

Dream Yoga

[Narrator]: This video was originally recorded in October 2018 at the annual Dr. Nida program held at Menla Retreat and Dewa Spa, New York. To learn about annual Tibetan medicine programs, please visit bethouse.us and menla.org.

[Dr Nida]: - Did it make sense? Was everything clear?

[Robert Thurman]: Probably one of the most well-articulated empowerments in the world. On planet Earth. Amen.

[Dr Nida]: With some humor.

Yeah. Who knew I was doing that on the field?

Right, exactly, right?

[Student]: I was so amazed that we got all of those. Like, we've got empowerment for all, is that right?

[Robert Thurman]: - Oh. Thank you. In the car.

[Dr Nida]: Yes, that happens. When the chakra is open, these are each connected with... the Six Yogas and the two Mudras.

[Robert Thurman]: Is there a systematic connection, like they could be started like those, those for that?

[Dr Nida]: Yes.

[Robert Thurman]: If you were a power man?

[Dr Nida]: Yes. Me too. I'm okay. I have some too. Thank you.

[Robert Thurman]: Can we do three minutes of breathing? Thank you. I see, hopefully people will be greeting her two more years. That's helpful.

[Dr Nida]: Okay, let's just review this greeting so we make sure everybody knows it before we go into it. Coming to the seven-point postural arrangement. In the empty body meditation, visualizing yourself as a hollow shell of light, with three empty luminous channels. The blue one in the center, the red solar one on the right side, and the white lunar on the left. We're going to do nine-fold purification like we've been doing every morning. Inhale through both nostrils. Exhale.

Blocking the left nostril first. Inhale through the right side. We're doing pure breath, pure light into the right channel. Hold the breath. Block the right nostril. Exhale left. Inhale left. Cleaning up the left channel. Hold your breath. Block the left nostril,

exhale right side. Both hands down. Inhale. Drop the fingertips. Hold the glass (breath). Exhale. And again, back left. Just do it at your own pace. One more time. Coming back to center. Empty body meditation and the "Bumpa Chen" with the four steps. First step: slow and smooth inhale. Second: holding and feeling below the navel. Number three: churning. Fourth step: exhale, shooting the breath out. Inhalations are slow and smooth, and the exhalations are short and fast, only exhaling about one third of the breath. One more. Through both nostrils.

- Sister, is that "Vajra Sister"?

- Yeah, Vajra Sister.

- With the ring finger?

- The ring finger, yeah.

[Robert Thurman]: All the other fingers are just extended.

[Dr Nida]: Now the other fingers wrap around like a fist. And the index finger can either stay out or... there's a bunch of fists like that. You can close them all or you can point towards the central channel.

That's good. There's another one that we can do, a little different but in the same ballpark while everybody's breathing. It's called "Vajra Repetition" (Vajra Recitation). It's a very advanced perfection stage thing. Visualize that your central channel is open, the knots around it are having release. In the center of the heart chakra, there's an upside-down letter "HUM". You could imagine it as an upside-down open HUM. And go. When you inhale through the nostrils, the inhalation itself is "OM."

[Robert Thurman]: It's white and comes in with a white light. So you inhale OM; at first you think OM as you're inhaling through the nostrils. But eventually the idea is that the inhalation itself is OM. You don't have to divide between the sound, the image of the letter, or the breath, because the breathing in is OM. We're trying to unify the mantra and the breathing. No pause. We inhale, and imagine that white energy goes inside the letter HUM in the heart center. And you hold your breath for some time—some seconds, ten seconds or something. Imagine that while the breath is being held, the OM turns into a ruby red "AH." Remember the second syllable, the AH? Without enunciating anything, the energy of the breath in the HUM of the heart is the sound AH. It radiates a red light that fills up your body. At the center of the heart chakra, as you're holding your breath, it is, or you hear, AH, and you show up with red light.

