

## HOW TO PURIFY NEGATIVE KARMA



## ***Purification: the Practice of Vajrasattva in the Context of the Four Opponent Powers***

There is no negativity that cannot be purified. The purification process is basically a psychological one. As Lama Yeshe says, it is our mind (and on the basis of that our actions) that create the negativity and it is our mind that transforms it by creating positive energy. Although we rely on Buddha's methods for the purification, it is not as if it is Buddha purifying us or forgiving us; we ourselves do the purifying.

We purify by applying, the Four Opponent Powers.

### **THE PRACTICE**

Prostrate three times then sit. Bring your mind to a quiet state.

#### **1. The Power of Regret**

Sincerely regret, from the depths of your heart, anything you have done to harm any living being, on this day, in this life, in all past lives.

As Lama Zopa Rinpoche says, "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."

The reason to regret is based on the logic of karma: We experience everything due to our past karma, our past actions; so having harmed others we ourselves will necessarily experience suffering in the future. Thus we cannot bear the thought of the future suffering that we ourselves will experience. And who wants that? We know from the present suffering that we do not want it, so the logic is, therefore, to remove the karmic seeds before they ripen as future suffering.

Go through the three non-virtuous action of the body and four of the speech, regretting those we remember and those we don't, in other words all the harm we have ever done to any sentient being since beginningless time.

If we have taken vows, then we must regret having broken them specifically: pratimoksha vows, bodhisattva vows, tantric vows.

For all of these, think like this: "I regret from the depths of my heart having harmed others, broken my vows, etc., because I do not want the future suffering. I am sick of suffering."

Then think, "What can I do about it? Whom can I turn to?"

#### **2. The Power of Reliance**

**Refuge** We rely upon, turn to, the Buddha, the doctor, who has the methods that we can use to purify. It's not that we need Buddha to forgive us; we purify ourselves by relying upon his methods..

Visualize Vajrasattva above the crown of your head. He is your guru manifesting in this aspect for your benefit.

He is in the bodhisattva aspect, radiant, blissful white light. He is adorned with jewels and silken clothes. He's sitting cross-legged on a white lotus, which although born out of mud is untainted by mud, just like our enlightened potential, which is born out of our delusions but is untainted by them. His face is radiant and beautiful. His eyes are long (horizontally) and peaceful and full of love and compassion for you. His mouth is red and very sweet. His hair is black and held up in a top knot.

Guru Vajrasattva's right hand, holding a vajra, which represents compassion and bliss, is at his heart; his left, holding a bell, which represents the wisdom realizing emptiness, is resting in his lap.

On a moon disk at Guru Vajrasattva's heart stands a HUM encircled by a garland of the hundred-syllable mantra.

Think: "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."

Now invite the wisdom beings to merge with your visualization, the commitment being: imagine light goes out of from the HUM at Guru Vajrasattva's heart to all the ten directions and hooks the energy of the body, speech and mind of all the enlightened beings of the universe. This light comes back and dissolves into the heart of Guru Vajrasattva, who now embodies all their energy. He is even more brilliant and blissful than before.

Now, say a prayer of refuge:

To the Buddha, the Dharma and the  
Sangha  
I go for refuge until I am enlightened.

By this practice of meditating on Guru  
Vajrasattva  
May I reach Buddhahood so as to  
benefit all sentient beings!

**b. Compassion** In order to develop compassion, we need to rely upon other beings, the very beings we have harmed and who have harmed us, by developing compassion for them.

Think in particular of people you have harmed recently; and in the past; and then, in general, all beings we have ever harmed since beginningless time.

Then remember those who have harmed you: have compassion for them because they will suffer as a result of the harm they have done to you.

Make the strong aspiration to do this practice of purification for the sake of all these sentient beings. "I must purify for their sake."

### **3. The Power of the Remedy**

This is the actual medicine, the doing of the actual practice of purification. There are three stages to the meditation, and it consists of visualization and recitation of mantra.

#### ***a. Purification of body***

Guru Vajrasattva very compassionately sends powerful white nectar, like coming out of a hose very forcefully, from his heart. It arcs around and enters your crown and pours into your entire body, filling you completely. It keeps coming and it forces out of your lower orifices all the harm you have ever done to any living being with your body in the form of inky liquid, which pours out of you and disappears into space, not one atom left. Feel completely purified.

