

# Sleep Yoga and the Nature of Clear Light

This teaching by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, based on the Mother Tantra (\*Ma Gyu\*) of the Bön tradition, explores sleep not merely as a biological necessity, but as a sacred opportunity for spiritual awakening. Rinpoche breaks down the concept of "Clear Light" and offers practical advice on managing daily transitions (morning and night) to prevent everyday stress from contaminating the space of rest. The talk emphasizes that Buddha nature is present in all experiences, including negative emotions such as fear and sadness.

[Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche]: In the spiritual path, we often fall into the duality of trying to run away from darkness toward the light. However, in teachings such as Dzogchen, it is said that Buddha nature and compassion are within everything and everyone, in every possible form. The Sleep and Dream Yoga that I teach comes from the Mother Tantra (\*Ma Gyu\*), from the ancient Bön tradition, specifically from the "Six Methods" (\*Tabdug lam cher\*).

## The Opportunity of Sleep:

We spend one-third of our lives sleeping. If we claim there is nothing valuable in sleep, then one-third of our life is "nothing." But the reality is that within sleep, within ignorance, and even within fear, resides the essence of a Buddha. The problem is our pattern of forgetting: we may travel thousands of miles to a retreat, listen to instructions all day, and at the moment we go to bed, we forget everything out of sheer inertia and habit.

## Daily Transitions:

**Upon Waking:** We all receive the gift of peace when we wake up; it is a "package" that comes with the human body. The practice consists of recognizing that peace and allowing it to "interfere" with our stressful actions during the day. Instead of allowing the stress of not finding your car keys to break your peace, let that peace allow you to deal with the key problem calmly.

**Before Sleeping:** The period between deciding to sleep and falling into deep sleep is key. Most people end the day watching television; their last image is a news channel or a commercial. In Sleep Yoga, we shut down devices, close off the outside world, and set the intention to connect with our internal sacred space. It is a

"restart" of the system.

The Nature of Clear Light:

Clear: Refers to space, emptiness, and the absence of blockages or duality. It means being "clear" of problems.

Light: This is Awareness. Awareness IS the light.

A central channel may be open and clear, but it only "illuminates" when you place your conscious attention upon it. The Buddha and the Bodhisattvas prepare everything for us; our only job is to recognize it, to be conscious.

Fear and Pain as Teachers:

One must not run away from fear. Fear only disappears when you bring it into consciousness, when you look at it closely, and even joke with it. Pain and conflict are not wasted time; they are signals trying to redirect you toward your essence if you are conscious of them. Sleep is like a "near-death experience" (\*NDE\*) that we have every night; it is an opportunity to die to our ego and awaken to our unlimited nature every day.

The Mantra of "Now":

The ego always tells you: "I will be happy after I finish this project, after I get married, after I get divorced." The practitioner uses the mantra of now: "Now is the moment to be happy, or I will never be happy." We use that voice of the ego as a confirmation that the moment is precisely the present.

Conclusion:

Sleep Yoga is not just for distant goals like the "Rainbow Body"; it is an urgent tool for daily well-being. It is about not carrying the day's baggage into the night and truly being able to rest in our deepest essence. Thank you very much!