

*Eight Prayers
to Benefit the Dead*



Contents

© FPMT Inc. 2007

Introduction	5
King of Prayers	7
Dedication Chapter from Shantideva's <i>Bodhicharyavatara</i>	17
Prayer to be Reborn in the Land of Bliss	23
Prayer for the Beginning, Middle, and End Until Buddhahood	29
A Daily Prayer to Maitreya Bodhisattva	35
Prayer for a Statue of Maitreya	37
Prayer for Spontaneous Bliss	41
Prostrations to the Thirty-five Confession Buddhas	43
	47

Credits

Cover thangka of the Medicine Buddha by Peter Iseli.

Line drawing of Samantabhadra on p.6 and Maitreya on p.45 © Robert Beer. Used with permission.

Line drawing of the five dhyani buddhas on p. 46 © Andy Weber. Used with permission.

Introduction

This booklet contains the eight prayers that are traditionally done in Tibetan Buddhist monasteries when someone passes away. According to Lama Zopa Rinpoche, we absolutely must do something to benefit those beings who have died. Rinpoche recommends Medicine Buddha Puja, Medicine Buddha practices in general, and this collection of eight prayers as being the most important practices to do at this time.

In addition, one may do the practice of Prostrations to the Thirty-Five Confession Buddhas. That practice is included at the end of this booklet.

Lama Zopa Rinpoche also recommends many other practices that can be done, if people are able. These include reciting a certain number of the King of Prayers for one full day or for a weekend; offering the Vajrasattva tsog practice; making extensive light offerings or any other kind of extensive offerings; doing Nyung Nä retreat or a weekend Vajrasattva, Medicine Buddha, or Chenrezig retreat (or all of them!); meditating on tonglen and dedicating it to the person who has died (while doing the meditation, recite OM MANI PADME HUM); reciting the Vajra Cutter Sutra; reciting and meditating on the Heart Sutra; meditating on emptiness and dedicating for the person who died; Dorje Khadro fire puja; making stupa tsa-tsas (this is to create the cause for a person to receive a good rebirth rather than one in the lower realms); making Mitrugpa tsa-tsas; sponsoring the publication of Dharma books; making offerings on the person's behalf to the Three Jewels, the Sangha, lay students with the same Guru as that person, or the Dharma center; or offering charity on the person's behalf to sick people, homeless people, poor people, charities, and animals.

These are examples of what can be done to benefit a being who has died, but again, the essential practices are Medicine Buddha and the prayers in this booklet. These practices bring immense benefit to one who has died, and helps them on their journey to their next life.



Samantabhadra

The King of Prayers

The Extraordinary Aspiration of the Practice of Samantabhadra

I bow down to the youthful Arya Manjushri.

You lions among humans,
Gone to freedom in the present, past and future
In the worlds of ten directions,
To all of you, with body, speech, and sincere mind, I bow down.

With the energy of aspiration for the bodhisattva way,
With a sense of deep respect,
And with as many bodies as atoms of the world,
To all you buddhas visualized as real, I bow down.

On every atom are buddhas numberless as atoms,
Each amidst a host of bodhisattvas,
And I am confident the sphere of all phenomena
Is entirely filled with buddhas in this way.

With infinite oceans of praise for you,
And oceans of sound from the aspects of my voice,
I sing the breathtaking excellence of buddhas,
And celebrate all of you gone to bliss.

Beautiful flowers and regal garlands,
Sweet music, scented oils, and parasols,
Sparkling lights and sublime incense,
I offer to you victorious ones.

Fine dress and fragrant perfumes,
Sandalwood powder heaped high as Mount Meru,
All wondrous offerings in spectacular array,
I offer to you victorious ones.

With transcendent offerings peerless and vast,
With profound admiration for all the buddhas,
With strength of conviction in the bodhisattva way,
I offer and bow down to all victorious ones.

Every harmful action I have done
With my body, speech, and mind
Overwhelmed by attachment, anger, and confusion,
All these I openly lay bare before you.

I lift up my heart and rejoice in all positive potential
Of the buddhas and bodhisattvas in ten directions,
Of solitary realizers, hearers still training, and those beyond,
And of all ordinary beings.

You who are the bright lights of worlds in ten directions,
Who have attained a buddha's omniscience through the stages of
awakening,
All you who are my guides,
Please turn the supreme wheel of Dharma.

With palms together I earnestly request:
You who may actualize parinirvana,
Please stay with us for eons numberless as atoms of the world,
For the happiness and well-being of all wanderers in samsara.

