

Heruka Chakrasamvara Teachings with Geshe Sonam Ngodrup

Eighth teaching – 1.7.2023 – Heruka Chakrasamvara

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Today, which is July 1st, which is Canada day, whether you are in Canada or whether you are friends in other countries, Geshela welcomes you with a Tashi Delek and he hopes that you are well and he hopes that you are happy.

And it says in the tantric treatises by Lama Tsong Khapa, one of the most important parts of the path is to be able to recognize one's own good fortune at having encountered the Vajrayana teachings.

And so we want to continue with a happy mind, with the speaker teaching with a happy mind and with the listeners of the receiving teachings with a happy mind.

And also to keep in mind the goal, the goal of these teachings is to be able to reach a state of happiness, of final, ultimate happiness.

And in order to be able to reach that final state of happiness we need to practice both aspects of the Buddha's teachings, the sutra aspect of the teachings and the tantra

And the reason for this is simple, when we think about the welfare, the ultimate welfare of ourselves, when we think about the ultimate welfare of others, there is no other way to really work towards that except through achieving Buddhahood for the wellbeing of oneself and all beings.

And that's why in the Heart Sutra it says, the bodhisattva the great being, it says the bodhisattva, that great being, there is that repetition there, because it wants to lay out for you the fact that these beings have achieved both their own welfare as well as they are working in a meaningful way for the welfare of others.

In order to achieve both welfare for oneself and other there is no way to do that other than Buddhahood; in terms to be able to achieve Buddhahood in a realistic way that has to happen through sutra and tantra. So actually tantra is required, it cannot be on the basis of sutra teachings alone.

Hopefully most of you will be familiar with the sutra side of the teachings, and you will know that in the presentation of the sutra side of teachings there is a very vast and profound presentation of both the wisdom and method side of the path.

But then comes the question, why do we need tantra? What are the difference between sutra and tantra? One feature of tantra it allows us to amass the cause of the Rupakaya, the form body. So, that's one reason.

So, in the explanations, in the commentaries what you find, in terms of achieving the Dharmakaya, the truth body, all of the methods to achieve that are available within the sutra system, but in terms of achieving the Rupakaya, the form bodies, the complete set of instructions for that are only available in tantra.

However, some commentaries say that even with regards to the truth body, to the Dharmakaya, if you look at the most subtle causes necessary to amass to achieve that, the complete presentation of that is actually not available in sutra, and certainly the complete presentation for the causes for the form body is not available in sutra.

We could also say it like this, if we are looking at the wisdom aspect: in terms of the object to be realized, which is emptiness, the complete set of instructions to do that are available in both sutra and tantra. But in terms of the instructions for the object possessor, in other words the subject, the one that is meditating on emptiness, the complete set of instructions of this aspect are only available in tantra.

What is the reason for this? When we look at the object possessor or the subject the reason is this: in terms of accessing the subtle body and mind, and specifically in terms of activating the fundamental innate clear to meditate on emptiness those instructions you only find in the tantric instructions. So the complete presentation to achieve both the truth body, the Dharmakaya, and the form body, the Rupakaya by activating the necessary subtle body and mind this complete set of instruction is only available in tantra.

So we should have a feeling of being fortunate to be able to access these teachings.

Thinking that we having achieved this precious human rebirth.. I am very fortunate to be able to access these set of instruction which through steadfast study and practice it is possible to realize realization even in one lifetime, I request the blessings of the holy beings of the buddhas and bodhisattvas to be able to do that.

So we will recite the preliminary prayers.

Geshela thought today to start with infused by a correct motivation at the beginning, a brief meditation on the three purifications of Heruka. So as you listen to this kind of meditatively with a happy mind.

And so of course, in the beginning we want to make sure that the body and mind are malleable by putting them in a relaxed state.

So then, in the space in front of you you visualize, imagining that he embodies all of the lamas, gurus, yiddams and the other enlightened beings, the jewel in one, Glorious Heruka, in his Sahaja form, with one face, two arms embracing the mother.

