

Teaching 18: Heruka Chakrasamvara Teachings

with Geshe Sonam Ngodrup

Eighteenth Chakrasamvara teaching – 22.02.2025

by Geshe Sonam Ngodrup - transl. Ven. Khedrup

Hello, greetings to all Dharma friends. Because today's teaching is a Vajrayana topic, Geshe la wanted to give you the greeting that he hopes that all of your practices of both sutra and tantra are going well.

Introduction

Within the four classes of tantra, our topic today, falls within anuttarayoga tantra, or unexcelled yoga tantra (I'm not saying highest yoga tantra anymore!). We are particularly fortunate to meet with that.

So, we have faith, and the wish to achieve the two bodies of a Buddha, in particular the Rupakaya, the form body, as well as the Dharmakaya, the truth body. The Vajrayana instructions actually make this possible, they give us all that we need to do that. It is really important to understand that any sadhana of anuttarayoga tantra, no matter which deity it is, has as its object of attainment two key things: the illusory body (Tib. *sgyu lus*) and the clear light (Tib. *'od gsal*). So, one way to think of this is that the illusory body, *sgyu lus*, is the substantial cause of the *Rupakaya*, and the clear light, *'od gsal*, is the substantial cause of the Dharmakaya, the truth body.

With the teachings of glorious Chakrasamvara in particular, mainly the focus of the teachings is the realization of the clear light, but we should understand that although clear light is the emphasis, all the instructions necessary for the attainment of the illusory body are also included in these teachings. And, then if we were to say “what is another uncommon characteristic of the Anuttarayoga in particular”, it is the capacity for the simultaneous accumulation of the two collections of both merit and wisdom. So, just to be clear, the two collections accumulated in the same moment, in the same instant, this is another one of the unique characteristics of unexcelled yoga tantra. So, to clarify, within sutra you have the two accumulations of merit and wisdom, and here you could perhaps be doing one of them, and have the other slightly in the background, but having both of them in equal intensity, in the same moment, this is only possible in Anuttara yoga tantra. So, why is it then, in Anuttara yoga tantra, that it is possible in one moment to have the accumulation of both the collection of merit and wisdom? One of the main reasons is that, remember that *the mind apprehending emptiness arises in the form of the deity*. When that mind apprehending emptiness is arising in the form of the deity, the *appearance* factor is the form of the

deity, while the *ascertainment* factor is the emptiness of the deity itself, its lack of inherent existence.

So here, maybe a question might come up – in the sutra teachings we are also saying the everything lacks inherent existence, so then certainly according to the sutra teachings, whatever deity arises is going to lack inherent existence as well. So, in that case, what is unique about tantra? What we need to say in a capsule here is that the unique tantric angle on this is that the mind apprehending emptiness (of inherent existence), arising in the form of the yidam deity with the appearance factor of the deity's form, and the ascertainment factor of the deity's lack of inherent existence, *this one mind* in the context of deity yoga, holds, simultaneously, the appearance factor of the deity's form, and the ascertainment of the deity's lack of inherent existence. This is why tantric deity yoga is unique. You might also say, why is there this mind apprehending emptiness arising in the form of the deity, why do we need to do that? Because we want this apprehension of emptiness to be of benefit to sentient beings, one needs (to manifest) the form body, the Rupakaya. Therefore, in this way, the appearance factor, the deity, is connected to the accumulation of the collection of merit. Since the deity's emptiness is ascertained in connection with the wish to benefit beings, that ascertainment factor is a very full expression of the accumulation of the collection of wisdom. These are not easy points, but they are critical to the foundation of Vajrayana practice. So, these are things we want to contemplate. Being able to accumulate the two collections simultaneously, in the same instant, is quite profound, and we should understand the reason this is possible.

So, we want to achieve the state of Vajradharahood. In the context of these teachings this means to achieve the state of glorious Heruka Chakrasamvara. To do that fully, we need to train in both the teachings of the generation stage and the teachings of the completion stage. One of the main points in generation stage practice is to see all appearances as the deity. That means that all sentient beings we encounter, for example, we train in seeing them as the gods and goddesses of the mandala. And any kind of ordinary environment, like a building where we may be, we train in seeing this as the celestial palace of the deity. With a smile, Geshe la says that when he hears that, it is hard to maintain that sort of vision of beings as gods and goddesses of the mandala, so he gets frustrated and complains to Khedrup. That's a very clear sign he's not maintaining that appearance. Training in these things is not so easy! In all seriousness, though, this is one of the main purposes in training in the generation stage.

Then, with the completion stage, just to be clear, some of the elements of the generation stage carry over into the completion stage. The main focus of the completion stage is to see any object, any appearance, as empty of inherent existence. That is the main training in the completion stage. In summary, if we consider the *functions* of the generation stage and the completion stage, these are two points related to the function of each of the two stages.

