

How can we make our Kalachakra practice relate to the modern world?

By Beth Gilmore, from Kalachakra Newsletter Vol. 1, No. 1, June 1999

Beth Gilmore sat and thought a fair bit following the discussion at the May meeting, sparked by an open question from Garry. Beth felt that she would like to air her views and the following is a short article from her perspective, dealing with the issues around relating our practice to the modern world:

If our environment, our appearance, our actions and enjoyment of these are all visualised as the deity's within the blissful awareness of emptiness then we are practising Kalachakra in relation to the modern world, right here and now! However, this is much easier said than done. At times we are still left with feeling that we are Westerners in our modern world and Kalachakra is this ancient Indian meditation system way over there.

As we know Kalachakra means "Cycles of Time". Perhaps what we need to consider is that the internal and external cycles of time were not something made up by an Indian guy thousands of years ago. They've always been in existence no matter whether they are written down in the form of a tantra or not.

From a Western psychological viewpoint, Kalachakra is like an instruction manual of self-help therapy applying an alternative to these regular comings and goings of life at the deepest possible level. Instead of continually allowing these cycles to appear in an impure way that harms ourselves and others we use the "Kalachakra cognitive therapy" and the "Kalachakra internal aerobics" to get down to the heart of these cycles and then switch them around and replace them with pure appearances, psychological perfection.

It is difficult at times to relate to enlightenment, it seems like a completely Eastern experience, but the path to it is actually a psychological process for anyone to undertake, with the right effort and perseverance of course.

We may ask ourselves: How can I relate to all this Indian imagery? Well, I say think of it as like having a well thought out, tried and tested, dressing up box that we've been given for our course of treatment and then leave it at that. Then we can focus our attention on the real meaning behind the costumes and play-acting.

As the Buddha said: If you want to help a man who has been shot with an arrow, you don't start asking him what type of arrow is this. Of what wood is it made? Such questions have no bearing on what you need to achieve. You just get in there and pull the thing out!