**Transcript of the teachings by Khen Rinpoche Geshe Chonyi on Grounds and Paths of Secret Mantra**

**Root Text:** *Illumination of the Tantric Tradition: The Principles of the Grounds and Paths of the Four Great Secret Classes of Tantra* by Ngawang Palden.

The root text, translated by Ian Coghlan and Voula Zarpani, is included in the course book: *Principles of Buddhist Tantra*, by Kirti Tsenshap Rinpoche, translated and edited by Ian Coghlan and Voula Zarpani, Wisdom Publications, 2011.

The main headings from the book are quoted, indented and in italics, for overall structure.

**Lesson 68 30 June 2018**

The definition vs the etymology of physical isolation. Root text, p. 154—174. More on the etymology: The basis of isolation. Isolation from ordinary appearance and adherence of ordinariness. Meaning of the indivisibility of bliss and emptiness.

**THE DEFINITION VS THE ETYMOLOGY OF PHYSICAL ISOLATION**

We have gone through the first of the five stages of the completion stage—the isolation of body or physical isolation. Did you understand the explanation? When we say, isolation of body, do you have an understanding in your mind of what that is?

Here is a question for you: In order to satisfy the etymology of the isolation of body, what example can you posit? Can you give an example?

*Khen Rinpoche: Does anybody have an example? I just want to know how much you understand. Does anybody have an answer?*

Can you give me an example of the isolation of body?

*Come, come. Quick, quick. I just want to know how much you understand. I don’t know how much you understand. If you really have zero understanding, then I need to repeat everything again.*

*Student 1*: When you have the white appearance, red increase and black near-attainment, that is the time you have physical isolation. Am I right?

*Khen Rinpoche:* *At which part do these occur? This happens in many places, many times. Which part are you talking about? There are also so many different channels. You have to be specific.*

*Student 1:* When the winds reach the central channel but have not reached the heart channel.

*Khen Rinpoche*: This occurs at every point in the isolation of body. Is that a feature of every instance of the isolation of body?

*Student 1:* What do you mean by every instance?

*Khen Rinpoche:* The boundaries of physical isolation “begins *from* the generation of pristine wisdom of the empties derived from causing the winds to enter, abide and dissolve in the central channel due to meditating on the subtle drop at the lower opening. It extends *up to but not including* the generation of pristine wisdom derived from the dissolution of the upper and lower winds in the central channel at the heart.” (p. 152—153). Those are the boundaries. During this period, from its beginning until to where it extends, you have this isolation of body at various points during this period.

Can you give an example of something that satisfies the definition of isolation of body but does not satisfy the etymology of the isolation of body? It is an isolation of body but it does not satisfy the etymology of isolation of body.

Do you understand the question?

*Student 2*: Can you define which part is the definition and which part is the etymology?

*Student 1:* I think the definition is very specific. The etymology is not specific. That’s the difference. For example on page 174, it mentions the lotus being water-born. It means any lotus but it does not have to be in the water as it can be on land as well, right?

*Khen Rinpoche*: *Correct!*

*Somebody answer my question. I just want to know how much you understand. I talked for three hours but you don’t understand a single thing. I don’t know what is wrong. Something is wrong somewhere. I don’t know.*

*Student 1*: Physical isolation can occur during the subtle generation stage and also the completion stage. It can occur in these two stages.

*Khen Rinpoche*: Yes.

*Student 1*: What more do you want to know?

*Khen Rinpoche*: Translator, can you translate once more? You listen carefully to what my question is.

*Sze Gee*: On page 174, you see this explanation in the middle of the page, “Physical solation does not necessarily fully conform to this etymology.” This is saying that something that satisfies the definition of isolation of body may not satisfy the etymology of physical isolation. Rinpoche is asking, “Can you give me an example of something that is a physical isolation that satisfies the definition of physical isolation but it does not satisfy the etymology of physical isolation?” That is the question.

*Khen Rinpoche: No answers? Then today we have to stay here until you get the answer. You must try.*

*Student 2*: Individual withdrawal in post-equipoise where all functional phenomena such as object sense faculties and so forth appear as the manifestation of bliss and emptiness. This is a type of physical isolation but it does not necessarily mean that the winds will be entering the channel.

*Khen Rinpoche: That is not correct. You are still not getting my question.*

You are saying that this state of individual withdrawal of post-equipoise or subsequent attainment is a case where the definition is satisfied but the etymology is not satisfied. Is that what you are saying?

*Khen Rinpoche: That’s why you are not getting my question*.

