

The Sadhana of Vajrasattva for Foundation Practices



History of this Sadhana

This sadhana is based on the Kagyu Ngöndro or Foundation Practices, also called *The Chariot that Carries Us Along the Noble Way* by Wangchuk Dorje, the Ninth Karmapa. The instructions have been expanded and modified to allow the practitioner to isolate and focus on the Vajrasattva practice alone.

The Ninth Gyalwa Karmapa, Wangchuk Dorje, was heard reciting mantras in the womb. He sat cross-legged for three days soon after birth and declared he was the Karmapa. Not surprisingly, he was soon recognized and, at the age of six, enthroned.

Much of his life was spent in a travelling monastic camp, in which strict emphasis was placed on meditation practice. His itinerant party received invitations to visit many places. They were unable to visit China, but made important trips to Mongolia and Bhutan. Wangchuk Dorje gave many teachings in southern Tibet and restored monasteries and temples wherever he went.

Karmapa Wangchuk Dorje was not a prolific author but several of his texts, such as *Mahamudra, Ocean of Certain Beneficial Meaning* and *Mahamudra, Dispelling the Darkness of Ignorance*, have made an important impact on the teaching of mahamudra.

*Given by Catherine Rathbun
to practitioners of Friends of the Heart*

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May all beings be happy!*

Traditional Tibetan Refuge Prayer

SANG GYE CHHÖ DANG TS'HOK KYI CHHOK NAM LA
JANG CHHUP BAR DU DAK NI KYAP SU CHHI
DAK GI JIN SOK GYI PAY SÖ NAM KYI
DRO LA P'HEN CHHIR SANG GYE DRUP PAR SHOK

Until I reach enlightenment, I take refuge in all the Buddhas
And in the Dharma and all the noble Sangha.
By the merit of accomplishing the six perfections
May I achieve buddhahood for the benefit
of all sentient beings.

The Vajrasattva meditation is designed for cleansing all unwholesomeness of all etheric planes and removing obstacles to the clear understanding of the disciple. The Vajrasattva practice also removes the deep roots that cause mental or physical illness.

Remaining faithful to your samaya and to the instructions of your vajrayana teacher, prostrate humbly before the sources of refuge, take your place, and arrange yourself in meditation.

Then, not allowing the mind to fall under the influence of the eight worldly dharmas, you should resolve to practice the perfect dharma. As you recite, do not allow the mind to wander, but keep the sound and sense of the words together. With this attitude, recite aloud the verses on:

The human body so difficult to obtain

First, this precious human birth, so favourable for the practice of the dharma, is hard to obtain and easily lost. At this time, I must make this life meaningful.

Impermanence

Second, the world and all its inhabitants are impermanent. In particular, the life of each being is like a water bubble. It is uncertain when I will die and become a corpse. As it is only the dharma that can help me at that time, I must practice now with diligence.

Karmic cause and effect

Third, at death there is no freedom, and karma takes its course. As I create my own karma, I should therefore abandon all unwholesome action, and always devote my time to wholesome actions. With this in mind, I must observe my mind-stream each day.

The defects of samsara

Fourth, focusing only on homes, friends, pleasures, and possessions deepens the roots of suffering. They are like the feast before the executioner leads me to my death. I must understand deeply the nature of attachment, cut my way through it, and strive to attain enlightenment.

Refuge

One should earnestly devote oneself to taking refuge in the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha, as if one were a hunted prey.

In order to liberate myself and all sentient beings from suffering, I go for refuge until enlightenment to the place of protection: the Lama, Vajrasattva, the Three Jewels, and all the assemblies of yidams and dakinis.

The Bodhisattva Vow

While you recite this, think of the countless sentient beings drowning in the ocean of suffering, experiencing endless birth and death. All sentience was and is one's mother, supporting one's existence. Hence, a sense of immense gratitude to all manifestation should arise.

