

## *A Practice Request on the Occasion of the Dudjom Sangyum's Parinirvana*

Venerable Gyatrul Rinpoche

August 30th, 2014

Dear Sangha,

Now we have an opportunity to practice. It is the parinirvana of H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche's Sangyum, so we can use this occasion to make offerings to all the buddhas and bodhisattvas by practicing a little. If people can gather to do Vajrasattva practice, that's wonderful, but for those who are unable to come, you can still recite the hundred syllable mantra of Vajrasattva. Even if you are dumb like me, ha ha ha, you can still recite the six syllable mantra, OM BENZAR SATO HUNG. In the best case, you will continue to practice this for your whole life. If that is not possible, at least try to practice for a year or a month. There isn't much excuse for not practicing, because even children can say OM BENZAR SATO HUNG. Try to say one mala (100 repetitions) of this short mantra each day. Or, you can say 1,000 a day. However much energy, opportunity or merit you have, please make use of it by practicing. This is taught by all the gurus in all the texts--you know this better than me.

I received teachings in Tibet from my Guru, in which he explained that Vajrasattva is the embodiment of all the buddhas' enlightened form, speech, mind, qualities and activities. Vajrasattva is the essence of all gurus, yidams, and dakinis, the essence of all the wisdom deities, whether they are peaceful, increasing, powerful, or wrathful, male or female. If we wish to invoke peaceful enlightened activity, we should practice Vajrasattva; if we wish to invoke enriching enlightened activity, or magnetizing, or wrathful, we should likewise practice Vajrasattva. No matter which deity we wish to accomplish, by practicing Vajrasattva we will accomplish that deity too. There is no practice more powerful; nothing has a greater blessing. This is the most effective way to confess and purify your obscurations, to accumulate merit and wisdom, and to benefit others.

Since this is the teaching of the high lamas, please commit to practicing Vajrasattva for your lifetime or whatever you can manage.

As you say a mala of the six syllable mantra each day, remember and reflect on the meaning of the deity Vajrasattva, the Buddha of Purification. In the future, when you have the opportunity, ask scholars or teachers about the meaning of the mantra OM BENZAR SATO HUNG. It has outer, inner, and secret meanings. If you understand the meaning, faith will easily arise, and with faith, interest and enthusiasm for the practice will naturally be present. Since Vajrasattva is the embodiment of all the buddhas, to internalize his qualities IS the offering, IS the purification, and IS the spiritual attainment.

The great masters say, Vajrasattva is so extraordinary that just to see his enlightened form plants the seed of liberation in one's mindstream. Likewise, just to hear his name or to touch his image also plants that seed. Any connection with him has the power to purify our obscurations, especially if we have faith. That kind of purification is the best kind of offering to the buddhas and the best kind of generosity we could show to sentient beings.

The cause of being born in Vajrasattva's pureland is unselfish action. The pureland appears for the sake of beings, and we reach it by turning our motivation outward to benefit others, rather than merely cherishing ourselves. We reach it by purifying our outer, inner, and secret obscurations.

Vajrasattva practice is particularly relevant for all of us because we, sentient beings, are quite desperate for purification. We all have countless mental afflictions, habits, obscurations, and obstacles, and many of them are completely unconscious. We are not even aware of them. We all have the two obscurations: afflictive obscurations, which are the negative emotions, and cognitive obscurations, which are misapprehensions of reality. These obscurations prevent us from being able to successfully learn and practice the dharma. In fact, these obscurations are so strong, they are like a dense fog.

To burn off this fog is the best offering that we could make to the enlightened ones. Even if we offered many beautiful things or many mandalas, those would not surpass the offering of purifying our obscurations. Why? Because the buddhas' sole purpose for emanating into samsara is to liberate beings. Thus, the principle thing which pleases all the buddhas is for sentient beings to purify their obscurations, to accumulate merit, and to attain buddhahood. The great lamas and all enlightened manifestations are supremely pleased by this. Thus, it is the most profound offering.

There is not one sentient being who does not need to accumulate merit or purify obscurations. Sentient beings are born in samsara, and our principle interest is self-interest, self-cherishing. We pursue status, wealth, and many worldly things, but instead of benefitting ourselves, we destroy ourselves. We have many problems: our bodies experience sickness, pain, discomfort and other sufferings, and our minds are not peaceful. We have accumulated so much nonvirtue with our body, speech and mind in this and past lifetimes that we have very strong obscurations. In fact, these obscurations are the cause for us to be born in the many realms of samsara such as the hell realms, hungry ghost realms, animal realms, god realms, and so forth, and we cycle through these interminably. The teachings on the preliminary practices explain this, so you can consult them for further explanation on this point.

The antidote to all of these obscurations, the weapon which can destroy every cause for birth in samsara, is Vajrasattva. Therefore, please, recite the Vajrasattva hundred syllable and six syllable mantras as much as you can! Make a commitment to do this practice continuously in this life!

All unwished-for circumstances, hardships and difficulties come from our own nonvirtuous actions, words, and thoughts. These are what we must eradicate. In general, no one likes to be ugly. We are all trying so hard not to be ugly. Well, this is the real ugliness that we need to change!

