

Vajrayogini Teachings Geshe Sonam Ngodrup

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Fourth Teaching – 16.12.2023

First of all Tashi Delek, greeting to all Dharma friends. Geshela hopes that you are well and he hopes that you are all happy. And especially he says we should have this awareness that we are gathered together for a great activity, that we are gather together today for a great purpose.

And that purpose that is so precious is to have this opportunity to practice, to be able to practice a system that combined both the aspect of sutra and the aspects of tantra.

So for our study and practice to go well it's important to proceed without doubt, with confidence and in order to be able to have that confidence it's important to know all of the stages, of all the steps of practice.

And so if we can first with these kind of practices have an unmistakable knowledge of how the self-generation sadhana, the practice proceed and the various stages, this is a very good beginning to having that confidence.

And so we will recite the preliminary prayers with the kind of aspiration may I receive blessings in order that things may come about just as we wished. So we begin with the praise to the Buddha.

Prayers

So of course one of the most important things which ensures the continuity of the session is to make sure that the activities at the beginning and the activities at the end are in order.

So then of course we talk about in the beginning and the end the activities, and at the beginning the motivation is particularly important and so when we are speaking about sutra and tantra, here we are focusing on tantra, specifically anuttarya yoga or highest yoga tantra so really the motivation we bring forth is in this life, in one short human life span, may I be able to actualize Buddhahood.

So those of you familiar with the Lama Chöpa, the Guru Puja, you will be familiar with the phrase "quickly, quickly". So quickly quickly really means in one short lifespan of human being.

Also, though, in order to be able to actualize that wish for enlightenment very quickly we also need the uncommon Mahayana refuge, which ins this case is brought forth on the basis of also refuge in the lamas, the yiddams, the other holy beings.

And also an awareness that really to actualize that final stage of Buddhahood is not possible with sutra alone, we also need to practice tantra, that's also very important.

And so really if we ask about what actually actualizes or achieves enlightenment, it's this mind and specifically also important in this picture is the [Tibetan?] the five omnipresent mental factors.

And so, also Geshela said, important to distinguish between these 5 omnipresent factors and these 5 aggregates, because we need to talk about the 5 aggregates reaching Buddhahood differently, because

of course nominally these 5 aggregates are contaminated, they are in the nature of samsara.

And so then related to these 5 omnipresent factors we also talk about the 5 subtle winds that are related to the mind. And the 5 subtle winds that are related to the mind are said to possess radiances of 5 colors. And so actually it's through practice and blessings that those 5 colored radiances of those subtle winds transform into the lords of the 5 families, in other words the 5 Dhyani Buddhas.

So, of course, not an easy task to actualize this, but really important to know that all of the bases of transformation are things that we possess in side of us. But just possessing them is not enough, we need to be able to effectively bring forth a method which will allow us to completely transform them. So Geshela is giving folks some homework: I think he said that if you can research and get within your mind the 5 aggregates or skandas, the 5 omnipresent factors, the 5 wisdoms and the 5 Dhyani Buddhas, that would be very, very useful for your practice. And so, we will also come to more on these matters later.

And so also, Geshela said, we could have an idea that this is something fun, or interesting to watch and in this way integrate all this information.

And so, connected with the activity at the beginning, the motivation, Geshela would like to lead a short meditation.

Meditation

So put the body and mind in a relaxed state

So imagine that in the empty space in front of us on a beautiful jeweled ground appears the celestial palace of Heruka father and mother – So Heruka and Vajrayogini]

And within this palace there is a beautiful bejeweled throne with the various lotus and moon cushions etc. and it is on this throne within the palace that appear Heruka father and mother.

And think as we gaze towards this and generate refuge, then our father and mother on either side of us, behind them all sentient beings with minds of great faith and confidence, also practice with us.

Think that I am going for refuge with complete confidence that guru Chakrasamvara, lama Heruka is able to protect me, to provide refuge from all fears.

And then think for all the 6 types of sentient beings in human form, surrounding me, for their sake I must actualize the Buddhahood of Heruka father and mother myself. Generate bodhicitta.

And think that pleased with these requests and practice Heruka father and mother come to our crown, then melt into light go down our central channel, dissolve into our heart.

Think that from the deity absorbing into us in this way and the deity absorbing into all the 6 types of assembled sentient beings in this way, they achieve the state of the guru deity lama Heruka Chakrasamvara.

And think that through all sentient beings' achieving the sublime state of Chakrasamvara in this way, like a bunch of crows that have suddenly been scared off we all ascend as a flock to the pure land of Heruka and Vajrayogini.

