

Teaching 19: Heruka Chakrasamvara Teachings

with Geshe Sonam Ngodrup

Nineteenth Chakrasamvara teaching – 17.05.2025

by Geshe Sonam Ngodrup - transl. Ven. Khedrup

First of all, greetings and tashi delek to all Dharma friends and, as usual, Geshe la hopes that you are well and happy, and that all of your practice is going nicely.

Introduction

Because we are engaged in the activity of Dharma practice today, it is always good at the beginning to take Lama Tsongkhapa's advice, and reflect on how fortunate it is that we have this opportunity. In terms of the Dharma we are studying here, it is particularly fortunate, because we are studying the Dharma that is complete, that is the final Dharma, the Dharma of the final intention, which is Anuttara, or highest yoga tantra. And, it is through these teachings of Anuttarayoga tantra, that we can actually tap into our physical body, and use and transform our physical body in the very highest way.

However, we should keep in mind that in many ways, tantra is the same as sutra, in that in both, for example, conventional and ultimate bodhicitta are extremely important to keep in mind. We should understand that ultimate and relative, or conventional, bodhicitta are the root of all the other practices, and the other expressions of Dharma are like their branches. So, when we speak of relative or conventional bodhicitta, this occurs at the very beginning, when we speak about establishing a sound motivation.

When we speak about relative bodhicitta, we understand that this is a motivation connected with minds such as compassion. And, in highest yoga tantra, for example we think about ultimate bodhicitta, in connection with the eight stages of dissolution, and as it relates to the final of those, the clear light of death. Also, we can think about highest yoga tantra in terms of its object of abandonment. If you have been paying attention, you will remember that there are three objects of abandonment in the generation stage of highest yoga tantra, and these are ordinary death, ordinary intermediate state, and ordinary rebirth. So, Geshe la wanted me to read a verse from the expression of worship, or the homage section, of the text on the three bodies, and it as follows. Geshe la says that actually he encourages you, if you have time, to recite this verse daily. If you do this as a daily recitation, it will be something that is beneficial for you. So, maybe I will type this out so we can make this available to folks. It goes like this:

“The basis is death, bardo, and birth like an iron house,

The purifier is the profound path of the two stages, which is like the elixir that transforms iron into gold,

The purified result is the complete purity of the precious three kāyas,

Homage to the Lord of Transformative Union!”

So here we think about ordinary death, bardo and birth as kind of like a box made of iron, some sort of solid object made out of iron. At first this seems okay, right? This is made out of iron. It is a heavy, stable thing. So, what can we do about ordinary death, intermediate state, and rebirth? The verse is telling us that if we develop ourselves, if we transform ourselves, we will be able to transform that iron house of those ordinary experiences into something that is like a wish-fulfilling jewel.

So, we can look at the generation and completion stages of highest yoga tantra like that substance that transforms iron into gold, what we would call “quicksilver”. I guess these days we would say it is mercury, but anyway it is like this magical substance that transforms iron into gold. Through using the practices of the generation and completion stages, we can take ordinary death, intermediate state and rebirth, and transform these into the three kayas of a fully enlightened Buddha. When we speak about these three bodies, we should understand that in the language here it is referring to the three bodies as the object of attainment. This the final object of attainment when full enlightenment is reached, and these are the three kayas of a Buddha – the Dharmakaya, Sambhogakaya, and the Nirmanakaya. We could say that the substantial cause of this result of the three bodies of a Buddha, is the *path* [of transforming ordinary death, intermediate state, and rebirth] into the three bodies. In the tantric terminology, it speaks of..so the result three bodies are those three bodies of a Buddha, and there is the *path* three bodies. Geshe la is noting that the path three bodies are most extensively explained when you come to [a consideration of} the completion stage in highest yoga tantra. But the generation stage has practices which are similar to the path three bodies. So it is really important to understand that the path three bodies, which are going to help us overcome ordinary death, intermediate state, and rebirth, are the path three bodies expressed in the completion stage of highest yoga tantra. And the other thing to understand is that when the three bodies of the path are attained in completion stage practice, enlightenment is certain in that lifetime. In tantric terminology, it says that one achieves “Vajradharahood” in that lifetime.

When we speak about achieving the path three bodies, how does this happen in terms of practice? For example, consider a person practicing during their lifetime, and they are not able to tap into that extremely subtle wind and mind, so that they are not able to realize emptiness with that extremely subtle mind. Nonetheless, if they reach a sufficient level of realization, they can, at the time of the clear light of death, use this moment to tap into the bliss, the clear light, and meditate single-pointedly on emptiness. If they are able to do that successfully, they are *certain* to achieve the resultant three bodies. They do not need to go into the bardo, because along with that realization we talked about, they achieve the illusory body.

However, to be able to cultivate the path three bodies of the completion stage, we need to first learn about the practices which are similar to this, which are the practices of the generation stage. To do that, we need to understand how to practice properly the self-generation sadhana. So that is where we are in our discussion at the moment.