Actually, if we are ugly looking, this is just an obscuration. If we have negative emotions, this is just an obscuration. If we cannot be successful no matter what we do, this is just an obscuration. If we have obstacles or are afflicted by negative spirits or enemies, this is just an obscuration. Obscurations result from our past nonvirtue. Who can protect us from them? Vajrasattva. Vajrasattva can protect us. He can protect all sentient beings, no matter where they are or what their experience is. Vajrasattva can protect even those in the deepest hells. No other refuge has this power.

There are innumerable enlightened emanations, manifesting as gurus, yidams, dakinis, and dharma protectors. But Vajrasattva embodies them all. These emanations manifest in order to protect us from enemies, obstructors, and demonic forces. However, if we simply purify our obscurations, all of these are pacified. We might think we need to recite wrathful averting or slaying-and-liberating practices. These are good, but if we really want to avert our obstacles and negativity, we need to purify our own obscurations. When we have purified them and we become awakened, all obstacles are removed and all harmdoers and enemies are liberated. Actually, all the harmdoers and enemies come from enacting attachment, aversion, and delusion with our body, speech, and mind. However much attachment, aversion, and delusion are in our minds, that is how much we are obscured.

Do you understand this? We can look at our own negative emotions to understand this further. For example, desire. In America we think “desire” just refers to sexual attraction between men and women. No, no, it is not only that. It refers to our hunger for and attachment to money, wealth, position, property, and all the rest. Basically, desire is occurring whenever we say “Me, me! Mine, mine!”

Desire, aversion and delusion are obscurations. The cause which brings about our own liberation is the purification of obscurations. So you see, practicing Vajrasattva is the best way we can benefit ourselves. Practicing Vajrasattva is the best way we can help others. There’s nothing better than Vajrasattva practice! And, it’s quite easy to say “OM BENZAR SATO HUNG.” Say it! And find out the meaning when you have the chance. If you need an image of the deity, we have this giant statue here at Tashi Choling. You can look at it and slowly understand its meaning.

Recite the hundred syllables or the six syllables, and if you have good faith, you will be able to accomplish any and all wisdom deities, whether peaceful, wrathful, magnetizing or enriching. If you have no faith, there won’t be much benefit.

So, please try. It is not difficult to practice like this, and it is of great benefit. You don’t have to believe me, nor do you have to trust inanimate objects like sticks and stones either. You can rely on the wisdom beings who appear only for the sake of sentient beings. Follow what they say.

We sentient beings are focused on money and we are following the eight worldly concerns. We have measureless attachment, aversion, and delusion, and numberless aspects of the five poisons in our minds. But if we purify our habitual tendencies of the two obscurations, if we purify our body, speech, and mind, we can reveal and ripen our own awakened nature. We can develop or unearth the extraordinary qualities of the buddhas within ourselves. If you wish to do this, practice Vajrasattva! If you wish to benefit yourself or others, this is the way to do it! All the great teachers say this.

Therefore, I request everyone to practice this. Sometimes we don’t fit together, we don’t get along, we just act out our attachment, aversion and delusion. This is just our afflictive obscurations rearing their ugly heads, causing us to wander in samsara and especially in the three lower realms where there is extraordinary suffering. There are all different kinds of beings in the lower realms, with various kinds of suffering. However, right now you all have great merit! Really amazing merit! Recognize this, and use it to accumulate merit and wisdom and purify obscurations. You have an opportunity to help yourself and others. At least open your eyes a little bit and practice Vajrasattva!

At Orgyen Dorje Den, so many empowerments were given. So many empowerment cards were shown. You all are human, which means you can understand language and meaning, and therefore you can’t give the excuse that you don’t understand, like animals. So, since you received so many empowerments, keep your commitments! Whether your commitments are on the level of the Hinayana, the Mahayana, or Secret Mantra, outer or inner, you must try to keep the promises you made. The way to keep them is to constantly purify transgressions with Vajrasattva. Please keep this in mind. The best offering you can make is to purify your own obscurations! Why is that the best? Because the gurus and buddhas only appear in this world in order to help beings become enlightened. If a guru is authentic, then his sole concern will be the liberation of beings. If someone offered him 100 billion dollars, or offered him a sentient being’s liberation, the latter would be the greater offering!

Everyone please look: one by one, each person is passing away. Not only the Sangyum, but everyone.

How does the Sangyum's parinirvana benefit us? It benefits us if we take it--as inspiration, as a reminder of impermanence, and as an opportunity to benefit ourselves--to heart by practicing. Our own practice, our own purification of obscurations and accumulation of merit, is the best offering we could make to a high being, a bodhisattva such as the Sangyum. Through her kindness, we pathetic sentient beings have a chance to practice.

I am sorry, I forgot that I am a funky old man making all these requests. I thought I was a handsome young guy so you would listen to me. I have a friend, Odzer the cat, he is handsome. You guys love handsome and pretty, so you would like him. I also know one pretty little girl, but I don't know where she is. I haven't seen her for many years. Harikoto is another kitty friend of mine. Anyway, all these guys are handsome and pretty so I am sure you would like them and listen to their requests. I am not so sure about a funky old man like myself!

Tashi Delek!

*-Gyatral*