“The Laughter of the Khandros,” The Offering of the Body from *The Great Treasury of the Ultra Profound Sky*

**INTRODUCTION**

There are many *chö* liturgies within the Bön tradition. As Western students, we have been fortunate to receive teachings of *chö* from the venerable Bön masters Yongdzin Rinpoche (Lopon Tenzin Namdak), His Holiness Lungtok Tenpa'i Nyima, and Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. On all occasions the teachings were based on the oldest and most important source, the “Path Transforming a Fearful Place” (*Nyen sa lam khyer*) chapter of the *Mother Tantra* (*Ma rgyud*); the sadhana prescribed was the *Laughter of the Khandros* (*mKha’ 'gro'i gad rgyang*), composed by Shardza Tashi Gyaltse Rinpoche, who achieved the rainbow body in 1934.

*Chö* is a meditative practice that traditionally is performed not by sitting quietly and comfortably on a cushion inside a shrine room, but in frightening places such as cemeteries and charnel grounds. Nonetheless, the practitioner of *chö* should first develop familiarity with the practice in a peaceful place such as a shrine room before actually practicing the *chö* in more frightening places. The purpose for performing it in frightening places is to help the *chöpa* or *chö* practitioner to connect to the gods and demons both inner and outer while heightening fear and thereby presenting the opportunity to cut through it. Singing the liturgy while playing special instruments, the *chöpa* visualizes the dismemberment, cooking, and finally offering of the body.

*Chö* is also one of the four daily offerings of the monastic Bön tradition. The other three are smoke offering (*sang mchod*), water offering (*chab gtor*), and burnt food offering (*gsur mchod*). Usually these sessions begin with prayers (mostly from the *Threifold Practice of the Secret Mother Tantra*) followed by the central part of the practice in which these offerings are included, and conclude with prayers. As the last offering of the day, around nine p.m., *chö* is performed. When it is practiced in this way in Menri and Triten Norbutse monasteries, this sadhana of *Laughter of the Khandros* is used. It is done at night to heighten the terrifying aspect for the *chöpa*, and also to prevent outsiders from entering the monastery complex by provoking a response of fear similar to that toward a charnel ground or any of the other terrifying localities in which *chö* is traditionally practiced.

The *chö* practice is seen as an expeditious route to enlightenment. Through the practice you can recognize obstructions/demons and use them as a bridge to reconnect to your own nature by cutting the veils of ego (the self-grasping demon). The object to be cut depends on the practitioner. If what are cut are the demons of external natural forces or illnesses in the form of malignant spirits, this is a shamanic perspective. If the poisons or negative emotions are cut by means of abandoning them and acting in accordance with the Perfection of Wisdom teachings or Prajñaparamita, this is a sutric view. If you cut your defiled aggregates and transform them into pure offerings acceptable for the jewels of refuge, this is a tantric view. Cutting through the root of the thought process—i.e. cutting off the demons of self-grasping and remaining in the non-dual state—is a dzogchen view. This practice encompasses all of these views, and as far as the efficacy of this practice is concerned, *chö* is said to be “like taking a jet plane to enlightenment rather than walking.”
Explanation of the Sadhana

In “Laughter of the Khandros,” you begin the practice with Performing the Dance of non-dual view. Upon sitting down to practice, settle into the understanding that the deities and demons are mere creations of your mind—therefore there is no reason to fear them. Supported by this understanding, connect with your own strength and energy and blow the kangling (thigh-bone trumpet) to summon all the spirits and invite them to the feast. With the aid of the damaru (drum) and bell, abide in the state of the non-duality of emptiness and appearances and dance on the head of the demon of grasping—your mistaken belief in an existing identity or self.

In Going for Refuge, you take refuge in the Great Mother Satrik Yum, the emptiness from which all emerges, and beseech her to embrace all sentient beings with her protection. In Developing the Mind of Enlightenment, you request the aid of Satrik Yum to liberate you and all the so-called gods and demons from the delusion of duality, which is the cause of harming others. With Prayer to the Khandros, you connect to the female deities and invoke their power to tame the harmful spirits and guide them to liberation.

In order to perform the main part of the practice, Offering the Body, sound PÉ and expel your consciousness upward through your central channel and out through the crown of your head. With a second PÉ your consciousness becomes the red-orange khandro [Sanskrit: dakini] Kalzang Ma, standing in the dancing posture and adorned with bone ornaments. Your former body becomes a corpse. As Kalzang Ma you offer this corpse, which represents your ego, in two feasts or banquets: a white feast and a red feast.

