

# *Kālacakra Bhutan 2025: Day One Teaching*

by HH 70<sup>th</sup> Je Khenpo, Tulku Jigme Chhoeda



Compiled and transcribed by Adele Tomlin.

## Introduction

"If one asks, why such prerequisites, why such secrecy is required? The Secret Mantra teachings need to be kept secret because they are beyond the spiritual capacity of people with wrong views, or even beyond those who are inclined towards the path of individual liberation. It is well known in the oral tradition of the learned scholars, in ancient India, when the secret Mantra Vajrayana was practiced in true secrecy, many practitioners attained siddhis or spiritual accomplishments. But later, when these secret teachings were practiced openly in the marketplace publicly for anyone to witness, some people lost faith. This lack of faith and misunderstanding, became one of the main causes for the gradual decline of the Buddha's Secret Mantrayana teachings from India."

"For the higher empowerments, a coloured sand mandala is not necessary at all."

"Understand this clearly, the real mandala of the deity assembly, needs to be appear vividly in the space in front of you. Now when it says "space in front of us" what does that mean? I am not talking about the empty void space, some kind of blank nothingness, the space being taught here is the Dharmadhatu space. The space of reality itself, which is free from all obscurations and grasping. The Dharmadhatu space, is the luminous clear aspect of your own purified mind. And because of this nature, something as vast as Mount Meru can fit within the space of your palm."

--Je Khenpo (teaching on Kālacakra , Day 1)

## Introduction

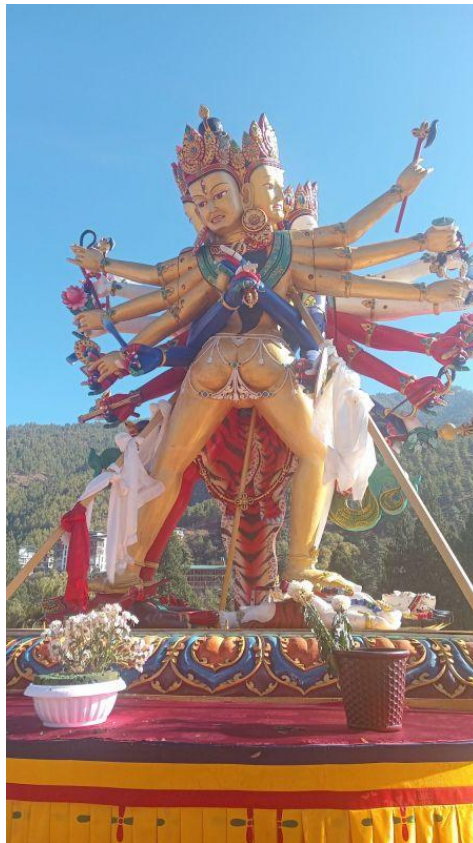
I was recently fortunate to be sponsored to go to Bhutan this month, and thus was able to attend the three-day Kālacakra empowerment given by HH Je Khenpo. As I [wrote about here](#), prior to this event I completed academic-level translation and research on Kālacakra from 2018 onwards. This second Part II in a series of articles inspired by the Bhutanese events and visit, is on the Kālacakra teaching and empowerment given by HH Je Khenpo. The first time such a mass Kālacakra event had been held in Bhutan, attended by thousands of Bhutanese and international devotees, and one which was genuinely non-sectarian with masters from all lineages present, as the Global Peace Prayer event before it had been. [Here is a short video](#) made of the event by the Bhutan Broadcasting Service.

As I wrote about here, the lineage was a special "female" one too, not usually given, but one that came directly from Vajravahni (Dorje Phagmo) herself, to an Indian mahasiddha, Abhayakargupta, according to his text, the Vajravali (Vajra Mala/Garland). An immensely important Kālacakra text, for reasons I outlined in that article.

As Je Khenpo's teachings on each of the three days, were very profound, wise and yet clear and accessible, I cite some quotations from his teachings (and have typed up a transcript of the Day One English translation, with some footnote sources/information added by myself where suitable) which I offer as an e-book for free download<sup>1</sup>. This transcript and Introduction were originally published on the <https://dakinitranslations.com> website on 20<sup>th</sup> November 2025. It is not for sale, copying or re-publishing. If quotes are used from this transcript please cite the source.

It was the first time I had ever attended Je Khenpo's teachings, or an empowerment, and was deeply impressed by his commanding voice, wise and clear teachings, as well his incredible stamina and energy. He sat (almost without any break) for hours at a time, delivering teaching and empowerment from 9am to around 3 to 4pm. Considering his age as well, this was clearly a sign of his bodhicitta flowing and realisations. Je Khenpo did not share any secret teachings, for reasons he explained, and the third day of the empowerment, there were few if any instructions at all, with it being guided on the secret level to suitable vessels. So there is nothing being revealed in the transcripts that is restricted and so on.

### **The meaning of Kālacakra and the supreme unchanging great bliss and union of bliss-emptiness**



*Photo: Adele Tomlin/Dakini Translations (November 2025).*

On the first day of the Kālacakra empowerment (12th November 2025), HH 70th Je Khenpo gave a profound and pith instruction on the meaning of the Kālacakra deity and the union (zung-jug), including how the Kālacakra represents the symbol of bliss-emptiness form the Zhen-tong (empty of other view) as being empty of all conditioned phenomena but full of all the Buddha Nature qualities which exist beyond conditioning:

"So, to elaborate more on this particular topic the zungjuk or the union. How is the zungjuk/union to be understood is that here the essence of all the teachings in the Vajrayāna context, particularly in the Kalachakra is the zung-juk or union of method and wisdom, thabshe zung-juk.

