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## **WINDS, CHANNELS AND DROPS**

By His Eminence Garchen Triptul Rinpoche

His Eminence Garchen Rinpoche: "So today, my dharma friends, I will give an introduction into this precious human incarnation is the vehicle that will bring us to the pure state of Buddhahood. And depending on the virtues we are practicing, we can use that human body to go up, because the virtues we are practicing in the human body are very powerful. But also the non-virtuous actions we are practicing, they will send us down. Those going up and going down depends on the human body. Therefore, this precious human incarnation is like the chungchur (ladder) between going up and going down. There are many methods to apply on the path of practice. But all of those practices, they are leading us to the state of enlightenment. Having realized the Buddha nature, their innate state of mind, that will lead us to the state of Buddhahood. So all those practices are one method to lead us to Buddhahood. Initially, one goes for refuge in the outer source of refuge, which are the three jewels. Then inwardly, one practices the three roots, which are the guru, the lama, the yidam deity and the dakini. Having gone to refuge, one applies oneself in the practice of the three roots. That is, innerly, outerly, and secretly. It is the way of being with our body, which is the channels, the winds and the drops. Having internalized those into practice, the results are that one will achieve the kayas, the three Buddha bodies. All those qualities are contained within everybody's body. Now when it comes to the practice of the winds, channels and drops, there is the condensed, the concise and the mediocre and extensive practice. The extensive practice would be the Six Yogas of Naropa. First, one meets with a guide, a teacher who has experiences in those practices. If one doesn't have the experience of meeting with those teachers, and just goes ahead with the practice, then great faults can arise from that. Through these practices, great qualities can arise, but also great faults will arise, and for that reason those practices are secret practices. The practices of the winds, channels and drops are secret practices. In the six practices of Naropa, in the extensive version, one practices them for about thirteen years. And then if one practices, one can accomplish the siddhis within one lifetime, just like Milarepa did. In a mediocre case, one practices them for five or seven years. Or one can practice for three years. When one practices for three years, one gets an approximate understanding of how the practice works. There are actually these days people who are doing those practices. You can ask many masters like Traga Rinpoche who are doing those practices who have acquired great gifts.

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and details. Those great masters have put those practices into practice. One could invite, and ask for guidance. So what is it I will introduce to you today? It is a practice you can practice on a daily basis, continuously □ those practices of the winds and channels; and it is a small practice, but with great results. So first and foremost, one needs to understand approximately the way of the channels and the winds, of how the channels go through the body. There are many scriptures,

medical scriptures on the body, where they explain the way of being of the channels. There is an exact number of how many channels there are, and how they are located and so forth. And probably when we are practicing, it is not quite exactly like they say in those medical scriptures, for example. When we are practicing, we are going in stages. But first, when we start out with the practice, the number of channels are probably similar. For example, we need to purify, make the channels even. For example, in America, if there were no roads, then nobody could go on those roads. So first one needs to even out those roads so vehicles can travel on those roads. In the same way, one needs to purify those channels so the winds can travel in the channels, just like preparing them as a road. So first there are three main channels, and there are four chakras. Regarding the channels, there is a pure state and an impure state. Just like the mind, the pure state is a mind that wishes to benefit others, a mind filled with bodhicitta; and in its impure state, it is a mind filled with self-clinging. It is those two that determine whether a mind is pure or impure - that is, a mind filled with negative emotions. So the first thing is to dispel those faults, and one needs to acquire those qualities; and for that, there are various visualizations. So first there are the three channels: the central channel extends from the secret place up to the crown. It is erected like a pillar. It is the channel of wisdom. And then there is the left and the right channels. And all three channels -the left, right and middle -meet below the navel. And then the left and right channel separate at the navel and extend upwards. [Editor's note: In a previous earlier teaching, Rinpoche stated: "Long ago, humans only had the central channel. But due to wrong influences, the two side channels were created (duality?) These channels are not created by our imagination, but actually do already exist in the subtle body, the body you experience in deeper meditation.] And then there are the four chakras. So we divide all those pieces up, so that we can understand this. For instance, America has many different districts; so we are dividing the four chakras, the four wheels. We first have the crown chakra, which is a wheel on the crown, the wheel of great bliss. Then we have the throat chakra, which is the enjoyment wheel. Then we have the heart chakra, which is the wheel of dharma and then we have the navel chakra, which is the emanation chakra. And then we have the secret chakra, but when we are making the visualization, we only use the first four: the crown, the throat, the heart and the navel chakras.

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When Rinpoche is giving those instructions on the visualization, please meditate on them while he is giving it; and visualize the central channel as the trunk of a tree going in the center and many branches, channels, spring from it. First you can think that from each center, from each wheel, eight branch channels are going in the four cardinal directions, and in the four intermediate directions. And they separate up even more and more, and multiply even more. You can first visualize eight channels for each of the chakras. Generally, on one's crown chakra, separated from the wheel, are eight branch channels that are going to multiply more and more. It separates into thirty-two; in one's throat chakra, it separates into sixteen; in one's heart chakra, it separates into eight; and in one's navel chakra, it separates into sixty-four. But you can start out with visualizing them separating into eight, but then being aware that there are countless

