

Vajrayogini Teachings Geshe Sonam Ngodrup

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On this particularly special significant auspicious day Geshela offers you his Tashi Delek, and he hopes that all is going well and that all of you are happy.

And this is a really special time to have this teaching on such an exceptional holy day.

And we are going to proceed hopefully in a relaxed way and from proceeding in a relaxed way, he hopes that we can all participate in the teachings happily and peacefully.

And in terms of being able to access these teachings, if we think of the various opportunities we have in our lives, it would be difficult that there is an opportunity more special than this. If we think about it in fact, if we think of the six realms of samsara, sorry, if we think of the three realms of samsara even those higher states of existence in the form and formless realm, those beings do not have access to such a practice. On the one hand those beings in the form and formless realm are devas or gods and they seem to have many excellent facilities etc. but from the point of view of practice, they don't have access to this type of opportunity. And even within our own realm, where human beings abide, known as the desire realm, there are also devas or celestial beings within this realm, they are said to be six types – and similarly they are not capable of engaging in such a practice of vajrayana.

And why is that with these particular beings? Principally because those beings lack the channels, or the chakras, the winds or the prana and the drops, the tigre, that are necessary in order to engage in this practice. And similarly, those in the three lower realms, they may possess facets of these chakras, these channels, these winds, these prana, these drops, these tigre – however, because they are beset by suffering it is not a suitable basis – those bodies are not a suitable basis for this type of practice.

And even within this human realm, we can see that there many that are evil minded, or may just simply the opportunity, they are not able to engage in this practice, but somehow or other, we us here, in this human realm, we have been able to connect with it. And so we have to achieve our aim, to have to achieve our great purpose through the combined practice of both sutra and tantra.

And it is said in fact that in a way tantric practices are absolutely necessary, that to reach enlightenment eventually one will have to practice and that's because although the profound teachings of sutra have the complete aspects necessary to achieve the truth body, the Dharmakaya, they do not have the complete causes necessary to achieve the form body, the Rupakaya. They possess some of the subsidiary causes of such a Rupakaya, or form body, but the sutra teachings do not possess the substantial cause of this form body, this Rupakaya.

Then another thing we can look at, from the perspective of how the object of abandonment within the paths of sutra and tantra are actually abandoned, and so if we think of the sutra perspective we can think of ignorance grasping at the self for example, which is like the main object of abandonment, so it is countered by cultivating its opposite factor.

And so, from the sutric point of view then this ignorance grasping at the self has to be countered by cultivating its antidote, which is its opposite, which is the meditation on selflessness.

But in the teachings of tantra, it is said that to be able to ultimately reach that complete enlightenment, one has to transform ordinary death, ordinary bardo, intermediate state and ordinary rebirth into the three kayas, the three bodies of a Buddha, and in this tantric presentation, to be able to abandon ordinary death, intermediate state and rebirth something that is their opposite as an

antidote that is not the way to go about cultivation. We have to cultivate something similar to them in order to transform.

And so, the essential practice what we absolutely must practice connected with this is the base three bodies, or kayas, the path three bodies or kayas, and the result three bodies or kayas.

Another thing that must be mentioned here: we know that within the practices of tantra, we talk about four classes of tantra. And so, in the lower three classes of tantra, as profound as these practices are, they don't have a complete or clear presentation of taking these three bodies into the path and for that reason it is said that the three lower classes of tantra do not have a complete presentation of the generation stage, that this complete presentation is only available within the highest class of tantra, anuttara yoga or highest yoga tantra.

So these three lower classes of tantra, they lack the complete presentation of taking the three bodies into the path - sometimes translated as the three bringings - so they lack that, which means that they lack a complete presentation of the generation stage which means that they lack the ripening practice required to proceed to the stage of completion.

Ultimately because they lack this ripening factor of a complete generation stage practice, which allows one to proceed to the stage of completion, and the stage of completion is necessary for achieving complete Buddhahood, then from this prospective, anuttara yoga tantra, highest yoga tantra is necessary to reach that final state of enlightenment.

So understanding that that final result is not possible in the absence of a practice of anuttara yoga, highest yoga tantra then we should feel very fortunate to be able to embark and to receive instructions on such teachings.

And another thing that within the highest yoga tantra we understand that we have mother tantra and father tantra. Father tantras principally clarify how to achieve the illusory body, mother tantras how to achieve clear light. Although both father and mother tantras have aspects of the teachings for both illusory body and clear light.