In the ordinary sense, we talk about male and female. We talk about male and energies in the nature. We refer to the moon as male, and sun as female. In the same manner, even in this

context when we talk about zung-juk, the Thab/method is the male, and Sherab which represents female. Thab the male refers to the supremely unchanging great bliss. Whereas the female Sherab refers to the emptiness that possesses all the supreme qualities. So, the union of the supremely unchanging great bliss and the emptiness that possesses all the supremely great qualities is what is to be understood as union here in the Kālacakra context."

The events in Bhutan, coincided with the 70th birthday of the 4th Druk Gyalpo King of Bhutan, Jigme Singye Wangchug. Je Khenpo spoke about the Dharma Kings of Bhutan with the same reverence and respect as the ancient Dharma Kings of India. The humility of the Bhutanese King seemed evident. No grand pomp or ceremony, he approached and met people directly with ease and warmth, without a heavy security presence of bodyguards. Although I had met the 5th Druk Gyalpo King briefly before when I was a speaker at the Vajrayana conference in Bhutan 2022 (on the female yogic roots of Vajrayana), I met him briefly again this visit when he surprised us all as we were seated during the empowerment with a walk-by greeting in which he stopped and said "Your presence here has made a huge difference." What a beautiful, heart-warming, moving, endearing and humble thing to do and say.

Certainly the Bhutanese royal and government patronage of the Kālacakra and Global Peace Prayer event in Bhutan, as well as the Buddha's relics being exhibited there, coming all the way from India, is admirable indeed. The event was funded by the Government of Bhutan and India. Prime Minister Modi was also invited to join the event, and I had a front row seat view next to the mandala when Modi entered the grounds to pay his respects to Je Khenpo and the Bhutanese Royal Family.



*Indian Prime Minister Modi, with HH 70th Je Khenpo and HM 4th and 5th Druk Gyalpo Kings of Bhutan. Launching the jointly organised Bhutan-India Dharma events.*

The Kālacakra Tantra that arose out of Indian mahasiddhas in the Indian sub-continent around the 10th Century, and was brought into Bhutan by the Indian siddha and scholar, Abhaya (who was encouraged and authorized to teach Kālacakra by visions of his yidam deity, Vajravahni). Thus the joint effort of Bhutan and India to make these events come to a glorious fruition on the non-sectarian and sacred, Vajrayana land of Bhutan was not only spiritually significant and auspicious, but politically and socially too.

I also share in this article some of my personal experiences of getting to Bhutan, and then attending and taking the empowerment. When the yeshe/primordial awareness deity mandala blessings were invoked descended and entered into union inseparable with the deity, the primordial awareness deity seemed to clearly speak that “now was the time for Kālacakra to be given and preserved by original lineages in Tibet and Bhutan.” And that the days of the [14th Dalai Lama/Gelugpa sectarian “hijacking” and misuse of the Dro Lotsawa/Jonang lineage of Kālacakra for political, social and entertainment purposes](#) was over. That the public association with the Kālacakra as being Gelugpa/Dalai Lama practice and text was incorrect and that this event was a symbolic sign of that being corrected.

In fact, in the years, prior to this empowerment I had personally requested (verbally and in writing) Nyingma and Karma Kagyu masters (HE Shechen Rabjam Rinpoche (Bodh Gaya Nyingma Monlam 2023), and 12th Tai Situpa Rinpoche (at Sherab Ling, 2019) to bestow the Kālacakra empowerments from their lineages, as there was a danger those traditions might become lost.

The non-sectarian approach of Je Khenpo was admirably evident for all to see too. For example, when he met HE 12th Khentün Tai Situpa (who bravely and graciously attended the Global Peace Prayer event, despite the presence there of several tulku teachers who had publicly called him a fraud, and liar who fraudulently created the 16th Karmapa's prediction letter of his incarnation). When Je Khenpo met Tai Situpa, they met face to face and offered traditional white scarves to each other. No high throne and 12th Tai Situpa far down below on his knees as it was set up by the Dharamsala/Gelug administration in exile recently for the 14th Dalai Lama long-life offering. especially as Tai Situpa clearly has a knee/leg condition and not one Gelugpa Geshe or monk offering a prostration to him.

In addition, [HH the 17th Gyalwang Karmapa, Ogyen Trinley Dorje \(supreme head of the Karma Kagyu lineage\)](#), and HE 12th Tai Situpa both generously and graciously composed and published long-life praises for the 70th Birthday of the 4th Druk Gyalpo King (something I did not see any of the other lineage masters do).



