Teachings on Vajrakilaya

This afternoon His Holiness is going to bestow the empowerment of Vajrakilaya. For people who are new to the process of empowerment you should know that you will be given a drink of water. You take the water in your cupped hands, with the left hand on top of the right hand. Then sip it and swirl it in your mouth. At the time you drink this water, you should visualize and experience all your obscurations and negativities as purified by this water. This way you enter the precincts of this empowerment as purified. 

What happens now is that a torma, a ritual cake made of parched barley flour is offered up to all the countervailing forces that might hover around the area of the initiation. This means either human or non-human obstructers. They are offered the cake as a symbol of whatever they need or want. Thereby they become satiated and filled. The torma is offered not only in a simple way, with mantra, mudra and samadhi. When the torma is offered, the obstructers rejoice and depart. In Vajrayana Buddhism, this done in a way that seems external. What it symbolizes is that one’s own mindsets that are contaminated by anger, aversion, or hatred are pacified. Thereby no obstructions will arise during the empowerment. In requesting and entering the empowerment mandala of Vajrakilaya, you should set your motivation, first and foremost, as being not just for yourself, but in order to gain the capacity to liberate all sentient beings. Let your altruistic aspiration be the liberation of all sentient beings from their sufferings. The process you are about to experience is called empowerment, or initiation. It is a key element to the practices of Vajrayana Buddhism. The initiation is necessary to practice. Just as perfume essences are ground from various substances and made into oils, if they are not ground and made into oils there will be no scent. 

A master who has received the empowerment himself from an intact lineage must transmit empowerment. Here the lineage that Rinpoche received, and from which He is transmitting the empowerment to us today, is without break. Specifically, His Holiness received this empowerment and the permission to transmit it from the lineage of Ratna Lingpa, who was a great treasure discoverer of Dorje Purba. Later he received the oral transmission and teachings from Kyabje Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche. Empowerment is an extremely important matter. It is crucial. Without empowerment, you will not have the power to practice. If you attempt to practice and you practice incorrectly, it will only lead to negative experiences. It is said you can end up in the hell realms if you practice without proper empowerment. You need to take this quite seriously because the empowerment is a transmission to you from an intact lineage and you need to keep it intact. If you break the lineage of practice, then the vajra master himself is subject to rebirth in the hell realms. In Tibetan the word for empowerment literally means power. What kind of power are we speaking of? We are speaking of the kind of power a king has. The authority of a king is a very powerful thing. When you attain empowerment, it means you receive the authority as an edict, like from a king, to do the practice. Today you are receiving the empowerment of Vajrakilaya; establishing a relationship with him and if you practice you will gain the power of His accomplishment. In Sanskrit, the word for empowerment is abhisheka. ‘Abi’ means everything that is offered, sacrificed, or done away with.
In the process of empowerment you should think that ‘abi’ means that you do away with, or sacrifice, the five poisons (ignorance, attachment, aversion, jealousy, and arrogance). They are gone! Driven away from you. ‘Sheka’ means that you are consecrated. There are four different empowerment processes that take place. The first is called the vase empowerment. In that you are given some water which you should consider to be wisdom nectar of Vajrakilaya. It enters into you through the crown of your head. Then you successively receive the consecration as it moves down, activating the centers of power in your yogic body. Therefore, when it comes to the crown, you receive the first empowerment, the empowerment of the vase. When the wisdom nectar arrives at the throat, you receive the second empowerment, which is called the ‘secret’ empowerment. Then the nectar goes to the heart center and you receive the empowerment of ‘discriminating wisdom of primordial awareness’. At the navel, the fourth center, you receive the empowerment of non-duality. The non-dual essence of awareness and emptiness, which is, called the ‘Great Seal’, or ‘Mahamudra’. The process of initiation is a ripening of your mindstream. Just as a fruit becomes ripe, so your own mindstream can ripen. Your own mental continuum is brought to fruition through this process. Buddhahood is gained through the process of ripening. The seeds are planted for that gaining of Buddhahood. When you receive the vase empowerment, it is the cleansing of all the negativities of you body and the planting of the seed of nirmanakaya, the manifestation of enlightened consciousness. When you receive the secret empowerment, it is the purification of all the obscurations of speech and vibrational patterns. That plants the seed for the eventual realization of Sambogahakaya, the body of visionary enjoyment perceivable by advanced adepts of enlightened consciousness. When you receive the third empowerment, the empowerment of primordial awareness, it is the purification of all obscuration of your mind. It plants the seed for the eventual realization of the dharma-kaya, the unmanifest self-referential state of enlightened consciousness. When you receive the fourth empowerment it is the purification of all the obscurations of body, speech, and mind together. It is the planting of the seed for the eventual realization of the essential body of awareness, combining all other modes of manifestation. It is called, in Sanskrit, the svabavikakaya which means the essential body (or manifestation) of enlightened consciousness. The fourth empowerment is especially important you should pay attention to it. It is, if you understand it, the transmission of the enlightened state of Mahamudra (the Great Seal). It is the complete and utter manifestation of the nature reality just as it is. The origin of the lineage of the transmission of the empowerment of Vajrakilaya is from Kuntungzangpo. From Samantabhadra, the manifestation of Vajrakilaya appeared as Vajrakumara, the youthful wrathful form of Vajrakilaya. It was transmitted to eight great Vidhyadaras. It eventually came down to Guru Padmasambhava. Guru Rinpoche taught it in Tibet in various places and also practiced the realization of Vajrakilaya in Nepal at Jang Re Shal, which is a great cave. Then the treasure of Vajrakilaya was hidden away and discovered in various forms by different treasure discoverers, called Tertons, over generations, and it has come down in an unbroken lineage to His Holiness. The empowerment granted today is the essence of all the Tertons derived from Guru Padmasambhava. Specifically, this empowerment was given in Tibet by Padmasambhava to the king Tetson Detsen and his main disciples. This lineage is a treasure lineage. There are three kinds of treasures, earth, sky, and mind treasures. This is an earth treasure. A Terton named Ösel Dorje took it out of the earth in a particular place. He was a previous incarnation of Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche. This treasure bears the style of Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche. There are many treasures floating about Tibet and some are authoritative. This one is quite authoritative because it bears the stamp of Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche. In order to receive the empowerment, it is necessary to ask the Vajra Master to bestow the empowerment. Now we will repeat a request prayer asking the Vajra Master give the empowerment.