Think in this way, I have been able to achieve something for the welfare of others in this way I have been able to achieve something for the welfare of myself by my mind becoming inseparably mixed with the mind of guru deity Heruka.

And think that from my mind becoming inseparably mixed with the guru deity's mind and achieving that realization then any phenomena, any object I look at, I am able to completely comprehend it's emptiness, its lack of inherent existence, just as I can clearly see these fruits of these flowers in front of me.

And think that this mind is single-pointed attention upon emptiness, this is the resultant Dharmakaya, the resultant truth-body.

And then think, I must manifest in a more apparent way to benefit sentient beings, therefore I arise as the Sambhogakaya of Chakrasamvara, which is like a pillar shape of blue light.

And think this is the resultant time Sambhogakaya, this awareness is important.

And then think to be able to fully interact with sentient beings I must manifest as the Nirmanakaya, and with this wish one takes on the fully endowed form of Chakrasamvara Heruka father and mother, Heruka and Vajrayogini.

So this was a very, very brief meditation, in a capsule meditation of taking the 3 bodies, the 3 kayas as the path.

So, of course it's really important that not only do we arise in the deity form etc. but we imagine that the place where we are is not the ordinary house or apartment where we normally dwell, this is actually the celestial palace within the mandala of glorious Chakrasamvara.

And so, then we said that we wanted to achieve the state of Chakrasamvara for the sake of all sentient beings and in order to be able to do this, of course the general preliminaries are very important.

And so, we can talk about these in terms of the 3 causes common to the 2 vehicles of sutra and tantra and these of course are the minds of definite emergence or renunciation, the minds of bodhicitta and the mind of emptiness.

So really to proceed in the practice it's really important to have great feeling for the perfect practice of method and the perfect practice of wisdom as well.

And in the second step is to receive the empowerment; and the third is, having received empowerment to guard the vows and commitments well.

And lama Pabongka Rinpoche he states in the commentary on Vajrayogini that really for success in this practice, an unwavering confidence or faith is very important.

And also a knowledge of the various components and their order of the sadhana practice itself.

And also single-pointed focus or concentration is very important.

And maintain the secrecy of this practice, not sort of going like "look at my amazing tantric practice" - it's secret.

So these can be seen that the 4 causes of attainment, they are sometimes spoken of the 4 causes of attainment.

And then to speak of Vajrayogini specifically, we know that to be able to achieve the holy state of Vajrayogini we proceed along the practice of 11 yogas.

Geshela reciting this verse of the 11 yogas:

1. sleeping
2. rising
3. experiencing nectar
4. yoga of the immeasurables,
5. yoga of the guru
6. the yoga of generating oneself as the deity
7. the yoga of purifying migrators
8. the yoga of being blessed by heroes and heroines
9. the yoga of verbal and mental recitation
10. the yoga of inconceivability
11. the yoga of conduct

These are the 11 yogas.

Geshela said that in terms of the first, the yoga of sleeping, he already gave some explanation of this, but he wanted to add just one more thing that he was studying recently, that he thought was interesting, which is that when one is going to sleep, if one wants to go to sleep with an arising feeling of bliss, one should visualize the sun cushion as extremely vast and bright, this can be helpful.

And if one wants to sort of have a deeper sleep in addition to the vastness and brightness, one imagines a warmth, a strong warmth of the sun cushion and this will allow the deep and blissful sleep.

And if one wants a sleep which is on the other hand blissful but not so deep, one wants to be able to maintain a measure of mindfulness and introspection while sleeping then one imagines rays of light radiating from that sun cushion.

So those were some uncommon instructions that Geshela received recently and he thought perhaps these would be of benefit.

And of course, with rising we know that from sleep we arise as the deity Vajrayogini and then connected with that we should imagine that when we go about our activities such as putting on our

clothes, washing our body, eating our breakfast etc. that we imagine these various offerings as bath, various ornaments, and food to the deity, as oneself as Vajrayogini.

So sleeping, rising, experiencing nectar Geshela has taught about these previously, we also done a little bit more on these, and of course we know that these 3 of the 11 yogas are not contained in the words of the sadhana self.

So the yoga of the immeasurables, actually, is commonly understood to be the part where the actual written sadhana begins.

And so then, in terms of how we are practicing these 4 immeasurables, we divide them into the various points.

And so this is visualizing the objects of refuge, going for refuge, generating bodhicitta, meditating on the 4 immeasurables etc.

