

A Short Vajrasattva Meditation

*Purification with the Four
Opponent Powers*



by Lama Zopa Rinpoche

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Editor's Introduction

In *Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand*, Pabongkha Rinpoche explains how the great Atisha would purify any negativity, no matter how small, immediately. Even in public or when riding his horse, as soon as he noticed a breach of his ethics, he would stop what he was doing, drop to one knee and then and there, purify it with the four opponent powers – the powers of dependence, regret, remedy, and restraint.

Of course, compared to us, Atisha may not have had that much to purify. Still, he would say, “I never break my pratimoksha vows; I rarely break my bodhisattva vows; but my tantric vows – I transgress those like falling rain.”

Atisha practiced purification in this way because of his deep realization of the psycho-mechanics of negative karma, especially its four fundamentals: negative karma is certain to bring suffering; it multiplies exponentially; if eradicated, it cannot bring its suffering result; and once created, it never simply disappears.

Through the study and practice of Dharma, we should try to attain Atisha's level of understanding. In the meantime, we should try to practice as he did.

Thus, we can be like the great Atisha – whenever we notice we have broken a vow or created any other kind of negative karma, we can purify that negativity with the four opponent powers without a second's delay.



The Actual Practice

Visualize as follows: On your right side is your father; on your left side is your mother. Your enemies and those sentient beings who make you agitated are in front of you, and your friends and those to whom you are attached are seated behind you. All other universal living beings, in human form, are surrounding you, as far as you can imagine. Visualize your object of refuge, the merit field, in the space in front of you, either the elaborate visualization of “the one into many,” as in Jor Chö; or the simple visualization of “the many into one”: all Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha in the one aspect of Buddha Shakyamuni. As you recite the verse below, think that you and all sentient beings are together taking refuge in the Three Jewels.

The Power of Dependence (A): Taking Refuge

I forever take refuge in Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha,
 And in all the three vehicles,
 In the dakinis of secret mantra yoga, in the heroes and heroines,
 In the empowering goddesses and the bodhisattvas.
 But most of all, I take refuge in my holy Guru forever. (3x)

The Power of Regret

First recall the definition of negative karma – any action that results in suffering, usually an action motivated by ignorance, attachment or aversion.

Almost every action I do, twenty-four hours a day, is motivated by worldly concern, attachment to the comfort of this life. It is like this from birth to death in this life and has been like that from beginningless rebirths. Nearly every action I have ever created has been non-virtuous, the cause of suffering. Not only that, but continuously I have also been breaking my pratimoksha, bodhisattva and tantric vows. Worst of all, I have created the heaviest of negative karmas in relation to my virtuous friends – getting angry at them, generating wrong views, having non-devotional thoughts towards them, harming their holy body and disobeying their advice. Having these negative imprints on my mental continuum is unbearable. It’s as if I’ve swallowed a lethal poison. I must practice the antidote right away and purify all this negative karma immediately, without a second’s delay.

In this way, generate strong feelings of urgency and regret.



Remembering Impermanence and Death

Many people my age or younger have died. It's a miracle that I'm still alive and have this incredible opportunity to purify my negative karma. Death is certain but its time is most uncertain. If I were to die right now, I would definitely be born in the lower realms. Because I could not practice Dharma there I would remain in the lower realms for countless eons. Therefore, how unbelievably fortunate I am to be able to purify my negative karma right now, without even a second's delay, by practicing the Vajrasattva meditation-recitation.

The Power of Dependence (B): Generating Bodhichitta

But I am not practicing this Vajrasattva purification for myself alone – the purpose of my life is to release all hell beings, pretas, animals, humans, asuras, suras, and intermediate state beings from all their suffering and its causes and lead them to unsurpassed enlightenment. In order to do this I must first reach enlightenment myself. Therefore, I must purify all my negative karma immediately by practicing the Vajrasattva meditation-recitation.

Visualization

Above the crown of my head, seated upon a lotus and moon seat, are Vajrasattva father and mother. Their bodies are white; each has one face and two arms. He holds a dorje and bell, she a curved knife and skullcup. They are embracing each other. The father is adorned with six mudras, the mother with five. He sits in the vajra posture, she in the lotus.

Vajrasattva is my root Guru, the holy mind of all the buddhas, the dharmakaya, who out of his unbearable compassion, which embraces me and all other sentient beings, appears in this form to purify me and all others.

In this way, your mind is transformed into Guru devotion – the root of all blessings and realizations of the path to enlightenment.

On a moon disk at Vajrasattva's heart stands a HUM encircled by a garland of the hundred syllable mantra. A powerful stream of white nectar flows from the HUM and mantra garland and I am cleansed of all sickness, spirit harm, negative karma and obscurations.