So that's not to say that father tantra misses out on clear light or mother tantra misses out on illusory body, they all have those aspects in a complete way, it's a matter of emphasis, what the main practice is. We could say that in the practice of our deity here, venerable Vajrayogini, that it is mainly a practice of clear light, but also with instructions for the illusory body. And out of method and wisdom, it's mainly a practice of wisdom, although also including many points related to method.

We will do just a really short preliminary prayers, so we can get to the motivation and then to the teachings. So we'll do the short praise to the Buddha, the mandala and the refuge.

Prayers

So, Geshela said that his idea to begin the session today, of course we want to establish the motivation, but he would also like to do a review of the Kusali tsog but by way of a meditation. So we will combine a meditation on the Kusali tsog with the motivation.

So, as much as possible, place the body and mind in a relaxed state.

So imagine in the space in front of you, the holy body of venerable Vajrayogini, within a four walled palace upon beautifully jeweled ground.

This four doored palace is imbued with all the marks of beauty, made out of beautiful metals and bejeweled, adorned with jewels etc.

Beginning again: there is a beautiful four-walled palace, inside of which is a beautiful throne held up by 8 snow lions. And upon this beautiful throne are three cushions, of lotus, sun and moon.

Sorry about that. And seated upon this throne is one's own root lama, but in the aspect of Vajradharma.

And he is gentle red color in hue. And we can imagine that in the configuration surrounding him are the source lineage lamas, Vajradhara and Vajrayogini and all the other lamas in the aspect of Vajradharma.

And instead of the Buddha Vajradharma, the lineage lamas are in the aspect of Hero Vajradharma, the one with the damaru and katvanga.

And so, in front of this configuration of the palace, and all of the gurus, is Buddha Shakyamuni and all of the other buddhas and bodhisattvas and the holy beings.

And so, this configuration which in kind of in front of that lineage lama merit field, sort of in the centre, this is Buddha Shakyamuni, surrounded by all of those holy beings, buddhas and bodhisattvas, this part of the configuration is known as honored guests of the three Jewels.

And then, to the right of that central configuration of the honored guests, is the principal deity Manjushri, and he is surrounded by the protectors both Dharma and worldly who bestow favorable conditions for practice. And this configuration of beings to the right is known as the guests of qualities.

And to the left, is Avalokiteshvara, the Buddha of compassion, and he is surrounded by configuration of the 6 types of sentient beings and this part of the visualization is known as the guests for compassion.

And then, below this, is the final group within this configuration and this group is known as the spirit and malignant forces as guests of karmic retribution. So they are the guests of karmic retribution. The main figure here, is Vajrapani – not because he is part of those guests but he is in the mode of subduing – and then there are non-human interfering spirits, classes of demons etc.

And imagine that gazing up towards this configuration is ourselves, our mother and father on either side of us, and the vast assembly of the 6 types of beings of samsara but in human form.

Geshela is not going to giving an extensive explanation of refuge and the mind generation, bodhicitta, just meditate in the best way you know.

And then imagine, that in an instant shooting up and rising above our old body we are in the aspect of the deity, venerable Vajrayogini.

And how this works is, we understand that it is our own mind, but in the aspect of venerable Vajrayogini, about the size of thumb, shooting up the central channel through the crown of the head to the space above.

And so, then she arrives in the space above facing objects of the merit field and then she turns through their blessing, gazes down and our old body, our normal aggregates that are left behind, these kind of fall down, like a tree would fall down in a forest.

And then, from the space with the merit field above, she then returns to the place where the old aggregates, where the old body is.

Then we think, from countless rebirth in beginningless samsara until now I had these aggregates, so many countless bodies but I never have been able to achieve much of meaning.

So I am going to engage in this practice so that I can derive great meaning from these aggregates, from this human body.

And then we imagine that at the side of the offering, through the blessings of the merit field, three self-arisen heads arise as the hearth to support the offering.

And then the deity cuts the first cut which is at the head and then the skull of our old body becomes the container, the vessel for the offering, sitting upon these three hearthstones.

So we don't want to think of this as something small or the normal size of our skull – in fact we want to visualize that the size of it increases, that the offering vessel becomes kind of unfathomably large, able to hold the entire world and its contents.

And the deity cuts the remainder of the body, the bones, bloods flesh etc. and this is put inside the offering vessel.

We imagine that through the power of Vajrayogini just glancing at this offering and through the power of the beings of the merit field above, just glancing at those offerings, the contents are purified, they are transformed into nectar they increase exponentially.