Geshela said, you can visualize if you like, the 12 armed form, but also the simple 2 armed form.

And imagine that visualizing together with us are all 6 types of sentient beings within samsara, but so that we can more closely identify with their suffering, they are in human form, they are all surrounding us.

Think they are all bringing forth the preliminary mind of refuge, the fear and the faith as well as the uncommon refuge, love and compassion.

And then think, until I actualize the state of Heruka Chakrasamvara I will continuously go for refuge to the 3 Jewels, Buddha, Dharma and Sangha.

And bring forth a very specific bodhicitta, thinking I must lead all 6 types of beings within samsara to the state of Buddhahood. In order to do this I must quickly, quickly actualize the state of Heruka Chakrasamvara myself.

Meditate on bodhicitta.

And think, glorious Heruka father and mother, pleased with our requests and intention, they melt into light enter the crown and then descend down our central channel. Their mind absorbs with our mind at above the heart level and our mind and Heruka father's mother's holy mind become of one essence, inseparable.

In terms of the mind that is thinking this, when we first conceptualize our mind it seems like there is something truly existent and solid there. But if we try to find some pinpointable essence that we can point to of the mind, we'll see that there is nothing findable, because the mind is momentary simply a continuum of previous, present and future moments of consciousness.

And that I for the self that is designated on the basis of that mind, for example, we'll find, if we look if we search for some kind of pinpointable essence, some sort of aspect of inherent existence, that similarly there is nothing pinpointable or findable at all.

And then we should also think that this mind that is meditating like this it is not a mind in its ordinary aspect, but it is the subtle mind in essence the fundamental mind of innate clear light.

And then think that that fundamental mind of innate clear light that it transforms into the resultant time great bliss wisdom

And then imagine that from this space of a resultant time great bliss wisdom from that essence of great bliss wisdom we are ourselves arise as glorious Heruka, Sahaja form, one face, two arms etc.

And we are embracing the mother.

And so when we visualize ourselves in this simple Sahaja form of Heruka we know that father is embracing the mother and his hands has the vajra and the bell. In the Luipa system, the mother holds a vajra and a skull cup, but if you are practicing the Ghantapa system, the 5 deity body mandala the mother is holding a chopper or katvanga and skull cup.

And then we can imagine that within our body at about the level of the heart the three wheels of the mantra are manifesting.

And we can imagine that from these mantra garlands countless light rays emanate in all directions.

We can imagine that the three wheels of the mantra they are calling, the first wheel all of the deities of the body wheel, the second wheel all of the deities of the speech wheel, the third mantra garland, all of the deities of the mind wheel.

And we imagine that from that then the mantra goes up the central channel out of our right nostril and then from that the light rays etc. reach all the sentient beings within samsara and completely clear away any suffering of body and mind, completely purify their bodies and minds.

And think by those light rays touching them any evil mind and any evil conduct are completely purified and eradicated. And they bring forth positive minds, wholesome conduct.

So we imagine that having accomplished these excellent activities for the benefit of others, then the light rays and the associated deities are reabsorbed through the left nostril and down through body.

So just a brief aspect of the three purification meditation.

So, keep in mind we did not cover all 3 purifications thoroughly within that meditation but we gave a brief taste of an aspect of that meditation.

It is said that if one is really skilled with the 3 purifications, one can relate the 3 purifications to the 3 bringings of death intermediate state and rebirth into the path.

So, then we talked about in terms of the 3 purifications, purifying body, speech and mind on the basis of the aspects of body, speech and mind of ourselves, the basis body, speech and mind and the resultant body, speech and mind.

When we are also reciting the mantras associated for example with this purification with body, speech and mind, we should imagine that as the sound of the mantra departs our mouth that it brings great happiness to all sentient beings and in this way we establish a positive imprint.

In this way, with this kind of awareness that is benefitting, the practice of the mantra does not become polluted by any worldly concerns, usually Geshela said, we use our speech to argue etc. so it's not like that, we are establishing an imprint that when we recite the mantra it's something positive, it's something that bring benefit.

