

Heruka Chakrasamvara Teachings with Geshe Sonam Ngodrup

Sixth Chakrasamvara teaching – 29.04.2023 – Geshe Sonam Ngodrup **transl. Ven. Khedrup**

Greetings to all dharma friends, with a joyful mind we are going to proceed on our topic today. Geshela said, from his side, he does not know this topic very well but he feels he can share something with you, so with a joyful feeling of being very fortunate we will proceed together. We are hoping that through the commentary that Geshela shares that at least we can improve a little bit the clarity of your understanding of the practice and through that planting that seed for understanding that ripen later and can be planted in the continuum.

In terms of being very fortunate, not only we have this precious human rebirth, we have also met the Buddha- Dharma and not only have we met the Buddha-Dharma, we have also been able to meet the Dharma that is the union of both sutra and tantra.

And so, understanding that reasonings then we are reminded of our good fortune and also reminded of the fact that if we want to achieve our own welfare in a complete way, and if we want to be able to work towards the welfare of others in a complete way, we need to practice a path which is a union of both sutra and tantra. If we just put aside tantra and do not practice it we will not be able to reach that goal.

Also, ultimately too, we understand, not only do we need both sutra and tantra, but we need a practice from the anuttara or highest yoga class of tantra as well to be able to get to that final goal.

And in terms of our topic today, out of the 2 classes of anuttara yoga tantra, the mother and the father class, this is the king of the mother classes of tantra, the Glorious Chakrasamvara.

Another thing to understand here is that it is because the teachings on Chakrasamvara are mostly emphasising clear light, that it is classified as a mother tantra, but we should also understand that within the Chakrasamvara are also methods for bringing forth the illusory body, so for this reason Heruka Chakrasamvara is the complete path to full enlightenment actually. When we hear the name Chakrasamvara, also this can bring joy to our mind, because the meaning of Chakrasamvara is the union of great bliss wisdom, the deity that is the embodiment of that union of great bliss wisdom.

So, the Tibetan word for Heruka or Chakrasamvara is dem chok, de indicates bliss, chok indicates supreme: so this deity is the embodiment of that supreme great bliss unified with wisdom.

Heruka, the Sanskrit word of this deity, and we come to a more elaborate explanation of this when we cover the 3 purifications, but He and ru refer to the 2 types of selflessness, the selflessness of persons and the selflessness of phenomena.

Ka refers to that supreme spontaneous great bliss that is focussing on those 2 selflessnesses as a means of arising wisdom, so this deity is an embodiment of that.

And don't worry because the full explanation of the 3 purifications practice, which is what most of you are doing, this will be coming in our next instalment of this course.

So, if we were to take a moment as a preliminary practice to do a short mediation. So, last time we did a brief meditation on the deity Heruka inseparable from one's kind lama dissolving in a downward fashion. So this is called a downward visualisation. Today we are going to try an upward visualisation.

And so, this visualisation can be done in a section of the sadhana, where we are making the requests to the root and lineage gurus and in terms of the visualisation we talk about visualising one's root guru, but we are not visualising the root guru in his/her ordinary aspect, we are visualising the root guru in the aspect of Heruka understanding that he is inseparable from our teacher.

The reason this is called the downward visualisation, because Heruka Chakrasamvara in essence with our root lama is at the top and then underneath we have all of the various lamas of the lineage, Tilopa, Naropa, Saraha, Gantapha, Luipa etc.

We are not going to present an exhaustive list of all of these lamas of the lineage, because it is going to be unfamiliar and too much, but this is to give you a general idea.

The next part of the visualisation, is we imagine all of these lineage figures from the bottom dissolving into the ones above, until only Heruka Chakrasamvara, one face, two hands, embracing Vajravarahi is left, they dissolve into that and then the object of focus becomes that simple form of Heruka Chakrasamvara, understanding it is inseparable from our root spiritual teacher.

And then, because of our praises and requests, we imagine that Heruka, the aspect of the lama is pleased with us, and then as much as possible, we imagine that he dissolves into blue light, also with red and white light if we want, and then he dissolves into our body.

Why do we mention these various colors when dissolving into us? Well, obviously when the deity dissolves into us in the form of that blue color lights and nectar that is because that is the color of the deity. When we imagine the red colored lights and nectars, as part of the visualisation, we imagine that this emphasises the great compassion that the deity has for us.