*Non-sectarian, equal and respectful approach and conduct of Je Khenpo towards other lineage masters. For example, here meeting HE 12th Tai Situpa.*

Also, in 2023, Je Khenpo composed a stunning Prayer for the ***Flourishing of the Complete Non-Sectarian Teachings***, which is downloadable [here](#) and was one of the official texts for the Bhutan 2025 event. Actions speak louder than words as we say, and Je Khenpo's noble and vast activities to give full ordination to nuns, and bring together all four main lineages (including Jonang) onto the main

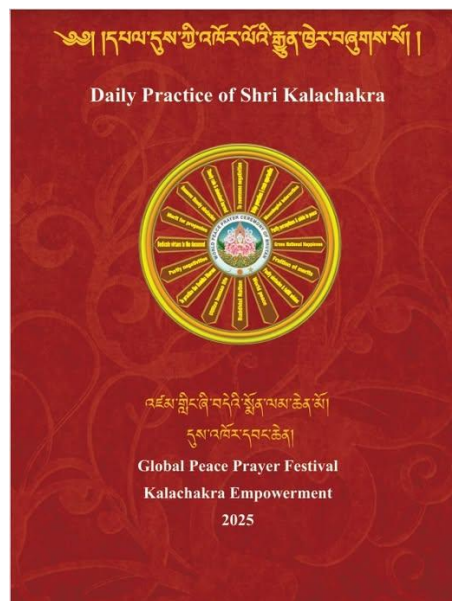
stages at the Global Peace Prayer event was also magnanimous and an excellent example (despite the predominantly all-male line-up) to show the Buddhist world.

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A Prayer for the Flourishing of the Buddha's  
Teachings in General and the Complete  
Non-Sectarian Teachings in Particular -  
The Noble Intention Called  
**“The Excellent Moon Palace”**

*Je Khenpo composition for the flourishing of non-sectarian teachings (2023). Downloadable [here](#).*

Je Khenpo also composed a daily practice booklet of Sri Kālacakra, which can be downloaded by those who took the empowerment [here](#).



*New daily practice of Kālacakra text for those who attended the Bhutan 2025 Kālacakra event. Composed by HH 70th Je Khenpo.*

Overall, as I wrote here, my experience at the Kālacakra empowerment and in Bhutan was magical and karmically flowing with blessings and ease. The Bhutanese hosts in particular were kind, gentle, accommodating, and helped me get a front row seat next to the mandala, and Je Khenpo, as well as opposite the many eminent tulkus there, every day I attended, even though it was a personal trip (sponsored by a private individual) and I was not an official guest .

Just prior to and during the empowerment, especially on the first day, I had several Vajra experiences of the deity and yeshe primordial awareness descending, including the Kālacakra deity wisdom mind (when I was being directed to bring the deity into the sand/mind mandala the thangka) that he was already in them, and as big as Bhutan, the universe and as small as the smallest atom, and showed himself in union doing precisely that. Other Bhutan 2025 articles are on the Buddha's relics coming to Bhutan and being exhibited in Tashi Chodzong, and the full ordination of many nuns, given by the 70th Je Khenpo.

Music? [\*Imagine\*](#) by John Lennon, Kālacakra mantra, [Sungtshom by 70th Je Khenpo](#).

Dedicated to the flourishing of Bhutan's Dharma activities, to the long life and activities of Je Khenpo and may we all attain the supreme bliss state of Kālacakra and abide in a pure land like Shambhala.

Written, transcribed by Adele Tomlin, 20th November 2025. Published as this e-book for download on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2025.

## DAY ONE -TRANSCRIPT

"Here in this mandala initiation the first two [lesser] motivations are absolutely not appropriate. You must you must not enter the mandala with such limited motivation. Instead, you must enter the mandala with only this intention to attain complete enlightenment solely for the benefit of others."--HH 70th Je Khenpo, Kālacakra empowerment (Day One, 2025)

At the beginning of the first day teachings, Je Khenpo outlined the royal patrons and Dharma Kings of Bhutan who support and patronize the Dharma in Bhutan as being equivalent to the ancient Dharma Kings of India such as, Ashoka or to the three Dharma Kings of Tibet.

### **Paying Homage to the Dharma Kings of Bhutan**

"I pay homage at the feet of the glorious Kālacakra and Guru who are inseparable/ Today on this auspicious day we gather here following the instructions and guidance of our great Dharma King, HM King Gesar Namgyel Wangchug, the crown jewel of Bhutan, the land of medicinal herbs. On essential component of the Global Peace Prayer festival is the conferring of the Kālacakra empowerment. A transmission that spans countless generations. A teaching that transforms the very fabric of time into the path of awakening." The successive Kings of the Wangchug dynasty in general, HM the 4<sup>th</sup> King Gyalpo and HM are the royal patrons of the Buddha Dharma. Our great Dharma Kings are equivalent to the great ancient Kings of India, such as King Bimsara of Magada

In terms of the patronage of Secret Mantra Vajrayana, Je Khenpo compared them to the King Indrabhuti of Oddiyana, Dharma King Suchandra, of the Kingdom of Shambhala in the North, where the enlightened Kings persevered the Kālacakra lineage."

Je Khenpo stated that the Bhutanese Dharma Kings are no different from the Dharma King, Trisong Detsen in the land of Tibet.

"Why are these comparisons drawn? Because the Guhya Samaja Tantra, the King of all Tantras revealing the secret yoga was taught by the Buddha in reliance on King Indrabhuti who requested this profound instructions, and became the royal patron.

