**Transforming the Five Masks**

*The Outer Mind Training for Transforming Poison to Wisdom*

Namo Avalokiteshvara Ya!

Through not understanding the view, Samsara arises. Within Samsara the five poisons continue to proliferate in the minds of beings of the four ages. Though it is undeniable that the intensity of the waves of confusion increase, now in the darkest time of Kaliyuga, here stranded on the island of self-grasping, the waves threaten to overcome and drown even diligent yogins, and all sentient beings.

In all of these places and times, the five poisons, like the methods of liberation, arise in accord with the circumstances faced by sentient beings, their situation, and their proclivities.

Now, in our time, the five poisons have taken on the guise of five masks, subtle and beguiling, appearing as friends, and even Vajra siblings and the Vajra Guru.

Through diligently examining the mind, keeping perfect the four vows, not departing from the methods given by the teacher, and integrating all phenomena in the state of Bodhicitta, we eradicate the masks of Mara, and liberate the poison into the energy of liberation, revealing the face of the Five Kayas and Five Wisdoms.

I will now show these poisons, and give a few words on subjugating them. This has three parts, the beginning, the actual meditation, and the conclusion.

**The Preliminaries**

In the beginning, when endeavoring to clearly see beyond the masks of the root of Samsara, always purify the elements, clear the stale prana, and with the field of accumulation, take refuge and generate the mind of awakening in this way:

*In the three Jewels,*

*I take refuge, clearly*

*Seeing the five poisons,*

*I will place all beings in*

*The state of complete liberation.*

Then, instantly, see the Guru appear on a four petaled lotus at your heart. Do not depart from the state of recalling the Guru, no matter what occurs.

Then, contemplate.

**2. The Main Practice**

*A. The Mask of Ignorance*

The proper reception of the three vows, especially at the time of empowerment, depends on the correct conditions of student and teacher.

When both have examined one another for an appropriate period of time, and the student requests empowerment into the profound Vajrayana, then is the time that the teacher must give the Abhisheka, Agama and Upadesha according to the capacity of the student to be trained.

After proper examination, the responsibility of the teacher is to give the transmission of the teachings in the correct way.   
  
Now, in our time, many teachers give the empowerment without further teachings, harming the Samaya by not examining, trusting, and teaching students who have been properly matured. Other teachers give the agama and the upadesha in absence of empowerment, and so they undermine the efficacy of the teachings by not establishing Samaya, or by ripening the body, speech and mind of fortunate individuals who have been empowered at the time of the cause.

The students, in not examining the teacher or the teachings, find themselves bound by the commitments to teachers they quickly do not respect or do not understand, or tied to practices that they cannot uphold. Other students, with the fault of the tainted vase, through prior understanding apply ideas to the Dharma that impede their ability to practice. Through the fault of the cracked vase cannot remember the teachings. Through the fault of the full vase, consider themselves complete masters, and cannot engage in the training of morality, meditation and contemplation.  
  
Or, having all the necessary qualities present, and the three types of transmission, do not know the proper rituals, their capacity, how to employ them at the time of the empowerment. Or, in the worst case, they lack Bodhicitta on the side of the teacher or student  
  
Now, in a state of profound Bodhicitta, recognize these causes as the mask of the poison of ignorance, transforming this into the face of Buddha Vairocana and Dhatishvari.

*Seeing the Face of Vairocana*On a comfortable seat, having gone in the way of the preliminaries and taken refuge and generated the mind of awakening, think and consider:  
  
*In this time of difficulty, students and teachers have  
Abandoned what to adopt, and what to discard,  
And Mara has shown the mask of ignorance for the teachings.  
Without the three faults of the vase, I will examine teachers,  
Apply my vows and practices, and the two types of Bodhicitta*

*Becoming of a proper student.*

*If I teach, I will examine the student, learn well  
The rituals of interdependent ripening,   
And always lead each matured student in the  
Correct way, giving the teachings at the right time  
And without impeding the lineage through partial  
Incomplete transmission.  
  
May all the virtue accumulated through these actions  
Transform all communities into flawless shelters for beings  
And giving up ignorance, may they find the state of  
Of the Wisdom of the Dharmadatu, and the purity of space!*Now, sound the syllable OM, and imagine that upon your crown arises the Guru as white Vairocana and consort. Again and again sound the syllable, and if you have the transmission, do the Guru Yoga and accumulate the mantra.   
  
