

## Purification - Breath and Mantra

Date : May 14, 2016

### Three Sacred Principles

Good day to everybody and everywhere. Today before we start the practice, I would like to explain a little. When we are doing this practice of Mandarava, at the beginning we are doing the nine breathings. When we are doing the nine breathings we should also be doing the visualization, not only the breathing. When we exhale, we imagine that all negativities, obstacles, negative karma and everything is drawn away. So we are exhaling and with that exhalation, we also integrate into its real nature of the elements. When we inhale, we imagine that all the substances and essence of the elements are combined with that breathing, and that is what we are inhaling. And when we finish inhaling, everything is integrated in our dimension. So with the nine breathings we should do that. After that, we are doing Ati Guruyoga, and I explained yesterday how we do that. So with Ati Guruyoga, when we are being in the state of Ati Guruyoga, we are relaxed. But when we are doing some practices, then we should think and do some visualization. After being in the state of contemplation, we enter again with thoughts. And then we do this practice with the purification mantra.

We are not using this purification mantra at the beginning in a very traditional way. You remember that in any practice we do, we must not be missing three sacred things. This system was originated in Mahayana. The three sacred things are that firstly we do refuge, we cultivate *bodhicitta* at the beginning, that means how we begin that practice; then secondly in any practice that we are doing, even if we have no capacity to be in the state of contemplation, we do not remain in a dualistic condition. So at the end any kind of practice we govern with the knowledge of emptiness. This is our real nature, and then we deal with that. This is the second sacred thing. When we finish any kind of practice, we do not forget to dedicate merits; dedicating sometimes has benefit for others. If we have some kind of relationship, good or bad, beings can receive some benefit. Of course we have good intention for all sentient beings and we dedicate, but if we have no connection it is not so easy for them to receive benefit.

So it is very important we have some connection to sentient beings so that they can receive benefit. We are also doing a dedication to give benefit for others and we are doing that with a very good intention so that we can accumulate merits. Also in Mahayana it explains, if you are not dedicating merits, etc, you can also destroy benefit easily. In Santideva's *Bodhisattvacaryavatara* it is explained that for thousands of *kalpas* we have accumulated good actions, it says for example you give generously applying benefit for others, you are offering to Buddhas and Bodhisattvas and enlightened beings, and when you are doing that you have good intention and you can accumulate merits. It says that any of good actions we have accumulated, we can destroy all if we are angry for one moment. So that means if we dedicate merits there is nothing that remains to destroy. In our life, we are distracted most of the time. We cannot say we will never be angry, we can be angry

very often, so then you see it is also important to dedicate.

### **Potentiality of the Purification Mantra**

So these are the three sacred things, not only in Mahayana but also in Vajrayana practice. Even if we are practitioners of Dzogchen, we apply refuge and *bodhicitta* just like in the system of Mahayana. You remember when we finish practice we are always dedicating merit. This is not a particular Dzogchen way, it is even a Mahayana system, but we are living in time and space and it is indispensable we should do that. So this is the more traditional way and in all schools, any traditions, they do in this way. They use this mantra for purification only in some rites of Yogatantra, but I have very much confidence with this mantra. I once had many problems with the class of the guardian of the *gyalpo* when I was in college for one year and I could not live there. My teacher gave me permission to go to another place to receive initiations, etc. But of course I was in college and even if I needed to go somewhere else for the initiations, etc., my teacher gave me very precise instructions; what I should study and prepare for an examination upon my return.

Once then there was an important Sakyapa teacher who gave all initiations of a collection of tantras. In the Sakyapa tradition there is a very important collection of the tantras called Gyudde Kuntu (*rgyud sde kun btus*). I went there and received initiations for nine months, every day, continually. Sometimes there were higher tantra initiations and only one initiation can take two or three days. Some of the lower tantras were easier and we could receive three or four different kinds of initiations. So in that period I also needed to study for when I had to return to college. During the same time I was receiving these initiations, I was receiving teachings of Madhyamika. There was a root text called Tsawa Sherab that I should study well and do an examination when I returned. Connected with that is another small text of Nagarjuna called Rigpa Trugchupa (*rigs pa drug cu pa*). One should memorize this root text and all the students had to learn that in memory. I then received all initiations and had to prepare to go back to my college.

I studied this root text called Tsawa Sherab (*rtsa ba shes rab*); there were many studied people among the students of my teacher and I didn't have any problems for studying that text. But then at the end I had to memorize this root text. In general people say I have a very good memory, I could learn one page in memory in one day. Other children were only able to learn one or two lines in the same period of time. Then everyone said, "Oh you are very clever." But then when I received all the initiations of Kriya and Ubaya tantra, and I started to learn that in memory, I discovered I could learn twelve pages a day. I was very surprised, how was I able to do that? But then later I understood that in the initiation of Kriya and Ubaya tantra there were a lot of purification initiations every day. In this purification they used this mantra of *e ho shuddhe shuddhe, yam ho shuddhe shuddhe*, etc., and after, in the Rigpa Trugchupa (*rigs pa drug cu pa*) there are not many pages, and I learned it completely in a few days. Then it was very easy to memorize the complete root text of Tawa Sherab (*rtsa ba shes rab*).