And then also imagining the objects, the field of refuge etc. dissolving into oneself.

And then the instantaneous self-generation as Vajrayogini.

In terms of the instantaneous self-generation Geshela has also taught of that and gave an easy and accessible presentation of that.

And it's really important actually in this instantaneous self-generation it must contain at least briefly the elements of taking all the 3 bodies into the path, so taking death, intermediate state and rebirth into the 3 bodies of the Buddha.

And so then when one arises in this instantaneous self-generation in the form of the deity it can also be spoken of as the vajra body. It can also be spoken of as the samaya of the body.

And so then, the next one that we can do, and Geshela said although it is not contained within the Vajrayogini sadhana itself, it's good to do this practice if we can, it's the blessing of the vajra and bell.

And also it's very important to have an awareness we go through the sadhana, through the method of practice, having an awareness of vajra body, vajra speech and vajra mind continuously.

So the 3 vajras or the 3 samayas [?] it's good to have an awareness of these throughout the sadhana. Then in terms of the actual practice of the self-generation this is known as the vajra body, in terms of the blessing the vajra and bell this is known as vajra speech – so the self-generation is the vajra body, the bell itself is the vajra speech, and the vajra itself represents the vajra mind.

And also, this is symbolic of one of the main kind of practices of tantra, which is actually to make the activities of body, speech and mind of one taste.

And so having blessed the vajra and bell we then come to the blessing of the inner offering. And so then also a lot of explanation Geshela has already given on that so we won't go into that again – maybe if we have some extra time.

Then the preliminary blessing of the offering. And so one important thing that Geshela wanted to mention here is that the blessing of the offerings isn't actually making the offerings. We are blessing the offerings, we are blessing the various offering substances and sort of preparing to be able to offer them to our guests of the holy beings.

And then, after that blessing of the preliminary offerings, then offering tormas we then have the meditation /recitation of Vajrasattva.

And so we understand also that to achieve the sublime state of Buddhahood it's important to have the points of both accumulation of merit and purification of negativity.

And so, also to understand that in the context of this tantra practice, to hope to achieve the 4 kayas, the 4 bodies of a Buddha in one short lifespan, this is a really extraordinary wish, so the accumulation and purification necessary to actualize it is kind of even more.

When we do the meditation/recitation of Vajrasattva incorporating the 4 opponent powers, this is of course mainly a practice of purification.

Visualizing Vajrasattva in the space in front of us and bringing forth minds of refuge and bodhicitta this is the power of the basis. And another really important thing in the context of the sadhana is when Vajrasattva father and mother melt into light and dissolve into us, dissolving in our body, it's really important to have this conviction that all negativities have been completely purified, completely cleared away.

In this way we have done a recap of the yoga of the immeasurables. I just read these 10 points for you really quickly of the yoga of the immeasurables:

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

Geshela also wanted to mention that when we visualize the meats and the nectars of the inner offering practice, as this is a mother tantra, the 5 nectars are the principal ones and then the meats in the subsidiary directions and also when we look at the sadhana, we are going from left to right – mother tantra. And we can also understand that these 5 nectars of the inner offering are the seeds or the essence of the lords of the 5 Buddha families.

And these practices are also a reminder for us that as we reach Buddhahood through the practice of tantra, we need to practice in a way that is kind of a union of both method and wisdom. So we actually cultivate the method and wisdom aspect together. And so we can see these 5 nectars as the essence of wisdom and we can see the 5 meats as representing the essence of method.

And so actually in this way, the inner offering becomes a beautiful practice symbolizing the union of method and wisdom. We talked about the 5 nectars as being the seed essences of the Lords of the 5 Buddha families, the 5 meats are considered to be the essence of the mothers or consorts of the 5 Dhyani Buddhas. And the union of the lord and lady deities also represents the union of method and wisdom.

So, then we understand in this way, how the nectars and the meats, how the lords and the ladies represent method and wisdom.

But also to understand generally, when we speak of the mother we understand that we are speaking wisdom, when we speak of the father we understand we are speaking of method. So the mother is wisdom and the father is method.

And also to understand the division of the practice sessions into the day and the night: the day is often considered symbolic of the practice of method and the night is symbolic of the practice of wisdom. And that's because the day is in the aspect of appearance and the night is said to be in the aspect of emptiness.

That is why the reason that night time is actually considered ideal for the practices of mother tantra such as Vajrayogini, because it is in the nature of emptiness, it is emphasizing wisdom.

