

Vajrayogini Teachings Geshe Sonam Ngodrup

by Geshe Sonam Ngodrup

Translation: V. Khedrup

Seventh teaching – 15.06.2024

Intro by Khedrup – not official -

Part of what we'll kind of go over today is the stages of the dissolution as that relates to the BAM syllable. So I want to make you guys aware that there is a difference in terms of how Pabongkha Rinpoche presents this and in terms of how Ngulchu Dharmabhadra presents this. And I checked this in both the corresponding texts.

So most teachers in the West rely primarily on Pabongkha Rinpoche's commentary. Geshela consults that commentary a lot. It's a very good commentary.

But the main commentary that Geshe la consults is Ngulchu Dharmabhadra. And in the Ngulchu Dharmabhadra, there is a slight difference with how the sequence of that BAM begins. They count the BAM shrinking in size as related to the first dissolution.

So I just wanted to mention that because I know that like we get used to hearing things one way and sometimes if something different happens, maybe you're like, did I hear that right? So yeah, there's a slight difference.

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Official lesson

Welcome everybody. Can you hear my voice clearly? Can you hear Geshela's greetings as well, clearly? Okay, great. Yeah. So he said, Tashi Delek greetings to all Dharma friends.

So he hopes that you are all well and happy, and he also hopes that your study and practice is getting better and better and flourishing. And as we embark on today's teaching, it's really important to think in terms of the endeavor that we're engaged in, there's no endeavor that is more important to oneself. There's no endeavor that is more important to one's country or community.

Indeed, we could say that there is no more important endeavor in the world than this one. So then when we think about our teacher, Buddha Shakyamuni, it speaks about the purpose in terms of working for the welfare of all sentient beings. So to actualize the same enlightenment, the same state of Buddhahood that Buddha Shakyamuni himself actualized for the benefit of all beings, this requires us to practice the paths of both Sutra and Tantra.

Indeed, ultimately, without relying upon Tantra, it is not possible to achieve the state of Anuttara Samyak Sambodhi[?], complete and perfect enlightenment.

So then, but also, it's important to clarify here that in terms of the object to be realized, in terms of emptiness, and in terms of coarse and subtle emptiness, there's actually no difference in the subtlety of the emptiness itself when we speak about the differences between Sutra and Tantra. So when it comes to view, the Madhyamika Prasangika, the middle way consequence school, is the ultimate expression of the view, the final view.

However, as beginner practitioners of the Vajrayana, of the methods of secret mantra, it is said that the Cittamantrin, or mind only school, may be something that is especially helpful to us at the beginning of our Tantric practice. So we can come to a discussion of that later. So the difference then lies within the method side of the path, the difference between Sutra and Tantra.

So in Sutra, we have a vast presentation of the six paramitas, or the perfections, and five of those are engaging in method. But in terms of achieving the cause, the actual cause of the Rupakaya, or form body of a Buddha, that complete method is not available in Sutra. So the substantial cause of the Rupakaya, or form body, is not possible to accumulate exclusively through Sutra, it's not there.

And also, it's something, in terms of the substantial cause of the Rupakaya, or the form body, it's something that's a little bit beyond the limitations of science to kind of really understand, or cognize. And why is this the case? Because if we look at the samsaric body that we have, which is often referred to as the contaminated body, this samsaric body is something that is very different. Something that is incongruent with this fully purified body.

And so, in terms of how, whether we're allowed to self-arise as the deity, whether we can self-generate as the deity by imposing it upon this body, or whether something different has to happen, there's different views in the different Tibetan Buddhist traditions, right? So Lama Tsongkhapa's view will be different than the views of some other great scholars. So Lama Tsongkhapa's view is that if we have not completely dissolved this ordinary samsaric body into emptiness, then we will not be able to properly do the self-generation, to arise as the deity.

Just as if we do not kind of knock the old house down and clear the ground completely, we will not be able to build the new house. So the dissolution of the samsaric, or ordinary body, into emptiness is essential.

So, so far Geshela has been speaking about the differences between sutra and tantra according to the object of attainment, right? What should be cultivated.

But we can also speak of the differences between sutra and tantra in terms of what should be abandoned. And in the tantric tradition, what should be abandoned is ordinary appearance and that grasping or clinging to ordinary appearance. And it is said that the antidotes to ordinary appearance and the clinging to ordinary appearance are not really available in sutra.