Then in this way, we talked about the purification of the body, the purification of the speech, the purification of the mind, this is what is meant by the triple purification.

And really the most important part of this practice of the three purifications is thinking about the name etc. and how this is indicating the 2 selflessnesses of both persons and phenomena.

And then bringing forth that great bliss and arising in the form of the deity, this is the purification of the body. The first one, thinking about the two selflessnesses is the purification of the mind, the second one, arising from great bliss in the form of the deity is the purification of the body. Then through the mantra, we imagine, visualizing the mantra the light rays etc. if we do it more extensively, deities together with those light rays going out and benefitting all sentient beings. And this is the purification of speech; and just as a reminder, when the texts talk about the quality of the Buddha, his holy body, speech and mind it is the holy speech that is considered the most important.

Geshela said that we talked about relatedness to the 3 bringings, so that point when light rays from the mantra and the associated deities of the mantra are going out and benefitting all of those sentient beings and then dissolving back into the left nostril, that could be connected to the taking rebirth into the path of the emanation body, the Nirmanakaya.

And when you are visualizing at different points these kind of lights manifesting and reaching out and accomplishing offerings and benefitting beings etc. it is said to be very important, that you abandon doubt, that you really have the conviction that as we imagine those lights and nectars benefitting other, that they really are.

So, we said that both sutra and tantra necessary practices of the Mahayana, and so if these are practices of the Mahayana, that means that our practice of sutra and hence also tantra must accomplish the welfare of sentient beings and therefore when we imagine this visualization with the lights and blessing the beings etc. it is very important that we have this conviction that we are accomplishing that welfare of beings.

And also, it is through these visualizations such as the lights blessing the sentient beings etc. when we talk about how tantra allows us to accumulate the 3 kalpas, the 3 eons of merit necessary for enlightenment in one short lifetime it is because of these practice of visualizing the lights etc. that this accumulation of merit is possible.

So one of Geshela's friend shared with him that this practice of visualizing the self-generation and visualizing the lights etc. going out to sentient beings and then being reabsorbed, that there is a special kind of lightness of happiness that he experiences when he practices this and if he for some reason has to miss that meditation he feels like the day is not complete.

So, if we develop this kind of taste for the practice, then any time that we have like free time, empty space in our day, we will be inclined to want to practice that and then it's very easy to build that consistency and quality.

So, Geshela is just saying, we come now to a point in the outlines when we notice a difference between the Luipa presentation and the Ghantapa presentation.

And if you remember we talked about the stages of the generation stage, and then specifically we talked about the preliminaries of the generation stage and we talked about the stage of the common preliminaries and then we also talked about the stage of the extraordinary preliminaries.

So, another thing is important to share with you here, when we finish the common preliminaries, the next kind of part of the outline is the Luipa calls them the uncommon extraordinary preliminaries, but in the commentaries on Gharanta, where 5 deity or body mandala it doesn't call them the uncommon extraordinary preliminaries, it calls these the branch yoga practices.

And within this particular part of the outlines, whether we call them the extraordinary preliminaries or the branch yoga practices, Luipa has 4 points included under this heading, whereas both traditions of Ghantapa have 3 points.

So, in terms of the first point within these extraordinary preliminaries or branch yogas this is the same for Ghantapa or Luipa, it's the 3 purification practice.

But Luipa has an auxiliary practice, connected to the 3 purifications, so what is that auxiliary practice connected to the 3 purifications? We are still counting this as one? This is a brief meditation on the four immeasurables.

And so not time to explain this extensively today but what we can say is that there is a sutra presentation of these 4 immeasurable thoughts, there is a presentation specific to the Vajrabairava/Yamantaka system, and there is a presentation specific of the 4 immeasurables to the Heruka Chakrasamvara system.

But we will discuss this a little bit later.

And so then, within these 4 points of the uncommon or extraordinary preliminaries according to Luipa, we covered the first one.