So, within this it is transformed into the three types of nectar: the nectar of complete freedom from illness, the amrita or nectar of deathlessness, and the nectar of uncontaminated great bliss wisdom. And think that the contents of this nectar is so vast that no matter how much of it is taken that there is still much that remains. It is inexhaustible.

We can imagine that from that hearts of ourselves as venerable Vajrayogini countless vajra-taste goddesses emanate and these vajra-taste goddesses and their skull cups take parts of this offering and present it to those beings of the field of accumulation, the field of merit.

And so, in how the actual practice is presented, we start within that merit field with the being Buddha Vajradharma who represents our root guru and then this offering can be made, is made more times, either 3 or 7 times.

And then it is offered to each of the groups of the lineage gurus with the purpose of requesting the blessings for attainments.

And so, on this basis one makes offering to all of the holy beings, guests of the 3 Jewels etc. and in this way accumulates vast collection of merit in order to be able to achieve one's aims.

And then, as one is making offerings to all of those ordinary beings, as well as to the possible interfering beings, one can imagine that one is repaying a karmic debt, repaying a karmic retribution and in this way all of one's obstacles to improvement, to attainment are cleared away.

And then at the conclusion one meditates and rejoices that I have been able to engage in a very complete, full practice of accumulation and purification of obscurations.

So we imagine that all of these beings are purified and that the visualization melts into light and absorbs into us, except for the assembly of lamas, the assembly of gurus – they remain.

And we can imagine that through this practice then, those beings to whom we owe a karmic debt, which are in particular those interfering beings, various spirits etc. but also the 6 types of sentient beings within that sphere of compassion, that through this practice they have achieved great bliss wisdom and they are able to be reborn in the pure land of Kechara.

And then we rejoice thinking, today I have definitely been able to do something for the welfare of beings, and we feel happiness.

So that was a brief meditation by way of review of the Kusali tsog offering.

So, Geshela said that he is aware that he presented the main points of the Kusali tsog last session, but just so that there is a complete transmission, he is quickly read through the words of this as they appear in the sadhana.

Just to conceptualize this, or to put this in perspective: whenever we speak about these deity practices of this class of tantra, we speak of the 7 purities. And we know that these 7 purities, they are similar to the sutra practice of the 7 branches or the 7 limbs with a couple of differences.

But then, within these 7 purities, different systems will have different emphases. So, with the practice of Vajrayogini, in addition to the 7 purities, there are the auxiliary practices to the 7 purities, which you don't find in any other system. And the first these auxiliaries of the 7 purities is the practice of the Kusali tsog.

And then Geshela said, he thinks some other practices might have the mandala, but the mandala as it is expressed in Vajrayogini, some special characteristics, so this is the second of the additional auxiliary practices. And then the final one is the exceptional way of receiving the 4 empowerments according to Vajrayogini

So, you may ask, then OK, these are the special things that the Vajrayogini practice, what does the Vajrayogini practice lack? One thing that it lacks, within this particular part, being able to receive and

renew the bodhisattva and tantric vows. You will see that in other yiddams, but you won't see that in the case of Vajrayogini. Geshela said also, depending on which practice you are doing, they are not explicitly stated there, but certainly they can be there and in some presentations you might find them.

Geshela said, the essence of those vows is contained within that verse where I go for refuge to the three Jewels etc., it's just that the things are not as explicitly and extensively laid out as they are in other yiddams practices.

So within the Yamantaka practice, for example, there is extra the auxiliary practices in addition to the seven purities, will be to offer one's body as a servant, and a practice to firmly follow the path to completion. And a special presentation of the 4 immeasurables. And other yiddam systems may have an extensive ritual for receiving and renewing the bodhisattva and tantric vows.

Actually Geshela is giving you brief pointers here, but if you have the interest, especially if you are practicing different systems, what you can do is look at the different deities systems and see how they compare. What are the extra things that some of those systems have, and what are the things that other systems may be lacking. This is useful to do.

Within the Vajrayogini system, the presentation of the completion stage is really concise, sort of as one unit, and then we have a vaster presentation of the generation stage in particular, the 11 yogas. And so, then in terms of these 11 yogas of Vajrayogini, we have extensively been able to cover 4 thus far.

And so at the moment in the sadhana, where we are, we are still within the yoga of the guru section. Then within the yoga of the guru – we completed those 4, we are in the 5th one, which is the yoga of the guru. This has 10 points:

I am going to read them for you as a way of refreshing your memory.