This in terms of sutra and tantra, to outline the (unique) characteristics of tantra, so that we can feel very fortunate to meet and engage in the teachings of tantra. This is why Geshe la sometimes begins with an explanation of the characteristics of tantra. So, we should be really happy and joyful about the potential that tantra unlocks, because think about how much trouble we have to go to, to accumulate just a little bit of merit. It is not easy to motivate (ourselves) and do that. But here, with the practices of tantra, we are able in the same instant, accumulate both the collections of merit and

the collection of wisdom. This is actually an incredible thing - that, through the practices of Vajrayana, we can complete the accumulations that it normally takes three eons to complete, in one short lifetime. So, that is considered something incredible and fortunate.

So, with a joyful mind, let us begin with the recitations.

Preliminary Prayers

We will begin with the praise to the Buddha. [There follows: Praise to Shakyamuni Buddha, Short Mandala Offering, Refuge and Bodhicitta.]

Meditation

With a peaceful body and mind, let us take a moment to bring forth the motivation.

Think that the place, the environment, clothing and so forth, where I am sitting-these are completely empty of inherent existence. Then imagine that from that sphere of emptiness arises a beautiful Buddha field, a pure land.

So, then, in that beautiful space in front, imagine one who is in essence one with the lama, who has shown me the three kindnesses of empowerment, oral transmission and explanation, appears in the form of glorious Chakrasamvara father and mother. So the root lama is Chakrasamvara. And you can imagine that, surrounding this central figure, are all of your root and lineage gurus, the dakas, the dakinis, all of the buddhas, bodhisattvas and holy beings.

Then imagine that on the same level as you, gazing upward, are all six types of sentient beings within samsara, but possessing human form, and that with a mind of wisdom and faith, they gaze upward to the sphere of holy beings, and bring forth the mind of faith and refuge.

Imagine that, gazing upward with a mind of faith and an attitude of joy, all of the surrounding holy beings, the lamas, deities and so forth, dissolve into the central being of Chakrasamvara father and mother.

Then think that Heruka father and mother, pleased with our mind of faith and refuge, come to our crown, facing in the same direction as ourselves and the assembled sentient beings.

Think that, facing in the same direction as us, they have an attitude of being pleased and happy with us, and feel close with us.

Then, think that Heruka father and mother, having this feeling of closeness and being pleased with us, dissolve into light and nectar and enter our body. They come to the place in our heart where our extremely subtle wind and mind abide, they dissolve and we become completely inseparable, like milk and water mixed together.

And think that as the deity dissolves and becomes one in essence with our extremely subtle wind and mind, all of the physical and mental suffering of ourselves and all sentient beings is instantaneously cleared away, just like the melting of snow on a warm day.

So think that from ourselves and others receiving these blessings, experiencing this bliss and happiness, we all develop a special capacity to develop a realization of emptiness. Think in this way, that one has, in particular from Heruka father and mother, received an uncommon, special blessing. And feel that one is especially fortunate to have received this blessing.

So, Geshe la said that this is just a taste of that dissolution meditation. Next time he plans to do it in more detail, so more of that will come. Ideally, with a meditation like this, you incorporate bringing death, intermediate state, and rebirth into the path. So there is a way to kind of connect all of those, which Geshe la hopes to go through next time.

So, as we said, to achieve the state of glorious Heruka father and mother, one needs to train in both the generation and completion stages, and at the moment we are doing the commentary on the generation stage. When we talk about the generation stage necessary to achieve the state of glorious Heruka father and mother, we can talk about the beginning, middle and end of the session.

Several times during these teachings we have presented the general outline of the practice, but if you don't want to get into so many points, when you are doing the practice you can just think about the activities at the beginning, the actual session, and the end.

Geshe la says that maybe his explanation was wrong, in that he gave you the full outline, rather than just the three essential points, and maybe that is a little easier.

In terms of the preparation then, we can say that there are eleven points. These are divided into two sections. The first is *seven common preliminaries*. The first is the praise and request to the root and lineage gurus, followed by the instantaneous self-generation as the deity. Third is blessing the vajra and bell. Fourth is blessing the inner offering. Fifth is blessing the outer offerings and tormas. Sixth is blessing the outer offerings to the self-generation, and seventh is the meditation and recitation of Vajrasattva. Next are the *(four) uncommon preliminaries*. First (in this second group) is meditating on the four immeasurables; second is blessing the various aggregates, constituents and so forth; third is meditating on the protection wheel to defeat all hindrances for oneself and others; and fourth is, through the seven purities, accumulating the two collections. But here, Geshe la is glossing it as the collection of merit. Geshe la says that he realizes that the way the outline is written out it is "accumulating the *collections*", but for our purposes here it is mainly about the accumulation of the collection of merit.

