

VAJRASATTVA PURIFICATION PRACTICE

PURIFICATION

TAM-CHE DU-NI SA-ZHI-DAG

May the surface of the earth in every direction

SEG-MA LA-SOG ME-PA-DANG

Be stainless and pure without roughness or fault

LAG-TIL TAR-NYAM BE-DUR-YA

As smooth as the palm of a child's soft hand

RANG-ZHIN JAM-POR NE-GYUR-CHIG

And as naturally polished as lapis lazuli.

LHA-DANG MI-YI CHÖ-PAY-DZE

May the material offerings of gods and men

NGO-SU SHAM-DANG YI-KYI-TRUL

Both those set before me and those visualised

KUN-ZANG CHÖ-TRIN LA-NA-ME

Like a cloud of offerings of Samantabhadra

NAM-KAY KAM-KUN KYAB-GYUR-CHIG

Pervade and encompass the vastness of space.

PURIFICATION MANTRA

OM NAMO BHAGA-WATE, BANZA SARA DRA-MARDA-NE TATHA-GATA-YA, ARAHA-TE,
SAMYAK-SAM BUDDHA-YA TAYA-TA, OM BANZE BANZE MAHA BANZE MAHA TENZA
BANZE, MAHA BIDYA BANZE MAHA BODHICITTA BANZE MAHA BODHI MAN-DROPA,
SAM-DRAMA-NA BANZE SARWA KARMA AWARANA, BISHO DHANA, BANZE SOHA

(Recite the purification mantra three times)

KON-CHOG SUM-GYI DEN-PA-DANG

By the force of the truth from the three Jewels of Refuge

SANG-GYE-DANG JANG-CHUB SEM-PA

By the firm inspiration from all Bodhisattvas and Buddhas

TAM-CHE-KYI JIN-GYI-LAB-DANG

By the power of all the Buddhas who have fully completed

TSOG-NYI YONG-SU DZOG-PAY

Their collections of both good merit and insight

NGA-TANG CHEN-PO-DANG

By the might of the void

CHO-KYI YING NAM-PAR DAG-CHING

Inconceivable and pure

SAM-GYI MI-KYAB-PAY TOB-KYI

May all of these offerings be hereby transformed

DE-ZHIN NYI-DU GYUR-CHIG

Into their actual nature of voidness

REFUGE

KON CHOG SUM LA CHAB SU DRO

I go for refuge to the Triple Gem.

SEM CHEN THAM CHAY DAK KI DROL

I shall liberate all sentient beings

CHANG CHUB NAY LA GOE PAR GYI

and place them in the state of Enlightenment.

CHANG CHUB SEM NI YANG DAK KYED

I shall purely generate Bodhicitta.

(recite three times)

VAJRASATTVA VISUALISATION

RANG KI CHI RO PAM LAY PE MA DANG

On the crown of my head, from a PAM comes a lotus

A LAY DA WAY KYIL KOR GYI TENG DU

And on it, from an A, a moon-disc mandala.

HUM LAY DOR JE KAR PO TSE NGA PA

On top of this, from a HUM comes a five-spoked white vajra,

TE WA LA HUM KI TSEN PA

The hub of which is marked with a HUM.

DE LAY OED TROE.

From this, light rays emanate

DU YANG SU GYUR PA LAY.

and collect back together,

DOR JE SEM PA KU DOK KAR PO
transforming into a Vajrasattva with a white-coloured body,

SHEL CHIK CHAK NYI KYI
one face and two arms,

DOR JE DANG DRI BU TSIN PA.
holding a vajra and bell and embracing

YUM DOR JE NYEM MA KAR MO
the motherly consort Dorje Nyemma, white,

SHAL CHIK CHAK NYI KYI
with one face and two arms,

DRI GUK DANG THOED PA DZIN PAY KHYUD PA.
holding a cleaver and skull-cup.

NYI KA ANG DAR GYI NA ZA DANG
Both are adorned with silken scarves

RIN PO CHE'I GYEN NA TSOK PAY GYEN PA.
and various jewelled ornaments.

YAB DOR JE'I KYIL TRUNG KI SHUG PA.
The father sits in the vajra position,

DE'I THUG KAR DA WAY TENG DU HUM YIK KAR PO
and in his heart on a moon is a white syllable HUM

DE LAY OED ZER TROE.
from which light rays emanate

RANG DRI YE SHAY PA CHEN DRANG.
inviting forth wisdom-beings who are like himself.

NYI SU MED PAR GYUR.
They (combine and) become non-dual.