Give an example of something that is a physical isolation but does not satisfy the etymology of physical isolation. This is my question from beginningless time until now!

*Student 3*: Let’s say you are meditating on *tummo* when the winds dissolve and enter the central channel below at the level of the navel and not at the heart. I think that is physical isolation. At that point in time, there is no appearance of the deities at all because you are meditating on emptiness or you are meditating on something other than the etymology, which are the 20 coarse objects appearing as deities. This is because at that point in time when the winds dissolve in the central channel, the appearance is maybe the white, red and dark appearances. I don’t know. I am not sure. Something like this where there is no appearance. I believe the etymology refers to post-equipoise where everything appears as deities. So, during meditative equipoise itself, this part of the etymology does not apply? That is what I wanted to ask actually.

*Khen Rinpoche:* Take a look at the top of page 174. This passage explains the etymology of the expression, physical isolation or isolation of the body. It says, “the purpose of isolation is to meditate on those as the appearance of bliss or emptiness or as deities.” So, it is not just meditating on those as deities. It is also meditating on those as the appearance of bliss and emptiness.

***Etymology***

**Regarding the etymology …**

**…**

**… or as deities.** (p. 173—174)

When the winds enter the lower end through meditation, one generates the exalted wisdom of white appearance. At that point, one attains the isolation of body. We can say that at that point you have the mind of empty. At that point, there is white appearance. Is that white appearance in the nature of bliss? In that case, won’t it satisfy the etymology?

*Student 4*: This is an example of physical isolation—the appearance of bliss and emptiness to a continuum of a yogi, someone who is on one of the levels of the completion stage, for example, verbal isolation.

*Khen Rinpoche:* You are not getting my question. The question is to give an example of physical isolation. If this person is on the level of verbal isolation, that consciousness cannot be the isolation of the body.

*Student 4*: The appearance of bliss and emptiness—isn’t that not physical isolation?

*Khen Rinpoche*: What are the boundaries of body isolation?

*Student 4:* The boundaries of body isolation will be first entering the central channel up to and before reaching the heart of the central channel.

*Khen Rinpoche*: When one attains verbal isolation, there is no more body isolation, right? Yes or no? Your example putting in verbal isolation is not correct.

*Student 4:* But the text mentions verbal isolation, at the bottom (of page 174).

*Khen Rinpoche*: That is why first you must get my question. That is a different answer, not for this question.

*Student 4*: Physical isolation is seeing appearances as the manifestation of bliss and emptiness or as deities. That’s what we are isolating from.

*Khen Rinpoche*: *Give an example. My question is still one question.*

Give one example of something that is physical isolation that does not satisfy the etymology of physical isolation.

*Student 5:* Can I say that a practitioner who has clear appearance of himself and his environment as a deity? That means I can see myself as my yidam. Then I can also see the environment as the mandala but I cannot yet generate pure view.

*Khen Rinpoche*: Out! In the first place, you are not getting my question. Looks like almost nobody got my question. I am wondering why.

*Student 6*: Sorry, I think I still don’t quite get the technical parts as it is quite profound. I am just going to read from the last lesson …

*Khen Rinpoche*: *It is not profound. It is very simple. I don’t want you to read. I want you to understand and answer my question. If the answer is not correct, then I will ask another question, why and what and so on.*

*Student 7*: Someone who is engaging in a consort practice is able to cause the winds to enter the central channel and cause the four minds to arise. That is a physical isolation but it does not satisfy the etymology of physical isolation because it is not based on the 20 coarse objects.

*Khen Rinpoche*: Why does this not satisfy the etymology? At that time, there is this white appearance. Why doesn’t that not satisfy the etymology?

*Student 7:* Because it is not a physical basis of isolation that is based on the 20 coarse objects.

*Student 4:* Here, the commentary to the root text says, “Verbal isolation conforms to the etymology of physical isolation but it is not a physical isolation” (page 174).

*Khen Rinpoche*: Give me the example you have.

*Student 4*: Therefore, if verbal isolation conforms to the etymology of physical isolation, that means the etymology of the physical isolation need not be within the boundary of the completion stage physical isolation itself. That conforms to the etymology. So, it is the other way round now in that sense.

*Sze Gee*: That is a different question. That is addressing the question of something that is not a physical isolation yet satisfies the etymology of physical isolation. Here, Rinpoche is asking the other way round—something that is the definition but not the etymology.

*Khen Rinpoche*: You are talking about something that satisfies the etymology but not the definition.

