

Vajrayogini Teachings with Geshe Sonam Ngodrup

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Firstly Tashi Delek, Geshela says greeting to all Dharma friends he hopes that you are all well, and he hopes that you are all happy.

Today our topic of discussion is a little bit of some remarks about the sadhana of Venerable Vajrayogini. Geshela also said, if you were to ask him, do you know a lot about the Vajrayogini practice, he would say he does not know very much about the Vajrayogini practice, however he has the occasion to share the little that he knows with all of you because ardent requests were made for this commentary, so in effect he felt he had no choice, actually.

So Geshela hopes though, that with a pure intention, if he explains as much about the practice as he is able, that this can create the cause for us all to improve our cultivation of it.

So, all of us are the same, in that our ultimate goal, the final goal of our practice is the achievement of the state of Buddhahood, complete enlightenment, and in terms of the cause of achieving Buddhahood, we know that one of the causes we need to amass is the practice of tantra. And specifically, to reach full enlightenment will not be possible without the practice of anuttara or highest yoga tantra.

And so, a lot of Geshela's friends, in these are knowledgeable friends, scholarly friends, they have said that if we set out to be able to achieve Buddhahood and we really want to traverse that path to Buddhahood, if we are not able to enter into the path of highest yoga tantra for some reason, that that is actually a shame, that would be a sense of loss.

In terms of achieving the final state of Buddhahood, to traverse that path would not be possible without entering the practices of tantra, specifically highest yoga tantra, so to be able to enter into these paths and put imprints for this path into our mind is something very fortunate.

Therefore, when Lama Tsong Khapa says, disciples, recognize your good fortune, that is something that is important for us to cultivate. We should contemplate our good fortune.

Geshela said, what he hopes to do today is to give a little bit of a brief overview of the Vajrayogini practice, and then as we continue these sessions, he will go into more detail. In other words, don't expect to get kind of everything right away, have in your mind that this commentary is something that is going to go on for a long time, so there is no need to rush.

Geshela's hope, his aspiration is that we can continue on this commentary just depending on scheduling, ever 6 to 8 weeks or so, we will have one commentary on Vajrayogini and all he is planned is that we will continue the commentary every 2 months or so until we have completed it.

In terms of the text Geshela will be using the sadhana of the self-generation, so this is the nearing path of great bliss also known as the quick path to great bliss, that has its own outlines as well. But Geshela said in addition to the outlines that you find within the sadhana, he is prepared some of his own outlines which he will also share with you and that is with the hope that it will maybe give a little bit of clarity, a little bit more of an understanding of the practice.

And so, the reason that he prepared these outlines is so that you can have a map in your minds so that the aspects of the self-generation are clarified and more meaningful for you.

So, what we are going to do, we are now going to recite the preliminary prayers, so we will recite the preliminary prayers that we usually do but instead of the praise to Heruka and the daikins like we have been doing in the Chakrasamvara series, we will recite 3 verses from the prayer to Vajrayogini lineage gurus. There is a tune for this, Geshela gave me a recording of the previous Zong Rinpoche singing the tune to this, however I am tone deaf, so if it is a disappointment, my apologies.

So Geshela is explaining that as we recite these words of the prayer we should have the motivation that with this session what we are going to do is improve our understanding so that we can perfect our practice as much as possible.

Prayers

So, we will take a brief moment, not a long moment, but a brief moment to cultivate refuge and bodhicitta, to meditate on this.

Meditation

First put your body and mind into a relaxed state.

And think, through placing my mind and body in this relaxed state my internal components such as the 4 elements etc. this come into harmony, these come into equilibrium.

And discursive thoughts, any unskillful thoughts, frustrations etc. these dissolve into the vastness of the mind, just like a rainbow dissolves into the sky.

Whether we talk about self, other external things, like mountains, meadows etc. although these appear to have inherent existence, if we try to point to their essence, we see that they don't have any inherent existence at all.

Then imagine in the space in front of you, from the space of emptiness arises a beautiful throne and upon this throne, on a lotus, and sun seat etc. is the glorious Heruka Chakrasamvara 4 faces etc. embracing the mother Vajrayogini.