LAR YANG THUG KAY HUM LAY OED ZER TROE.
Once again from a HUM at his heart light rays emanate

WANG KI LHA CHEN DRANG.
and invite forth empowering deities.

DE SHIN SHEG PA THAM CHAY KYI
O all Tathagatha Buddhas

DI LA NGOEN PAR WANG KUR DU SOL.
please confer empowerment on this one.

SHEL SOL WA TAB PAY
Having thus been requested,

DE NAM KYI YE SHAY KYI DU TSI GANG WAY BUM PA THOG NAY.
they hold up vases filled with the nectar of wisdom and confer the empowerment saying,

OM SARVA TATHAGATA ABHIKSHEKA TA SAMAYA SHRI YE HUM.

SHAY WANG KURU KU YE SHAY KYI DU TSI GANG.
Thus initiated, (Vajrasattva's) body becomes filled with the nectar of wisdom

MI KYOED PAY BU GYEN PAR GYUR.
and his crown is adorned by Akshobhya.

CHOM DEN DAY DOR JE SEM PA,
O Bhagavan Vajrasattva, I request you to cleanse and purify myself

DAK DANG SEM CHEN THAM CHAY KYI DIK DRIB DANG.
and all sentient beings of our downfalls and obstacles,

DAM TSIK NYAM CHAK THAM CHAY CHANG SHING DAK PAR DZAY DU SOL.
as well as of our degenerated and broken words of honour.

SHAY SOL WA TAB PAY.
Having been thus requested

THUG KAY HUM KAY OED ZER TROE.
from the HUM at his heart light rays emanate,

SEM CHEN THAM CHAY KYI DIK DRIB CHANG.
cleansing all sentient beings of their downfalls and obstacles,

SANG GYAY SAY CHAY LA NYE PAY CHOD PA PHUL.
and making offerings to please the Buddhas and their offspring.

DE NAM KYI YON TEN THAM CHAY OED KYI NAM PAR DU NAY
All their good qualities collect back together in the form of light

THUG KAY HUM LA THIN PAY
which dissolves into the HUM at his heart,

ZI JI DANG THU TAB PHUN SUM TSOK PAR GYUR.
whereby his brilliance, power and strength become quintessence of the sublime.

THE 100 SYLLABLE MANTRA OF VAJRASATTVA

OM BANZA-SATTVA, SAMAYA MANU-PULAYA
Oh Vajrasattva, keep your pledge,

BANZA-SATTVA TVENO PATISHTA
Vajrasattva reside in me,

DIRDHO ME BHAVA, SUTOKYO ME BHAVA
Make me firm, make me satisfied,

SUPOKYO ME BHAVA, ANU RAKTO ME BHAVA
Fulfill me, make me compassionate,

SARVA SIDDHAM ME TA YANZA
Grant me all siddhis.

SARVA-KARMA SUCHA ME
Also make my mind

CHITTAM SHRIYAM KURU HUM HA HA HA HA HOH
Virtuous in all actions Hum Ha Ha Ha Ha Hoh

BHAGAVAN SARVA TATHAGATA
All the Blessed Tathagatas,

BANZA MA ME MUNCHA, BANZA BHAVA
Do not abandon me, make me indivisible,

MAHA SAMAYA SATTVA AH HUM PHAT
Great Pledge Being.

(recite 21 or 108 times)

DAK NI MI SHAY MONG PA YI.
Out of ignorance and delusion I have transgressed

DAM TSIK LAY NI KAL SHING NYAM.
my words of honour and let them degenerate.

LA MA GON PO KYAB DZOD CHIK.
O Lama, lord master,

TSO WO DOR JE DZIN PA TE.
lord of beings

THUG DE CHEN PO'I DAK NYID CHEN.
with a nature of great compassion,

DRO WAY TSO LA DAK KYAB CHI.
to you I turn for refuge.

DOR JE SEM PAY SHAL NAY RIK KYI BU.
Vajrasattva replies, O son of the family, you are cleansed

KYOD KYI DIK DRIB DANG
and purified of all your downfalls and obstacles,

DAN TSIK NYAM CHAK THAM CHAY CHANG SHING DAK GO.
as well as your degenerated and broken words of honour.

SHAY SUNG NAY RANG LA THIN PAY RANG KI GO SUM DANG
Then he dissolves into me and my body, speech and mind become

DOR JE SEM PAY KU SUNG THUK YER MI CHAY PAR GYUR.
inseparable from the body, speech and mind of Vajrasattva.

DEDICATION

GE-WA DI-YI NYUR-DU DAG
By the accumulation of this merit

DOR-JE SEM-PA DRUB-GYUR-NE
may I quickly accomplish in reality Vajrasattva.