In some, the subtle imprints left behind by the knowledge obscurations, sometimes translated as the obscurations to omniscience, the subtle imprints left behind by the knowledge obscurations can only be completely purified through the practice of tantra. So those of you who are familiar with sutra will be familiar with the two truths, relative and ultimate. In terms of being able to perceive simultaneously the two truths of the same object, like that flower Geshela was holding in front of himself, there's a subtle veil that prevents us from being able to see those two together.

And that veil is the imprint left behind by the knowledge obscurations, which we can only purify through the practice of tantra.

So to be able to build upon our potentials and to be able to have access to the full path, which will allow us to understand the final view and achieve the final result of complete and perfect Buddhahood, Anuttara Samyak Sambodhi[?], we should have a feeling that we are greatly fortunate to be able to encounter and cultivate such a teaching.

So we'll take a moment to just sort of set our body and mind in a state of peace and prepare it for meditation.

Meditation

So by thinking that oneself, others, any object has no natural or inherent existence, think that it is empty.

So from that sphere of emptiness arises glorious Heruka Chakrasamvara, surrounded by the root and lineage gurus or lamas in the sky, in the space in front.

And so think that all six sentient beings, but in the aspect of human beings, are kind of arranged behind us, with us as sort of the guide or the leader, and that together we gaze upon this field of refuge with a mind of great faith and confidence.

And as much as possible, try to meditate on this feeling of refuge.

Think, for the purpose of achieving the welfare of all sentient beings, I will continue to cultivate, continue to practice until I am able to realize, to become the same nature of Chakrasamvara, father and mother.

So then think that from going for refuge and this mind generation of bodhicitta, father and mother, Chakrasamvara, are extremely pleased with us.

Then they shrink in size, dissolve into lights and nectar, and dissolve into a BAM at our heart. We dissolve into that BAM, so that all that is left is the letter BAM.

Think, our mind becomes mixed inseparably with the mind of the guru Yidam. And in this way, our minds are of one nature, inseparable.

And think that through this visualization, through receiving these blessings, I can achieve all that I wish in my study and my practice.

And think, through this visualization and receiving these blessings, the body and mind, the Chakras, the energy channels, the winds and the drops are all blessed and become workable.

Think, through receiving these blessings, I can accomplish any action, any enlightened activity that I wish. And in this way, bring forth a courageous attitude infused with joy.

So we'll pause there.

So a visualization and a motivation, a short one to begin. So Geshela said also when you're doing the meditation about receiving the blessings of the guru and mixing your mind with the guru's mind, you can just do this into kind of your body as the deity or your ordinary body. It doesn't necessarily have to involve the visualization of the BAM letter.

Prayers

So then, as before, infused with this motivation, for the sake of all sentient beings, to be able to actualize the state of Guru Chakrasamvara or to be able to actualize the state of Guru Venerable Vajrayogini.

And so in accordance with other Anuttara Yoga or highest yoga tantra practices, then actualizing the state of Vajrayogini comes through cultivating the two stages of generation and completion, the paths of those two stages. And so when one reaches a high level, one practices the stage of completion, which allows one to actualize the holy body of the deity Vajrayogini. But in order to get to where we can actually cultivate that, the assisting factor or the ripening factor is required, which is the training in the generation stage of the deity.

And then for that reason, it is in these particular sessions that we are mainly looking at the generation stage practices. And then in terms of practicing the generation stage, there are the practices to engage

during the actual meditation session and the practices to engage in during the meditation break. And then during the actual or meditation session, it is divided into the activities at the beginning, the activities in the middle and the activities at the end.

And so then in terms of the preparation, preparing the place, the room of meditation well, and if you have a holy image or an image of Vajrayogini, setting that up, although that's not necessary and beginning the practice that way. And another thing that is also useful to have is some of the commitment substances. So for example, the katvanga and the curved knife that Vajrayogini holds. And if you don't have these actual supports, you can have a card with a drawing of these. And then another thing that is mentioned is also preparing all of the offerings, the outer offerings as well as the various tormas. Now you can visualize these, but when you're doing a retreat, it's good to actually lay these out.

And then also one will have one's own personal tantric implements of the vajra, the bell, the inner offerings, skull cup and so forth. And so Geshela was mentioning that actually one has two sets of the vajra and bell and the inner offering. And he said, you know, this is especially in the case of lamas. One vajra and bell and inner offering will be used in public rituals that one is performing in public and the other vajra and bell and the inner offering will be kept in one's room just for one's own private practice. So this is the way practiced by the previous great beings. And that is because, of course, tantra or Vajrayana is supposed to be greatly secret. But because many Vajrayana rituals are performed in public these days, then one also keeps a set of these private implements to remember that.

