

## Confession - Sojong

Any practice of Vajrasattva is related to the practices of confession (Tib. *so-jong*) and purification as present in all Buddhist traditions.

*The Words of My Perfect Teacher* by Patrul Rinpoche is the most popular text on the Preliminary Practices of Vajrayana Buddhism. The section on "meditating on the teacher as Vajrasattva to cleanse all obscurations" teaches

1. How obscurations can be purified through confession. The main obstacles that prevent all the extraordinary experiences and realizations of the profound path from arising are negative actions, obscurations and habitual tendencies. "Obscurations" means factors of negative emotions and conceptualizations that cover and obscure our Buddha nature. Just as the surface of the mirror has to be cleansed to allow forms to be reflected in it, so too our obscurations have to be eliminated to allow realization to appear like a reflection in the mirror of the Ground of all. The Buddha taught countless methods of purification for this purpose, but the best of them all is meditation and recitation related to the teacher Vajrasattva.

Any negative action can be purified through confession: "there is no harmful act that cannot be purified through confession". However "purification only takes place when you confess sincerely in the right way" that is by first arousing bodhicitta -- that is, focusing with pure intention the desire to aid sentient beings to attain enlightenment without exception. This True Aspiration is, in itself, a purifier of all past misdeeds.

### **The Four Powers**

1. The Power of Support -- you can take Vajrasattva as your support. But, you can also take any spiritual friend or teacher, or any representation of the Buddha. You can just imagine yourself sitting in front of the Buddha and feeling his unconditional kindness beaming to you. . . . you can imagine your dark deeds leaving you as black tar and dissolving, and the wisdom and compassion pouring in as light from Buddha.

2. The Power of Regret -- this comes from a true feeling of remorse for all negative actions done in the past. You feel remorse and, concealing nothing from the Buddha, confess them with strong regret, for nothing can be purified without strongly felt regret.

3. The Power of Resolution -- remembering the faults, resolve never to commit them again, even at the cost of our life.

4. The Power of Action as Antidote -- offset the negativities through accomplishing as many positive actions as you can. These can range from the symbolic, such as doing prostrations; psychological, such as rejoicing in the merit of others, or actual, from putting out water for wild animals in your neighborhood, donating to charity and helping others in practical ways.