*These two questions are different.*

*Last call. You don’t have the answer, then we finish class. We end the class and you bring your answer next Saturday.*

*Student 7*: Mental bliss.

*Khen Rinpoche*: *What kind of mental bliss?*

*Student 7:* Physical isolation has two parts. The first one is individual withdrawal and the second one is absorption. Under absorption, there are five parts and one of them is mental bliss. Mental bliss is a physical isolation. That is the answer to your question.

*Khen Rinpoche:* Explain why it does not satisfy the etymology?

*Student 7*: Because it does not appear as a deity.

*Khen Rinpoche*: *OK. It’s somewhere there. Then I continue.*

You have to try your best every day to remember, to understand properly and retain it. You must generate this motivation, “I am going to learn what physical isolation is. I am going to learn how to answer this question, ‘What is physical isolation?’ I am going to listen to the explanation carefully and I am going to make sure that I know what physical isolation is.”

**MORE ON THE ETYMOLOGY**

*Basis of isolation*

Let us look at this expression, “isolation of body.” What is the body that is the basis of isolation? We posited it as the aggregates of an ordinary person. This means it is the aggregates of form, feeling, discrimination, compositional factors and consciousness that are propelled by ordinary karma and afflictions. So, the bases of isolation are the contaminated appropriated five aggregates that arise from ordinary karma and afflictions.

*Khen Rinpoche: Is this clear? Don’t forget this point.*

*Isolation from ordinary appearance and adherence to ordinariness*

When we say isolation of body, you must understand what that body is. You have to isolate it from something. What does it mean to isolate such a body? Usually these contaminated appropriated five aggregates appear to us as ordinary. We also adhere to them as ordinary. What we want to do is to isolate ourselves from these ordinary appearances and adherence to ordinariness and put a stop to them.

So, in the isolation of body, the body refers to the five contaminated appropriated aggregates that you isolate from ordinary appearances and adherence to ordinariness.

For example, you cause the form aggregate to arise as the body of the deity.

* First, you meditate on emptiness.
* You purify everything into emptiness.
* You ascertain that emptiness.
* The apprehended aspect of that mind ascertaining emptiness arises as the body of the deity.
* The non-dual exalted wisdom of bliss and emptiness arises as the deity.

So, on the occasion of the isolation of body, such exalted wisdom of non-dual bliss and emptiness arises as the deity.

* One meditates on the subtle drop at the lower opening.
* Through the force of this meditation, the winds enter, abide and absorb into the central channel.
* In dependence on this, the four joys are generated.
* One then realizes emptiness.
* The apprehended aspect of this exalted wisdom of non-dual bliss and emptiness then arises as the body of the deity.

Through the force of the winds entering, abiding and absorbing into the central channel, the minds of white appearance, red increase, black near-attainment and the clear light mind arise. Even though this clear light mind is not the fully-fledged clear light mind, the mind has become subtler and subtler during this process. So, at this point of the clear light mind, it is *as if* dualistic appearances have vanished. With this mind, you have to ascertain emptiness and place yourself in meditative equipoise realizing emptiness. At this point, you meditate single-pointedly on emptiness using this clear light mind. This is the meditation on the ultimate deity. During this time there is no appearance of bliss or the deity. This is known as the meditation on the ultimate deity as mentioned in the text.

**THE INDIVISIBILITY OF BLISS AND EMPTINESS**

At this point, even though it is not the case that all dualistic appearances have vanished, it *seems* as though all dualistic appearances have vanished. One meditates as though the object and subject do not have different entities. In this way, one is set in meditative equipoise on emptiness.

During this meditative equipoise, the yogi meditates as though his mind and emptiness have become an indivisible entity so that all that appears appear as the sport or the play of emptiness.

After this, when the yogi arises into subsequent attainment, through the force of that meditative equipoise, everything that appears appear as emptiness. Everything that appears as emptiness also appears as bliss.

This is the significance of saying that bliss and emptiness are indivisible or indivisible bliss and emptiness.

Through the force of such meditative equipoise, when one arises into subsequent attainment or post-equipoise, then any object that appears will appear as a sport of bliss or the appearance of bliss. It appears as a deity.

What does this mean? I have already explained this a few times in the previous sessions. Can someone explain this in a few words? What does it mean to view an object as a sport of bliss? Does it mean that it is one taste, one nature, with all phenomena? Is it the case that all phenomena are in one nature with bliss?