The Power of the Remedy: Mantra Recitation

OM VAJRASATTVA SAMAYA MANUPALAYA / VAJRASATTVA
TVENOPATISHTHA / DRIDHO ME BHAVA / SUTOSHYO ME
BHAVA / SUPOSHYO ME BHAVA / ANURAKTO ME BHAVA /
SARVA SIDDHIM ME PRAYACCHA / SARVA KARMA SU CHAME /
CHITTAM SHRIYAM KURU HUM / HA HA HA HA HO /
BHAGAVAN SARVA TATHAGATA / VAJRA MAME MUNCHA /
VAJRA BHAVA MAHA SAMAYA SATTVA AH HUM PHAT

ཨོཾ་བཌྲ་སཏྲ་སམ་ཡེ། མ་རུ་སྤྲ་ལ་ཡེ། བཌྲ་སཏྲ་ ཁྱེ་ལོ་བ་ཏིལ། འི་ཚྭ་
མེ་བྲ་མ། སུ་བོ་ཏྱེ་མེ་བྲ་མ། སུ་ཏྱེ་ཏྱེ་མེ་བྲ་མ། ཨ་རུ་རྟོ་མེ་བྲ་མ།
སཐ་སིཿ་མེ་བྲ་ཡ་ཚྭ། སཐ་ཀམ་སུ་ཅ་མེ། ཅིཿ་བྱི་ཡི་ཀུ་རུ་ཧྲི། ཏ་ཏ་ཏ་ཏ་
ཏི། ལྷ་ག་མན་སཐ་ཏ་བྲ་ག་ཏ། བཌྲ་མ་མེ་མུལ། བཌྲ་བྲ་མ་མ་རུ་སམ་
ཡ་སཏྲ་ཨུཿ་ཧྲི་པཎ། ། (21x)

The Meaning of the Mantra

You, Vajrasattva, have generated the holy mind (bodhichitta) according to your pledge (samaya). Your holy mind is enriched with the simultaneous holy actions of releasing transmigratory beings from samsara (the circling, suffering aggregates). Whatever happens in my life – happiness or suffering, good or bad – with a pleased, holy mind, never give up but please guide me. Please stabilize all happiness, including the happiness of the upper realms, actualize all actions and sublime and common realizations, and please make the glory of the five wisdoms abide in my heart.

Recite the mantra seven or twenty-one times or as many times as possible, practicing the three techniques of downward cleansing, upward cleansing and instantaneous cleansing (see appendix 2, p. 10). For the meaning of the mantra word by word, see appendix 3, pp. 12-13.

Generating Faith in Having Been Purified

From the crown of my head, Guru Vajrasattva says, “Child of the race, your negativities, obscurations and broken and damaged pledges have been completely purified.”

Generate strong faith that all is completely purified just as Guru Vajrasattva has said.



The Power of Restraint: Refraining From Creating Negativities Again

Before Guru Vajrasattva, I vow never again to commit those negative actions from which I can easily abstain and not to commit for a day, an hour or at least a few seconds those negative actions from which I find it difficult to abstain.

Absorption

Guru Vajrasattva is extremely pleased with your pledge. Vajrasattva father and mother melt into light and dissolve into you. Your body, speech and mind become inseparably one with Guru Vajrasattva's holy body, speech and mind.

Meditation on Emptiness

In emptiness, there is no I, creator of negative karma; there is no action of creating negative karma; there is no negative karma created.

Place your mind in that emptiness for a little while. In this way, look at all phenomena as empty – they do not exist from their own side. With this awareness of emptiness, dedicate the merits.

Dedication

Due to all these merits of the three times collected by all the buddhas, bodhisattvas, myself, and all other sentient beings (which appear to be real, from their own side, but which are empty), may I (who appears to be real but is empty) achieve Guru Vajrasattva's enlightenment (which appears to be real but is empty) and lead all sentient beings (who appear to be real but are totally empty) to that enlightenment (which appears to be real but is empty) by myself alone (who appears to be real but is also totally empty, non-existent from my own side).

May the precious bodhichitta, the source of all happiness and success for myself and all other sentient beings, be generated within my own mind and in the minds of all sentient beings without even a second's delay; and may that which has been generated be increased.



May I and all other sentient beings have Lama Tsong Khapa as our direct Guru in all our lifetimes, never be separated for even a second from the pure path that is greatly praised by the conqueror buddhas, and actualize the complete path – the three principal paths and the two stages of Highest Yoga Tantra – the root of which is Guru devotion, within our minds as quickly as possible.

Just as the brave Manjushri and Samantabhadra realized things as they are, I dedicate all these virtues in the best way, that I may follow after them.

Whatever dedication the three time victorious ones gone to bliss have admired as best, in the same way, I also perfectly dedicate all these roots of virtue so that I may perform good works.



References:

Lama Zopa Rinpoche. *Teachings from the Vajrasattva Retreat*. Lama Yeshe Wisdom Archive: Boston, 2000.

Lama Yeshe. *The Tantric Path of Purification*. Wisdom Publications: Boston, 1995.

Colophon:

This teaching (including the appendices) was given by Lama Zopa Rinpoche during the Vajrasattva retreat, Land of Medicine Buddha, Soquel, California, USA, 1999, and revised in New York, November 1999. Edited by Nicholas Ribush, 2001. Lightly revised for inclusion in *Essential Buddhist Prayers*, Vol. 2 by Ven. Constance Miller, FPMT Education Department, 2001.



