



Tibetan Tantric Yoga

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The Tibetan tantric yoga teaching and practice is not like the usual yoga practiced in the West. It is a practice of *rLung* and exercise of the mind purely based on spiritual development, a tantric tradition of master Pundit Naropa and Lama Marpa Lotsawa. It removes the negative energies from the channels and chakras by physical positions and movements which harmonize wind and mind. The yoga technique helps stimulate the channels and chakras, and gives an experience of realization of the mind and its function. The *rLung* regulates the body and the natural function of the energy, and the visualisation of the divine Buddha Vajrayogini blesses the body/mind and transforms it into the pure state of Buddha nature.

Generally there are six basic physical exercises and 39 secondary exercises. During the retreat, the six basic physical exercises are introduced to restore the energy function of the general wind and the five principal wind functions in the four chakras.

The benefit of the yoga practice:

- Prolongs life
- Cleans the channels and chakras
- Prevents various physical and energetic disorders
- Cures the different physical disorders with individual exercises
- Increases the awareness
- Improves memory
- Gives spiritual experience

Naropa's six yogas

Marpa Lotsawa (1012-1096), one of the greatest masters of Tibet, went to India several times and received many teachings of Buddhist sutra and tantra and secret tantric practices from the great Indian master Naropa, and others. Especially he received Naropa's six dharmas or yoga practice, came back to Tibet and introduced it. He also translated numerous sutras, tantras, and medical texts, and introduced a new tantric tradition in Tibet (Sarma tradition). From it, the era of the new tantric traditions of Kagyupa and Gelukpa schools began. Especially he defused his tradition of meditation and the Naropa's yoga tantra.



Naropa¹

- The six yogas are:
1. **Tummo**, yoga of psychic heat
 2. **Gyuma**, yoga of illusory body
 3. **Odsal**, yoga of clear light
 4. **Phowa**, yoga of consciousness transference
 5. **Nyilam**, yoga of dreams and
 6. **Bardo**, yoga of the intermediate state

Marpa Lotsawa taught Naropa's six Dharmas or yogas to his disciples including Milarepa, Tsurton, Lama Ngogpa. He became the founder of the yogi tradition and meditation practice in Tibet, and a great enlightened master who nourished the pure lotus of Milarepa (1053-1135) and awakened his mind. From his teaching, a great number of school of yogas developed in Tibet. The present practice of Naropa's six yogas came from the tradition of Pal Phagmogrubpa, the master who belonged to the Phagdru Kagyudpa order and from whom Lama Tsongkhapa received and defused it in the Gelukpa school. There is a great number of hidden practitioners of Gelukpa schools, and especially a secret tradition of Gelukpa 'Wensa Nyengyud tradition of meditation', who practice *Gadhen Chagya-chenpo* or 'Gelukpa great mahamudra practice'. Yoga is one of these secret practice traditions to transmute the unenlightened mind into the pure state of awakened Buddhahood.

Yoga schools in Tibet

There are two popular yoga schools in Tibet. They are Zhalu and Drigung Phowa chenmo monasteries. They select the right participants and give rLung yoga training for twelve years. The training starts every monkey year (after 12 years) and finishes in the next monkey year. The rLung practitioner (yogi) uses special colors of clothes to improve the power of the Tummo fire. The yogi should follow strict discipline and order according to the tradition. Every winter of the 12th year or monkey year, during the coldest season in Tibet, all the trainees should demonstrate their technique and power of the rLung/wind meditation exercises. The practitioner, with lotus posture, jumps up from inside of the training room and goes out through the roof of the house from a half-foot square open window without losing the posture. The trainees also should melt the iced Yak leather by Tummo heat power. After the demonstration, the practitioner should make a great journey in certain areas of Tibet by wind power (which gives extremely fast walking) and should return to the base in due time. The successful practitioner will receive the title of master in Tibetan yoga, *rLung-gompa*, by the monastery. There are also many religious yoga practitioners who are not monks or nuns but laypeople from different Dharma schools. They generally practice secretly in their room, on mountains or in the forest without speculation or dualistic expectations. Their goal is to achieve the final realization of the mind as Buddha state.

Yoga for the health

Generally all yogis and serious Dharma practitioners among the monks, nuns and lay people practice Tibetan yoga. It has been very little introduced in the public health field, neither by spiritual masters nor lay people. The reason is simple as this method of exercise shouldn't transform into a method of earning a living instead of an altruist purpose.