Until I reach the essence of enlightenment, I take refuge in all the buddhas, and likewise in the Dharma, and in the assembly of bodhisattvas. Just as buddhas in the past gave rise to bodhicitta, followed the bodhisattva path and, through progressive training, established themselves in the stages of the bodhisattvas, likewise I, too, for the benefit of sentient

beings, will give rise to bodhicitta, train in the bodhisattva path and gradually, as they did, become proficient. *(repeat three times)*

Divine Abidings

May all beings have happiness and the causes of happiness. May they be free from suffering and the causes of suffering. May they never be separate from the highest bliss, which is without suffering. May they come to rest in great impartiality, free of attachment and aversion to those near and far.

Confession and Resolution

In many previous lifetimes I have performed countless unwholesome actions, based on ignorance. All the seeming pleasures of samsara will end in vanity and pain because of the roots of unwholesomeness that have not been cleared. I must finish ignorant action now, in this lifetime. It is like a fire: perhaps warm at first but, if uncontrolled, it will burn me. It is like poison: from the root of poison, poison grows. I must take the antidote or I will suffer without end.

Think of actions you have performed for which you are truly repentant, and say to yourself, with determination, "This I will avoid in the future!"

Countless other beings are also suffering from blindness and caught in painful repetitive patterns. I vow to bring happiness by all possible means to sentient beings. I will free them from suffering and unhappiness. This is why I seek to attain buddhahood.

Hollow Body Visualization

Fully understanding that it is for the sake of all sentient beings that one works for enlightenment, prepare for the meditation by performing the "hollow body visualization".

You may continuously repeat the mantra "ARA HUNG" if it helps you to hold the mind in focus.



PAM



AH



HUNG

The seed syllables are white like crystal, and face forward as you visualize them above your head.

ARA HUNG

Crystal clear white light moves through my body, from the top of the head to the soles of the feet, leaving it completely empty and clear like a crystal vase.

Rest like this for a while, feeling the edges of the body as you breathe.

From emptiness, above the crown of my head a crystalline white seed syllable PAM emerges and turns into a thousand-petalled white lotus. On the lotus the syllable AH turns into a flat, white moon disc. Light swirling from the moon disc forms into a HUNG, which turns into a five-pronged dorje

dorje = (Tib.) diamond or thunderbolt. In Sanskrit, it is "vajra". Vajrasattva, therefore, is "Diamond/Thunderbolt Being". Vajrasattva is also called Dorje Sempa (literally "Diamond Mind" in Tibetan.

standing vertically on the moon disc. In the centre of the dorje is the seed syllable HUNG.

From the HUNG light rays emanate upward, filling the sky with immeasurable offerings to all the buddhas and bodhisattvas in the ten directions. Simultaneously, light rays from the seed syllable are directed downward to all sentient beings in every realm, bringing them purification, benefit, and well-being.



The light rays return and transform the dorje and HUNG into the form of Vajrasattva.

The five Buddha-Wisdoms are symbolized on Vajrasattva's crown by jewels of five colours, visualized from left to right as:

Yellow jewel: Wisdom of Equanimity

Blue jewel: Mirror-like Wisdom

White jewel: Wisdom of Dharmadhatu, "thusness"

Red jewel: Discriminating Wisdom

Green jewel: Completion Wisdom

His body is the colour of clear white moonstone, and is adorned with silks and many jeweled necklaces, bracelets, and anklets. He wears a five-pointed crown, symbolizing the attainment of the five Buddha-Wisdoms. He wears beautiful jewelled earrings. He sits in the sattva position, with his left foot drawn in and his right foot extended somewhat. His right hand, held at the heart centre, holds a golden vajra. His left hand, resting on his thigh, cups an upside-down silver bell pressed to his side.



OM



AH



HUNG

At his forehead is a white OM, at his throat a red AH, and at his heart a blue HUNG. At his heart there is also a white syllable HUNG resting on a lotus and moon disc, and around it is the hundred-syllable mantra, appearing as a ribbon of white light, starting in front and making two complete turns in a clockwise direction.

Now, with sincerity and reverence, one offers a prayer to the Vajrasattva figure, asking that oneself and all others be cleansed of all negativity and suffering. Use the following text or make up your own; make it as personal as you wish.

Oh Lama Vajrasattva, please clear away and purify all negative actions, obscurations, mistakes, and transgressions of myself and all sentient beings who are as limitless as space.