- 1) Visualizing the field of accumulation
- 2) The blessings of body, speech and mind
- 3) Inviting the wisdom beings
- 4) Dissolving the commitment beings
- 5) Accumulating via the 7 purities
- 6) Kusali tsog accumulation
- 7) Offering the mandala
- 8) Supplicating the lineage masters
- 9) The blessing of the 4 empowerments
- 10) Collecting the field of accumulation

Up to now we have finished covering the Kusali tsog accumulation and this will bring us to a discussion of the mandala, supplicating the lineage masters – we will just go over that very concisely – and then we will do the blessing of the 4 empowerments.

Geshela said, for those of you who are really in a rush to get to the new stuff, meditate on patience. That was directed at me [Khedrup] mostly, but I don't know, maybe some of you feel like this sometimes.

In the context of this, and also what we have covered, the 4 types of guests are very important, that was the one that we covered in sense of the offering – and then you also have the 5 vajra goddesses. These are things to pay attention to. These 5 are the 5 goddesses of the sense objects of sight, sounds, smell, touch and taste. And in the context of making the offerings here, actually, it's only one type from among these 5 goddesses of offering, which is very important, which is the vajra-taste goddesses. Then the next part, which is important in the context of the Kusali tsog, is the 4 types of guests. So we can divide it into these 4 types of beings: the honored guests of the Three Jewels, the guests for compassion 6 types of beings, guests of good qualities, protectors who bestow favorable conditions

and the guests of karmic retribution – that’s the non-human interfering spirits etc. You can also do this more concisely and divide this in 2 types of guests, Geshela said: the guests above and the guests below. This is kind of a beautifully expressed here, but also if we keep this in our mind, it makes the practice very easy to do. And so, these formulations of guests Pabongka Dechen Nyingpo actually mentions that it’s very similar formulation to what you’ll find in other practices such as the tormagatsa, the 100 offerings tormagatsa.

And so, Geshela wanted to clarify something, that Kyabje Pabongka he wrote a very good commentary on Vajrayogini, but there is one thing there that he would dare to say is mistaken, and so we have to cover what may be mistaken as well.

And so, this one aspect, Geshela said, he can’t really say that it’s a mistake, but the instruction of a particular facet of the Vajrayogini practice is maybe not matching up with what Lama Tsong Khapa advises and also with what HH the Dalai Lama advises.

And so, when does this particular practice come, where there is this contention? It actually comes within the 11 yogas, within the 6th one. So within these 11 yogas of Vajrayogini we can understand that yoga’s 1 through 5 are kind of considered as the preliminaries. So sleeping, rising, experiencing nectar, immeasurables, yoga of the guru – these are the preliminaries.

These are related to, for example, in our future lifetime we want to continue practice and we want to be able to be reborn as a human or a deva, so these help us to accumulate the karma necessary for that.

We could say in a way, that that’s kind of the main function of those preliminary practices.

This difference of opinion will come during number 6: just a spoiler alert, it’s related to how to do the self-generation as it relates to the stages of death; that’s where Kyabje Pabongka and the Dalai Lama and Lama Tsong Khapa diverge.

Geshela just reading the gathering of the collection of Kusali.

So, I am not going to read that out, because you can all see the collection of Kusali on page 21, so you get the transmission from Geshela, I won’t read that in English. But one thing that Geshela will mention here is when we bless the Kusali tsog with OM AH HUM HA HO HRIH, the HA HO HRIH part is optional. We don’t necessarily have to recite HA HO HRIH, we can imagine that the activities of HA HO HRIH are accomplished merely by Vajrayogini gazing at the contents.

So the HA is said to be able to clear away all faults like, color, hue etc. That is the function of the HA. HO is said to purify all unpleasant scents etc. HRIH is said to purify all possibly negative potentialities that remain within the offering. So on the basis of the transformations enabled by these three letters, then the contents are able to transform into amrit, into nectar. And so then, one imagines that this offering has been transformed, the innumerable vajra-taste goddesses with skull cups take these offerings and offer it, and there is one method when one imagines 7 offering goddesses are emanated. And there is another one where you just emanate a single vajra-taste goddess, reabsorb her, emanate her again, reabsorb her, and complete the offerings that way.

Another one is to – in the first part of this practice, - emanate 3 vajra-taste goddesses who make the offerings to the lama 3 times and then do that repeated emanation but just for 1 goddess for each of the remaining groups of offering.