Whatever slight positive potential I may have created,
By paying homage, offering, and acknowledging my faults,
Rejoicing, and requesting that the buddhas stay and teach,
I now dedicate all this for full awakening.

May you buddhas now living in the worlds of ten directions,
And all you gone to freedom in the past, accept my offerings.
May those not yet arisen quickly perfect their minds,
Awakening as fully enlightened ones.

May all worlds in ten directions,
Be entirely pure and vast.
May they be filled with bodhisattvas
Surrounding buddhas gathered beneath a bodhi tree.

May as many beings as exist in ten directions
Be always well and happy.
May all samsaric beings live in accord with the Dharma,
And may their every Dharma wish be fulfilled.

Remembering my past lives in all varieties of existence,
May I practice the bodhisattva way,
And thus, in each cycle of death, migration, and birth,
May I always abandon the householder's life.

Then, following in the footsteps of all the buddhas,
And perfecting the practice of a bodhisattva,
May I always act without error or compromise,
With ethical discipline faultless and pure.

May I teach the Dharma in the language of gods,
In every language of spirits and nagas,
Of humans and of demons,
And in the voice of every form of being.

May I be gentle-minded, cultivating the six paramitas,
And never forget bodhichitta.
May I completely cleanse without omission
Every negativity and all that obscures this awakening mind.

May I traverse all my lives in the world,
Free of karma, afflictions, and interfering forces,
Just as the lotus blossom is undisturbed by the water's wave,
Just as the sun and moon move unhindered through the sky.

May I ease the suffering in the lower realms
And in the many directions and dimensions of the universe.
May I guide all wanderers in samsara to the pure bliss of awakening
And be of worldly benefit to them as well.

May I practice constantly for eons to come,
Perfecting the activities of awakening,
Acting in harmony with the various dispositions of beings,
Showing the ways of a bodhisattva.

May I always have the friendship
Of those whose path is like mine,
And with body, words, and also mind,
May we practice together the same aspirations and activities.

May I always meet a spiritual mentor
And never displease that excellent friend,
Who deeply wishes to help me
And expertly teaches the bodhisattva way.

May I always directly see the buddhas,
Masters encircled by bodhisattvas,
And without pause or discouragement for eons to come,
May I make extensive offerings to them.

May I hold within me the Buddha's genuine Dharma,
Illuminate everywhere the teachings that awaken,
Embody the realizations of a bodhisattva,
And practice ardently in all future eons.

While circling through all states of existence,
May I become an endless treasure of good qualities –
Skillful means, wisdom, samadhi, and liberating stabilizations –
Gathering limitless pristine wisdom and positive potential.

On one atom I shall see
Buddha fields numberless as atoms,
Inconceivable buddhas among bodhisattvas in every field,
Practicing the activities of awakening.

Perceiving this in all directions,
I dive into an ocean of buddha-fields,
Each an ocean of three times' buddhas in the space of a wisp of hair.
So I, too, will practice for an ocean of eons.

Thus, I am continually immersed in the speech of the buddhas,
Expression that reveals an ocean of qualities in one word,
The completely pure eloquence of all the buddhas,
Communication suited to the varied tendencies of beings.

With strength of understanding I plunge
Into the infinite enlightened speech of the Dharma
Of all buddhas in three times gone to freedom,
Who continually turn the wheel of Dharma methods.

I shall experience in one moment
Such vast activity of all future eons,
And I will enter into all eons of the three times,
In but a fraction of a second.

In one instant I shall see all those awakened beings,
Past, present, and future lions among humans,
And with the power of the illusion-like stabilization
I will constantly engage in their inconceivable activity.

I shall manifest upon one single atom
The array of pure lands present, past, and future.
Likewise, I shall enter the array of pure buddha-fields
In every direction without exception.

I shall enter the very presence of all my guides,
Those lights of this world who are yet to appear,
Those sequentially turning the wheels of complete awakening,
Those who reveal nirvana – final, perfect peace.

May I achieve the power of swift, magical emanation,
The power to lead to the great vehicle through every approach,
The power of always beneficial activity,
The power of love pervading all realms,
The power of all surpassing positive potential,
The power of supreme knowledge unobstructed by discrimination,
And through the powers of wisdom, skillful means, and samadhi,
May I achieve the perfect power of awakening.

Purifying the power of all contaminated actions,
 Crushing the power of disturbing emotions at their root,
 Defusing the power of interfering forces,
 I shall perfect the power of the bodhisattva practice.

