

*The New Guide to
Dakini Land*

Also by Geshe Kelsang Gyatso

Meaningful to Behold
Clear Light of Bliss
Universal Compassion
Joyful Path of Good Fortune
The Bodhisattva Vow
Heart Jewel
Great Treasury of Merit
Introduction to Buddhism
Understanding the Mind
Tantric Grounds and Paths
Ocean of Nectar
Essence of Vajrayana
Living Meaningfully, Dying Joyfully
Eight Steps to Happiness
Transform Your Life
The New Meditation Handbook
How to Solve Our Human Problems
Mahamudra Tantra
Modern Buddhism
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GESHE KELSANG GYATSO

*The New Guide
to Dakini Land*

THE HIGHEST YOGA TANTRA
PRACTICE OF BUDDHA
VAJRAYOGINI



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Contents

Illustrations	vii
Introduction	ix
Preliminary Explanation	1
The Yogas of Sleeping, Rising, and Experiencing Nectar	27
The Yoga of Immeasurables	41
The Yoga of the Guru	81
The Yoga of Self-generation and the Yoga of Purifying Migrators	109
The Yoga of being Blessed by Heroes and Heroines	129
The Actual Generation Stage Meditation	155
The Yoga of Verbal and Mental Recitation	163
The Yoga of Inconceivability and the Yoga of Daily Actions	185
How to Attain Outer Dakini Land through the Practice of Generation Stage	207
Completion Stage	215
Dedication	230
Appendix I – The Condensed Meaning of the Commentary	231
Appendix II – Sadhanas	
<i>Liberating Prayer</i>	245
<i>The Blissful Path</i>	247
<i>Dakini Yoga</i>	256
<i>Condensed Six-session Yoga</i>	275
<i>Vows and Commitments</i>	279
<i>Quick Path to Great Bliss</i>	285
<i>The Uncommon Yoga of Inconceivability</i>	333
<i>Feast of Great Bliss</i>	343

<i>Vajrayogini Retreat Preliminaries</i>	415
<i>Preliminary Jewel</i>	441
<i>Vajrayogini Burning Offering</i>	451
<i>Vajradaka Burning Offering</i>	507
<i>Samayavajra Sadhana</i>	515
<i>The Root Tantra of Heruka and Vajrayogini</i>	521
Appendix III – Diagrams and Illustrations	
Hand Gestures	532
Seed-letters and Ritual Objects	538
Glossary	545
Bibliography	557
Study Programmes of Kadampa Buddhism	561
Tharpa Offices Worldwide	565
Index	567

Illustrations

Venerable Vajrayogini	x
<i>Commentary</i>	
Mandala of Vajrayogini	xii
Buddha Vajradharma	28
Venerable Vajrayogini	42
Naropa	80
Pamtingpa	112
Palden Lama Tenpa Sonam Gyaltzen	164
Je Phabongkhapa	184
Dorjechang Trijang Rinpoche	206
Venerable Geshe Kelsang Gyatso Rinpoche <i>(included at the request of faithful disciples)</i>	214
<i>The Blissful Path</i>	
Guru Vajradharma	248
Venerable Vajrayogini	252
<i>Dakini Yoga</i>	
Guru Vajradharma	258
Dorjechang Trijang Rinpoche	260
Venerable Vajrayogini	270
<i>Quick Path to Great Bliss</i>	
Guru Vajradharma	286
Hero Vajradharma	296
Venerable Vajrayogini	302
Kinkara	316
Dorje Shugden	318
<i>The Uncommon Yoga of Inconceivability</i>	
Guru Sumati Buddha Heruka	334
Venerable Vajrayogini	336