And in terms of the offerings, right, if you just keep it really simple, you can just set up a set of offering bowls like you see just above my head. But even actually if you don't have those, you can visualize these as part of the practice.

So that's the preliminaries. And then when we come to the actual session to be cultivated, in the Vajrayogini practice this is conceptualized as the eleven yogas. So within these eleven yogas, three of them are not included in the self-generation text or sadhana, and within the eleven they are considered the preliminaries.

These are sleeping, rising, and experiencing nectar. And so, for example, the yoga of sleeping has a way that can be practiced which is mostly informed by the way, by the generation stage, and a way that can be practiced mostly informed by the completion stage. And we can maybe come to a discussion of those differences at length later.

So when we begin the sadhana, or practice text, the sadhana begins with yoga number four, which is the yoga of the immeasurables. And so within the four immeasurables we may think of the four immeasurable or boundless thoughts that are practiced in many contexts, but specifically with the Vajrayogini sadhana, under this rubric of the four, or that heading of the four, there are other practices included as well.

And so then these are explained as visualizing the objects of refuge. So then Geshe la is saying that within actually that section of the four immeasurables there's a few practices included, so he's just listing those for you:

- visualizing the objects of refuge,
- going for refuge,
- the mind generation,
- the four immeasurables,
- the refuge objects dissolving,
- and the instantaneous self-generation.

And so the blessing of the vajra and bell is not included in all of the sadhanas, but Geshela said if you can bless the vajra and bell occasionally by adding a verse, it's very good to do that.

And then there's also the practice of blessing the preliminary offering tormas, but Geshela's explaining that in the context of Vajrayogini, especially the briefer practices, this is not always included or done very abbreviated.

And then the tenth outline is the meditation recitation of Vajrasattva.

And then we come to the next outline, which is the practice of the [Tibetan word], the Guru Yoga. And so then the practices that we have included up to this point are practices of accumulation and purification, and of course with the Vajrasattva, it's especially emphasizing confession and purification. And when we speak of the Guru Yoga, for example, the Guru Yoga is mainly focusing on the accumulation of merit.

And so we actually discussed the Guru Yoga and the various outlines of that extensively already in previous classes, so we won't go into that today.

So then we come in the sadhana to the actual practice of the self-generation and we could say that the actual practice of the self-generation is the very heart, the very essence of the practice. And so then after the guru yoga we come to the self-generation and we say that this is the actual practice. Why do we say that this is the actual practice? It's because the essence is really the three bringings, right, taking the three bringings into the path.

And so then we could say - this path of taking the three bodies into the path in terms of the basis for its practice, the basis for its practice is ordinary death, ordinary intermediate state and ordinary rebirth. And if we really want to kind of activate our potentials, activate our mind, it's important to understand that in terms of obstacles or the things that we need to defeat, these are not external things. The main obstacles are actually within us, right? Ordinary death, ordinary intermediate state and ordinary rebirth. If we cannot separate ourselves, if we cannot defeat the ordinary death, intermediate state and rebirth, this will continue to bind us to the wheel of samsara and we will continue to circle in perpetuity. And so then this is kind of compared to an iron house by a great adept called Yangshin Gaowei Lojo, chak[?], so you can think of it as like a house or as kind of a square shaped piece of metal.

And so if we don't kind of deal with this problem of ordinary death, intermediate state and rebirth, then it's kind of like you have that metal object that is very firm and seemingly impenetrable. However, if we get discouraged, we need to remember that if we engage in the yogas of generation and completion stage, like quicksilver, like a magic elixir, this can transform that iron into gold. So just actually in order for us to be able to actualize this, the holy beings, they have set out the instructions of the generation and completion stage, just like a vast banquet set out before us.

So if we are able to use these practices and transform this iron house, which is this ordinary samsaric body, what can we actualize? We can actualize the resultant state of the three kayas, the Dharmakaya, the truth body, the Sambhogakaya, the enjoyment body, and the Nirmanakaya, the emanation body. So Geshela asked me to read you, sorry, I was like, should I read it? He's like, don't rush. Now he wants me to read it.

So Geshela asked me to read it because he's actually said it's nice to hear these reflections of the holy beings because they're very powerful. So I'll read you the verse.

The basis of purification is ordinary birth, death, and bardo, right? And that is what is compared to this iron house.

The purifier is the profound path of the two stages, like the elixir transforming it into gold.

The purified result is the complete purity of the precious three kayas, homage to the Lord of transformative union.

So other schools of Tibetan Buddhism, other great masters have a view that do not seek the Buddha outside of yourself. The Buddha is within your own mind. This is something you'll often hear.