It’s good to know these different ways of doing things, because we all have different affinities, so according to your own capacity and affinity you do it the way that it appeals to you. Do I want to emanate all of the 7 and cover all of the groups and guests in that way? Do I want to instead emanate an individual offering goddess each time for each of those groups of guests? Or, do I want to emanate 3 vajra-taste goddesses to offer to the guru and then do individual ones with the remaining guests? So you could do it in any of these ways.

And so, also it mentions the vajra straw, so this is a vajra shaped kind of straw that emanates from the tongue of the one who is enjoying the offering and in this way they consume the offering. Geshela said it is literally like a straw, when you go to a restaurant or something and you have a milkshake or whatever, it’s the kind straw, just like that. And actually, it’s quite clear within the words of the sadhana

itself. It has the aspect and shape of a vajra but I guess in terms of its outer covering and how it appears it looks like a tongue. That is how Geshela is describing it. And he is telling me this because later on there is going to be a reason for this.

And so, the offering to the root guru the nature of the 4 bodies etc. depending on your wish you can recite this a total of 3 or a total 7 times:

*To my root guru, the nature of the four holy bodies,
I offer this nectar of commitment substance. May you be pleased.*

And so, then we offer to the lineage gurus and then we offer to the assembly of guru, yiddams, Three Jewels and guardians, wisdom protectors.

So that assembly of gurus, Three Jewels, guardians, that's the assembly of honored guests, that's number 3. And then the fourth one,

*To the resident indigenous lords of the land and town,
I offer this nectar of commitment substance.
May you provide a thousand-fold help.*

And so, then:

*To all sentient beings—those of the six realms and the intermediate state—
I offer this nectar of commitment substance.
May you be freed.*

So this is the 5th group. Sometimes it's described as 4 groups, sometimes as 5, this depends if you separate the guru from the root and lineage or if you count them as one.

So, the last verse

Due to this offering all the guests are satisfied with uncontaminated bliss etc.

this is very important, because it allows – the making of this offering to become a cause for the achievement of great bliss wisdom or non-dual bliss and emptiness.

The sentient beings, freed of obscurations, attain the dharmakaya.

where it says this in the long sadhana, at this point, what you want to do is visualize that all of those sentient beings have achieved the state of venerable Vajrayogini.

The three spheres of the offering become the entity of nondual bliss and emptiness

Geshela said, here you can think of the lack of true existence of the one who makes the offerings, the substances of the offering itself and the ones to whom the offering is made, who are receiving the offering. And so, actually, all of these are important.

So if you think about the three spheres of emptiness in the context of offering, this is extremely important, because what it does it protects the merit of your offerings from being degenerated from things like anger. Very important for that reason.

This is a very important point, and you will find this in the Madhyamakavatara, the text on entering the middle way, for example, that when it talks about the roots of virtue being degenerated by anger, this in regards to the merits accumulated through the practice of generosity etc. but anger cannot do this with roots of merit accumulated through wisdom.

We can understand the hidden meaning behind that. What's the hidden meaning that we can understand? That we talk about the merits related to the collection of merit and the collection of wisdom: the merits with the virtue accumulated via the collection of wisdom cannot be degenerated through anger. So, that's very important.

Another thing related to how the ritual is performed: a lot of the times when we are using the inner offering, when we make the inner offering, we know that we hold the skull cup in our hand above and we sprinkle it. In the context of the Kusali here, that's not necessary, you can just leave the inner offering in its normal place in front of you in the skull cup. We know when we make the inner offering, depending on who we make the offering to, we might hold up the offering cup a little bit higher, at the head, at the throat, and then towards the bottom of the body, depending on who we make the offering.

Geshela explains the Kusali tsog offering in as elaborate a way as he is capable of. There is no more that he feels capable of telling you, about the Kusali tsog than what he has shared.

But, if there are still doubts, we can go over it again.

Geshela is not going to go through the mandala. He is going to do it in a brief way, not elaborate. But, I want to mention something: I looked at various sadhanas of Vajrayogini that we find in the Gelug tradition, I am not sure about the Sakya tradition and they all have this long mandala offering that starts with: OM VAJRA BHUMI AH HUM, mighty golden ground and whatever. They don't actually contain the secret words of the sadhana, that relate to the outer, inner, secret and suchness mandalas. So this is a *lopshe*[?] an instruction lineage that for whatever reason has not been put in – I looked at the Gonzalez translations, and the FPMT translation, you won't find it in either of those. However, in the text that Geshela has, it contains those, so I will just be reading from my rough translation of the mandala offering according to that text.