Then when the deity dissolves into us, and dissolves into our heart mixing with our subtle wind and mind and they become inseparable, this meditation is what is actually known as guru yoga. So, point of emphasis here. And it is actually said that at that point of meditating upon the actual guru yoga, there are examples of practitioners who have been able to realise emptiness in that context actually.

Let's just begin to put our body and mind in a relaxed state.

We imagine that any discursive, disturbing thoughts, stress that we have had that these just dissolve like clouds into the sky

Think my body and mind are relaxed and at ease

In the space in front of me are a beautiful lotus and moon seat

and upon that are the deity Heruka Vajravarahi, simple form, one face, two hands, two legs etc.

And it is the smoky deep blue color

And that deep blue is unchanging symbolizing that the deity is continuously focussed on meditating on emptiness, constantly in meditative equipoise

Because of being in that meditative equipoise upon emptiness this deity is very powerful in being able to bestow blessings that we can arise spontaneous great bliss

So, imagine this deity embracing the mother, red Vajravarahi and then we imagine below the lamas of the lineage, Tilopa, Naropa, Saraha, Krishnacharya, Luipada and Gantapha etc.

And going through the generations of the lineage to Lama Tsong Khapa and beyond

And from our mind of respect and faith we imagine that the lamas are pleased and then they dissolve one by one starting with the lamas of the lineage closest in time to us and dissolving upward, and upward and upward

From dissolving into father and mother Heruka we imagine that the power of the blessings of Heruka Vajravarahi are exponentially stronger

Then we imagine from bringing forth this mind of great faith making requests, lama Heruka is pleased and comes to the point of the crown of our head

And we also imagine that our face and the face of the deity lama Heruka are in the same direction

From our faith, from our side and from the deity's great compassion for us then he dissolves into the form of blue light and comes to our central channel

We imagine that he descends through our central channel, to the extremely subtle wind and mind at our heart, he becomes mixed inseparably mixed with our subtle wind and mind and in this way our mind and the mind of Heruka as well as all of the yidams, deities, dakinis etc. are inseparable

From bringing forth that joy and the associated feeling of bliss, we then direct our attention to emptiness saying "where is this "I" or the self that seems so solid? Is there anything pinpointable?"

And think that this mind contemplating emptiness is able to realize this and bring forth exalted wisdom

Then think "if I remain dissolved and focused with great bliss on emptiness I remain in that equipoise I will be able to achieve my own welfare, but not the welfare of others, therefore I must give rise to the form bodies to achieve the welfare of others. And then after this we imagine that we are manifested as kind of a pillar of blue light with a rough shape of the deity.

So that represents the Sambhogakaya, the enjoyment body. But then we think again, the Sambhogakaya can only interact with certain sentient beings, but we want to be able to benefit all sentient beings, to benefit all sentient beings I must arise in the form of Nirmanakaya, the emanation body. Then imagine yourself arising as Heruka, one face, two hands, embracing the mother.

And when we arise as the deity, this isn't in some sort of esoteric way, but we think: it is this mind meditating single-pointedly on emptiness THAT is what arises as the form of the deity.

And having brought forth this form which is in the nature of great bliss wisdom we think "I will work to achieve the welfare of others, the welfare of beings.

And in that way, think "from my heart I will make requests to the lamas, yidams etc. to be able to do that"

So, this is a little bit of a vaster way of doing that preliminary meditation, and in terms of these instructions, Geshela first heard them during a commentary of HH the XIV Dalai Lama on the six session guru yoga.

And in terms of the text source of the instructions for this visualisation from the lamas, the load, the deities above, you will find this in the commentaries of the Gantapha body mandala system of Chakrasamvara.

And of course we will come to a discussion of those a little bit more later.

Geshela said, too much talking now time for the prayers, we will begin the prayers at the beginning of the teachings.

So, just before, one more thing before we start, Kyabje Trijang Rinpoche, he gave also the instructions that when we are listening to the teachings, we should imagine the teacher, ourselves as the students and all the surrounding sentient beings in the form Heruka Chakrasamvara; and we should imagine the place in which we are sitting as the celestial palace in the Buddha field of Heruka.

Actually, we have done that, because we have all taken the time to dissolve those ordinary appearances and arise in the form of the deity.

Prayers

So just bring forth this thought that until I am able to actualize this state of Heruka Chakrasamvara for the benefit of all sentient beings I will continuously go for refuge to Lord and Lady Heruka. Think, I don't want to take too long, because sentient beings are waiting, may I quickly, very quickly be able to achieve the resultant state of Heruka to work for the welfare of beings.