So although that's very precious and a lot can be understood from that, if you were to ask Lama Tsong Khapa, he'd say, well, it's not exactly like that.

If you say that we're already Buddha, we can't actually say that. It doesn't fully make sense. So we can't really say that one's mind is already Buddha, but we can say that one's mind provides the basis for actualizing Buddhahood. Certainly we can say that.

So in that way, we don't need to seek outside our own mind for enlightenment because within our mind are the potentialities that can be activated, that will allow us to achieve the Dharmakaya, Sambhogakaya and Nirmanakaya, the three kayas of a Buddha. Certainly this is true.

And so in terms of the actual basis with which we can actualize the generation and completion stages, it is actually said that a human being of this earth of Dzambuling endowed with the six faculties is the supreme basis for being able to actualize that. There is nothing better than that. So Geshela said if there are those among the listeners who are either heat-born, egg-born or spontaneously born rather than womb-born, now they'll be understanding we can't fully cultivate those instructions, so they may feel a little bit disappointed. But if you are womb-born, you can, right? A human being who is womb-born.

So then those six elements, there's different ways of enumerating them.

One of them is enumerating them as the four elements of earth, fire, wind and water plus space and consciousness. So human beings endowed with those six, that's one way of counting. So then another way of counting them is the three white substances of the father and the three red substances of the mother for a total of six. So the three substances of the father and the three substances of the mother. So just trying to say which ones are from the mother and which ones are from the father. So from the mother, there is the flesh, the blood and the skin. And from the father, the bone, the marrow and the white substance.

So that's another way of counting these six elements in terms of the ideal vessel for these teachings, which is a human being of Dzambuling endowed with the six elements. And in fact, it is said that if one does not possess those six, then one is not a suitable vessel, even as a beginner of these teachings. And why is this the case? Because actually these - as we practice the generation stage as a beginner, what we're aiming for is to bring forth the spontaneously arising great bliss wisdom. This is very important.

So also it is understood that the devas, the gods of the form and formless realm cannot practice these teachings because they cannot come into union as father and mother the same way that beings of this desire realm can. And therefore, they cannot especially bring forth the bliss part of that spontaneously arising great bliss wisdom. So they can't experience the bliss of union of the coming together of the organs of the father and mother.

And for that reason, they are not considered suitable vessels of these teachings. So we've eliminated the form and formless realms as beings, as beings who can practice these teachings. So that leaves us with the beings of the desire realm.

And so then when we speak about the desire, So then within these desire realms, there are six classes of devas or gods. And so it is said that two of these classes, the class called delighting in emanation and the class called power over others emanations, they are also not suitable to practice.

They also cannot experience the bliss of union that comes from the joining of the two organs.

So why is this the case? Because devas in those two realms of delighting emanation and power over others emanation, they experience the bliss of union just by gazing, just by gazing upon each other, not through the joining of the organs. So in the next two of these six realms of gods of the desire

realm, free from strife and joyful Tabjel[?] and Ganden - not the same Ganden when we speak of Tushita, it's another type of Tushita - so free from strife and joyful, they are also not suitable to practice because the bliss does not arise from union. It only arises from touching.

So the next ones, [Tibetan names?] so the 33 and the four great kings, it is said that they do have contact of the organs, but they don't have the red and white constituents associated with procreation. Therefore, they cannot also bring forth the same great bliss that is necessary in this context. So we've eliminated all of the devas or all of the gods.

So that leaves us with human beings. So then we come to beings in this cosmology of the four continents. So in Deya and Videya, Uttarakuru [?] and so forth. So these three of these continents, the human beings that dwell there, they experience a bliss that is much more refined than the ones of Jambudvipa land, which is where we abide, right, Jambudvipa. They experience a bliss that is much greater than what we experience. Because they experience a greater bliss or happiness, they are not able to bring forth the renunciation or definite emergence to practice this path.

So then when we speak of the beings of the lower realms, the animals, the hungry ghosts, the hell beings and so forth, they have the sense faculties and so forth, but they don't have the capacity or the facility to be able to practice. So they are also eliminated. So it is only human beings of Jambudvipa endowed with the six elements that are able to practice these teachings.

So this is very important for us to understand, right? That being a vessel suitable of practicing the three bringings, taking the three bodies into the path is already something really extraordinary. It's not so easy.

So if we think of taking death into the path of Dharmakaya or truth body, now we would think of the clear light of death. And this is divided into two categories, the example clear light and the meaning clear light. So through the practices of Tantra, what we want to do is take this ordinary clear light of death, which all beings experience and transform this right into the meaning and example clear light, which lead to realization. This is likened to taking a pot, which is made of clay or of earth and transforming it into a jeweled vessel.