 If you do not, just imagine that you are bathed in white light above your crown, your whole body becomes perfectly white and crystal in color, and from yourself and the Guru radiates white light, revealing the purity of of Vairocana and Dhatishvari to all beings, dissolving the false mask of ignorance as to how to apply the teachings of the glorious Vajrayana.   
  
OM OM OM  
  
*B.The Mask of Hatred*Once a student or teacher, from the interdependent root of Bodhicitta, has made the Samaya vows at the time of the empowerment, it is undeniably true that the whole Kula is bound together until liberation is reached. This is the single boat that crosses the far shore of Samsara, to the place beyond the concept of place, beyond even the concept of a vehicle, the single taste of liberation in all experiences.  
  
The storm which threatens this fragile boat, with such possibility for success or ruin, is turning one’s back on the teacher or one’s Vajra family through infighting from anger and aversion, the cause of which is grasping to expectations.   
  
Through demeaning or harming the Guru, through gossip behind the back of the teacher regarding her or regarding one’s brothers and sisters, through cutting others off without conversation, through a lack of empathy and the quick knife of seeking one’s own rightness over relationship, this hatred degenerates the blessings of the lineage, and makes the Dharma itself out to be a poison.   
  
Now, in a state of profound love and kindness, giving one’s Vajra family and all beings an attempt at genuine understanding and knowing, seeing with pure vision the state of the Kula, knowing oneself and all of the Vajra family to be the deity and retinue, allow anger to become Mirror-like wisdom, the face of Buddha Akshobhya and Buddhalocana that is direct without being harmful, truthful without cold animosity, concerned without hot destructive rage.   
  
*Seeing the Face of Akshobya*

Going in the same way as before, consider and recite:  
  
*In this time of difficulty, students and teachers  
Have turned away from Bodhicitta, the root of*

*Profound Samaya, and Mara has shown the mask  
Of hatred, within the kula and outside of it,  
Spreading gossip, responding without empathy,*

*Being critical without offering advice and discussion*

*And employing harsh words and even curses.*

*From this point forward I will hold Bodhicitta  
As the very blood of my heart, and clearly seeing*

*How to interact as both a teacher and a student,*

*Will endeavor to always watch my words in discussion,  
And watch my mind when by myself.  
  
May all the virtue accumulated through these actions*

*Transform all communities into flawless shelters for beings  
And giving up hatred, may they find the state of  
Mirror-like Wisdom of Clarity, and the purity of earth!*Now, sound the syllable HUNG, and imagine that upon your crown arises the Guru as blue Akshobhya and Buddhalocana. Again and again sound the syllable, and if you have the transmission, do the Guru Yoga and accumulate the mantra of the inner practice.   
  
If you do not, just imagine that you are bathed in deep blue lapis light above your crown, your whole body becomes perfectly blue-black, like the depths of the night sky, and from yourself and the Guru radiates blue light, revealing the purity of Akshobhya and Buddhalocana to all beings, dissolving the false mask of hatred between the kula, and all beings, showing clarity and presence in all situations.

HUNG HUNG HUNG

*C. The Mask of Pride*

The root of the realization of the three jewels, lord among two legged beings, with golden skin, ushnisha and all the signs and marks without exception, is the Lion of the Shakyas. This is the one who taught the ultimate truth of emptiness, and the relative truth of dealing with all arising circumstances. This is the realization of the two aims, two types of Bodhicitta and two truths, all of which is wrapped within the perfect four seals.   
  
Understanding this, limitless methods arise that suit different types of beings. As long as there are beings that arise, unique methods will arise through compassion to suit their qualities and lead them to perfect liberation.   
  
The end result, the fruit of all of the Dharma of the three turnings of the wheel, is Buddhahood. The difference is in the scope of beings, and the time in which it takes from the time the teachings are imparted, until the time of their result.  
  
In this time, fortunate beings who have received the teachings have been deceived by the mask of pride. Taking the form of false devotion, the lie of a line of pure teachings, most supreme, more efficacious and eclipsing other teachings has arisen. From this belief, the false perception of a responsibility to subjugate forms of the Dharma has spread.  
  
Despite the understanding of all the Buddha Dharma, that if even a word of genuine Dharma is disparaged, all the three jewels are disparaged, and one incurs a great downfall, beings have been deceived, and though they have found the golden treasure of liberating instructions, the fire of their pride has made the gold molten and deadly.  
  