Contents

May I purify an ocean of worlds,
 May I free an ocean of beings,
 May I clearly see an ocean of Dharma,
 May I realize an ocean of pristine wisdom.

May I purify an ocean of activities,
 May I fulfill an ocean of aspirations,
 May I make offerings to an ocean of buddhas,
 May I practice without discouragement for an ocean of eons.

To awaken fully through this bodhisattva way,
 I shall fulfill without exception
 All the diverse aspirations of the awakening practice
 Of all buddhas gone to freedom in the three times everywhere.

In order to practice exactly as the wise one
 Called Samantabhadra, 'All Embracing Good,'
 The elder brother of the sons and daughters of the buddhas,
 I completely dedicate all this goodness.

Likewise may I dedicate
 Just as the skillful Samantabhadra,
 With pure body, speech, and mind,
 Pure actions and pure buddha-fields.

I shall give rise to the aspirations of Manjushri
 For this bodhisattva practice of all-embracing good,
 To perfect these practices
 Without discouragement or pause in all future eons.

May my pure activities be endless,
 My good qualities boundless,
 And through abiding in immeasurable activity,
 May I actualize infinite emanations.

Limitless is the end of space,
 Likewise, limitless are living beings,
 Thus, limitless are karma and afflictions.
 May my aspiration's reach be limitless as well.

One may offer to the buddhas
 All wealth and adornments of infinite worlds in ten directions,
 And one may offer during eons numberless as atoms of the world
 Even the greatest happiness of gods and humans;

But whoever hears this extraordinary aspiration
 And, longing for highest awakening
 Gives rise to faith just once,
 Creates far more precious positive potential.

Those who make this heartfelt aspiration for the bodhisattva way
 Will be free of all lower rebirths,
 Free of harmful companions,
 And will quickly see Amitabha, Infinite Light.

And even in this very human life,
 They will be nourished by happiness and have all conducive
 circumstances.
 Without waiting long,
 They will become like Samantabhadra himself.

Those who give voice to this extraordinary aspiration
 Will quickly and completely purify
 The five boundless harmful actions
 Created under the power of ignorance.

Blessed with supreme knowledge,
 Excellent body, family, attributes, and appearance,
 They will be invincible to vast interfering forces and misleading
 teachers,
 And all the three worlds will make offerings.

Going quickly to the noble bodhi tree,
 And sitting there to benefit sentient beings,

Subduing all interfering forces,
They will fully awaken and turn the great wheel of Dharma

Have no doubt that complete awakening
Is the fully ripened result – comprehended only by a buddha –
Of holding in mind by teaching, reading, or reciting
This aspiration of the bodhisattva practice.

In order to train just like
The hero Manjushri who knows reality as it is
And just like Samantabhadra as well,
I completely dedicate all this goodness, just as they did.

With that dedication which is praised as greatest
By all the buddhas gone to freedom in the three times,
I, too, dedicate all my roots of goodness
For the attainments of the bodhisattva practice.

When the moment of my death arrives,
By eliminating all obscurations
And directly perceiving Amitabha,
May I go immediately to Sukhavati, Pure Land of Great Joy.

Having gone to Sukhavati,
May I actualize the meaning of these aspirations,
Fulfilling them all without exception,
For the benefit of beings for as long as this world endures.

Born from an extremely beautiful, superlative lotus
In this joyful land, the Buddha's magnificent mandala,
May I receive a prediction of my awakening
Directly from the Buddha Amitabha.

Having received a prediction there,
May I create vast benefit
For beings throughout the ten directions,
With a billion emanations by the power of wisdom.

Through even the small virtue I have accumulated
By offering this prayer of the bodhisattva practice,

May all the positive aspirations of beings
Be fulfilled in an instant.

Through creating limitless positive potential
By dedicating this prayer of Samantabhadra's deeds,
May all beings drowning in this torrent of suffering,
Enter the presence of Amitabha.

Through this king of aspirations, which is the greatest of the sublime,
Helping infinite wanderers in samsara,
Through the accomplishment of this scripture dazzling with
Samantabhadra's practice,
May suffering realms be utterly emptied of all beings.

Colophon:

Thus, The Extraordinary Aspiration of the Practice of Samantabhadra, also known as The King of Prayers, from the *Gaṇḍavyūha* chapter of the *Avatamsaka Sutra* (translated by Jinamitra, Surendrabodhi, and Yeshe-de, circa 900 C.E.), is complete. The Tibetan was compared with the Sanskrit and revised by Lotsawa Vairochana.

