

THE KALACHAKRA FOR WORLD PEACE 2011 A BRIEF INTRODUCTION

The Kalachakra, translated as the Wheel of Time, originated with the Buddha himself in the 6th century BCE. People from around the world flock to the Kalachakra initiation because the practice has the ability to confer enormous blessings and generate great positive force in both the present and the future, for both the individuals attending it and for the world at large.

Four days of preliminary teachings precede the Kalachakra, and His Holiness the Dalai Lama has remarked openly that attentive attendance at the teachings can be of the highest value. To provide a common basis for understanding before the Empowerment is given, His Holiness will present the fundamentals of the Buddhist belief system during the first four days of the Kalachakra for World Peace.

Fundamentals of Buddhist thought emphasize understanding the nature of reality, with its foundation of intrinsic interdependence. From that basis flows the need for wisdom, compassion, and action which helps others and harms no one. Buddhism views the comprehension of these basic principles of reality as the path which leads unmistakably to true and lasting happiness, along with inner and outer peace.

After the Preliminary teachings, the Empowerment will begin. The largest initiation regularly bestowed by His Holiness, the Kalachakra is an extraordinarily comprehensive ritual dealing with all aspects of our lives, in terms of inner and outer experience. In addition, the Kalachakra Tantra presents an extremely sophisticated comprehension of cosmic reality. Due to the refined and unique way in which these teachings are presented, with ritual dance, preliminary teachings, the construction of the great Kalachakra sand mandala, and an empowerment ceremony lasting 3 days, the Kalachakra holds the power to transform individual lives, the environment and the community, and the world beyond.

The Kalachakra refers to three parallel cycles of time: external, internal, and alternative. At the external level, Kalachakra relates to the formation, abiding, and cessation of universes; at the internal level, it relates to the corresponding physiological cycles of birth, old age, and death; and at the alternative level, it empowers the practitioner, through a series of visualizations, to liberate him or herself altogether from futile, repetitive patterns of suffering.

The Dalai Lamas have always been linked to the Kalachakra Tantra, beginning with the first Dalai Lama, Gyalwa Gendun Drup, in the 14th century. Its practice is emphasized at Namgyal, the personal monastery of the Dalai Lama, and the Namgyal monks accompanying His Holiness will create the sand mandala, join His Holiness in chanting the sacred prayers, and offer the ritual dances.

Remarking on the Kalachakra, His Holiness has said: "The initiation to the Kalachakra is one of the most important...because it takes everything into account: the body and the human mind, and the whole external aspect -- cosmic and astrological. By its complete observance, it is possible to achieve Awakening in a single lifetime. We firmly believe in its power to reduce conflict and we believe it is capable of creating...peace of the spirit and therefore peace in the world."

The final day of the Kalachakra brings the dissolution of the sand mandala, prayers for the long life of the Dalai Lama, and a long-life blessing for those in attendance.

The Kalachakra opening in Washington, DC, has a special and most auspicious aspect: July 6, the first day, is the 76th Birthday of His Holiness. The closing day will be July 16.