We can imagine that as we visualize this on either side of us are our mother and our father. And if you feel like challenging yourself you can imagine your enemy or the person you are having difficulties with, sitting just right in front of you and you imagine that all sentient beings but all 6 types of being in samsara but in the form of human beings are assembled behind you and that we are engaging in these practices together.

Then imagine that all these assembled beings, from the very depths of their mind, their bottom of their hearts with great faith they go for refuge to Heruka father and mother.

And then think, myself together with all 6 types of beings assembled behind me until we achieve the resultant state of Buddhahood the actual state of Heruka Chakrasamvara we will continuously go for refuge to Buddha, Dharma and Sangha.

And then think, in order to really lead all sentient beings to that state that is completely free from problems and suffering I myself, the self or that that I call the "I" it must become of one essence with glorious Heruka Chakrasamvara. Think, may I achieve that state of Heruka for the sake of all sentient beings. Bring forth bodhicitta.

With this human rebirth I have now, with this human body and mind if as much as possible I put great effort into achieving this, I can definitely achieve the state of enlightenment.

So we will pause the meditation there.

In order to be able to benefit all sentient beings we want to be able to achieve the resultant state of Vajrayogini, in order to be able to achieve that resultant state of Vajrayogini, we need a good understanding of the sadhana, so let us proceed with that motivation.

And so in terms of these teachings of Vajrayogini we can say that they were propounded by the Buddha himself and in terms of the source of these teachings you find the presentation of Vajrayogini within the Chakrasamvara root tantra, sometimes called the Heruka root tantra.

And so, in terms of the essential instructions of this lineage of Vajrayogini, Tilopa and Naropa are particularly important, specifically we can say that the essential instructions originated with the yogi Tilopa.

Naropa met Tilopa and then striving really with great difficulty to be his student eventually he was able to perceive Vajrayogini directly. And Vajrayogini gave Naropa many of the essential instructions of the practice.

There are many kind of stories about Tilopa and Naropa, some are very inspiring, some are also quite funny, but in a capsule what we can say is this: Naropa's guru devotion to Tilopa was extraordinary, and because of his very extraordinary way of relying upon his teacher, that is why Vajrayogini was moved to appear to Naropa directly and bestow the lineage of her instructions.

And so then, in terms of how these teachings came to Tibet, we can start the story with the great Marpa Lotsawa, Marpa the translator. In fact, Marpa requested persistently Naropa for the lineage of Vajrayogini teachings but was not able to receive it. And Geshela said, perhaps this was because simply not due to any shortcoming of Marpa but simply because the timing was not right to bestow those instructions.

So what happened is it was actually two brothers from Nepal, known as the Pamtingpas, they went to Naropa and requested the Vajrayogini lineage instructions and seeing that the time was right, Naropa bestowed it upon them.

And so then, the Pamtingpas brothers passed it on to Tibetan disciples and then the practices of Vajrayogini were broadly transmitted within especially the glorious Sakya tradition and then from there they gradually also spread to Tibetan Buddhism generally.

In particular the practice of Vajrayogini also became very wide-spread within the Gelug tradition and then Geshela said, some people even say that the Gelugs actually stole Vajrayogini because she became so popular. He thinks it was said as a joke but people say it like that.

So, in terms of the special features of this Vajrayogini practice: one of those special features is said that without having to leave our current physical body behind, advanced practitioners can in this very same body be lead by Vajrayogini herself to the Dakini pure land, to Kechara.

And then, in terms of where this pure land of Vajrayogini also known as Kechara, is actually located, scholars will give different answers to this question.

Some scholars explain that how this happens, is actually when the yogi or yogini is engaged in for example the recitation of many, many mantras of Vajrayogini, what will happen is Vajrayogini she will first appear as an ordinary woman, she will appear as an ordinary woman and then lead the sincere practitioner to the pure land like that.

Many kind of narratives are given that at first Vajrayogini will appear as an ordinary woman and then she will guide the being to dakini land gradually transforming into Vajrayogini. So many of the stories are like that.