Lama Tsongkhapa makes a refined point here, too. When we talk about transforming ordinary death, intermediate state, and rebirth, we are not talking about the death, intermediate state, and rebirth [associated with] our last lifetime, our previous rebirth. That is over. There is no point in transforming that. At this moment we are in this body in a more or less stable way, we could say, so we are not experiencing a dissolution of the elements or anything like that. So what do we meditate on to transform ordinary death, bardo and rebirth into the path? So we have to imagine it in the future, i.e. that our future death, intermediate state and rebirth [transform] into the path. Geshe la is just letting us know that actually this is just Lama Tsongkhapa's point about this, but that there is some debate between scholars who have different viewpoints about it.

So, we could ask, what is ordinary death, intermediate state, and rebirth most connected to, or what propels it? From the tantric perspective, it is ordinary appearance, and the grasping, or clinging to, that ordinary appearance. Once that ordinary appearance, and the grasping at that ordinary appearance are cleared away, then the causes that are driving the experience of ordinary birth, intermediate state and rebirth are cleared away, so they are no longer experienced. How do we cultivate purifying ordinary appearance and grasping? We purify that by cultivating the clear appearance and divine pride of being the deity. To successfully clear away that grasping at ordinary appearance, because of course what we are experiencing now is a samsaric experience, we cannot just superimpose a divine appearance on that, right? For example, if you have an old house, and you want to build a new house on the same property, you need to knock the old house down and then take away all the rubbish. You need to clean up the place. So, in this way, we first need to first dissolve the samsaric appearance that is connected to the ignorance grasping at the self. If the mistaken mind associated with the ignorance grasping at the self is what is responsible for the samsaric experience, or the ordinary experience that we are experiencing, then, on the other hand a mind that is *unmistaken*, a mind that is holding emptiness as its object, this can be the place from where there appears a Buddhafield and from where there arises the appearance of the deity. If in the preliminaries we have bodhicitta and the wisdom realizing emptiness, and if we understand that these represent a vast and perfected mind, then it logically makes sense that starting from that, we are able to give rise to a pure land, or indeed, to anything we want. Just think about it: if the *mistaken* mind is capable of giving rise to the incredibly complex appearances of samsara, together with its associated problems which are uncountable, then pure lands and divine appearances are definitely possible for the *unmistaken* mind holding emptiness as its object.

Now, it's not like when we're clearing away our actual, physical samsaric garbage, Geshe la says, where you just take it to the dump. In tantric practice, we dissolve the appearances of samsara into the sphere of emptiness. That is how we clean it up.

So, the wisdom realizing emptiness, and in particular the appearance aspect of that wisdom realizing emptiness, are what can arise as the celestial palace, as the [resident] deities, and so forth.

Geshe la says that there is a lot to cover (we say that every time!), so he will end the introduction here, and we will just do a very brief visualization/meditation on the refuge field, followed by preliminary prayers and offering of the mandala.

Preliminary Meditation

First, bring the four elements into balance and relax the body and mind.

Self, others, the samsaric environment, all the objects and beings within it, think that these all dissolve into the ground of emptiness.

Think that from this sphere of emptiness, the root syllables YAM, RAM, BAM and LAM of the four elements arise.

From this arises Mt. Meru. On Mt. Meru there is a lotus with thirty-two petals. And upon that, a double vajra.

Then upon the double vajra, there appears a second lotus, this time with eight petals.

Then upon that, the holy cushion of Heruka Father and Mother, which is sun disk.

Upon this, the father and mother, Chakrasamvara and Vajrayogini [Vajravarahi]. The father with four faces and so forth. The mother with one face.

Then, imagine that, on the eight-petalled lotus surrounding the sun cushion, in the four cardinal directions are the four heart dakinis of the bliss wheel.

And imagine that in the intermediate directions on the four remaining petals of that eight-petalled lotus, are skullcups filled with nectar.

And then imagine that on the next level down from the great bliss wheel, are the deities of the holy mind wheel: eight male deities, eight female deities, totalling sixteen.

Then, the next level, the deities of the holy speech wheel: eight mother, eight fathers, for a total of sixteen.

The next level: eight mothers and eight fathers of the holy body wheel. A total of sixteen.

All of the deities mentioned up to now are facing toward the holy mother and father in the center.¹

Then the last (outermost) wheel is known as the commitment wheel, with eight [female] guardian deities who, because they are guardian deities, face outward, away from the mother and father.

Think, “As I gaze upon this vast refuge assembly of glorious Chakrasamvara father and mother, and the other deities, I take them as my ultimate refuge.”

Imagine that as we gaze upon the assembled deities and go for refuge, that surrounding us on the earth level are all six types of sentient beings of samsdara, but in human form, bringing forth the mind of fear and faith, for unmistakable refuge.

¹ Geshe la notes that for the yabyum deities of the mind, speech and body wheels, this means that the male deities (yab) are facing are facing toward Heruka Chakrasamvara and Vajravarahi in the center, and consequently the female deities (yum) are facing outward.