So, within these eleven preliminaries, we see that the main practice through which one is able to clear away obstacles or unfortunate conditions is the meditation and recitation of Vajrasattva, and the main way we are able to accumulate the collection is establishing the conditions and accumulating the collections (through the seven purities), which Geshe la glosses here as the collection of merit.

This is sort of distilling it down to the main preparation part, or the beginning of the session. Preparation like if you were preparing a meal, going shopping, picking up and preparing all the vegetables you are going to cook.

Then we come to the actual session, and the actual session consists of the main points that are going to be cultivated. So in the actual session, it is, in particular, connected with collection of wisdom, taking death into the path of the truth body. This is the practice which helps us to overcome the ordinary, samsaric (experience of) death.

And the next one is taking ordinary intermediate state into the path of the Sambhogakaya. And, of course, this is what helps us to overcome the ordinary experience of bardo. How this works in terms of what we are visualizing is we have this taking death into the path of the Dharmakaya, and then we get to the next step of taking bardo into the path of the Sambhogakaya, or enjoyment body, the thought is, that as the formless Dharmakaya, I can't really connect with sentient beings, so I must take a form in which I can connect with them. So, in this second (bringing) of the three, I appear in the form of this nada (flame) – we imagine this nada being visualized. And so, this Sambhogakaya, when it is being visualized in the form of this nada, we can view this as a subtle rupakaya (form body). But we are imagining that this is really the Sambhogakaya, the enjoyment body.

So, what do we think then? We think that this kind of subtle form body can only be seen by arya bodhisattvas and so forth, and because we want to be able to benefit all sentient beings, we must give rise to a *coarse* rupakaya, or form body. So, the parallel is that in the bardo state, the bardo being cannot be seen by ordinary sentient beings, so in the same way, when Buddhas are in the sambhogakaya state, most beings cannot see them. Only arya bodhisattvas are able to see them. That's the parallel.

There is another similarity here, in that the bodies in the ordinary bardo state are said to be connected to the extremely subtle wind and mind, and that the enjoyment body of Buddhas in the Sambhogakaya state are also connected to the extremely subtle wind and mind.

Remember that one of the principles, when we talk about the differences between sutra and tantra, in the case of tantra, we take an object similar to the object to be abandoned in order to abandon it. This is kind of like the psychology of tantra. It is quite different from the psychology of sutra, which says that the antidote for the thing you have to abandon is its complete opposite. Quite a difference there.

One of the examples, Geshe la says, (as we are in complicated times, don't take offence), if an army trains with a person made of straw, or a target made of straw, and they shoot their weapons at that in order to train, it's the same kind of mode of training with tantra. So, it is similar in the fact that of course we are not trying to overcome an outer enemy, right? We are trying to overcome an inner enemy, (which is) samsarically driven, ordinary death, bardo and rebirth. That is what we are trying to overcome. And so then, thinking in this Sambhogakaya state, in the form of this nada, "I am not able to fully connect with sentient beings, and work for their benefit. I must give rise to the emanation body"; we therefore arise in the form of the deity. And the parallel here is that we are in

our mother's womb, then we are actually born. And at the point when we are born, we can fully interact with the world. (In contrast to ordinary sentient beings, however), for those beings who achieve Buddhahood in one lifetime, actually do not need that physical body any longer, but they hold onto it, they remain with it, to use it to continue interacting with and benefitting sentient beings. Because they have achieved the illusory body and so forth, they no longer need that physical body, but they hold onto it because they use that coarser form to interact with ordinary sentient beings.

Now, just going back to where we were, a sort of recap of the actual session, and of course the actual session is taking ordinary death, bardo and rebirth into the path of the three bodies (Dharmakaya, Sambhogakaya, and Nirmanakaya). Taking these ordinary experiences into the path of the three bodies is not just some ordinary point. We really want to scrutinize and cultivate this, using both analytical and placement meditation when we are engaging with this.

So, even if we are not able to complete all the points of that path before the time when we pass away, if we have trained in this, and have also familiarized ourselves with emptiness, then at the time of death, there is another time when the mind can be relaxed and focused, and we can make great progress. When we go through the death process, there is a moment where an appearance of emptiness dawns within the mind. If one is able to recognize and to utilize that, this is an opportunity for great transformation. But, if one simply just goes through that process without this awareness, then one will be trapped within that samsaric cycle of ordinary death, bardo and rebirth. If, at the time that happens (i.e., when the appearance of emptiness dawns within the mind), we are able to meditate upon that appearance of emptiness that arises as part of the death process, we are already on a path to experience great happiness and peace. And being able to recognize that appearance of emptiness is what is known as the “son” clear light in tantric terminology. So, when the clear light of death is happening, and one is able to apprehend the appearance of emptiness at that time, this is what is known as the “son” clear light. When we speak about the “mother” clear light, this is that clear light and appearance of emptiness that (naturally) occurs for any sentient being going through the death process. When we speak about the “son” clear light, not only is there an appearance of emptiness, *but one is also able to direct their awareness to and focus on this appearance of emptiness* occurring within that stage of the death process. We therefore speak about these two types, the mother and son clear light, meeting, or joining. If the mother and son clear light are able to meet, then from rebirth to rebirth there is no problem. But at the moment we are not able to recollect our “mother”, so the training in the generation stage is like saying, “this is when your mother will arrive, this is what she looks like, this is how to recognize her.” This is part of the training. This is the importance of the eight stages of dissolution (occurring in the death process).

