**A Purification Practice with Guru Shakyamuni Buddha**

***A-Initial Visualization*** (simplified)

At the level of your forehead and approximately a body's length in front of you is a sphere of golden rainbow light shining with the inspiring radiance of the excellent qualities of your spiritual mentor and all Fully Enlightened Beings

**or**

***B-Initial Visualization*** (elaborate)

At the level of your forehead and approximately a body's length in front of you is your spiritual mentor visualized as inseparable from all Fully Enlightened Beings in the form of Shakyamuni Buddha, seated within a sphere of golden rainbow light that radiates from his heart.

He is seated on a large lion-supported and jewel-adorned throne, upon which is a seat consisting of a large open lotus and cushions of the sun and moon; these symbolize fully enlightened renunciation, wisdom and compassion. Neither the throne, the lions, nor any other part of the visualization contains even an atom of solid, material substance. Instead, the entire visualization is a mere reflection of the mind and made of rainbow light: transparent, intangible and radiant.

Guru Shakyamuni' s body is made of golden light and he wears the saffron robes of a monk. He is seated in the vajra posture with his right hand in the earth­ touching mudra, while his left hand rests in his lap in the meditation mudra holding a begging bowl filled with nectar.

His eyes are long and narrow. His lips are cherry-red and the lobes of his ears are long. His hair is blue-black and each strand is individually curled to the right. Every feature of his appearance represents an attribute of his completely unobstructed mind.

His face is very beautiful. His smiling, compassionate gaze is directed at you and, simultaneously, at all the other beings surrounding you. Feel that this supremely compassionate, fully enlightened being is free of all critical judgments and that he accepts you lovingly, just as you are, recognizing your fundamental Buddha nature.

# The Power of Regret

Then recall the harmful actions you may have committed with your body, speech or mind. Recognizing that these destructive actions, which currently obscure your Buddha nature, are the source of every suffering, cultivate the sincere feeling of regret that motivates you to cleanse yourself of all their unwanted consequences.

# 2a-The Power of Reliance: Taking Refuge

Imagine yourself seated in the center of a vast assembly of mother sentient beings, all of whom wish to be happy and to be separated from suffering just as you yourself do. Feeling the enlightening presence of the Guru Buddha before you and recalling his excellent qualities and his readiness and ability to help, take heartfelt refuge in him as the embodiment of the Three Jewels. From the depths of your heart request the Guru Buddha's inspiration to become free from every limitation so that you may gain all the realizations along the path to full enlightenment. In such a state of mind, go for refuge three times:

**NAMO GURUBHYA NAMO BUDDHAYA NAMO DHARMAYA NAMO SANGHAYA**

I take refuge in the Guru

I take refuge in the Buddha I take refuge in the Dharma I take refuge in the Sangha

# 2b-The Power of Reliance: Generating Bodhicitta

Then cultivate the compassionate bodhicitta motivation as you recite the following three times:

I **go for refuge until** I **am enlightened**

**To the Buddhas, the Dharma, and the Supreme Assembly. By the virtuous merit that** I **collect**

**By practicing giving and other perfections,**

May I **attain the state of a Buddha**

**In order to benefit all sentient beings.**

Finally, to enhance your bodhicitta motivation, cultivate the Four Immeasurables of equanimity, love, compassion and joy, as follows:

**May all sentient beings be free from the bias of attachment and aversion.**

**May all sentient beings have happiness and the causes of happiness.**

**May all sentient beings be free from suffering and the causes of suffering.**

**May all sentient beings find fortunate rebirths**

**and complete liberation.**

***3a-The Power of the Remedy*** (elaborate)

At the Guru Buddha's crown is a white **OM,** at his throat a red **AH,** and at his heart a blue **HUM.** These three represent all Enlightened Beings' perfectly pure body, speech and mind.

During the **first** mantra recitation, visualize that a stream of purifying **white** light flows from the Guru Buddha's crown and enters your crown, cleansing you all negativities accumulated through harmful actions of your body.