If we don't transform - we really have to understand this - if we don't transform the clear light of death that we experience is just going to be an ordinary clear light of death. And in fact, that won't be able to benefit us much because it will simply lead to the unfolding of further wandering, further circling in samsara or cyclic existence.

What we do now through our practice of imagination or visualization meditation, and through going through these various processes, is we take this ordinary clear light of death - it becomes through this practice, a clear light, which will allow us to realize emptiness. Because when we come to the very refined state of this clear light of death that arises, the appearance of that clear light is the same as the appearance of the object to be realized, emptiness.

So if we are able to train in this practice of tantra and in these visualizations, then when we actually experience the clear light of death, we will be able to understand that the appearance of that clear light and the appearance of emptiness, that they both have the same appearance, this will allow us to approach the realization of emptiness.

And that is really the first of the three bringings, transforming ordinary death into dharmakaya. If one is able to realize emptiness using this most subtle mind that is manifest, that realization will be extremely profound.

After that realization has been achieved, the danger of falling into the lower realms has been completely eliminated. So that's approaching, that's starting to bring that ordinary death into the path.

After that realization of emptiness, when one is able to meditate further and reach the levels of the example and meaning clear light, one brings forth a body that is similar to the dharmakaya, similar to the truth body.

One has established the basis which will allow one to quickly actualize complete enlightenment or full buddhahood. And once the dharmakaya is fully realized, that is the completion of transforming ordinary death into the path of dharmakaya. That's the completion of that path.

If you can bring forth an understanding, if you can dawn an understanding of this sequence within your mind, then your practice of the sadhana, your practice of the generation stage will be really meaningful. And because one has developed habituation to the generation stage meditations, then when one comes to the level of completion stage, all of the signs and appearances that one needs to meditate on will naturally unfold. And so when we speak of these eight disillusionings, in the samsaric sense, in the ordinary sense, the way those eight disillusionings unfold is according to our karma.

As a Vajrayana practitioner, before we begin our death process, before we go through those eight stages of dissolution, we imagine the eight stages of dissolution and we meditate on those as a way of being able to access this mind to meditate on emptiness. We prepare ourselves.

And so in the Vajrayogini practice, the eight stages of dissolution are conjoined with the visualization of the letter BAM with the body, with the BAM getting smaller, the body of the BAM dissolving into the line on top, the line dissolving into the half moon, into the base of the nada and into the three squiggles. The visualization happens like that.

And so when we think of the BAM letter itself, right, this is combined with the eight stages. So then when we think about the dissolving of these elements together with the sign or the appearance that manifests, that is how we visualize.

So first the earth into water, water into fire, fire into wind, and then wind dissolves into consciousness. And so then these are combined with four appearances or signs, the mirage-like appearance, the smoke-like appearance, the firefly-like appearance, and the sputtering butter lamp appearance. Then we go through the stages of the radiant white appearance, red increase, black near attainment, and finally the clear light.

So these are combined with this visualization of the letter BAM. First a larger BAM becoming increasingly smaller in size, then the body of the BAM dissolving into its head, then the head of the BAM dissolving into the half moon, the moon into the tige, the tige into the nada, and then the three curves of the nada dissolving in sequence until just a tiny little is left. Geshela said that in terms of the nada dissolving, you'll notice if you look closely at the top of the nada that there's kind of three curves in it, so it's the bottom one dissolves into the middle one, the middle one dissolves into the top one until just a tiny little piece of that nada is left.

And also just to be very clear, when we speak about the various appearances like the mirage-like and the smoke-like and so forth, this isn't just in the context of this practice, right? These appearances also arise for ordinary beings going through the death process. Yeah, so we went through those eight already, so we will move on now. So now we're going to look at the actual sadhana itself.

So we are on, according to my page number, the page numbers are different, but according to my page number, in the nearing path to great bliss, quick path to great bliss, FPMT sadhana, I'll read you where we are.

This very BAM expands and becomes equal to the extent of space, whereby the entire environment and all its inhabitants become the nature of bliss and emptiness. Once again, it gradually contracts from the edges, becoming a minute syllable BAM.

From the top, it gradually absorbs up into the nada. The nada also becomes unobservable and becomes the dharmakaya of indivisible bliss and emptiness.

OM SHUNYATA JNANA VAJRA SVABHAVA ATMAKO HAM.

So I was just explaining to Geshela, I put my asterisk right beside this mantra OM SHUNYATA JNANA VAJRA SVABHAVA ATMAKO HAM.