The second one is the blessings of the aggregates, constituents and sense bases. I am giving you this in the way it is commonly translated, but we know that the Luipa sadhana is a Berzin translation and has its own flavor and he translates that as the Ennobling Consecration of the Aggregates, Cognitive Stimulators, and Bodily Elements [page 23].

And actually this is a very beautiful, nicely stated and greatly beneficial meditation.

So, you will see that within the sadhanas of the Ghantapa Chakrasamvara, whether 5 deity or body mandala, you don't have the words in the sadhana about this practice of blessing the aggregates, constituents and sense bases.

But, according to the instructions of the previous Kyabje Zong Rinpoche, although the words for blessing the aggregates, constituents and sense bases are not in the Ghantapa body mandala or 5 deity practice, practitioners who have time and want to practice in a top-quality way, should actually take this meditation from the Luipa sadhana and insert it into the Ghantapa practice.

And then, another difference: after the blessing of the aggregates, constituents and sense bases, in the Luipa sadhana we'll find that we move to the meditation of the protection circle, whereas in the practices of Ghantapa it's actually the accumulation of merits and the visualization of the merit field that comes next.

We see that in terms of the order of the practices it's a bit different, but in terms of 3 of the practice, the practice of the 3 purifications, the practice of protection circle or wheel, and the practice of the accumulation of merit, these 3 shared by both systems, Luipa and Ghantapa.

So, Geshela's plan in terms of the rest of our time today is he is just going to briefly present some aspects of this section of blessing the aggregates, constituents and sense bases, this is on page 23 of the sadhana. However, understanding that lots of people joining us, are practicing in the Ghantapa system, not necessarily in the Luipa, that the sadhana that they may be doing, he will mostly talk about the protection circle, so we will just cover the blessing of the aggregates, constituents and sense bases very briefly and maybe come to it later again.

And the meditation on the protection circle is considered particularly important because of all of the obstacles that are going to come up for us as practitioners.

So, when we visualize this protection circle really well, it's like a shield almost of impenetrable vajras and we can visualize that within this protection circle together with us are anybody that we want to protect, people that are close to us, our friends, our family etc. And that this vajra structure is so impenetrable that not even an ant could get in, much less injuring spirits, illness causing spirits, obstacle makers etc.

And so, when we talk about the protection circle, we talk about a common protection circle and an uncommon protection circle. The common is pretty much the same, except for some minor detail for Guhyasamaja, Yamantaka and Heruka Chakrasamvara.

So, if you are practicing one of those systems more, you can rest assured that what you are learning here is going to apply to that system, it's going to benefit.

And also, in terms of the protection wheel, there is a vast presentation, a middling presentation and a brief presentation of the protection wheel.

For example in the Vajrabhairava/Yamantaka practice as part of this visualization of the protection circle you have the visualization of the 10 wrathful ones, these are types of deities, the 10 wrathful ones, this is considered the extensive protection circle.

We can come to a discussion about those differences in the systems later but first let us talk about the blessing of the aggregates, constituents and sense bases. We are now at page 23.

We are just going to cover a little bit of this section, so if you don't have the sadhana prepared, don't worry, we are just going to cover some brief points here.

So, basically the blessing of the aggregates, constituents and sense bases these are accomplished through this practice by arising 17 deities whose names you will see in the sadhana.

So, how do we do this? For example if we talk about this related to the aggregates or skandas we talk about the aggregates of form, feeling, discrimination, compositional factors and consciousness.

And those 5 are the bases of designation of the self, so in the practice together with those 5 of form, feeling, discrimination, compositional factors and consciousness we count a sixth one, which is the basis of the aggregates, the reality sphere or Dharmata as it is sometimes called, so there is a total of 6.

An interesting part of how Luipa visualizes this meditation on purifying the 5 skandas or aggregates is that nr. 1 form, the deity associated with that is visualized at the crown.