Translator's Colophon:

Translated by Jesse Fenton in Seattle, Washington in 2002 by request of her teacher, Venerable Thubten Chodron, relying on the commentary Ornament Clarifying the Exalted Intention of Samantabhadra ('phags pa bzang po spyod pa'i smon lam gyi rnam par bshad pa kun tu bzang po'i dgongs pa gsal bar byed pa'i rgyan) by Jangkya Rolpāi Dorje, and on clarification of many difficult points by the very kind Khensur Rinpoche Konchog Tsering of Ganden Monastery.

*Shantideva*

The Dedication Chapter from Shantideva's Bodhicharyavatara

1. May all sentient beings be graced with the bodhisattva way of life by the virtue I have obtained while reflecting on *A Guide to the Bodhisattva Way of Life*.
2. Through my merit, may all those in all directions who are afflicted by bodily and mental sufferings obtain oceans of joy and contentment.
3. As long as the cycle of existence lasts, may their happiness never decline. May the world attain the constant joy of the bodhisattvas.
4. As many hells as there are in the worlds, may beings in them delight in the joys of contentment in Sukhavati.
5. May those afflicted with cold find warmth. May those oppressed with heat be cooled by oceans of water springing from the great clouds of the bodhisattvas.
6. May the forest of sword-leaves become for them the splendor of a pleasure grove; and may the swordlike Salmali trees grow as wish-fulfilling trees.
7. May the regions of hell become vast ponds of delight, fragrant with lotuses, beautiful and pleasing with the cries of white geese, wild ducks, ruddy geese, and swans.
8. May the heap of burning coal become a mound of jewels. May the burning ground become a crystal marble floor; and may the

mountains of “the crushing hell” become temples of worship filled with Sugatas.

9. May the rain of burning coal, lava, and daggers from now on become a rain of flowers; and may mutual battling with weapons now become a playful flower fight.
10. By the power of my virtue, may those whose flesh has completely fallen off, whose skeletons are of the color of a white jasmine flower, and who are immersed in the river Vaitarani whose water is like fire, attain celestial bodies and dwell with goddesses by the river Mandakini.
11. May the horrifying agents of Yama, crows, and vultures suddenly watch here in fear. Those looking upward behold blazing Vajrapani in the sky and wonder: “Whose is this brilliant light that dispels darkness all around and generates the joy of contentment?” May they depart together with him, freed of vice through the power of their joy.
12. A rain of lotuses falls mixed with fragrant waters. It is seen to extinguish the unceasing fires of the hells. May the beings of the hells, suddenly refreshed with joy, wonder, What is this? and may they see Padmapani.
13. Friends, come, come quickly! Cast away fear! We are alive! A fragrant radiant vanquisher of fear, a certain prince in a monastic robe, has come to us. By his power every adversity is removed, streams of delight flow, the spirit of awakening is born, as is compassion, the mother of protection of all beings.”
14. Behold him whose lotus feet are worshipped with tiaras of hundreds of gods, whose eyes are moist with compassion, on whose head a stream of diverse flowers rains down, with his delightful summer palaces celebrated by thousands of goddesses singing hymns of praise. Upon seeing Manjughosha before them, may the beings of the hells immediately cheer.

15. Through my virtues, may the beings of the hells rejoice upon seeing the unobscured clouds of bodhisattvas, headed by Samantabhadra and bearing pleasant, cool, and fragrant rains and breezes.
16. May the intense pains and fears of the beings of the hells be pacified. May the inhabitants of all miserable states of existence be liberated from their woeful states.
17. May the animals’ risk of being eaten by each other disappear. May the pretas be as happy as the people in Uttarakuru.
18. May the pretas always be satiated, bathed, and refreshed by the streams of milk pouring from the hand of noble Avalokiteshvara.
19. May the blind always see forms, and may the deaf hear. May pregnant women give birth without pains, as did Mayadevi.
20. May they acquire everything that is beneficial and desired by the mind: clothing, food, drink, flower garlands, sandal-paste, and ornaments.
21. May the fearful become fearless and those struck by grief find joy. May the despondent become resolute and free of trepidation.
22. May the ill have good health. May they be freed from every bondage. May the weak become strong and have affectionate hearts for one another.
23. May all regions be advantageous to all those who travel on roads. May the purpose for which they set out be expediently accomplished.
24. May those who journey by boat succeed as they desire. May they safely reach the shore and rejoice with their relatives.
25. May those who find themselves on wrong paths in dreary forests come upon the company of fellow travelers; and without fatigue, may they journey without fear of bandits, tigers, and the like.