*Student 8:* That means the subject of observation and the object of observation are one. Bliss is emptiness. Emptiness is bliss. Emptiness is not other than bliss. Bliss is not other than emptiness. So, they are one. You see everything as bliss. Is it like that?

Everything is emptiness.

*Khen Rinpoche*: *My question is this. Everything is emptiness is correct. Everything is bliss. Is that correct or not*? Everything is bliss? What is your answer?

*Student 8*: Yes.

*Khen Rinpoche*: Everything is mind?

*Student 8:* Yes. But that’s according to the book. Bliss is empty. Then emptiness is bliss. Emptiness is none other than bliss.

*Khen Rinpoche*: I have explained this twice in the past. If you had paid attention, then you would have developed some understanding. What does it mean to view all phenomena as the nature of bliss?

*Student 9*: When you arise from meditative equipoise, it is the understanding of emptiness. You are able to see that the nature of any object, any phenomenon, is emptiness. In this way, whatever you see, you see its basis is in the nature of emptiness. Then every phenomenon comes to your mind as bliss.

*Khen Rinpoche*: *How?*

*Student 8:* Because whatever phenomenon it may be, its nature is bliss. The nature of every phenomenon is emptiness. Emptiness is bliss. Therefore, bliss is emptiness.

*Khen Rinpoche*: *What does that mean? You say these words but what do you really mean? Sometimes, it sounds so easy but when you try to explain ...*

*Student 8:* Actually I tried to relate this to the mental factor of feeling.

*Khen Rinpoche*: *Don’t go into mental factors. Just do this.*

*Student 8*: Because I am able to get some realization of emptiness, therefore, whatever phenomena I come across, they appear to me as being blissful. This is because my mind is purified of the obscurations that see suffering. So, whatever appears is happiness. It is like the mental factor of feeling. If you feel there is an unpleasant feeling, it is due to non-virtue ripening and suffering comes. So, when I have purified my mind, whatever phenomena I see, the mental feeling of virtue ripens and this results in me experiencing happiness.

*Khen Rinpoche*: *So profound! I am joking!*

* So, the basis of isolation in the isolation of body is the ordinary five aggregates.
* What is it that you want to isolate the basis from? You want to isolate them from the appearance of ordinariness and the adherence to ordinariness.
* What is the method for doing this? The method for you to do this is to meditate on the aggregates however they appear—as the appearance of bliss or as the appearance of deities.

So, when through the force of meditation, the winds enter, abide and absorb into the central channel, eventually, the clear light mind will arise. This subtler mind meditates on emptiness. At this point, there is no appearance of bliss or the appearance of the deity. This means that even though this is the isolation of body, it does not satisfy the etymology of the isolation of body.

How do you posit examples of isolation of body that does not satisfy the etymology? You basically have to bring up those types of absorption (on page 156).

***Absorption where the deities appear***

**Absorption has five types: …**

**…**

**… 5. The concentration of single-pointed mind** (p. 156)

There are five types of absorption. Mental bliss, the bliss of pliancy and concentration are posited on meditative equipoise. So if you posit mental bliss, bliss or concentration of this meditative equipoise, even though they are isolation of body, they do not satisfy the etymology of isolation of body.

After you arise into subsequent attainment, objects can appear. Due to your good meditation during meditative equipoise, when objects appear, they appear as the appearance of bliss. They are in the nature of emptiness and in the appearance of bliss.

When any object—say, the form aggregate—appears, then one meditates on this form aggregate as having the nature of emptiness. Also, one meditates on bliss. This means that bliss and emptiness become of one taste. Even though this is not actually happening—bliss and emptiness being of one taste—the yogi imagines and visualizes that this is so and meditates in that way.

Here, we are *not* saying that bliss is emptiness. We are *not* saying that bliss and emptiness are one nature.

Bliss and the emptiness of that bliss are one nature and are one entity. As said by one of you, “Bliss is emptiness. Emptiness is bliss.”

In the beginning, there are the ordinary aggregates, say, the ordinary form aggregate that is the basis of isolation. In order to isolate that from ordinary appearance and adherence to ordinariness, the yogi meditates on the form aggregate as being in the nature of emptiness. This exalted wisdom of bliss meditates on the nature of emptiness of the form aggregate.

The yogi meditates by imagining that the bliss and emptiness are of one taste. Just as the yogi views the form as the sport of emptiness, the yogi also views this form as a sport of bliss. Why? He views bliss and emptiness as one entity because form and the emptiness of form are one entity. So, the yogi meditates *by imagining* that the emptiness of form and bliss are one taste. He meditates and imagines that they are one nature. Through the force of imagination, the yogi is able to meditate on this form to be the nature of bliss because just as form is the sport of emptiness, it is also viewed as the sport of bliss.