This Kālacakra Tantra, this very teaching we are about to receive today, was taught upon request of Dharma King Suchandra, of the Shambhala Kingdom. During the reign of the Dharma king of Tibet, King Trisong Detsen all the canonical scriptures of the Buddha, and the great commentarial treatises of the great panditas, existing in India, were brought to Tibet, the scriptures, and commentaries, what we now revere as Kangyur and Tengyur. Furthermore, King Trisong Detsen graciously supported in propagating the inconceivable cycles of the early translation, the Nyingma school teachings, that comprise of Kama, the canonical oral transmissions. Terma, the treasure teachings concealed by Padmasambhava for the future, and dagnang (pure vision) teachings received by pure vision of realized masters. Similarly, now in these extremely degenerate times when the five degenerations are intensifying, the fact that we have the good fortune, to be blessed and full access to the teachings of the Buddha in general, and the teachings of the secret mantra Vajrayana in particular, is only due to the great benevolence and peerless wisdom, of the Dharma Kings of Bhutan.

Therefore, let us pay homage and offerings to the great Dharma kings as a gesture of our sincere gratitude. Today, many high learned lamas, tulkus, accomplished masters, the four kinds of sangha, bhikshu and bhikshuni, laymen and laywomen are gathered here for the empowerment. In this

gathering there are most likely many noble accomplished beings, with their minds enriched by the profound generation and completion stages. Like the hidden yogis in disguise.

To all of you, it is my sincere request to be present not as disciples receiving the empowerment from me, but rather as masters who direct the enlightened intention towards the empowerment ceremony and confer blessings as representatives of the Buddhas of the ten directions. To you all, I pay homage and offerings.

Furthermore, all attending the empowerment today now enter the mandala of the secret Mantrayana. Therefore, everyone present here today, embody the nature of male and female deities. Not one amongst us is an ordinary sentient being. Hence all of you who are worthy of homage. With bodies as numerous as atoms in all worlds, throughout all realms, with supreme devotion I offer prostration.

Amidst this gathering of learned and accomplished beings, I hold neither the eagerness nor the conceit to teach. However, for the sake of those in the audience amidst the learned ones, who have limited background knowledge, I offer a brief explanation of the empowerment for their benefit. Lacking eloquence both in worldly expression and in textual and reasoning exposition on Dharma. I shall simply share whatever arises in my mind.

The Buddha taught that admitting one's ignorance, it itself a mark of the learned. While pretending to know, what one does not know might be considered heroic in worldly terms, from a dharma perspective, the Buddha declared that claiming knowledge one does not possess is utterly improper. In fact, it is like committing the heinous crime of lying.

So, such a person, will be like a thief of the world. Therefore, prioritizing Dharma, I admit my limitations. I myself only know about 10 percent of the Kālacakra teachings. However, if one does not even understand the essential key points of the Kālacakra teachings, then it would be improper to confer the empowerment.

From what I have observed of the Kālacakra cycle of teachings, some practitioners emphasise explanation of the tantras, some stress on conferring empowerments, while some focus on practical application. Some give importance to meditative practice and some simply generate devotion because it is the Buddhas teachings. While emphasizing whatever teachings belong to their own lineage transmission. Remaining indifferent to other traditions. Therefore, one should not cling to extreme views such as one must definitely receive the Kālacakra or one must not receive it.

In order to cultivate proper motivation to receive the empowerment, the first motivation is to cultivate the vast intention of the bodhicitta or the mind of enlightenment. How do we cultivate? For the benefit of all mother sentient beings, equal to space I am going to engage in this practice and receive the empowerments, and I alone will shoulder the responsibility to bring all sentient beings to the perfect state of complete enlightenment. This is what we call the vast intent of bodhicitta. The most important motivation one needs to cultivate here in the Vajrayana context, particularly today is what we call the five perfections, the perfect place, teacher, retinue, Dharma, and time.

### **The five perfections of place, teacher, retinue, Dharma, and time**

In this particular Kalachakra gathering I will specifically highlight that to cultivate the essence of the five perfections in your mind stream is such that when one remains inseparable from the instantaneous moment of self-awareness, all the five perfections are complete within oneself. So please understand the five perfections in the following manner.

The first perfection is *perfection of place*. When one recognizes appearances as the innately present primordial wisdom, this is the pure realm of Og Min, Akanistha the pure realm. At this point, when one recognizes all appearances as the innate present primordial wisdom within our mind, there is no need to seek a perfect place elsewhere.

The second perfection is the *perfect teacher*. How do we cultivate this? When we recognize the very nature of one's own mind is the innate primordial wisdom, this is the Vajradhara or Dorje Chang or Kālacakra. So, there is no need to search for a perfect teacher elsewhere.

The third perfection is *perfect retinue*, kor phun sum tshog. How do we cultivate this? When we recognize that all the sentient beings of the six realms are by nature male and female deities. There is no need to seek a perfect retinue elsewhere. This is in very much in line with what the great Drugpa master, founder of the Drukpa tradition, Choje Tsangpa Gyatso, who said in his aspiration prayers, may we be able to recognize the enlightened body, speech mind qualities in all the minds of sentient beings.

The fourth perfection is *the perfect Dharma*. How do we cultivate this? Since everything that arises unceasingly is the natural display of the ultimate vajra mind, this is the Dharma, there is no need to seek perfect teachings elsewhere.