Next, we talk about then arising as the nirmanakaya, and this happens on the basis of the five manifest enlightenments. And then the supporting and supported mandalas arise *instantaneously*. In the sadhana, we talk about the supported and supporting mandalas arising instantaneously, because it is said that likewise, at enlightenment, the supporting and supported mandalas of the deity arise instantaneously as well. Then, as we next meditate on the arising of the mandalas *in stages*, going back to our formulation of the activities occurring at the beginning, middle and end of the session, we have come to the activities occurring at the end of the session.

Connected to this, in the teachings of Akhu Sherab Gyatso on the activities at the end of the session, there are six points. The first of these six points is the brief explanation. Second is the extensive explanation. This is generation of the celestial palace, the various deities inhabiting it, and so forth. The imagining the main deities and the various retinue deities. Up to this point we have covered all of those. Then, the third point is recollecting the purity and the body mandala. So, you will see that within this third point there are two activities, and we want to differentiate between those two, i.e., recollecting the purity and meditating on the body mandala.

Now we turn to the sadhana itself. We are on p. 48 of Berzin's translation, towards the bottom where you will see the "OM AH HUM". Here you should write, because it is not there in the text, the phrase "Recollecting the Purity." So, recollecting the purity through the purity of the name, we have talked a lot about this. And also, in terms of recollecting the symbolism, we have talked a lot about the various vowels and consonants, how these exemplify method and wisdom and so forth. We have had a conversation about all of these. And so now we are talking about the purity of the concordance factor.

OM AH HUM

(Imagine that the secret places and four chakras of the father and mother couples in the mind, speech, and body wheels become ennobling and consecrated in the same manner as took place with the principal couple.)

The mother and father couples, with their four places and their secret places having been ennobled and consecrated, Go into union, whereby their bodhichitta melts.

Arriving from the crown of their head to their throat – joy;

Arriving from their throat to their heart – supreme joy;

Arriving from their heart to their navel – distinguished joy;

Arriving from their navel to the tip of their gem, there arises deep awareness of simultaneously arising joy.

The joining of that (deep awareness) to inseparable blissful awareness and voidness itself has arisen as the thirty-seven goddesses who have taken on the essential nature of the thirty-seven factors leading to a purified state.

If you are wondering, the "thirty-seven factors leading to a purified state" is Berzin's terminology for the thirty-seven enlightenment factors.

When we talk about these four places, we are talking about the navel, heart, throat and forehead. And, remember that at these four places there is either a moon or a sun disk, and mantras, and lights interacting and so forth. So, we went through this meditation last time. The idea here is that the light of the sun and moon disks, and the various mantras interacting and meeting, is a blessing to the channels and winds at that particular place in the body. Then there is the blessing of the secret place, the father and mother joining as well. So, on the basis of all this happening, the channels,

winds and drops get a very special sort of blessing. On the basis of the activation of the extremely subtle wind, the *gtum mo*, the inner fire, begins to blaze. Then on the basis of blazing of the *gtum mo*, and the heat moving up the central channel, the fire is hot so it begins to melt the white constituent abiding at the crown level. And then that dripping down, when it comes to the forehead and throat (joy), heart (supreme joy), navel (distinguished joy), and secret place (simultaneously arising joy), that is how that all happens. At the point in the sadhana where it says “there arises the deep awareness of simultaneous joy”, Geshe la says that here a deep awareness of emptiness occurs. This is a very important point.

Then at that moment there is this arising of supreme awareness wisdom of emptiness, and we can imagine this arises as these consciousnesses connected to the thirty-seven enlightenment factors. Then, when these factors arise in the form of deities, this is the purity of the concordance. Remember we had the purity of the symbolism and the name, and then the purity of the concordance. Here the purity of the concordance is actually *the purity of the deities* concordant with the thirty-seven enlightenment factors.

