

**Lama Caroline**

# **The elemental 'shutting down' process**

**Introduction to the gross,  
subtle and very subtle elements**

**EH YAM RAM LAM BAM**

***Transcript - days 4 & 5***

Lama Caroline

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Introduction to the gross, subtle and very subtle elements  
Kunpen Lama Gangchen, Albagnano, Italy

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Transcript: Introduction to the gross, subtle and very subtle elements  
given at Kunpen Lama Gangchen, Albagnano, Italy  
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Lama Caroline, Dorje Kanyen Lhamo, was born in England in 1965. As a child she was fascinated by science, astrology and space exploration. Whilst at the university of London, she began to feel that the scientific approach to reality was too external and conceptual and so began to investigate reality through Buddhist meditation and explore inner space. From 1986 to 1991 she studied Gelugpa Buddhism in Cumbria, England, with Geshe Kelsang Gyatso. Then in 1991 she met her spiritual master, Lama Gangchen Rinpoche, and, impressed by his open modern approach to spirituality, she began to study and collaborate with him. For the past 28 years she has accompanied him on numerous teaching tours and pilgrimages worldwide, promoting non-violence, non-formal education, the NgalSo tradition of Tantric Self-Healing and an inter-religious spiritual forum for world peace. She is the chief editor of Lama Gangchen Peace Publications, which publishes books on Buddhism, peace media and peace education. She is presently editing the NgalSo Gyatso – the collected works of Lama Gangchen that form the basis of the NgalSo tradition.

In August 2000, in Tibet, she was recognised by Lama Gangchen as Lama Dorje Khanyen Lhamo (Goddess Who Upholds and Transmits the Vajra Speech of the Buddha) and is one of the two lineage holders of the NgalSo teachings.

She has done numerous meditation retreats of the Mahayana and Vajrayana traditions and teaches courses and workshops on Buddhist philosophy, tantra, medicine, yoga and astrology. She has a diploma in Inter-religious Studies from the Open University (UK), an MA (with merit) in Buddhist studies from the University of Sunderland (UK) and is about to embark on a BA in Tibetan and Sanskrit.

*We were very fortunate to receive a commentary on the Five Supreme Healers and Five Element Mothers during a course from the 2nd to 12th August 2017 at Albagnano Healing Meditation Centre in Italy. The course was given by Lama Caroline who since 28 years has worked alongside Lama Gangchen recording his teachings and producing the books and sadhanas we now have. The following is a lightly edited transcript of the second half of this course - concentrating on the Great Element Mothers and the element absorption practices.*

*To follow this text it will be useful to have the following books and sadhanas from Lama Gangchen Peace Publications:*

- *Making Peace with the Environment*
- *Crystal massage method to create the pure energy form of light and nectar - the secret commitment assembly of Guyusamaja*
- *The process of death, bardo and rebirth according to tantra*

## Day 4

Yesterday we started to talk about what are called the eight dissolutions in the Guyusamaja Tantra and in the Tantric Grounds and Paths commentary. We started to explain this very important knowledge and information about how the earth element absorbs into the water element, the water into fire, fire into wind, wind into space and then about how our subconscious manifests - the white, red and black visions and then the clear light.

We talked about the earth element and about making peace with the earth element. What we need to do, for example, when we meditate on the earth element absorbing is to realise that it is empty of inherent existence. When we meditate on that point and we see the shimmering blue or purplish light, we should try to think *ok this is Great Mother Lochana, the Earth Mother, this is Guru Buddha Lochana taking care of me, helping me, guiding me* and this will give us a very good feeling. As the mind goes deeper and deeper, it experiences different kinds of emotions, and different things come up - of course what comes up depends on each one of us. Each one of us has done different things in our life so we all have different things registered in our energy, in our subconscious, some things happy and others are not so happy. What we want is for the positive side to always come up! We should think: *Guru Buddha, my guru manifesting in the form of the Great Earth Mother, please help me. Then: Great Water Mother, my guru manifesting in the form of the Great Water mother, please help me to have a positive experience through all the absorptions.*

Yesterday one of the things I was talking about was the inner signs of the elements, and these signs are a natural human experience not something extra-terrestrial, they are just something that happen to us naturally but it seems that most of us are normally too distracted, tired or busy to notice. We think if we can see these things we're

a great yogi or yogini, but actually we all have these experiences. We have to train to recognise them and to have more clarity, and also in how to do something with our subtle mind that arises at that time. For example, we've all been going to bed for a very, very long time, for many years, so we have the experience that when we are going to sleep sometimes there is sometimes a kind of flash of light that wakes us up. This is our subtle mind manifesting. For sure we've all experienced this but we don't recognise it because we sleep heavily or we are too tired or stressed, but many times we experience this flash of light, then we have to go back to sleep because we woke up. It's our own mind, it's not supernatural, we are not being abducted by aliens, it is our subtle mind, our subconscious mind manifesting in a natural and normal way. Our mind is actually, as Rinpoche says, always full of light, except for one moment when it goes dark but then the light comes back again. We have many, many different kinds of lights inside our own mind, our own consciousness. Many people have these experiences, it's normal.

### **Comment**

*Hello everybody, yesterday I was asking Lama Caroline because I was reading Lama Gangchen's Tibetan medicine book and I was reading about the signs of death and I thought that I see many signs of those elements and I've been practicing for about 4 years. First it happened when I was doing Self-Healing without realising what I was actually doing. I'm not a profound practitioner or anything but then I started have dreams, first it was all the time that I was drowning, ship wrecks - they were terrifying. All the time too much water and then last year I dreamt that everything started burning down, my house was burning down and I felt it as I touched things and I needed to get them out and it was also terrifying and the other dreams were my son was in the car and the car was burning. I thought it is really not very good. The last one was when I came here to the retreat, then there was this like dream paralysis, you know that you actually know that you are dreaming but you can't get back to your ordinary self and it is a terrifying feeling and I had this my whole life. Now when I was here, in my dream*

*I knew I had to get up and the earth started shaking and I could feel it and things were falling on me in the dream and I knew I had to get back into my body because it was a dream. When these things were happening five years ago I was completely panicking because I didn't know what to do and now I'm also panicking and I think oh my god I'm not going to wake up so what should I do and I am completely afraid but then I start thinking intellectually ok now I should do something - it's the death process and the first thing that comes into my mind I do whether it's Guru Yoga or whatever.*

## **LAMA KHYEN LAMA KHYEN**

The first thing we should do in that situation is call the guru. Since 32 years I've been a Buddhist and many people have shared these kinds of experiences with me. These are experiences of our inner elements and they are actually quite normal. The important thing is don't panic, we're not dying, don't worry, it's good to get in touch with the elements because this is actually one of our authentic human experiences. We are made of elements and consciousness and we have methods to wake them up. This is exactly why we have this *Making Peace with the Elements* practice so when the elements arise and absorb, and they absorb every night when we go to sleep, we need the energy to do it purely and peacefully.

For example, what happens first when the earth element absorbs - it says in the book it's like a tsunami, or an earthquake because that's what we feel unless we're very lucky and very pure. With the practice we start to pacify these energies and they start to appear in a better way, a nicer way, even in a funny way. It's like we are making sure that the positive side of that experience manifests. Then we have the experience of a huge amount of water but with a nice feeling, we are changing the quality of the experience. This is exactly what we are trying to do with the practice, because these element absorptions will happen to us sooner or later. There's no need to be afraid. At



first it's a bit like shaking, turbulence, but we can learn how to pacify that experience so it gets better and we can actually spend more time thinking about what this feeling is, it's not truly existent, it's empty of inherent existence, this is really the Great Earth Mother, the Great Fire Mother, Great Wind Mother. As I say this is a feeling, an experience, it's not something intellectual it's actually what will happen to all of us so it's very important that we have this profound method to do something about it.

Sometimes we have dreams about the elements because it's related to the balance of the energies in our body. For example, my mother, she's a very nice person but she's not interested in Buddhism, she likes us and she likes to come in the gompa to have a rest, but since years and years she's had this dream of a tsunami overcoming her village in the middle of England. She has this dream quite often, so I think it's related to some kind of imbalance of energies in her body. Everybody has these things actually, it's quite normal. Maybe people don't share their inner experiences much any more. In modern life we are too busy to look inside, we are so busy looking into our phone and everywhere else that we don't have time to look inside, we don't have space for these things that are actually our own natural experiences.