Finally, the fifth perfection is *the perfection of time*. How do we cultivate this? In the immediate moment of self-awareness, the three times, past present and future are not established as separate realities. When one recognizes this very moment as equality itself, there is no need to seek a perfect time elsewhere. This is how we cultivate the five perfections in the context of the Vajrayana teachings.

### **Introduction to the meaning of empowerment and the qualifications of the master**

So, in today's gathering, some may wonder is not today an empowerment ceremony? Isn't this an empowerment being conferred? Or is it a teaching? Now when we talk about the teachings, in the Buddhist context, according to the teachings while you received any teachings, using the umbrellas is not permitted. But here in this gathering, I would allow you all to use umbrellas. When we talk about wang, empowerment, what does *wang* actually mean?

Each of us has something precious within our mind, a wish fulfilling jewel of our own enlightened nature, but right now, it remains hidden beneath layers of delusions. Which is why we cannot recognize the enlightened nature of our mind. Wang or the stream of empowerments, is simply a method that washes away the stains of our delusions. It purifies them and through this purification, we gain mastery over our own true nature. We reclaim what was innately ours. That is the enlightened nature of our own mind. According to secret mantra vehicle/yana, from one perspective in the context of the empowerment ceremony, the master needs to be an authentic master, with all the noble qualities. And empowerments should be given very carefully to small groups, maybe just one fortunate disciple, or seven, twenty-one or at the most to one hundred at a time.

Before conferring the empowerment, the vajra master has to complete the approach practice of the yidam deity reciting hundreds of thousands to even ten million mantras of the yidam. The disciples too must have completed the preliminary practices, such as reciting one hundred thousand recitations of the Vajrasattva mantra.

The empowerments themselves cannot all be given at once, there is a proper sequence. First you get the lower empowerments and practice it completely bringing it to perfection. Only after that completion should one receive the next higher empowerment.

### **Why is secrecy required in secret mantra?**

If one asks, why such prerequisites, why such secrecy is required? The Secret Mantra teachings need to be kept secret because they are beyond the spiritual capacity of people with wrong views, or even those who are inclined towards the path of Sravakas or path of Pratyeka Buddhas, those on the path of individual liberation.

It is well known in the oral tradition of the learned scholars, in ancient India, when the secret Mantra Vajrayana were practiced in true secrecy, many practitioners attained siddhis or spiritual accomplishments. But later, when these secret teachings were practiced openly in the marketplace publicly for anyone to witness, some people lost faith. This lack of faith and misunderstanding, became one of the main causes for the gradual decline of the Buddha's Secret Mantrayana teachings in India.

### **Why a mass empowerment?**

Why then are we gathered here today? On the other hand, there is another perspective which is equally important. The Chandrapada Sutra, (Sutra of the Moon), teaches us that the Buddha essence pervades all beings. Generate the vast supreme mind. All beings without exception possess the seed of Buddhahood. Here there are no unsuitable beings whatsoever.

In other words, every sentient being possesses the Sugata essence, Buddha nature. In our true natural state, we are primordially pure Buddhas, therefore, ultimately no one is unsuitable to receive these teachings.

If we look at historical examples of the past, there were accounts of how accomplished great Vajra masters conferring empowerments and emptying the entire country and transferring all sentient beings to the pure realm.

If we look at the Kālacakra tradition itself, in the land of Shambhala there was a great Kalki King [Mañjuśrīkīrti—Rigden Jamphel Dragpa](#), an emanation of Manjushri himself. He conferred the Kālacakra empowerment to vast numbers of people, to the rishis like Surya Ratta and to the people of all 96 districts of Shambhala. By conferring the empowerment and teaching them the Kālacakra Tantra he ripened and liberated them all.

In essence, it depends on the intention and attitude of both the vajra master and the students receiving it. That is what truly matters. If the empowerment restrictions are too strict, the lineage itself could eventually perish. And beyond that, if you maintain such strict requirements most disciples would never have the opportunity to receive such complete empowerments in their lifetime. A suitable time would never come for devotees to receive such an empowerment.

So, lineage masters, eventually recognized this importance and made a compassionate decision by making the secret mantra teachings more accessible. And from this came the tradition we have today, public empowerments, where thousands of us gather together to receive the empowerment. Now here is something important one must note, even with this more open approach there is a sovereign reality. Among one hundred people who receive the empowerment and hold the sacred samaya damtsig, perhaps one person will breach the samaya. Among 100 people, maybe ten will break the samayas. So, we must be extremely careful, this is not something to take lightly.

So, what is very crucial here is if everyone could recognize appearance and existence as the vast expanse of purity, there would be no need for such concerns, but that is extremely difficult.

### **What is a yidam deity and are some superior to others?**

Among the many yidam deities such as Kālacakra, Chakrasamvara, Hevajra and many others, are some deities better than others, are some higher and some lower, is one deity practice superior than the other practices? Here is what one needs to understand. Ultimately, in absolute reality, all the yidam deities are equal. They are all manifestations of primordial wisdom. Each one can bestow the supreme and common accomplishments/siddhis. So, at the ultimate level there is no such thing as good or bad. There is no hierarchy at all. However, on the conventional level, there are some slight differences in their vastness and extent. Their differences in terms of how they manifest, not in their essential nature or power.