Think: “In order to achieve the ultimate welfare of all sentient beings without exception, I myself must achieve the ultimate state of Chakrasamvara and the other deities. May I achieve enlightenment for all sentient beings.”

Think: “From going for refuge and generating bodhicitta in this way, all of the refuge deities melt into light and absorb into Heruka father and mother, the central deities. Heruka father and mother, being pleased with us, then melt into light, enter our crown, and dissolve into our central channel.”

Think, “From this visualization all the negativities, accumulated since beginningless rebirths, both of the two obscurations are completely cleared away, and the holy body, speech and mind of Heruka father and mother become mixed with my body, speech and mind.”

Think, “I have received an uncommon blessing of holy body, holy speech and holy mind of glorious Heruka Chakrasamvara father and mother.”

We will pause there.

Continuing the Teaching on the Body Mandala

So, Geshe la says that these types of meditation are very helpful for what we mentioned before, which is divine pride and clear appearance. What we want to do when we are really want to focus on developing those things, is when we are meditating on the mandala of the deities for example, we will take a lot of time to contemplate all of the cemeteries surrounding, all of the rings of fire, and all the other aspects of the environment very nicely. That will help us develop that.

Similarly, it will help and benefit us to develop divine clear appearance and divine pride when, during this section for example, we visualize, taking the time to do it really nicely, the father, the mother, all of the retinue deities as the object of refuge. That also helps us out. And Geshe la says that there are special reasons too, that we want the retinue deities melting into the main ones, then dissolving into light and nectar which fills the central channel, and so forth. This is also very helpful. But Geshe la says that sometime you may want to do it a little differently, when you think about the figures in the refuge field, you do not dissolve them. You just hold them there, and you concentrate on getting their appearance, that aspect, just right.

So [Geshela explains], it should be a little bit like your favorite movie. Imagine that you go to a cinema and to see your favorite movie, and you just really like it. Because you are so into it, you can remember every detail, what the different actors looked like, their facial expressions during particular scenes, the sets and costumes. All of that. You want to apply that same kind of enthusiasm here, so you can reflect on all the various aspects of the deities related to the practice.

This must be a *vivid* experience. Another example is, if you think of somebody you are very angry with, because you are so focused, you are going to remember everything you dislike about their appearance. You will remember each, and every, nasty thing they said to you, and, as you reflect on all these things about the person you’re upset with, it’s such a vivid recollection that the anger feels present, and very real. So, this is the kind of intensity of engagement we want to have. Kyabje Zong Rinpoche has said that you want a vivid experience to the point that, like when you are angry

and think about that person, and you can remember everything nasty thing they said to you, it upsets you so much that you have sweat running down your face..this kind of vivid experience!

Geshe la says that of course this is just an example, but the point is, we want the experience of the divine pride of the deity, as well as the experience of the appearance of the deity and the figures of the mandala to have this same level of involvement and intensity.

Returning now to where we ended the previous teaching, Geshe la says that in terms of what we have covered so far in the teachings [on the practice of Heruka Chakrasamvara in the Luipa tradition], we have covered all the preliminary practices in earlier classes. We also have covered the main parts of the core practices of taking the three bodies into the path. So, that has been completed.

Now we are into the auxiliary practices connected with the generation stage. In this connection, we have also covered sections describing the various visualizations of the self-generation. We have begun to consider in particular the various auxiliary practices connected with generating the **body mandala**, and its visualization. We have covered some of the body mandala visualization. We considered the equivalent of the celestial palace, and also the father and mother, the deities of the four cardinal directions, the four directional (or heart) dakinis, which match up with the colours of the four faces of Heruka Chakrasamvara, and we described the four intermediate directions, in each of which there is a skullcup filled with nectar. So that brings us to the mind wheel of the supported body mandala. In Dr. Berzin's translation this is on p. 53.

Geshe la says that there was one aspect of the celestial palace as it relates to the body mandala that he has a doubt whether he explained that to you correctly. He just wants to clarify this point because it is very important. When we go through transforming the various parts of our body into the body mandala, how does this happen? I think Geshe la explained this before, but he just wanted to make sure it is clear. So, certain particular parts of the body emanate a replica, which dissolves into the [appropriate part of the] *external* mandala, and transforming it into [that particular aspect of] the *body* mandala. This is just to clarify this important point. So, there is a question that arises, because the language can get rather confusing here. Does this mean that the celestial palace of the body mandala is inside the holy body? No, it does not. It is an *external* celestial palace. However, when we speak about the deities of the body mandala, these are generated within the holy body. This is the correct interpretation.

It is very easy to have a misunderstanding here, Geshe la says, because we mentioned that the celestial palace of the body mandala is external, so it is very easy to think that the deities of the body mandala are inside that external celestial palace. But this is not correct. The deities of the body mandala are within the visualized holy body. So then, who is in the external palace of the body mandala that is outside? The deities of the outer mandala [Heruka father and mother, and the deities of the five wheels.] Geshe la says that you really have to think about this, and flesh out these points, because it is not easy to get that right away. This is why he wanted to go over it again. Geshe la says that he risks an assumption here, that most people who are new to the practice of Chakrasamvara, if you ask them where the bodies of the body mandala deities are visualized, they will say the deities are visualized in the body mandala celestial palace. But that is not actually

correct. But to be clear, when we speak about meditating on the *celestial palace* of the body mandala, and the celestial palace of the outer mandala, these are the same.