Geshela said that in terms of the longer mandala offering, with all the heaps etc. he is not going through that today, because he thinks probably many of you have already received teachings on that. Perhaps if you want a more elaborate teaching on that in the future, you can [fades away...].

If you want to make the elaborate offering with all the heaps, using the mandala kit, like a mandala the metal mandala kit, one thing Geshela would remind you of, is that with the hand that you are holding the kit with, the hand can't be empty. You need to put a few grains of rice or a few stones in that. And as we go clockwise 3 times we imagine that this is purifying any kind of negativities, sinful karma etc. And as you go anticlockwise you imagine that instead of dispelling, you are gathering, you are gathering the blessings and the positive energy of all the buddhas and bodhisattvas, the holy beings of the three times.

And so, within this text, that Geshela has of the mandala offerings, the mandala is actually divided into 4 different types of mandala, the outer mandala, the inner mandala, the secret mandala and the suchness mandala.

And these different types of mandala are imbued with 4 special qualities.

- 1) Quality of nature
- 2) the causal quality
- 3) the aspect or type quality
- 4) and the offering quality.

I will give those 4 again: nature, causal, type or aspect and the 4th is offering.

That's important to keep in mind as well.

What I am going to read you is what Geshela and I have in our text. Geshela said you could do these special mandala practices after you have done the main mandala with all the heaps etc.

I will read my translation of the verse:

*The spontaneously arisen wisdom of bliss and emptiness
the apprehended aspect arisen from the aggregates, elements and sense sources
together with the continents, great mountain, precious vase, sun and moon
I offer to the treasure of compassion, the refuge and protector.*

And so, what Geshela was sharing here was that although this is just a few words, it actually contains the essential meaning of the 23 heap mandala of Lama Tsong Khapa for example.

Just to clarify in terms of the outer, inner, secret and suchness mandala: when we are offering the part that says "together with the continents, great mountain, precious vase, sun and moon" this is the outer mandala. *The apprehended aspect arisen from the aggregates, elements and sense bases* – the aggregates, elements and sense bases are something internal within us, so this is considered as the inner mandala offering.

So we have offered all of these external things, like the continents, mountain, vase as well as the aggregates and elements – so those are the aspects of the offering. But the nature of the offering is great bliss wisdom, their essential nature is great bliss wisdom. And because their essential nature is that great bliss wisdom, this is the secret mandala offering. And because every single aspect of the mandala offering that we make is dependently arisen, and therefore empty - and is empty and is therefore dependently arisen - the suchness mandala is also included here.

So the nature quality that we spoke about is the quality of great bliss wisdom realizing emptiness – that's the nature. The type or aspect quality is the aspect of the great mountain, the 4 continents, the 4 subcontinents etc. The causal quality is the inner constituents of the body, such as the constituents, sense bases and aggregates. The offering quality is actually the qualities of those to whom we are making the offering.

These are all of the individual guests to whom we are making the mandala offering.

So there are all of these offerings made to the different assemblies of guests.

Within that one short verse, there is a lot of beautiful meaning. I am going to read it one more time, because I know you don't have that in front of you:

*The spontaneously arisen wisdom of bliss and emptiness
the apprehended aspect arisen from the aggregates, elements and sense sources
together with the continents, great mountain, precious vase, sun and moon
I offer to the treasure of compassion, the refuge and protector.*

And then the mandala verse continues:

*The objects of my attachment, anger, and ignorance—
Friends, enemies, strangers, body, and resources—
Without any sense of loss, I offer them. Please kindly accept them,
And bless me to pacify the three poisons in dependence on their own objects.*

IDAM GURU RATNA MANDALAKAM NIRYATAYAMI

There's a very deep meaning of this: when we offer the objects of our attachment and aversion up to the Three Jewels, that means that as we go on about our day, if we see something we are attached to, we think, **I can't feel attached to that, I have already offered that up.**

If we see a person or a situation that makes us angry, we say: I can't get angry about that, I have already offered that up. So this can be a very useful practice. And if we practice in this way, then what happens is, we will naturally liberate the three poisons of attachment, anger and ignorance.

Geshala said, this kind of practice and this psychology is used for example, like in the monastery, like when a dog has run off or something, and somebody might think about hitting it, they say you can't

do that, because you have given up your object of aversion. And in this way it protects the practice of compassion. On that basis, from thinking in that way, something that can really nourish and improve and improve our practice, and in that way we have completed a brief explanation of the mandala offering.