Recite the mantra as you visualize (3 or 7 or as many as you wish, either the long or the short):

### **SHORT**

OM VAJRASATTVA HUM

### **LONG**

OM VAJRASATTVA SAMAYA MANU PALAYA / VAJRASATTVA DENO PATITA / DIDO MAY BHAWA / SUTO KAYO MAY BHAWA / SUPO KAYO MAY BHAWA / ANU RAKTO MAY BHAWA / SARWA SIDDHI MEMPAR YATSA / SARWA KARMA SU TSA MAY / TSITAM SHRIYAM KURU HUM / HA HA HA HA HO / BHAGAWAN / SARVA TATHAGATA / VAJRA MA MAY MU TSA / VAJRA BHAWA MAHA SAMAYA SATTVA / AH HUM PHAT!

Then be delighted that all the harm you have ever done to any sentient being with your body is completely purified. And think that there is no way you could do anything but benefit others now with your body.

### ***b. Purification of speech***

Again, Guru Vajrasattva very happily sends powerful nectar from his heart chakra. It arcs around and forcefully enters your crown, filling your entire body, this time forcing up to the top of your body all the negativity of your speech, which overflows and disappears into space, not one atom left – just like, as Lama Yeshe says, when you turn on the tap in the sink and fill the dirty glass, all the junk in glass comes to the top and overflows.

So imagine that all the gossip and harsh speech and useless speech and lying and talking badly about others behind their backs – all this is purified by the powerful nectar filling you.

Recite the mantra as you visualize this.

### **SHORT**

OM VAJRASATTVA HUM

### **LONG**

OM VAJRASATTVA SAMAYA MANU PALAYA / VAJRASATTVA DENO PATITA / DIDO MAY BHAWA / SUTO KAYO MAY BHAWA / SUPO KAYO MAY BHAWA / ANU RAKTO MAY BHAWA / SARWA SIDDHI MEMPAR YATSA / SARWA KARMA SU TSA MAY / TSITAM SHRIYAM KURU HUM / HA HA HA HA HO / BHAGAWAN / SARVA TATHAGATA / VAJRA MA MAY MU TSA / VAJRA BHAWA MAHA SAMAYA SATTVA / AH HUM PHAT!

Again, feel so happy that your speech is now completely purified. And imagine that it's not possible that you could do anything but benefit others with your speech.

### ***c. Purification of mind***

Third, Guru Vajrasattva now very compassionately sends powerful beams of laser light from his heart chakra, which arcs around and enters your crown chakra and fills your entire being – just like, as Lama Yeshe says, when you turn on a light in a room the darkness is instantly dispelled. So, just as the light hits your heart chakra, the darkness of the negativity of your mind – all the attachment and neediness, the anger and violence, the depression and resentment and jealousy and bitterness, etc. – all instantly dispelled, not one atom left.

Recite the mantra as you visualize this.

### **SHORT**

OM VAJRASATTVA HUM

## LONG

OM VAJRASATTVA SAMAYA MANU PALAYA  
/ VAJRASATTVA DENO PATITA / DIDO MAY  
BHAWA / SUTO KAYO MAY BHAWA / SUPO  
KAYO MAY BHAWA / ANU RAKTO MAY  
BHAWA / SARWA SIDDHI MEMPAR YATSA /  
SARWA KARMA SU TSA MAY / TSITAM  
SHRIYAM KURU HUM / HA HA HA HA HO /  
BHAGAWAN / SARVA TATHAGATA / VAJRA  
MA MAY MU TSA / VAJRA BHAWA MAHA  
SAMAYA SATTVA / AH HUM PHAT!

Again, be delighted that all your delusions, which are the source of our own suffering and the cause for why we harm others with our body and speech, are totally purified, gone, finished.

Think: there is no space in your heart now for anything but love and kindness and forgiveness and wisdom and bliss and compassion.

### *d. Purification of even the imprints of negativity of body, speech and mind*

This time imagine that Guru Vajrasattva sends light again and it fills you completely and eradicates even the subtlest imprint of negative energy from your mind. (It's like once you removed the garlic from a jar, you still need to remove the smell.) Again recite the mantra.

## SHORT

OM VAJRASATTVA HUM

## LONG

OM VAJRASATTVA SAMAYA MANU PALAYA  
/ VAJRASATTVA DENO PATITA / DIDO MAY  
BHAWA / SUTO KAYO MAY BHAWA / SUPO  
KAYO MAY BHAWA / ANU RAKTO MAY  
BHAWA / SARWA SIDDHI MEMPAR YATSA /  
SARWA KARMA SU TSA MAY / TSITAM  
SHRIYAM KURU HUM / HA HA HA HA HO /

BHAGAWAN / SARVA TATHAGATA / VAJRA  
MA MAY MU TSA / VAJRA BHAWA MAHA  
SAMAYA SATTVA / AH HUM PHAT!

Now feel you are completely purified, not one atom of negativity left in your mindstream; even the subtlest obscurations to omniscience have been removed.