<i>Feast of Great Bliss</i>	
Guru Vajradharma	344
Hero Vajradharma	362
Venerable Vajrayogini	380
Kinkara	398
Dorje Shugden	400
<i>Vajrayogini Retreat Preliminaries</i>	
Venerable Vajrayogini	416
Khandarohi	432
<i>Preliminary Jewel</i>	
Venerable Vajrayogini	442
<i>Vajrayogini Burning Offering</i>	
Fire Deity	464
Venerable Vajrayogini	476
<i>Vajradaka Burning Offering</i>	
Vajradaka	508
<i>Samayavajra Sadhana</i>	
Samayavajra	516
<i>The Root Tantra of Heruka and Vajrayogini</i>	
Buddha Shakyamuni	522
Twelve-armed Heruka	524
<i>Diagrams and Illustrations</i>	
Hand Gestures	532
Seed-letters and Ritual Objects	
Letter BAM	538
Letter BAM and mantra rosary	539
Seed-letters	540
Tormas	541
Practitioner's table	542
Fire puja mandala	543
Ritual objects for fire puja	544

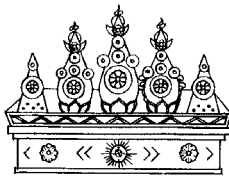
Introduction

I have prepared this book, *The New Guide to Dakini Land*, to clarify many profound meanings, and to make it easy to understand and practise this precious holy Dharma. Please enjoy!

We should know that living beings have many different capacities for spiritual understanding and practice. For this reason, out of his compassion, Buddha the Blessed One gave teachings on many levels, just as a skilful doctor administers a variety of remedies to treat different types of sick people.

For those who wish merely to attain human happiness Buddha gave teachings revealing actions and their effects, or karma; and he taught moral discipline as their main practice. For those who wish to experience the permanent inner peace of liberation, or nirvana, for themselves, Buddha gave teachings on the disadvantages of samsara, the cycle of contaminated rebirth; and he taught the three higher trainings – training in higher moral discipline, training in higher concentration and training in higher wisdom – as their main practice. For those who wish to attain the ultimate goal of full enlightenment Buddha gave teachings on learning to cherish others, great compassion and the supreme good heart, bodhichitta; and he taught the six perfections – the perfections of giving, moral discipline, patience, effort, concentration and wisdom – as their main practice. All these teachings are open to anyone who wishes to study and practise them. The experiences that are gained from practising them are called the ‘common spiritual paths’.

Besides these teachings, Buddha also gave teachings on Tantra. These may be practised only by those who have received Tantric empowerments. The experiences gained by practising these teachings are called the ‘uncommon spiritual paths’.



Venerable Vajrayogini

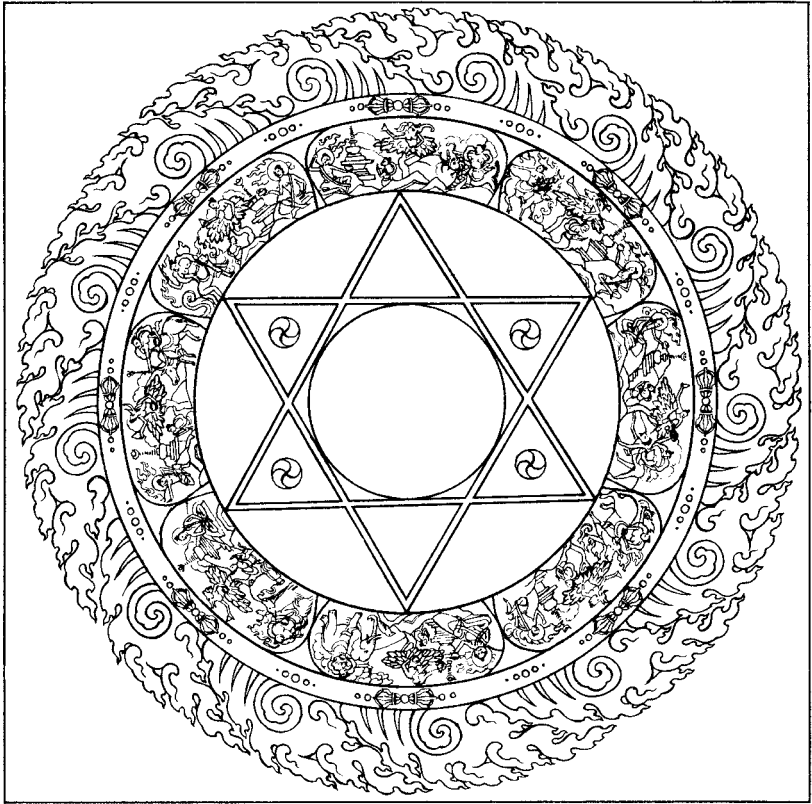
In the Tantric teachings Buddha revealed four classes of Tantra. The practices explained in this book, *The New Guide to Dakini Land*, are included within the highest of these, Highest Yoga Tantra. These are the very essence of Buddha's teachings. They include special methods for preventing ordinary appearance and ordinary conception, special methods for preventing ordinary death, intermediate state and rebirth, and uncommon methods for transforming all daily experiences into higher spiritual paths. By transforming ordinary experience in this way we can prevent all the problems we experience in our daily life and swiftly attain the ultimate happiness of full enlightenment. In this context, 'Dakini' refers to Vajrayogini, and her Pure Land of Keajra is called 'Dakini Land' or 'Keajra Heaven'.