And so then after the mandala offering, we have prayers of request to the lineage gurus. Geshela said, he is not going to read all of the beings in this prayer, but he wants to read you the first verse:

*To Vajradharma, lord of the family of the ocean of victorious ones;
Vajrayogini, supreme mother of the victorious ones;
Naropa, preeminent child of the victorious ones,
I request: please bestow the innate exalted wisdom.*

According to Pabongka Rinpoche's commentary, as you recite these, you imagine that the lama for the verse you have just recited dissolves into the one below and then dissolves into the one below, and then dissolves into the one below, like that. For example, if you are doing an abbreviated lineage prayer and you want to include HH the Dalai Lama in the prayers, what you would do, you would recite for example the verse of Lama Tsong Khapa imagine that he melts into light and then dissolves into his HH the 14th Dalai Lama and then you recite a verse of request to HH the Dalai Lama.

And then, as we come to the end of this lineage prayer you imagine that all the guests have visualized and it comes down to that last figure who is your own root guru, your root lama, the one who moves your mind the most, who has bestowed upon you the three kindnesses and then you imagine that the root guru, having absorbed all these other beings melts into light and dissolves into you.

That's just a brief explanation of the lineage requests and blessing. And then having dissolved all of these lamas then we come to the part of the sadhana that deals with receiving the 4 empowerments. So the verse goes:

*To the guru encompassing all objects of refuge,
I make requests: please grant blessings;
Please confer the four initiations completely,
And bestow the state of the four holy bodies.*

And this request has to be made three times. So, the first time one makes this request, one imagines that it is done as a request and an offering to one's own lama.

The second time we recite it, we can imagine that what's happening is that our root guru is making a request to the lineage gurus: my student has requested the 4 empowerments, may I bestow them?

Also if you know the lines of the lineage, you could think in this way: so for example if HH the Dalai Lama is your root guru, you imagine that the first time you yourself make this request to His Holiness, and then HH the Dalai Lama he will make a request to his guru, represented principally as Ling Rinpoche and say to Ling Rinpoche: may I bestow these empowerments upon my student?

But Geshela said, also you think that you can imagine that the request is made to all the lineage lamas. You don't need to think that it is just one, there is many, many lineage lamas.

And as one recites this verse, the guru encompassing all objects of refuge the third time, one can imagine that the lineage lamas have consented to the root guru to bestow the empowerment with happiness, with their blessings and now the empowerment can be bestowed.

And this is a time in the practice where we should feel really joyful because we are going to think, not only am I able to receive these 4 empowerments from my root guru, but I am also able to receive the 4 empowerments from my root guru with him or her having explicitly received the blessings of all the lineage lamas to do so.

And receiving the blessings of the 4 empowerments is very essential in fact it is said that in order for the empowerment that we received in actuality not to degenerate we need to receive, visualize receiving the 4 empowerments again and again. We can think of it as a river that when we receive the

4 empowerments every day again and again this prevents an outflows of the river, it's not like the river is going to reduce to a trickle as it goes to its course, it will maintain a constant flow.

This is a principle assisting factor for the blessings of the empowerments that we ourselves have received to not degenerate.

As we continue, we think:

White light rays and nectars radiate from the OM at my guru's forehead and absorb into my forehead.

Geshela said, in the commentary, as we visualize from the OM the white nectars and light rays emanating, we also visualize that within those white nectars and light rays are countless white letters OM. And these then dissolve into our forehead.

And in this way, all of the negativities related to the body are completely purified. The white nectars and also the color of white deities for example, white is considered the color symbolic of the purification of negativities and obscurations. The same as the white color of Vajrasattva.

And then one thinks, in addition to that, within the four different types of empowerments I have also received the VASE empowerment.

And having received that empowerment, I have received the blessings necessary to effectively engage in the generation stage practices.

And I have also received the blessing to – in the future – be able to actualize the Nirmanakaya, the emanation body. That's the first of these empowerments.

We are now on the verse that begins:

Red light rays and nectars radiate from the AH at my guru's throat and absorb into my throat.

Just as was mentioned before, we imagine that from the light rays and nectars red in color that emanate from this AH there are also countless red AHs within the lights and nectars.

