

Meditation Three: A Short Vajrasattva Practice

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(Also available as an individual practice booklet from FPMT Education Department)

Motivation

Begin by making sure the spine is straight. The arms rounded and relaxed with the hands resting in the lap, right on top of the left in a gentle triangle. The shoulders relaxed. The head just slightly tilted forward with the gaze down towards the floor; and the mouth and jaw relaxed.

Taking a few deep breaths in and out. Allowing the body and mind to be completely present. And setting a motivation for the practice, reflecting on our precious human life – the opportunity that we’ve found now that we’ve met the teachings; and the wish to take advantage of this chance as much as possible before we die.

Thinking of those in our lives that we know directly or indirectly that we want to help in some way. Acknowledging that place within our hearts that truly wishes to develop, to awaken our qualities of wisdom, compassion, and ability to help others.

How wonderful it would be to be free of belief in self-concept, free of the prison of the contracted self. Recognizing that even though we might have a great wish to develop realizations in our minds, our mind just feels very dull, blocked, unable to see or understand.

Feeling the great burden of the mountains of negativities – misknowing reality and acting out of ignorance – that have been imprinted on our mindstream; cluttering up our wisdom; counteracting our compassion; blocking our ability. So, wanting to be free of all these blocks, all these mental veils, all these negative habit patterns, and to be free to act in ways beneficial to ourselves and others.

So, with this wish, we’ll do the practice of Vajrasattva.

Preliminary Visualization

Visualizing in the space before us Vajrasattva, father and mother, the union of wisdom and method, or compassion, representing the perfect union of our mind with enlightenment. Perfect purity, radiating white light.

And visualizing ourselves surrounded by all living beings, our father on our right side, our mother on our left. Enemies and those beings who agitate us in the space before us; and friends just behind us. And with a wish that all of us would quickly find perfect happiness, and taking responsibility to bring

that about; with a deep wish to free our mind of all that which prevents us from actualizing the path quickly, we recite together the verse of taking refuge:

The power of reliance (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

Then meditating on the power of regret, especially calling to mind specific actions of our body, speech, and mind, which only serve to bring about more suffering for ourselves, and others. Realizing that the definition of negative karma is any action which results in suffering, any action motivated by ignorance, ignorant liking of things, and ignorant disliking of things; not understanding the real causes of our experience:

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, bring to mind specific actions that we know are not in alignment with our spirit of enlightenment and generating great regret, and a strong sense of urgency to wash this away from our mindstream; not wanting even the slightest residue of imprint.

Then 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 reliance (B): Generating bodhicitta

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.

So, very strongly generating in the mindstream this wish to just be free of all the negativity, all the karmic blocks, all the negative habit patterns that we have created in our minds – in this life, and in lives without beginning, not even knowing what kinds of darkness are still obscuring our mind.

Then visualize:

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.

The power of the remedy

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.

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 or 21x)

Visualize a final purifying stream of white nectar and light pour forth from Vajrasattva's holy body and mind; and like a very, very strong shower, completely cleanses from our mind, body complex every single negativity, every single mental veil. These wash away completely through the soles of our feet, enter a crack in the earth and are consumed by the Lord of Death amidst a blazing fire.

He becomes completely satiated. His mouth is sealed with a double dorje. He turns and walks away. The crack in the earth is healed, and our body and mind are completely calm and clear, like crystal.

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.

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.

Then with this awareness that there is no negative action – with the subject alone, no negative action; with the object alone, no negative action; and it's impossible to engage in action without subject and object – with this awareness, dedicate the merits:

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