Geshela is just drawing your attention to the second line of the verse of the praise, where it says: "Glorious Heruka, lord of all things stable and moving".

Things stable is referring to things like mountains, lakes, forest etc.

And the things moving are sentient beings, the various types of sentient beings that are flitting to and fro within samsara.

So, how is glorious Heruka the lord of all things stable? He has the power to transform all things stable into the physical aspect of the celestial palace of the mandala.

How is he the lord of all things moving? Heruka has the power to help all beings achieve the resultant state of Chakrasamvara.

Because he can lead all sentient beings to that state, because he can establish the celestial palace and the pure land, he is the lord of both things stable and moving.

So, what do we need to do in order to actualize the state of Heruka Chakrasamvara? This is in common with all systems, all deities of anuttara yoga, highest yoga tantra, we need to practice the generation stage and the completion stage.

In terms of the text that we are looking at, it's known as a sadhana, a drupta [?] in Tibetan, but Tibetans also call it a dagkye[?] a self-generation, so this shows us that the text is outlining the generation stage of the practice.

Ideally, actually, what we are doing, we have internalized the instructions and we know how to meditate on the generation stage, so we just sit on our cushion and start meditating. But realizing that most sentient beings might not be capable of that, the sadhana outlines the various points of practice and we go through those in the session.

The other thing that is worth saying here is that many aspects of the generation stage practices of all of the deities of highest yoga tantra are very similar, so even if Heruka might not be your main practice, by learning these points in the commentary you will be greatly benefitted.

Then when we come to the stages of practice of the self-generation, the outlines are the activities at the beginning of the session, the activities of the actual session, and the activities at the conclusion of the session. If that's a bit too wordy, you can just think, preliminaries, actual, conclusion.

When we speak about the activities at the beginning of the session, we speak of things such as the common and uncommon refuge practice.

Why do we always go through the outlines? Because you want to hear these outlines again and again until the outlines are very firm in your mind. That's the idea of mentioning these in each class.

And so, then in terms of the 2 types of preliminaries practice, the common or general preliminaries, which is where we are now, these are 7 points in number:

So, the common general preliminaries we will just enumerate them again:

1. the supplication to the lineage lamas
2. the instantaneous arising or instantaneous self-generation
3. the blessing of the vajra and bell
4. the blessing of the inner offering
5. the way of offering the preliminary offering tormas
6. the blessing of the offering to the self-generation
7. the meditation/recitation on Vajrasattva

If you are able to remember these outlines, you already have a brief self-generation sadhana, at least the first part in your mind.

Today's topic is the actually last of these common, general preliminaries, number 7 the meditation, recitation method of Vajrasattva.

Another thing we want to pay attention to, through the various parts of the practice are the 3 vajras: the vajra of body, the vajra of speech and the vajra of mind. The vajra of body is when we are generating also in the instantaneous self-generation as the deity. So, the instantaneous self-generation that is the vajra of the body.

And when we are blessing the vajra, this represents the vajra mind, when we are blessing the bell this represents vajra speech. So, we see that right in the beginning part of the preliminaries we have the blessing of vajra body, vajra speech and vajra mind.

And this also is the practice of blessing this vajra and bell of never being separated from the vajra and bell which is also one of the tantric samayas or commitments.

It is said that if we have these 3 commitments of vajra body, vajra speech and vajra mind in place, then our practice of the entire deity system will be successful.

Why do we want to arise as the vajra body? Because we know that in our ordinary form, as an ordinary being, the offerings that we can make are very limited, therefore, when we arise in the deity we can engage in a very vast accumulation and purification.

In the next part of the sadhana, after the blessing of the vajra, bell etc. we come to the offering of the tormas to the directional protectors.

In terms of the blessing of the inner offering and the blessing of the preliminary tormas, we also need to do this in the form of the deity, and if we don't bless those things, we can't offer them. And this is another reason why the body vajra, why the deity generation is very important.

Of course, if we make outer offerings in our ordinary form, we will accumulate a bit of merit, and that is something very useful to do, but in particular it's limited. And with the inner offering, we know of course that if we don't bless the inner offering it's not suitable to be offered. So the arising as the deity is very important.