Nr. 2 feeling, the deity associated with that is visualized at about the navel; Nr. 3 compositional factors the deity visualized for that is visualized at the throat; Nr. 4 the 4th aggregate is visualized at the feet, and the 5th aggregate of consciousness is visualized at the heart. So, when we visualize, purifying the aggregates of form, we are visualizing the white Vairochana deity at the crown.

So, maybe a question arises, that's strange, because form is our whole body, so why would you not just visualize Vairochana at the hand, or at the feet or at the heart, in the center of the body? You might have that question.

So, the reason for this, is yes, our body has all of these parts to it, but these are like the branches of the body. If we talk about the essential substance of the body it's the white essential drops, and the white essential drops are said to be in the crown area, that is why we are visualizing Vairochana at the crown, at the head.

And then the feeling aggregate, we are visualizing Vajra-surya at the navel level. Why do we visualize the deity associated with the aggregate of feeling at the navel? Because it is at the navel level that the inner fire or tummo is activated, which will help us to feel the most profound feeling, the profound feeling of great bliss.

We know how this works, we activate the inner fire at the navel level, this blazes upwards which causes that white essence to drip down through the central channel which activates that feeling of great bliss, so now we have the reason of why the deity associated with purifying the aggregate of feeling is visualized at the navel.

And then, the next one at the throat, Berzin calls it the aggregate of distinguishing, it's usually translated as discrimination, we visualize the deity Padma-narteshvara we visualize at the throat.

This is because discrimination, being able to discriminate between things is happening on the basis of

the voice, sound and wind, that is why Padma-narteshvara associated with purifying discrimination is visualized at the throat.

The next aggregate, which is – I don't know why Berzin translated it like this, he is a lot smarter than I am, so he had a reason, I don't why he calls it the aggregate of aggregate of other affecting variables, because normally it is called compositional factors. So compositional factors, the deity Vajra-rajā is visualized at the feet at about the ankle level.

And so the reason given for this, that Vajra-rajā the deity associated with purifying compositional factors, why is he visualized at the ankle, at the feet? Because we know that under compositional factors the main, one of the main parts of compositional factors is karma, and engaging in actions requires us to go back and forth, be able to walk between various destinations and do those actions. That is why the compositional factors purifying deity Vajra-rajā is visualized at the feet.

And so the deity associated with cleansing the aggregate of consciousness is visualized at the heart because that is where the winds, and specifically the downward wind are said to abide.

We see how meditating on these 5 deities, basically what we are doing is through this practice of purification, we are purifying the 5 aggregates in to the 5 Buddha families, and that is how we are blessing the 5 aggregates and their bases.

Geshela said, that I was complaining, I wasn't complaining, I was worried I as misunderstanding because the deities actually, some of them like Vairochana is one of the names of one of the 5 Buddha families. Not all of the names of the deities, but anyway, they are purifying these 5 aggregates into the essence of the 5 families.

Geshela said, if you look at the commentary – he said it is good I asked that question – if you look at the deities that are mentioned here, some of them like Vairochana we immediately associated with the lord of the 5 families, but the other names, Vajra-surya, Padma-narteshvara etc. these are kind of subsidiary names, in other words, other epithets or names that are given to deities which represent the essence of the 5 families.

For example, if we look at Vajra-Suria, is said to be another name for Ratnasambhava – and we can see that Ratnasambhava is yellow, the sun is yellow.

And red, Padma-narteshvara, this is an epithet used to refer to Amitabha, and we know that Amitabha is red and so is this deity.

Green, .vajra-rajā, in our sadhana it says vajra-rajā which is literally vajra king, vajra means king, but this is actually referring to Amoghasiddhi, who is green in color.

And Vajrasattva is white. Another exception here: Vajrasattva is actually here referring to Akshobhya. I noted to Geshela that Akshobhya is blue in color, and Vajrasattva is white, but he said no, the commentaries say really this is Akshobhya. Geshela said he is going double check on the blue thing and if he is wrong, he will tell us.

And just another thing to mention here, we talked about at the top of the head the black Heruka representing purifying the sphere of reality this is actually also visualized at the crown.