As we move down p. 49 in the sadhana text, we have the thirty-seven enlightenment factors. Beginning with the first set of four:

*The close placement of mindfulness on the body,
The close placement of mindfulness on feelings of levels of
happiness,
The close placement of mindfulness on the mind,
And the close placement of mindfulness on phenomena – These
four are, in turn:
Dakini, Lama, Khandarohi, and Rupini.*

The we have the four legs of magical emanation, the second set of four:

*The leg of intention for (attaining) extraphysical powers,
The leg of joyful perseverance for (attaining) extraphysical
powers, The leg of scrutiny for (attaining) extraphysical powers,
And the leg of pondering for (attaining) extraphysical powers –
These four are, in turn:
Prachanda, Prachandakshi, Prabhavati, and Mahanasa.*

Then we have the third set, the powers of faith, perserverance, mindfulness, and absorbed concentration:

*The power of belief in fact,
The power of joyful perseverance, The power of mindfulness,
The power of absorbed concentration,
These four are, in turn:*

Viramati, Kharvari, Lankeshvari, and Drumacchaya.

Then we have the power of discriminating awareness (remember this is Berzin's term for discriminating wisdom), etc., the fourth set:

*The power of belief in fact,
The power of joyful perseverance, The power of mindfulness,
The power of absorbed concentration,
These four are, in turn:
Viramati, Kharvari, Lankeshvari, and Drumacchaya.*

Then we come to the fifth set of four:

*The force of absorbed concentration, The force of discriminating awareness,
The factor of absorbed concentration for (attaining) a purified state And the factor of joyful perseverance for (attaining) a purified state – These four are, in turn:
Shyama-devi, Subhadra, Haya-karna, and Kha-ganana.*

The sixth set of four begins with zest (I would say that as the factor of joy):

*The factor of zest for (attaining) a purified state,
The factor of a sense of physical and mental fitness (I would translate this as pliancy) for (attaining) a purified state, The factor of thorough sorting of phenomena for (attaining) a purified state,
And the factor of mindfulness for (attaining) a purified state –
These four are, in turn: Chandra-vega, Khandarohi, Shaundini, and Chakra-varmini.*

Then, the seventh set:

*The factor of even-mindedness (or equanimity) for (attaining) a purified state, A right view, right thought, and right speech –
These four are, in turn, are:
Suvara, Maha-bala, Chakra-vartini, and Maha-virya.*

Then, the eighth part:

A right boundary of action, right livelihood, Right effort, and right mindfulness –

These four are, in turn:

Kakasya, Ulukasya, Shvanasya, and Shukarasya.

Right absorbed concentration is Shri Heruka.

So, one very important point here, and Geshe la says that you should highlight the line, “*Right absorbed concentration is Shri Heruka*”. So far, we have been going through all these feminine deities for the other enlightenment factors, but here we speak about the masculine deity, Heruka. So, prior to this we have mentioned thirty-two feminine deities, and we haven’t mentioned any of the father deities (i.e., the yab deities associated with the yum deities of the mind, speech and body wheels). So, how do we understand this? We understand that although it is all the names of the mothers, the goddesses are specifically mentioned, along with these are the fathers, the male deities. It is just that the male deities are not explicitly mentioned. Likewise, this line, “*Right absorbed concentration is Shri Heruka*”, this reverses it – it mentions the father, the male deity, explicitly, and understand that *implicitly* with him is the mother in union.

Then finally, the ninth set of four:

*Generating constructive phenomena not generated before,
Safeguarding those already generated,*

*Ridding oneself of destructive phenomena already generated,
And not generating those not yet generated –*

*These four factors for (attaining) correct riddances
 (“riddances” here means abandonment) are, in turn:*

*Yama-dadhi, Yama-dhuti, Yama-damsthrini, and Yama-
mathani.*

So, mark here: “*This concludes the section on recollecting the purity*”, because remember that this section has an outline that has two parts, “*Recollecting the Purity*”, and “*Meditating on the Body Mandala*.” Now we have finished the part on recollecting the purity. Geshe la says that when you are practicing the sadhana, you will want to mark these outlines to give yourself a compass as to where you are, otherwise it becomes overwhelming.

You will see that this last one, where we have Yama-dadhi, Yama-dudhi and so forth, these “four factors for attaining correct riddances”, as Berzin translates it, in the thirty-seven enlightenment factors, these are normally the second set. But here they are put at the end. Why is that? And Geshe la says these thirty-seven enlightenment factors are so important. You find them in all the Mahayana and Theravada traditions, they are really a universal Buddhist thing. So normally, on the path of accumulation, we talk about the four close placements of mindfulness, then when we come to the second path, that of preparation, we talk about the four factors for attaining correct riddances”. So, why in the sadhana would we take these four factors and put them at the end, when in the normal presentation they are actually the second set of things to be cultivated? There is a reason for this. The nature of each of these four factors for attaining correct riddances is, actually, a type of perserverance, or joyous effort. So, it means that our cultivation, from the beginning to the very end, needs to be like an unbroken stream, a stream whose current is perserverance, or joyous

effort. And remember that effort here is *joyous* effort. It is a mind of joy, not a mind of toil and difficulty. You're allowed to complain about having to expend a little effort, but it is supposed to be like that. It is supposed to be joyous effort, right?