The source of all the essential meanings contained in *The New Guide to Dakini Land* is *Illuminating All Hidden Meanings* (Tib. Be don kun sel), which is a precious commentary to the practice of Heruka and Vajrayogini Tantra by Je Tsongkhapa. Through the kindness of my root Guru, Dorjechang Trijang Rinpoche, I have had the opportunity to study and practise the instructions of Heruka and Vajrayogini. Now I have written this book as a special offering, mainly for practitioners of the modern world.

To practise the instructions explained in this book we require special inner conditions. First we should train in the common spiritual paths, the practice of Kadam Lamrim, and then receive the empowerments of Heruka and Vajrayogini. Having received these empowerments we should strive to maintain our vows and commitments purely.

If we have a pure motivation and read the entire book carefully, concentrating deeply on its meaning without rushing to finish it, we will gain profound realizations of Buddhadharma.

Geshe Kelsang Gyatso
2012



Mandala of Vajrayogini

Preliminary Explanation

The commentary to the Highest Yoga Tantra practice of Venerable Vajrayogini consists of the preliminary explanation, the main commentary to the generation and completion stages, and the dedication. The first of these, the preliminary explanation, has seven parts:

- 1 Generating a correct motivation
- 2 The origin and lineage of these instructions
- 3 The benefits of these instructions
- 4 Biographies of past Buddhist practitioners who gained realizations through practising these instructions
- 5 The qualifications necessary for practising these instructions
- 6 The four special causes of swift attainments
- 7 What are outer and inner Dakini Lands?

GENERATING A CORRECT MOTIVATION

These instructions concern the extraordinary spiritual path of Tantra, or Secret Mantra, which is the quickest and most profound method for attaining great enlightenment. We should rejoice in this precious opportunity to study these instructions which, if put into practice, can lead to full enlightenment within one short human life. However, studying these instructions will be truly meaningful only if our motivation is pure. If we read this book merely out of intellectual curiosity we will not experience its real meaning. To receive the maximum benefit from these instructions, each time we study or practise them we should begin by generating a pure, altruistic motivation. We can do this by reciting the following prayer three times while concentrating on its meaning:

I and all sentient beings, the migrators as extensive
as space, from this time forth until we reach the
essence of enlightenment,
Go for refuge to the glorious, sacred Gurus,
Go for refuge to the complete Buddhas, the Blessed
Ones,
Go for refuge to the sacred Dharmas,
Go for refuge to the superior Sanghas.

We should then recite three times:

Once I have attained the state of a complete Buddha, I
shall free all sentient beings from the ocean of samsara's
suffering and lead them to the bliss of full enlightenment.
For this purpose I shall practise the stages of Vajrayogini's
path.