When we do these practices we gradually develop confidence that our guru is with us, it's very important to believe the guru is with us when we sleep and in all our experiences. Everything is an illusion, it's not truly existing the way we think it is. We also have this whole thing called dream yoga where we start to test the nature of our dreams, the nature of reality. Of course for this we need more awareness and clarity than we have now. We do the preliminary practices, such as mandala offerings and prostrations, to create the causes to have a clearer mind, with more inner energy and more awareness. Rinpoche said something very nice to me this morning, he said there is a long way which is to do all the long sadhanas of Guyusamaja, Heruka, Yamantaka or there is this quick way. He said

it's the same, this sadhana is the quick way because it is the essence of all the tantric practices. Some people like a very long way and some people like a very quick way. He's very kindly giving us the quick way, the essential points of the tantric practices.

I think one important thing to know is that we can't die in a dream unless our karma has expired and we were going to die anyway. For example, let's say we dream we are in a big flood and we get swept away, well we can be swept away but we won't die. Try. This is the fun bit of dream yoga because once we know we can't die, we can start to enjoy the experiences. We can't die in a dream. All the time we have this big fear that we're going to die, but we can't die in a dream. For example, I have many, many dreams - one time I had this dream that I liked very much, in this dream I was on the top of a big skyscraper and then it started to collapse, I thought I was going to die but then I told myself no you're not going to die so let's see what happens. It was like an earthquake, the whole 100 story building fell down around me, so I jumped, just to try. It was just like Matrix, brilliant! Of course we don't always have that awareness, but that time I did and I tried. Try and maybe you will find something interesting and then you will be become more confident in yourself as well. Once we realise this it's ok, it's more interesting. Try. In our dreams we can try to fly in the sky or swim underwater, we can let Dracula bite us or whatever. Then we'll be thinking, ah this is fun.

Sometimes people do die when they are asleep, but to die that way our karma and our breath has to be exhausted. We would receive signs before, so if we haven't had any then go on, jump off into space and see what happens! In dream yoga, first we recognise the dream as a dream and then we recognise everything else like a dream - that it's empty of inherent existence. What we are living now is also a kind of dream, so it all becomes very interesting - that's the idea. However, for these things to work we need more awakened energy inside our body and mind. That's why we train in *NgalSo Tantric Self-Healing* and

the other branches of it. One of the many things we need to do is get our energy inside the central channel, at least a little bit, and they say for the dream yoga to fully work we need to develop what is called the tummo. Anyway, for now we do our best, we can get something, some flash of the actual experience.

**Comment:**

*Sometimes when I dream there are certain situations, for example someone attacks me - what happens is that I realise that it is a dream and I start to howl like a wolf and in that way I gather all the power inside me like a superman and sometimes this howling is loud even other people can hear it. Or I think I am underwater and then I think, I'm dreaming and so I just let go and enjoy it.*

Before someone commented that they feel like they can't move, this is also very common. In the west we have something called the astral body, and everybody gets really excited about it, and there is a meditation with people going out of the body with a cord attached to the navel and this sort of thing. The Vajrayana viewpoint is that we can go out of our body but there is no cord, it's actually our dream body that goes out of our physical body into the dream world but in the morning or whenever it has to go back into the physical body. Sometimes we feel like it's a plane landing, *woosh*, and the feeling of going back into our body can be a bit bumpy. Sometimes we wake-up but our body isn't moving yet because our dream body is still not in our normal body. This is a very normal kind of experience. All these things are very interesting, but we shouldn't get completely excited or obsessed thinking it's something amazing or that we're really special - it's just normal. A normal human experience. It can happen but eventually we wake-up, it's only a few seconds this feeling of not being able to move the limbs, or at the most a few minutes. The western tradition believes there is a kind of subtle cable attaching us to the gross, maybe they are afraid they need this cable or they will fly off into space or something!

In the Indian Vajrayana tradition they explain it differently. It's completely normal to have this kind of experience. There are lots of subtle experiences. If we talk to people then we will find that many people have these experiences. Why? Because we are human beings and we function like this. Maybe we never realised before, maybe we were more unconscious and now we are becoming more conscious about our actual human experience.

**Comment:**

*Years ago I had the same dream each week that I was at the seaside near my house and from the sea would come one huge black wave like a tsunami. So huge, like mountains. I watched all the water come over me then I lost consciousness, black. I always lost consciousness. It was a time that I made a lot of Self-Healing practice and I still had the dream but now it changed. I was inside. I saw again this tsunami and I thought ok it's coming again and again and I don't have any escape but I think I will not die this time, I will wait for the water. I took one very big breath and I say if it comes and closes over me then I will hold my breath and then I will come to the surface and survive, never die. Never kills me again. It comes over me and I say ok now what you do? So what you do now you close over me or you retreat - I spoke to the water. Then after this experience I held my breath and I lived and I'm not afraid anymore.*

Thank you for sharing - you are making peace with your water element. In Rinpoche's *NgalSo Guyusamaja* practice it talks about these interesting things. Maybe we don't really realise what's actually in Rinpoche's books. It's completely normal to dream about the elements. When we meditate on the element absorption, then the dreams come out more clearly. It's like an energy that has always been there but we weren't aware of. At first it manifests a bit too strongly, then afterwards what happens is it becomes more peaceful. We say that we're purifying it - with awareness. Like you were saying: ok I'll hold my breath, when we realise something like this it becomes more calm and more peaceful. Sometimes the dreams are quite strong

but if we continue like we heard before then it will go on in a more peaceful and positive way. What we need to do in our lifetime is work with these experiences. It's not just blah blah blah, yeah ok I did my practice - we have to work like this because these things will come up when we go to sleep, when we are dreaming and in our meditation. Obviously this is what we want - to recognise and clean the elements, for example **LAM LAM LAM, LAM HO SHUDDHE SHUDDHE SOHA**. If we clean the energy, then we receive all the positive energy relating to that element. Rinpoche has shown us very clearly what to do.

Let's carry on with the dissolution of the water element. First the earth element dissolves, next the water element dissolves. So we need to recognise, clean and make peace with the water element and have the positive side of that experience. For example, in Rinpoche's book *Making Peace with the Environment*, it says we need to practice the three transformations: transforming death and the fear of dying into the dharmakaya, transforming the bardo and the fear of the bardo into the sambokakaya, transforming rebirth and the fear of being reborn into the nirmanakaya. It says that due to the water element arising repeatedly in our meditations and dreams that the sea storms and tidal waves in the bardo are pacified. Usually we use the word bardo for the time between death and rebirth, although we can actually say there are many bardos. Now, for example, we are in the bardo between birth and death.

When the water element absorbs, what happens? What is the normal water element in our body? It's our saliva, sweat, urine - all the fluids in the body - blood, lymph and so on. The aggregate - remember the Five Supreme Healers are the emptiness of the five aggregates - relating to this element is the feeling aggregate, or lets say our emotions. The part of the body related to the water element is the ears. In oriental medicine, they say if someone has kidney problems we can see it in their ears, for example sometimes people's ears go

red or they swell up and then they know something is wrong with the kidneys, with the water element. Then in the explanation, I'm following the Tantric Grounds and Paths, the basic wisdom related to the water element is called the wisdom of equality. We are normally aware of pleasure, pain and neutral feelings, but we don't normally think of these as equal. We think pleasure is nice, pain is horrible and the rest we ignore as much as possible. We have some kind of feeling that pain truly hurts, pleasure truly doesn't, but in fact pleasant feelings can change into unpleasant ones and vice versa. We need a little bit of detachment towards our feelings and not think this is truly existent otherwise we get this process of obsession. Then we create our personal samsara and it all gets worse and worse.

If we understand how our feelings work then we can make some inner space, emotional space, and stop creating the emotional drama that we call samsara. When the earth element absorbs, for example when we go to sleep, we have a sinking feeling and our eyes shut, hopefully there is this inner mirage-like sign of a shimmering light, then the water element gets stronger and starts to absorb. Then, like when we go to sleep, eventually we can't hear anything anymore. Maybe we live in a noisy neighbourhood but finally we can't hear the noise and we go to sleep - the sound wind or energy stops functioning in our ears. Also another thing, which is not so bad, is that as we get older and we get more aches and pains when we go to sleep the uncomfortable feeling of pain stops - otherwise we can't go to sleep. Sleep can be a great relief if we are in pain. We have the normal sleep experience and this happens everyday, but we are training in meditation and through these very beautiful practices, through the blessings of the guru buddhas, we start to recognise, wake-up, clean and purify the elements. As we meditate, we go further inside - a powerful, nice experience.