It is *not* the case that form and bliss are the same. They are *not* one entity. Form is matter whereas bliss is consciousness. They cannot be of one entity. The yogi meditates by imagining that just as whatever appears during subsequent attainment is the sport of emptiness, he also imagines that they are the sport of bliss. This makes it possible for whatever to appear during subsequent attainment to appear as the sport of bliss.

As much as whatever appears is able to arise as bliss or as a deity, it serves to increase one’s bliss by the same degree. It becomes an aid to increasing one’s experience of bliss. As much as one is able to increase bliss, one is able to reduce the coarse consciousnesses to the same extent.

By withdrawing the coarse consciousnesses, that serves as a condition for the clear light mind to arise, and for one to meditate on that during meditative equipoise. As much as you are able to increase bliss, by that much you will be able to aid your meditation. This means that through the vanishing of many types of dualistic appearances, you are able to meditate on this exalted wisdom of bliss and emptiness.

* To understand the etymology, you have to know that in this expression, isolation of body, you are isolating the ordinary body from the appearance of ordinariness and the adherence to ordinariness.
* How you do that? By causing everything to appear as the sport of bliss or as the deity.
* How do you cause everything to appear as a sport of bliss? First, you have to understand the nature of emptiness. By understanding emptiness well, you are able to view everything as the nature of emptiness. In that way, you can view everything as the sport of bliss.

It is important for you to understand the meaning of emptiness as explained in the sutra system. In order to practise tantra, you must have an understanding of emptiness. Otherwise, there is no way for you to practise tantra in a detailed way.

So, when we say, “All phenomena are empty.” what does that mean? You have to have an understanding of what we mean when we say, “Form is empty.” If you have a good understanding of emptiness, then there is something you can work with when you are told to view everything as a sport of bliss.

Today, you have to make sure that you are able to understand what physical isolation is. You should be able to explain what physical isolation is, “The isolation of body means this and this ...”

How do you meditate on physical isolation?

* First of all, you have to meditate on the coarse generation stage.
* After that, you meditate on the subtle generation stage.
* After you have completed that, then you meditate on the completion stage.
* To meditate on the completion stage, you first meditate on the isolation of body.

What do you do during the isolation of body?

* You meditate on a subtle drop at the lower opening of the central channel.
* As a result of focussing your mind there, the winds will gather there and this will make the winds enter, abide and absorb into the central channel.
* As a result of the winds entering, abiding and absorbing into the central channel, the four empties will arise and the eight signs will also appear.
* These eight signs are the same eight signs we discussed previously—the appearance of the mirage, smoke, sparks, lamp, white appearance, red increase, black near-attainment and clear light.

There is a wind called the downward voiding wind. This is the wind that is responsible for urination and excretion. When the winds enter the central channel, this downward voiding wind also ascends.

There is this red bodhicitta that we obtain from our mother that mainly resides at our navel. As a result of the winds entering the central channel, the downward voiding wind reverses direction in the central channel. As a result, it ignites this red bodhicitta causing the *tummo* or *candali* that is in the nature of heat to be ignited. Due to it being ignited, this causes the white constituent to melt. This causes the bodhicitta to descend, giving rise to the four joys and the four empties.

As for the arising of these four joys and the four empties, sometimes, they are able to occur in a very coordinated way. However, there are also other situations where, for example, the empty arises first. Then the joy arises. Sometimes, it is the joy that arises first and then the empty will arise. But sometimes, they are able to arise together. These joys arise due to the bodhicitta melting.

The four joys are joy, supreme joy, special joy and innate joy. When these joys arise, the essential point is that you have to use them to meditate on emptiness because when the joys arise, dualistic appearances are reduced to a certain extent. So, you must use these joys to ascertain emptiness.

Among the four descending joys, the best is the fourth one, innate joy. When the melted bodhicitta reaches the secret place, you generate innate joy. The greater your ability to generate this joy or bliss, the greater will be your ability to reduce appearances. The essential point is that when this innate bliss arises, you have to use it to ascertain emptiness. This is because at this point, dualistic appearances have vanished. If you are able to use this mind to ascertain emptiness, that is a mind that realizes emptiness with extraordinary power. So, this is what we mean by exalted wisdom of indivisible bliss and emptiness where bliss and emptiness are non-dual.