Further, many practitioners have fallen for the alluring mask of spiritual property. Believing some family, tulku, gompa, labdrang or lineage possesses only the true Dharma, or possesses a Dharma that belongs to them and is their personal property. These poor beings, being deceived from being stewards of the Dharma, and believing ownership and protection are the same, treat the Dharma like a marketplace, and lose the essential meaning of the teachings.   
  
Now, in a state of Equanimity without expectation, we release all false ideas of a ‘one true’ Dharma, and trample joyfully upon the idea of spiritual property with an open hearted dance. Knowing how to protect the teachings through our conduct, following the training precisely, seeing who can teach and who are qualified to learn, the Dharma becomes self-protected and obstacles become self liberated. Pride is transformed to the Wisdom of Equality between all teachings and Dharma doors, and we see the face of Ratnasambhava and Mamaki, with respect and proper preservation for all methods that lead to liberation.

*Seeing the Face of Ratnasambhava*

Going in the same way as before, consider and recite:

*In this time of difficulty, students and teachers*

*Have clung to the experience of superiority,*

*Believing that the profound methods passed to them*

*Are the only real and true Dharma, and the only*

*Methods worthy of future transmission,*

*Engaging in sectarian polemics and violence.*

*Many have begun to mistakenly believe that*

*The Dharma is spiritual property to be owned,*

*Branding it and making all manner of threats  
Both legal and spiritual, and in both cases  
Mara has now shown the mask of spiritual pride.*  
  
*From this point forward, knowing the single intent*

*Of all the Dharma is profound two-fold Bodhicitta,  
I will hold as a wish fulfilling jewel all methods*

*That arise to help the endless ocean of beings,  
And will recognize the poison that arises*

*From the view of owning the Dharma teachings.  
  
May all the virtue accumulated through these actions*

*Transform all communities into flawless shelters for beings  
And giving up pride, may they find the state of  
The Wisdom of Equanimity, and the purity of water!*Now, sound the syllable TRAM, and imagine that upon your crown arises the Guru as golden Ratnasambhava and Mamaki. Again and again sound the syllable, and if you have the transmission, do the Guru Yoga and accumulate the mantra of the inner practice.   
  
If you do not, just imagine that you are bathed in splendid golden yellow light above your crown, your whole body becomes perfectly like pure gold, like an endless treasury, and from yourself and the Guru radiates golden light, revealing the purity of Ratnasambhava and Mamaki to all beings, dissolving the false mask of pride between the kula, and all beings, showing genuine equanimity.

TRAM TRAM TRAM

*D. The Mask of Desire*

The desire for the Dharma, which is ultimately the wish that all beings find the state of final freedom, is the self-less appearance of grasping that eradicates grasping. In the space of finding the precious human body, the right time, place, teacher, and teaching, the instructions on knowing what to abandon and what to discard are vital.

On the precarious ledge of Tantra, the razor thin walkway between the plummet of destruction and the leap in to the sky, it is the poison of desire that arises as the path of wisdom of discrimination, and knowing the proscriptions and prohibitions of the commitments and conduct for the empowerment at the time of the path.

Now, fortunate teachers and students who have encountered the profound Vajrayana Dharma, and have received the four empowerments, so unlikely and so rare, have mistaken the genuine meaning of the third empowerment.   
  
Teachers, under the guise of instructions in liberation, have abused the positions of their power, taken students as consorts against their wishes, or through the manipulation of prestige and exclusivity. Still wearing the robes of a monk, they have degenerated the precious Vinaya, and cast a shadow on the jewel of the original Sangha.   
  
Students, not understanding the instructions, have taken to believe that conduct on the path is meaningless, and whatever they do is liberated by the mere fact that they have entered into the gate of the Mandala, not understanding their circumstances, or the truth of relative arising.

Now, in a state of Joy without grasping, we release all manipulation and power structures that masquerade as the teachings. If we are in the position of a teacher, with thorough resolve, we endeavor to protect all beings, especially our students, and understanding our Samaya, we cease all forms of sexual abuse, and using the tools of power to fulfill the depths of our own grasping.   
  