The inner sign we experience is smoke, whitish billowing clouds of smoke inside our mind. It's like incense smoke, a nice smoke, not

like a big house fire or something like that. We see in our mind nice, billowing, pleasant smoke. In meditation we can have this experience, and if we do we should think this is the Great Water Mother. It's also possible that we might have dreams about water.

I want to explain what happens normally when we die relating to the water element. When someone is dying, the sign of the water element dissolving is that the body liquids dry up. The body normally produces blood, urine and other liquids. I've seen with friends who were dying, that the liquids in the drainage bag for urine and blood become less and darker as they near death and finally stop altogether. All these things that it says here are completely true based on observation. At a certain point a person who is dying can't hear us anymore. As the water element absorbs, various kinds of emotions relating to the water element arise. If we do this practice then the positive side of these emotions will come up. In the *NgalSo Guyusamaja* sadhana, it says: *Self-generation as Vajrasattva via the three transformations*. It's so beautiful I want to read it to you. It says: *the practice of the three transformations is not only an essential preparation for our death but when we experience the process of the absorption of the five elements it is a practice that is also beneficial for our everyday life, when we become sick or feel tired it means that one of our inner elements or energies is overwhelming the others causing blockages, impurities, negative influences and sicknesses. This practice has the potential to help us improve our health as we learn to look, listen, touch and feel with a more peaceful and positive way. Through rehearsing and becoming familiar with the process of death, bardo and rebirth, by using the natural cycle of the energies as we experience everyday as we fall asleep, dream and wake-up we can make our sicknesses, regrets and negative conditions die - not us.* Any negative experience during the death process such as fear, sadness, attachment and so on only occur because we are creating the causes for them right now during our lifetime. By meditating correctly on the death and rebirth experience we create positive causes and conditions and this ensures that we will have a pure and peaceful death experience. It's so beautiful what

Rinpoche said, so beautiful and true. It then says: *first transformation, transforming death into the path of the truth body. Absorption of the five elements. The earth element absorbs into the water element.*

**LAMA JUNGWA SA CHU TAGME JUNGWA RANGSHIN KHYEN**  
**LAMA** means lama. **JUNGWA** means element. **SA** is earth and **CHU** is water. **TAGME** actually means solitary.

So it means the Mother whose nature is the pure water element and the pure earth element.

All the things we repeat actually mean something. Rinpoche's NgälSo practices mean relax in Tibetan. There are two syllables, like in English, RE-LAX. **NGAL** means the negative causes and conditions we don't want and **SO** means all the good things we do want. **NGAL** goodbye, **SO** yes please!

*It says: the earth element produces the hard parts of our body, our bones, flesh, nails and so on. As it is absorbed and is overwhelmed by our water element our body becomes thinner and weaker, our limbs loosen and we experience a sinking feeling. The power of our eyesight diminishes and everything becomes unclear and dark. We have difficulty to open and close our eyes and finally we go blind. We experience terrifying sensations and the vision of been crushed in a huge earthquake or sinking into quicksand.*

As we can see, all the information from this teaching is inside our sadhana. We just need to understand it. First it explains the negative or normal part **NGAL**. It is the basic experience. We actually want something better than that. **SO** is the positive.

*By the Great Earth and Water Mothers' blessing and energy we can transform all these negative dependently arising experiences into pure crystal earth, Vairochana's mirror-like wisdom and peace quality. Negative forms transform into pure forms and our negative earth energy transforms into the vajra earth energy. We experience the peaceful inner mirage vision,*



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*like shimmering light or like sunlight dancing on rippling water and we feel stable. All gross and subtle manifestations of the earth energy become peaceful and friendly.*

## **MAY I BECOME THE GREAT EARTH MOTHER AS I DIE.**

It means to recognise that this is us, not something outside of our ourselves. It then explains how to do that. This is a very useful meditation. Here in the *NgalSo Guyusamaja* book by Lama Gangchen called *Crystal Massage Method to Create the Pure Energy Form of Light and Nectar*, it explains the meditation on the letter **HUNG** absorbing piece by piece. We can also do the same with the stupa meditation. It's the same meditation.

Many people find the stupa meditation easier, most people find meditating on the Tibetan letter **HUNG** difficult. If we want to do this meditation it's easy, get some paper, cut out - a yellow square, white water disc, red triangle, green half circle and the blue drop, like a stupa. We can stick it on the wall or put it on our tablet or whatever - it's important to be able to see this at least until we can visualise it clearly. We can make it big so that we can still see it if our eyes are failing. Big is better. It's very useful for people who practice dharma, who are into Vajrayana, to stick this on the wall in front of them when they are dying. At that time we're not feeling very well, we're dying, so we want something easy, simple and to the point to visualise. Last year one of our dear friends passed away after 28 years of illness. She was a very incredible person, but finally she needed to pass away like everybody has to. For maybe a year she was bed ridden, and her friends put this stupa meditation on the wall in front of her but they made a very shiny, beautiful, glittery one. She was always looking at it and thinking about the elements. For many, many years she was very strong and not dying. One day we went there and the earth element had fallen off the wall, and we quickly tried to stick it back on but it fell off again and actually that was around the time her

earth element started to absorb. It was an outer sign. It was the sign of the process starting, she died after one week. These things are very interesting. She was a long time friend and disciple of Rinpoche and a practitioner of Yamantaka. Many people thought she was just an 'alternative' Spanish lady, but in the end at the moment of death she showed clearly her inner qualities and I hope we will all do the same in the future. For years she was riddled with cancer - she showed me the scans - full of cancer everywhere. It seemed impossible that she was still alive. The doctor told her 28 years before: *there is no chance you are going to live, come to the hospital and get ready to die*. She said no thanks and never ever went back to the hospital. She came to see Rinpoche instead and he taught her many healing methods and for 28 years she lived very well, she helped many people in Spain and all round the world to make peace with cancer, especially in Andalucia and South America.

Everyday she did Self-Healing and Yamantaka practices based on the Five Supreme Healers and Five Great Mothers. She would do one hour of Yamantaka mantras everyday. Towards the end of her life, Rinpoche sent her a message to say that she now needed to do two hours of Yamantaka. She was a special person who lived a normal life - a house with flowers around the door, lots of children and a cat. Near the end of her life I went a few times to meditate with her, because all our life we are training for that. For example, we were doing Yamantaka Self-Initiation together and at some point it was like her breath kept disappearing. I kept thinking she had died in front of me but she would come back again and laugh at me. It's really true, her breath was absorbing. It's like we are not breathing outside but our breath is still there, our life is still there. Rinpoche made sure that she knew very well how to meditate on the element absorptions: earth into water, water into fire and so on. In her last moment she breathed in and breathed out very softly and she was gone. I don't know if you've ever seen someone die, it's not usually like that. Sometimes it takes a long time and it's not so nice. The breathing gets very uneven.

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But she just breathed in, breathed out and she was gone, very softly. We can all do this if we trust in our guru and our practice. It's not like: *oh, only Milarepa can do this*, of course the great lamas can do it but so can we. We can live in the best way, have a very good life and also die in the best way thanks to the kind gift our gurus are giving us. Getting to know the Great Element Mothers and the absorption of the elements, is a very interesting and useful subject.

Inside this *NgalSo Guyusamaja* sadhana is such important information. Maybe it needs a more beautiful cover but the information inside is perfect. Don't think these old sadhanas are retro or something, this is the best information we can ever have.

### **Question**

*My question is about the visualisation of the Five Mothers. Is it necessary to visualise the shape of the mother? I prefer to visualise them like a light or colour or use a general shape.*

### **Answer**

Rinpoche often says the important thing is the feeling, the energy. In ancient times all these energies were personified into gods, Hindu gods, and then later on when buddhism came along, into buddhas. It's the feeling of the sacred that's important. If we go to Nepal it's full of these archetypal images of the sacred, of the pure human experience. If we look at the *Guyusamaja* sadhana, this is why it says crystal massage - it's more the light, the feeling. Our subconscious sometimes personifies things. For some people elemental forces will appear like a person, as a woman or something - but not for everybody. It depends. If we don't feel comfortable visualising a female guru buddha, we don't have to. Just concentrate on the feeling of the Great Mother Earth. Maybe then our subconscious will make another image, this is possible. Remember that these are energies inside of us, but of course we also have the elements outside so our mind experiences them according to our own karmic impressions and possibilities.

