The Sādhana of Secret Vajravilāsinī

On *The Sādhana of Secret Vajravilāsinī* published by the Central Institute for Higher Tibetan Studies: Śābara, “Yoginīsarvasvaṃ Nāma Guhyavajravilāsinīsādhanaṃ,” *Dhīḥ: Review of Rare Buddhist Texts*.

31. “Let’s make love.” *Cakrasamvara Tantra*; Gray, *Cakrasamvara Tantra*, p. 261.

66. *oṃ abhiṣiñcantu mām...* “Consecrate me all...” *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 47.

oṃ sarva tathāgata... “*oṃ* All buddhas vow...” Umāpatideva, *Śrī Vajravārāhi Sādhana*; English, *Vajrayoginī*, p. 243 n. xxii.

Chapter 11. Inner Awakening: Commentary to *The Sādhana of Secret Vajravilāsinī*

“The ḍākinīs are all-pervasive...” *Cakrasamvara Tantra*; Gray, *Cakrasamvara Tantra*, pp. 329-331.

On Śabara and the siddhas of Orissa: Abhayadatta, *The Legends of the Eighty-Four Masters*; Dowman, *Masters*; Tārānātha, *The Seven Instruction Lineages*; David Templeman, *Seven Instruction*; Chomden Raldri, *Ornamental Flower for the Dohās*; Schaeffer, *Great Brahmin*, p. 130.

“For twelve years...” Abhayadatta, *The Legends of the Eighty-Four Masters*; Dowman, *Masters*, p. 62.

“A dancer living...” Vajrāsana, *The Prayer of the Eighty-Four Siddhas*; Linrothe, *Holy Madness*, p. 431.

On Śabarī: A sādhana to Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa in *The Garland of Sādhana*s is attributed to her, *The Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Sādhana (Vajravidāraṇī Nāma Dhāraṇī Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Sādhana)*. She co-compiled a set of songs with Jñānalocanā and Padmalocanā; Shaw, *Passionate Enlightenment*, p. 266.

“Shooting the arrow of clear understanding...” Padmalocanā; *Ibid.*, p. 50.

“Shooting the arrow of ultimate experience...” Padmalocanā; *Ibid.*, p. 51.

Padmalocanā, compiler: *Pith Instructions on the Precious Symbolic Mahāmudrā* (Tib. *Phyag rgya chen po rin po che brda'i man ngag*), Dedge 2445; Shaw, *Passionate Enlightenment*, p. 266.

Padmalocanā, Jñānalocanā, and Śavarī, compilers: *Herein the Vajra Songs of Mahāmudrā* (Tib. *Phyag rgya chen po rdo rje'i glu zhes bya ba*), Dedge 2287; *Ibid.*, p. 266.

On Vajravilāsinī: English, *Vajravilāsinī*, pp. 22, 61, 84-86, 89-91, 103, 106, 360-362, 380, 405 n. 104.

On Vajrayoginī: *Ibid.*; Shaw, *Buddhist Goddesses*, pp. 357-386.

On Padmanarteśvara: *Cakrasamvara Tantra*; Gray, *Cakrasamvara Tantra*, pp. 187, 236, 298, 365; Āryadeva, *The Lamp that Illuminates the Practices*; Wedemeyer, *Āryadeva's Lamp*, pp. 299, 301; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Buddhist Tantra*, pp. 214, 388 n. 20, 459 n. 43; *The Garland of Sādhana*s (*Sādhanamālā*); Benoytosh Bhattacharyya, *Sādhanamālā*, nos. 30, 31, 32; Benoytosh Bhattacharyya, *Indian Buddhist Iconography*, p. 43; Shaw, *Passionate Enlightenment*, pp. 122-125; English, *Vajrayoginī*, pp. 88-89, 91, 118, 219, 360-361, 420 n. 185; Donaldson, *Buddhist Sculpture*, Vol. I, p. 264.

On images of Padmanarteśvara: Benoytosh Bhattacharyya, *Indian Buddhist*, pp. 133-136; Shaw, *Passionate Enlightenment*, p. 235 n. 86.

On the unpublished palm leaf version of *The Sādhana of Secret Vajravilāsinī*: English, *Vajrayoginī*, pp. xix, 321-328, 360 n. 12.

On initial and closing practices: English, *Vajrayoginī*, pp. 113-139, 215-216, 226-237, 288-299, 303, 309.

2. On the red color of Vajravilāsinī: English, *Vajrayoginī*, p. 155.

4. On the translation of Śabara's two mountains: English, *Vajrayoginī*, pp. 83-84, 360, 364-365; 416 n. 158. The two mountains are in a region called Dakṣiṇāpatha, English, *Vajrayoginī*, pp. 83, 87, 416 n. 158.

5. On the symbolism of aśoka trees: *Ibid.*, p. 208.

6. On the holy day Aśoka the Eighth: *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 32.

48. This verse, unlike in the illustration in English's version, has her earrings off. *Ibid.*, p. 86 fig. 22.

49. On visualizing the sexual organs of the deities: *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 160.

English's Vajravilāsinī carries a “vajra chopper” (vajra kartṛī); English, *Vajrayoginī*, pp. 86, 89. Our recension reads that she is “holding a vajra” (vajra kartikara).

56. English's illustration shows a vertical mark on Padmanarteśvara's forehead; *Ibid.*, p. 86 fig. 22. Our recension of the sādhana reads “across.”

57. Padmanarteśvara's hair is down, unlike the image in English; *Ibid.*, p. 86 fig. 22.

59. English shows Padmanarteśvara's hands up, not at her hips as in our recension; *Ibid.*, p. 86 fig. 22.

106. On Garuda Mudrā: Fredrick Bunce, *Mudrās in Buddhist and Hindu Practices*, p. 72.

120. On worshipping the deity as the same gender of the practitioner: English, *Vajrayoginī*, pp. 88-89.

130. Vajravilāsini's five seed-syllable mantra in the version of the sādhana presented by English is: *em nīlīm rīm rūm blīm*: English, *Vajrayoginī*, pp. 90, 362. The five-syllable seed mantra, according to our version of the sādhana, is: *em ām rīm raṃ brīm*. Our version of the sādhana gives two different versions of the second seed syllable in verses 130 and 135: *ām* and *vīm*. In meditation, the translators selected the best of the two seed syllables.

135. In this verse, the second seed syllable in the original Sanskrit version is *vīm*. The translators changed the transliterated version presented in the book to match the second seed syllable *ām* in verse 130.

Colophon: *Mahā Yoginī Jāla (The Great Yoginī Assembly Tantra)*: London, School of Oriental and African Studies, ms. 211643.

Reconstructed Sanskrit Terms: Anubheda Mantra - Dissolution Mantra; Devatā Anubheda - Absorbing the Deity; Tri Loka Anubheda - Dissolving the Three Worlds; Deva Anubheda - Dissolution of the Deities of the Consecration; Viśuddha Pūjā - Purifying through Worship; Guhyatva - Importance of Secrecy (term created by the author); Buddha Kṣetra Mantra - Mantra for Attaining a Pure Realm after Death (term created by the author).

Conclusion. The Paradise of the Yoginīs: The Tantric Lifestyle

“Enjoyment and magical powers...” *Cakrasamvara Tantra*; Shaw, *Passionate Enlightenment*, p. 38.

“At the center of...” *Hevajra Tantra*; Farrow, *Hevajra Tantra*, p. 242.

“The greatness for both...” Jamgön Kongtrul, *Esoteric Instructions*, p. 134.

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