When we refer to a deity/yidam, it is not just grasping to their colourful images, such as their faces, one face, two faces, many faces, one arms or two arms and so on. All of these deities that appears with colourful images represent the inner enlightened nature of the deities. So, when we talk about the deities, deities do not refer to the external, colourful images. That is not the meaning of the deity. The meaning of the deity in essence is the union of method and wisdom. That is what we need to understand.

### **The meaning of Kalacakra and the supreme unchanging great bliss**

So, in this context, what does the wheel of time really mean? Kālacakra /du gi khorlo, Kala time represents the method and chakra refers to the wisdom. Kala referring to method, what is the method? It is the chogyur mi gewai Dechen, the supremely unchanging great bliss. And chakra, referring to wisdom represents emptiness that possesses all the supreme qualities.

Now from these two what is the supremely unchanging great bliss? It is the same as the primordially pure self-arisen awareness. This is termed in Dzogchen as the kadag Rangjung gi rigpa. The nature of mind and co-emergent appearances and Madhyamika or the middle way school teachings, tongpa/emptiness, and dependent origination. All of these teachings are complete in terms of the union I am speaking about as taught in the Kalachakra teachings. Therefore, whether we talk about the Mahamudra, great perfection or Mahasandi, Madhyamika or Uma. Empty-of-Self (Rang-tong), and empty of other, the Zhentong, or bliss emptiness school/detong. None of these teachings contradict each but the names may differ as per tradition, but the actual meaning transcends thought, expression, and description. So, the main point that I want to relay is that all the Sutrayana teachings, whether the Prajnaparamita, whether it is the middle way school Uma, the Mahamudra, the Great Perfection and when you talk about the school of emptiness, whether it is rangtong, Shentong and detong, all the essence of the teachings are complete here in this Kalachakra teachings.

### **What is the zungjug/union?**

So, to elaborate more on this particular topic the zungjuk or the union. How is the zungjuk/union to be understood is that here the essence of all the teachings in the Vajrayana context, particularly in the Kalachakra is the zungjuk or union of method and wisdom, Thabshe zungjuk.

In the ordinary sense, we talk about male and female. We talk about male and energies in the nature. We refer to the moon as male, and sun as female. In the same manner, even in this context when we talk about zungjuk, the Thab/method is the male, and Sherab which represents female. *Thab* the male refers to the supremely unchanging great bliss. Whereas the female *Sherab* refers to the emptiness that possesses all the supreme qualities. So, the union of the supremely unchanging great bliss and the emptiness that possesses all the supremely great qualities is what is to be understood as union here in the Kālacakra context.

### **The important connection of Secret Mantra Vajrayana with ethics/conduct**

There are people who have misconceptions about the secret mantra Vajrayana teachings. People think that secret Mantrayana teaching has nothing to do with Vinaya, the teachings on the Buddhist ethics, nothing to do with the Sutras, Abhidhamma or the teachings on wisdom. There are people who think that Vajrayana is all about visualizing deities and chanting mantras. And that in Vajrayana any conduct is fine, eating meat, drinking alcohol and so on, there are people who think that in Vajrayana all one needs to do is obey one's lama. This shows they do not understand even a tiny fraction of what secret Mantrayana actually means.

So, what does it mean? When one embarks on the secret mantra Vajrayana path, we need to abandon all harmful actions of body, speech, and mind. Everything the Vinaya and ethics teach us. Then we perfect all virtuous qualities, everything taught in the Sutras and Abhidhamma about wisdom, compassion, and skilful conduct. On top of this firm foundations, when our practice is embraced by the union of method and wisdom, as taught in the secret Mantrayana. Then it becomes the ultimate Vinaya, the ultimate Sutra Yana, and the ultimate Abhidharma. Therefore, the secret Mantrayana is the quintessence of the Buddha's teachings.

It is where all the Buddha's teachings culminate and are perfected. If one does not understand this and treats Vajrayana as something separate and isolated from the rest of the Buddha's teachings, then we are actually pushing the Vajrayana out of the Buddha's Teachings and creating a false division which is not acceptable.

### **The outer, inner, and other Kālacakra**

To give a contemporary example, that might help one understand Kālacakra, these days all around the world, people understand that protecting the natural environment is crucial and we think of nature, the colour green comes to our mind, we use green to represent nature and the environment. In a similar way, we need to understand our own nature and true nature. Now, the way we see our body, speech and mind, and the way things appear to us is confused and deluded. We see ourselves as ordinary, limited, solid and separate. But the actual nature of our body, speech and mind is the body, speech, and mind of the Kālacakra deity itself, that is our true nature.

Why is Kālacakra appearing in blue? The blue colour is a symbol and represents the unchanging nature, or reality. For example, it is like how the sky appears blue, even though its true nature is unchanging and colourless. So then the nature of the outer world, the physical environment, the nature of the inner world, sentient beings, and the nature of what we call Buddha Nature, all of these are Kālacakra the wheel of time. Because of that we talk about these three aspects, outer, inner, and other Kālacakra as the divine bodies of the deities, male, and female.

As mentioned earlier, ultimately all deity practices are equal. There is no good or bad but conventionally speaking, Kālacakra is particularly vast in scope. Vast in scope refers to not just inner meditation practices, it refers to the inner world of sentient beings, Mount Meru, the four continents, Sun and Moon, the planets and stars, the years and months, the dates and so on. Even though all of these appearances in essence are empty, they manifest in the form of divine mandalas. That is what is being taught here in the Kālacakra.