26. May deities protect the dull, the insane, the deranged, the helpless, the young, and the elderly, and those in danger from sickness, the wilderness, and so on.
27. May they be free from all lack of leisure; may they be endowed with faith, wisdom, and compassion; may they be possessed of stature and good conduct; and may they always remember their former lives.
28. May they be inexhaustible treasuries just like Sky-treasure. Free of conflict or irritation, may they have an independent way of life.
29. May beings who have little splendor be endowed with great magnificence. May unattractive wretches be endowed with beauty.
30. May the women in the world become men. May the lowly obtain grandeur and yet be free of arrogance.
31. Through this merit of mine, may all beings without exception abstain from every vice and always engage in virtue.
32. Not lacking the spirit of awakening, devoted to the bodhisattva way of life, embraced by the buddhas, and free of the deeds of maras,
33. May all beings have immeasurable life spans. May they always live happily, and may even the word “death” disappear.
34. May all quarters of the world be delightful with gardens of wish-fulfilling trees, filled with the buddhas and the children of the buddhas, and be enchanting with the sounds of Dharma.
35. May the ground everywhere be free from stones and rocks, smooth like the palm of the hand, soft and made of lapis lazuli.
36. May the great assemblies of bodhisattvas sit on all sides. May they beautify the earth with their own resplendence.
37. May all beings unceasingly hear the sound of Dharma from the birds, from every tree, from the rays of light, and from the sky.

38. May they always encounter the buddhas and the children of the buddhas. May they worship the spiritual mentor of the world with endless clouds of offerings.
39. May a god send rain in time, and may there be an abundance of crops. May the populace be prosperous, and may the king be righteous.
40. May medicines be effective, and may the mantras of those who recite them be successful. May dakinis, rakshasas, and other ghouls be filled with compassion.
41. May no sentient being be unhappy, sinful, ill, neglected, or despised; and may no one be despondent.
42. May monasteries be well established, full of chanting and study. May there always be harmony among the Sangha, and may the purpose of the Sangha be accomplished.
43. May monks who wish to practice find solitude. May they meditate with their minds agile and free of all distractions.
44. May nuns receive provisions and be free of quarrels and troubles. May all renunciates be of untarnished ethical discipline.
45. May those who are of poor ethical discipline be disgusted and become constantly intent on the extinction of their vices. May they reach a fortunate state of existence, and may their vows remain unbroken there.
46. May they be learned and cultured, receive alms, and have provisions. May their mindstreams be pure and their fame be proclaimed in every direction.
47. Without experiencing the suffering of the miserable states of existence and without arduous practice, may the world attain buddhahood in a single divine body.
48. May all sentient beings worship all the buddhas in many ways. May they be exceedingly joyful with the inconceivable bliss of the buddhas.

49. May the bodhisattvas' wishes for the welfare of the world be fulfilled; and whatever the protectors intend for sentient beings, may that be accomplished.
50. May the pratyekabuddhas and shravakas be happy, always worshipped by the lofty gods, asuras, and humans.
51. Through the grace of Manjughosha, may I always achieve ordination and the recollection of past lives until I reach the Joyous Ground.
52. May I live endowed with strength in whatever posture I am. In all my lives, may I find plentiful places of solitude.
53. When I wish to see or ask something, may I see the Protector Manjunatha himself, without any impediment.
54. May my way of life be like that of Manjushri, who lives to accomplish the benefit of all sentient beings throughout the ten directions.
55. For as long as space endures and for as long as the world lasts, may I live dispelling the miseries of the world.
56. Whatever suffering there is for the world, may it all ripen upon me. May the world find happiness through all the virtues of the bodhisattvas.
57. May the teaching that is the sole medicine for the suffering of the world and the source of all prosperity and joy remain for a long time, accompanied by riches and honor.
58. I bow to Manjughosha, through whose grace my mind turns to virtue. I salute my spiritual friend through whose kindness it becomes stronger.

Colophon:

Reprinted with permission from *A Guide to the Bodhisattva Way of Life*, translated by Vesna A. Wallace and B. Alan Wallace, Ithaca: Snow Lion Publications, 1997, pp. 137-144.

Prayer to Be Reborn in the Land of Bliss

by Je Tsongkhapa

I pray to Buddha Amitayus, teacher of gods and men. Your excellent activities give endless benefit to beings. Remembering you just once pushes away fear of the lord of death. Your mind always generates compassion towards beings like a mother towards her only son.

Many times the good qualities of the supreme paradise, Dewachen, were praised by Lord Buddha. By compassion's power and prayers to be born there, I will explain whatever I can.