Why is this? That is because the other 4, when we have this 5 aggregates all of the 4 are designated on the basis of form.

Because the aggregate of form is visualize at the head that the basis of the aggregates, the sphere of reality is also visualized at the head.

So, just to say, here it says the form is visualized at little bit lower, at about forehead level and sphere of reality is like really at the top of the head.

The next that we come to are the constituents. When we talk about the constituents or the cognitive stimulators they are often given as 12 in number but we have the 6 inner and the 6 outer constituents. These are the inner constituents.

Then we come to the sense bases, and the sense bases are 5 in number. So 5 aggregates plus the sphere of reality, which 6 aggregates, 6 cognitive stimulators or 6 constituents and 5 sense bases for a total of 17.

So we have earth, fire, wind and water plus space this becomes 5.

These 17 deities as you go through the sadhana you notice they have various names and forms and stuff, we are not going into detail but they actually are important, and especially important to remember, this practice really connected with the fact that when we achieve our Buddhahood, we will manifest these lords of the 5 Buddha families. So very important practice from that perspective.

Geshela said, that next we come to the protection circle, so because we are mainly following the Luipa tradition, we go through the steps as it unfolds in the Luipa, but just so that you know, whether we talk about the protection circle in the Luipa or in the Ghantapa, whether the body mandala or the 5 deities, it's pretty much the same.

Geshela said he hopes, he has the aspiration to present the protection circle according to the words as they appear in each of these traditions.

Geshela said that one of things that is mentioned in the commentary, when we come to the protection circle, that there is a possible error in the presentation of the protection circle in the sadhana.

There is a mantra that appears in the Luipa sadhana that is actually in the wrong place, it should be located elsewhere.

So, actually that particular mantra should come at a different place in the sadhana, it should not be presented here.

So, in the Ghantapa tradition, whether in the 5 deity or the body mandala, when are we meditating on the protection circle? It's actually after we have taken the intermediate state into the path of the Sambhogakaya, the enjoyment body, that is when the protection wheel is visualized.

And when we are meditating on the protection wheel, it is very important that we meditate on the protection wheel based upon the divine pride of ourselves as the deity.

What the reasoning behind the Ghantapa presentation is, if the protection circle has been meditated upon on the basis of the divine pride, how are you going to do that if you don't have that awareness that divine pride of yourself as the deity, or even if it's something abstract like you are in the form of this light, you want to manifest as the deity.

You have this pillar of blue light, and so this pillar of blue light you haven't actually manifested as Heruka, but we understand that, you know that there is a door that a certain person comes through, and when the door is open that person will appear? It's the same. That pillar of blue light, we know that Heruka will come from that and so that pillar of blue light is enough of the basis for divine pride that you need to bring forth here.

And then, the Heruka that appears from that pillar of blue light, this is oneself as Heruka.

Just as a rainbow appears from the sky, we know that Heruka will appear from this blue light.

So, from that pillar then manifesting oneself as Heruka you take the left arm and you snapping your fingers in the 4 directions, so firstly in front of yourself,

OM SUMBHA NISUMBHA HUM HUM PHAT

So, Geshela said, it doesn't need to be a loud sound, it can be like a gentle sound, it's really kind the 4 fingers and the thumb going together in the front.

So there is a black colored mantra of OM SUMBHA NISUMBHA HUM HUM PHAT and this is in the eastern direction, and the eastern direction can be visualized actually where you are sitting or slightly as the space in front of yourself and the you recite OM SUMBHA NISUMBHA HUM HUM PHAT.

And then we snap in the northern direction and as we recite

OM GRIHNA GRIHNA HUM HUM PHAT

we imagine that this mantra appears in that direction which is green in color.

And so, west as we snap our fingers we visualize the mantra red in color

OM GRIHNAPAYA GRIHNAPAYA HUM HUM PHAT

and so if we visualized east in front of us snapping, then with the west we are snapping behind us.