So, the practice of the inner offering is not just taking the lid off the skull cup and sprinkling a few things in the air that will not have any power at all, it could even be a fault. We need to meditate on blessing and transforming the inner offering.

Also, when we are blessing the inner offering we don't just want to recite the words mindlessly, in a robotic way, but we want to have this idea that we are really blessing the inner offering in the form of the deity.

If we are able to engage in the practice of blessing the inner offering correctly it will be transformed into the 3 types of amrita, the 3 types of nectar.

These are the amrita or nectar of freedom from disease, the amrita or nectar of deathlessness and the amrita or nectar of great bliss wisdom. So, these are all things that we need.

Another thing: when we are in a setting such as this one in which we are listening to a teaching about the self-generation we can be having a lot of doubts, we can be thinking about various things and wondering but when we are actually engaged in the practice of the sadhana at home, we want to proceed with confidence. So, whatever little or much we might know, we try to proceed with confidence through the ritual.

Also, another thing: if you have a particular question that arises in the context of these teachings, you can absolutely contact Geshela. You can contact my email (Khedrup@lamayesheling.org) and I am pretty good at getting back at people within a week or so with Geshela's feedback.

For those of you who are newly joining us in order to kind come up to speed, Geshela said, all you really need to do is familiarize yourself with the seven points of the common general preliminaries. If you do that/ you should be able to follow as we move along the teachings.

Now we will begin our discussion of the meditation recitation of Vajrasattva.

We are on page 19 of the 62 deities Chakrasamvara sadhana.

Vajrasattva Meditation for Purification

Safe Direction (Refuge) and Reaffirming a Bodhicitta Aim

I take safe direction [that is Berzin's way of saying refuge] forever from the Buddhas, the Dharma, and the Sangha.

I take safe direction forever from those having all three vehicles of mind,

From the yogis of hidden mantra and from the dakinis,

From the heroic viras, heroic lady virinis, and from empowering goddesses,

As well as bodhisattvas of a great nature,

And especially from my tantric masters.

So, in order to be able to engage in the practice of purification of Vajrasattva, we need to first begin with refuge and bodhicitta. So, that is what we find here.

In terms of the points on **refuge**, we are pressed for time, so we won't go into a lot of detail today, but Geshela wants to speak a little bit of how we can visualize these objects of refuge in the context of the sadhana.

When we begin, I take safe direction from the Buddhas, the Dharma and the Sangha, we can visualise that the Buddha Jewel is represented by Heruka embracing Vajrayogini and the mandala deities in the Buddha field, in other words in the actual pure land of Heruka. So that's the Buddha Jewel.

The Sangha Jewel is represented by the deities in the 24 holy places of Heruka that abide within our world.

The Dharma Jewel is represented by the true paths and the true cessations that these deities have achieved in their minds. True paths and true cessations.

So there is actually further ways of explaining this which we might come to later if we have time.

Three vehicles of mind refers to vehicles of shravakas, hearers and pratyeka buddhas, solitary realizers and Buddhas.

And we understand that all of those beings on the path before the path of no more learning, so the 4 paths and also all of those who have achieved the path of no more learning and beyond.

Yogis of hidden mantra and dakinis: in the context of this practice, we can think those are the deities of the 24 holy places that are abiding in our ordinary world.

How do we come to the 62 deities of Heruka? We talk about the Luipa 62 deities of Heruka. If we think about those 24 holy places and we think that there is a male deity and a female deity for each of those 24 places that brings us to 48. Those 24 as the father and mother, it's 48 when you have the male and female deity separated out – those 24 and father and mother together, we can imagine 8 deities of holy body, 8 deities of holy speech wheel and 8 of the holy mind wheel. So the 8 of the wheel of the holy body, the 8 of the wheel of holy speech and the 8 of the wheel of the holy mind.

When those 24 are divided into the male and female deities – the father and mother - this brings us to a total of 48. And on top of these 48 deities there are a further 8 deities. And these deities we can see them as guardians and they are the deities we might rely upon when we establish the boundaries of a retreat.

And then on top of that we have the 4 heart dakinis, the 4 heart dakinis of the 4 directions.

And then we have the actual main deity father mother Heruka Chakrasamvara for a total of 2 so that brings us up to 62.

Why do we have these deities of the 24 holy places, what is their function?

It was because, when this tantra was taught, in these 24 places there were kind of unseen beings like powerful kind of beings in these 24 places that were causing all kinds of problems to the inhabitants of this earth. And the enlightened Buddha manifested as deities to subdue all of these, so that's why we have these deities of the 24 places.