And also to understand that we speak of highest yoga tantra attainments of the illusory body and clear light and while all the practices have components of both, mother tantra such as this one are emphasizing the clear light more.

Also saying the night is the side of emptiness and the day is the side of appearance, just practically we can see when the sun is shining we see all the appearances and the objects in the outer world very clearly.

Whereas at night time, in that darkness then there appears to be a lack which represents emptiness more than the side of appearance. And also related to the practice of Vajrayogini being a practice associated with dakini practices, it is said that night time, the time of wisdom is also the time where the dakinis are more active.

So in this way we have concluded the yoga of the immeasurables. And we come to the next one which is the yoga of the guru, the guru yoga.

And so to this point of the guru yoga, we have completed, we need accumulation and purification with the Vajrasattva etc. we completed purification – and now we have the accumulation of merit.

The guru yoga it has 6 points and the first 2 are:

- 1) visualizing the field of accumulation and
- 2) amassing merits through the 7 purities

You will see in terms of these 7 purities, you will find in other highest yoga tantras as well, such as Vajrabhairava or Yamantaka. But Vajrayogini – this practice of the 7 purities has some uncommon, special characteristics, such as the Kusali tsog accumulation.

And similarly Vajrabhairava/Yamantaka also has a particular characteristic of this 7 purities.

And so the first of these is offering one's body. And the second is the pranas[?], the samaya to be a kind of steadfast mind or steadfast concentration. The third is keeping the precepts of the 5 Buddha families. Geshela said there's 4 but he thinks that he may have forgotten the 4th one – the 4th one is the meditation of the 4 immeasurables. So these are as they are related to Yamantaka.

So that's related to Yamantaka, now we come to how they are related to Vajrayogini. So I am going to give the Yamantaka one more time: 1) offering one's body, then it's 2) steadfast abiding or concentration of mind 3) guarding the commitments of the 5 Buddha families and the 4) 4 Immeasurables.

Slowly, slowly Geshela plans, if folks are interested to give a commentary on Vajrabhairava, but he thought that he might give just a little bit of a taste of the difference with Vajrabhairava.

And so then in terms of the 7 purities as they related to Vajrayogini we completed the prostration. Following that we have the practice of making the offerings, and actually making the offerings is divided into different parts which are very important, so we have

the outer offerings,
the inner offering,
the secret offering and
the suchness offering.

The outer offerings means the 2 waters, then the kind of 4 main offerings and then the other subsidiary offerings. And then we also have the offerings of the 6 substances etc.

And we also understand that there are 6 offering goddesses etc. making the offerings. So we are on page 18 of the Vajrayogini sadhana:

Offering goddesses emanate from my heart and perform the offerings.

And so then when we do the beginning sort of Lotus turning mudra to send out the offering goddesses we snap the fingers outwards, representing the goddesses going outwards. And we can actually imagine countless emanations of these goddesses departing from our heart.

And so then after we make the offerings and we dissolve the goddesses back, we snap our fingers towards ourselves.

Also, Geshela said, this will change when we are making offerings principally to the self-generation.

*OM ARGHAM PRATĪCCHHA SVĀHĀ
OM PĀDYAM PRATĪCCHHA SVĀHĀ*

So these are the argham and padyam offerings, the 2 types of waters.

OM VAJRA PUṢHPE ĀḤ HŪM SVĀHĀ

So the next one is flowers.

OM VAJRA DHŪPE ĀḤ HŪM SVĀHĀ

OM VAJRA DĪPE ĀḤ HŪM SVĀHĀ

OM VAJRA GANDHE ĀḤ HŪM SVĀHĀ

OM VAJRA NAIVIDYA ĀḤ HŪM SVĀHĀ

OM VAJRA ŚHAPTA ĀḤ HŪM SVĀHĀ

So we imagine that we are offering the main aspects of the offering substances, the flowers, incense, lights, scents, food and music etc.

And so we have these kind of 2 waters ad the preliminary and then we have the 5 main offerings followed by subsidiary offerings.

OM ĀḤ VAJRA ADARŚHE HŪM

This is the offering of beautiful forms. For Adarshe, when we are offering forms, what can we imagine offering? We can imagine offering a mirror to the deity to view itself.

And so, also know that our mind is like a mirror and can reflect all objects, so the mirror can also be a representative of that.

OM ĀḤ VAJRA VĪNI HŪM

Vini is the offering of sound, so it's a lute.

OM ĀḤ VAJRA GANDHE HŪM

This is an offering of washing the body.