Geshe la now would like to give you a shortcut for when you are doing this sadhana. What we can do here is, you can start from p. 49 where it says "the joining of that deep awareness to inseparable blissful awareness and voidness itself has arisen as the thirty-seven goddesses, who have taken on the essential nature of the thirty-seven enlightenment factors...". If you start from there, then go to p. 50 where it says, "Right absorbed concentration is Shri Heruka", you can leave the name of all those deities out. So basically, starting with that verse on p. 49 ("joining of that deep awareness..."), you then skip everything in between, and pick up where it says "Right absorbed concentration is Shri Heruka". This is a way to shorten the practice, assuming you do not have time to do the full 100-page practice. It shortens it.

Now we come to the actual meditation on the body mandala, halfway down p. 50:

(While reciting each line, imagine that each part of the body mentioned emits a replica of itself, which dissolves into the corresponding part of the external mandala.)

*From the transformation of my legs being spread apart, having
the shape of a bow,*

*comes the bow-shaped (mandala) of wind in the progressive
stacking of the elements.*

*From my groin being in the form of a triangle, the triangular
mandala of fire;*

From my circular-shaped belly, the circular mandala of water;

From my square chest,

the square mandala of earth; From my spine,

Mount Meru;

From the thirty-two channels of my crown (chakra),

the (thirty-two petaled) lotus (on top of Mount Meru);

*And from my body being equally an arm-span from top to
bottom and side to side (when my arms are outspread),*

*the square immeasurably magnificent palace having four equal
sides – the Heruka mandala, embellished with ornaments such as
a (jeweled) molding, strands (of pearls), and the like.*

*From my eight limbs (two forearms, lower arms, thighs, and
calves), (come) the eight pillars;*

*And from the three – my body, speech, and mind – the three
wheels.*

Remember that when we arise as the deity, we have arisen as the deity in the *outer* mandala. So you are in that outer mandala as Chakrasamvara, and the shape of your legs, i.e., your *stance* (right leg

extended, and left bent), is in the shape of a bow. Remember that as you stand as glorious Chakrasamvara within that celestial palace, you are standing on the lotus, sun and moon seat, remember that under that are the “seats” of the mandalas of the four elements, starting with wind, then fire, water and earth. In this part of the meditation, you are going to do a lot of emanating and re-absorbing.

Remember that you are an enlightened being, Shri Chakrasamvara. You can emanate out and re-absorb anything you want. So, don’t think of yourself as powerless when you are in the form of Chakrasamvara. That defeats the whole point. You can do anything when you are Chakrasamvara.

So, you imagine that the legs being spread apart in the shape of a bow, that a replica of this is emanated and dissolves into the wind mandala. And then with that replica dissolving into the wind mandala, this becomes the wind component as (part of) the body mandala. It has become the wind element of the body mandala, which we are slowly building up. So, when you understand that, all of the points with respect to the elements following, occur in that same pattern. So, the outer wind element transforms into the body mandala wind component. (*Khedrup la: In my notes, I have marked this sequence of transformations as 1, 2, 3, etc., and so this I have marked as number one.*)

Then, number two is the groin in the form of a triangle. So that groin shape emanates out and absorbs into the outer triangular fire mandala, transforming that into the fire component of the body mandala. So, number three, the same thing: from the circular shape of the belly, that emanates out a replica which absorbs into the outer water mandala, which transforms into the water component of the body mandala.

Next, number four, here Geshe la is pointing to his chest, which is basically like a square. The bottom side of that square would be your rib cage, then the two sides on either side of your breast, and then the top forming the square shape. A replica of that chest then dissolves into the outer earth mandala, transforming it into the earth component of the body mandala.

Number five is your spine. You imagine that your spine emanates a replica, and that replica dissolves into Mt. Meru of the outer mandala, and from that absorption, that transforms into the Mt. Meru of the body mandala. And then number six, from (an emanation of) the thirty-two channels of the crown chakra, this transforms into the thirty-two petalled lotus on the top of Mt. Meru of the body mandala.

Next, for number seven, Geshe la says that here “my body being equally an arm-span from top to bottom, and from side to side”, is explained by the holy beings as the distance between the two outstretched arms being equal to the height of the body from head to toe, and that these two measurements cover the entire body. We imagine that a replica of these absorbs into the outer celestial palace, and becomes the celestial palace (together with all its various features) of the body mandala.

Now, for number eight, the two forearms, lower arms, thighs and calves transform into the eight pillars of the body mandala. Geshe la says that here, when we talk about the eight pillars, it is really important to understand that these eight pillars are not on the outside of the celestial palace which is what you might think, but they are on the inside of the celestial palace. They are like the pillars

which would hold up the ceiling of a room. Also, it is not like in the middle of the room, but along the sides.