Blocked by thick ignorance of the points to be abandoned and obtained, the chances for beings to reach a higher life are killed by the weapon of anger. We are locked in samsara's prison, bound by the rope of desire, and carried away by the great river of karma into samsara's ocean.

Adrift in sufferings' waves of sickness and old age, swallowed by the sea monster's mouth of the ruthless lord of death, and buried under a load of unwanted sufferings, I am unprotected and moaning with depression. My mind aspires to witness a destitute person's only friend, the Savior Amitabha.

You are accompanied by the great bodhisattva, Lord Avalokiteshvara, and surrounded by a supreme entourage. Please don't forget your unwavering promise to benefit us, made for immeasurable eons by generating the bodhisattva mind. By the power of that, I supplicate you respectfully

to come here through the force of your miraculous powers and compassion, just like the king of birds flies through the deities' path of the sky.

By depending on the power of amassing the ocean-like two collections of virtue accumulated by myself and others throughout the three times, I pray, Amitabha, that you, together with your two chief sons and your entourage, will stay close to me at the time of my death and protect me. Please, Buddha, may I see you directly along with your entourage. At that time may very strong faith in you arise in me.

May there be no extreme pain at the time of death. Without forgetting, may I remember the object of my faith. At the moment of death, may the eight bodhisattvas come to me with their miraculous power and show me the exact path to travel to Dewachen.

Because of that may I be born from a lotus into the precious pure land of Dewachen with sharp faculties and among the Mahayana race of beings. As soon as I am born, may I retain everything previously learned about concentration, selfless bodhichitta, endless ability, confidence, and so forth. May I achieve immeasurable collections of good qualities.

May Amitabha, his entourage, and the buddhas and bodhisattvas of the ten directions have confidence in me, and may I receive the complete Mahayana teachings, understanding them exactly as intended. Through miraculous power, may I go unobstructed to the many buddha-fields, completing all the great bodhisattva activities.

Even though I take birth in the pure realms, may I be drawn by the great power of compassion to go, without obstacles and through miraculous ability, mainly into impure lands.

May I teach the Dharma to all beings exactly as fits each one's ability. Because of that, may I be able to establish them in the perfect, pure path praised by the buddhas. May I quickly complete all excellent activities and easily achieve buddhahood for the sake of the vast numbers of beings.

One day, when this life's activities are finished, may my mind become full of faith and compassion from being able to see you clearly, Amitabha, surrounded by your ocean of disciples.

As soon as the appearances of the intermediate state come to me, may the eight bodhisattvas show me the unmistakable path. Because of that, may I be born into Dewachen and then emanate into impure lands in order to save beings.

Even though I may not always be able to achieve such a supreme state through all my lives, may I always achieve the basis of a perfect human form. May I strive at hearing, contemplating, and meditating upon the explanations and realizations of Buddha's teachings.

May I never be separated from the basis of a human form, ornamented by the seven qualities of the higher realms.¹ In those lifetimes may I always achieve the ability to remember all my previous existences with exact clarity.

Throughout all my future lives may I see samsaric existence as without essence. May I be attracted to nirvana's qualities. Because of that, through Buddha's excellent teachings on vinaya, may I renounce the world and enter the monastic life.

When I become a monk or nun, may I not commit any of the natural bad deeds nor break even the slightest of Buddha's precepts. May I be just like Bhikshu Mitrugpa (Undisturbed), achieving great enlightenment by completely developing the heap of ethics. Also, throughout all my future lives may I exactly understand the way for purely cleaning away the mental afflictions.

Then may I achieve the excellent collections of recollecting everything without exception that I previously learned, including the branches of perfection and holding in mind the words and meanings of the Dharma. May I achieve the pure confidence to teach without obstacle to others I behold.

Also, throughout all my lives may I enter the samadhis called "going courageously" and so forth, may I gain the "flesh eye" and so forth,² and may I achieve the five clairvoyances, such as the miraculous ability to know faraway objects and so forth.³ May I never be separated from these abilities.

Throughout all my future lives may I achieve great wisdom, which makes me able, through my own power, to discriminate between the points of what should be developed and what should be abandoned.

May I achieve clear wisdom, which is able to discriminate even the subtle details of the mental afflictions and of the pure virtues exactly as they are, not mixing them but keeping them separate.

May I achieve quick wisdom, which is able to terminate without exception all lack of understanding, wrong views, and mental doubts as soon as they arise.