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However, many yogis have helped the patients suffering from the different diseases with yogic method and techniques. There are more than one hundred yogic techniques that can heal the disorders mentioned in the yoga practice of the different schools. Especially they can pacify the disturbed negative *rLung* flow and its functions in and outside of the body. The yoga tantra says that the mind and energy flows in the channels, which is of essential importance for the life, and corresponds to the universal solar and lunar rotations. Breathing is the basic formula, which brings connection between the universe, man and the energy circulation. The subtle wind that flows in and out is the life of the beings and is called ‘life span wind’, *Sok-rLung*. The ‘Kumbaka-Vase’, *rLung Bumpacen*, yogic method can control the decrease of the life span wind flow. Therefore it prolongs the life span of the person, and gives positive health. It rejuvenates the mind and body and prevents from sickness and aging disease. It gives true experience of the innate nature of our mind, and liberation from the samsara. A person who has burnt the dualistic ignorance by *Tummo* fire, can even fly like a fearless eagle in the sky of samsara. Therefore Tibetan yoga is a very personal practice and its principal goal is to develop the spiritual and inner liberation from the samsaric negative forces.

PRELIMINARY KNOWLEDGE ON YOGA

Vajra body introduction

In yoga practice it is very important to know more about ourselves, how we are, and how we function. This knowledge gives us a concrete understanding of the vajra body and how it illuminates our mind without clinging to the ‘illusion body’, *Gyu-mei-lue*. Below is the subject of the knowledge, introduced before or during the yoga practice, in which practitioners should visualize themselves as Buddha Vajrayogini, and the practice place as a mandala.

The human body is made of five components which are:

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| 1. Tsa | Channels and chakras |
| 2. Rlung | The wind |
| 3. Drod | Psychic heat |
| 4. Thikle | The essence drop |
| 5. Sem | Mind |

The above mentioned five components are generally in the state of energy and quintessence form inside the channels and circulate through the body, minute by minute, by the wind power. Each component has the potentiality to support the mind and mental consciousness in order to keep the body mandala in a healthy system. Yoga tantra says that channels are like a house and the subtle wind and mind are like its owner. These two elements give the correct components of the basic structure of the body/mind. It also says that wind is the vehicle of the mind and the thikle is like a treasure. The temperature is a power which sustains the body heat.

The circulation of these energies doesn’t stop from the birth till the end of life and remains the lightening of the body/mind.

1. Tsa

Tsa, ‘channel’ means hollow tube where blood, wind and consciousness can pass freely, for example body cavities such as blood vessels, the mouth and hollow organs. *Tsa* is a symbol of space, and it gives space to the consciousness and other components of body/mind to manifest themselves under transcendental and dualistic forms and colors. It is like a house for the consciousness. The space is limitless and boundless therefore its symbolic sign is the zero. Everything manifests from this zero or space and also dissolves into it. For example, in mathematics, the zero keeps the first space for no. 1, which goes until 9 and returns back to the zero. It shows that all phenomena existence have the same space origin and ends at the same place. In fact, there is nothing which comes or goes to that state. Therefore Buddhism,

as a symbolic language, calls *Shunyata* (voidness) what draws round zero. The space is a *Thikle* (round) in Tibetan, and *Bindu* in sankrit. It is the cause of the particle as well as the unlimited space nature. It is the base for everything and the innate nature of emptiness. This is called space particles as well as symbol of the body channels.

The channels exist in three energetical groups: *Kyangma*, *Roma* and *Uma* systems which correspond to the cold or lymphatic system, hot or blood circulatory system and wind or nervous system of the physical body. Each system has 24.000 channels and the total comes to 72.000 that sustain the mind and mental system and the five element systems of the body.

2. *rLung*

Second is *rLung*, the wind element. It is a subtle wind, which is manifested from space particles. Wind has a light, subtle and mobile nature and is the carrier of the consciousness. Therefore it is called here 'the vehicle of the mind' as it carries the mind and the secondary consciousnesses - which perceive the perceptions - to the objects. It sustains the body system and gives life and *micro vitae* to the body. The mind and wind are one in two aspects and they function together. These two components have the analogy of a blind horse and a man without legs. Each alone can't perform normal function but they can do complete work if they are together.

3. *Drod*

The psychic heat *Drod* is produced by the space particles and the heat manifested from the friction of the wind element. This is another fundamental element as it supports and gives power to the consciousness, like the power of the fire that can launch rockets to space. The power is called *medrod* or 'digestion fire' in medicine and *Tummo* in yoga tantra. The heat (fire) sustains life and protects the body/mind. This psychic fire increases the wisdom, burns the ignorant mind of the brain and gives realization and liberation from the darkness of unawareness. That is why yoga describes *Tummo* as the aggressive fire which ignites from the below navel, pierces the chakras one by one and reaches the sky of the crown chakra. The *tummo* burning arrow married with the celestial bride leads to enjoy the life of transformation of *samsara*. They give birth to the son of awareness from the blissful garden of *Vajrayogini*.