Another explanation of how this happens is, the sincere practitioner is engaged in the sadhana practice and the recitation of many mantras and then the time comes when Vajrayogini descends from the Kechara pure land herself and she will appear before the practitioner and will give empowerments and specific instructions, and then that place where the practitioner abides actually becomes transformed into Kechara, into pure dakinis land. This is another explanation of how this happens.

It wasn't just kind anybody who said this, the different ways that Vajrayogini guides the practitioner to the pure land this was explained by very great and learned lamas. This is the explanation that Geshela passes to you.

Another special feature of Vajrayogini is the great compassion, and especially the great love and affection that she has for practitioners of her system. In fact it is explained that the red color of her holy body is a symbolic representation of her great love and compassion for her practitioners. And so, there are also many other aspects to her holy form that indicate the great love, the great compassion she has for all of those who practice her path. To achieve the state of Vajrayogini we need to practice the 2 stages: the generation stage and the completion state.

The formulation of the generation stage in this system of Vajrayogini is formulated as 11 yogas. And it is explained that all of the practices of the generation stage can be included in these 11 yogas. In terms of the formulation of these 11 yogas it is contained within the teachings of a great Sakya patriarch.

So the first 3 yogas are sleeping, rising and experiencing nectar. The next 3 are yoga of the immeasurables, yoga of the guru, yoga of generating oneself as the deity.

In this way we have covered 6 of the 11.

Nr. 7, the next line just has 1 yoga, nr. 7 is the yoga of purifying migrators. The next one, the next line, also one yoga, the yoga of being blessed by heroes and heroines.

The next line one yoga as well, the yoga of verbal and mental recitation.

And then the yoga of inconceivability and the yoga of conduct brings us to 11.

The great Sakya patriarchs they gave this enumeration and then the last line is, these are the 11 yogas. These are the holy instructions that the great Sakya lamas passed down to us and this is how we should proceed in our practice.

If you were to ask, where does the practice of the sadhana begin? The practice of the sadhana actually begins with the 4th yoga, the yoga of the immeasurables. The first 3 yogas of sleeping, rising and experiencing nectar, they may be hinted at in the preamble to the sadhana but they are not contained within the practice of the sadhana itself.

Geshela said in terms of these first 3 yogas, that are not contained in the sadhana of sleeping, rising and experiencing nectars, perhaps we wonder what experiencing nectar is. What we would do is we would dissolve a nectar pill, sometimes into alcohol, sometimes into tea, and then what the practitioner does when they begin their practice, usually in the morning, can also be at night, they dip their finger within that nectar and draw the phenomena source, that's the 2 triangles, looks almost like the star of David, and then something in the middle and then they put it to their tongue, that is experiencing the nectar.

And then there's also things about a manifesting in the form of the deity to do this, but since we are not in a rush we can explain this in detail later.

In terms of the yogas of sleeping and the yoga of rising what is the reasons that we need to practice these? Some scholars say, to practice Vajrayogini first we need to wake up, the practitioner first needs to wake up to engage in the practice. So, if you wake up then we can posit that logically that you were sleeping, because you can't wake up if you are already awake, so sleeping has to be a thing and it is for this reason that the yoga of sleeping was posited.

Lama Tsong Khapa however says that this reasoning is very coarse, and if we explore a little bit more there is probably a more subtle reason that we need to engage in these yogas of sleeping and rising.

So, Lama Tsong Khapa explains that the reasoning we need the yoga of teaching it relates to Vajrayogini how she is positioned. Vajrayogini is a mother tantra, it is emphasizing clear light, it is also emphasizing the emptiness side rather than the appearance side; and because it is emphasizing the empty side, then this is associated with nighttime. The appearance side of other tantra is associated with the day time, and because at night we are usually sleeping that is why we need the yoga of sleeping.

Also thinking about this, we can understand something else: when we talk about the different tantras giving rise to illusory body and clear light, we can understand that Vajrayogini has both, but it is mainly emphasizing clear light. It is actually also for this reason that it is said, Vajrayogini practitioners, it is good to begin the Vajrayogini session at night, actually.