Beginning with the White Feast, you [as Kalzang Ma] sever the cranium with the curved knife held in the right hand, chop the corpse into pieces, and place the flesh, blood, and bones inside the cranium, which becomes a cauldron (Sanskrit: kapala). A short A, red in color, emanates from your heart to create a fire. Externally this fire melts all the elements of the physical body, which become nectar. Internally feel that the fire from the red A melts the upside-down white HAM located at the crown of your head. The resulting melted nectar fills sky and earth. Now you present this offering to the four guests. These guests are the jewels of refuge (i.e. enlightened beings), the worldly protectors, the eight classes of hindering spirits, and the beings of the six realms of existence. Having delighted the enlightened beings, you complete the two accumulations of merit and wisdom; the rejoicing protectors maintain their promise to safeguard the teachings and its practitioners; the satisfied hindering spirits become pacified; and the debts you owed to all beings of the six realms are repaid.

No one is to be excluded, and that is why there is also a Red Feast. Hollow out the skin and pile the corpse’s flesh, bones, internal organs, and blood on it. As Yongdzin Rinpoche explains, this banquet is for the more carnivorous guests (usually among the third and fourth guests), who are said to arrive like vultures on a corpse. Although they are also invited to the white feast, these guests prefer the red one in which they eat the flesh, drink the blood, chew the bones, and swallow the internal organs. Eating until totally satisfied, the guests become pacified and your karmic debts of past and future lives are repaid.

Both the red and white feast offerings are boundless in that they suffice no matter how many guests come or how big their appetites are, and infinite in that they transform into whatever the guests desire. At the end, feel that everything you have to offer has been offered, and all the desires of every guest have been thoroughly satisfied.

Now that the gods and demons are totally satisfied and pacified, you present them with the Gift of Dharma, requesting them to cause no further harm to others and instead to
take refuge and develop the mind of enlightenment, or bodhicitta. The Gift of Protection is to prompt the recognition of their own true nature as buddhas, or enlightened beings. These are the teachings of the nature of mind.

Finally, with the Prayers and Dedication, you dedicate the merit of the practice to those gods and demons who have created obstacles as well as to all sentient beings, with the wish that all will attain enlightenment.

allelḥaṃnamakāyaḥ śuddhājñānairātmanisuddhiṃ mandalam uṣṇīṣam

Yang zap nam kha dzö chen ē lu jin khan drö gé gyang zhuk
“The Laughter of the Khandros,” The Offering of the Body from The Great Treasury of the Ultra Profound Sky

INTRODUCTION (not chanted)

Hri ho dzi ra da ki de pa ho
I pay homage to the knowledge holders, khandros, and deities.

Khan dro gong chö ngö drup drup pa la
In order to accomplish the intention and conduct of the khandros

Gyu lu tsok kyi khor lo kor wa la
This illusory body is circulated as a wheel of offering.

Thok mar nyen né chin né sa dül wa
Begin by going to a fearful place and taming the land.

Khor dé nyam nyi tok pé nel jor gyi
The yogi who realizes the equality of samsara and nirvana

Ye shé röl pé lu len dro trap ching
Sings the song and dances the dance of playful primordial wisdom.

Tap shé yer mé da sil dra dang ché
Together with the sounds of the drum and bell—the inseparability of method and insight—

Dak mé ngang né shuk chung tsik di jō
[This yogi] chants the following words which well up from the state of selflessness:
THE PRACTICE

Dro dung wa ni ~ Performing the Dance (Kangling [ibhiggBone trumpet], and then with drum [damaru] and bell [suhyen], daru phep and 2 sets of 3 beats)

Di na lha dang dre shé nang wa yang
Even though so-called gods and demons appear here,

Yum chen bha gé long né shen ma gyi
They were created from nothing other than the vastness of the Great Mother’s bhaga.

Zhi tsel gak mé rang nang gar gyur wé
The unceasing dynamic energy of the base becomes the dance of self-appearance,

Nyi mé ye shé ngang du ya la la
Which naturally dissolves into non-dual primordial wisdom. YA LA LA!

Nyi dzin dre gô go la dro zhik dung
[I] dance upon the heads of these wild demons of grasping at duality

Dak dzin gong pô phung po shik se shik
And upon the corpse of the great demon of grasping at a self, destroying them.

Dak mé nyuk mé lu yang ying su tön
My song of natural egolessness draws them into space.