OM ĀḤ VAJRA RASE HŪM

This is an offering of food

OM ĀḤ VAJRA SPARŚHE HŪM

Is offering clothes, beautiful garments.

OM ĀḤ VAJRA DHARME HŪM

This is actually offering the Dharmadatu but it takes the form of a phenomena source, like two triangles together. So because of the 3 sides of the 2 triangles it is actually of these phenomena source, part of the symbolism here is that it represents the 3 doors of liberation.

And so, another way to understand these 5 offerings etc. is to think that they offerings to the 5 sense doors plus consciousness.

So beautiful taste, smells, tactile touches etc. these are what we know as the qualities of this desire realm. The wonders of the desire realm.

And we also talk about, when we talk about attachment, attachment is often arising due to these 5, so we talk about an attachment, a separated from the 5 enjoyable objects.

And another way to understand these 6 is that they can be understood as related to – sorry, when we add the 6th they are related to the 6 constituents.

So in this way we completed the outer offerings briefly. I said to Geshela, he really wanted to tell you the colors and the names of the vajra goddesses that are making those offerings that we just did. So I just reminded him, so we will go through those.

Geshela said the 2 goddesses to go back a little back, - the 2 types of goddesses offering the 2 types of water is not really clear in some commentaries, what color they are actually. Some commentary say that they are white in color, others say that they are blue in color. Actually in one commentary on the 5 deity Chakrasamvara that Geshela is looking at, it says that because there is a lack of clarity one can visualize them as blue in color.

But other commentaries talk about visualizing them as white in color.

And so then the rupavajra form goddesses are white, the vajra sound goddesses are blue, the vajra smell goddesses are yellow, the vajra taste goddesses are orange, and the vajra touch goddesses are green. And finally the vajra dharmadatu goddesses is white in color.

These are the 5 various colors plus the sixth one.

Geshela said that also when we are visualizing the offering goddesses, we know that they have sort of four arms, and so two of those arms are holding the particular offering substances, and so the first two arms higher one are the vajra and the bell and the lower ones holding the offering substances.

In this way we have completed the outer offerings.

The next one is making the inner offering.

OM GURU VAJRADHARMA SAPARIVĀRA OM ĀḤ HŪM

We imagine this perfectly purified inner offering and offering that to guru Vajradharma. Geshela said, sometimes you may be doing your practice and you may not be able to travel with your inner offering container etc. So it is said that when you are doing the purifying and blazing part of the inner offering practice, you can imagine an inner offering at for example say a monastery or any kind of Buddhist institution you have a connection and you can imagine that you are purifying and blessing there. So because you have been a little bit lazy or forgetful and haven't taken your inner offering with you, then you can imagine the inner offering in these other places as the basis of the substances and you kind of purify and transform based on that. So if you think about a particular monastic institution that you are connected to in India, it is sure that there is going to be somebody there who is engaged in the practice of inner offering at any given moment, so you can imagine like that.

But then, when you actually make the inner offering to have to visualize that there is an inner offering in front of you. And we can imagine, because the inner offering in its ultimate aspect is not necessarily the outer kind of accruals, it is the inseparable great bliss wisdom from which the inner offering arises, so you can think like that.

Now we come to the secret offering – we are on page 19

*I offer illusion-like mudras beautiful in the glory of youth,
Slender and skilled in the sixty-four arts of love;
A host of beautiful messenger dakinis,
Born from sacred-place, mantra-born, and innately born.*

A consort that we are offering here, it is very beautiful and young, we imagine them in the most beautiful aspect as possible. And she is skilled in the 64 arts of love, because she is able to bring forth though that great bliss in the father, in the lord deity. And then we talk about messenger dakinis: this is actually an interesting word, punja[?] the Tibetan word is punja[?] – some people are translating it as angel, I don't if that works, but whichever works best for you, but they are three types:

- born from sacred places

- born form mantra
- and innately or spontaneously born

The first of these, from sacred place, are said to be goddesses that have achieved realizations of completion stage but not yet the state of union.

Mantra born are said to be those who possess the realizations of generation stage but have not yet reached the completion stage realization.

Innately born are those arya messenger dakinis with a direct realization of emptiness who have achieved the state of meaning clear light.

So we talk about two types of clear light: the example clear light and the meaning clear light.

They are those who have the realization of the second type of clear light, the meaning clear light.

Geshela said, that's what he is remembering but if there is an error, he is not so certain about that particular point, so let him know if there is an error.