One of my friends told me that last week when we were talking about the Five Supreme Healers, that she had a dream about Amoghasiddhi. I asked her what he looked like. I thought maybe he was a green colour with all the jewels, but she said he was like a smokey coloured man that she just knew was Amoghasiddhi. Our mind works with these energies and interprets them in an individual way. In India, the most beautiful thing is to dress like a King. An Indian King was the best of men, he was the most beautiful, the richest, the most everything. This is most people's deep seated or open wish when they are young, and then when they realise they are not the most beautiful, powerful, richest etc they have a crisis! The Supreme Healers are personified like that - as the best of men. Actually the Buddha's name Gautama means 'leader of the herd' or 'best of cows', cows are a very holy thing in Hindu society, so we can see its similar.

If we look at Buddhist art over the centuries, people have perceived buddhas and bodhisattvas in many different forms, according to their own cultural backgrounds and inner impressions. For example, Vajrapani appears as a greek god, like an ugly yaksha-demon, like an handsome Indian prince - it depends on the observer's mind. Whenever Vajrapani, Amoghasiddhi, an awakened being or Guru-Buddha appears in our mind, in meditation or in a dream, there is a very special amazing energy and feeling that goes together with it. In Vajrayana we use a lot of different symbols and images because they speak the language of our subconscious. All the symbols, mantras, mudras and so on, in the tantras, talk to our subconscious. The symbols are better than thousands of words, they are like a direct conversation with the subtle mind. **LAM, BAM** is talking directly to the subtle mind, and all the symbols such as vajras, bells, colours, mudras and so on, are a direct conversation with the subtle body and mind - it's not conceptual stuff like *blah, blah, blah*. The subtle body and mind doesn't listen to that.

Lama Caroline

### **Comment**

*I have difficulty in visualising the letters.*

### **Answer**

Then just feel it. **LAMMMMMM**. Maybe we can't see it but we can feel it. The zero point is the vibration. That's why we say **LAM LAM LAM**. We say it inside ourselves. The form represents a sound, the shape is actually the symbol of a sound. Most important is to make the sound and feel it vibrating inside, if possible with colour. If we can't manage the colour we can at least manage the vibration. Everybody can say **AH** or **YAM** or **BAM**, if we can do the rest it's nice, if not it doesn't matter. For example, A in English and in other western languages is like this - A. But A is not truly an A. If we check what's really there, there are three lines, / and - and \, and based on these three lines, because someone told us it was so, we impute the sound A. A is just the symbol we use to represent the sound A.

On a page there is not a A sound, there is the symbol of the A sound. Someone was just saying that each colour also has a different frequency. A frequency in terms of vibration. One thing is our scientific view of this, and yes there are different frequencies that we can measure with a machine, but in Sanskrit **YA** has a black colour, **RA** has a red colour - sounds have colours. This is true. Different sounds are associated with different colours since ancient times. In English and Italian we have A B C, vowels and consonants, but in Sanskrit they are all coloured according to the elements. Some parts of the alphabet manifest fire energy, some wind, others water and earth and so on. So when we say mantras, it's actually producing different elemental vibrations. I passed through a phase of colouring in mantras because I wanted to see what elements were coming out, like music. What's coming out? There is all sorts of fascinating stuff we can do when we practice NgalSo. This is one reason why mantras work because they have these elemental vibrations. In Tibetan they say a mantra is something that protects the mind, for example from ordinary appearances and

conceptions, in Sanskrit literally mantra is a tool that changes the mind. This is because mantras are connected with the energy winds and elements, and repeating or intoning them changes something in our subtle body and mind.

## DAY 5

We are on the last day of this course about getting to know the Five Supreme Healer Buddhas and the Five Great Element Mothers which actually means making peace with our five principal emotions and five elements, the same five elements that make up our body and mind, and learning how to use those energies in a pure and positive way. As we know the five elements: space, wind, water, fire and earth are the basis of everything, the basis of our material existence. If our five elements are pure and healthy we are healthier, we have more energy, we have a better quality of life, we have a long life and we can do whatever we want with it. For example, we can have material success or we can use our life in order to try and seek enlightenment, to seek spiritual development. Actually we can do both if we like, not just one or the other. Anyway, if we have a long life we have more time to complete all our projects.

We all want a good life, but the quality of our life is disturbed by our unlimited attachment, our anger, our pride, our jealousy. These emotions upset our mind so much that we don't have a good quality of life because we get into too many emotional dramas that make us unhappy and give problems to ourselves and others. That is also why we emphasise ethics in Buddhism- not because we are uptight puritans or anything like that - but because we want to avoid emotional dramas, to have inner and outer peace and the inner emotional space to work on more interesting things like transforming our emotions and inner elements.

This subject of transforming the five elements into the Five Mothers and the five emotions into the Five Supreme Healers, is very deep, very profound and very interesting. For example, if we understand the five elements then we can learn how to take care of our health, so more or less by taking care of our emotions, our diet and our behaviour we don't need to go to the doctor so much because we are healthy and energetic. It's really works very well if we learn how to apply these principals to our daily life. If we do have an illness - genetic, karmic or from whatever causes - then the dharma, together with medical treatment makes the whole experience a lot better than normal. The buddha said if we get shot by an arrow, don't get shot by two arrows! By this he meant that the first arrow is that we have to pass through old age, sickness and death when we experience pain, discomfort, tiredness and so on. But on top of this we are shot by the second arrow which is fear, anxiety, stress, depression and so on. The buddha said that there is no need for the second painful arrow. Lama Gangchen says the same thing, but in a simpler way - *pain but no suffering!* We all need to remember this when we are not feeling well.

In these past few days we were talking about how our body and mind shut down in a sequence when we go to sleep, just like when we switch off our computer. We call that shutting down sequence going to sleep. Through applying certain meditation techniques we can learn to recognise what is happening during that process and use the experience positively - not just switch off and go to sleep. Of course we all go to sleep and feel better the next day, we have more energy... and that's great but we can do so much more with our experience of going to sleep, dreaming and waking up. We looked at how we go to sleep and the sequence of the elements absorbing one into the other - the shutting down process - and how it also appears in our life as the ageing process in a much slower way and how at the time of our death the same thing happens. Death is like going to sleep but waking up somewhere else. A very important Vajrayana Tibetan Buddhist teaching is how to transform the experience of death into what

we call the dharmakaya, the mind of an enlightened or awakened person. All of us also dream, some people say they don't but this is because they sleep heavily but if we ask them closely they do have some kind of dreams. This dream experience, between going to sleep and waking up, is the basis of transforming the experience we have after death called the bardo. We all wake up in the morning, actually we don't know if we will tomorrow but until now we always woke up... so that experience, if we apply the right techniques according to the lineage of our spiritual masters, we can transform into the rebirth process. If we apply those techniques properly then we can gradually learn to transform the cycle of going to sleep, dreaming and waking up or death, bardo and rebirth. I explained that these are all natural processes and that we and the universe are made up of the same five elements, the same kind of atoms. Because we are made up of the same materials, the same components, the outer world has an effect on us. The same elements we have are found in the outer world - just maybe in a different form. It has been discovered by scientists that most of our atoms are made up of collapsed stars from outside our solar system. We also spoke shortly about what is the earth element in our body and what happens when it starts to absorb. It can absorb when we go to sleep, it can absorb if we are a very good meditator during meditation and it will definitely absorb completely when we die. So there are different times when we can see that happening. We can also see it slowly absorbing as we get older: dentist and optician and osteoporosis.

When we go to sleep we feel like we are sinking into our bed, we feel very nice, comfortable and attached to our bed. Then our eyes shut and actually if we've trained in this meditation then sometimes through our own practice, through the blessings of our guru-buddha, we start to see a sign that looks like the sun reflecting on a swimming pool on a summer's day - a shimmering light. What happens is the element becomes weaker and the energy or *prana* gathers - and as this element energy gets weaker the next one appears more strongly, so the sign



of the earth element absorbing is that the water element manifests in our mind on a subtle level. So the sign is a kind of shimmering, bluish light in our mind. Normally when we go to sleep we have what we call the basic mirror-like wisdom. This means seeing many different things reflected in our mind - just like inside this mirror or even on the reflective screen of my phone I can see thousands of buddhas because we are in the Temple of Heaven and I can also see the reflections of all of you as well - but as we go to sleep our sight becomes unclear and everything goes dark. That's what going to sleep is like. We need to transform these basic experiences. How can we transform them? By recognising them!