As students we will know our circumstances, and apply the appropriate conduct for our own level of attainment and understanding. Desire is transformed into the Wisdom of Discrimination between what is virtuous and what is non-virtuous, and we will see the face of Amitabha and Pandaravasini, the self-perfected interdependence between the student, teacher and Vajrakula.

*Seeing the Face of Amitabha*

Going in the same way as before, consider and recite:

*In this time of difficulty, students and teachers*

*Have understood the path that transforms desire  
As a mere euphemism to engage in conduct*

*That degenerates Samaya.  
  
Teachers who sexually abuse and harm their students*

*Through displays of deceit and power, and those on the path*

*Who mistake engaging in harmful activities for*

*The path of wisdom and great bliss, have been led astray*

*By the mask of Mara showing desire as unrestrained grasping.*

*From this point forward, understanding the precious  
Situation of the bond between student and teacher,   
And without confusion knowing the Vajra conduct*

*Of what to adopt and what to discard,*

*I will engage in actions that protect and give*

*Safe refuge to all beings, neither abusing power  
For sexual desire, nor using Vajra behavior as an*

*Excuse to suit my own self-grasping.*   
 *May all the virtue accumulated through these actions*

*Transform all communities into flawless shelters for beings  
And giving up desire, may they find the state of  
The Wisdom of Discrimination, and the purity of fire!*Now, sound the syllable HRIH, and imagine that upon your crown arises the Guru as ruby red Amitabha and Pandaravasini. Again and again sound the syllable, and if you have the transmission, do the Guru Yoga and accumulate the mantra of the inner practice.   
  
If you do not, just imagine that you are bathed in flashing red light above your crown, your whole body becomes perfectly like a shining ruby, like a radiant red sun, and from yourself and the Guru radiates red light, revealing the purity of Amitabha and Pandaravasini to all beings, dissolving the false mask of desire between the kula, and all beings, showing the conduct that is inseparable from the view.

HRIH HRIH HRIH

*E. The Mask of Jealousy*

There is no doubt that every Tantra that arises, the endless display of the three jewels and three roots, and the array of methods that compassionately arise, all teach that the path of Vajrayana is fueled by Samaya, the commitment and relationship that connects the teacher to the student, and forms the Vajrakula, shade under the sweltering sun of samsara.

The nature of this commitment is sealed at the time of the empowerment, when the sun of the teachings strikes the seed of the three kayas, and the empowerment at the time of the cause and path take the high road of liberation at the time of the result. This living, organic relationship between the student and teacher is the unique indestructible diamond Vajra that differentiates this path from other methods in the Dharma.  
  
And yet now, not understanding the importance of the living nature of interdependence, many have mistaken the spiritual marketplace of books and inert videos from teachers that they do not know as a proper substitute for the genuine Vajra path. Learning mantras from texts, and taking secret techniques to be a thing found and stolen, like an ancient vase from a museum, they rejoice in their own supposed cleverness, like those with who find a picture of a home, and assume it to be the nature of living inside a house with one’s family.

Availability and improper promulgation has been mistaken as the door to the path, rather than as a cause for rejoicing in the existence of practice materials for those who have properly entered and are engaging on the path, and a motivation to enter the path correctly for those who haven’t yet done so.   
  
Many of these poor beings denigrate the lineage of transmission, and due to a fear of teachers and of working with others, largely due to the other poisons of our time, have taken as a seal of honor finding their own way through the dangers of the forests of spiritual seeking, laughing with joy at the precarious nature of their own probable demise.   
  
Students threaten and demand teachings from their teachers, cannot keep silent regarding their instructions, and teachers themselves, under the pressure of money, prestige, or simply having a weak will, give in to these demands and reverse the harmonious relationship of kindness between the Vajra Master and the Sādhaka.

Now, in a state of Compassion without grasping, we give up all ideas of stealing from the three Jewels, understanding the teachings themselves are self-secret, and blossom like the radiant Utpala of light between the proper teacher and Vajra family. We cease clinging to the idea that the rightness of a text is a substitute for a relationship with mother sentient beings, Dharma friends and fellow sojourners on the path.   
  
Knowing how to enter the path, and not reading and applying teachings that haven’t developed in the context of Samaya, Jealousy is transformed into All-Accomplishing Wisdom, and we will see the face of Amoghasiddhi and Samayatara, experientially knowing the limitless nature of Liberation and the arising four activities.