We won't go through the full history, but that just gives you a little bit of an idea how these deities manifest.

And then we also have all of the bodhisattvas who are inhabiting this world, we are seeking their help and going for refuge, so that's the bodhisattvas of great nature.

And especially from my tantric master. So, when say tantric masters we can think mainly of our root guru but also all of those direct gurus for whom we have received tantric initiations and teachings as well as the gurus of the lineage of all of those teachers.

So, if we are visualising this, in going for refuge, where do we visualize the tantric masters? We actually visualize them in the charnel ground, which are like the cremation grounds that are surrounding the mandala and the deities and in the sort of charnel ground nearest us there is a throne held up by 8 snow lions, upon which sits our kind root guru and he is surrounded by or she is surrounded by various masters.

Why do we have the charnel ground surrounding the abode of the deity? Mainly to bring forth the mind of definite emergence or renunciation.

So, understanding all of these points the visualisation we then go for refuge.

*After transforming myself into a Heruka
For the sake of benefiting all limited beings,
I shall secure every limited being
In a Heruka topmost state*

This is bodhicitta.

In terms of the 3 different types of bodhicitta, this is expressing the king-like bodhicitta, we get to enlightenment first and lead all beings there.

Now we come to the actual meditation and recitation of Vajrasattva.

In terms of the visualisation of Vajrasattva, there are 3 modes, 3 methods to visualize.

The first of these is you maintain the awareness of yourself as the yidam, and this goes for any sadhana, whether it is Heruka, whether it is Yamantaka, Vajrayogini etc. – you visualize yourself as the deity and that Vajrasattva is on your crown. That is the first way to visualize this.

This is really for high level practitioners. The commentaries indicate that it might not be the most comfortable method for more ordinary practitioners.

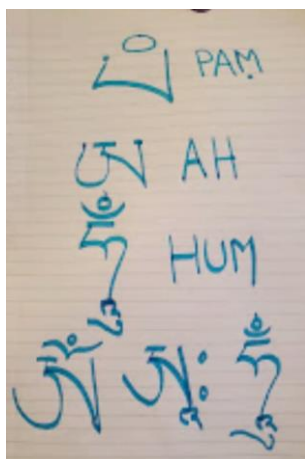
Why is that? Because there is like a dichotomy. If we visualize that way because we are in the form of Heruka, who is a fully enlightened Buddha, but then why do we engage in Vajrasattva practice to purify our negativities, our sins and our obscurations? Heruka doesn't have any of those things, so what's the point of the practice? Because of that dichotomy this first method might be difficult.

When you come to higher levels of practice there actually are reasons for doing it that way, but we won't discuss them right now.

The second way, is to arise yourself as Vajrasattva, you do a self-generation as Vajrasattva. And on that basis you focus on purifying beings, this is the second mode of practice.

And also, in line with the reasons before, maybe for beginners this might not be the most comfortable approach.

The third one, which is the one advised for beginners, is you have an awareness that you yourself are in your ordinary form and then Vajrasattva is at the level of the crown or in the space above you and you do the practice based on that visualisation.



We are going to proceed with that. So, we imagine that from the crown of our head a PAM appears. This then the PAM transforms into a lotus.

I will ask Dave to bring up an image of these letters because I thought they might be unfamiliar for people. First excuse my calligraphy which is completely awful, and secondly excuse the fact that I used a highlighter to draw the letters, I was pressed for time, but it's just to give you an idea of the shape of these letters so it's more meaningful.

So, why do we visualize the syllable PAM? The first part of the syllable PA that letter is the same letter that is at the beginning of PEMA or lotus. That's why from the PA arises the lotus, the PEMA.

And also, when the PAM is transforming into this lotus, we think that as this is arising and merely labelled as a lotus so are all ephemeral phenomena merely named and merely labelled.

So, the little circle that you see above the PAM you can visualize it almost in the aspect of a ball or sphere and you imagine that this represents the great bliss wisdom realizing emptiness. This is the method aspect of great bliss wisdom.

Then it transforms into a lotus. Upon that lotus we visualize the syllable AH. Then that AH transforms into a moon seat.

So, that AH transforming into a moon seat and this represents the wisdom realizing emptiness itself. AH represents lack of inherent existence. And in fact, it is said within that collection of the prajnaparamita or perfection of wisdom sutras, there is one sutra that is just the letter AH that expresses all. We can bring that to mind as well.