Remember, for 10 seconds or however you like to practice holding the breath. You exhale, and the exhalation is a deep blue "HUM." Again, we're working towards

non-duality, the non-separation of the OM and the inhalation, the AH and the retention, and the HUM and the exhalation. At the height of the heart, in the center of the central channel. Then when you inhale, and you exhale, the exhalation is a blue HUM. Try to unify those three syllables with inhalation, holding, and exhalation. Inhaling is white OM, holding is red AH—imagine the glowing red light shining throughout your body, or throughout the universe actually—and the exhalation is a blue HUM. Try that a few times. That's called Vajra Repetition or Vajra Recitation, although you don't make any sound other than the breathing itself.

Divine Buddha body... when you do that practice, I think you've already achieved that. It's a kind of creation stage stability, when you are able to visualize yourself having that form. There's a nice story. A friend of mine, Daniel Goleman, was stuck years ago in Dharamsala. All planes cancelled, no train tickets... and it was a 400-mile journey. He had to take a taxi to Delhi to catch a flight. A very arduous journey back then, bad roads, 17 hours, very bumpy in an old Indian Ambassador taxi. It was a horrible journey. But he knew Vipassana meditation. So he began to inhale white OM, hold red AH, and exhale blue HUM. He focused on that and wasn't irritated by all the jangling and jostling. By the time he got to Delhi, he was very calm; the practice somehow anchored him in that annoying environment.

- See... in the honor of talking... I've never noticed this. I wore a special t-shirt today. It's my professor t-shirt, yuck yuck yuck. I'm a real yuck. I don't know if you're hinting at something...

So that's called the Vajra Repetition. They say if you know how to do that at an advanced stage, 1,080 times every morning when you wake up, your central channel will open and you will be in a really great state. It's the second stage of the Perfection Stage.

Okay, so what do we do now?

[Dr Nida]: Sorry, I'm doing it all again. Dream Yoga.

[Robert Thurman]: Dream Yoga, okay, please.

[Dr Nida]: Close the text. Don't read that white paper. You're going to lose your "cool" (flow). Thank you. We're at Dream Yoga. There are two steps in general. Step one is daytime practice: what you do every day while eating, dressing, walking, sitting, or sleeping.

Now we are in a sitting state. At any given moment of life, imagine: "I am dreaming." Seven times. "I am dreaming, I am dreaming...". Imagine that this is a dream and that every thing is an illusion. What is this? It's a "dream bubble." Can you say that seven times? Dream bubble... dream bubble... Very nice.

Change. Bring the thumb up. "I'm happy and dreaming." "I'm unhappy and dreaming." "I'm angry and dreaming." Seven times. Amen (laughter). "I'm jealous and dreaming." "I'm confused and dreaming."

I'm confused indeed.

Okay, once you have gone through desires... What's your name? Lucy. Lucy, wake up. Are you sure? Yes.

Can I have chocolate? Besides chocolate... how do you say chocolate? Somebody offered some dream chocolate. I want to eat chocolate and dream. Seven times. Stronger, ladies!

This is called empowerment. Imagine you are eating chocolate. Chocolate empowerment. (Laughter). It's full of sugar, full of bad stuff, but you can eat as much as you want. Eat, eat. Only one. Dream chocolate. Dream eating. You didn't eat anything.

Give me a Tea... Everyone, share. Share the chocolate. I'm eating and dreaming. I'm enjoying everything. Say it: "I'm eating a dream, I'm tasting a dream." You are enjoying and dreaming.

I smell and dream. Spray me... can you spray me? You can do it. I smell and dream... I feel and dream. I'm feeling and dreaming. You have to say it, feel it, and experience it. Thank you.

Okay, look at the image of Buddha Amitabha. Now you have received the Dream Yoga empowerment. The red syllable is the syllable "AH," which becomes the Buddha. Practice before falling asleep: Guru Visualization. Visualize a white lotus flower with four petals in the center of your throat chakra. The awareness of the chakra is awesome. Your consciousness arises as Guru Amitabha. Your awareness, the nature of the Guru, and the nature of Buddha Amitabha are the same. There's no difference. The nature of your consciousness is infinite light. Guru Yuthok is infinite light and Buddha Amitabha is infinite light. There is no division. They are inseparable. In union, two fingers wide. In his heart there is a coral-colored "AH."