THE ORIGIN AND LINEAGE OF THESE INSTRUCTIONS

The two stages of the practice of Vajrayogini were originally
taught by Buddha Vajradhara. He manifested in the form of
Heruka to expound the *Root Tantra of Heruka*, and it was in this
Tantra that he explained the practice of Vajrayogini. All the
many lineages of instructions on Vajrayogini can be traced back
to this original revelation. Of these lineages, there are three that
are most commonly practised: the Narokhachö lineage, which
was transmitted from Vajrayogini to Naropa; the Maitrikhachö
lineage, which was transmitted from Vajrayogini to Maitripa;
and the Indrakhachö lineage, which was transmitted from
Vajrayogini to Indrabodhi. This commentary to the generation
and completion stages of the Highest Yoga Tantra practice of
Vajrayogini is based on the instructions of the Narokhachö
lineage.

THE ORIGIN OF HERUKA TANTRA

At one time this universe was controlled by the worldly deity
Ishvara. His mandalas and lingams existed in many places
in this world, the most important ones being in the twenty-
four holy places. Ishvara's followers sacrificed innumerable

animals as offerings to him. This greatly pleased Ishvara and in return he helped them to obtain wealth and worldly success, but he obstructed anyone who tried to attain liberation or enlightenment. Under the influence of Ishvara the people of this world slaughtered thousands of animals every day, thinking that they were performing virtuous actions. In reality however they were accumulating heavy negative karma and depriving themselves of the opportunity to attain liberation.

The Heroes and Heroines of the five Buddha families found this situation intolerable and asked Buddha Vajradhara to intervene. Buddha Vajradhara manifested in the form of Heruka and through the power of his blessings subdued Ishvara and transformed Ishvara's mandalas, or worlds, into Heruka's mandalas. The other Deities of Heruka's mandala subdued Ishvara's retinue by converting them to followers of Heruka.

Heruka did not reabsorb the mandalas, his pure worlds, that he had emanated in the twenty-four places in this human world but left them intact, and to this day beings with especially pure karma are able to see these mandalas and the Heroes and Heroines who abide within them. For practitioners of Heruka and Vajrayogini these blessed places are particularly powerful sites for meditation.

After subduing Ishvara and his retinue, Heruka expounded the condensed, middling and extensive root Tantras of Heruka. Of these, only the *Condensed Root Tantra of Heruka* has been translated from Sanskrit into Tibetan. Buddha Vajradhara also expounded many explanatory Tantras, which are commentaries to the root Tantras, and a number of these have been translated into Tibetan. It is in these root and explanatory Tantras, especially in the forty-seventh and forty-eighth chapters of the fifty-one chapters of the *Condensed Root Tantra of Heruka*, that Buddha Vajradhara gave clear instructions on the practice of Vajrayogini.

THE LINEAGE OF THESE INSTRUCTIONS

The first Guru in the lineage of these instructions is Buddha Vajradharma and the second is Buddha Vajrayogini. Vajrayogini transmitted these instructions directly to Naropa, who diligently put them into practice and as a result gained

great realizations. Although Naropa had many disciples he kept his practice of Vajrayogini secret, transmitting it only to two brothers from the Nepalese town of Pamting, now called Pharping. He recognized that the Pamtingpa brothers, Jigme Dragpa and his younger brother Ngawang Dragpa, had a particularly strong karmic connection with these instructions. Sakya Pandita Kunga Gyaltsen and other famous Teachers have remarked on the fact that even Naropa's most famous disciple, the great Tibetan Master Marpa, did not receive these instructions.

The Pamtingpa brothers passed these instructions to the Tibetan translators Lokya Sherab Tseg and then Malgyur Lotsawa. It was Malgyur Lotsawa who translated the *Condensed Root Tantra of Heruka* from Sanskrit into Tibetan. Through his kindness many Tibetans in the past became great Yogis and Yoginis, and today many people have the opportunity to study and practise the Heruka and Vajrayogini Tantras. Malgyur Lotsawa himself reached the supreme Union of Vajradhara and attained Dakini Land in that life.

From Malgyur Lotsawa these instructions were passed down in unbroken succession to Je Phabongkhapa, and then to the most Venerable Dorjechang Trijang Rinpoche, holder of the lineage. It was from this great Master that I, the author, received these instructions.