Den mé gyu mé dro gar kha la trap
Leaping into the sky, I gesture and dance, creating a magical display,

Nel jor tong nyi kha ngé ngar ké di
And with the lion's roar of emptiness, this yogini

Gyal gong wa kyé po mô lé kem shik
Shatters the skulls of these foxes, these male and female hindering demons.
De chen ye shé röl pé dro chen gyi
With my dance of the play of great bliss and primordial wisdom,
Nga dak zung dzin nyö mong dül du lok
HUNG HUNG HUNG Pé Pé Pé
I pulverize dualistic self-clinging and emotional afflictions.
HUNG HUNG HUNG Pé Pé Pé

Chap su dro ~ Going for Refuge (no instruments)

Zhi ma chö tong chen Satrik Yum
O Mother, Satrik Yum, you are the uncontrived base, the great emptiness.

Ma yum chen long la kyap su chi
I go for refuge in the vast space of the Great Mother.

Ma nyen sé lhan dré rik druk dro
O Mother, please regard with your compassion all gods and demons of this untamed,
frightening place

Ma khyé kyi tuk jé zung du sól Pé
As well as the sentient beings of the six realms, all who have been my mother. Pé

Sem kyé pa ni ~ Developing the Mind of Enlightenment [Bodhicitta]

Rang trüл pa ma shé nyi dzin gyi
Through delusion, unknowing, and self-grasping,

Zhen sem chen yong la nö ché dré
These demons have caused harm to other sentient beings.
Da jang chup sem kyi dön tok né
Now, having realized the mind of enlightenment

Ying ka dak ngang du dröl gyur chik PE
May these beings be liberated within the primordially pure space. PE

Sem chok kye ching söl wa dep pa ~ Prayer to the Khandros

E MA HO! Bön ku Küntu Zangmo la söl wa dep
How marvelous! I pray to the body of truth, Küntu Zangmo.

Dzok ku Sherap Parchin la söl wa dep
I pray to the body of perfection, Sherap Parchin.

Yum chen Chema Ötso la söl wa dep
I pray to the Great Mother Chema Ötso.

Khandro Kalpa Zangmo la söl wa dep
I pray to the khandro Kalpa Zangmo.

Khandro Tukjé Kündrö la söl wa dep
I pray to the khandro Tukjé Kündrö.

Khandro Öden Nyibar la söl wa dep
I pray to the khandro Öden Nyibar.

Khandro Sipé Gyalmo la söl wa dep
I pray to the khandro Sipé Gyalmo.

Zhi wé khan dro kar mo la söl wa dep
I pray to the white peaceful khandros.
Gye pé khan dro jang mo la söl wa dep
I pray to the green increasing khandros.

Wang gi khan dro mar mo la söl wa dep
I pray to the red powerful khandros.

Drak pö khan dro ngön mo la söl wa dep
I pray to the blue wrathful khandros.

Jik ché go ma de zhi la söl wa dep
I pray to the four classes of terrifying gatekeeper goddesses.

Drin chen tsa we la ma la söl wa dep
I pray to my kind root master.

Ma tsok tuk jé gong pé tsel chung la
May the overflowing dynamic energy of the intention of these hosts of mothers

Ma túl nyen sé lhan dré wang du dü
Subdue the gods and demons of this untamed, frightening place,

Ma rung nyen sé lhan dré zil gyi nön
Vanquish the gods and demons of this untamed, frightening place,

Ma tok kham sum sem chen ying su drong
And guide all the unrealized sentient beings of the three worlds into space!

Ma chik kha ying tsöm bu chik dré né
O sole Mother, having been mixed into a single mass of space,

Ma lü dzok pé sang gyé sa top shok [repeat this line] _PE
May all beings without exception achieve perfect buddhahood!  _PE_
Lu tsok la ~ Offering the Body

Nam shé par tè zuk pung drel
[My] consciousness flies upward and is liberated from my physical body.

Lü dak dzin bor wé kye mé sem
My unborn mind abandons this body and self-grasping.

Tsa u mé lam né kha lé tön PÉ
Expelled into the sky through the path of the central channel. PÉ

Nyön mong kyi dü chom Kalzang Ma
I arise in a rainbow display as Kalzang Ma, destroyer of the demons of conflicting emotions,

Ku gyen druk tra le gar gyi zheng PÉ
In a dancing posture, adorned with the six [bone] ornaments. PÉ

Kar gyé ché ni ~ White Feast

Yé dri guk gi phung po dü po drel
With the curved knife in her right hand, she liberates the demon of the aggregates.

Dü nyem ché go ché tø pa drek [damaru, bell]
She cuts off the head of that arrogant demon. The severed skull

Tong sum gyi kha la zang su tsuk
Is placed as a cauldron as vast as the three-thousandfold universe.

Zuk pung po nö du ling gi zhak
The physical aggregates of my abandoned body are flung into the vessel.
Tuk sang we dzö né trö pa yi
The heart’s secret treasure emanates a short A

A tung gi me yi zuk phung zhü
Whose fire dissolves the aggregate of form.