### **The visible and invisible phenomena to the human eye**

Now, at this point, some of you might wonder, is there a contradiction between what the Buddhist teachings describe and what we cannot observe with scientific instruments. Regarding this question, although myself am not an expert in science, when I examine it through my own experience and reflection, I find something quite remarkable. There are extremely subtle material particles, that

actually exist but remain hidden from our ordinary perception. Things we simply cannot see directly with our own eyes. Today, with scientific instruments, we can observe these particles, just as the enlightened Arhats of ancient times could perceive with their pure vision.

For example, if you look at a cup of water, in the ancient times, the Arhats who had clairvoyant wisdom minds, could see through the cup of water, and find millions of sentient beings dwelling in the water. In the same manner, through the scientific observation, science can tell us there are countless organisms in a cup of water. So this is a parallel and is something amazing.

When it comes to our body and mind, scientists can observe the physical body, but they cannot directly observe the mind. What they can see in the body is the neural activity in the brain that correlates with positive or negative mental states and the feelings that arise from them, in ordinary worldly language, we call the body material and the mind immaterial. But in Buddhist philosophical terminology, we cannot simply categorise mind as immaterial. Rather we distinguish between what is visible to the eye, which we call having form and what is invisible to the eye, which we call formless. It is similar to how we might see that humans have physical form, while gods and spirits are formless beings.

To give an example to illustrate this. Although the abbot of Dechenphu Lhakhang is [Genyen Dragpa Melen](#) (guardian protector in Bhutan) , along with his retinue of 100 000 god spirits, known as tsens, we cannot see them with our ordinary eyes. With all our scientific instruments and technology, we can barely detect anything there. The same is true of the Kingdom of Shambhala. Does this mean that these places and Kingdoms are truly formless? That they have no form at all. No that is not quite right. Rather, the time has not yet come, and those of us without the necessary merits and karmic connection, we cannot perceive them. They are concealed or hidden by the divine blessings and protection.

So things that arise from the common karma, shared by sentient beings, they can appear and be perceived in a common shared way by everyone. The reason we perceive everything from the highest peak of existence, down to the lowest hell realm is that the causes for all these appearances exist completely within our own body. From the crown of our head, to the soles of our feet, through the power of interdependent origination. This appears outwardly as external phenomena. Now, a point to be noted, the perceptions that arise in what we call the transcendental meditation. Cannot be perceived through ordinary samadhi meditation. And the perceptions that arise in the ordinary samadhi meditation, cannot be perceived by an untrained, ordinary, mundane mind.

### **Five types of superior vision**

So if scientists cannot even observe the mundane, ordinary mind, how could they possibly observe the perceptions of the samadhi meditation? Let alone transcendental meditation. We human beings possess only one type of vision, our physical fragile eyes. But beyond this limited sight, there exists five superior types of vision, the *divyacakṣu, lha-chen* or divine eye vision. The *wisdom insight, prajñācakṣu, sherab chen*, or the wisdom eye vision. The Dharma vision/eye, *dharmacakṣu sangye chen*, or the *buddhacakṣu, ye shes chen*. And finally, *cho gi chen*, or the Dharma vision.

What these five exalted types of vision can perceive is truly inconceivable and beyond ordinary comprehension. For this reason, we simply cannot conclude that something does not exist merely because scientists have not observed it. This is mainly to dispel the doubt and misconception of people saying that the cosmic structures and configurations described in the Kālacakra teachings have not been observed by the scientists, so these teachings must not be true. So in order to dispel this doubt and misconception, I hereby describe the entire cosmological teachings.

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Now, to talk about the coloured sand mandala, according to the Tantras true intention, the ripening empowerment, especially the vase empowerment, should be bestowed in a coloured sand mandala. The three key practices of melodic chanting (yang), drawing sacred geometric lines (tig) and ritual dance (gar) are central to the secret mantra practice. And these three are practices that are actively flourishing in the monastic centres all around the world. The yang is the melodic chanting. These days, in order to make the chanting pleasing to the ears, people try to change the melodic chanting, which exists in the tradition, for the longest time. People try to change the geometric drawing of the lines, in order to please the current witness. In order to please the patrons. There are also certain accounts where the sacred dances are reformed, just for entertainment purposes. So this is not acceptable. This will be the violations of the Vajrayana teachings.

### **Is it necessary to have a coloured sand mandala?**

There are also people who have a concern that if one has a coloured sand mandala during the empowerment it is a proper complete empowerment, and without it is the empowerment somehow deficient or incomplete? No. That is not how it works. Externally, in the coloured sand mandala, the Bum Wang, the vase empowerment is conferred. Likewise, in the body mandala or the vajra master internally, the secret empowerment is conferred. In the same way, the wisdom empowerment is bestowed in the mandala of the consort. And most secretly, in the mandala of one's own mind, the awakened mind, the fourth word empowerment is bestowed. So for the higher empowerments, a coloured sand mandala is not necessary at all.

When we talk about Kālacakra in general, the text mentions seven empowerments for introducing children to the sand mandala. When they say children, they are not talking about infants, those from birth up to around ten years of age, that is the context. Even though these are considered lower empowerments, the teachings tell us that if both the master and the students receiving the empowerment have completely renounced worldly activities and distractions, then a coloured sand mandala is not necessary.

