

Chenrezig Initiation

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<https://youtu.be/xkttWRQRguA>

Preparation

Initiation starting at 22:10 (audio)

Now has come the time to give the initiation. Initiation in Sanskrit is *abhikentsa*. What does this term mean? In Tibetan it means that the temporary obscurations, which are in our mind stream: the obscurations of attachment, anger, ignorance, jealousy and pride, are destroyed, torn apart, and that the qualities can develop in our mind stream.

Drawing the adventitious obscurations from our mind stream and putting the qualities and *siddhi* there is not something simple. Normally in order to receive initiation the person receiving it should be someone who has at least finished the outer, particular and inner preliminaries, and the person who gives the initiation, the lama, should also have all the qualities that a lama should have. In our case we can't say that the students are fully qualified for an initiation and the lama is fully qualified to give it. So today it will be more like receiving a benediction of the lineage.

For the lama who is giving the initiation, the qualities that he/she should have to be a qualified lama there are many according to the sutra, there are many according to the tantra as well. It is very difficult to have them all, but the minimum necessary is that the lama has got the lineage for that initiation, a lineage that goes to the source of the initiation and that he has kept the *samaya* of that initiation very properly and also that he has *bodhicitta*. It is difficult to be really a *bodhisattva*, but at least have pure *bodhicitta*, this is what Patrul Rinpoche has said.

For the students who take the initiation there are also a lot of characteristics but the minimum is that the student should be a stable person and also that they sincerely wish to practice the initiation they are receiving. What does it actually mean to receive an initiation? It means that the absolute primordial wisdom is born in our mind stream exactly as the lama has taught it. Absolute primordial wisdom is the non-conceptual wisdom, and it is very difficult to be engendered like this in our mind stream. There is also, not the absolute primordial wisdom, but the example absolute primordial wisdom, and this is when we have the understanding that: "Oh, it is like this."

For example, for the view of emptiness, if it is not really realized, at least we understand that it is like for example space. This would be like the example primordial wisdom. Of course primordial wisdom is not like space, but we don't have any better example to exemplify it. So, for the actual primordial wisdom to be engendered in the mind stream is very difficult but at least there should be the example primordial wisdom.

There are many different types of initiations, but all of them can be summarized into four: the initiation of the vase, the secret initiation, the wisdom initiation and the word initiation. The first one, the initiation of the vase, this is to purify the obscuration of the body. Why is it purifying that? It is because in the creation phase we meditate on our body as the body of the deity, and through that process the purification of the body is done.

There is the initiation of the creation phase. How is it given? It is similar to a prince becoming a king. At that time there is a ceremony. Even if the ceremony is a bit similar in our case, we apply special methods and special wisdom, so there is the view which the spiritual teacher holds, as well as the student of the secret mantrayana. When this initiation is done there are also special blessings that can be carried through.

This initiation of vase, the initiation of the creation phase, through that we receive the blessings of the body, and authorization to practice the creation phase. In the past the students would then go and start practicing this creation phase until they attained the result of this practice. Then one day they would go to the teacher and explain what they had practiced and what kind of experiences they had had, and the teacher would check if it's alright. If it was alright then they would receive the second initiation, which is the secret initiation. It is connected with the dissolution phase.

So this secret initiation when I give it or when it is normally given, one should practice the means of one's own body. What are they? This is a practice where one uses one's own channels, winds (prana) and tige (bindu in Sanskrit). So the student would practice the channels, winds and bindu, until full mastery of that practice, and then they would go to the lama again to check if it's alright. And then if the student has gained mastery on the practice of their own body, the teacher would give third initiation, which is the wisdom initiation. Then there is relying on bodies of others to do the practice, male or female. With the practice on other's body the great bliss of primordial wisdom comes forcefully. When that has happened, one can receive the fourth initiation of precious word. At this last initiation one does not rely on anything else but words, this is when rigpa, primordial wisdom, absolute primordial wisdom, is given.