At this point His Holiness starts the empowerment ceremony with the request prayer ...
The teachings continue in the evening.

I am now going to teach the practice (sadhana) of Dorje Purba stage by stage. The first part of the Sadhana of Vajrakilaya is taking refuge. You take refuge in the Enlightened Beings of the Three Times. You take refuge in all the Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, Lamas, and enlightened beings currently in this world with unwavering intent. Imagine here, that your own lama is Vajrakilaya subsuming all the Buddhas of the Three Times. You should understand that your teacher is the enlightened form of Vajrakilaya in this world. The second part of the sadhana is the generation of bodhicitta. In general, this is true of all sadhanas. Taking refuge and generating bodhicitta go together as a unified, synchronistic pattern of energy counteracting the energy of ignorance, or primitive beliefs concerning the nature of reality. The third part is the establishment of boundaries, we say here “All those inimical, countervailing spiritual forces who would militate against the accomplishment of our practice, we cut you off! We lay down the boundary here you cannot come in!” What does this mean? It means our own thoughts, our own negative mindsets, which are not an actual part of the nature of reality. We cut them off. We lay them aside. We draw a line in the sand. With outer, inner, and secret offerings we make boundaries with body speech and mind which cannot be violated. Let go of, completely dissolve your view of yourself and your surroundings as ordinary. Dissolve into the sphere of great emptiness. From emptiness arises the letter ‘Hung’. From the letter ‘Hung’ arises a lotus and sun disk seat radiating light. Its essence is empty. Its nature is cognitively charged and luminously aware. Its wisdom energy is all-pervasive. It manifests in an unimpeded manner. The entire outer universe arises from it and the entire inner universe, namely the sentient beings resident in the outer universe, arise from it as well. The four great elements of earth, air, fire, and water all come from it. It manifests as a boundless celestial mansion. The boundless celestial mansion is square. It has four corners. It is boundless, yet it has four corners. In the center, arises the letter ‘Eh’ above it. From the instantaneous transformation of the letter ‘Eh’ arises a wheel with ten spokes, representing the ten directions. From the wheel arise a lotus and sun seat. On top of the lotus and sun seat there appears the upstanding letter ‘Hung’; from the instantaneous transformation of which arises Vajrakilaya. One visualizes, then, the true presence of Vajrakilaya in the following manner: He appears having three faces and six hands. On the crown of his head is the tiara, which encompasses the Buddhas of the Five Families. He represents the full manifestation of the four bodies of enlightenment (dharma, samboghakaya, nirmanakaya, and svavabhikakaya). He has in his five places the syllables ‘Om’, ‘Tam’, ‘Hung’, ‘Hrih’, and ‘Ah’. He represents the self-awareness and the spontaneous self-arisen presence of all manifestations of enlightened consciousness in and of himself.