Appendix 1

Breathing Exercise

In your body there are three main channels. The central channel is like a transparent tube extending through the center of your body from the crown chakra to the secret chakra. The two side channels, smaller than the central channel, start from the nostrils, first running up into the head and then curving back and down (like umbrella handles), running downward and parallel on either side of the central channel, meeting it just below the navel chakra.

Begin by breathing in slowly, concentrating on the air entering the left nostril. As you breathe in, start slowly, then breathe slightly faster, then slow down at the end of the breath. Bring the air down through the left channel to the navel, where, as you exhale, the air flows into the right channel and up and out the right nostril. As you breathe, all your desire and attachment energy is expelled and disappears completely. Do this for three breaths.

Then repeat the process, concentrating instead on breathing in through the right nostril and breathing out through the left. As you breathe in this way, all your aversion energy and hatred are expelled and completely vanish. Do this for three breaths.

Then, breathe in through both nostrils. Bring the breath down through the central channel, together with your saliva. Hold your breath down at the level of the navel chakra, which is located four finger-widths below the navel. Gently tighten your pelvic and genital muscles and bring that energy up to meet the breath energy at the navel chakra. Keep them together and try to feel the energy. Hold the energy there until you start to feel uncomfortable. Then gently and naturally release your breath. Exhale the breath energy out through your nose, while imagining that all your ignorance energy is expelled through the crown of your head. Your energy winds (*prana*) disperse into your central channel and dissolve inside, at your heart, instead of being exhaled outside. Do this for three breaths.



Appendix 2

How to Purify During Mantra Recitation



There are three ways to make purification while reciting the mantra. One can do all three or only one, whatever is most comfortable and depending on one's individual practice.

The first method

Visualize the white blissful kundalini energy flows down from Vajrasattva father/mother in union into your central channel. It spreads throughout your nervous system, flowing very strongly like water coming from a hose or like a very powerful shower, and flushes out all negativities of your body, speech, and mind through the openings and pores of the lower part of your body. All this negative energy is expelled in the form of snakes, scorpions, ants, long worms, etc. or as black tar or dirty black oil. Feel that you are completely purified, clean clear, especially your gross negativities, and over-come with blissful energy.

The second method

The blissful kundalini energy slowly fills your body starting from below. As the level of amrita rises, your negativities start to rise as well, floating on top of the nectar, like oil floating on water. Your negativities and defilements are slowly pushed upward by the pure amrita kundalini energy; it gradually overflows out of your body through all your upper orifices and your crown chakra. You experience great bliss.



The third method

An immense amount of powerful light energy, limitless bliss-ful kundalini energy in the form of light, radiates from Vajrasattva's heart. Immediately as it makes contact with your crown chakra, the negative energy, especially your ignorant attachment energy, completely disappears, just as when a bright light is switched on in a dark room, the darkness instantly and completely disappears. You cannot say that the darkness leaves through the window or through the door when a light is turned on. It just disappears, no longer existing anywhere at all.



Appendix 3

The Meaning of the Mantra

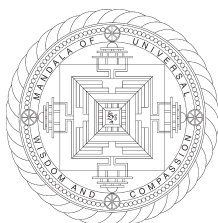


OM	the qualities of buddha's holy body, speech, and mind; all that is auspicious and of great value
VAJRASATTVA	the being who has the wisdom of inseparable bliss and emptiness
SAMAYA	a pledge that must not be transgressed
MANU PALAYA	lead me along the path you took to enlightenment
VAJRA SATTVA TVENOPATISHTHA	make me abide closer Vajrasattva's vajra holy mind
DRIDHO ME BHAVA	please grant me a firm and stable realization of the ultimate nature of phenomena
SUTOSHYO ME BHAVA	please grant me the blessing of being extremely pleased with me
SUPOSHYO ME BHAVA	bless me with the nature of well developed great bliss
ANURAKTO ME BHAVA	bless me with the nature of the love that leads me to your state



SARVA SIDDHIM ME PRAYACCHA	please grant all powerful attainments
SARVA KARMA SUCHAME	please grant all virtuous actions
CHITTAM SHRIYAM KURU	please grant your glorious qualities
HUM	the vajra holy mind
HA HA HA HA HOH	the five transcendental wisdoms
BHAGAVAN	one who has destroyed every obscuration, attained all realizations, and passed beyond suffering
SARVA TATHAGATA VAJRA	all those who have realized emptiness, knowing things just as they are
MAME MUNCHA	do not abandon me
VAJRA BHAVA	the nature of indestructible inseparability
MAHA SAMAYA SATTVA	the great pledge being; the great being who has the pledge, the vajra holy mind
AH	the vajra holy speech
HUM	the transcendental wisdom of great bliss
PHAT	clarifying the transcendental wisdom of inseparable bliss and emptiness and destroying the dualistic mind that obstructs it

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