If you have done a retreat of Vajrayogini before, you'll know that to honor this tradition the first session of the retreat is actually conducted in the later part of the evening, at nighttime.

And so, in terms of the yoga of sleeping, there are 2 presentations of this: the yoga of sleeping according to generation stage and the yoga of sleeping according to completion stage.

And the same is true of rising: we have the yoga of rising based upon generation stage and the yoga or rising based upon completion stage.

Geshela is just going to go over these briefly and maybe we will come to a more detailed later. But just briefly to do yoga of sleeping according to the generation stage, first the practitioner visualizes a beautiful throne held up by 8 snow lions in the space in front of them.

And then one also imagines upon that a throne a beautiful lotus seat and what we do we then put our head resting just at the edge of the lotus on that throne and we visualize ourselves in a form similar to Vajrayogini but without all of her ornaments.

We visualize a seated, this is facing in the northern direction and we can visualize our lama in the aspect of Vajradharma. Usually when the practitioner is practicing this sleeping yoga, s/he is resting on their right side towards the northern direction where we are visualizing that lama.

The head is facing the northern direction and your face you are gazing towards the western direction. This is ideal. If you can manage that.

And this posture on your right side resting your head on your hand like this, this is known as the lion's posture and it is said to be the same posture that the Buddha took when manifesting paranirvana.

And then it is said, when one arises from sleep, if one can, it is very important to have the divine pride of being the deity and also the vividness and the clarity of that visualization.

And when one is waking up, one can imagine that the sound that wakes one up is the three OM OM OM mantra, OM OM OM SARVA BUDDHA DAKINIYE VAJRA VARNANIYE VAJRA VAIROCHANIYE etc. one can imagine that one is awoken by the sound sung by the divine beings.

So this presentation of these first 2 yogas of sleeping and rising is the presentation of sleeping and rising according to the generation stage practice.

So that was just a brief – there's lot more detail, but that was just a brief presentation of these first 2 yogas, and we will come to a more in-depth later.

So having covered at least briefly, the first 3, sleeping rising and experiencing nectar, we now turn to the yoga that appears in the first part of the sadhana, and the yoga that appears in the first part of the sadhana is the yoga of the immeasurables.

A lot of you will already be familiar with how these practices begin to unfold, if you have been following the Chakrasamvara commentaries. Because what you will find many aspects of the Vajrayogini practice are in fact many similar to Heruka, with a few notable differences that we will cover.

As we speak about the sadhana, to keep the sadhana firm in your mind, Geshela would like to propose 10 outlines.

- 1) Visualizing the objects of refuge
- 2) Going for refuge
- 3) The mind generation (bodhicitta)
- 4) The 4 immeasurables

Geshela said, what you will find is that, the way the sadhana is formulated and the words of the sadhana, the bodhicitta and the 4 immeasurables are kind of combined, that's something to note.

- 5) Imagining the refuge objects dissolving

Geshela said you can say dissolving or dissolving into oneself, entering, something like that. Those are the 5 points.

What happens is these objects of refuge, the various deities, and the lineage lamas etc. that we visualize these all dissolve into ourselves, and then after they have dissolved into our self, we dissolve and then we arise instantaneously in the form of the deity Vajrayogini, this is Nr. 6 within the ten

- 6) the instantaneous self-generation.
- 7) the blessing of the vajra and bell (this is not in the sadhana, but Geshela feels it's very good if you can add the blessing of the vajra and bell to the sadhana)

Geshela said in the Heruka practice there is a little section about how to bless the vajra and the bell, we don't need necessarily need to make it that elaborate but we can just imagine that the vajra represents method, the bell represents wisdom and emptiness – and so when they are picked up together they represent the nature of ultimate bodhicitta. So you can contemplate like that, very briefly as a way of blessing the vajra and bell.

And so, another reason it is important to bless the vajra and the bell, is that we contemplate what the vajra and bell remind us of. And one thing that the vajra and bell remind us of are the 3 samayas, the the 3 commitments.

The first of these samayas or commitment is the commitment to generate the deity. That's the first commitment, the yoga of the self-generation.