So, this is my [Khedrup la's] question. The external celestial palace, and the body mandala celestial palace, Geshe la says that at the conclusion of the visualization, they are the same celestial palace. So, I had a doubt: at any point, is there a separate external palace and body mandala palace? The answer is no. There is just that external celestial palace that is always there, and as part of the body mandala visualization, you think external palace is also the body mandala celestial palace.

And another very important point, Geshe la says, is that on the visualization level, this meditation on the body mandala celestial palace, and the meditation on the deities of the body mandala, has a very different kind of sequence.

Now, regarding the generation of the body mandala deities (as opposed to the body mandala celestial palace), Geshe la says that he has been researching the point about how, remember, a part of the [subtle] body emanates a replica, and this goes out and dissolves into the body mandala deity? Geshe la says this may be one way of doing it, but it could be that in this particular practice, it is actually the nadi and the constituent themselves that transform, without that [step of] replication. This is a point he is investigating and trying to come to a point of understanding about.

So, again in the context of the generation of the body mandala deities, we taught about (in the terms Berzin uses), the transformation of the “channels and energy source drops”. The channel is what transforms into the virini, the dakini, or the female deity, and the energy source drop is what transforms into the vira, the daka, or the male deity.

Now, Geshe la says it is time for the *rlung* section, the oral transmission of this part of the sadhana [beginning with the section “Generating the Mind Wheel in the Supported Body Mandala” on p. 53].

*From the transformation of the syllables PU JA O A, GAU RA
DE MA, (blue), KA O TRI KO, KA LA KA HI, (red),
PRO GRI SAU SU, NA SE MA KU, (white),*

*Bedecked with a drop, at my twenty-four bodily locations – the
crown of my head and so on,*

Come, in essential nature, the twenty-four external lands,

But in the aspect of the channel-skins

(At the outer tips) of the hollow energy-channel-spokes.

Now, to generate the body mandala deities, we have to transform the channels and energy source drops, or constituents, right? That's how we do it. In the physical constituents associated with the 24 holy places, each of these retinue deities stands on an elevated seat described as like half of a damaru drum². Geshe la says that around the rim of this half damaru drum seat, where the wood

² Geshe la further comments that the substantial cause of the body mandala deities is the channels and constituents. But one needs to be mindful that the 24 places in the body and the 24 holy places in India are of one essence.

meets the leather, is like a silver edge, like the rim of the large Tibetan tea bowl (or cup) which is sometimes embellished with silver. So, in this illustration, the rim of the damaru, where the leather meets the wood, has silver around it.

So, the first step in how you meditate on the body mandala is taking the first syllable of the name of the holy places. So, you generate the syllable first, then you think about that silver ring, and the half-damaru seat associated with that. Just to be clear, we have these twenty-four places which are associated with the twenty-four initial syllables of the names of those places, these transform first into that silver connecting rim, then into the damaru seat, then we understand that is arising from the channels and energy source drops. From the channels arise the heroines, and from the drops arise the heroes.³ These heroes and heroines are in union. So, there are twenty-four [yabyum] pairs, or a total of forty-eight heroes and heroines.

Now we continue:

From the transformation of the energy-channels at the twenty-four locations

And the energy-source (drops inside them), abiding inseparably in essential nature, Come the twenty-four heroic viras and heroic lady virinis:

From the transformation of the energy-source drop and channel within the energy-channel situated at my hairline, Pullira-malaya, are Khanda-kapala and Prachanda.

From the transformation of the energy-source drop and channel within the energy-channel situated at the crown of my head, Jalandhara, are Maha-kankala and Chandakshi.

From the transformation of the energy-source drop and channel within the energy-channel situated at my right ear, Oddiyana, are Kankala and Prabhavati.

From the transformation of the energy-source drop and channel within the energy-channel situated at the back of my neck, Arbuda, are Vikata-damstri and Maha-nasa.

These are the (four) locations.

From the transformation of the energy-source drop and channel within the energy-channel situated at my left ear, Gaudavari, are Sura-vairina and Viramati.

From the transformation of the energy-source drop and channel

³ This sequence is described on p 53 of the sadhana text as

"From the transformation of the syllables PU JA O A, GAU RA DE MA, (blue), KA O TRI KO, KA LA KA HI, (red), PRO GRI SAU SU, NA SE MA KU, (white), Bedecked with a drop, at my twenty-four bodily locations – the crown of my head and so on, Come, in essential nature, the twenty-four external lands, But in the aspect of the channel-skins (At the outer tips) of the hollow energy-channel-spokes."