Lü phung kham dü tsir nar gyi zhu
Thus the physical body’s constituents and elements melt into nectar.

A HAM ke dü tsö zhün tik kyi
By the drops of the refined nectar from A and HAM,

Ro gya den dü tsö nam sar kheng [repeat line] PÉ
This nectar of one hundred flavors fills sky and earth. PÉ

Kyap kön chok drön la chö pa bül
To the source of refuge, the three precious jewels, I make this offering.

Ka ten sung tsok kyi gyé par zhé
To the hosts of protectors of the sacred teachings, accept [this offering] and be pleased.

Gek jung po de gyé ngöm par röl
To the eight classes of obstructing beings and elementals, enjoy [this offering] and be content.

Ma rik druk dro nam tsim par chö PÉ
To the beings of the six realms, our mothers, partake of this offering and be satisfied. PÉ

Lha chö drön nyé né tsok nyi dzok
Through pleasing the divine guests with this offering, may the two accumulations be perfected.

Bön ten kyong gyé ne lé chöl drup
By delighting the protectors of the teachings of Bön, may their oath-bound commitments be upheld.
Dön po mō duk sem nō gel zhi
May all harm and adversity caused by malevolent male and female demons be pacified,

Ma rik druk dö tsim len chak kher PÉ PÉ PÉ
[And] through satisfying the wishes of our mothers, all sentient beings, may all karmic debts be repaid.  PÉ PÉ PÉ

Mar gyé ni ~ Red Feast

Ye dri guk gi pung pō dü po drel
With the curved knife in her right hand, she liberates the demon of the aggregates.

Dü nyem ché go ché yang zhi teng
Cutting off the head of this arrogant demon, atop its flayed skin the size of the three-thousandfold universe

Tong sum gyi kha la sha trak pung
She heaps the flesh and blood.

Ja kō po ro tok lhak pa zhin
Like vultures feasting on the remains of a corpse,

Khıyö nyen sé lhan dré dir dü la
The gods and demons of this frightful place gather.

Sha dō nam sha la kham kham zo
May those who desire flesh tear it with their teeth and eat!

Trak dō nam trak la chip chip thung
May those who desire blood drink it gulp by gulp!
Rū dō nam rū cho lha kang jip
May those who desire bones gnaw the bones and suck the marrow!

Nang tröl dang gyu ma khyur khyur röl
Pull out the organs and entrails and feast upon them!

Tse nga chyi len chak kher gyur chik
Thus may my karmic debts of [this and] previous lifetimes be repaid,

Dré duk chen duk sem zhi gyur chik [repeat line] PÉ PÉ PÉ
[And] may the negative intentions of these malevolent demons be pacified.

Bön jin ni ~ The Gift of Dharma

Ne sang chen zhing khō lhan dré nam
Gods and demons who dwell in this great secret place,

Dū tak tu zhen la nō sem pang
Abandon forever the mind of harming others!

Yūl yung drung ne zhir kyap su söl
Take refuge in the four yungdrung (lamas, buddhas, shenrabs, and dharma).

Ma sem chen yong la nying je kyé PÉ
Generate compassion for all sentient beings, our mothers. PÉ
Kyap jin ni ~ The Gift of Protection

Sem dren sem khen pö zhī tsa chö
In cutting the root of the thinker of thoughts and memory,

Dön ngö po ma drup sa le wa
Ultimately, it is vividly clear that there are no entities.

Di Kün Zang kong pa yang dak yin
This is the pure understanding of Kün[tu] Zang[po].

Da rang ngo shé ne dröl war shok PÉ
Now, recognizing one’s own natural face, may all be liberated! PÉ

Je su ngo mön ni ~ Prayer and Dedication

Dak gi zak mé tsok chen di kyé pé
The virtue arising from this great stainless accumulation

Ge tsok nyen sé lhan dré yong la ngo
I dedicate [for the benefit] of the gods and demons of this untamed, frightening place.

Kün kyang tsok nyi ter la long chö né
From the richness of the treasury of the two accumulations,

Dro kun cham chik sang gyé nyur top shok PÉ
May all beings equally and spontaneously attain buddhahood. PÉ

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The introduction and explanation for this practice were written by Alejandro Chaoul-Reich. The sadhana was translated by the Ligmincha Translation Committee. The translation greatly benefited from the work of an earlier translation by John Myrdhin Reynolds. May the guardians forgive any errors that we may have introduced. The practice is intended for use by those who have received transmission and explanation from an authentic lineage holder. Please respect this request. Our heartfelt gratitude to our teachers! May our teachers enjoy excellent health and long life! May their dharma activities flourish! May all beings benefit!