And then in the southern direction

OM ANAYA HO BHAGAVAN VAJRA HUM HUM PHAT

snapping and that mantra is visualized as yellow in color.

And so, another difference here: in the Yamantaka and Guhyasamaja practices these mantras are all visualized as blue in color. In the Chakrasamvara practice they have different colors.

And we imagine also that these mantras are kind of facing upright.

Also, the 4 mantras, they are forming like a square, touching each other and there is no intervening space in-between.

Another difference which is important to know here, when we begin speaking about protection circle, the protection circle in the Yamantaka and Guhyasamaja practice is actually in the shape of the circle, but when we talk about it in the Heruka Chakrasamvara it is actually more a square.

And so these 4 mantras, OM SUMBHA etc. these are very, very important mantras to practice. And when we practice them in the context of the Heruka mantra, they are known as the mantra of Heruka's 4 faces. Each mantra is connected with one face of Heruka.

So, each of those 4 mantras, they are known as the mantras of the 4 faces of Heruka, because each of those faces utters one of those 4 mantras.

And, in the Guhyasamaja system they are not known as the 4 mantras of the 4 faces of Guhyasamaja system, but they are known as the mantras of the 4 HUMS because you count one HUM for each of the 4 mantras so it's named like that.

And then, the other one as the 4 precious mantras. The 4 precious mantras are:

- 1) The root mantras of Heruka father and mother
- 2) Essence mantra
- 3) Close essence mantra
- 4) the Armour mantra

So those are the 4 precious in the context of Heruka. If we have the practice of these 4 mantras and the complete practice of the 3 purifications, it is said that we have a full practice of Heruka Chakrasamvara.

So, as we are meditating on the common protection circle, we now have the first step in place, which is that we have visualized these 4 mantras in the correct position, in the proper color.

And then, these mantras they radiate light in their respective colors, and that light reaches the peak of the realm of Brahma, all the way down to the golden ground below.

Actually the realm of Brahma is referring to a deva realm, a god realm which is in the first part of the form realm, just in case you are curious.

We want to visualize that realm as extremely vast and because that is vast, we are imagining that these colors of the 4 lights associated with the mantra also in a very vast configuration.

So then, the next step, we imagine those mantra lights radiating in their respective colors, so the next step is from the mantras transforming into light rays, east black, north green, west red and south yellow a square vajra fence pervades from the above of Brahma which is very very high up there all the way down to the golden base, in other words the ground where we are. And actually we can see, what we have basically done is constructing the 4 walls of a house, but those walls are made up of vajras. Together with that established fence, that fence in each of those directions, there is in the centre a HUM.

And Geshela said, at this point, just to be clear, we haven't actually build the roof yet, we've only build the 4 walls so far.

Then we imagine from that HUM at the center. there appear various vajras. And then at the centre of all of those visualized vajra is a HUM. And then, from that HUM at the centre of all of those vajras light rays emanate. And then from light kind of pervading from those vajras in all the directions, the ground also becomes a vajra ground. So we build the 4 walls and then what we did is we did this visualization with all of the vajras marked with the HUM at the centre and then the lights and then this fills in the ground/floor that then becomes vajras.

And then on the basis of that, the vajras emanate light which actually pervades beyond the walls and also up into the space above.

And this is like a vajra net. So this vajra net, which is like a net of vajras, it is surrounding all 4 walls, so it is outside those 4 walls and it's surrounding that and also in the space above, so it's hanging like a net above all of that.

So, the example that is given is really like a net, like a net that is hanging above and covering all of this. As we continue, [page 25]

Outside, a swarm of arrows in the shape of five-spoked vajras, shooting vertically and horizontally, pervading everywhere; And beneath and within it, a (pyramid-shaped) vajra-tent;

And then a vajra tent. The idea that we have here when we talk about a swarm of arrows in the shape of five-spoke vajras, the vajras are kind of interlocking together, almost, so there is some movement there, and it's like a net, which can catch even the smallest fish.