Visualization on the four petals and the four syllables (OM MA NI PAD ME in this context, or the dream mantra syllables). You can choose any color. Guru Amitabha in union offering him great bliss. The goal is to be able to "catch the dream." Say it three times: "May I be able to catch the dream." "To realize my own awareness within the dream." "To lose my fear in this ridiculous dream." "To transform the dream." "To allow the fear in the dream (to pass)." To understand the truth of the dream.

Okay, then this is the visualization. Here we put it in different colors, but you can use any colors you want. The main symbol is a red AH. The mantra is OM ANUTTARA TARA... After you have recited the prayer, red light radiates from the Guru's body—this means Buddha Amitabha's body illuminating all bad karmas and provocations from your body. Your body is filled with a red light, which then expands beyond it. Are you visualizing? Mentally you chant OM ANUTTARA TARA and then we follow the meditation. Red light like the rising sun radiates from the body of the Buddha. Eliminating all bad karmas.

All of this space becomes a Pure Land. Welcome back. The light is offered to all Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. The light returns to the Guru's heart. Then the AH becomes very radiant and colorful. Focus your mind on this. The light returns to the Guru's heart and the heart becomes very radiant. Try to see that red AH in your throat chakra. The letter AH is very clear and sharp. As if you are threading a needle. It's good: the AH has a hole, like a needle, right? On the top there's a little triangle. Try to think of that little triangle very carefully. Just before you fall asleep, remind yourself 21 times—verbally or mentally—to "catch the dream."

- "Catching the dream" is a Tibetan expression. It means to become lucid, to have a lucid dream. You tell yourself you want to be lucid in the dream. Say mentally: "I want to be lucid in the dream." "I want to recognize the dream." "I want to identify myself with the Buddha."

It's more than just being awake in the dream, it's recognizing what it brings. Lucy, Lucy... Did you say that 21 times? Thank you. If you fall asleep mindfully, you will be able to catch the dream. You will have lucidity. If you cannot catch it, it's because of weak devotion, karma, or lack of desire, courage, and effort. Be more mindful and pray more from your heart. Pray to Medicine Buddha, Amitabha... ask Yuthok to bless you, to help you. Did you go to the toilet? How did you do? "I believe in the blessing of God" (rephrased for context). We are in the center, okay?

If you still cannot catch the dream after repeating this visualization in the throat for one month, we change to the head. Yuthok manifests in the form of different Buddhas. First, Amitabha in the throat. If you don't receive the blessing there, change it to the head. In the head, Yuthok manifests as Buddha Vairochana. If it's not working, the third is Akshobhya or Medicine Buddha. If still not working, Ratnasambhava... Amoghasiddhi... If it's still not working after all that... give up Dream Yoga. And come back to Ati Yoga. How do you do it? It's "now and here." Ati Yoga is now and here. Any given moment you can always do Ati. It will make the mind free from past and future, open and present. A pure consciousness. And then after some Ati, your dream will become lucid by itself. If you are lucid in life,

you are lucid in the dream. Normally it's easy to become lucid in the dream.

If you wake up after you have caught the dream, do not open your eyes. It's very easy to wake up, especially with excitement. Keep your eyes closed, remain mindful, and relax. Don't push yourself too much. "Oh, I almost got it and now I woke up." Don't give yourself pressure. Just be mindful: "I lived, I dreamt, I became lucid, I woke up." Okay, what can I do? Try to sleep again. Mindful and relaxed. That is how you overcome the problems of not catching the dream or waking up too soon. No opening eyes, no distracting.

Excellent. Anger... joy... Excellent. Maya, very good. Can you show us? In the dream you are not shy. "I'm not shy in the dream, I am brave." "I transform my shyness into bravery." "I transform anger into joy in the dream." That's better. That's American anger (laughter). Who else is angry?