I think now most people don't recognise them, so we work with these inner and outer energies so they become stronger, cleaner and more powerful. We restore the energies to their full capacity through the *NgalSo Tantric Self-Healing* practice and then what we try and do - and this is the goal of our practice - is get our *pranas* or energies to gather into our heart chakra when we go to sleep. This means our energies re-enter into our central channel. It is very important to recognise when this is happening. This practice is not just for very good meditators with good concentration. We all go to sleep so this is a good moment to train our mind - that's why I suggested we start by sticking the shapes of the elements on our bedroom wall and making the stupa meditation of the elements when we go to bed. We visualise the earth, water, fire, wind and space inside our body. Actually what we do is either:

- 1) we imagine the elements one by one, like the earth is absorbing, the water becomes brighter then the water absorbs

- 2) that the entire stupa composed of five elements starts to shrink, first it is the size of the inside of our body from the perineum to the crown, and then it starts to shrink. It shrinks and shrinks and shrinks, and we feel like we are going to sleep, into a point in our heart chakra. Then inside our heart chakra it becomes smaller and smaller until it is very tiny.

In the meditation texts it always says we should visualise things the size of a mustard seed, get one out of the kitchen and see how big it is. It's really tiny! We have to visualise the stupa shrinking to that size and finally disappearing completely into inner space. Then we have to see what happens. It's very interesting so try it. This is one of the most powerful meditations we can do. Don't just think it's interesting - really try it - it's free, we can try in our room and visualise the stupa absorbing into our heart or do it like in Rinpoche's book, one element dissolving into the next one from the bottom to the top of the stupa. Try. Anyway we have to go to sleep everyday, so better to think about something positive. Remember until now we always woke up but maybe one day we won't. We always say we should die thinking about something positive, so if we do this mediation then automatically our next life will be positive because we have created the condition for the positive side of our human experience to manifest. There are lots of benefits to doing this meditation, we will also be healthier, less tired... It's a win-win situation and it's free, what more could we ask for!

Next the water element absorbs. Obviously when we go to sleep the fluids in our body don't dry up, that only happens when we die. What happens when we sleep is that because the water element is linked to hearing, even if we live in a very noisy place, finally at some point we don't hear anything anymore. Actually this is good because as we get older sometimes we also have some discomfort, aches and pain, so these sensations disappear from the body when we sleep. As we know if we have pain and we go to sleep we can no longer feel it. That's actually good. The water is dissolving, that means the energy is entering the central channel, maybe at the heart or maybe at one of the other chakras. Usually when we go to sleep it's entering at the heart. If we observe our experience, sometimes we can have this sensation in the middle of our chest of the *pranas* gathering, but if we're too busy thinking about who said what on social media or whatever soap opera we were watching on tv, or whatever emotional

drama we are involved in our lives, then there is no chance to feel this - our mind needs to be a bit more quiet and peaceful. Our modern life is very interesting, super nice, but if we are too much busy with it we miss out on the actual blissful inner experiences of our own bodies and minds. Here in Italy we have the slow food movement, which is nice, but we need a slow life movement as well because we need to re-discover the authentic qualities of our own life. We have to extend the slow food movement to the rest of our life so we can discover and develop the authentic energies and qualities that are already existing within us. It doesn't mean slow like a sloth it means we rediscover more qualities. To discover all these deeper levels of human existence actually gives quality and joy to our life.

When the water energy dissolves into the central channel the fire element manifests. Sometimes we just see this naturally but if we concentrate on the elements like Rinpoche suggests then there is more chance of seeing the sign and they say it's kind of like billowing incense smoke, a pleasant smoke, like some movement in our mind. It's like everything is becoming more ethereal. Next the fire element dissolves into the wind element. What this means for example, is that when we go to sleep our body gets a little cooler because we lose the heat, that's why we need a blanket. If we watch somebody in bed going to sleep, their breathe also becomes much more subtle. Usually our mind is busy with this person, that person, what they are doing, their affairs, their business and so on, but at this point it all kind of dissolves - thankfully we don't care anymore - and we just go to sleep. This happens because the fire element dissolves. Another thing that happens when the fire wind dissolves is that we can't digest. Of course in normal life when we are asleep our body still digests but it's better if we don't get up in the middle of the night and eat a focaccia with parmesan because our body is shutting down and it just kind of sits there. It's not so healthy. I like eating and drinking, I'm not a fanatic, but definitely getting up in the middle of the night and having a huge sandwich is not healthy. In fact what happens is

that we can't sleep because it's blocking the natural energy cycle of our body. The inner sign of the fire element dissolving into wind is the fire-flies vision, they say fire flies but they are not like our green ones, they are like lots of orange points of light in our mind. It's like when we throw a piece of wood onto a bonfire that's almost out and all the sparks fly up into the night sky. We see many orange lights in our mind. This is the sign of the fire element dissolving into the wind element.

Now the wind element dissolves into the consciousness. Remember I'm talking about when we are going to sleep or when we are meditating. I talked before about the death process and also about ageing but I think going to sleep is the more practical one, the everyday experience that we can try and get in touch with. Also we are not afraid of sleep, we like sleep! When we fall asleep we have the sensation of the energy gathering into our heart. These energies are called winds because we can feel them moving. Anyway, at this point, it is what we would actually call going to sleep. The gross mind and gross body are shutting down, but this doesn't mean that we have shut down completely - we still have our subtle body and mind. Here we have the basic wisdom of achieving activities that when we purify, when we see the lack of intrinsic-essence, becomes Supreme Healer Amoghasiddhi. What happens now is we finally - relax! Our mind is generally very busy, but now we are no longer mindful of external activities, the people around us and their activities and so on. Finally we relax and go to sleep. The inner sign is that our mind becomes very dark, remember all this is an inner experience, with a point of orangey light in the centre. Sometimes this point is a bit bigger and shrinks down to a single point, a glowing point in the middle of our mind, a bright orangey colour. It's not an unpleasant darkness, it's kind of interesting because it's our mind.

Our gross body and mind are shutting down and our subtle mind and body are waking up. In the subconscious mind there are quite

a lot of things that could manifest, in fact they say there are a total of 80 possibilities. According to the western scientific or materialistic idea we are just born, our parents have sex and our body based on materials develops, our thoughts come from our bio-chemistry. The Buddhist point of view is that of course our parents make love, of course we inherit our DNA from our parents and so on, but the consciousness, from our past life, enters into the appropriated ovum and sperm of our parents. Appropriated means that we take possession of our parents' ovum and sperm - so basically we are body snatchers! We don't have a body at that point, and so we lay claim to the essence energy of our parents' bodies, their ovum and sperm, and from this our body develops. In buddhism we say we have 'appropriated aggregates' meaning that the body we cling to so strongly, originally was not ours. That's one of the reasons we always have to remember our parents' kindness, regardless of their personalities, as they provided us with our body. The Buddhist view of how we develop in the womb is due to our parent's DNA, the elements, plus karma, plus consciousness. When our mind entered into our parents' ovum and sperm, the two bodhichittas, it's like diving into a swimming pool without any water in it. It's a big shock re-entering into the material world. Our mind enters into the two bodhichittas but the shock of the mind re-entering into the material world knocks us out and we have a kind of amnesia. High beings can re-enter in a more soft, pure and positive way, but for ordinary people it's a big shock.

I'm in the dharma since a long time and many people have told me about flashbacks of their past lives. Nobody told me they were an Egyptian princesses or Maria Antoinette of France or anything like that, the majority of them had experiences of being normal people who were trying their best to meditate. The information is in there, but we need to recover it by meditating. Everything is recorded in our subtle mind. If we read books about reincarnation in the west then most people were in Egyptian temples, all of them were like the best people of their societies. Actually most of us were just normal people.

What I saw with people who told me their experiences, was that we were all just trying to practice - in Tibet and other places - and here we are again still trying. This is what continuing on the path means. To me this seems much more likely to be true. Most likely we were normal people who lived and died and had some strong experiences, not everyone could have worked in those Egyptian temples! Our lives are already special and beautiful enough as they are. Also another thing that happens regarding past life flashbacks, in my opinion, is that mostly people don't remember the huge amount of pleasant things that they experienced. What tends to come back at first and for quite some time are unresolved traumas - which would kind of make sense as these are the things that we didn't digest emotionally and which are blocking our personal growth. These past life flash backs tend to come up during initiations, during retreats, when we have fevers and so on. Of course it's all personal - for each one what we experience depends on what happened to us in the past, on what is stored in our own inner space disc.