*within the energy-channel situated between my brows,
Rameshvari, are Amitabha and Kharvari.*

*From the transformation of the energy-source drop and channel
within the energy-channels situated at (each of) my two eyes,
Devikoti, are Vajra-prabha and Lankeshvari.*

*From the transformation of the energy-source drop and channel
within the energy-channels situated at (each of) my two
shoulders, Malava, are Vajra-deha and Drumacchaya.*

These are the (four) neighboring locations.

*The deities of the mind wheel stand in the manner of those who
act in the sky,*

And all have bodies blue in color.

So, last time a student asked about the meaning of the line “deities of the mind wheel stand in the manner of those who act in the sky”. Geshe la originally answered that it was the posture that these deities have. But, actually they are called the deities who act in the sky because when the deities were actually first coming to the site of the mandala, they are said to come from the sky. This detail is from the origin story in the Chakrasamvara tantra having to do with Ishvara, when Ishvara descended from the world that came from the sky, having transformed [the beings there into] deities of the mandala who also arrived from the sky, [i.e., who “stand in the manner of those who act in the sky”]. Geshe la says that it is just like talking about a monk coming from Tibet, or Nepal. These deities are coming from the sky. That is what is meant by “act in the sky”.

Another thing that should be mentioned here is that when we generate these deities, they are generated from that seed syllable which is the first syllable of that specific holy place, in other words, one of the twenty-four holy places. When you are generating the deities of the body mandala, you have to think that they are really the same deities [that actually abide] in those holy places, for example in Pulliramalaya. We think that they are very pleased with our practice, with this mind of faith engaging in the practice, and that this is really a request for them to come from this faraway place, for example Pulliarmalaya, and generate within my body.

So, Geshe la says that there really are these twenty-four places, and that there is a way to condense down into twelve, but he will explain that next time. We will prepare the presentation and go over it carefully next time.

Next is “Generating the Speech Wheel in the Supported Body Mandala”:

*From the transformation of the energy-source drop and channel
within the energy-channels situated at (each of) my two armpits,
Kamarupa, are Ankuraka and Iravati.*

*From the transformation of the energy-source drop and channel
within the energy-channels situated at (each of) my two breasts,
Ote, are Vajra-jatila and Maha-bhairava.*

These are the (two) local areas.

From the transformation of the energy-source drop and channel within the energy-channel situated at my navel, Trishakuni, are Maha-vira and Vayu-vega.

From the transformation of the energy-source drop and channel within the energy-channel situated at the tip of my nose, Kosala, are Vajra-humkara and Surabhakshi. These are the (two) neighboring local areas.

From the transformation of the energy-source drop and channel within the energy-channel situated at my mouth, Kalinga, are Subhadra and Shyama-devi.

From the transformation of the energy-source drop and channel within the energy-channel situated at my neck, Lampaka, are Vajra-bhadra and Subhadra. These are the (two) festival places.

From the transformation of the energy-source drop and channel within the energy-channel situated at my heart, Kanchira, are Maha-bhairava and Haya-karna.

From the transformation of the energy-source drop and channel within the energy-channels situated at (each of) my two testicles, Himalaya, are Virupaksha and Khaganana.

These are the (two) neighboring festival places.

The deities of the speech wheel stand in the manner of those who act on the ground,

And all have bodies red in color.

I [Khedrup la] just wanted to draw people's attention to something. I noticed that (and this applies to the previous section, too), where it says that "all have bodies red in colour," I'm not saying that this is incorrect, but these words do not occur in the Tibetan version of the sadhana.

Continuing with the *rlung* for the section "Generating the Body Wheel in the Supported Body Mandala", p. 55:

From the transformation of the energy-source drop and channel within the energy-channel situated at my penis, Preta-puri, are Mahabala and Chakra-vega.

From the transformation of the energy-source drop and channel within the energy-channel situated at my anus, Griha-devata, are Ratna-vajra and Khandarohi.

These are the (two) gathering places.

From the transformation of the energy-source drop and channel within the energy-channels situated at (each of) my two thighs (and two upper arms), Saurashtra, are Hayagriva and Shaundini.

From the transformation of the energy-source drop and channel within the energy-channels situated at (each of) my two calves (and two forearms), Suvarna-dvipa, are Akasha-garbha and Chakra-varmini.

These are the (two) neighboring gathering places.

From the transformation of the energy-source drop and channel within the energy-channels situated at (each of) my sixteen toes and fingers, Nagara, are Shri Heruka and Suvira.

From the transformation of the energy-source drop and channel within the energy-channels situated at (each of) the two tops of my feet, (and two tops of my hands), Sendhu, are Padmanart-eshvara and Maha-bala. These are the (two) charnel grounds.

From the transformation of the energy-source drop and channel within the energy-channels situated at (each of) my two big toes (and two thumbs), Maru, are Vairochana and Chakra-vartini.

From the transformation of the energy-source drop and channel within the energy-channels situated at (each of) my two knees (and two elbows), Kuluta, are Vajrasattva and Maha-virya.

These are the (two) neighboring charnel grounds.

The deities of the body wheel stand in the manner of those who act beneath the ground,

And all have bodies white in color.