He was asking me, did we explain the meaning of this mantra? I believe we did. Does anyone think I'm incorrect in saying that we explained that? Okay, good, I don't see it. If you realize later, just email me, we'll cover it.

So now bringing the intermediate state into the path of sambhogakaya.

So, at the point that we're visualizing this clear light of death, and then as we go through that first part of the meditation, at that point, all that is left is that clear light is the subtle mind that is meditating single-pointedly upon emptiness.

That's all that's left at that point. So, what we think as the meditator, imagining going through this at this point is, okay, right now there is this mind, this blissful mind meditating single-pointedly upon emptiness. But this is just the wisdom truth body. The wisdom truth body is only something that can be cognized by other Buddhas. So, if I remain in this state, I will not be able to benefit sentient beings.

So, Geshela also wants to explain that actually, when we do this death into the path of Dharmakaya, the moment that you have this mind manifesting single-pointedly on emptiness, you actually want to pause here and meditate for as long as possible.

And, of course, that depends also on how much time you have for the session and so forth, but try to spend some time here.

And so, the next thing is, one thinks, for achieving the welfare of others, they need to be able to interact with me. So, I must achieve the welfare of others, and then one brings forth the Sambhogakaya or enjoyment body.

So, reading from the sadhana from the top of page 37

*From within emptiness, in which all appearances have thus been withdrawn,
my mind, in the nature of the apprehension aspect of the exalted wisdom of non-dual bliss and emptiness,
takes the aspect of an upright red-syllable BAM abiding in space.*

So, there's a difference here between father tantra and mother tantra, in terms of taking intermediate state into the path of Sambhogakaya.

In father tantras, such as Yamantaka/Vajrabhairava and Guhyasamaja, the visualization is of kind of a basic figure of the physical form of the body of that particular deity. At least in the father tantra is a basic shape of that body of the deity, but in mother tantra, one does not arise this shape of the body of the deity. In mother tantra, one arises either as a BAM or as a tige or a nada, something like that.

So, what's the difference in father tantra arising in sort of that coarse form or shape of the body and in mother tantra arising as the seed syllable? This is related to the main focus of father and mother tantra, which in the case of the father is the illusory body and in the case of the mother tantra is clear light. And so, arising here is not necessarily the easiest thing to do. In fact, many commentators have said actually dissolving into that emptiness is the easy part, but then this process of arising kind of conceptualizing that is more difficult.

So, when you go through these stages, what Geshela is advising you is to think of it like an old-style television set. When you turn off that TV, it dissolves until there's just one little pixel left into the center

that disappears. And then when you turn it on again, that initial pixel appears and then gradually expanding from that, the complete picture arises. It's a bit like that.

So, all of those appearances have dissolved into emptiness in the previous meditation and now the first appearance that's going to arise, that's going to manifest in this sadhana is the letter BAM.

So, one's mind, right? In a way, it's one's mind that is manifesting as this appearance of the letter BAM.

So, the apprehension aspect of the exalted wisdom of non-dual bliss and emptiness, that means the mind apprehending that exalted wisdom of non-dual bliss and emptiness, takes on this physical aspect of the letter BAM. And once one has done that and arisen the BAM, it's very important to think that this BAM is oneself arisen as the aspect of Vajrayogini's Sambhogakaya and having divine pride in being Vajrayogini's Sambhogakaya here. Divine pride, very important.

So, this divine pride of being Vajrayogini, as well as the clarity and the vividness of the visualization, is said by holy beings to be very important.

So, in this way, we then have covered bringing the intermediate state into the path of the Sambhogakaya.

So, then, in order to understand taking the intermediate state into the path of Sambhogakaya, it's very important to understand three outlines. So, I'll give you these outlines. The first is in accordance with the basis of purification. The second is in accordance with the purifier. And the third is in accordance with the purified results. So, I'll give those again:

- 1) the basis of purification,
- 2) the purifier,
- 3) and the purified results.

So, this, in accordance with the basis of purification, it's the basis of the clear, light of death combined with the changes in the subtle wind and mind that accomplish the intermediate state. That is the basis of purification.

So, arising in the form of this letter BAM, with the divine pride of thinking this is really the Sambhogakaya of venerable Vajrayogini, having that is actually what is able to purify the ordinary experience of the bardo.

So, it's spontaneously arising great bliss. It is inseparable great bliss, wisdom.

So, we can see here that if we haven't studied and developed some feeling for the teachings of emptiness prior, engaging in these meditations of the three bringings is going to be more difficult. So, without that stable feeling or basic understanding of emptiness, then our practice of the three bringings is actually unstable. So, that's the conclusion of the discussion of the first outline in accordance with the basis of purification.