May I achieve profound wisdom, which gives me access to the scriptures of Buddha's excellent speech, so that without becoming stuck, I may understand the unfathomable depths of meaning.

In summary, with the wisdom free from the faults of perverted wisdom, may I become just like venerable Manjushri with a skillful teacher's wisdom that keeps a clear understanding of the meanings of the Buddha's teachings and enables me to perfect all the bodhisattvas' transcendental activities.

Like that, with wisdom that is great, clear, quick, and profound, may I take care of other fortunate ones with kindness, destroy wrong views, and please the knowledgeable through teaching, debating, and composing scriptures on the various branches of Buddha's teachings, becoming a completely perfected scholar.

Throughout all my future lives may I be free of holding thoughts that mainly cling to my own purposes, and may I stop all laziness and cowardliness toward the great activities of the bodhisattvas. Then may I become skillful in the bodhisattva mind, which willingly takes on the purposes of others with a brave mind perfectly complete. By that, may I perfect all bodhisattvas' activities and become just like venerable Avalokiteshvara.

Also, throughout all my future lives, when working for the benefit of myself and others, may I subdue all demons, extremists, and opponents with wrong views through the skillful power that enables me to complete

all the perfect bodhisattva activities, becoming just like the venerable Vajrapani.

Throughout all my future lives, with effort that abandons all laziness, may I complete the bodhisattvas' activities by first generating the bodhisattva mind instantly and then not wavering from it. Through that great effort may I find incomparable buddhahood, becoming just like Buddha Shakyamuni.

Throughout all my future lives, may I be able to overcome all sicknesses of body and mind that are obstacles to achieving enlightenment. May I become just like the thus-gone Medicine Buddha, just by mentioning whose name one is able to pacify all sufferings of body, speech, and mind.

Also, throughout all my future lives, may I attain whatever length of life I wish for, becoming just like Buddha Amitayus. Even by saying his name one is able to subdue all untimely death.

When obstacles to life come near, please appear to me, Savior Amitayus, and through your four activities, tame your disciples, appearing to them clearly in whatever form is fitting. As soon as your form is seen, may all obstacles to life be extinguished, without exception.

When you appear in whatever form is fitting for your disciples, Savior Amitayus, may we be able to recognize those forms as you, and may a faith that is not artificial and that is unshakably strong arise. Through the power of that faith, may we meet directly with you in the form of virtuous friends throughout all our lives, Buddha Amitayus, receiving direct teachings and never becoming separate.

Throughout all my future lives may I be held in the kindness of a fully qualified Mahayana virtuous teacher, the root of all ordinary and transcendent good qualities, and may that teacher become very happy with me.

At that time also, through the power of a strong, unshakable faith toward my virtuous guide, may I only perform activities that please my teacher with all three doors of my body, speech, and mind. May I not

do anything that would cause my guide to become displeased for even an instant.

Having pleased my virtuous friend, may every holy instruction be bestowed without leaving anything out, and may I diligently practice. Understanding whatever meanings are taught, may I strive to be able to accomplish them completely. May I not become influenced for even an instant by misleading friends or non-virtuous teachers.

Throughout all my lives, may I have reasoned faith in cause and effect, renunciation, the altruistic wish for enlightenment, pure view, and all knowledges entered into effortlessly, experienced without break. Throughout all my future lives, may the roots of all virtues I perform through my body, speech, and mind serve to benefit others, becoming a cause for their pure enlightenment.

Colophon:

Source unknown. Lightly edited by Ven. Constance Miller, FPMT Education Department, April 1999. Revised June 1999.

A Prayer for the Beginning, Middle, and End of Practice

by Je Tsongkhapa

I bow before the conquering buddhas, bodhisattvas, and arhats of all directions and of all times.

I offer this boundless prayer with the purest of minds
to free countless beings from cycles of existence.
By the power of the unfailing Three Jewels
and of great rishis possessed of the force of truth,
may these sincere words bear fruit.

Life after life, may I never be born into realms
of great suffering or unfavorable circumstance
but gain always a precious human form
blessed with every conducive provision.

From the moment of birth may I never
be lured by the pleasures of existence,
but, guided by renunciation intent on freedom,
be resolute in seeking the pure life.

May there be no hindrance to becoming a monk,
from friends, family, or possessions,
and for every conducive circumstance,
by mere thought may it appear.

Once a monk, may I be untainted as long as I live,
by breach of vow or natural fault,
as promised in the presence of my preceptor.

I pray that on such pure foundation,
and for every mother sentient being,
I devote myself with hardship for countless eons
to every aspect, profound and vast, of the Mahayana.