And then that AH transforms into a moon seat and that moon seat is a kind of brilliantly clear color of white.

Upon that moon seat arises a HUM which is also a very important symbolic letter.

When we see this letter HUM we don't just visualize this letter HUM but we imagine that it is the seat of the uncontaminated great bliss wisdom of all the Buddhas.

Geshela feels like it is very important to recollect that when we visualize or when we recite the letter HUM, that makes it more meaningful.

If you really have a feeling for what this letter HUM as the seed syllable represents, then emanating the lights and nectars, making offerings to all of the Buddhas, engaging in the visualization to benefit all sentient beings this will all become more meaningful.

And then, from that HUM that dissolves into light and arises as a white 5 spoked vajra. Its hub has a HUM, so it's marked with a HUM as a symbol.

When we give more commentary on this, which we don't have the time to do right now, aspects of this commentary indicate how the body, speech and mind of a fully enlightened being like a Buddha are completely inseparable, this is also very interesting to think about.

And the HUM, when it arises it also represents the wisdom, compassion and power of all the Buddhas.

The HUM that is marking the vajra light rays emanates. The light rays pulse outwards and enlighten sentient beings.

Light-rays emanate, perform both enlightening functions

So, enlightening functions here – I am sorry – this does not refer to sentient beings, that refers to the light pervading all of the pure realms of the Buddhas.

So we imagine that this light pulses outward and completely pervades all the pure realms of the Buddhas.

As it pulses out and pervades all of these Buddha fields we can imagine that these lights transform into offerings that are presented to all enlightened beings in those Buddha fields.

If that is too esoteric, you can imagine that the light transforms into countless Vajrasattvas that make the offerings to all of the Buddhas in those realms.

This light is not just any kind of light, but it's on the HUM symbol marking the vajra which represents the wisdom, compassion and power of all the Buddhas, the light is in that nature.

Then the light collects back inwards, we can do a second visualisation: it pulses out again, but this time it is not pervading the Buddha fields but it is pervading all of the abodes of samsara and touching all of the 6 types of beings within samsara.

We can imagine that just in a place that is experiencing heat and drought when the rain falls, it gives a feeling of relaxation and ease, when these lights pervade the realms of all these sentient beings it completely clears away their problems and it relieves all of their suffering.

So, with this visualisation we have accomplished what are known as the 2 purposes, the first of which is to make offerings etc. to all of the enlightened ones, and the second which is work towards removing the suffering of all beings.

When we are visualising this light: another thing: just to make the visualisation clear, think about when you light a stick of incense and smoke from that incense slowly drifts towards you.

Do you visualise the light pervading in a gradual way like that smoke sort of wafting towards you. No, that is how you are supposed to visualize it. Because that's like a slow bringing forth the lights towards you. That's not what we want to visualize here.

It's more like a completely immediate pervading of that lights, just like when the sun crests about the peak of a mountain, those rays completely pervade the snowy field on the mountain. It's that kind of pervading. That's how we visualize those lights.

Then those lights gather back, and from performing those 2 purposes and gathering back into the HUM marking the vajra, it is greatly empowered.

We have accumulated great merits from making offerings to the Buddhas and benefitting sentient beings.

Then we are arising as white Vajrasattvas. Generally, there are different forms of Vajrasattva, some with yellow body, some with red body some with white body.

Why are we visualising the white aspect here? White is the color of purification, which represents clearing away our obscurations, both the afflictive obscurations and the knowledge obscurations.

Those light rays collect back in – back to the sadhana

*And collect back in, transforming into
A Vajrasattva with a white-colored body,
One face and two arms, holding vajra and bell,*

*Sitting in the vajra cross-legged posture
And embracing his motherly partner, Vajra-gauri,
White, with one face and two arms,
Holding a cleaver and skullcup.*

Both are adorned with silken scarves and various jeweled ornaments

So, at this point we have visualised, if we are doing the 3rd of the possible visualisations, we visualise Vajrasattva father and mother on our crown.

*And both have an OM at the crown of their heads,
An AH at their throats and a HUM at their hearts.*

I have put those in the drawing and you'll notice that when we mention the AH at the second line of the generation of Vajrasattva – Berzin just put a capital letter A – and when we have the AH here, it is A

H together. And there's a reason Berzin did this: the first A is visualized as the second one down in the vertical presentation. The AH that we are visualizing here, with the OM, AH, and HUM together marking the deity is the AH with the achung? and with the closing dots on the end of it. So, what you are visualizing here is different, that's why Berzin renders it as A and AH.