During such a meditative equipoise, there are no more dualistic appearances. It is as though dualistic appearances have totally vanished. With that bliss, you meditate on emptiness. It is as though your mind has become the nature of emptiness. This is how you meditate on the exalted wisdom of indivisible bliss and emptiness.

*Emptiness is the object and bliss is the object-possessor*

This bliss and emptiness is such that emptiness is the object and bliss is the object- possessor, the subject. You meditate on emptiness with this bliss as though you are pouring water into water. They are indivisible. With this bliss, you ascertain emptiness and you meditate.

During that time, it is as though there are no more dualistic appearance. You meditate as though there are no dualistic appearances at all. So, besides emptiness, nothing else appears. The yogi meditates on great bliss and emptiness through imagination, imagining that they have become one entity. In reality, they are not one entity. The object, emptiness, and the object-possessor, great bliss, are not one entity. But the yogi meditates by imagining they are one entity.

You have to be careful not to become confused. As we have said just now, bliss and the emptiness of bliss are one entity. But this is not what we are saying here when we say that you meditate on great bliss and emptiness as though they are one entity.

Bliss and the emptiness of bliss—they are one entity. But here you are meditating on bliss and emptiness as being an indivisible entity. In fact, the object and the object- possessor are *not* one entity. But the yogi imagines they are one entity and meditates on them.

I gave this example—form and the emptiness of form—just now. Basically, first, you purify everything into emptiness. Then from this state of emptiness, you meditate on the emptiness of form. Form does not exist inherently. So, form merely appears. If you look for form, you will not be able to find it. In this way, you meditate on the nature of emptiness of form.

* Form is the sport of emptiness.
* Form is in the nature of emptiness.
* From the state of emptiness, form is established.
* Form and the emptiness of form are one entity.

This is precisely what the statement in the *Heart Sutra* means when it says, “Form is empty. Emptiness is form.”

First of all, we already understand that form and the emptiness of form are one entity. So, the yogi understands that form is the sport of emptiness. So, using form as the basis, we can talk about:

* form being in the nature of emptiness
* form being the sport of emptiness
* form having this expression of emptiness

For example, a yogi on a completion stage can meditate on this innate bliss and use this innate bliss to meditate on the emptiness of form.

* This yogi meditates on this innate bliss and the emptiness of form as being one entity, as though all dualistic appearances have vanished.
* The yogi imagines that this innate great bliss and the emptiness of form are like water poured into water and meditates on them as being of one entity.
* The yogi meditates in this way so that innate bliss and the emptiness of form do not appear differently to him.
* Therefore, just as form is the appearance of emptiness, the yogi can meditate on form as the appearance of bliss.

*Khen Rinpoche: If you get that point, that’s it. I think I have repeated this for three classes. I have been repeating the same thing but I am not sure whether you get it. You got it? I don’t think so.*

* The yogi meditates by imagining that this innate great bliss and the emptiness of form are one entity, that these two are indivisible.
* The yogi already understands that form is the appearance of emptiness.
* Now he meditates on this emptiness and bliss as being indivisible.
* Just as he sees form as the appearance of emptiness, he can see form as the appearance of bliss.

*Khen Rinpoche: Okay, now listen. This is the last time. I am not going to repeat anymore. You must get it!*

The yogi is meditating on the equality of emptiness and bliss. He already knows form is the appearance of emptiness. Since emptiness and bliss is indivisible, therefore, form is also the appearance of bliss. Basically, through the power of imagination, whatever appears then appears as the sport of bliss.

If you are able to do that, this means that anything that appears becomes an aid to your bliss increasing. When this bliss becomes greater and greater, dualistic appearances become less and less. So, a lot of dualistic appearances will be eliminated. That will contribute to you being able to generate this innate bliss.

This is what you need to train in:

* Anything that appears is emptiness.
* Anything that is empty is bliss.
* Anything that is bliss is the sport of the deity.

This is like a formula that you see in the tantric texts.

In the beginning of the completion stage, you train in the isolation of body. In this stage, you cause the winds to enter the central channel and as a result of that, you are able to generate the joys. Then using these joys, you have to ascertain emptiness. Eventually, you want to generate innate joy and you want to place yourself in meditative equipoise on emptiness using this innate joy. After meditative equipoise, you arise into subsequent attainment. During subsequent attainment, you want to view everything that appears as the sport of bliss or as deities.

Recall that we talked about the two main divisions.

**Physical isolation is classified in two types: …**

**…**

**… the manifestation of bliss and emptiness** (p. 154)

Physical isolation is thus classified into two types—individual withdrawal and absorption.