So these are the 3 types of messenger dakinis from sacred place, mantra born and innately born – this is what Geshela remembers, but he asks you to check here.

So offering all of these beautiful messenger dakinis. That concludes the secret offering.

Now we come to the suchness offering:

*I offer you supreme ultimate bodhichitta,
The great exalted wisdom of unobstructed innate bliss,
The sphere free from elaboration, the nature of all phenomena,
Spontaneous and indivisible, beyond words, thoughts, and expression.*

I offer you supreme ultimate bodhichitta,

Actually, there is something missing here, jip-jel[?] means separated from the obscuration, this hasn't been translated, I am not sure why. So this, Geshela said, is separated from the obscuration: the wisdom and the knowledge obscuration.

And also, we can think that is it separated from ordinary appearance and clinging to ordinary appearance. We can also understand the two obscurations in that way, according to tantra.

And so slowly, slowly I will come to more of an explanation of those.

Geshela said when we talk about the ordinary, the grasping at ordinary appearance in tantra this is connected with the afflicting obscuration and when we talk about ordinary appearance itself this is more connected to the wisdom obscuration.

And so, actually the two main objects to be abandoned according to the tantric presentation are the ordinary appearance and the grasping or clinging at that ordinary appearance.

And so, the divine pride that one maintains having arisen as the deity is said to be an antidote to the clinging at ordinary appearance.

Visualizing the celestial abode, the palace, the mandala of the deity etc. with the qualities of clarity and vividness, these are said to be the antidotes to ordinary appearance itself.

So the great exalted wisdom of unobstructed great bliss.

"This sphere free from elaboration, the nature of all phenomena", this is meditative equipoise upon spontaneous great bliss wisdom.

"Spontaneous and indivisible, beyond words, thoughts, and expression" – this means that apart from experience, words cannot really do justice to describe this profound state.

Once this is achieved, according to the tantra path, one becomes an arya bodhisattva.

Offering this mind generating offering this completely perfect bodhicitta to the guru this is the suchness offering. Geshela said, important to clarify for people is that ultimate bodhicitta, which is primarily emptiness that we are offering here. Sometimes we hear bodhicitta and we think of something else.

So in this way we have concluded the offerings.

Next on page 20:

*I take refuge in the Three Rare Sublime Ones.
I confess all my negative actions individually.
I rejoice in the virtues of transmigratory beings.
I keep in my mind a buddha's enlightenment.
I take refuge until I am enlightened
In the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Supreme Assembly.
In order to fulfil the aims of myself and others,
I will generate the mind of enlightenment.
Having generated the mind of supreme enlightenment,
I will invite all sentient beings to be my guests.
I will undertake the pleasing, supreme conduct of enlightenment.
May I become a buddha to benefit transmigratory beings.*

I take refuge in the Three Rare Sublime Ones.
This is refuge practice. We can think of this as the common refuge.

I confess all my negative actions individually.
That's the limb of confession. Confessing negative actions individually. Individually is quite important here, but Geshela said, we are kind of pressed for time today, so we can explain more later. One way of understanding individually is, we can understand the negativities accumulated through transgressions of the pratimoksha, the individual liberation – the bodhisattva – and the secret mantra vows – so because they are three separate categories of vows they also entail three different methods of confession and purifications. But one way of understanding individually. But all of them have this common characteristics that they are seen as faults that for purification to be complete we want to incorporate the 4 opponent powers.

So the next one,
I rejoice in the virtues of transmigratory beings.
That's the limb of rejoicing.

*I keep in my mind a buddha's enlightenment.
I take refuge until I am enlightened
In the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Supreme Assembly.*
This is the uncommon Mahayana refuge.

*In order to fulfil the aims of myself and others,
I will generate the mind of enlightenment.*
That's aspiring bodhicitta.

*Having generated the mind of supreme enlightenment,
I will invite all sentient beings to be my guests.
I will undertake the pleasing, supreme conduct of enlightenment.*
Engaging bodhicitta.

May I become a buddha to benefit transmigratory beings.
That "may I" is an aspiration, so this is actually the limb of dedication here.

So you can see, said Geshela, that right there are 5 of those 7 practice, refuge, bodhicitta, confession, rejoicing and dedication.
And before that had the offering of prostration and making the actual offerings, so those are the total of 2 so we come to this total of 7.

So these 7 pure practices they are very similar to the 7 limbs, there are 2 that are different: not requesting the turning of the Dharma wheel and not passing away, that's the difference from the 7 limbs of sutra vs. the 7 purities of tantra.