DRO-WA CHIG-KYANG MA-LU-PA
And all sentient beings without exception

KYE-KYI SA-LA GO-PAR-SHOG
may I lead to that stage.

JANG-CHUB SEM-CHOG RINPOCHE
May the supreme Bodhi-mind
MA-KYE PAY-NAM KE-GYUR-CHIG
grow where it has not grown.
KYE-PA NYAM-PA ME-PA-YANG
Where it has grown undefiled,
GONG-NE GONG-DU PHEL-WAR-SHOG
may it unceasingly increase.

NOTES ON VAJRASATTVA

At the beginning of our practice we reflected on how rare and precious this human existence is. To spur our endeavour we reflected upon impermanence. To increase our mindfulness we reflected on the way actions lead to their results. Finally, we saw how the ordinary condition of samsara is never beyond suffering and, realising the unchanging benefit of liberation, we understood the need to find and rely upon a spiritual teacher. Then we continued with the main part of the preliminary practice, first crossing the threshold of the Buddhadharma by taking refuge in the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. After that, we developed bodhichitta, the wish to attain enlightenment for the sake of others, which is the root of the Vehicle of the Bodhisattvas. Now, as we enter the Vajrayana, we come to the meditation and recitation on Vajrasattva (in Tibetan, Dorje Sempa), the purpose of which is to remove hindrances on the path to enlightenment. These hindrances are the obscurations and negative actions we have accumulated in the past.

Vajrasattva is the sovereign lord of all the mandalas of the Vajrayana, or Diamond Vehicle. To meditate on Vajrasattva is the same as to meditate upon all the Buddhas. His hundred-syllable mantra is the quintessence of all mantras.

The main obstacles to progress along the path to enlightenment are the obscurations that come from our past negative actions. There are various kinds of negative actions. Some, like killing, stealing, lying or cheating are obviously intrinsically unvirtuous. Others are transgressions of vows and precepts that the Buddha or one's teachers have taught to help one progress spiritually.

The main purpose of Vajrasattva practice is to purify these obscurations. It is said, "The only virtue of sin is that it can be purified." In fact, there is nothing that cannot be purified, even the most apparently heinous deed.

The four powers

In order to purify negative actions completely, one needs four powers or strengths: the power of support, the power of regret, the power of the antidote, and the power of resolution.

Purification requires a support for us to express our remorse, make our confession and repair the effects of our past negative actions. In this case, the support is Vajrasattva. Visualise him above your head, utterly peaceful and smiling, brilliant white like a dazzling snow mountain illuminated by the rays of a hundred thousand suns. He is sitting in full vajra posture, upon a thousand-petalled white lotus and a moon disc. In his right hand he holds a golden vajra at his heart centre, and in his left, a silver bell resting on his hip. Vajrasattva is wearing the thirteen Sambhogakaya adornments - the

five silken garments and the eight jewelled ornaments. He is in union with his consort, Vajratopa,¹⁰ who holds a curved knife in her right hand and, in her left, a skull cup filled with amrita, the nectar of immortality. Visualise Vajrasattva not as someone made of flesh and blood, but like a rainbow in the sky, vivid yet empty. Unlike a rainbow, on the other hand, he is not simply something perceived physically, for he is pervaded with the wisdom and compassion of all the Buddhas. Think of him as your kind root teacher, appearing in the form of Vajrasattva.

The second power is the power of deep, intense remorse for one's past actions. If you had swallowed a virulent poison without realising it, you would certainly feel desperate when you found out you were going to die. Similarly, up to now you have not been aware of the devastating power that has accumulated from the negative actions you have committed throughout many past lives. Today, realising that these negative actions are the very cause of your wandering in samsara and of all your suffering, you feel a strong regret at having acted so carelessly. If you did not feel this regret, you would simply continue to accumulate negative actions and perpetuate your suffering. But now you realise that you need to purify yourself, so you turn to Vajrasattva to request the means to do so.

Why is it Vajrasattva that we choose for this purification? When he vowed to achieve enlightenment for the sake of all beings, he made this wish: "When I become a fully enlightened Buddha, may all beings be purified of their obscurations, their ignorance and their negative actions simply by hearing my name, seeing my form, thinking of me, or reciting the mantra that contains my name."

Regret alone is not enough: we have to put into action the means for purifying ourselves. This is done through the power of the antidote. Direct your whole mind towards Vajrasattva, confident that, since he is the all-encompassing sovereign of all mandalas, the union of all the Buddhas, he has the power to purify your obscurations. Visualise Vajrasattva above your head as previously described, with a moon disc in his heart centre, upon which is a white letter HUNG surrounded by the hundred-syllable mantra. Recite:

Ah! On the crown of my head, on a lotus and moon,
Sits Guru Vajrasattva in union with his consort.
From the mantra in his heart falls a stream of nectar,
Which purifies illness, harmful influences, negative actions and
defilements.