**Absorption has five types: …**

**…**

**… 5. The concentration of single-pointed mind** (p. 156)

There are five types of absorption, one of which is analysis. This analysis occurs during the subsequent attainment of the isolation of body. During that time, you meditate on the deities in a detailed way. Therefore, there is an explanation of, for example, the physical isolation of one hundred lineages.

***The four lineages***

**Physical isolation is classified into:…**

**…**

**… one extremely secret lineage** (p. 158)

How are these 100 lineages obtained? Of the 32 deities of the Guhyasamaja tantra, 20 are divided into five each. That gives a total of 100 lineages.

* When these 100 lineages are condensed, you obtain the five tathagata lineages.
* When these five are condensed, you obtain three lineages.
* When these three are condensed further, then you obtain the single lineage of Vajradhara.

So, perhaps these condensed ways of meditation can be called investigation.

There is this stanza from the *Guru Puja* (LC 12) that talks about how you should meditate on the merit field.

Your pure aggregates are the five sugatas;

Your four elements the four consorts;

Your sources, channels, sinews,

And joints are actual bodhisattvas.

The first line of this stanza, “Your five pure aggregates are the five sugatas” means that you meditate on the purified factors of your five aggregates as being the five buddhas. For example, we take the first of the five aggregates, the form aggregate. This is divided into five, according to the five lineages. Take Vairochana as an example. It can be divided into:

* Vairochana of Vairochana
* Vairochana of Ratnasambhava
* Vairochana of Amitabha
* Vairochana of Amoghasiddhi
* Vairochana of Akshobhya

The *Guru Puja* then goes on to talk about how the ten limbs are meditated on as the ten wrathful deities, “Your limbs the wrathful protectors.”

In essence, 20 of the 32 deities of Guhyasamaja are divided into five each, giving a total of 100 lineages. Why are 12 of the 32 deities left out? It is not because they don’t exist. As explained on page 162, it is because they are not explicitly mentioned in the Guhyasamaja *Root Tantra*.

**From the thirty-two deities, …**

**…**

**… This is understood from the *Annotations*.** (p. 162)

It is not that, in general, those 12 deities do not exist. They do exist. If we do not leave out these 12 deities and divide each of the 32 deities into five, we will obtain a total of 160 (i.e., 32x5) lineages.

In the commentaries, there is also mention of six lineages. This means we add Vajradhara to the usual five lineages with Vajradhara being the sixth lineage. If you divide further, you obtain a total of 192 (i.e., 32x6) lineages. How do we obtain 192 lineages? It is because of these six lineages. This means that we can divide each of the 32 deities of Guhyasamaja into six lineages.

*Khen Rinpoche: Correct? This is just to leave some imprint in the mind.*

If you think about it, how would you divide each deity into six lineages? Just now we have:

* Vairochana of Vairochana
* Vairochana of Ratnasambhava
* Vairochana of Amitabha
* Vairochana of Amoghasiddhi
* Vairochana of Akshobhya

If you add a sixth lineage, you will end up with Vairocana Vajradhara.

How do you differentiate between Vairochana of Vairochana and Vairochana of Ratnasambhava? Perhaps Vaironchana of Vairochana is easier to understand. It is just Vairochana. But what if we have Vairochana of Ratnasambhava? Perhaps, this would be a deity that is yellow in colour, just as Ratnasambhava is yellow in colour but it has the implements of Vairochana. If I am not mistaken, I think Vairochana Ratnasambhava will be a yellow-coloured deity holding the implements of Vairochana.

*Khen Rinpoche: It is something like that. I am not sure. Anyway, I don’t think you need those details. Also, I don’t know much details.*

When you are looking at this isolation of body, you understand that this occurs in the completion stage when the winds enter the central channel. So, the winds do *not* enter the central channel during the generation stage.

To make things simpler, we can think of the boundaries in this way. It is the secret place and above but below the heart.

* When the winds enter the central channel, on the level of the isolation of body, the winds enter the central channel at the secret place and above but below the heart.
* When the winds enter the central channel, the four joys are generated. With the joys, one has to ascertain emptiness.
* On top of the four descending joys, there are also the four ascending joys.
* At the end of the four descending joys, you have the innate joy. The joy then reverses direction and ascends, going upwards to the crown of the head.

***The difference in superiority between descending and ascending joys***

**It is said … must be innate joy.** (p. 170)

All the ascending joys are pervaded by innate joy.