Today I will briefly give all four initiations thinking that you yourself are requesting and attending this initiation and the lama is the form of Avalokiteshvara. Don't think an ordinary person like me! And this initiation itself has two steps, the preliminary and the main practice. In the preliminaries there are four things: there is first washing, second offering of gek torma, third the protective circle and fourth a preparation called dagun.

For the first one why do we wash our mouth? It is in order to purify the obstacles which could come to our body when we are practicing Avalokiteshvara. When we want to practice there can be obstacles, sickness and so on for the body, so we do the purification of the mouth in order to get rid of the obstacles.

The second part is about the gek. It is to give torma to the gek, they are obstacle makers. Obstacles can be of three types, there can be outer, inner and secret obstacles. The outer obstacles are in a form of beings. They can be human or non-human beings that make obstacles to our practice of Avalokiteshvara. Inner obstacles are like ignorance, attachment, anger, jealousy, pride and so on. Secret obstacles are what have to be abandoned, like the clinging to seeing things as pure or clinging to things as impure. In our case today we are going to practice outer gek torma for obstacle makers asking them not to make obstacles to our practice but go.

Thirdly there is the protective circle. This is done by visualizing the vajra tent around us. What is the reason of doing that? It is so that all the siddhis which will come can stay with us, and the obstacles cannot come to this place anymore. For that we visualize the assembly of wrathful deities. All the females have their face turned inside and all the males have their face turned outside. This protective circle as well as the torma for the gektor is not only for today. This is something that is good to do when we do our usual practice.

And now let's engender bodhicitta. Bodhicitta is the thought that this initiation we are taking today is not only for our own benefit but also for the benefit of all sentient beings, so that we may be capable of bringing them all to the state of Avalokiteshvara.

This initiation of Avalokiteshvara was taught by Guru Rinpoche when he was in Samye with his entourage: the king and 25 disciples. When the first teachings were translated in Tibet from Sanskrit into Tibetan, this was done at the time of the king Songtsen Gampo. He sent Thome Sambhota to India to start this process of translating and the first text to be translated was the sutra of Avalokiteshvara. At that time in Tibet there was no good writing system, so Thome Sambhota created a new writing system for the sake of translating, and the very first text written in these new characters was the sutra and tantra of Avalokiteshvara.

So first there were 25 sutras and tantras that were translated in India, and then the king Songtsen Gampo practiced Avalokiteshvara accordingly. He saw Avalokiteshvara face to face. After that he himself wrote two texts, which are called the Mani Kabum. Of these two texts the first one is about how to practice Avalokiteshvara and the second one contains advice for his sons, wives and ministers. This is called Mani Kabum, and if you get a chance to read that in the future, it is good. Later on, after the king Songtsen Gampo, there was another king called Trisong Detsen, and he invited from India the scholar Shantarakshita and Guru Rinpoche and that time the translation was done in Samye. Thanks to their work Buddhism could really expand in Tibet.

The text that I'm using today comes from that time from Guru Rinpoche, it's a treasury hidden by Guru Rinpoche in the ground, and it was a treasury to be found by Chogyur Lingpa. It was at the time of Jamgon Khyentse Wangpo and Chogyur Lingpa and Kongtrul Yonten Gyamtso, at that time they were alive. It is a root treasury from Chogyur Lingpa, he took it from under ground, and the arrangement of the text was made by Kongtrul Yonten Gyamtso. Why does this happen? It is because some termas are written in the letters of dakini. Some tertons can read it and some cannot. If they cannot read it they have to ask the help of somebody else, and probably this is what happened that Kongtrul Rinpoche helped Chogyur Lingpa to read and to make arrangement of the text in Tibetan. Chogyur Lingpa was said to be a very good practitioner, but he wasn't skilled in Tibetan writing. He actually found many treasures, but he needed to tell Kongtul Rinpoche to write them down in Tibetan.

In order to receive the initiation we offer a mandala. We will think we are offering to the Noble Avalokiteshvara our body, our belongings and all the virtues of the three times that we have.