Then recite the hundred-syllable mantra as many times as you can. While reciting, generate strong devotion towards Vajrasattva, thinking, "Because of my past actions in this life and in all my previous lives, I am in this miserable situation in samsara. Grant your blessings now so that I can purify myself, or I will continue to circle in samsara forever." This fervent supplication, offered with hands folded and tears of devotion in your eyes, invokes the wisdom mind of Vajrasattva to purify your negative actions. By the force of your prayer, from the letter HUNG in Vajrasattva's heart, luminous nectar starts to flow, containing all his wisdom, loving-kindness and power. This nectar completely fills the bodies of Vajrasattva and his consort and flows out from the point of their union, from their toes and from all the pores of their bodies into the

thousand-petalled lotus upon which Vajrasattva is sitting above the crown of your head, and down through its stem, the end of which penetrates the opening in the top of your head, the Brahma aperture. Through this aperture the nectar descends and fills your body, completely washing away all your obscurations and impurities, which pour forth from all the pores and apertures of your body. Your illnesses come out in the form of pus and blood, negative influences in the form of insects, scorpions, and snakes, and mental obscurations as dark, smoky liquid. The cleansing stream of nectar is so powerful that it washes away all your obscurations like a river in flood carrying away all the trees and rocks in a valley. As these obscurations flow out of your body, the earth below you opens, down to seven levels below the surface. There, in the form of a red bull with mouth gaping open, is Yama, the Lord of Death. The dirty liquid enters his mouth, and, as he swallows it, turns into nectar. Now all your karmic debts, your past actions, have been totally purified and transformed into wisdom. Similarly, not only is your body purified, but even the ordinary aggregates and elements - your flesh, blood, bones and skin - are no longer gross material substances; they become transparent, as if made of light. You are completely clear and luminous inside and out. Then you consider that this red bull, and all those to whom you have past karmic debts, are completely satisfied. The earth beneath you closes again and you are completely purified, your body pure and transparent like crystal.

The amrita from Vajrasattva still continues to flow down, progressively filling your body. As it fills your head, you receive the blessings of Vajrasattva's body, and all the negative actions you have committed physically, such as killing, stealing, and sexual misconduct, are purified; you receive the vase initiation and the seed is planted for realising the Nirmanakaya, the manifested body of the Buddhas. When the nectar reaches your throat, you receive the blessings of Vajrasattva's speech, and all the negative actions you have committed verbally, such as lies, idle chatter, slander, and harsh words, are purified; you receive the secret initiation and the seed is planted for realising the Sambhogakaya, the body of perfect enjoyment. Then, as the nectar flows down to your heart level, you receive the blessings of Vajrasattva's mind, and all your negative thoughts, such as animosity, envy, and false views are purified; you receive the third empowerment, the wisdom initiation, and the seed is planted for realising the Dharmakaya, the absolute body. Finally, as the nectar reaches your navel centre, throughout your body you receive the fourth initiation, the initiation of word, which indicates the absolute nature; all the subtle defilements of body, speech and mind are purified, you receive the blessing of the adamant wisdom of Vajrasattva, and the seed is planted for realising the Vajrakaya, the unchanging adamant body of all the Buddhas.

After this, conclude by reciting the supplication to Vajrasattva:

Protector, I have been ignorant and foolish, and I have broken and spoiled the samaya. Guru and protector, be my refuge! Sublime Vajra Holder, embodiment of great compassion, supreme among beings, I take refuge in you. I repent and confess all deteriorations, breaches, faults and downfalls of the root and branch samayas related to body, speech and mind. Cleanse and purify all negative actions, obscurations and habitual tendencies.

As soon as you have said this, think that not only your own defilements and obscurations, but also those of all beings, are completely purified. Imagine that Vajrasattva is pleased by your supplication. He smiles and says, "Noble child, you are now purified of all obscurations." After that say:

Vajrasattva melts into light and dissolves into me.

The moment Vajrasattva dissolves into you, you no longer have your ordinary form, but become Vajrasattva, united with his wisdom consort. In your heart centre is a white moon disc, upon which there is a blue letter HUNG surrounded by the six-syllable mantra, OM VAJRA SATVA HUNG, pronounced om benzar sato hung in Tibetan). In front, which should be thought of as being to the east, is the white syllable OM; on the right, to the south, are the yellow syllables VAJRA; behind, to the west, is the red syllable SA; on your left, to the north, is the green syllable TVA.