That is the explanation of the isolation of body. Do you have any questions on the isolation of the body?

*Question*: During the occasions of individual withdrawal, investigation and analysis, these three states are done in post-meditative equipoise. Are the winds still inside the central channel? If they are, how does the yogi go about his post-equipoise activities?

*Answer*: In order to obtain the isolation of body, the winds have to enter and abide in the central channel. However, during post-meditative equipoise, the winds will not stay there. If the winds stay in the central channel, then one would be still in meditative equipoise.

When one is going through the stages of death, the empties—white appearance, red increase and so on—occur in an exact sequence. However, when one is doing practice, there is no necessity that they arise one after another in exact sequence, i.e., white appearance followed by red increase followed by black near-attainment and so on, i.e., the empty, the great empty and so on. There is no necessity that they arise in that sequence.

If you are meditating, then you have to make great effort for these to arise in sequence. They will not arise in their natural sequence as when one is dying during the death process. When one arises into subsequent attainment and meditates on, for example, the 100 lineages, during those times, the winds don’t have to stay in the central channel.

*Khen Rinpoche: When someone is asking a question, you have to concentrate and pay attention to what is being asked and what my answer is. Otherwise, you will be lost.*

*Question:* So, there will be, for example, appearances of the ordinary limbs of his body to his sense consciousness but his mental consciousness perceives them as manifestation of bliss, emptiness as well as the deities. His mental consciousness overpowers the appearance to the sense consciousness in post-equipoise meditating on the 100 lineages. Is that correct?

*Answer:* Yes.

*Question:* Is innate joy the same as simultaneously born joy?

*Sze Gee:* The literal translation of the Tibetan is “simultaneously born.” Another translation term for it is “innate.” So simultaneously born and innate are just different translations of the same term.

*Question*: Is exalted joy the same as special joy?

*Sze Gee:* Special joy and exalted joy mean the same thing.

*Question*: Regarding generating the four empties, when the winds enter the central channel, what does this actually refer to? What is the role of these four empties in meditative equipoise? Does it refer to the white appearance, red increase and so on?

*Answer:* The four empties correspond to the white appearance, red increase, black near-attainment and clear light. You can think of the set of four empties as equivalent to this other set of four.

* The first of the four empties is empty. This does not refer to the emptiness of inherent existence. Rather, it refers to the dissolution of the 80 indicative conceptions. These occur during the mind of white appearance. So, at the time of white appearance, many kinds of appearances have vanished. At this point, the mind has become very subtle. Besides white appearance, there are no other appearances. This mind of white appearance is such that many appearances have vanished. For that reason, it is called empty. During this stage, if you have a good understanding of emptiness, then you should use this mind of white appearance to ascertain emptiness.
* When we move on to the mind of red increase, it has even fewer appearances compared to the mind of white appearance. Because of that, the mind becomes clearer.
* It is the same when you move on to the mind of black near-attainment. You will have even fewer appearances and greater clarity of mind.
* When you reached the fourth empty, the extreme empty,[[1]](#footnote-1) basically you have the clear light mind, which is a very subtle mind where dualistic appearances have subsided even more than before. As a result of this, the mind becomes even clearer and therefore, the power to realize emptiness becomes greater.

*Question:* Regarding the appearance of the deity during this time, since there are no other mind that is manifesting except for the four empties, does that mean the appearance of the deity comes from the apprehended aspect of these four subtle minds, say, the mind of white appearance?

*Answer:* Actually I have already explained this before. Perhaps you did not catch it. These are stages of meditative equipoise and during meditative equipoise, deities cannot appear. Deities appear only after you arise into post-equipoise or subsequent attainment.

*Khen Rinpoche: OK. I think you should all be clear about the isolation of the body. Make sure you understand something. That is the point.*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Four Joys** | |
| Joy | When the bodhicitta moves from the crown to the throat |
| Supreme joy | When the bodhicitta moves from the throat to the heart |
| Special joy | When the bodhicitta moves from the heart to the navel |
| Innate joy | When the bodhicitta moves from the navel to the secret place |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Four Empties** | |
| Empty | White appearance |
| Great empty | Red increase |
| All empty | Black near- attainment |
| Extreme empty | Clear light |

Interpreted by Toh Sze Gee; Transcribing team: Phuah Soon Ek, Lau Geok Chin, Alison Wong, Rachel

Tan, Aki Yeo, Julia Koh and Vivien Ng; edited by Cecilia Tsong.

1. Refer page, 11, Lesson 66. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)