The consciousness enters the parents' ovum and sperm and from that we know the embryo develops over 9 months, then out we come. The energetic remains of that first moment, of our personal big bang, remains in the heart chakra. There is what we call the very subtle mind and it is encased in the remains of the red bodhichitta, the female energy from our mother, and the white bodhichitta, the essence of the male energy, from our father. Basically it looks something like a Kinder-egg, the chocolate one, with orange and white foil around it: half orange, half white. We don't have a Kinder-egg inside, but we do have an indestructible drop that is red on the bottom and white on the top - and inside the surprise is our very subtle winds and mind. The essences of the five *pranas* and the very subtle consciousness are there, and this is the part of us that goes on from life to life. Unfortunately we won't remember whether we were Italian, French, German or Tibetan or all the normal things that we did, where we went on holiday and how many partners and houses we had, but the deep

aspect of ourself, the continuum, the changing continuum, survives. Something in the stream will be the similar because its a continuum. Therefore people who spend their life meditating, trying to improve themselves - guess what they'll be doing in the next life if it all goes well? They'll be meditating and trying to improve themselves. We pray in the Lama Chopa: *Oh Guru in my next life may I become one of your close disciples*, this means may I continue to do the same thing and may I continue to improve myself and become a socially useful empathetic person.

When we are conceived our very subtle mind and energy enters our parents' sperm and egg, the two bodhichittas, then we are like a yoghurt with emotional problems! The body is not solid. This is our first experience of this life - being an emotionally disturbed yoghurt - and then we start to develop, our nervous system arises and all the other things. What's amazing, although we know all about embryology these days because we have all this technology, is that the ancient Buddhist masters and Indian Rishis also knew about it. How did they know? Some of the things we can only see under a microscope, they already knew. It's amazing. They explained clearly, without technology, in the Buddhist medical texts the same process we can now see, such as the nervous system developing. They explained exactly what we can now see with all our microscopes, DNA, scans and ultrasounds. We come from the two energies of our father and mother. The white energy from our father, the male energy, creates our bones, nerves, bone marrow and so on. The red energy from our mother, the female energy, creates our flesh, blood and so on. If we look at our parents very closely and compare our own bodies, its really interesting. Anyway personally I can see clearly my bone structure, teeth, hair etc come almost identically from my father and other parts of me from my mum. For example, my mother can open my iPhone with her thumb print - its supposed to be impossible for anyone else to do it, but she can do it. Actually there are three white parts and three red parts of our human bodies and we need all these

six parts to achieve enlightenment. It is said in the dharma texts that it is only as a human being, or in the pure-land of the dakinis and dakas where they also have some kind of human body like us, can enlightenment be achieved. This is one reason that we always pray to have another human rebirth with good conditions to practice the dharma, or to go a pure-land. We never pray to go to heaven or to come back as a dolphin or something like that. Within our body, whether we are a man or woman, we have both male energy and female energy because we all have brains, we all have nervous systems, we all have bones, we all have flesh, we all have blood. The male energy is principally gathered at the crown chakra, maybe it means our brain or our nervous system. The red energy, whether we are a man or a woman, is gathered principally four fingers below our navel. If we're a woman it's kind of obvious because when we menstruate we feel discomfort at this point and we lose red blood, but also men have a red drop at this point in a subtle form. It's very important to take care of these two bodhichittas, it's very important for our health because we want a good life, we want energy, we want happiness, joy, blissful feelings and so on.

We were talking about going to sleep, so now at this point the gross element energies have shut down and our subtle mind manifests. The element energies are gathering into our heart chakra. The white energy from our father, that we have had since our conception, is also gathering into the heart from above. Obviously not 100%, 100% only happens at the time of death but some part is gathering into the heart. In the Tantric Grounds and Paths Commentary, it explains that what happens at this moment is that our gross breathing has not completely absorbed but has become less as it enters the subtle, more internal phase. We have the central channel, our central life energy, then we have two side channels that go down and curl around the central channel and plug into it. Like the caduceus, the symbol of medicine on the pharmacies, the staff of Hermes and the two coiling snakes, symbolising the central channel and the two side channels. They plug



in the central channel below the navel. What happens now at this point is the energy inside gathers and enters into the central channel below the navel. It's like in Rinpoche's practice when we are saying **OMMMMMMMMM** - we always go to the point 4 fingers below the navel and then we say **OMMMMM**, **OMMMMM** and this has a very big meaning. We should practice the best we can, with faith, and keep doing it as often as possible for a longtime. Then it starts to reveal itself. If we practice the meditations in *NgalSo Tantric Self-Healing* and use Rinpoche's methods like Guyusamaja, Heruka and so on, we are also connecting with our spiritual lineage, with blessings, unbroken from our gurus and the buddhas of the past generations.

If we create all these conditions together then we start to see things more clearly, but for example we've all probably seen this experience of what's called the white vision. When we go to sleep, I think everybody has had this experience of seeing a flash of light. True or not true? Most people have had the experience of going to sleep and then waking back up, with this light flash inside our head or mind. This is when the gross elements have absorbed and the white vision is manifesting. Maybe without doing anything we have this natural experience but what we want is to get a deeper, stronger, more powerful experience. What happens at this moment, normally, is that the subtle minds will start to manifest. In that moment 33 different possible emotional states can manifest. Some are positive, some are negative. Obviously what we want is for the positive side to manifest. Let's go back to Lama Gangchen's Guyusamaja sadhana, we should all have one of these it's such an interesting and beautiful text. It's such positive information we can use. It says: *The space element absorbs and the subtle mind manifests.*

**LAMA JUNGWA NAMKHA TAGME YUM KYE RANGSHIN KHYEN**

**Lama Jinajika Khyen**

**Lama Great Space Mother, All-Knowing One**

**Lama Jinajika Vairochana, All-Knowing One**

As we know from Lama Gangchen's practices, the subtle minds are linked with the energies of both an element and a Supreme Healer. In Guyusamaja, which we take many of our teachings from, the white vision is related to Supreme Healer Vairochana, the red vision to Supreme Healer Amitabha, and the black vision to Supreme Healer Akshobya. We talked before about the wind dissolving into space, now the gross space element is absorbing so it's like the two elements are working together. We need to purify that experience and manifest the positive side of our mind when we have what is called the empty white vision. In this book it's talking about transforming death, but now we are talking about transforming going to sleep. In the Ngalso Guyusamaja sadhana it continues: *NGAL, when our gross breathing ceases, the two energy currents in our right and left channels fail and our life and mental energies gather into the central channel and finally into our heart chakra. We feel like we are lost in the vast expanse of outer space. Then: SO, By the Great Space Mother's blessing we now have the special opportunity to connect with the non-dual energy within our central channel because the energy currents of our right and left channel which cause our dualistic perception of reality no longer function. All gross and subtle manifestations of the space energy become peaceful and friendly.*

They have become peaceful and friendly because all our life we are doing **EH YAM RAM LAM BAM SHUDDHE SHUDDHE SOHA**. We are doing all these element meditations and *Tantric Self-Healing*, and that's how they become peaceful and friendly, just by themselves they don't.

*The White Vision.* Here it says the three visions of pure crystal light, so it's talking about the light inside our own consciousness. People are afraid to die and one of the reasons, apart from becoming nothing, is the darkness but actually when we start to meditate we go into our own mind and there is lots of light in there. *Ngäl: when the white vision arises due to the dissolution of our essential male energy we feel overwhelmed by fear or that we are lost in a huge white hole. We experience the 25 dark and*

*destructive minds caused by our unlimited attachment and unbalanced male energy.* Here's it's explaining that there are 33 possible experiences. It doesn't mean that all these minds will manifest, because it depends on what kind of experiences we had and what imprints we put into our mind. There is a very old film called Flatliners. It's about a group of medical students who decide they want to investigate death. They inject some kind of drug, to stop their hearts. One at a time they are injected with the drug and then they wait 1,2,3 minutes and then they use electricity to shock them back to life. Don't try it at home! It's just a film - but they start to have these weird experiences because what happens is that their subconscious is activated. Some of them have very beautiful experiences and others have really horrible experiences. Why? It depends on their behaviour during life. For example, one guy was really horrible, rude and sexist, so he has to go and apologise to all the women he offended to stop the visions in his subconscious. His vision was that everywhere he went all the women complained at him and when he came back from death, his subconscious wouldn't stop. Each one of the medical students has to go back and make amends in order to change their subconscious minds. This film shows this idea very well.

Here, in Rinpoche's book, there are 33 minds linked to the white vision. In the Tantric Grounds and Paths they list all 33 but Lama Gangchen divides everything into **Ngal** and **So**: negative causes and conditions and positive causes and conditions. It shows the kind of things that could manifest at that point. Which ones manifest depends on us, hence we need to create positive causes and conditions. We should work with the elements, think about our guru, think about positive things. This is why all religions such as Catholicism have benefit at the time of death, because in the moment of death the person has the last rite of their tradition and they are thinking about Jesus or Madonna - this is positive so their minds will go in a positive direction. Each religion has something positive. That's what religions are for - to make the mind go in the right way in the last moment,

so people die in a peaceful and positive way. This is one reason why we respect very much all other religious and spiritual traditions. Each one has a really important value, especially in the moment of death - it's helping the people who follow that tradition. Of course we have our way and for us it's the best, but all those other millions and billions of people, they also have their own way which is the best and most beneficial for them.