Actually, Geshela said, if we are focusing on the aspect of ourselves as the self-generation of Vajrayogini, there is already an AH at her throat, we can imagine those lights and nectars easily dissolving into the AH that we have at our throat. And certainly we've all accumulated a lot of unfortunate and negative karma through unskillful speech, so we can imagine all negativities accumulated through speech are completely purified. And so, within the configuration of the 4 empowerments, this time it is said one achieves the SECRET empowerment. It is not stated explicitly here, but you'll find explicitly stated in Yamantaka and Guhyasamaja, at this point in addition to that empowerment, it is said that one also achieves the blessing to achieve the completion stage practices of bodily isolation, self isolation, mental isolation as well as the illusory body. That's not explicitly stated but it's implied. And the final object of attainment, is the resultant enjoyment body, one achieves the cause for that. Within 4 bodies, we have achieved potentiality to achieve 2 of those.

The next verse, beginning with:

Blue light rays and nectars radiate from the HUM at my guru's heart and absorb into my heart.

This is entering us and the lights and nectars and these letters purify negativities principally of mind.

This is considered to be, within the 4 empowerments, the EXALTED WISDOM empowerment.

Within the completion stage it is considered to bestow the potentiality for the 5th stage of completion stage practice and achievement of clear light. In this way one imagines that one has achieved a potentiality for the actualization of Dharmakaya, the truth body.

And then the next verse beginning:

White, red, and dark blue light rays and nectars radiate from the syllables at my guru's three places and absorb into my three places.

This is said to be within the 4 empowerments, the precious WORD empowerment. And it is said to bestow potentiality for the final completion stage practice, which is the stage of the union. And it is said to bestow and extraordinary potentiality for achieving the Svabhavikakaya, the nature-truth body.

And then we think that I have been able to unmistakably to receive the blessings of the guru's holy body, holy speech and holy mind. This is the common presentation, also hopefully and easy to understand presentation of receiving the blessings of the 4 Empowerments.

Then it goes:

The blessings of my guru's holy body, speech, and mind enter my body, speech, and mind.

Then there is a request that is made, and this request goes:

Precious guru, nature of all the buddhas of the three times, to you I request: please bless my continuum. (3x)

This is actually the dissolution and absorption of the field of accumulation, some folks call it the merit field. This is the very final point of the yoga of the guru.

Due to the request, the encircling lineage gurus absorb into my root guru at the center. My root guru also, out of affection for me, melts into red light, enters through my crown, and merges indivisibly with my mind in the aspect of a red syllable BAM at my heart.

... enters through my crown... Geshela said: enters your crown and then travels down your central channel actually.

Through receiving this blessing in the letter BAM at our heart one imagines that our mind and the holy mind of the lama, the yiddam, the deity etc. have become of one essence, inseparable. And one can truly give rise to great bliss, realizing emptiness.

With this absorption of the field of accumulation into oneself, we talk about lights and nectars, we can think 4 here.

Those of you who are following the Chakrasamvara teachings we already talked a little bit of this in the Chakrasamvara lessons. At this point actually, different practices have different ways of doing it. So with the Guhyasamaja practice, actually Guhyasamaja returns from being with you to the pure land, to the place where Guhyasamaja normally abides.

With Yamantaka, there is a verse recollecting that the deities are not truly existent etc., they are in the nature of emptiness, and so at this point, Vajrabhairava and the attending deities, we actually visualize them dissolving into emptiness.

There is another way to meditate in the Yamantaka sadhana, thinking that they have no pinpointable essence. Not just in Yamantaka, but in different practices where you recollect the deity having no pinpointable emptiness [essence?] and therefore they dissolve into emptiness.

But in the practices of Heruka Chakrasamvara and Vajrayogini at this point in the sadhana, what happens is the practitioner is bestowed with blessings, they actually dissolve into the meditator. One imagines that all of the deities of the merit field absorb into the lama, who absorbs into lights and into oneself, and in this way the field of accumulation absorbs into you.

And so then we should have really this feeling that all of the blessings have absorbed into me, I am holding all of these blessings.

So in this way we have now completed all of the preliminary or auxiliary practices that are coming before the actual practice, which is the actual practice of generation stage, transforming the 3 bodies into the path. So as we go from the 5th to the 6th yoga, which is the yoga of the self-generation, we will see that this is the one that contains transforming the 3 bodies into the path, or the 3 bringings.

So Geshela thinks this is a good place to end, at the end of this yoga, before the next yoga, so we will stop there.

We didn't cover some new stuff (laughing), everybody who wanted some new stuff hopefully there is some new stuff. So, thanks very much, we will just do a really brief dedication and then we close.