Moreover, all twenty-four heroic viras have one face and three eyes, Their hair in a (two-leveled) top-knot,

And fastened around their forehead, the silk head-band of a vira (with vajra designs).

They have four arms: the first two hands, holding a vajra and a bell, are embracing their motherly partner.

The remaining right holds a damaru-drum and the left a khatvanga-staff. They are bedecked with the mudra-seal of the six bone-ornaments

Have a crown of five dried human skulls,

Wear a long hanging necklace of fifty moist human heads, And stand (facing inward) with their right leg outstretched.

All twenty-four heroic lady virinis have one face, two arms, and three eyes. Embracing their fatherly partner with both arms,

Their right hand holds a cleaver, while threatening with the threatening mudra all malevolent beings in the ten directions.

Their left holds a skullcup filled with blood and serves it up (to

the mouths of their fatherly partners).

*They are naked, with the bodily form of ferocious women,
beautified by having hair hanging loose,*

*They 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
And an apron (with tiny bells) making the tinkling sound “sil-
sil.”*

Geshe la says that one of the reasons we went through this quickly is the of course the appearance of all these deities are the same as we covered in previous classes on the outer mandala. There might be a slight difference with, for example the five mudra ornaments, and six mudra ornaments, but otherwise the physical appearances are much the same. And also, there are differences between the male and female deities with the five and six bone ornaments, for example the female deities with the apron with the little bells that make the “sil sil” sound – that is only for the female, not the male deities.

So, we did the supported body mandala wheels of holy body, speech and mind. This brings us to the wheel of those with close bond, or the “samaya wheel”, on p. 56:

*From the transformation of the energy-channel situated at the
root of my tongue, comes black Kakasya.*

*From the transformation of the energy-channel situated inside
the depression at my navel, comes green Ulukasya.*

*From the transformation of the energy-channel situated at the
entrance of my penis, comes red Shvanasya.*

*From the transformation of the energy-channel situated at the
entrance of my anus, comes yellow Shukarasya.*

*From the transformation of the energy-channel situated at the
pore for my forehead curl, comes Yama-dadhi, blue on her right
side, yellow on her left.*

*From the transformation of the energy-channels situated at my
two ears, comes Yama-dhuti, yellow on her right side, red on her
left.*

*From the transformation of the energy-channels situated at my
two eyes, comes Yama-damshtrini, red on her right side, green
on her left.*

*From the transformation of the energy-channels situated at my
two nostrils, comes Yama-mathani, green on her right side, blue
on her left.*

*Moreover, all of them (have the bodily form of) ferocious women,
Energetic in working for the benefit of all limited beings.*

They have one face, three eyes, with mouths having fangs bared;

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 outward) on a corpse as a cushion, 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.

Moreover, all the deities of the wheels have fastened around their forehead a garland of five-spoked vajras.

(Geshe la said before starting the *rlung* before starting this section: notice that all of the eight deities here are female.)

When speaking about these deities of the wheel of close bond, Geshe la uses a phrase that I (Khedrup la) think is very nice. In Tibetan he refers to them using a phrase which in English means the “eight female guardians.” Regarding their posture, he says that what he has told you up to now is that those eight female guardians face *outward*, because they are like the security. However, there are some commentators who say that they are (like the deities of the four other wheels) *facing inward*, while many commentators do say that they face outward, as indicated parenthetically in Berzin’s text. Geshe la says that facing outward makes sense to him, because these are guardian deities, and if they are guardian deities, it makes sense that they would be looking outward, to locate any obstructions or hindrances so that they could subdue them.

You will also notice, as we went through this section, that of the eight guardian deities, four of them are of a solid colour, and four of them are bifurcated into two colours. Geshe la says that you sometimes see that in the West, where people are of two colours, like when people are painted or decorated at some of the street festivals and so forth. Why are four of these deities bifurcated into two colours? The reason for this is actually that they are two deities that are combined into one, and to represent that, they have bodies with have one colour, and half another colour. What happened is that at the time of Ishvara, back to the origin story in the Chakrasamvara tantra, there were eight obstructing deities that were subdued by Ishvara. So, when Chakrasamvara subdued and manifested the subdued form of those obstructing deities, those eight were manifested as the four deities in the wheel of close bond with bifurcated colours. So, this is the story. Ishvara and his retinue deities came into the world and was causing all of these problems. Then, Chakrasamvara, in order to subdue Ishvara, arose in the form of Heruka father and mother, with his own retinue deities to subdue those of Ishvara’s mandala.

Another point to note is how the sixty-two deities of the Heruka body mandala are related to the thirty-seven factors of enlightenment. So how do those sixty-two deities relate to the thirty-seven

enlightenment factors? You relate the thirty-seven enlightenment factors to the sixty-two deities in this way: first, you focus on the female deities. You have the eight female deities of the mind wheel, of the speech wheel, and of the body wheel, which brings you to twenty-four. Then, in addition you have the eight female guardian deities of the wheel of commitment beings, and the four heart dakinis of the great bliss wheel, which, when added to those of the mind, speech and body wheels, gives a total of thirty-six. Then, finally you have Vajravarahi/Vajrayogini which brings us to a total of thirty-seven. So, these thirty-seven deities correspond to the thirty-seven factors of enlightenment.⁴ Geshe la says that if you think of it in that way, it is a little bit easier to relate to the thirty-seven factors of enlightenment.