During the **second** mantra recitation, visualize that a stream of purifying **red** light flows from the Guru Buddha's throat and enters your throat, cleansing you all negativities accumulated through harmful actions of your speech.

During the **third** mantra recitation, visualize that a stream of purifying **blue** light flows from the Guru Buddha's heart and enters your heart, cleansing you all negativities accumulated through harmful actions of your mind.

or

***3b-The Power of the Remedy*** (simplified)

During the three successive mantra recitations, visualize streams of first **white,** then **red** and finally **blue** light flowing from the center of the sphere of golden light before you and entering, in turn, your crown, throat and heart, cleansing you of all defilements of body, speech and mind.

# Mantra Recitation

While this cleansing light flows into you, recite Shakyamuni' s mantra three, seven, twenty-one, one hundred and eight or as many times as you like:

**(TAYATA) OM MUNI MUNI MAHA-MUNAYE SVAHA**

As the flow of cleansing light into you continues, allow yourself to feel you are gradually becoming lighter, less solid and more transparent, thereby revealing your fundamental purity.

Dwell silently for a few moments within the resulting experience of calm spaciousness.

# 4-The Power of the Resolve

Then make the heart-felt resolution that you will refrain from committing the same harmful actions you just purified ever again, or at least for a year, a month, a week, a day or an hour.

# 5-Final Absorption

Now imagine that the source of inspiration you had visualized before you melts into a sphere of golden light that contracts and becomes more concentrated as it comes to the space just above the crown of your head.

This concentrated sphere of radiant golden light then slowly descends through your crown until it comes to rest at the very center of your heart chakra. Your ordinary sense of self—unworthy, limited, and burdened with faults—and all your wrong conceptions disappear completely.

In that instant you become one with the Guru Shakyamuni Buddha's holy mind in the aspect of vast and boundless space.

Concentrate on this limitlessly spacious experience for as long as possible, allowing no other thoughts or ordinary appearances to distract you.

**NOTE:** *If you are doing a brief practice, you may now dedicate the meritorious energy of your practice, as in section 8 below. For a more elaborate practice, continue with sections 6 and 7, as follows.*

# 6-Re-emergence

Instantly, from this empty space there appear in the place where you are sitting the lion-supported throne, lotus, sun and moon seat, and upon these your mind in the aspect of Shakyamuni Buddha. Everything is in the nature of light, exactly as you had visualized it earlier. Cultivate the feeling that you ***are*** Buddha, and concentrate, undistracted, on this enlightened identity.

# 7-Benefiting others

Turning your attention to the sentient beings surrounding you in every direction, generate love and compassion for them by recalling that they all want to achieve happiness, peace of mind and fulfillment, and that they all want to experience freedom from dissatisfaction and suffering.

With this heartfelt understanding, send forth from the center of your heart multi-colored rays of light in all directions as you recite the mantra:

**(TAYATA) OM MUNI MUNI MAHA-MUNAYE SVAHA**

As these light rays reach the countless beings surrounding you, they bring healing energy, inspiration, strength, and whatever is needed to bestow upon them temporary and ultimate happiness.

Visualize that all these surrounding beings fulfill their enlightened potential and are transformed into Buddhas, experiencing great blissful wisdom.

All these Buddhas then dissolve into your heart, like snowflakes falling into a mountain lake, inducing an experience of inexpressible joy.

# 8-Dedication

Understanding that nowhere within the three spheres of dedication—that is, yourself as the one making the dedication, the aims you are dedicating for, and the act of dedication—is there even one atom of concrete self-existence, dedicate all the meritorious energy and whatever insight you may have generated through this practice so that:

* + All beings may be freed from their mental and physical suffering
  + That His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Kyabje Zopa Rinpoche and all spiritual friends revealing true paths to happiness, higher rebirth, liberation and full enlightenment may have long, fruitful lives
  + That we may come under the benevolent care of such compassionate Gurus in this and in all future states of existence
  + And so that we may attain full enlightenment as swiftly as possible in order to repay the infinite kindness we have received from each and every sentient being.