And now we put the palms of our hands together and imagine that we hold a white lotus in our hands. We request from the teacher to receive the initiation of Avalokiteshvara. The teacher is seen in the form of Avalokiteshvara and we ask him to give the initiation. Please repeat after me.

All sentient beings have once been our mothers and we take refuge in the Noble Avalokiteshvara. Please repeat after me.

Now we engender the bodhicitta in our own mind exactly as the bodhicitta which the Noble Avalokiteshvara has. So I request the Avalokiteshvara to give me the vow of bodhicitta.

Now in order to accumulate merit and in order to do that we practice the Seven Branches. So, repeat after me.

Now think that I am taking the three vows together: the vows of individual liberation, the vows of bodhicitta and the vows of the secret mantrayana, and that I will keep them until I attain the state of liberation.

Which commitment have we taken? We have taken the commitment to do the benefit of beings. We have also said that at price of my life I will not let go of this commitment.

Now according to the teaching we have received today and yesterday we can meditate the practice of Avalokiteshvara using the three samadhis or the five aspects of enlightenment. So we can visualize Avalokiteshvara white or red, as we prefer. In any case he has got one face and there is the lotus, sun and moon and the seed syllable HRIH, which becomes Avalokiteshvara, this is how we can meditate. Think that now your body has become like this.

Now we have finished with the preparation for the initiation, and we are going to start the actual initiation one by one. So let's do the mandala offering for initiation itself.

Now for this initiation of the noble Avalokiteshvara, the vase initiation, the secret initiation, the wisdom initiation and the word initiation, we need to request for the four initiations and to receive them we need to enter the mandala of Avalokiteshvara, so we ask the vajra master the authorization to enter the mandala.

Now we visualize that from the heart center of the vajra master there are rays of light that are emanated, and there are a lot of female and male wrathful deities, and also male and female bodhisattvas, and their blessing enters the vase. When we receive this initiation of the vase we imagine that all the obstacles of body, sickness or other obstacles which we may have, are melted away, that they are purified.

Now when we take amrita we imagine that the amrita from the vase is completely permeates our body and at that time the obstacles of the body disappear. The obstacles of the body can be for example diseases or being tired; difficulties of the body. So now the amrita has completely filled our body, we are Avalokiteshvara. The main deity of the family of Avalokiteshvara is Amitabha, and he is sitting on top of our head. Now we have received from today onwards this initiation and authorization to practice the creation phase.

And then we practice pure perception, when we practice pure perception, some people say: "But how can I do that? Because, for example if everything is like a deity, when I walk on the street, the street is also the deity and I'm walking on deity and that's not correct." This is not the way to think. If we see everything as pure, then everything is pure. It's not that there is something impure walking on something pure. And also in our center if we visualize that everything is pure then we are all male and female deity and all the problems that can occur between people in a center are also completely disappeared. And also we have now the seed for in the future becoming a tulku, a nirmanakaya.

The second initiation is the secret initiation, and it can be either the real secret initiation or the example secret initiation. What is the real secret initiation? That was actually before Buddhism going to Tibet, and this was given by the lama being in yab yum, and there would be amrita coming down, and this was the secret initiation. This would not be given by any kind of lama but by a fully characterized lama, who has attained stability in the practice of creation and dissolution. But this is not the case anymore, it has ended when Buddhism came to Tibet, and the reason is that many of the audience who were receiving the initiation were monks, and if they were to receive an initiation in this way they would become ordinary beings and lose their vows. To give an initiation in this way was not authorized in Tibet, so now there is only the example secret initiation, which is given and for that alcohol is used in which some dutsi is put for blessings.

Even if one is a monk or nun, if one has attained the level of noble, then it is not a problem to receive the real initiation, because at that level there is no attachment anymore, so it wouldn't be a problem.

Rinpoche in English: Difficult, yes? I mean we are all ordinary, that's why the example is better.