So when I went back to college I had to take an examination, not only explaining, but also reciting

both texts from memory. That is when I discovered the potentiality of this mantra. For that reason I use this mantra every day; it is very good for memory and increasing that clarity. Later when I arrived in Italy and we started the Dzogchen Community, I prepared our practice of the *thun*, but I did not put this mantra in the *thun* because it was not done in a traditional way. Then one year there was the problem of Chernobyl. There was so much paranoia, we had no milk or vegetables for months and months. In that moment we felt afraid that everything was contaminated. We needed a kind of protection. I thought that I should teach this mantra to people and I started to teach my students. Then we were not only doing this practice for Chernobyl, but I put it in the *thun* and we started to use it for the beginning of all practices. So it is a very, very powerful mantra for purifying and strengthening our energy.

I told you already it is very important that we are coordinating and strengthening our energy in our condition. Even if you do not know the precise visualization and you are only chanting this mantra, it helps very much for purifying. Of course if you know how to do the visualization, it is much more powerful. Particularly when we are dealing with Ati Guruyoga, it is really becoming very powerful. For example, when we first do a practice and pronounce A, it means we are being in a state of Ati Guruyoga. Then we are sounding *om e ho shuddhe shuddhe*, this is a mantra of purification. When you are pronouncing *om* you do not need any particular visualization, nothing. Because at the beginning there is *om* and at the end of the mantra there is *svaha*, and there are three words for empowering the potentiality of the function of these words. Not only this mantra, but we have many mantras like this. For example the Tara mantra, *om tara tuttara svaha, om tare tam svaha*, etc. So *om* is how we start and the explanation says it has ten qualifications, and if you want to know in a more intellectual way you can study all these things. But when we are doing practice we do not need to do any visualization.

## Purifying the Elements

Then we are starting with *e ho shuddhe* and *e* means the element of space. *Ho* means to multiply. You remember that when we are doing a Ganapuja, *ha ho hri, om ah hum, ha ho hri. Ha ho hri* are the three seed syllables. *Ha* means purifying. If we need to offer something we need to purify. *Ho* means multiplying. Also if there are many guests then we need to multiply offerings. *Hri* means transforming. You see purifying, multiplying and transforming. For example, if we are offering ice cream we are thinking we are making a very nice offering, but there are some guests who do not need ice cream. Maybe they need a beefsteak, for example. Someone else says, I do not need to eat something, but I need money. So instantly you transform into what they need. This is a Ganapuja and all the offerings, *om a hum, ho ha ho hri. Ho* means multiplying more and more.

Here it also says *om e ho*, *e* is the element of space. You remember when we have the visualization of the Ati Guruyoga, there is a *thigle* and in the center of the *thigle* it is blue. Blue is the element of space, the root and base of all the elements, just like sky. *Ho* means infinite manifestation, larger, so this is the meaning, *e ho*, we are spreading more and more. But we are purifying what is related to this element. If we have the element of space in the perfect way, there is

no problem. If there are some problems and there is no element of space, there is no possibility of manifesting all prosperity. So for that reason we are saying *shuddhe* and purifying.

Why are we always saying *shuddhe* two times? Not only this mantra, but many for example, *dhare dhare*, *hanne hanne*, etc., we repeat always. You should understand that when a mantra repeats it is connected with time. What we should apply is related to past and future time. Past, for example, if we have accumulated negative karma we purify all this. Then for the future, there will be all possibilities and secondary causes for manifesting in the time. Also we are purifying that. So this is how this mantra is related to the element of space and then we are purifying and we say *e ho shuddhe shuddhe*.

*Yam ho shuddhe shuddhe* is the element of air. This is very important because the element of the air is movement. For example, we have many agitations, we are nervous; all of this is related to the element of air. When we need to have this kind of activity we remember with the five colored *thigle*, we already did this kind of visualization, we spread from this green *thigle* green light that spreads and purifies all in our dimension; purifying, strengthening and coordinating everything with that element. Now we have a perfect element of air.

Then there is also the red color of the fire element. Then there is *bam*, the water element. Don't worry if there is coordination a little different, some people wonder why this order of elements is a little different than the ordinary order. It doesn't matter, this is a Yogatantra system, so we apply and it works, that is more important. And when we say *bam ho shuddhe shuddhe*, also the element of water is coordinated. *Ram* is the fire element, also red color, and we also spread and purify that. *Lam* is the earth element, we also purify all. This, in general, we do as a complete purification.

If you have knowledge and you have some kind of problem and that problem is related to a certain element, for example if you have problems of the blood pressure, etc., that is more fire element. If you have something like rheumatism and skin diseases, then it is water element. If you are very nervous and agitated, you cannot remain in a calm state, this is the air element. Then when you know this, you can apply this mantra in a specific way. If you want to use it in a specific way, how should you do that? You remember in the beginning there is *om*, and when it is finished it is *shuddhe shodhanaye*, so you do the same way, *om e ho shuddhe shodhanaye svaha*, *om yam ho shuddhe shodhanaye svaha*, *om bam shuddhe shodhanaye svaha*, etc, only chanting this mantra and doing visualization and you can overcome this problem. So these are all the elements we have and it is very good we use this mantra in a complete way and we can have much more benefit. So now you see why we use this mantra at the beginning and why it is important. It is very important in the relative condition. I am not saying that this is the path of realization; the path of the realization is Ati Guruyoga. You remember that.

*Transcribed and edited by Naomi Zeitz*