At this point in the sadhana, one performs offerings. One offers to Vajrakilaya water for the mouth, water for the feet, perfume and incense, the light of candles, flowers to delight the senses, food, and sound. Those are the outer offerings; the inner offerings are blood and semen. After the offerings are made, there is a stanza of praise: “I myself am Vajrakilaya. In myself as Vajrakilaya, at the center of my heart, is another Vajrakilaya (standing upright and the size of my thumb), and in the heart center of that Vajrakilaya, standing upright, is a vajra in the navel of which is the letter ‘Hung’”. Around the letter ‘Hung’ are the letters of the mantra. These letters are setup counterclockwise, but rotating clockwise. ‘Om’ is in the front, then ‘Vajra, Kili, Kilaya, Sarwa, Bigana, Bam, Hung, Phat’ as you recite the mantra. As one recites the mantra, light rays emanate out. The tendered offerings to the enlightened beings come back and radiate out again and touch all sentient beings, healing them, bringing them into the teachings of Dharma. Then all the light rays emanate and purify the four elements that constitute constituent being. The light rays go out again and make offerings to all the enlightened beings. Then the light dissolves into oneself as Vajrakilaya. There is nothing other than that. That is the visualization and the mindset to hold while reciting the mantra. You recite the
mantra as much as you can. While reciting the mantra the four activities of enlightened consciousness are enacted. That means luring, enriching, magnetizing, and destroying, whatever needs to be done is enacted. Other than that there is no purpose to mantras. His Holiness then leads the practitioners into the practice of the mantra.

From oneself as Vajrakilaya, while reciting the mantra, hold on to the view of yourself as the yidam. In your heart center is the wisdom being Vajrakilaya. From the ‘Hung’ in his heart center light rays radiate out and penetrate the ten directions of space. Then make offerings to all the enlightened beings, and heal and purify the stains and defilements of all sentient beings. Eliminate the limitations of all sentient beings. The light rays then return in to you. All that is conceived as ‘outer world’ dissolves into the central figures of the visualization: oneself as Vajrakilaya. Then the whole divine realm of Vajrakilaya dissolves into Vajrakilaya himself. Vajrakilaya dissolves into the being at his heart. The being at dissolves into the letter ‘Hung’. The letter ‘Hung’ dissolves from the bottom up until it enters into the sphere of emptiness where there is no reference point, no ‘inside’, no ‘outside’, no ‘other’, no subject, no object, and you allow the mind to subside into and rest within its own sphere, in that realization of non-dual awareness and emptiness. As long as you are able, you allow the mind to reside within its own natural sphere. Then, thoughts, specifiable appearances and experiences begin to arise again. You let them arise as the letter ‘Hung’, which instantaneously transforms into the appearance of Vajrakilaya. At his crown center is the white letter ‘Om’, at his throat center is the red letter ‘Ah’, and at his heart center is the blue letter ‘Hung’. Light rays emanate out and penetrate the ten directions of space. You hold to the realization that all form is the manifestation of Vajrakilaya. All sound is the manifestation of the mantra. All thought is the movement of Vajrakilaya’s enlightened consciousness. In that realization, you dedicate the merit, or the positive energy that is accumulated in the practice of the sadhana to the welfare of all sentient beings. That concludes the empowerment and a brief teaching of how to practice the sadhana of Vajrakilaya.