And the vajra and bell representing method and wisdom, the bell represents the samaya of speech. And the dorje represents the samaya of mind.

And so it is important in the practice of tantra never to be separated from these commitments.

So the commitment of the vajra body, which is the yoga of the self-generation, the commitment of the vajra speech and the commitment of the vajra mind. These are the 3 samayas. These are sometimes called the 3 commitments, there is also an other way to call them: the 3 vajras.

When we are practicing the sadhana in particular it is very important never to be separated from these 3 samayas.

When you practice the long sadhanas, if you go through the practice very, very slowly, a lot of these points are self evident, you come to understand them.

That was the 7th within the 10.

Having finished the 7th, blessing the vajra and bell, we now come to the 8th point of the 10

- 8) blessing the inner offering
- 9) blessing of the preliminary offering tormas
- 10) meditation recitation of Vajrasattva

And so if you look at the sadhana in particular the beginning point where we are talking about the 4 Immeasurables etc. and you identify the various parts, these 10 points will become very clear to you. I would just like to read out those 10 again in case you missed them:

- 1) visualizing the objects of refuge
- 2) going for refuge
- 3) the mind generation (bodhicitta)
- 4) the 4 immeasurables
- 5) dissolving the objects of refuge
- 6) the instantaneous self-generation
- 7) the blessing the vajra and bell
- 8) blessing the inner offering
- 9) blessing of the preliminary offering tormas
- 10) meditation recitation method of Vajrasattva

What happens is, if you familiarize yourself with these 10 outlines, then when you practice the first part of the sadhana you will feel like OK, I really know what is happening here, and this will give you a lot of happiness and confidence when you practice. Within these 10, out of those 10 points, where can we expand within those 10 points?

In particular, visualizing the object of refuge, we could put 3 subheadings within that:

- the succinct way to visualize
- the middling way to visualize
- the vast way to visualize

Within the sadhana Quick Path to Great Bliss that we are referring to, the visualization of the objects of refuge that is explained there is known as the vast visualization. And another thing is that we really need to have a commentary because some of the things that the sadhana says are very general about the visualization and we also need some specifics.

The short method of visualizing the objects of refuge, that will be easy for all of you to understand, we visualize the jewel all in one, so we imagine one figure - and so Geshela said, when you do the all in one, you can visualize in the space in front Vajrayogini, if you like, imagining that she is the embodiment of all of those objects of refuge of the field of accumulation.

For this jewel all in one, the brief visualization you can visualize Vajrayogini in her solitary form, you can also visualize Chakrasamvara father and mother, Heruka and Vajrayogini together, but you have the awareness, when you visualize, that the single form represents all of the lamas, yidams, dakas, dakinis, wisdom protectors etc.

The middling way of visualizing the objects of refuge, this relates to the holy places of Chakrasamvara and Vajrayogini within this world. So, there are said to be 24 holy places and we imagine those holy places and we imagine those holy places and holy beings within them and then we go for refuge. This is one of the middling presentations.

If we were to briefly outline the middling way - Geshela will present you a vast visualization and this one will be a little bit different. This vast visualization is a little bit different because it is according to

the teachings of [?] Dharma Bhadra who was a great lama of Tashi Lhunpo Monastery. So he is going outline for you an alternate vast visualization according to [?] Dharma Bhadra.

So we have the lion throne in front of us, and upon this lion throne are the 3 cushions of lotus, moon and sun seat.

So, you visualize the lotus, moon and sun seats. The moon and sun seats from understanding what Geshela is saying, these are counted together as one. And the third seat are the two deities that Vajrayogini is trampling beneath her feet. So their trampling under her feet is representing that she is subduing them. When you look at Vajrayogini trampling Bhairava and the mother under her feet, the male and female deity under her feet, you don't need to be narrow minded about that, you think that she is subduing them out compassion, and that in fact one day she will lead them to the state of complete enlightenment.

And so, we have this central figure of Heruka father and mother upon that lion throne - we have in front of us Chakrasamvara and that is the central figure and then in the space in front we have the single form of Vajrayogini and then surrounding Vajrayogini are the other yidams of the highest yoga tantra class.