From the HUNG, and from the syllables of the mantra, boundless rays of multicoloured light emanate to the Buddhafields of the ten directions, making infinite offerings to the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. Think that the Buddhas, having accepted your offerings, send back their blessings, all their wisdom, loving-kindness and power, in the form of rays of light which dissolve into you. Like a lotus bud opening as the rays of the sun touch it, Vajrasattva becomes even more brilliant and perfect.

Then visualise that from your whole body and from the syllables of the mantra, boundless rays of light emanate, filling the whole universe around you. The universe is now no longer an ordinary, impure place, but the perfect Buddhafield of Vajrasattva, the Buddhafield of Pure Joy. The sentient beings in it are also no longer ordinary: all the males have the form and nature of Vajrasattva, and all the females the form and nature of Vajratopa, his wisdom consort. To the east all beings become white Vajrasattvas and Vajratopas of the Vajra or Diamond family; to the south they become yellow Vajrasattvas and Vajratopas of the Ratna or Jewel family; to the west, they become red Vajrasattvas and Vajratopas of the Padma or Lotus family; to the north they become green Vajrasattvas and Vajratopas of the Karma or Action family; and in the centre, they become blue Vajrasattvas and Vajratopas of the Tathagata or Buddha family. All these beings are continuously reciting the hundred-syllable mantra, the sound of which fills the whole of space.

In this way, appearances, sounds and thoughts are no longer ordinary, but appear as the sheer display of wisdom. The external world is a Buddhafield and the beings in it are manifestations of Vajrasattva and Vajratopa, all sounds are the resonance of mantra and all thoughts are the spontaneous display of bliss-emptiness.

Now recite the six-syllable mantra as many times as you can. At the end of the session, the whole outer universe together with the beings in it, starting from the periphery, dissolves into you as Vajrasattva and consort. Then the consort dissolves into Vajrasattva; Vajrasattva melts into light and dissolves into the mantra in your heart centre. The syllables of the mantra dissolve into each other one by one, and then into the central letter HUNG. The HUNG, starting from the bottom, dissolves upward, melting into light, until finally it vanishes like a rainbow in the sky, leaving only the vast expanse of luminous emptiness. Sit for a while, simply remaining in that

state of utter simplicity, free from all concepts and clinging. It is the innate wisdom, the immutable mode of being, the true face of the absolute Vajrasattva.

After a while, when you start to come out of this meditation and thoughts again arise in your mind, you should think that all outer appearances are a Buddhafield, all beings are deities, all sounds are mantras, and all thoughts are wisdom. As the mirror of your mind has been wiped clean through the practice of Vajrasattva, all phenomena are dearly reflected in it according to their true nature.

In order to make your purification last, you now need to apply the fourth power, the power of resolution. This means to have the unwavering determination that even if it costs you your life you will not revert to negative action, which, as we now know, causes all our suffering and keeps us circling in samsara.

Conclude by wholeheartedly dedicating the merit of this practice for the sake of all beings, saying, "By this merit, may all sentient beings swiftly achieve the level of Vajrasattva himself," and offering all the benefits from this practice completely to all beings. You should not think that the merit is divided up among them, but that each and every being receives all the merit in its entirety. When dedicating the merit, however, you should remain free of clinging and concepts, mindful that in absolute truth there is no one who dedicates, no object of dedication and no act of dedicating. The hundred-syllable mantra has to be recited a hundred thousand times, and the six-syllable mantra six hundred thousand times. Until you have completed the number of recitations of the hundred-syllable mantra, spend most of each practice session on that, and then recite the shorter mantra a few times at the end. Once you have completed the hundred thousand recitations of the hundred-syllable mantra, recite it just a few times at the beginning of each session and then concentrate on the recitation of the shorter mantra.

We should remember that meditating upon Vajrasattva is the same as meditating upon all the Buddhas. To achieve the realisation of Vajrasattva is to achieve the qualities of all the Buddhas. Moreover, the mantra of Vajrasattva, the hundred-syllable mantra, is the hundred peaceful and wrathful deities in the form of sound; it embodies all the wisdom and power of Vajrasattva himself. If you recite the hundred-syllable mantra twenty-one times every day, concentrating completely on the visualisation of the nectar pouring down and the purification, no breaches of vow or samaya and no obscurations will be left unpurified. If you recite the hundred-syllable mantra one hundred times without distraction, you can even purify a "crime with immediate retribution" quite easily. If you do this practice, all the Buddhas will think of you as their own child, and everything that obstructs your spiritual experience and ultimate realisation will be dispelled.

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