An Introduction to the Energy Body

In the following video, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche describes some of the inner workings of the energy body. Below, you will find an explanation of the energy body and its components. If you are interested in learning more about the Six Realms referred to in the upcoming video, these are described in some detail in Chapter 13 of Rinpoche’s book Tibetan Yogas of Body, Speech and Mind.

Unlike the physical body, which is made up of flesh, blood, bones, cells, blood vessels, and vital organs, the energy body is made up of mind and energy. The energy body is a system of spheres of light (Tib., tiglés; Skt., bindus), sacred winds (Tib., lung; Skt., prana), channels of light (Tib., tsa; Skt.), and chakras (Tib., khorlo, Skt., cakra).

**Tiglé**— Although usually translated as “drop” or “seminal point,” in the context of dream yoga the tiglé refers to a luminous sphere of light representing a quality of consciousness and used as a focus in meditation practice.

**Prana** — The content of dream is formed by the mind, but the basis of the vitality and animation of the dream is the prana. In the context of this teaching, prana refers to the vital energy upon which both the vitality of the body and consciousness depend. It is the foundational energy of all experience, of all life. All of the ways you can relate to the world and to your own mind, energy, and physical body are affected by prana and all are inseparable from prana.

Whether you are awake or asleep, when your mind maintains clear awareness it can travel a clear, direct path to higher
meditative experiences. When your mind lacks awareness, it is inevitably propelled into places it doesn’t necessarily want to be. It gets caught up in endless internal chatter; fixates on problems and worries; gets dragged into anger, guilt, pride, or desire; and loses itself in samsaric dreams. Whichever destination your mind arrives at, prana is the essential force that propels it there.

*Channel* — the channels are the "veins" in the system of energetic circulation in the body, through which stream the currents of subtle prana. The subtle channels themselves are energetic and cannot be found in the physical dimension. However, through practice or natural sensitivity, individuals can become experientially aware of the channels.

*Chakra* — Literally “wheel” or “circle,” *chakra* is a Sanskrit word referring to energetic centers in the body. A chakra is a location at which a number of energetic channels meet.

The Bon Mother Tantra uses the analogy of the horse, rider, and path to explain the relationship between mind, prana, channels, and chakras:
- Prana is like a blind horse. Without your mind holding the reins, prana gallops unaware in whatever direction karma forces it to go.
- The mind is like a lame rider. Without prana to propel it, your mind is unable to access and connect with higher experiences of freedom, openness, and clarity. It also can’t effectively reach others through prayer.
- When the lame rider catches the blind horse, your mind can go where it intends, experience the right kind of space, connect with the right qualities, and manifest in the right ways. How does your mind catch and guide the prana? Through awareness.
• The channels are the path. Just as a horse will naturally follow a clear trail through a forest, prana travels through a system of channels running throughout the body. There are gross physical channels such as your body’s nerves and blood vessels, subtle energy channels, and very subtle channels that are more related to mind.
• The chakras are the intersections, the energetic junctions where many channels meet.

-----

Adapted with permission from the chapter “Mind and Prana in Meditation Practice,” Tibetan Yogas of Body, Speech and Mind, by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche (Ithaca, N.Y.: Snow Lion Publications, 2011); and from the glossary and the chapter “The Energy Body” of The Tibetan Yogas of Dream and Sleep, by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche (Ithaca, N.Y.: Snow Lion Publications, 1998).

These instructions are for personal use in connection with GlideWing Production’s online workshop with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. Please do not distribute or otherwise share them with others.