And it is said that just from seeing sort of those beautiful arrows like vajra that those who delight in virtue, that this gives rise to bliss within the mind.

Those who are unvirtuous, those who are evil doers, they cannot even bare to glance at it.

At that point within that, there is a vajra tent. And within that vajra tent there is a vajra canopy.

So the canopy, it's called alare in Tibetan, the canopy, if you have ever been to a teaching of a high lama, such as HH the Dalai Lama you notice a square shaped kind of fabric hanging, that's placed above the teaching seat. It's basically like that, except in this case much bigger, made out of vajras.

And so this vajra's canopy is basically hanging over the entire structure with the 4 walls etc. And it has this beautiful aspect.

Some scholars say that the vajra canopy actually overhangs the vajra tent a little bit and where it goes beyond the vajra tent it's like those beautiful eaves, like the eavestrough that the water goes through on our houses, so it can be visualized a little bit like that.

So, the vajra canopy can either be visualized completely within the tent, according to some scholars, or visualized as jutting out beyond the tent as well. Qualified scholars make both arguments.

All constitute a solid structure (of vajras) with no empty spaces (between the spokes of any of them)

And then, as we go to page 26

And is surrounded outside by vajra flames, like the fires at the time of the eons of destruction.

Why do we talk about vajra flames? We don't talk about flames or fire, but we actually talk about vajra flames.

The reason we have to have vajra flames, is because one of hindrances causing deities, or the hindrances causing spirits is actually a deity of fire. So, if it's just normal fire, they are not scared of that, because they are the gods/devas of fire, so that's why it needs to be a vajra fire.

That's why we visualize all of this surrounded by vajra flames.

*OM MEDINI VAJRA BHAVA VAJRA BANDHA HUM
OM VAJRA PRAKARA HUM BAM HUM
OM VAJRA PANJARA HUM PAM HUM
OM VAJRA VITANA HUM KHAM HUM
OM VAJRA SARAJALA TRAM SAM TRAM
OM VAJRA JVALA ANALARKA HUM HUM HUM*

And so just reciting those mantras that follow, the first blesses the vajra ground, the second the vajra fence, the third the vajra tent, the fourth the vajra canopy, the fifth the sort arrow like vajras.

These mantras are all in the essence or the essence is the great bliss of Heruka.

These are the mantras blessings the vajra ground.

And so, actually if you have ever been to a consecration ritual, you know that for example when a house is consecrated, there are certain mantras that are recited, so these kind of the replacement of the consecration mantras for what we are building in the context of the Heruka practice here. So, sometimes we will have moments where we are unhappy or we are experiencing a lot of obstacles, and in those moments, actually visualizing the protection circle with the tent etc. this can be something very beneficial.

And some lamas say, we probably don't have time to do this every night, but that it is very useful to visualize the protection circle around where one is sleeping, when one goes to bed.

And why is that? Because when we are sleeping the sense consciousnesses are no longer operating, it's just the mental consciousness that is operating. And at the time when those sense consciousnesses aren't operating it's more easy for obstructors and interferers to cause problems.

But of course, you don't need to do this big elaborate thing, if you want to be protected when you sleep you can think about bodhicitta and emptiness and that will do the job just fine.

In this way we have completed a brief discussion of the common protection circle.

You will see that actually the protection circle in the context of Vajrabhairava etc. it's really kind the flames and the fence of vajra, it's a little bit easier, but here it's something [disturbance in the recording].

So in this way we should have a feeling of being pleased, we now have covered the sadhana to the protection circle, and of course if we revisit this, if we go through this in our practice again and again it will eventually become familiar.

We will also be meeting in the future, so there will also be more opportunities to clarify.

That is where we will pause today, and then in our future installments we will be covering mor details.

So with a happy mind, let us dedicate the merits.

One thing that Geshela said, in terms of how to make this practice real for you, you should have in your mind an order of the various steps of the self-generation ritual, for whichever Heruka practice or yiddam practice you are doing, that is really, really important.

So thank you very much, let us dedicate the merits.