What is more, in Abhayakara's Indian commentary, it clearly states that any of these three types will work fine for the empowerment, a coloured sand mandala, a painted mandala, or a mandala of directly realizing the nature of mind itself. Additionally, if one needs to confer empowerments of many different deities over many consecutive days, some empowerments take months to complete. So in this case, a painted mandala can be used in place of a sand mandala as verified by Abhayakara, and there is no concern that the empowerment based on painted mandala will be invalid.

It is said that merely seeing the mandala can purify one's obscurations, even if one has committed the biggest heinous crime of killing one's father and mother, it is taught just by perceiving the mandala, one can cleanse all one's negativities accumulated over many eons. It means that if you see the mandala, instead of developing wrong views, if one generates faith and devotion, one can become a suitable vessel for secret Mantrayana practice and one can gradually attain Buddhahood. That is what the teaching is referring to. There are immeasurable benefits to encountering any of these mandalas. For today, the mandala you should focus your attention to, is the mandala here at my right side.

Understand this clearly, the real mandala of the deity assembly, needs to be appear vividly in the space in front of you. Now when it says "space in front of us" what does that mean? I am not talking about the empty void space, some kind of blank nothingness, the space being taught here is the Dharmadhatu space. The space of reality itself, which is free from all obscurations and grasping. The Dharmadhatu space, is the luminous clear aspect of your own purified mind. And because of this

nature, something as vast as Mount Meru can fit within the space of your palm. In actuality, it transcends being either narrow or wide, it is beyond such limitations entirely.

So what I have shared you today is just a basic outline a rough introduction to the history and background of this empowerment ceremony to go to the higher more advanced empowerment. When we proceed to the more advanced empowerments, I will not be able to explain everything in full detail, in the way I am doing now and the reason why it is.

So, think of it this way. Imagine someone dressed beautifully in elegant clothes and fine jewellery. When people see them, everyone thinks how wonderful, how beautiful. There's nothing troubling or disturbing about it. Everyone appreciates what they see physically. But now imagine that same person suddenly appearing completely naked in front of everyone. What would happen? People would be shocked and scandalized. Their minds would be disturbed, wouldn't they? Well, it is similar with these profound tantric teachings. If I were to explain the deepest, the most sacred meaning directly and literally spelling everything out in explicit detail, most people's mind simply will not be ready to receive it properly instead of helping you. It would actually cause confusion and could do more harm than good.

So the empowerment that we will be giving through the sacred words spoken words as I confer the empowerments, I will be reading out the sacred words and what is important is through your devotion and faith in your heart receive the empowerment. That is how the blessings and the blessings of the lineage will enter into your mind streams.

### **The empowerment: bathing ritual**

When our peerless teacher Buddha Shakyamuni was born, gods and goddesses performed a ceremonial abolution for Buddha. And secondly, in ancient time in ancient India when a when a king was enthroned, the first the very first ritual was the empowerment bath. We are following the same tradition here today.

It is vital to know the bathing ritual. It is not like ordinary water washing away physical dirt from your body. The deity, whose very essence is divine, takes the form of water and through this they wash away the impurities of our body, speech, and mind. Today with so many people receiving this empowerment. It would be impractical to physically distribute each empowerment substances, the bathing water, the secret nectar and so forth to everyone present.

More importantly, if these substances of the empowerment were actually handed out, some might develop misconceptions and doubts. In reality, such misconceptions indicates that one is not yet prepared to receive the profound secrets of tantra. So here is what we will do instead. I will be performing the ritual here and you can focus your attention on the reflection in this glass mirror.

As I perform the bathing ritual, you can visualize this way. From the space in front of you, gods and goddesses are pouring the sacred water over you, bathing you completely. As they do this, all your negative karma and obscurations are being completely purified and washed away. When you think about it this way, it will bring a sense of peace and clarity to your mind. So please visualize in this manner.

### **The correct superior motivation, not lower motivations**

The preliminary empowerment right consists of 16 essential dharmas. First essential dharma for the preliminary rights empowerment begins with establishing a proper motivation.

When we speak of motivation there are three levels we must understand clearly. the lesser motivation, the middling motivation, and the supreme motivation. The lesser motivation is simply wishing that all illnesses and negative forces of this present life be pacified and that we obtain some happiness.

The middling motivation is aspiring merely to attain the status of gods or humans in our future lifetimes.

And finally, the supreme motivation. The supreme motivation is the aspiration to attain the complete and perfect state of Buddhahood.

Here in this mandala initiation the first two motivations are absolutely not appropriate. You must you must not enter the mandala with such limited motivation. Instead you must enter the mandala with only this intention to attain complete enlightenment solely for the benefit of others. This is the Buddhist motivation. Wanting to achieve perfect Buddhahood not for your own sake but to be truly helpful to all sentient beings.”

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<sup>i</sup> This transcript and Introduction were originally published on the <https://dakinitranslations.com> website on 20<sup>th</sup> November 2025. It is not for sale, copying or re-publishing. If quotes are used from this transcript please cite the source. See here: <https://dakinitranslations.com/2025/11/20/kalacakra-deity-in-bhutan-2025-je-khenpo-teaching-day-one/>