

A Short Vajrasattva Meditation

Purification with the Four Opponent Powers



by Lama Zopa Rinpoche

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.

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Purification with the Four Opponent Powers

Visualization

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: 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: 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 (7x,
21x, or 28X)

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 p. 102). For the meaning of the mantra word by word, see p. 98.

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.

Colophon:

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