Then number nine, replicas of your body, speech and mind go into the three wheels of the outer mandala, and they transform into the three wheels of the body mandala.

[In response to a question regarding the meaning of this ninth point, Geshe la offers the following: *Just as a replica of your back spine enters the Mount Meru of the outer mandala, it is then transformed into the body mandala. In the same way, the replicas of your body, speech, and mind enter the holy body, speech, and mind wheels of the outer mandala, then these are transformed into the body, speech, and mind wheels of the body mandala.*]

So, what has happened by this point (in the sadhana)? And you can note this in your sadhana. We have established the outer basis. So, the outer mandala, from this meditation, has been transformed into the base of the body mandala. So, why is this important? Why do we need to go through this visualization? Because, when we meditate on the outer mandala, we need to bless it so that it becomes the inner support for the body mandala. Because, if we try to meditate on the inner deities, still holding onto the idea of an outer celestial palace, and so on, it will be more difficult to arise great bliss. So, we need to integrate the environment into the body mandala. Because we have taken also the basis, the support of the mandala palace, the elements, Mt. Meru and so forth, into the body mandala, it will be much easier to arise great bliss on the basis of this meditation. It becomes holistic.

So now we come to generating the deities of the body mandala. So, we begin with glorious Heruka.

Generating the Principal Deity, Heruka, in the Supported Body Mandala

*From the transformation of a “springtime” syllable HUM, the
size of the thickness of a mustard seed,*

*Which is a creative-drop of bodhichitta, like a drop of dew, that
has fallen inside the central channel*

in the middle of the Dharma-chakra at my heart,

*Comes a Glorious Heruka, a Vanquishing Master Surpassing
All:*

So, when we come to the deities of the body mandala, all of these are arising on a transformed form of our body. So that they are within our body. Remember that. So that we think that the springtime refers to a drop of white bodhicitta. So that springtime drop transforms into a HUM, and that HUM transforms into glorious Heruka. So, we talked about springtime as a time of blossoming, a time when the mind becomes open and happy in this same way. So, because great bliss can arise from the melting of those drops, in the same way that the melt in the spring happens and the mind arises great joy. So, we have here generated the father deity of the body mandala. So, what’s going to happen here, since some people have requested the complete transmission of the sadhana, Geshe la wants to read it. But what we have here is a description of Chakrasamvara – we see his implements,

the mother's implements and form, etc. We have already gone over this before, but so you can get the complete transmission of the sadhana, I will just let Geshe la go through this part of the sadhana in Tibetan. I am not going to translate it.

[Geshe la gives the *rlung* for this section:]

His body's dark blue and has four faces:

*The central face black, the left one green, The back one red, and
the right one yellow, With each of the faces having three eyes.*

*He has twelve arms and around his forehead is fastened a
garland of five-spoked vajras.*

*With his extended right leg, he stomps on the head of black
Bhairava, Who has four arms: his first two hands with palms
pressed together, His other right holding a damaru-drum and
the left a sword.*

*His bent left leg stomps on the breast of red Kalarati,
Who has four arms: her first two hands with palms pressed
together, Her other two holding a skullcup and a khatvanga-
staff.*

*They each have one face, three eyes,
and are adorned with the five ornaments.*

*With his first two arms, he embraces Vajra-varahi,
While holding in his right hand a five-spoked vajra and in his
left a bell.*

*In his second two hands he holds a white elephant-hide cloak,
(dripping) with blood,*

*With his right hand holding its left foreleg, His left hand its left
hind-leg,*

*Stretching the hide across his back, While making the
threatening mudra:*

*The two finger-tips of the threatening mudras Are at the level of
his brow.*

*In his third right hand, he holds up a damaru-drum, In his
fourth an axe, In his fifth a cleaver, And in his sixth a trident.*

*In his third left hand, he holds up a khatvanga-staff, marked by a
vajra (on its tip),*

*In his fourth a skullcup filled with blood, In his fifth a vajra
grappling-rope, And in his sixth, the four-faced head of Brahma.*

*He has a topknot of hair, marked with a crossed double-vajra
(horizontally through it),*

*And on each face he has an adorning (crown of) five human
skulls,*

strung together, on top and on bottom, by two (parallel) rosaries of black vajras. On the left side of his central face (by his topknot)

hangs a slightly askew crescent moon.

His faces change expressions, have their four fangs bared, and are terrifying.

He expresses the nine moods (of dance):

The three physical moods – flirtatious, heroic, and repulsive; The three verbal moods – laughing, ferocious, and terrifying,

And the three mental moods – compassionate, majestic, and peaceful.

He wears a tiger-skin loincloth and has hung (around his neck)

A long garland of fifty moist human heads, strung together with human intestines. He's stamped with the mudra-seal of the six bone ornaments,

And his entire body is smeared with the ash of human bone.

