

PRACTICE INSTRUCTIONS
FOR
THE MEDITATION AND RECITATION OF
GLORIOUS VAJRASATTVA

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As this practice of Vajrasattva will be done by many people — some with little familiarity with the Vajrayāna Buddhist view and practice — some brief instructions may be helpful for those who are new to the practice.

We suggest beginning this meditation with a few minutes of shamatha meditation (for written instruction you may refer to the Nalandabodhi website at <http://www.nalandabodhi.org/meditation1.html>) and a short reflection on developing our heart of compassion. Those familiar with mahāyāna Buddhist practice may wish to practice Tonglen (sending and taking) or reflect on the Four Immeasurables. This will provide a good foundation on which the meditation on Vajrasattva can develop. Ngondro students may begin as usual with the “four reminders”, or four common preliminaries. A brief read-through of the liturgy before beginning your first session, with attention to the instructional notes in italics, will help in gaining orientation.

After our short preparation as above, we recite the section of the text that comes under the heading, “The power of the support”, three times. This is the verse of going for refuge and engendering bodhicitta.

Next is “the power of applying the antidote”. Read and reflect on the words of the text beginning at “**With my body...**” and continuing through the end of section c), “The power of regret” (“... **shines like crystal**”). The intention here is to acknowledge the negative actions and inclinations of ourselves and others, and connect to the experience of vivid purity. This purity is represented by Vajrasattva but is taught to be inseparable with the nature of our being. The use of a visualization helps us to experience this purity.

As for the actual visualization, simply follow along in your mind as you chant each section of the text. One need not try to have a “perfect” visualization; a basic sense of focus is sufficient. For, while we intend to develop a clear visualization of Vajrasattva as described in the text, we do so in stages, first becoming familiar with the language and the process of purification. Gradually we develop further the experience of clarity.

When visualizing Vajrasattva (“**At his heart center, on a moon, is a white HŪṂ, circled clockwise at its edge by the hundred-syllable mantra garland...**”), we visualize the syllable HŪṂ. One may visualize the Tibetan character for this syllable if familiar with it, though it is also sufficient to visualize it in English or in the letters of any other language that one is most accustomed to. The HŪṂ sits on a moon disk, at the edge of which are the remaining syllables of either of the hundred-syllable or six-syllable mantras of Vajrasattva (the latter beginning with HŪṂ in the center, surrounded at its edge, in clockwise fashion, by OM, VA, JRA, SA, and TVA).

As we begin the section “c) The power of regret...” we supplicate Vajrasattva for our own sake as well as all that of other beings “**limitless as space.**” We visualize that the “**stream of amrita**” (elixir of purity) is exuded by the mantra, filling Vajrasattva and descending from him, entering our body through the top of our heads where “**It washes our body...**”. While maintaining this

visualization we recite the mantra of Vajrasattva, OM VAJRASATTVA HŪṢ, “as many times as you can” (Make a note of your total number of recitations for including with our general accumulation). The general purpose of the mantra is to invoke the experience of purity, and to align our minds to this experience through the visualization of Vajrasattva and recitation of the mantra.

An instructional note made by Jamgön Kongtrul, the author of the liturgy, indicates that "it is sufficient to recite just the essential six-syllable mantra". Indeed, for the mantra accumulation project of prayer4peace.net, it is the six-syllable mantra that we will be focussing on for the purpose of our worldwide accumulation, and it is this shorter mantra that will most swiftly accomplish our goal of one billion recitations.

When we reach the end of our period of recitation, we conclude with the section “d) The power of turning away...”. Here, we make the intention to not repeat our negative actions (again, including all beings in addition to ourselves). Then Vajrasattva “**forgives me with delight and dissolves into me**”. Vajrasattva dissolves into light, and that light then enters us and we rest briefly (either in shamatha meditation or simply resting in the experience of becoming inseparable from, or merged with, Vajrasattva).

We conclude our practice with the "Dedication of Merit". Through making a dedication of merit we share the accumulation of our merit (virtue) in a boundless way.

In regard to dedication, The Dzogchen Ponlop Rinpoche has said that it is important to make a very strong dedication, and to dedicate one's merit so that the world may be filled with peace, harmony, and happiness; so that it may be a place where beings are free from harming each other, and so that all beings may enjoy the prosperity of both temporal and ultimate joy.