When we train in this meditation, first we might have this flash of light spontaneously when we go to bed but sometimes it may appear for a bit longer or be a bit stronger. They say in the Tantric Grounds and Paths, the sensation is like a big empty space, a sky, but there is this brilliant white moon, this brilliant white light. It depends on us, maybe we have one flash and then it gets stronger until it's like looking directly into a very full moon, very bright and powerful - this is our own subtle mind manifesting. We have the feeling of it coming from above because the white bodhichitta in our crown chakra descends. If we do Rinpoche's practice this will actually manifest. I have a friend in Spain and he was doing *Self-Healing* regularly for a couple of years and at a certain point he developed a kind of samadhi - when he meditates even if we poke him with a stick or a pen, and I tried this to check if it was true or not, he really doesn't feel anything. It's amazing. At first it was kind of fun, seeing a friend in deep meditation and then checking how much it takes to disturb them, but finally we stopped and let him get on with it. He's developed this very powerful concentration, he can absorb into his subtle mind, and we were all asking how he did it. He said he was just doing *Self-Healing*, nothing extra, and then one day -*BAM*- it just happened.

In our tradition, thankfully, we have many great masters, those who have passed away and also fortunately we also have many still living masters - so don't think that we can't do it too! I've seen with friends who are not called Tulku or Rinpoche that things happen when we do this practice. Our whole mind becomes full of this incredible, bright

moonlight. Rinpoche has really given us everything, now we just need to apply it.

There's a big list of emotional experiences related to the white vision, the red vision and the black vision. Basically, we have male and female energy and from these arise all kinds of different emotions relating to them. It seems to me that the male part is more related to aversion and the female part is more related to attraction. This explains a lot about the so called battle of the sexes: men are always running away from the relationship and women are always running after them! There is always this unresolved dynamic between men and women. It's because of these two energies. Even here at the time of death it's coming out! I'm joking!! We all have these two energies inside ourselves whether we are a man or a woman. We all have feelings of aversion and attraction, but they link one side to the male and one side to the female. The negative side of the white vision is fear, we can be very afraid of death and doubt that God or Buddha is of any use, we can feel very depressed and very negative. This is what we want to transform - this strong fear of death. There is also craving for life, not wanting to die.

In the Lam Rim teachings it explains in the 12 links of interdependence, how we come back into samsara again and again. What brings us back is that we don't want to die. This strong grasping onto life is a basic human feeling. It is a feeling we need to transform and accept before we do pass away. Basically this first one, the negative side of the white vision, is all the things we are afraid of, for example dying with fear, dying in pain, dying without feeling spiritually protected, our mind is shaking in a very strong way and that is what we are all afraid of. We are afraid that this experience will happen to us. However, if we practice then at that moment what will manifest instead is all kinds of nice emotional experiences like inner peace, happiness, certainty that our spiritual path really works, that it's true, and that death is not the end, we have a strong feeling of certainty like a huge sense of relief.

Through our practice we can cancel fear and pain and have a very positive and good experience instead. So doing this practice of the elements absorbing, white vision, red vision, black vision and clear light is really the best insurance policy we can invest in.

In Rinpoche's Guyusamaja text it says: **OM SHVETA PURUSHA BODHICHITTA DRISHTI**. Why do we say this in Sanskrit, what for? It is because it has a very particular deep, profound meaning and vibration. In Sanskrit each word has many levels, more than in our European languages. It's really deep and important to keep Sanskrit in the mantras.

### **OM SHVETA PURUSHA BODHICHITTA DRISHTI**

Om white male bodhichitta vision

### **OM SHVETA PURUSHA BODHICHITTA DRISHTI SHUDDHE SHUDDHE SOHA**

May the fear and negative concepts of the over-whelming full moon vision be purified.

*So: By the blessings of Jinajika, father and mother, we can experience inner peace, the 8 positive concepts and the inner lights of contentment when the white bodhichitta vision appears. By these blessings we are able to recognise the brilliant inner moonlight as the pure crystal energy of Jinajika-Vairochana. We can achieve the mirror-like wisdom, the vajra body and the peace siddhi when the 33 subtle male concepts absorb.*

If we do our practice then, sooner or later, we will see some of this and we will think: *wow it's true, it's true and therefore I don't need to be so afraid*. Of course we are all afraid to die, we all want to live but thanks to our gurus, such as Rinpoche and other great masters, we have an insurance policy. We can think: It seems to me that what it's saying here is true, because even though I'm not having a huge experience, I'm having some kind of experience so therefore if I keep on practicing I can assume that my experience will get better. It's like anything - if

we practice we get better at it. What this gives us is a huge sense of relief. All the time, like Rinpoche says, we are very much motivated in our life by fear. An underlying fear. This sense of relief we feel is like taking refuge: *yes it's true the Buddha can protect me, yes the dharma is true, if I rely on my gurus teachings everything will be ok.* We start to really take refuge on a deeper level, not just *I'm a Buddhist blah, blah, blah.* It becomes a real experience because we know the dharma is true. The Buddha can protect us. Why do we take refuge? Because of fear and faith. What do we fear? Death! Buddha can protect us from an ordinary death. If we don't believe this, then we should do the *Self-Healing* practice and get some feeling for ourself, we will know ourself. Buddha Shakyamuni said you don't have to believe anything - just try it and make your own conclusion. Do the practice and you will see!

**OM SHVETA PURUSHA BODHICITTA DRISHTI SHANTI  
KURUYE SOHA**

**OM SHVETA PURUSHA BODHICITTA DRISHTI PUSTRIM  
KURUYE SOHA**

**OM SHVETA PURUSHA BODHICITTA DRISHTI ATI KHYANA  
ATI KITI SOHA**

**OM AH JINAJIKA OM HUM**

Rinpoche is always repeating these mantras with us, he's actually tried to make something that we can repeat. Don't think that Rinpoche is just making this up because maybe we got that impression, but it's not true at all. I have photocopies of all Rinpoche's collection of texts and Rinpoche has received all these teachings from his guru. I know because I have Rinpoche's notes, handwritten, from when he received them from his teachers, from Kyabje Trijang Rinpoche, Kyabje Song Rinpoche... this is our lineage. Rinpoche is a great yogi and what he's teaching us is exactly what the yogic practices of our lineage are. He's very kind. He says he doesn't want to take anything with him to the cemetery, he wants to share everything with us. He's extremely kind

to show the true essence of his practices to us. These practices actually go back through many, many generations of yogis and yoginis.

**SHANTI KURUYE SOHA** may everything be pacified.

**PUSTRIM KURIYE SOHA** may everything increase.

In 1991 when Rinpoche said he was going to make a practice called *Self-Healing*, and asked me to write it down, he wasn't talking very much English, so I got a little pocket notebook thinking it would be enough. We started and until now we never finished! I checked once and I have more than 18,000 pages written down so far. 18000 pages and 4 laptops later and he is still going strong. He still has many things to share. I came to Italy because I wanted to study with Rinpoche - I already had other Buddhist masters, lucky for me - but I wondered why Rinpoche's teaching was so different from all the other teachings. I'd already studied about Heruka, Guyusamaja, Lam Rim - I knew something about it but I didn't understand why Rinpoche's practice was completely different. It's because Rinpoche is truly sharing his tradition with us. I know this now because I learnt Tibetan and Sanskrit and did Buddhist Studies with Tibetan masters and at University and I have all Rinpoche's books, so I can look back through the history of the Gelugpa tradition, the Kargyu, Sakya, Nyingmapa and Kadampa traditions, and back through the Indian Thervadan, Mahayana and Vajrayana schools and see exactly what Rinpoche is doing. He's taking out the yogic practices of his tradition and sharing them with us - that's why ours is different. We are really so lucky, so fortunate to have Rinpoche as our master.