Mantra Yoga

Having made this request, the HUNG in Vajrasattva's heart begins to radiate immeasurable light which pervades the entire universe and invokes all the buddhas and bodhisattvas of all time and space. These divine beings, in the form of white light and amrit nectar, fall like uncountable snow crystals into the HUNG.

Then from the HUNG and the surrounding hundred-syllable mantra light and amrit nectar pour forth, entirely filling his body, which becomes completely clear and transparent, yet iridescent with this liquid.

When his body is completely filled, the nectar begins to fall from the big toe of Vajrasattva's right foot into the top of my head, drop by drop at first, but becoming a stream of nectar. It flows down through the channel in the middle of my body, filling my heart centre, and then circulating through all the veins and nadis of my being.

All ignorance, unwholesome states and clinging are completely washed away by this outpouring of nectar. They exit from my body through my pores and lower orifices in the form of black liquid, dissolving into the earth below.

Then the nectar, having pushed out the impurities, begins filling my body from the bottom upward, like milk being poured into a crystal vase. It fills me all the way to the crown of my head, at which point it sprinkles upward, touching Vajrasattva in a gesture of offering and thanks.

Continue visualizing like this as you recite the mantra.

*Here is an interpretation of the mantra:
OM Vajrasattva, pray guard the samaya.
Vajrasattva pray thou stay nearby.
Steady me, gladden me,
Enrich me, be loving toward me.
Bestow on me all realization.
In all my actions cause my mind to be pure
HUNG HA HA HA HA HO...Blessed state!
All the vajra Buddhas,
Do not abandon me! Make me vajra-like!
Great Samaya Being - AH.*

OM BENZA SATO SAMAYA MANU PALAYA
BENZA SATO TVENO PATITA
DRIDHO ME BHAWA SUTOKAYO ME BHAWA
SUPOKAYO ME BHAWA ANURAKTO ME BHAWA
SARVA SIDDHI ME PRAYATSA
SARVA KARMA SUTSA ME TSITTAM SHRIYAM KURU
HUNG HA HA HA HA HO BHAGAWAN
SARVA TATHAGATA BENZA
MA ME MUN TSA BENZRI BHAWA
MAHA SAMAYA SATO AH

After repeating twenty-one, 108, or as many mantras as you have determined to do, offer thanks to Vajrasattva for his great blessing.

Oh protector! Unknowingly and in ignorance, I have gone against and violated my samaya vows. Lama protector, please grant me refuge. Oh Supreme Vajra Holder, you who have mastery of great compassion, Lord of Beings, I take refuge in you. I confess all my violations of the vows and precepts I have taken. Grant your blessing to cleanse and purify all negative actions, obscurations, mistakes and transgressions.

Vajrasattva smiles in response to my request and says, “My child and diamond disciple, as one who is continuing in my lineage, all sins and veils of ignorance of yourself and all sentient beings, all degenerated vows and unwholesome actions of body, speech, and mind are purified.”

Dissolution

Then the figure of Vajrasattva, together with the moon disc and lotus, dissolve into light. The light is absorbed into the crown of my head, and the three centres of body, speech and mind become the very essence of Vajrasattva. We become inseparable.

Remain in this state for as long as possible.

**Dedication and
Aspiration**

One thereafter shares the merit of this practice with all sentience. Then review the meditation practice without allowing doubt or skepticism to confuse the mind.

I dedicate this virtue that all beings without exception be granted the state of buddhahood, that they may travel the inner path to the vajra-mind, a non-dying, ever-blissful union of wisdom and skillful means.

By this merit, may I quickly realize Vajrasattva. Having realized, may I establish all beings without a single exception in such a state.

Through the blessing of the buddhas who attained the three kayas, through the blessing of the unchanging truth of the Dharma, through the blessing of the unwavering intention of the Sangha, may this dedication and aspiration become fulfilled.

Long Life Prayer for the Lama

Long life prayers for the lama — usually much longer and more elaborate than this one — are always an integral part of Tibetan dharma practice and must be performed at the end of every session.

May the lama live long,
May her good health increase,
May her dharma activity flourish.