Now we come to the second outline in accordance with the purifier. So, I'll just read this.

From the example and meaning clear light, achieving the impure and pure illusory bodies.

So, how do the realizations unfold? If we think of the example of King Indrabhuti, who was a practitioner of the Guhyasamaja Tantra, who was an ordinary, started out as an ordinary being just like us. On the basis of his practice of Guhyasamaja, he meditated on the example and meaning clear light and then was able to arise the illusory body. So, having achieved the example and meaning clear light and having arose the illusory body, despite that achieving of the illusory body, it is said that King Indrabhuti still kept his previous form.

So, his ordinary body was still there, still functioning. So, why after achieving the illusory body, did he maintain that ordinary or impure body? It was because he had many followers, many subjects who he could lead into the path of Dharma. It was for that purpose.

So, within that coarse form, kind of beneath those layers is actually not just the illusory body but the pure illusory body. That cannot be seen by most ordinary beings like ourselves. So, in order to be able to continue interacting with them, he maintained that coarse body.

So, Lord Milarepa, Gyelwa Ensapa, Khedrup Losang Gyatso other great sort of mahasiddhas who definitely achieved this realization, they were in a similar situation. They maintained that ordinary body despite that realization of the illusory body in order to be able to continue to interact with their disciples.

So, in accordance with the purifier, I'll just go over that again,

From the example and meaning clear light, achieving the impure and pure illusory bodies,

and then Geshela mentioned a second part to this,

accordingly generating the extraordinary completion stage in realizations in the continuum and hence ripening the roots of virtues.

And so, now we come to the next one which is in accordance with the purified results. And so, the result is in the aspect in accordance with a Buddha's enjoyment body.

So, establishing the divine pride in that and being that enjoyment body is the way of forging the path through fruition and through meditating in this way, actualizing the extraordinary potential and establishing it.

So, we have these in accordance with the basis of the purification, in accordance with the purifier, and in accordance with the purified result. These three outlines are applied to each of the three kayas, right? So, the Dharmakaya, the Sambhogakaya, and the Nirmanakaya.

So, then one has arisen as transforming the bardo into the Sambhogakaya as this letter BAM. So, in terms of the symbolism of the letter BAM, the three squiggles of the nada are said to be symbolic of the body, speech, and mind of the bardo, of the intermediate state being. But, there is another presentation, another tradition of scholarship, which speaks about the symbolism of the BAM differently.

It says that the tige, so the base of the squiggle, and the squiggle itself represents the body of the bardo being, and in its transformed aspect, the body, the form of the Sambhogakaya. Then, the base of the BAM, so I have to say body again, but that part of the BAM, which is the main letter, not the part on top, that part of the BAM, which is the main letter, this is said to represent the speech. So, the speech of the bardo being, and transformed aspect, the speech of the Sambhogakaya.

There is an A, a base syllable letter A, within the BAM. This is said to represent the mind of the bardo being, and in its transformed aspect, the holy mind of sambhogakaya. So, we can understand these various visualizations, and the meaning ascribed to them, as being representative of the path of ordinary body, sorry, of the basis of ordinary body, speech, and mind, of the path of cultivation of body, speech, and mind, and of the result of holy body, holy speech, and holy mind.

And so, the red color of the BAM is said to represent, in the ordinary aspect, the bardo's attachment, the bardo's attachment that is going to next drive it into another rebirth. If we take the BAM in terms of the Sambhogakaya purified aspect, the red color of the BAM represents unbearable compassion for all sentient beings.

So then, that concludes our discussion of taking intermediate state into the path of Sambhogakaya, and now, we continue bringing, and the next part is bringing birth into the path of Nirmanakaya, so we continue. So, I'll just read what Geshela read. We're on page 37.

From within emptiness, from E E come the red phenomena sources—two intersecting tetrahedrons—*inside of which, from A comes a moon disc, white tinged with red.*

On top of it, arranged counterclockwise, is the mantra: OM OM OM SARVA BUDDHA DAKINIYE VAJRA VARNANIYE VAJRA VAIROCHANIYE HUM HUM HUM PHAT PHAT PHAT SVAHA

As the syllable BAM in space, upon seeing the moon, I develop the intention to take rebirth in its center, whereby I descend there.