When the elements have absorbed the subtle minds arise. First there is the white vision when the male part of our subconscious manifests. Here in our *Element Absorption* book it's all in pictures. White bodhichitta in the crown and then it arises as **OM** and then it arises as Supreme Healer Vairochana. All these pictures are talking to our subtle mind, our subconscious. We shouldn't think it's like kindergarten or



something like this. Our subconscious understands this language of images, sounds, gestures, energies... It's not interested in ordinary information, in conceptual things. The subconscious works through this. That's why our Temple of Heaven is full of images because we want to work with the subconscious and heal and purify it. We want to heal the mind on many different levels and get enlightened. Lama Gangchen's books have many different methods to get to the same point, in the Guyusamaja practice we visualise the Tibetan letter **HUNG** dissolving in stages from the bottom into the top, from the earth element into the clear light of bliss. We do this in both the Heruka and Yamantaka practices. This book *Making Peace with the Environment* is more general, it is the essence of the information related to the elements in our tantras. Here we are talking about the element symbols, rather than the parts of the Tibetan letter **HUNG**, absorbing bit by bit which is also very beautiful.

Here in Lama Gangchen's book *Making Peace with Death* it just says the white vision manifests as Supreme Healer Vairochana, and then it says in Tibetan at the place of the crown chakra appears Supreme Healer Vairochana who arises from a white letter **OM** and the vision is like a full moonlight. These books are very good because they are simple and essential. When we die we don't want a big pile of books, maybe we can't even lift up a book, maybe we can't see, the last week for sure we will feel too ill. What we want is a simple easy practice, that's why I was suggesting that we should all make the element symbols and stick them in front of our bed because we need to train in this. It's nice to make a beautiful one and put it on the wall in our room so when we go to sleep we remember to do the meditation. We need to train in working with the elements. If we're very good, we can get this book and do the practice before we go to bed, if not we can stick the elements in front and repeat: **LAM BAM RAM YAM EH, SHUDDHE SHUDDHE SOHA, ATI KHYANA ATI KITI, OM AH HUNG OSEL** - or something like that. What we need is an easy practice. **LAMA KHYEN LAMA KHYEN** *help, help, bless me, please*

*guru*.... Maybe we'll have the fortune to recite the long self-initiations of Heruka, Kalachakra, Guyusamaja, Tara and all that kind of thing in the last months and weeks of our lives, if not maybe we'll be doing this practice and listening to a recording of the Self-Healing practice when we die.

### **LAMA AROLIKA YAB YUM KHYEN**

### **LAMA AROLIKA AMITABHA FATHER AND MOTHER ALL KNOWING ONES**

It explains that at this point appears the red vision, actually it's like a huge red sunset. Sometimes there is a sunset and the whole sky is very red and beautiful - it looks like that. The white vision is like looking into the full moon, brilliant white coming from above, and the red vision is like looking into an incredible beautiful sunset - looking into our own mind. I'm telling you these things because we always think *I can't do it, it's not possible for me, I'm not good enough* but many of us have these experiences already. For example, one friend who has now passed away used to tell me that many times he had this red vision. As we get nearer to death these visions become more apparent. Why? Because we are getting nearer to death. It comes closer, so we do start to have these visions. These visions are real. For example, once I was in Gaunts House in England with Lama Gangchen and there was a completely normal looking British lady who came along for the course. She had never been to a Buddhist course before but she wanted to come because she saw a poster saying that our course was about death. She had had a very strong experience and wanted to see if it was true or not.

She'd had been operated on for some abdominal problem and her heart stopped on the operating table and they had to bring her back. She'd had what we call a near death experience. She said what she felt was that she was looking into a blast furnace, very bright red. It started to get hotter and hotter and then it became like white, brilliant

white, like the white vision. Then she had a very strong feeling to go into the light. She felt if she went into the white light she would never come back. Then later she woke up and was in hospital, feeling bad but still alive. I thought this was very interesting because remember our tantric texts were written from the point of view of men, most of them were written by male yogis. She was just a normal lady who happened to have a near death experience and for her the female part of the mind was manifesting first - the red vision appeared first, and then came the male. I thought this was really interesting and probably true. It's really fascinating. She had never read a Buddhist book - so it wasn't that she'd read about it and then it happened to her.

Because I've been travelling with Rinpoche all around the world for many years, I get to hear people's experiences. It's so interesting. So not just this lady but many people have these experiences and they get magnified, get clearer and nicer when they do the tantric practices. When we do *NgalSo Self-Healing* we work with the elements and their absorptions and so on. All these things are not scary - they are blissful. It's amazing, interesting, blissful and exciting, to have this kind of experience. Each time we have this white and red vision we need to recognise that it doesn't have a truly existing nature. Otherwise we will also grasp at the experience and get over excited and fixated and then it's all going wrong as usual. Our ego will grow - and that's the opposite of what is suppose to be happening. At each stage of the absorptions - earth, water, fire, wind, space, white, red, black, clear light - something happens, we see something and we feel something, but this is empty of its own nature. It is not truly existing. If we feel like this, its wonderful, it's going in the right way.

There are 40 possible emotional experiences which we can have related to the red vision. 22 are kind of negative or **NGAL**, which we definitely don't want, and there are 18 positive ones that we want to develop, or would prefer to have. We need to do our practice again and again and again: **OM AH VAIROCHANA HUNG** - purifying the

white vision, **OM AH AMITABHA HUNG** - purifying the red vision. We need to work with our elements, because this is how we purify these inner experiences. As we can see with Rinpoche, practice means we do hours and hours and again and again, weeks and months and years of this. Why? Because we want these experiences to be pure and positive. The investment is really worth it, we shouldn't think we're wasting our time or that it is boring.

Next is what is called the black vision. The white energy from the father and red energy from the mother have gathered into the heart chakra, into what we call the indestructible drop, where they absorb. Our very subtle mind is inside this indestructible drop. Normally, at the point of falling asleep we get this *pouffffff* feeling of knockout. This is what we are afraid of when we die, this darkness. This black vision. But, it only lasts a moment and then the most subtle mind arises, the clear light mind. In our sadhana it says the white vision is Supreme Healer Vairochana, the red vision is Supreme Healer Amitabha and the black vision is Supreme Healer Akshobya. The thing is that for us Supreme Healer Akshobya is transpersonal. We don't have the same feeling towards Akshobya as we do towards our guru or our protector.

I want to share one idea that I heard when I studied classical Tibetan in a Karma Kagyu Buddhist centre. Students there told me that when they do the black vision they think of the Karmapa's black crown. For them this crown is a very important and powerful symbol, made from dakini hair, so during the black vision they think about the black crown of the Karmapa so they feel comfortable and relaxed. I was thinking that we could do something similar. Maybe we could concentrate on Rinpoche's black beard! I know he doesn't have it anymore but for many years Rinpoche had a black beard. There are many images of him with a black beard around the gompa. When we have the black vision we could think of Rinpoche's black beard. Why? The point is this gives us a very good feeling. We don't like

Lama Caroline

this black vision, we are afraid and think it's horrible, but if we think of Rinpoche's black beard, we get the feeling that the guru is there and this is much better. In my meditation I always visualise Rinpoche with a black beard, its supposed to auspicious. Remember in tantra, that the guru is always visualised as young and healthy, maybe 16 or a bit older. This beard thing is just my idea, but immediately I have a better feeling when I think about the black vision - *oh yes Rinpoche's beard*. When we die we want to feel that our guru is with us. It's why we say **LAMA KHYEN LAMA KHYEN**. Anything that can connect us with the feeling of our guru is the right thing to do.

After the black vision comes the clear light. Unfortunately, today is the last day but in the future there is a lot to say about this subject and we will continue. I'd like to at least conclude today with the words - *clear light* - to create an auspicious interdependence to continue.

To conclude, death, bardo and rebirth, is what we have to experience and transform. The essence of tantra can be seen in the image of the Five Fathers and Five Mothers. It is showing us what we have to do: transform the five impure emotions into the Five Supreme Healers, transform the five elements into the pure experience of the Five Element Mothers, gather the winds and so on. The message is there.

So let's dedicate that we can get closer to the state of awakening in order to find peace and happiness for ourselves and for all other mother sentient beings.

## **Seven limitless prayer**

Limitless love

May all beings have happiness and its causes

Limitless compassion

May all beings be free from suffering and its causes

Limitless joy

May all beings never be separated from the great happiness  
that is beyond all misery

Limitless equanimity

May all beings dwell in equanimity, unaffected by attraction  
to dear ones and aversion to others

Limitless health

May all beings recover from the sicknesses of mind and body  
pollution so that they all enjoy relative and absolute health now and  
forever

Limitless ecological regeneration

May all beings relax in a pure and healthy outer and inner  
environment now and forever

Limitless peace

May all beings enjoy inner and world peace now and forever

The elemental 'shutting down' process  
Albagnano 2018

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