When you are visualizing this OM AH HUM on the deities, Geshela say you are not just visualizing them covering the outside, like some kind of mark, you imagine that there is the central channel and you imagine that there are the channel knots at the crown, throat and hart. In other words, the nadis, where these channels are joining. Inside those is where you are visualising the OM, the AH and the HUM.

And visualizing the OM AH and HUM not only at these crown, throat and heart wheels of the father but also of the mother is said to be is an uncommon feature of Vajrasattva as it appears in the Chakrasamvara practice

Merging of the Deep Awareness Beings

*From the HUM at their hearts, light-rays emanate,
Bringing forth beings of deep awareness,
Who are like themselves.*

Then we imagine that those wisdom beings are invited and then they dissolve into the commitments being who are similar appearance and then we recite:

JAH HUM BAM HOH

So, when we recite JAH we imagine they're at the crown, when we recite HUM we imagine that they come down the central channel. BAM the dissolve and HOH they become inseparable. This is inviting, entering, abiding and becoming of one nature.

This is happening not with oneself, this is happening with the Vajrasattva that you have up here, if you are doing that kind of visualisation, just to be clear. Just so that you don't get confused.

Of course, Vajrasattva father and mother, supreme powerful deities, but when they have absorbed all of these additional enlightened beings they are even more powerful.

So, once again, we are now at the point of receiving empowerment on page 20

Receiving Empowerment

*Once again, from the HUM at their hearts,
Light-rays emanate and bring forth empowering deities.*

Light-rays emanate and what these do, they invite the deities who are going to bestow the empowerment.

So, when we recite this line

"All Thusly Gone (Buddhas), please confer empowerment on them."

we are making this request to confer the empowerment and the Vajrasattva at our crown level is also making that request. However when the empowerment is actually bestowed, it is being bestowed on that Vajrasattva, it's not being bestowed on ourselves, just to be clear.

But both of us make the request: ourselves and the Vajrasattva sitting here.

Having thus been requested, they hold up vases

Filled with nectars of deep awareness

And confer the empowerment, saying,

“OM SARVA TATHAGATA ABHISHEKATA SAMAYA SHRIYE HUM.”

Their bodies fill with nectars of deep awareness.

Whose body is filled with nectars? Vajrasattva father and mother that are here.

And then, when it fills up, it's almost like it's gradually filling up, filling up, filling up, until it comes right to the top of the crown. And at that point the water spills over and it transforms into the physical aspect of the deity Akshobya. Akshobya, lord of one of the Buddha families, so in this way not only is Vajrasattva empowered by all of these deities that were invited by also empowered by one of the Lords of the Buddha's families and in this way Vajrasattva is a powerful basis for purification.

Then, our next job is to visualize a HUM at the heart of Vajrasattva surrounded by the 100 syllable mantra OM Vajrasattva samaya etc.

Now we come to the visualization of the purification with the 100 syllable mantra. And there are 2 ways: the recitation with the object of focus for one's own welfare, and the recitation with the object of focus for the welfare of others.

In addition to that there are various forms of visualisation that we can employ for Vajrasattva:

- the visualization called dispelling from above,
- the visualization called dispelling from below
- and the visualization dispelling from a heap

If we are doing the visualization mainly on the welfare of others, we imagine lights and nectars departing from the heart of Vajrasattva and then these light rays go out and touch all 6 types of sentient beings in the form of humans and on the basis of that, on the crown of each sentient beings appears Vajrasattva father and mother and then we visualize the lights and nectars of the purification, purifying in that way.

There is not a lot of time, we are going to try go to through dispelling from above, below and in a heap, as it relates to for your own benefit.

So we imagine Vajrasattva father and mother at our crown. From the point of union where father and mother are meeting, a stream of white nectar, a luminous white nectar descends. This enters our body and then just like a river or water flowing through a pipe, the dispelling from above visualization, these lights and nectars enter and they flush – like a strong stream of water through a pipe – through our body and all of our negativities, the 2 types of obscurations etc. they depart from our lower orifices and our feet.

So we can imagine this like really powerful, almost like a dam bursting and you can imagine that maybe that there is a place there that has a lot of garbage or a lot of unwanted things – from the force of that water everything is just completely cleared away. That's the dispelling from above visualization.