And so now we come a short explanation of an uncommon practice, particular to Vajrayogini, which is known as gather the collection of Kusali.

Geshela want to explain a little bit to you about the name of this practice. So when we speak about different types of scholars or sadhus, we can speak of Kusali sadhus and we can speak of pandita sadhus. So the pandita sadhu or excellent individual, s/he has the external aspects of scholarship and engage in the activities of scholarship etc. The Kusali sadhu actually possesses the same realizations and understandings as the pandita sadhu, but their aspect is very humble, such that if you were to see them on the street you wouldn't know that this is in any way a special person.

So the Kusali sadhus they are known like Shantideva was known as the sadhus of the 3 activities: eating, sleeping and defecating. So those who practice but their external manifestation is only those 3 mundane activities, they are known as the Kusali sadhus.

So, to begin this Kusali offering, we think about our body and we think from the countless bodies and rebirths that I had in beginningless time until now, my body has not been able to achieve much of meaning. So think, today I want to make this body something that is truly meaningful, truly beneficial. In order to do this I will transform it into an offering to the special guests, lama, yiddam etc.

So at this point imagines one's mind in aspect of the red letter BAM. So, this mind that was going through the practices generating as Vajrayogini etc. here we take it down to this kind of minute essence of the letter BAM. And then we can think that this BAM takes the aspect again of Vajrayogini but very small, about the size of our thumb. And so we imagine that this thumb sized – first the BAM, then the thumb-sized Vajrayogini – at about the heart level.

And we imagine that the dakini gazing up through the central channel she sees in kind this place in front and above all of the beautiful holy beings to whom we will make the offerings: lamas, yiddams etc. And she sees those assembled holy beings as being like a beautiful scattering of flowers. This arises a feeling of joyful bliss in her mind and then accordingly that thumb-sized dakini goes up our central channel through the crown of our head. And so she goes up and gazes towards those holy beings. Now Geshela said that there is a misunderstanding: some people think that this thumb-sized dakini emerges through the crown protrusion and then takes union with one of another of the holy beings. This is incorrect. She just gazes at them. So this misunderstanding came because the words in Tibetan can be understood in a way of thinking that she would enter into union with the guru field for example, but this is not the case.

And so she is facing and gazing at those holy beings in the field above. And then so, in this way she receives the blessings from the lamas and yiddams of that field and then turns back and looks at the body. And so she sees that ordinary body that has been left behind and she kind descends to the level where that body is. And it is said that the way of descending to that kind of body, those aggregates that have been set aside is the kind of way that vultures will circle and descend to take a feeding. And the vulture like dakini, flying around like a vulture, does three circumambulations towards the left on those aggregates or body. And also, those old aggregates are kind said to be lying down, like the great trunk of a tree which is fallen. And the dakini going to this old body or aggregates, Vajrayogini, the dakini, she takes off the skull part of those aggregates with her katvanga[?] and places that kapala – that skull from the head of the ordinary aggregates upon 3 hearth stones that have spontaneously manifested – very similar to the inner offering. And then she cuts apart that old body into various portions of flesh, liquid etc. and places them inside the kapala from the skull on the 3 hearth stones. And then once that offering is all in place, we imagine that above it are the letters OM AH HUM. And so we imagine that from a wind at the heart of oneself as Vajrayogini there is a wind that blows and that wind activates the flames beneath the skull cup which boils the substances.

And the OM AH HUM that are kind of sitting above this offering within the skull cup they emanates countless lights and nectars which go forth to all of the holy beings, the buddhas and bodhisattvas and bring back their blessing of body, speech and mind in the form of lights and nectars.

And so as the steam comes from this offering in the skull cup being heated, through the force of the steam, the OM AH HUM somehow come to reverse in order, so instead of the HUM being at the bottom, there is the OM at the bottom, that AH above that and the HUM above that.

So we imagine that through this practice first any faults of color, smell and taste are completely purified. Then it is transformed into the essence, the amrita of nectar and then it becomes exponentially inexhaustible. This particular part of the offering, Geshela said, we can just think of it with the letters OM AH HUM. If we want to do it more extensively we can think of the [?] letters OM AH HUM HA HO HRIH.

Geshela is reading the explanation of OM AH HUM HA HO HRIH from the Samvarodaya tantra: the mantra OM AH HUM is always used for blessing, the mantra HA HO HRIH for purifying and realization. HA letter captures colors, HO letter captures scent, HRIH letter conquers powers, one shall rely upon this nectar.