Now we have completed all of the points related to the body mandala of Chakrasamvara. In the overall outline of the Luipa sadhana, in the Atiyoga section which has six points, we have now completed the first three of those. So, now we come to the fourth point, which has different kinds of things embedded in it. The first is donning the body armor, and the second is inviting the deities to bestow abhisheka.

Geshe la says to please bear with him, we are going to leave the body armor discussion for now, and there is something additional he really wanted to cover today. He will read the body armor section and discuss it next time, since he has also covered that in detail in the Vajrayogini commentary. The Vajrayogini and the Chakrasamvara body armor treatments are very similar. There are a few differences in the names, and some of the tiny details of the visualization, but the basic principle is the same. And we also talked about the three reasons we need the body armor. The first reason is so that the inseparability of the wisdom and commitment beings is maintained. The second is that so all of the blessings received throughout the sadhana practice can be retained within. And the third is to provide protection from any external hindrances or obstructions.

So, we are skipping to p. 59, where it says “PHAIM”, Merging of the Deep Awareness Beings and Receiving the Empowerments. Remember the blazing mudra (Geshe la demonstrates), and the three syllables that form “PHAIM”.

Geshe la proceeds with the *rlung* for this section:

PHAIM!

*Rays of light emanate forth from the syllable HUMs Standing
on the sun-discs at all the deities' hearts And invite back here, to
the space in front,*

*The heroic viras and powerful, heroic lady virinis,
dwelling in the realms of the worlds in the ten directions, And
arisen as the circle of deep awareness (beings), Together with the
empowering deities,*

(All) in the form of the (deities of the Heruka) mandala.

*The light-rays dissolve back into the HUM at my heart. The
empowering goddesses hold skullcups,*

⁴ A summary detailing Geshe la's way of counting the deities here is given in the Appendix.

Brimming with the nectars of deep awareness, and damaru-drums.

Geshe la says that these three sets of deities we imagine, are the heroes and heroines first, and the empowerment deities second, and the mandala deities third.

Then, all of those light rays that went out to invite the deities dissolve into the heart, and the empowering goddesses hold skullcups, brimming with the nectars of deep awareness, and damaru drums.

Just as a reminder, “deep awareness” is Berzin’s term for “wisdom.” Geshe la says that now we come to the offerings by the sixteen goddesses, and that this is quite a vast section.

Imagine that hosts of knowledge ladies, visualized as before, emanate from your heart, make the offerings and then dissolve back into your heart.

OM VAJRA VINE HUM HUM PHAT *vina lute*

OM VAJRA VAMSHE HUM HUM PHAT *flute*

OM VAJRA MRITANGE HUM HUM PHAT *mridangam double-headed drum*

OM VAJRA MURAJE HUM HUM PHAT *muraja large drum*

OM VAJRA HASYA HUM HUM PHAT *smile*

OM VAJRA LASYA HUM HUM PHAT *flirt*

OM VAJRA GITI HUM HUM PHAT *sing*

OM VAJRA NRITYA HUM HUM PHAT *dance*

OM VAJRA PUSHPE HUM HUM PHAT *flowers*

OM VAJRA DHUPE HUM HUM PHAT *incense*

OM VAJRA DIPAM HUM HUM PHAT *butter lamp*

OM VAJRA GHANDE HUM HUM PHAT *cologne water*

OM RUPA VAJRI HUM HUM HUM PHAT *sights*

OM RASA VAJRI HUM HUM HUM PHAT *tastes*

OM SPARSHE VAJRI HUM HUM HUM PHAT *physical sensations*

OM DHARMADHATU VAJRI HUM HUM PHAT *embrace*

So, the first set of offerings made by the sixteen offering goddesses, to whom are these offerings made? They are made to the wisdom beings (deep awareness beings). Geshe la says that when you are doing these various offering mantras together with the mudras, there are two ways to do this: the elaborate way, where you send the goddesses out and call them back in with the mudra of whatever it is you are offering, and the other, abbreviated, way is just doing the sending out, doing all the offerings, then doing the calling back in at the end.

So, what you would do here (in the abbreviated way), is recite:

“OM VAJRA VINE VAMSHE MRITANGE MURAJE HASYA LASYA GITI NRITYA HUM HUM PHAT.”

Sorry, Geshe la says that this is not how it is done. You *can* do it this way, but it is not advisable. There are explanatory verses for each offering, but they are not given here.

Now Geshe la will demonstrate the sixteen offering mudras.