So, initially, we had, as the bardo being, we have this BAM, which is representing the Sambhogakaya, which is meditating on greatest wisdom. So, from that emptiness then - so, the BAM is thinking of that great bliss wisdom realizing emptiness, and then from that sphere of emptiness, there come two E syllables, and from that red phenomena sources. And then from A comes a moon disk, which is white tinged with red; and on top of it, arranged counterclockwise, are the letters of the mantra.

As the syllable BAM in space, upon seeing the moon, I develop the intention to take rebirth in its center, whereby I descend there.

So, that mind is thinking, I must take rebirth there.

So, then, one gazes upon the moon in the center of the phenomena source, which is white in color, as well as the mantra, the letters of the mantra, the syllables of the mantra, which are red in color. The colors white and red here represent the essence, the constituents of the father and the mother. And another symbolism that we can understand here is that the two triangles, or tetrahedrons, that make up the red phenomena source, one represents one's father, and one represents one's mother.

So, as one's visualizing that, then one's mind, at this point in the visualization, is still in the aspect of that letter BAM, the Sambhogakaya. So, what one thinks is, as the Sambhogakaya, as the enjoyment body, most sentient beings still cannot see me. So, I cannot interact with them to work for their benefit.

Therefore, in order to achieve the welfare of all sentient beings, I must take on the Nirmanakaya, the emanation body. So, also, another way of understanding the white color is understanding that it represents pure emptiness. Okay, sorry. And so, these two tetrahedrons that make up the phenomena source, they are red in color, but they seem to have a white border. There is a white border, and that white border represents purified emptiness.

And the fact that each of the triangles that make up the phenomena source has three points to it, represents the three doors of liberation.

So, on the basis of the moon, the BAM, and the phenomena source, one finally will, as the meditation proceeds, arise in the form of venerable Vajrayogini, and this is the essence of taking birth into the path of the emanation body.

And there is this aspect of the basis, in accordance with the basis of purification, in accordance with the purifier, and in accordance with the purified result, as it unfolds in this last of the three bringings, taking rebirth into the path of Nirmanakaya.

And we will begin there next time.

Yes, so more details will come as we proceed with the sadhana. So, I will just mark where we are, and we will continue where we left off next time.

And also, Geshe-la said, as we come to this part of the meditation on the three bringings, there are significant differences between the Gelug tradition and the Sakya presentation of this, and Geshela hopes to share some of those differences and their respective benefits with you next time.

So, Geshela said that actually the way he sees these differences is maybe not the way others see them. But for example, when you read Pabongka critiquing maybe some aspects of the Sakya practice of Vajrayogini, what you should do is actually take his critiques to a Sakya Lama and ask the Sakya Lama, what do you think about this? And then you hear their opinion of things, which enriches your understanding. And then you actually come to hold two lineages of oral instruction, which is a very good thing.

So it's good to understand the different presentations and then choose which one maybe you want to go with, but informed by the understanding of both.

Yes, so then the other thing that Geshela wanted to share with you is that when we speak of the - the arising as the Nirmanakaya, this can also be based on a presentation of the five purities.

And so then when we speak about these five, I'm sorry, I don't have everything in my head like Geshela does - So, this happens on the basis of the five manifest enlightenments, which we can also call the five purities.

And so, in the Vajrayogini tradition, this is

- 1) enlightenment from mirror-like wisdom,
- 2) enlightenment from the wisdom of equality,
- 3) enlightenment from the wisdom of discrimination,
- 4) enlightenment from the wisdom of accomplishment, and
- 5) enlightenment from the wisdom of Dharmadhatu.

And so then, from those five wisdoms how those are informing this practice of arising as the Nirmanakaya. So, there are different ways to arise as the deity, right? We have the instantaneous self-generation, we have the arising based upon the three, and here we have the arising based upon the five.

And so, apart from that, there are other ways to do it as well, and we can discuss those as we go along.

And so, in terms of instantaneous self-generation, we've covered that pretty well, actually. And so, in terms of explaining it in terms of these five, then we can come to more explanation of that as we go along in the sadhana.

And so, we'll come to more discussion of that as we continue. And so, Geshela also wanted to say that he was actually planning to do it this session. That's what I prepared, actually, but we went in a different direction. He was planning to give you an extensive explanation and definition of each of the five wisdoms, but we didn't get there, so maybe in next month's session of Chakrasamvara, he'll explain those five wisdoms in more detail. But also, really to keep in mind that it's our prior training in really developing feeling for bodhicitta and for emptiness that is going to help us be successful in these generation stage meditations. And so, different ways, cultivating the different aspects of how to meditate on emptiness, cultivating the different aspects of how to meditate on bodhicitta and emptiness is very important.

So, we will now dedicate the merits.