From Buddha Vajradharma to Dorjechang Trijang Rinpoche there have been thirty-seven lineage Gurus. The lineage of these instructions is unbroken and the blessings passed down from Buddha Vajradharma are intact. Each lineage Guru attained complete experience of these instructions, thereby ensuring that their power has not decreased. These instructions are completely authentic and are clearly presented. If we put them into practice with deep conviction and joyous effort we will definitely gain realizations. We should know that Buddha Vajradharma, Buddha Vajradhara and Buddha Shakyamuni are the same person with different aspects. Vajradhara is the manifestation of all Buddhas' minds, Vajradharma is the manifestation of all Buddhas' speech, and Shakyamuni is the manifestation of all Buddhas' bodies.

THE BENEFITS OF THESE INSTRUCTIONS

It is said in the *Condensed Root Tantra of Heruka* that the benefits to be gained from engaging in the practice of Vajrayogini are limitless and that a thousand voices could never fully enumerate them. Here we will consider ten principal benefits.

BY PRACTISING THESE INSTRUCTIONS WE QUICKLY RECEIVE GREAT AND POWERFUL BLESSINGS

When we practise these instructions we quickly receive great and profound blessings from all the Buddhas. These blessings help us temporarily, and eventually enable us to attain the ultimate goal of full enlightenment.

THESE INSTRUCTIONS ARE A SYNTHESIS OF ALL ESSENTIAL INSTRUCTIONS

The instructions on the practice of Vajrayogini are a synthesis of all the essential instructions contained within the Tantras of Heruka, Yamantaka and Guhyasamaja. All the essential points of the stages of Secret Mantra are included within the practice of Vajrayogini.

THESE INSTRUCTIONS ARE EASY TO PRACTISE

The instructions on the practice of Vajrayogini contain concise and clearly presented meditations that are relatively easy to practise. The mantra is short and easy to recite, and the visualizations of the mandala, the Deity and the body mandala are simple compared with those of other Highest Yoga Tantra Deities. Even practitioners with limited abilities and little wisdom can engage in these practices.

BY PRACTISING THESE INSTRUCTIONS WE CAN SWIFTLY ACCOMPLISH ATTAINMENTS

Many great Teachers such as Dorjechang Trijang Rinpoche have said that through the practice of Vajrayogini those with

only middling fortune can attain Dakini Land in this life. Those with greater fortune will attain this with ease, and even those with lesser fortune can attain Dakini Land in the intermediate state between death and rebirth. If we continually recite Vajrayogini's mantra we will remember the mantra when we are dying, and then, as if in a dream, we will hear Vajrayogini and her retinue of Dakinis calling us and inviting us to her Pure Land. In this way Vajrayogini will guide us through death and the intermediate state and lead us to the Pure Land of the Dakinis.

It is said that even those with the least fortune who do not attain Dakini Land in the intermediate state will be led by Vajrayogini to her Pure Land within seven lives. Even if such practitioners find themselves in the deepest hell, Vajrayogini will bless their minds and cause their previously accumulated virtuous actions to ripen. In this way they will be released from hell and guided directly to the Pure Land of the Dakinis.

Thus through keeping our commitments purely and practising these instructions sincerely we can attain Dakini Land in this life, in the intermediate state, or certainly within seven lives. 'Dakini Land' refers to the pure world of Heruka and Vajrayogini, commonly known as 'Keajra Pure Land' or 'Keajra Heaven'. A detailed explanation of Keajra Pure Land can be found in Part Two of *Modern Buddhism*. As our main commitment we should emphasize practising the nineteen commitments of the five Buddha families, an explanation of which can be found in *Condensed Six-session Yoga*, in Appendix II.

THESE INSTRUCTIONS INCLUDE A SPECIAL BODY MANDALA PRACTICE

Body mandalas are not included within all Deity practices. A practice that contains a body mandala is more profound than one that does not, and the most profound of all body mandalas is that of Vajrayogini.

End of preview

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