## 4. The Power of Resolve

The fourth step in the purification process, and such a crucial one, is the determination not to harm with our body, speech and mind again. Without this, we keep doing the same old things. The determination, the aspiration, to not harm again is like a beacon that guides our body, speech and mind in new directions. Remember, as Lama Zopa Rinpoche says, "Everything exists on the tip of the wish, the aspiration."

If you have taken vows, then think, "I will never break my pratimoksha vows. I will never break my bodhisattva vows. I will never break my tantric vows and commitments."

As for our other old habits, if we can't commit to never do them again, then don't lie to ourselves, as Lama Zopa Rinpoche says. So think carefully and then decide to refrain from them for a year, a month, a day, even a minute – whatever is realistic. Then in general vow to make the effort to avoid the others.

This determination not to do again is what gives us the strength to change.

## Conclusion

Guru Vajrasattva is delighted with us. Wanting to merge with your mind, he melts into white light and absorbs into you through your crown. Think: "My guru's body, speech and mind, Vajrasattva's

body, speech and mind, my own body, speech and mind: same thing." "Union-  
oneness," as Lama Yeshe would say.  
Meditate on this.

Next, as Lama Zopa Rinpoche recommends, meditate on the emptiness of the three circles: "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.

### **Dedication Prayers**

Finally, dedicate all the merit, the positive energy, you have created by doing this purification to all living beings:

As a result of the three-times' merits of  
myself and others,  
May bodhichitta – from which the  
happiness of all sentient beings comes  
–  
Be generated in the minds of self and  
other sentient beings without delay,  
even for one second.  
And that which has been generated, may  
it increase.

As a result of the three-times' merits of  
myself and others,  
May emptiness be generated in the  
minds of self and others sentient  
beings, without delay, even for one  
second.  
And that which has been generated, may  
it increase.

As a result of the three-times' merits of  
myself and others,  
May I, who am empty form my own  
side,  
Achieve Guru Shakyamuni Buddha's  
enlightenment, which is empty from  
its own side.  
And lead all sentient beings, who are  
empty from their own side,  
To that enlightenment, which is empty  
from its own side,  
As quickly as possible, by myself, alone.

Whatever dedication the Victorious  
Ones Gone to Bliss  
Of the three times have admired as best,  
I shall also perfectly dedicate in the same  
way all these roots of virtue  
So that I may perform good works.

Because of the past, present, and future  
merit created by me and by the  
Buddhas, Bodhisattvas and sentient  
beings,  
May I, my family, students, and all  
sentient beings  
Be able to actualize completely in this  
very lifetime  
Lama Tsong Khapa's path of unified  
sutra and tantra,  
Which is pure like refined gold.  
May this pure teaching of Lama Tsong  
Khapa  
Spread in all directions and flourish  
forever.

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## 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

VAJRASATTVA DENO PATITA make me abide closer Vajrasattva's vajra holy mind

DIDO MAY BHAWA please grant me a firm and stable realization of the ultimate nature of phenomena

SUTO KAYO MAY BHAWA please grant me the blessing of being extremely pleased with me

SUPO KAYO MAY BHAWA bless me with the nature of well developed great bliss

ANU RAKTO MAY BHAWA bless me with the nature of the love that leads me to your state

SARWA SIDDHI MEMPAR YATSA please grant all powerful attainments

SARWA KARMA SU TSA MAY please grant all virtuous actions

TSITAM SHRIYAM KURU please grant your glorious qualities

HUM the vajra holy mind

A HA HA HA HO the five transcendental wisdoms

BHAGAWAN one who has destroyed every obscuration, attained all realizations, and passed beyond suffering

SARVA TATHAGATA all those who have realized emptiness, knowing things just as they are

VAJRA MA MAY MUTSA do not abandon me

VAJRA BHAWA 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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## THE FOUR TYPES OF KARMIC RESULTS THAT THE FOUR OPPONENT POWERS PURIFY

**1. The power of regret** purifies the *experience similar to the cause*, which, let's say for killing, is to get killed, to die young or to get sick.

**2. The power of reliance**, *Refuge and bodhicitta* purify the *environment result*, which for killing is living in a place where the food and medicine are not conducive to good health.

**3. The power of the remedy**, in this case the *visualization and recitation of mantras* – or whatever action one does as the actual antidote – purifies the *throwing karma* that causes birth in the lower realms.

**4. The power of the resolve** or *determination not to do again* purifies the *action similar to the cause*, which in a sense is the worst result: it's the habit to keep killing, which propels one back into the lower realms.

*Colophon*

*By Robina Courtin, based on the teachings of her lamas, Lama Thubten Yeshe and Lama Zopa Rinpoche.*