So, this concludes the description of the form of the glorious father. So we've gone from the top of p. 51 down to the middle of p. 52. Geshe la is now going to read the description of the mother. Remember, you have already had commentary on this before, it appears here again in the sadhana.

“From the transformation of a creative drop, in the form of the fire of of tummo heat, the red element at my navel”... this relates to the red drop. We can imagine here that we generate the father (at the heart), and we generate the mother (at the navel), then we meditate that the red drop, which is closer to the navel, ascends to where the white drop is, and the two drops having met at the heart, are the mother and father in union. So, in this way we have generated the main deities, father and mother, of the body mandala.

Generating the Motherly Partner, Vajra-varahi, in the Supported Body Mandala

[Here, Geshe la gives the *rlung* for this section]

From the transformation of a creative-drop, in the form of the fire of tummo (inner heat) – the red element at my navel –

Comes a Vajra-varahi, a Vanquishing Lady Surpassing All, with her body red and having one face.

She has two arms, three eyes, is naked and her hair hangs loose.

She wears an apron adorned with fragments of a (human) skull.

She embraces her fatherly partner around his neck with her left hand,

*in which she holds a skullcup filled with the blood of the four
demonic mara forces and the like, and serves it up to the mouth
of her fatherly partner;*

*With her right hand, she threatens with the threatening mudra,
as well as with a vajra, all malevolent beings in the ten
directions.*

*Because she realizes the equality of all wandering beings in
voidness, She possesses the brilliance of sunlight*

*Through having an appearance of totally pure deep awareness
That is like the fires at the time of the eons of destruction.*

She delights in blood and drips out blood,

*As she nicely wraps her two calves around her fatherly partner,
above his thighs.*

*Since she works for the benefit of wandering beings Even though
remaining in the great blissful awareness*

*That's the functional nature of an exceptionally perceptive mind
of vipashyana,*

*She has an identity-nature of compassion. She is bedecked with
the mudra-seal of the five bone ornaments, Has a crown of five
dried human skulls*

And wears a long hanging necklace of fifty dried human skulls.

*The couple (Heruka and Vajra-varahi), in the essential nature of
the "springtime" (drop) and (tummo) energy-drop,*

Having met at my heart, stand entered in union.

Geshe la has read through the description of the father and mother, and we are on p. 53. He is just clarifying why are we not giving a full explanation of the description of the father and mother. This is because we have already given a description of the father and mother, and the symbolism of their holy bodies previously, and it is exactly the same words as are in the sadhana earlier, it is just now that the description is in the context of the body mandala.

*From the four channel-spokes, east and so on, at the (chakra
wheel) at my heart, in which the energy-winds of the four
elements pass,*

*Come black Dakini in the east, green Lama in the north, Red
Khandarohi in the west, and yellow Rupini in the south.*

So the chakra wheel at the heart is blessed, and the four channels in the principal directions become the four heart dakinis, in the directions indicated.

*They have one face, three eyes, with mouths having fangs bared
and a slight smile; They are naked and their hair hangs loose.*

They have four arms: the first right hand is holding a cleaver and the first left one a skullcup –

They hold them at their hearts in a manner as if they were embracing;

Their lower right hand holds up a damaru-drum and the lower left a khatvanga-staff.

*They stand (facing inwards) with their right legs outstretched,
Are bedecked with the mudra-seal of the five bone-ornaments,
Have a crown of five dried human skulls*

And wear a long hanging necklace of fifty dried human skulls.

So, this is a description of the four heart dakinis.

*From the transformation of the four channel-spokes, southeast
and so on, (in which the energy-winds) of the four offering
(sensory objects pass),*

Come, in the four intermediate directions,

the four human skullcups brimming with five nectars.

This is the great bliss wheel.

So, at the heart chakra, in the four principal directions you have the four heart dakinis, and the what is in the intermediate directions? In each of the four intermediate directions the channel spoke transforms into a skullcup brimming, or full with, nectar. This is the great bliss wheel of the body mandala, and the deities of the great bliss wheel are the four heart dakinis.

Geshe la says that we are coming to the end of our time, but he did want today to get started on the body mandala commentary, so we will leave it here for now, with this description of the great bliss wheel. We will pick up here next time when we return to these teachings on Chakrasamvara.

Thank you very much, and please dedicate the merits with joy.

Concluding Prayers and Meditation

Through the virtuous merits we have collected, as well as through the power of the virtuous blessings of Heruka Chakrasamvara father and mother on their minds, may all sentient beings who have evil thoughts, have their minds completely purified, and give rise to minds of loving kindness.

Through evil thoughts, evil intentions and evil actions being completely purified through these blessings, may all conflicts be completely cleared away, and may all sentient beings abide together in peace and harmony.

And just, through the power of these merits, may all of my wishes for progress on the path, or fruition of practice, be able to come about.