The next one is the dispelling from below visualization, explaining to achieve our own purification. From the point of union of father and mother white luminous nectar descends, and as it descends into our body, is more like rain drops, slowly slowly it fills up our body and slowly, slowly the liquid rises to the crown of our head taking with it any impurities, obscurations etc. and then just like filling water into a bottle, the impurities come to the crown of our head and are completely cleared away. That is dispelling from below.

We imagine that negative karma, the 2 obscurations, and also the result of that negative karma, which is our own suffering, our own unhappiness, this is completely cleared away out of the top of our head.

And then the next one, dispelling in a heap, we imagine that from the point of union of the father and mother a powerful white nectar descends and it just kind of spreads out eliminating all darkness and impurities completely spreading out and this is the dispelling in a heap.

And the metaphor for this one it's like if you have a pile of dust in your living room, and somehow a strong wind blows through that room, that dust is just cleared away in an instant, like that. So that the dispelling in a heap visualization.

And at that point there is no impurity that can be pointed to at all, it has been dissolved like a rainbow into the sky.

If you want to connect this practice of Vajrasattva with creating causes to actualize the completion stage, when you do this visualization you can imagine, that in fact those impurities have been dissolved into the expanse of emptiness.

Because they lack inherent existence on the basis of the subtle wind and mind they are accumulated and manifest, but also because of the fact that they lack inherent existence they can be dissolved back into subtle body and mind and into emptiness.

We will come to more explanation of this, because this particular explanation of Vajrasattva is related more the completion stage.

The example about this is like if you have a very dark room and you turn on a light, everything is illuminated, there is no darkness there at all. And you cannot point and say, this is where the darkness started dissolving. It's just instantaneous.

Like that by dissolving the impurities into the sphere of emptiness, there is nothing impure that can be pointed at at all.

One of the other ways to visualize, to purify and benefit sentient beings, we can imagine we in our ordinary form have a white moon disc at our heart and upon that white moon disk are all the assembled sentient beings.

If that's uncomfortable, we can visualize a white moon disk in the space in front of us upon which sit all 6 types of sentient beings in human form.

So why do we visualize all in human form? There's a couple of important reasons.

One of the reasons is because we are imagining these sentient beings through dharma and we know that for example if animals or other types of beings hear the Dharma they are not able to understand it. So to visualize it really bringing benefit, we visualize in human form. That's one reason.

Geshela said that we are coming to the end of our time, so we have to leave it here, but before he let's you get on with your day he just wants to share one more thing.

And so, of course at this point we are focusing on the mantra recitation and we are doing however much we can with regards to that.

And one of the important things related to the recitation of course is the 4 opponent powers of purification.

Usually when we speak of the 4 opponent powers: the power of the support, or the power of the basis we speak of this being the practice of refuge and generating bodhicitta.

In the case of practicing the sadhana this is not the case. And the case of practicing the sadhana the power of the basis or support is the generation of Vajrasattva. And that's because it's through that generation of the deity Vajrasattva that all of the accumulation and purification is going to take place.

Then, when we come to the point of the actual purification on the basis of the generation is the purification of the 2 obscurations so that is the power of the antidote.

Now, the 3rd one, the power of complete eradication, sometimes translated as regret, this happens just below the mantra Vajrasattva on page 21

*Out of unawareness or being stupefied,
I've transgressed my close bonds
Or let them weaken.*

At that point you bring forth the power of regret.

So we have to think out of awareness through being stupefied I made mistakes, I have broken my commitments and we want to have a feeling of regret about that.

*I take safe direction from you, Guru-Guardian;
I take safe direction from you, foremost Holder of the Vajra.*

As we are going for refuge here will be also be imagining we are promising not to make the faults again, that is the 4th opponent power, turning one's back on the fault.

This is a special presentation of the 4 opponent powers according to the system of Heruka Chakrasamvara.

So, Akhuchin Sherab-gyatso mentions this in his commentary and of course with other self-generation practices we can also incorporate this as well.

That concludes our brief class for today.

So Geshela said, in terms of the deity that we might be visualizing here, in terms of our self-generation as the class is over we imagine that this is dissolving into emptiness and then we can return into our ordinary form if we want.

So, we will do our regular prayers for dedication and also we will do His Holiness's Long life and Rinpoche's quick return.