And so then, having made this offering, one then kind again gazes up towards the people to whom we are going to be making the offering. I said to Geshela, one thing that's important to clarify here is that the body that we are offering isn't the self-generation, this is our old body of the ordinary aggregates. So an ordinary body that we are offering.

Geshela said that with this awareness it's kind of a little bit like taking the different perspective and going back to the ordinary form, just like we did in the Vajrasattva. You may have done the self-generation but we set that and the divine pride aside, so that we can purify effectively. The same case is here. One's body is visualized in ordinary form.

Geshela said also that just to understand despite practicing the generation stage we still have this ordinary body, in real time, so that's what we are offering.

With the Vajrasattva it's a little bit different, we are not visualizing our old ordinary body or anything, one can actually maintain the self-generation but one decreases the divine pride etc. so that one can purify.

Then we can think that as we gaze back up and prepare to make the offering to the holy beings, there is the assembly of lamas and then the yiddams etc.

Or, one can also visualize that up in the space above there is the aspect of Buddha Shakyamuni surrounded by the yiddams, teachers etc.

When one visualizes in that way, with Buddha Shakyamuni, it's known as the [Tibetan?] = the worshipful guests of the three Jewels.

To the right side in this field of merit, one visualizes Manjushri surrounded by the various guests.

And so the worshipful guests of the three Jewels, that's Buddha Shakyamuni in the center, and to the right side we have the lord gathering of worshipful guests which is with Manjushri.

And so surrounding Manjushri are all the arya superior beings and guests. And then to the left – we have Buddha Shakyamuni in the center, to the right Manjushri - and to the left there is

Avalokiteshvara/Chenrezig and he is surrounded by the ordinary 6 types of beings within samsara.

You have that field of Buddha Shakyamuni, the worshipful guests, then you have the lord Manjushri and then to the left the field of the compassionate ones, that's Avalokiteshvara with those 6 types of beings.

And I you want to expand on this, so you have in the center Buddha Shakyamuni to the left and right Manjushri and Avalokiteshvara and then in the back, slightly lower you can visualize Vajrapani, the lord of spirits. And surrounding him is an assembly of interferers and harmers types of beings.

And this field is known of the field to those we owe a debt, because we know that these hindrances come about because of the karmic debt. So as we are offering now this nectar which is purified from that ordinary body, there is different kinds of ways that we think about making that offering to the holy beings, and the first is an offering like a minster would make to a king. And so is the offering like the minster or lord made to Shakyamuni. The next one is like an offering between friends: the friend to

the friend offering, this is the mentality we can have as we offer the Kusali tsog to Manjushri and the surrounding deities.

And then, when we make the Kusali tsog offering, the offering of nectar to those to the left side, Avalokiteshvara, with the 6 types of beings of the samsaric realm, it's like an offering to someone who does not have enough to eat or who doesn't have enough to drink: so an offering of generosity to a needy sentient being, one has that awareness.

And as one offers to the back of this configuration, which is Vajrapani together with the hindering causes etc., when one makes the Kusali tsog to them, it's like an offering to someone in debt to their creditor. Then at the conclusion of this offering, there's different ways to think: one can think that some of those objects of offering are holy beings, we don't think of that, but we also know that in those assemblies there were also some sentient beings, we can think that through making this offering to the sentient beings within those assemblies, they are able to give rise to meditative equipoise on great bliss wisdom and then transform from the ordinary being into the fully enlightened Vajrayogini etc.

And then, having brought all those sentient beings then one can specifically think of the assembly of harming beings that are surrounding Vajrapani and one can think that they are able to, through the blessing of this nectar, to completely purify the afflicted and evil minds and in this way they too are able to bring forth great bliss wisdom, meditate on emptiness and achieve the state of Vajrayogini.

And then, once all of these beings have been liberated then the holy beings within those configuration, such as Manjushri, Avalokiteshvara, we can imagine that they melt into light and then dissolve into us. And also, an awareness to have that the person making the offering, the beings receiving the offering and the substances of the offering are all empty of inherent existence.

Geshela said, this was a brief taster introduction to this Kusali tsog accumulation practice. But also as you engage in the sadhana practice yourself, you come to more understanding and he'll also give more detail on this as we go along.

So thank you very much that brings us to the end of our time today. Let us dedicate with a joyful mind. Geshela said, some of you he sees at these session, so we want to wish you happy holidays, Happy Christmas, Happy New Year, whatever you are celebrating.

So thank you very much, we will do the dedication.

