

Khenpo Samdup's Explanation of the Guru Rinpoche Mantra

OM AH HUNG BENZRA GURU PEMA SIDDHI HUNG

The Guru Rinpoche mantra is OM AH HUNG BENZRA GURU PEMA SIDDHI HUNG. OM AH HUNG are the syllables or symbols of the enlightened body, speech and mind. By reciting these syllables, OM AH HUNG, we are actively transforming our impure experience of ordinary body, speech and mind into our pure experience of enlightened body, speech and mind of the deity so it is like the essence of the enlightened body, speech and mind of all of the Buddhas. OM symbolizes the enlightened body of the Buddhas. AH symbolizes the enlightened speech of the Buddhas, and HUNG symbolizes the enlightened mind of the Buddha. Through reciting these three syllables we are transforming the nature of our body, speech and mind. We are getting closer and closer to recognizing our own body, speech and mind as the enlightened body, speech and mind of the Buddhas.

When we practice we are practicing to achieve the state of Buddhahood. When we achieve the state of Buddhahood we manifest the Dharmakaya which inherently contains the qualities that are the indivisibility of the three Kayas. In these syllables OM AH HUNG also are the qualities of the three Kayas. OM is the nature of the Nirmanakaya, AH is the nature of the Sambhogakaya, and HUNG is the nature of the Dharmakaya. In order to achieve this state of Buddhahood we must manifest the three Kayas of Buddhahood.

There are different variations of this mantra: OM VAJRA GURU PEMA SIDDHI HUNG or OM AH HUNG VAJRA GURU PEMA SIDDHI HUNG. In the variation where there is just OM then all three syllables OM AH HUNG are subsumed into the single syllable OM. OM holds the nature of all three in the same way that the Dharmakaya does. The three Kayas are inherent in the single syllable OM.

Both mantras have the words VAJRA (or BENRA as it is pronounced in Tibetan), GURU and PEMA. The three Kayas are also contained within these three words. VAJRA represents the Dharmakaya, GURU represents the Sambhogakaya and PEMA represents the Nirmanakaya. VAJRA GURU PEMA also represents Guru Rinpoche and his name. Guru Rinpoche is Buddhahood. To accomplish Buddhahood one must manifest the enlightened nature of the three Kayas. Synonymous with Buddhahood is the manifestation of the indivisibility of the three Kayas. So in Guru Rinpoche all three Kayas are complete—the Dharmakaya, Sambhogakaya and Nirmanakaya.

BENZRA or VAJRA refers to a vajra. The literal meaning of vajra is indestructible. It is stable, unchanging, unwavering and cannot be destroyed. This is the nature of the Dharmakaya, the true nature of mind. The true nature of mind itself is Dharmakaya and nothing or no one can destroy it. It is unchanging and indestructible from beginningless time. It abides ever present as the very basis of awareness and can never be altered, changed, harmed or destroyed in any way. Even if one goes to the hell realms with indescribable suffering and pain still the Dharmakaya essence of mind is never harmed or altered in any way. Even when one goes to the animal realms no matter how much stupidity or ignorance is temporarily experienced by the ordinary mind the unchanging nature of the Dharmakaya is never touched. In the realm of humans no matter what suffering is experienced or however much negativity or negative deeds one engages in still this Dharmakaya nature is never tainted or stained. The vajra essence primordially pervades and is indestructible and unchanging in nature. In that way it is like a vajra.

In this way the vajra like essence of mind can never be harmed or destroyed. In the same way it conquers all. If one recognizes this diamond like nature of mind which cannot be destroyed but which is all destroying nature, then all delusion is totally conquered through this single recognition of mind's essence instantaneously. Afflictive emotions, all of the variations of desire, anger and ignorance are destroyed. In recognizing this diamond like essence of mind then all delusion is destroyed so it is all destroying yet indestructible.

The word GURU represents the accomplishment of all of the qualities of the Sambhogakaya. Through the recitation of the word GURU in the mantra one accomplishes this. Guru Rinpoche for instance appears in Sambhogakaya form and through the manifestation of the Sambhogakaya he purifies the obscurations of speech. Sambhogakaya is the purifying nature of speech. GURU itself means unsurpassed or fully supreme. It is the fully supreme or unsurpassed collection of all of the enlightened qualities, particularly the enlightened qualities of speech. Through manifesting as the Guru all of the enlightened qualities of the Guru are fully manifested in one's own mind stream. Particularly through this one manifests the qualities of enlightened speech. So in that way with the word GURU in the mantra one plants the seed for manifesting the Sambhogakaya.

Then there is the word of PEMA. PEMA means lotus. In regard to the three qualities of the body, speech and mind, PEMA is associated with the qualities of the enlightened body. This is referring to the Nirmanakaya, so all of the qualities of the Buddha's enlightened form are fully manifested through the recitation of this syllable in the mantra or word PEMA. Through the word PEMA one plants the seed for accomplishing the Nirmanakaya. If one manifests the Nirmanakaya then one becomes like a lotus, just as a lotus is born from the mud and grows from the mud it blossoms unstained from the mud from which it grows. In the same way when one gives rise to the precious mind of Bodhichitta, one develops the compassion of love and Bodhichitta in one's mind stream then one becomes like an exalted being who abides in samsara but is unstained by the faults of samsara. One is in the world but not of it. No matter how much one has to exert oneself in order to accomplish the benefit of beings one never tires, becomes annoyed, or becomes tainted by the faults of samsara. In this way this word PEMA represents these qualities of Nirmanakaya. It represents the essence of love, compassion and Bodhichitta because it is through manifesting and generating these qualities in the mind stream, one is able to accomplish the Dharmakaya.

Then there is the recitation of the word SIDDHI. SIDDHI means accomplishment or obtainments referring to actually accomplishing the deity. When we accomplish the deity we manifest all of the qualities of the deity or the Buddhas enlightened body, speech and mind.

When we say HUNG, HUNG is evoking the enlightened mind of the deity. This is like invoking the blessings of the deity's enlightened mind or the heart blessings of the deity. By invoking the blessings or the qualities of the deity's enlightened mind then the blessings enter our mind stream. As we recite the mantra we are getting closer and closer to the enlightened body, speech and mind of the deity. Gradually our own body, speech and mind become purer and purer. Gradually we transform the impure body, speech and mind into the enlightened body, speech and mind of the deity. In this way the mantra of the deity is like the heart essence of the practice. The mantra is the life force of the deity.