*Seeing the Face of Amoghasiddhi*

Going in the same way as before, consider and recite:

*In this time of difficulty, students and teachers*

*Have given up the proper way to enter into the teachings  
Mistaking Samaya to be an ornament of power and control  
They steal the teachings, and mistake blindness for sight.   
The mask of Mara showing jealousy has arisen*

*As the illusion of self-sufficiency, and being confused*

*Regarding interdependence, beings enter the path*

*Of their own confusion, and find the result  
Of perpetual, endless Samsara.   
  
From this point forward, valuing the teacher,*

*Teaching and Vajra Kula, understanding the*

*Medicine of the teachings, and the healing*

*Of the Five Kayas, I will engage in those*

*Teachings most suited to my disposition, following*

*The Vajra master, and relying upon the Kula as*

*My siblings upon the path of swift liberation.   
Not being a mere collector, or one who hunts*

*The teachings for their own adornment and   
Self-gratification, I will attain the state of Buddhahood*

*For all beings, and accomplish their benefit.*

*May all the virtue accumulated through these actions*

*Transform all communities into flawless shelters for beings  
And giving up jealousy, may they find the state of  
The All-Accomplishing Wisdom, and the purity of air!*Now, sound the syllable AH, and imagine that upon your crown arises the Guru as emerald green Amoghasiddhi and Samayatara. Again and again sound the syllable, and if you have the transmission, do the Guru Yoga and accumulate the mantra of the inner practice.   
  
If you do not, just imagine that you are bathed in brilliant green light, your whole body becomes like a perfect emerald, like a jewel in the crown of Mother Tara, and from yourself and the Guru radiates green light, revealing the purity of Amoghasiddhi and Samayatara to all beings, dissolving the false mask of jealousy between the kula, and all beings, and showing the limitless display of that which accomplishes the two aims of oneself and others.

AH AH AH

At the end of the particular practice, for whichever of the outer masks you are trying to transform, imagine the associated Wisdom Buddha at the crown, surrounded by the other Buddhas in the main directions around him, all of them in union with their appropriate consort.   
  
Then, if you are a teacher pray:  
  
*May the five masks transform swiftly into the five Wisdoms  
And may I become a reliable guide, leading all beings to*

*The state of the five perfected wisdoms and elements!*If you are a student pray:  
  
*May the five masks transform swiftly into the five Wisdoms  
I may I always practice for the sake of beings, so that*

*Through the four immeasurables they may go beyond confusion!*

If you have not yet entered the path pray:  
  
*May I swiftly enter the gates of the five Kayas,  
Through the profound ripening empowerments,   
And finding the authentic teacher, teachings and Kula  
May I bring all beings to the gate of the Mandala of Liberation!*Sound:  
  
OM HUNG TRAM HRIH AH  
  
Many times sound this melodiously, as the five lights radiate to all beings and situations, all paths inside and outside the Dharma, and endow them with the conditions of harmony, removing the conditions of harm, and opening the gate to relative and absolute freedom.

At the end, rest for a time.  
  
Then, dedicate with whatever verses you like, and seal this with the mantras:  
  
OM DHARE DHARE BANDHARE SVAHA

JAYA JAYA SIDDHI SIDDHI PHALA PHALA

‘A AH HA SHA SA MA

MAMA KOLING SAMANTA

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Colophon:  
  
*Endeavoring to compose some words on how the poisons have manifested in our modern circumstances, I, Lama Dorje Sherab, was inspired to compose this during the practice of the Guru Yoga according to the Lamdre Lobshe. After beginning the composition, during the night, I dreamed of my root Guru, Norbu Rinpoche, who gave me an empowerment of Vajrasattva according to the Tantra of the Never Waning Banner, connected to the Anu and Ati of the Guhyagharbha- and explained how this teaching could be applied at the outer, inner and secret level.  
  
Having been revealed as a pure method, I asked the faultless Guru regarding how this was to be applied, and he responded that the outer practice was a mind training meant for anyone through the agama transmission, the inner practice was a Guru Yoga meant for those who had any abhisheka, agama and upadesha according to the higher Tantras, and that the secret practice was meant for those with the Guhyagharbha or Shitro specifically, and those who had the particular empowerment of the five families coming from this teaching.  
  
Of those, this is the outer mind training. For those with the oral transmission, may it be a cause to see through the five masks, and realize the essence of the five Wisdoms and five pure elements.  
  
Sarva Mangalam!*