

Commentary on Guru Yoga Practice

(Bill Burns)

Refuge

Raising Bodhicitta

Aspiration

Visualization (Meditation): Manifesting as Vajrayogini, Avalokiteshvara, Tara, etc., or just as you are in the moment; Mandala of Buddhas, Lineage teachers and deities; Offerings; the Four Empowerments; nondual meditation; mantra

Dedication

Commentary: (this form is basically taken from a practice given by the 16th Karmapa and then expanded or elaborated). The notes are consistent with both the Kagyu and Nyingma traditions of this practice. This form is not meant to be restrictive but just a suggested guide whereby practitioners may insert their own devotional input and inspirations. Guru Yoga is an essential devotional tantric practice in which the guru is perceived as the essence of the buddhas, the meditational deity and the nature of one's own mind. Guru yoga is related to path empowerment – empowerments that are supports for the path of Vajrayana. They are called variously: vase, secret, wisdom and sacred word initiations. This practice is considered a symbolic form of these. They repair and purify.

Refuge:

I take refuge in the glorious holy guru, the kind root guru and the lineage teachers.

I take refuge in the entire assembly of the mandala of deities and devas.

I take refuge in All the Buddhas.

I take refuge in the Supreme Dharma

I take refuge in the noble Sangha

I take refuge in the dakas, dakinis and protectors who possess the eye of Wisdom. (3x)

Bodhicitta: (these are just examples, the practitioner may find his own words and phrases for generating the spirit of awakened mind/heart.

May I, the yogi on the path follow in the footsteps of the great ones, those who have manifested boundless compassion and skillful means.

May I speedily attain the state of Vajradhara for the sake of all beings.

(Manifesting as the embodiment of all the teachings)

May I speedily attain the state of Mahamudra in order to liberate others.

I cultivate and increase absolute and immaculate bodhicitta in order to create an enlightened planetary civilization. Etc. (repeat 3 times)

Aspiration: Gratitude: Appreciation and delight in and for all one's experiences; the path- the interaction with the phenomenal world.

Acknowledgement of the Buddha nature- the Source essence in all beings.

Nurturance of life: Caring for and nurturing the life in all things. Allowing things to have their being, expression and completion of form life, including thoughts and emotions, insects, etc.

Visualization:



One may visualize oneself as a particular deity or yidam, if one has been introduced into a deity practice. Or just as you are in the moment.

The white OM syllable on a moon disc is visualized on one's forehead. The red AH syllable on a red lotus is visualized at one's throat center. And the blue HUM syllable on a sun disc is visualized at one's heart center.

Visualizing oneself as a deity enables one to go beyond the limitations of everyday conventional ideas not only of the teacher but also of oneself.

Out of the vastness of formless vibrant space Vajradhara (the Adi-Buddha) appears, blue in color (the color of lapis lazuli) and adorned in regal finery with jeweled ornaments and beautiful silks.

He is seated on a jeweled throne held up by snow lions. On the throne is a thousand petal lotus and the sun and moon discs.

(Vajradhara: Vajra suggests thunderbolt and indestructibility. Dhara is often translated as holder or permanently possessed. His dark blue color symbolizes indestructibility and the profound and boundless nature of his omniscient mind. The ornaments and garments signify his capacity to ceaselessly benefit and fulfill the needs of all living beings and the preciousness of that activity.)

Vajradhara's hands are crossed over his heart in the union gesture. His left female hand is inside (signifying inner wisdom and emptiness) and bearing the bell; his right, the male hand holding the *vajra* is above the left to symbolize method and compassion directed outwards.

A stream of infinite white light blazes forth from the heart center of Vajradhara illuminating all the Buddhas, deities, lineage teachers, mahasiddhas, bodhisattvas and protectors who fill the space surrounding Vajradhara. They are all absorbed into the light and enter the heart of Vajradhara and primarily one's root teacher who is seen in the form of Vajradhara. (Vajradhara is the symbolic representation of the "Body of Reality", the ultimate state of enlightenment.

