

Instructions for the *Tsa Lung*

Clearing Obstacles with the *Tsa Lung* Exercises

The five *tsa lung* exercises promote the release of physical, energetic, and mental obstacles. In Tibetan, *tsa* means channel and *lung* means vital breath or wind. Through bringing the focus of the mind, the breath, and the physical movements together, in each exercise we seek to open particular chakras or energetic centers in the body and clear the obstacles that disturb and obscure us from recognizing the pure and open space of being. Recognizing this pure and open space of being is the union of space and awareness, the source of all positive qualities.

The Three Main Channels

When working to clear obstacles through the *tsa lung* exercises, imagine the three main channels of the body: the central channel and two secondary channels. These channels are made of light. The central channel begins four finger widths below your navel, rises straight up through the center of your body, and opens at the crown of your head. It is a channel of light, blue like a deep autumn sky. In diameter, you imagine it to be about the size of your thumb. There are two side channels, one red and one white. They have diameters slightly smaller than the central channel, more like the pinky finger in diameter. On your left side is the red channel, on your right, the white channel. The three channels form a junction four finger-widths below the navel. The side channels rise straight up the body on either side of the central channel. However, as they approach the crown, they curve forward under the skull, pass behind the eyes, and open, one at each nostril. The right white channel represents male energy and method or skillful means and opens at the right nostril; the left red channel represents female energy and wisdom and opens at the left nostril.

There are chakras along the central channel that are like energy centers, having different qualities and characteristics and presenting different opportunities for the practitioner. The central channel is the clear and open expression of the totality of your being. In experience it is hard to define the central channel. There is no ordinary terminology for it. The simple expression would be to say it is some deep sense of settling in oneself, completely resting with full awareness rather than resting by sleeping. We all know how to rest by sleeping deeply, but to rest with full awareness is not something everyone knows how to do. The *tsa lung* exercises are useful to remove the blocks and obstacles to resting deeply with full awareness.

The Four Stages of Breath

In each of the five exercises there are four stages to the breath: **inhaling, holding, re-inhaling, and exhaling**. In each exercise you inhale through the nose and imagine the breath follows the pathway of the side channels until reaching the junction as described earlier. When the air reaches the junction just below the navel, the energies of the two side channels, male and female, unite and move up the central channel. Imagine the central channel fills with positive energy which rises to the chakra where you are working in the particular exercise. The breath is held throughout this process, and the focus is held at the particular chakra.