Now that we have received the secret initiation we have the authorization to practice the means of our own body – that means the upper door. And this is a practice which is done with the channels, winds and bindus. It is said that in the channels move the winds and in the winds are the bindus and in the bindus is the mind. In the practice we pierce the crucial points of the channels, winds, bindus and mind. Why do we do that? At the moment our mind is all the time running away; we have thoughts that are running everywhere. We practice shine, that doesn't work, then we do some yoga and that doesn't work, because our mind is just all over the place. But when we pierce the crucial points with that practice then our mind comes back home and has no choice but to stay there. It's a little bit like closing the door of a house, then we have to stay in the house. So, with that practice the consciousness will stay right. So these are the special means of the upper door of piercing the crucial points of one's own body.

This is not an easy practice to do for two reasons. One is that because of the practice we need to be very limited with our food and conduct and that is difficult. The second reason is that it is possible to do when we are 20 years old, but after

that it becomes difficult. So, for us it is much better to receive the initiation of the vase first and practice that very well, and then to receive the initiation of word and practice mahamudra and dzogchen.

Rinpoche in English: Yes, practice mahamudra and dzogchen, the secret and wisdom initiations you receive just like blessing; that is fine, more suitable for us.

The next is the initiation of wisdom. This you receive only after having completely mastered the practice of the second initiation, when one has gathered back all the bindus in the channels. Then one trains in sending the tige into the secret place and getting it back, not letting it go outside, and sending it again etc. When one has complete mastery over this process, then one can go to one's teacher and if he is master of that process he will help us or we will find a partner to practice with the other's body. But nowadays this third initiation is given only as an example initiation and not as a real initiation.

This is a picture of a naked dakini. What does it represent? It represents the Yum Prajnaparamita, or in the old tantra (nyingma) we say Kuntuzangmo, Samantabhadri, in the new tantra we say Dorje Phagmo, Varavarahi.

Rinpoche in English: For all of us the second and third initiations are over, we became old, no chance!

And we think that we have purified all the obscurations of the mind and that we have the seeds to attain the level of Dharmakaya in the future. Yesterday during the vow of bodhicitta we saw that the first root downfall was to explain emptiness to somebody who is not suitable for receiving these teachings, and maybe today I am breaking my vows, who knows, because I'm giving all these teachings of the secret mantrayana. So please recite the Vajrasattva's mantra.

Most of the teachers don't say anything, they just read, but I sometimes say, sometimes not.

Normally this fourth initiation is given with a mirror or crystal; today I don't have a mirror, so I'm using a picture. Why do we use crystal? This is because crystal is naturally pure, and in the same way the nature of mind is naturally pure since beginningless time.

Now that we have received this initiation we are authorized to practice dzogpa chenpo and we think that we have the seed for the result of Svabhavikakaya.

And now we imagine, we visualize that this [the universal torma] is the real body of Avalokiteshvara and we are receiving all the four initiations, we can say the body speech and mind or OM, AH, HUNG, HRIH all together at one time.

Repeat after me promising that you receive the samaya and the vows.

Offering mandala.

This is the end of the initiation. The life force of the initiation depends on us keeping the samaya. There are many samayas. There is the collection of 100.000, which can be summarized into 27 root samayas or 14, sometimes into five or even three root samayas. Now it was the initiation of Avalokiteshvara, so I think it will be all right, if the main samaya will be to see all forms as the body of Avalokiteshvara, to recite the mantra of Avalokiteshvara and to mix our mind with the enlightened mind of Avalokiteshvara.

Now it's time for us to eat the tsok together. It is said for the tsok that there are the outer, inner and secret tsok. The outer tsok is the food that we have prepared. We offer it and we eat the rest of it. This is the outer tsok. The inner tsok is

the practice of the second and third initiation. The real tsok is actually to remain in equipoise in the meaning of the fourth initiation, the initiation of the word. So, what we are going to do today is the outer tsok.

Lakma is gathered.

Finishing prayers.