VINE: like strumming a lute; **VAMSHE:** like playing a flute (some do it in front, like playing a recorder); **MRITANGE:** like playing the double-sided drum (like the drum used by Hare Krishna devotees); **MURAJE:** playing a huge drum, like a timpani; **HASYA:** like a smile, almost like you are pulling a rosary out of your mouth; **LASYA:** like flirting, like wearing a belt of vajras moving with the hips; **GITI:** like playing the two small bells (*ting sha*) in the gsur offering; **MRITYA:** a dancing mudra done at the point above the eyebrow where the third eye is located; **PUSHPE:** flowers (Here, Geshe la says what is taught in the commentary is that you imagine these flowers filling a large bowl or pot in front of you. When the offering goddesses are filling this pot, the flowers are multi-coloured, not just one colour-some are white, some are smoke-colored, etc. Some of these are simple flowers, but some of them are assembled into objects of offering. Some look like victory banners, some like parasols, and so forth.); **DHUPE:** incense. (Here, this incense is the kind you put on coals, like a powder.); **DIPAM:** butterlamp. (Here, Geshe la says you want to imagine big butterlamps with a very powerful flame that emits different colours of radiant light that completely clears away the darkness of ignorance. The radiant lights are like halos that spill into each other, forming a large conflagration. The radiances from all of the emitted light kind of play together, like a dance of light. In *Lama Chopa* there is a verse like this.); **GHANDE:** the cologne water offered at the heart level. (There are different kinds of pleasant smells that are offered. One is like adding the powdered incense to the fire element. Here, it is mixed with the water element and is sprinkled.); **RUPA:** what is being offered here is a mirror. (Essentially all the aspects of the environment reflected in the mirror. The mirror is capturing form.); **RASA:** food, **SPARSHE:** physical sensations. (Geshe la says the actual object offered is a very smooth cloth, or very beautiful garment.); **DHARMADHATU:** the Dharmadhatu. (Here you imagine you are offering a Dharma source, or phenomena source (tetrahedron). This is to remind us of the Three Doors of Liberation, and therefore emptiness, therefore inseparable bliss/emptiness wisdom).

These are the sixteen offerings made by the sixteen knowledge ladies. These offerings appear in different places (in the sadhana), but once you understand it, it is the same each time.

Next is “Merging of the Deep Awareness Beings”:

VAJRA ANKUSHA JAH

VAJRA PASHA HUM

VAJRA SPHOTA BAM

VAJRA GHANTA HOH

This is the “JAH HUM BAM HO” mantra made a little longer, Geshe la says. Most sadhanas use the shortened form, but the longer form is what is given here. So, with JAH (DZA) the deities assemble at the crown, with HUM they descend or begin to absorb into the commitment being, with BAM they meet each other, and with HO they become inseparable with each other. It is like pouring milk and water together, completely mixing. (Also, just a translation note here. Where it says “close bonding and deep awareness beings”, this is very different from our FPMT language. These just refer to the commitment and the wisdom beings.)

OM YOGA SHUDDHAH SARVA DHARMAH YOGA SHUDDHO 'HAM

The close-bonding beings and deep awareness beings

Merge to become of one taste.

From this merging, bliss/emptiness arises.

With this, we will end today's discussion here. These sixteen offerings with the sixteen goddesses..once you have understood them once, they will appear at different points in the sadhana, but having understood it once, they will be the same each time they occur. So, we offered them right now to the wisdom beings, and you will see that they will occur again, when they are offered to the empowering deities in that section. This brings us to the end of our time together today, so let us dedicate the merit nicely.

Dedication

We recollect and rejoice in these merits that we have cultivated, and we dedicate these merits to the long life of the incomparable victor, His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama. May his life be long, may all of his wishes without exception be fulfilled, and may the live of all genuine spiritual masters also be long, and may they be able to accomplish all of their aims exasctly as they wish.

Through our merits that we have accumulate, may any type of being who has given rise to evil thoughts and engaging in harmful conduct, through the blessings of Guru Chakrasamvara father and mother, may those harmful thoughts and actions be pacified, and may all beings abide together in peace. Through these roots of merit may the sun of happiness shine without prejudice upon all beings equally, and may all our study and practice flourish.

Appendix

Counting the Thirty-seven Female Deities Related to the Thirty-seven Limbs of Enlightenment, and the Sixty-two Deities of the Supported Mandala of Heruka Chakrasamvara

Thirty-seven limbs of enlightenment: only female deities are counted here. First, eight female (yum) deities of the mind wheel, eight of the speech wheel, and eight of the mind wheel, for a total of **twenty-four**. Next, we add the eight guardian deities of the commitment wheel, together with the four heart dakinis of the great bliss wheel, for a total of **thirty-six**. Finally, we add Vajravarahi/Vajrayogini herself, for a total of **thirty-seven**.

Sixty-two deities of the supported mandala: First, there are eight yabyum deities (or sixteen male and female deities) in each of the mind, speech, and body wheels, for a total of **forty-eight**. Next, we add the four heart dakinis of the great bliss wheel and the eight guardian deities of the commitment wheel, for a total of **sixty**. Finally, adding the Chakrasamvara yab yum pair gives a total of **sixty-two**.