4. *Thikle*

Thikle or 'essence drop' is the energetical earth and water elements manifested from the space particles and fire element. This energy is a quintessence of the food energy digested and transformed by the digestive fire. The *Thikle* supports the mind like a fuel energy. There are two different types of the *Thikles*: *Dhang* and common *Thikle*. *Dhang* resides in the heart and produces radiance which shines to all parts and surface of the body, mainly in the face, chest and forehead. From this radiance an aura or body light is formed and protects the body/mind from the negative external energies. *Thikle* is a pure state of material energy and the highly refined substance called 'treasure of the body'. The common *Thikle* contributes to continue the generations of human beings.

5. *Namparshepa*

Namparshepa, 'mind' or 'consciousness', is the owner of the body and resides in the center of the heart energy. It governs the body/mind and experiences the positive and negative karmas that carry this life to the next. Six consciousnesses are generally mentioned: eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind consciousnesses. They are like the palm of a hand with its fingers, which closes to the center every night and opens in the morning.

Depending on the philosophical schools, eight consciousnesses can also be mentioned. The two added are *Kunshi* and the 'mental affliction mind'. *Kunshi* is the base of all mind and mental

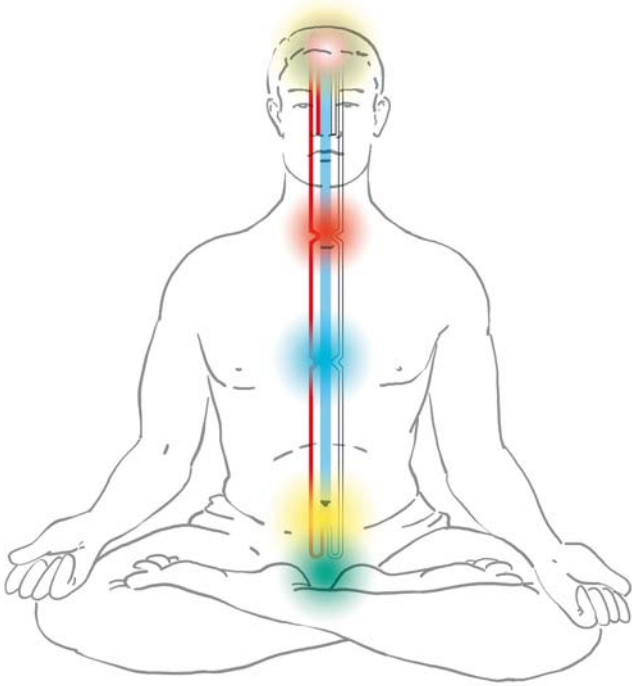
functions, while the ‘mental affliction mind’ is a mind veiled by negative emotions. Both are in the mental consciousness. The function of the sensory consciousnesses is to perceive images, sounds, tastes, smells, touches and general thoughts and to know and recognize them by *shepa* or consciousnesses. So they are called *shepa* or ‘knower’. Because the sensory consciousnesses have no capacity of observation, to specify or make profound observations, the function has to be performed by the mental consciousness. All the important perceptions and experiences are generally imprinted in the mental consciousness, *Kunshi*, and carried to the next life. They are called *bagchag* or ‘latent mind’.

Main Yoga practice

- Preliminary- respiration exercise
- Naropa’s six main physical yoga practices



YOGA OF THE ELEMENTS



The Yoga element meditation is a special yogic practice used to purify our basic five elements and re-balance the body/mind and energies. It is a method of visualizing space and the other elements and their colors one by one, and purifying one's own body, organs, channels, consciousness, subtle wind energies, and subtle and gross bodies through mental exercises. The instructor guides the practice with verbal instructions while participants listen to the instruction and heal themselves through the elements visualization.

- Space and mind
- The mind and light
- The wind, energy and power
- The elements, medicine

Diagnosis

- The color and dimension of the body/mind
- Channels and chakras
- Visualization
- Flash light observation

Healing

- Purifying the negative energy by yogic method
- Purifying the negative energy by mantra and visualization
- Recharging and balancing the energy by elements and visualization
- Re-equilibrating the body/mind and stabilizing the subtle body
- Harmonizing the energy and restoring the immune system of the body/mind.

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