On the right side of this visualization, we have the central figure of Buddha Shakyamuni surrounded by various Sambhogakaya and Nirmanakaya aspects of enlightened beings.

And so, when we turn to the sadhana, we can see that is says:

In the space before me are Guru Chakrasamvara father and mother, encircled by the assemblies of root and lineage gurus, yidams, the Three Sublime Ones, Dharma protectors, and guardians.

So, here we will notice – the three jewels are the jewels of Buddha, Dharma and Sangha.

On the right side this form of Buddha Shakyamuni, surrounded by sambhogakaya and nirmanakaya aspects of enlightened beings, this represents the Buddha Jewel.

On the left side is Manjushri and he is surrounded by holy bodhisattvas, shravakas, hearers, and pratyekabuddhas – solitary realizers. This represents the sangha jewel.

Behind we can visualize a large collection of texts of the root and explanatory Chakrasamvara tantras in the aspect of light with golden illuminated letters.

When we say root tantra, it's important to know that this means: root tantra those tantras that were actually firstly spoken by the Buddha, so we can speak of the root tantra of Guhyasamaja, the root tantra of Vajrabhairava, the root tantra of Chakrasamvara.

The explanatory tantras were given, because understanding that the root tantras will be too difficult for most beings to understand, various great holy beings they took the lines of that root tantra and then they gave a line commentary, an explanation. These are known as the explanatory tantras.

So, sometimes a lama will do this for his own text; so we all are familiar with Madhyamakavatara, the Entering the Middle Way of the Glorious Chankrakirti. So Chandrakirti also composed, thinking that perhaps the original text might be too difficult, an auto-commentary, an explanatory commentary on that original text as well.

So this is a presentation known as the 5 forms. So, you have the Heruka father and mother in the middle, Vajrayogini in the front, Buddha Shakyamuni Manjushri to the right and left, and the text behind, this is known as the 5 figure formulation of the vast visualization of the objects of refuge.

We are going to recite these first words of the yoga of immeasurables, the appears on page 9 of the sadhana, that hopefully everybody has got:

Dün gyi nam khar la ma khor lo Dom pa yab yum la tsa gyü kyî la ma yi Dam chhog sum ka Dö sung mäi tshog kyî kor nä zhug par gyur

So Geshela said it's good to recite this because we left out mention of the Dharma protector. So I will read this verse in English. I think in the future what I will do, so you can get the transmission from Geshela, I won't read the Tibetan, I will just read the English after him.

In the space before me are Guru Chakrasamvara father and mother, encircled by the assemblies of root and lineage gurus, yidams, the Three Sublime Ones, Dharma protectors, and guardians.

So Geshela recited the verse for taking refuge:

*I and all transmigratory beings, equaling the limits of space,
from now until reaching the essence of enlightenment,
Go for refuge to the glorious holy gurus;
We go for refuge to the complete buddha-bhagavans;
We go for refuge to the holy Dharma;
We go for refuge to the arya Sangha.*

Next, generating bodhicitta and the 4 Immeasurables.

*I will attain the state of complete buddhahood
And then free all sentient beings from the ocean of samsara's suffering and place them in the bliss of complete enlightenment. Therefore, I shall practice the stages of the path of Vajrayogini.*

So, I will attain the complete state of Buddhahood – this is the aspiring bodhicitta.

And then free all sentient beings from the ocean of samsara's suffering - the mention of all sentient beings, this hints to the first of the 4 immeasurables, immeasurable equanimity.

Then saying that we will free them from the ocean of samsara's suffering, this is immeasurable compassion.

And place them in the bliss of complete enlightenment – this bliss hints at having first brought forth that compassion, we then have immeasurable joy.

And the remaining of these 4 immeasurables is contained in:

Therefore, I shall practice the stages of the path of Vajrayogini

This is really saying I am actually going to take that action for all sentient beings.

And so, in terms of the kind of bodhicitta that is being hinted at in this verse, it's the you get there first and the you lead beings there. So, this is the king-like bodhicitta and the king-like bodhicitta is the same bodhicitta that is used in the Heruka Chakrasamvara sadhana.

