A Study of Frederick Lenz’s 27 Talks on Tantric Buddhism

Troy Omafray
A Study of Frederick Lenz’s 27 Talks on Tantric Buddhism
A Study of Frederick Lenz’s 27 Talks on Tantric Buddhism
Overview

• མཁན་པོ་འགྱུར་མེད་ཕྲིན་ལས། (mkhan po’ ‘gyur med phrin las) Khenpo Gyurme Trinly Rinpoche

• “Khempo” was the founder of Osel Dorje Nyingpo
Overview

• Khempo’s vision of the Lenz project
Overview

• About Khempo
Overview

• me
Overview

• An explanation of the project
Khempo’s commentary:

- Written in “Khemplish” (Khempo-English).

- A blend of normative Tibetan Buddhist notions.

- Terse
Contents of Lenz’s “27 Talks on Tantric Buddhism”

1) Tantric Buddhism I
2) Six Worlds
3) The Mature Monk
4) The Natural State
5) Freedom
6) Enlightenment
7) Self Effort
8) Possibilities
9) The Nexus of all Pathways
10) The Path of Affirmation
11) Tantric Buddhism II
12) Computer Science
13) The Awareness of Meditation
14) Focus and Meditation
15) Professional Meditation
16) The Best Meditation I Ever Had
17) Metaphysics
18) A Clean Room
19) The Bhagavad Gita
20) Buddhist Enlightenment
21) The Path of Negation
22) Transience
23) Peak Experiences
24) Solstices and Equinoxes
25) Tenacity
26) Buddhist Yoga
27) Light
The 5 Themes

Mind

Emptiness

Path

Meditation

Tantra
Meditation

Theme #1
Meditation

- Reason was not emphasized
- Meditative goal: to “stop thought”
- “Stopping thought” also suggests relaxing into the true nature of the mind
- Lenz’s path is markedly experience based
- Rest mind in itself
Meditation

Khempo’s commentary:

“The senses are not thought. Only the conceptual mind thinks. But when you look directly without obscuration toward the luminous mind, our true nature is uncovered.”
Meditation

Meditation is the key to non-conceptual concentration.

Meditative insight is the basis for the Lenz’s theory of mind.

“Uncovering Buddha-nature” echoes Maitreya’s Uttaratantra-shastra
"...this mind, O monks, is luminous and it is freed from adventitious defilements..."
- Buddha (Anguttara Nikaya I,X)

"...remove delusion to realize the luminous essence of mind...
- Rangjang Dorje (Consciousness, Wisdom, and Buddha Nature)
Lenz said:
“Self-recognition of basic mind is the final path.”
Meditation

Lenz’s approach is similar to Rangjung Dorje and Dolpopa

Dolpopa said:

“Reaching the wisdom-mind is facilitated only by pristine meditative absorption.”
Meditation
IN YOUR MIND’S BROWSER, CLEAR YOUR CACHE...

NOW DELETE YOUR HISTORY...

NOW NAVIGATE TO A BLANK WEB PAGE...
Theme #2

Mind
Mind(s)

**Lenz said:**

“The mind is luminous, infinite, permanent and at the same time there’s an ordinary thinking mind.”

- This suggests two separate minds
Rama said:

“We must peel back the layers, know the mind, this is what brings us beyond.”
Mind

Five Sense Consciousnesses

eye

body

ear

tongue

nose
Mind

6th consciousness - conceptual mind

eye

body

ear

tongue

nose
6th consciousness - conceptual mind

7th consciousness (intermediate mind / afflicted mind)

8th consciousness (all-base / Buddha-nature)
Mind

Khempo said:

“In term of the six consciousnesses, you don’t see the absolute; when one does see the absolute, then the fabricated is eliminated.”
Mind

7th Consciousness

• Rangjung Dorje’s notion of the 7th consciousness

• Two Aspects
Rangjung Dorje said:

“This is Mahamudra free from conceptual artifice.

This is the Great Madhyamaka free from positions,

this is the Great Completion that includes all...”
Mahayana Eight Consciousnesses
Theme #3

Emptiness
Emptiness
Illusion and Correct View
Emptiness

Illusion and Correct View
Emptiness

How to overcome the illusion?
Emptiness

- Lenz suggest two types of emptiness:
  - self-empty (*rangtong*)
  - empty of other (*shentong*)
Buddha-nature is permanent

Buddha-nature is empty of everything that is not Buddha-nature.

Khempo shored up Buddha-nature
Emptiness

Tantric Emptiness of Other

- Lenz’s approach was *tantric shentong*

- *Tantras* make no attempt to establish emptiness through reasoning.
Khempo said:

“Rama’s [Lenz’s] tantra is Kalacakra where every kaya [form] is empty but clear light nature is other...”
Theme #4

Path
Path

Soteriology

• Lenz gave a general sense of the path to enlightenment

• Khempo outlined Asanga and Maitreya’s *Abhisamayalamkara*

• Khempo also spoke extensively about Maitreya
Path of Shamatha

Repeated practice stressed. This is the path of generating merit and wisdom.
Theme #5

Tantra
Tantra

• Tantra is the practice of transmuting desire

Kalacakra mantra
Tantra

- Astrology and the connection with Kalacakra-tantra

Kalacakra mantra
Kalachakra-tantra

Kalacakra is referred to as the ‘Wheel of Time’

‘Time’

‘Wheel’
Wheel of Time
Tantra

In outlook I think Lenz was a Tantric Shentongpa.


thank you