channels that are separating, branching off even more. Each pore of the body is connected to a separate channel. So this is how you can visualize it. As for the visualization at the crown chakra you start out first visualizing all the chakras— eight branch channels springing from them. So first you start out like that. At the crown chakra as well, you have eight channels coming from the crown chakra. From each of those, another two channels are merging. In the end, one has 32 channels emerging from the crown. They multiply and from each of those another channel is merging from them. And in the end you can now say we have thirty-two, but they separate more and more, and there is no measure as to how many channels there really are. In each pore there is a channel; but for the crown now, you can visualize thirty-two. Then at your throat chakra, the chakra of enjoyment, ultimately there are sixteen channels springing from them. First you again visualize eight channels. Then they separate into two, and then you have sixteen channels. But still being aware that countless channels are pervading that whole space from each pore. Then from the heart chakra, the dharma wheel, there are eight coming from the heart chakra, there are eight channels in total and yet they multiply into fine subtle channels, which are all-pervasive. At the navel chakra, the emanation chakra, first visualize the eight channels coming from that chakra then they become separated into the sixty-four channels. Then into two and two, but they are so many and subtle, they pervade the whole navel area. Visualize all those channels coming from the central channel. Visualize this over and over again. Then regarding the winds traveling down the channels: Visualize them traveling down the left and the right channels and they meet at below the navel at the navel chakra. Hold these winds there for some time. Closed off and held closely. Hold them for some time at the navel chakra and hold your attention for some time. Practice calm abiding and shamata. This is the purification of the channels. When you hold the wind,

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visualize all the channels are pervaded by those winds, and filled up by the winds. You can only do it for a short time; in the beginning, as you are training, one has a very brief visualization. So you keep the energy in your navel. The navel chakra is the royal seat for the energies. You keep that for some time. As you breathe out, visualize that everything becomes empty of self nature. You empty the channels and that is the way you are training in the purifying of the channels, and purify the channels. It is like making a road. So what is the purpose of holding the winds? It is a method to be able to abide ... a method to purify concepts arising. The practices of mahamudra and dzog chen are to make the mind abide. When one doesn't understand about the winds and channels, one's mind goes all over. One first needs to practice and habituate one's mind in mindful awareness and hold the winds and mind together. Condense them and hold them. That is the way and method to make the mind abide. Jigten Sumgon has said that it is a method to be able to abide with one's mind -these practices of the winds. So first, when we are visualizing, we are visualizing our winds merging in the navel chakra and it abides there for some time. In the beginning it will not abide there for a very long time: At the navel chakra, you can visualize a flame to be just like a butter lamp at the navel point where the three channels, the central, and

where the left and right channels meet. Then you visualize as you breathe in, that winds are going down and with the syllable ohm you think ohm and they meet at the navel chakra. They merge with the navel chakra with the flame, where there is the syllable ah. As they merge with the AH syllable, the flame starts breaking because the wind is meeting with the flame. And when the wind meets with the flame, then the flame is getting stronger and it starts crackling. Visualize it merging with the fire, the syllable ah, and hold that for some time. As you breathe out, think the syllable hung. You visualize and recite ohm, ah, hung. As you breathe in, hold it and breathe out. And at some point of practice, you will feel heat arise. You will actually feel heat arising. At that time, the wind is merging with the fire, that the winds and mind are connecting and merging. And so the mind doesn't get lost. The mind does not get lost, does not get distracted and does not go all over, but the mind is focused together with the winds. And at some point, heat will arise. That is the visualization. As you breathe in, and you can also think as the hung is merging with the AH, you receive the blessings of the Buddha. In the beginning, try to hold the air inside the navel chakra for some time, but you will not be able in the beginning to hold it for a very long time. So you just stay for a short time and then breathe out with the syllable HUNG again. These are all practices, methods, to make the mind abide single-pointedly. All the practices of dzog chen, shamata and mahamudra are for that. So when you do these practices with the winds with channels, you combine the wind and your mind and, therefore, you will be able to abide and not be distracted.

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So, first; when we are training in the practice of the winds, it is important that our physical posture is correct, that our spine is straight. Generally, we are sitting in the seven-fold Vairochana posture, where we also need to sit in the full lotus position. In the Six Yogas of Naropa, one actually should sit in the seven-fold Vairochana posture; but now for us it is most important for us to sit with a straight spine. Only then will the winds be able to travel properly in the channels; and ultimately in the central channel. But first we need to train the travel of the winds and purify the channels. For that we need to train in stages. First you visualize only the crown chakra, the crown wheel of great bliss. You visualize the winds gathering there and filling up all the channels at the crown chakra. So first you only have that visualization. And then you go on to the next one, to the throat, and you visualize that all the channels in the throat are filled up with the energy of the air. And you visualize each by each. And then you visualize the heart, and visualize all the channels coming from the heart are filled up by the winds. If you do not visualize practice in stages, it will be difficult for us to have a proper visualization. So first we need to train like that in stages. And that is how we are purifying; so, approximately, according to those instructions, visualize, but have the visualization very clear. When it comes to the visualization, it is to be visualized very clearly, very fine --just like when you have a needle and a thread, and you want to put that thread through the hole in the needle. It takes very much a certain subtle, fine clarity. So, clarity is very important. In the beginning, when one hasn't had much experience in the practice, one needs to visualize the chakras, wheels and channels in

stages, over and over again, until finally all the channels are filled up with the energy, with the winds. But in the beginning, that will not happen in one visualization. But we need to go in stages, so practice those visualizations gradually. First we visualize the crown; then we visualize the throat and ultimately we feel the winds filling up each and every one of our pores. So, we need to visualize it over and over again, over and over again, and purify each one by one, and every one; because for the beginners, it is difficult to have them all visualized together, at the same time. First focus on the visualization of the channels. Then, when that has become clear, then visualize the winds. Hold the winds. Then the winds are filling up all the channels. Then thirdly, comes the OHM AH HUNG meditation. And fourth, you visualize the flame at the navel. So we go from step one, step two, step three and step four. And only when the first one becomes clear, do you go to the next step. And sometimes it takes a whole month for only one step. That depends on the mental capacity of the individual. Somebody today will practice the visualization of the channels and then it becomes clear. And tomorrow, one will practice visualization on the winds and so forth. But until the channels become clear, one should meditate on that over and over again. Whether it takes a day, or a week, or a month and so forth.