Offerings:

One makes offerings as an expression of one's love and devotion. For example, one might offer oneself as the body of the deity. One might offer one's body, speech and mind, the body of bliss, the outer, inner and secret offerings such as one's emotions, consciousness, and mandalas. We may offer: Pure water in a vase or chalice, along with flowers, incense, candles, mirrors, perfumed water, food and music; A myriad of delights from the earthly and celestial realms; Crystal palaces, pleasure gardens, exotic birds and animals, jewels, and beautiful landscapes. Whatever comes to one's imagination may be offered.

"With both physically arranged and mentally created offerings, I offer everything in the universe as one vast offering."

The Four Empowerments:

A white light radiates from the crown of Vajradhara and is absorbed in the OM syllable on one's forehead. One then identifies with the syllable and merges with it and then lets go. One may think that one is receiving the vase empowerment, the blessings of the vajra body, and that the potential of the Nirmanakaya has been established in you.

Then, blazing like a ruby in the guru's throat the rays of the red light enters your throat and is absorbed by the AH syllable purifying your speech...One identifies with the syllable and lets go. One receives the potential to attain the level of the Sambhogakaya.

Then the deep blue syllable HUM in Vajradhara's heart emanates a ray of blue light that penetrates your heart, purifying of all obscurations your essence, from which mental processes develop. One identifies with the blue HUM syllable and lets go. The potential to attain the level of the Dharmakaya has been established in you.

*Mantra: OM Vajra Guru Vajradhara AH HUM spontaneously arising
compassion accomplishment indestructible bliss HUM HUM HUM*

Repeat the mantra recitation. Mantra has the quality of protecting the mind.

When you finish the mantra recitation, rest momentarily in that space.

A suggestion here is to make an offering in a huge jeweled vessel of all that needs to be dispelled or transformed in one's system: glamors, kleshas, obscurations, attachments, wrong views, etc. Make this as a sincere offering.

Then light radiates simultaneously from the three centers of Vajradhara and enters all three centers purifying the karmic and conceptual obscurations of the ground of all. One realizes the unity of the three as one, (svabhavikakaya) and as being inseparable from the body, speech and mind of one's teacher. One's own suchness nature is inseparable from the suchness nature of the guru. One rests in formlessless meditation.

Look into the face of the great primordial dharmakaya, your own mind itself (one's mind is a reflection of That) –eternally transcending pretense, change, acceptance and rejection.

(This last phase is taken from Khyentse Rinpoche's excellent book—Guru Yoga. I have incorporated this into the practice.) It is just a suggestion and may be spontaneous. Something else could occur.

“At the end of the practice we arouse an even stronger devotion. The guru becomes more resplendent in compassion and kindness and smiles at us with tremendous love. Then a red light streams out from his heart like a shooting star and is absorbed into our heart, filling our whole being with inconceivable bliss. Our body melts into a mass of red light the size of an egg, which gradually condenses into an exceedingly brilliant red sphere. Like a spark of fire, it suddenly shoots out and dissolves into Vajradhara's or Guru Rinpoche's heart. We remain in this state, our mind inseparable from the wisdom mind of the Guru.

Again, from Khyentze's book: May I and all sentient beings reach the ultimate goal of the path: the realization of the ultimate nature. Having obtained this human body, met the teacher, received his instructions, and put them into practice. May we make the seeds of the four empowerments blossom into the four kayas, so dispelling the four veils! By accomplishing the four kayas, may we achieve ultimate enlightenment.

Conclude with the Dedication:

By this merit may all obtain omniscience.
May it defeat the enemy of wrongdoing,
From the stormy waves of birth, old age, sickness and death,
From the ocean of samsara, may I free all beings.

May all beings dwell in the great equanimity, free from suffering and sorrow
May they enjoy profound illumination, infinite love and joy.
May they attain the Light of supreme and perfect Truth.
May they attain supreme happiness.
May all beings realize the nature of mind, the innate essence.

OM AH HUM OM AH HUM OM AH HUM