In this way we have covered the following parts of the 10 outlines that Geshela proposed you, visualizing the objects of refuge, going for refuge, mind generation and the 4 immeasurables.

Next we make the request:

To the gurus and the precious Rare Sublime Ones, I prostrate and go for refuge. Please bless my continuum.

At this point we visualize that having gone for refuge, generated bodhicitta etc. those beings of the field of accumulation, the field of merit, they are pleased with us, they feel close to us, they melt into lights and they come to our heads, melt into lights and nectars which then descends to our central channel and heart.

Next we recite:

The objects of refuge before me melt into the aspect of white, red, and dark blue rays of light and absorb into me, whereby I receive the blessings of the holy body, speech, and mind.

At the conclusion of this verse Geshela explained what you need to do is imagine that your body, speech and mind is of one essence, inseparable from the holy body, speech and mind of the deity.

And as they absorb into oneself, one imagines that one also melts into light and one experiences great bliss and then from within that space of great bliss, the sphere of emptiness is established, and from that great bliss then bringing forth that emptiness, meditating on emptiness is very important here, because remember, meditating on emptiness is the prerequisite to be able to really bring forth the instantaneous self-generation.

And so, when one is thinking about great bliss and emptiness, this is not just an ordinary bliss, it's a great bliss that is superior to others.

Also, it's the great bliss not of the ordinary mind, but the great bliss of the fundamental innate clear mind. This is also very important to remember.

And then that mind, experiencing great bliss and meditating upon emptiness from that sphere of emptiness on the basis of the extremely subtle wind and mind instantaneously arise in the form of the Venerable Vajrayogini. That's where we recite the line:

Instantaneously I become Perfect Pure Vajrayogini.

It's a great mistake to just think that OK, I am imputing Vajrayogini on top of this ordinary body somehow; we have to dissolve that ordinary body into emptiness first, that is very important.

The other important thing to understand, is that when we do this meditation we absorb those object of refuge, we experience great bliss, from that space of great bliss we meditate on emptiness and then we then arise great bliss and emptiness. The great bliss and emptiness that we arise before the instantaneous self-generation is the resultant time great bliss and emptiness experienced by a fully enlightened being, it's not like our normal attempts to meditate on bliss and emptiness.

This is very important because, HH the Dalai Lama also clarified that when we talk about the self or the "I" that is the basis of the self-generation, it is not the ordinarily posited "I", it's the "I" that is posited on the basis of the extremely subtle wind and mind. This is another important point to remember. Vajrayogini that is posited on the basis of this merely labelled "I" that is designated of this extremely subtle wind and mind – so one arises as the instantaneous self-generation.

Why do we need the instantaneous self-generation? Because we need to appear as the deity to accomplish the activities as follows, such as blessing the inner offering, and blessing and presenting the preliminary tormas etc.

If we just kind of recite the words of the blessing without going through the meditations, we are not actually going to be able to accomplish the activities of the sadhana, because we can't bless the inner and outer offerings and the tormas etc. in the form of an ordinary being, we need to do that in the form of the deity.

And also, another important point here, in order to really kind of bless the outer offerings and the tormas etc. in the best possible way, this has to be done by first accomplishing the inner offering, because you need to sprinkle the inner offering on the other offering substances.

And if we want to bless the substances of the inner offering properly, not only do we need to be in the form of the deity, but we also need to understand what the various substances of the inner offering are as well as their significance, because if we don't understand that, how can we do that?

Another thing that is really important, if you don't actually meditate on the various phases of the transformation of the inner offering substances, if you just mindlessly recite the words of the inner offering and then sprinkle it or something you don't accomplish the activities of the inner offering. Important to be clear.

It's just like if you are imagining that you want to prepare a very nice meal, you have to shop for the groceries, you have to do the prep of the food and cut it up etc. and then you have to kind of cook it nicely, in the same way, to be able to prepare and present the inner offering you need to go through all of the previous stages of refuge, the mind generation, establish the motivation, arise as the deity. Once one has arisen as the deity one is then endowed with a special power, a special capacity and one can then accomplish the inner offering.

This is one of the most important reasons why we need the self-generation.

And so, then one has arisen in the form of Vajrayogini and on the basis of this one now visualizes and blesses the inner offering.

As Geshela recites the words of the sadhana you are getting the lung of the sadhana. So this is important. So we are continuing now with the words of the inner offerings – this is on page 11.

So, reading, what Geshela has recited:

OM KHANDAROHI HUM HUM PHAT

OM SVABHAVA SHUDDHAH SARVA DHARMAH SVABHAVA SHUDDHO HAM

[Everything becomes emptiness.] From within emptiness, from YAM comes wind, from RAM, fire, and from AHs, three hearthstones of human heads. Upon these, from AH comes a wide and expansive skullcup.

In it, from OM, KHAM, AM, TRAM, and HUM come the five nectars and from LAM, MAM, PAM, TAM, and BAM come the five meats, each marked by its syllable. The wind blows, the fire blazes, and the substances in the skullcup melt.

Above them, from HUM comes a white upside-down khatvanga. It melts and falls into the skullcup, whereby the substances become the color of mercury.

So, what we visualize, we visualize the vessel, which is kind of the cup of the inner offering, facing us. And that cup of the inner offering it is held up by these 3 hearthstones which are in the shape of human heads. And then, within that we are going to visualize the various substances of the inner offering.

And so, before we accomplish this, what happens is we have to imagine chasing away obstructors so as we recite OM KHANDAROHI HUM HUM PHAT we imagine that from our heart as Vajrayogini light rays emanate. On the end of each light ray is a wrathful Khandarohi who chases away obstructors.

So then, generally when we speak of the inner offering, there is no time to go into it extensively today, but we can speak of the inner offering in terms of four activities: we can speak of the inner offering in terms of the first activity of purifying, the cleansing, then generating, then blessing. Those are the 4 outlines.

It's also important to understand that by visualizing transforming the 5 meats and the 5 nectars into that nectar of uncontaminated bliss as it is explained in the inner offering, this creates an imprint within our mind to be able to achieve the state of deathlessness.

And so that attainment of deathlessness is a very important siddhi, it's quite an important thing to achieve.

Another thing: it is said that the practice of the inner offering establishes the cause, the imprint of the cause within us to be able to achieve the 4 activities of the holy beings: pacification, increase, power and wrath.

And on the basis of those 4 activities, we can achieve all of our temporary and ultimate goals.

So OM, KHAM, AM, TRAM and HUM those are seed syllables of the 5 dhyani Buddhas.

Just to recap what those are, they are Vairochana, Amitabha, Ratnasambhava, Amoghasiddhi and Akshobhya. And so, these names of the Lords of the 5 Buddha families these are very important because they are not just any deities, it is said that upon our enlightenment our 5 aggregates or heaps of form, feeling, discrimination, compositional factors and consciousness will actually transform into these 5 dhyani Buddhas, the 5 lords of the Buddha families.

And this also relates to our subtle wind and mind; the subtle wind is said to possess 5 radiances. And it is those 5 radiances that ripen into the 5 wisdoms that become these 5 dhyani Buddhas.

And so connected with that are 5 types of mind: the 5 omnipresent mental factors; so these 5 omnipresent mental factors together with these 5 aggregates they are kind of gradually through this process purified till enlightenment and in this way it is a little bit scientific if you think about it.

So, we will have to pause here, because we are out of time, for today, but just our last point to remember these seed syllables, OM, KHAM, AM, TRAM and HUM these are the 5 dhyani Buddhas, LAM, MAM, PAM, TAM and BAM these are the seed syllables of the 5 consorts. And so, also when we imagine placing the 5 meats and the 5 nectars – we place them starting from the left and that's related to this practice being a mother tantra. Those are the 5 nectars related to mother tantra, they are presented from the left. The 5 meats, as they are related to father tantra, they are visualized starting from the right.

So, then these are the sort of brief points that Geshela wanted to present today and then we will continue in a relaxed way in our future sessions. Having completed then, let us dedicate the merits nicely.