May I be cared for by true spiritual friends,
filled with knowledge and insight,
senses stilled, minds controlled, loving, compassionate,
and with courage untiring in working for others.

As Sada Prarudita devoted himself to Dharma Arya,
may I sincerely please my spiritual master
with body, life, and wealth,
never disappointing him for an instant.

I pray that the Perfection of Wisdom, forever profound,
a bringer of peace, unbound by identification,
be taught to me as taught to Sada Prarudita,
unsullied by the muddy waters of false views.

May I never fall under the sway
of false teachers and misleading friends,
their flawed views of existence and nonexistence
well outside the Buddha's intention.

With sail hoisted of the sincerest of minds,
driven by winds of unflagging effort,
on this well-built ship of study, thought, and meditation,
may I bring living beings from samsara's ocean.

As much as I excel in learning,
as much as I give to others,
as pure as my morality grows,
as much as I become wise,
by as much may I be empty of pride.

I pray that I listen insatiably
to countless teachings at the feet of a master,
single-handedly with logic unflawed,
prizing open scriptures' meanings.

Having examined day and night
with fourfold logic all that I have heard,
may I banish every doubt
with the discerning understanding
that arises from such contemplation.

With conviction on dharmas profound
gained from understanding born of contemplation,
I pray that I retreat to solitude
with a perseverance severing life's attachments
to devote myself to proper practice.

When the Buddha's thoughts dawn upon me
through study, thought, and meditation,
I pray that things of this life forever bonded to samsara
and thoughts of my happiness alone
never arise in my mind.

Unattached to my possessions
I pray that I destroy parsimony,
gathering disciples around me
by giving first of material wealth
to satisfy them with Dharma.

With a mind renounced may I never transgress
even the smallest precept, though it may cost my life,
flying forever, therefore, the flag of freedom.

When I see, hear, or think of those
who struck, beat, or maligned me,
may I be without anger, speak of their virtues,
and meditate upon patience.

I pray I will apply myself to enthusiasm,
achieving virtues unachieved, improving those attained,
banishing utterly threefold debilitating laziness.

I pray to abandon the meditative absorption
that lacks the power of insight to quell samsara,
that is divorced from the moist compassion to quash nirvana's passivity,
and that mostly throws one back to cycles of existence,
but develop instead the meditative absorption
that unites compassion and insight.

I pray that I banish false views of emptiness,
mentally fabricated and partially known,
born from fear of the most profound truth, cherished as supreme,
and that I realize all phenomena to be forever empty.

May I bring to faultless morality
those so-called practitioners with their wayward ethics,
shamelessly empty of pure practice,
rashly pursuing paths shunned by the wise.
May I bring to the path praised by buddhas
those lost and fallen onto wrong paths,
swayed by deluded teachers and misleading friends.

I pray that my lion-like roar
of teaching, argument, and composition
flattens the pride of fox-like false orators,
and, gathering well-trained disciples about me,
I fly the banner of the teachings forever.

In whatever life I may drink the nectar of Buddha's teachings,
I pray to be born into a good family
and be of handsome build, wealthy, powerful, and wise,
blessed with long life and sound health.

May I develop the unique love of a mother
for those who malign me
and harbor ill designs upon my life,
my body, or my possessions.

By growing within myself
the pure and extraordinary bodhi-mind
whose nature is to cherish others more than self,
may I soon give them unsurpassable enlightenment.

Whoever hears, sees, or calls these verses to mind,
may they be undaunted in fulfilling
the powerful prayers of the bodhisattvas.

By the power of these vast prayers
made with the purest intention,
may I attain the perfection of prayer
and fulfill the hopes of every living being.

Colophon:

Reprinted with permission from *The Splendor of an Autumn Moon: The Devotional Verse of Tsongkhapa*, translated and introduced by Gavin Kilty, Wisdom Publications, 2001.

*Amitayus*

*Until Buddhahood*¹

Ji si thub chhog zhug so

Until I manifest
The holy state of a supreme subduer,
May I obtain a basis for accomplishing the pure noble path,
Take ordination, and remember all my lives.

May I uphold the treasury of many infinite qualities –
dharani,² confidence,³
Meditative stabilization, clairvoyance, magical emanation, and more.
Having attained peerless knowledge, mercy, and ability,
May I swiftly perfect the conduct of enlightenment.

When I see signs of untimely death,
In that very moment may I clearly see the body
Of Protector Amitayus and destroy the Lord of Death;
May I quickly become an immortal knowledge-holder.

In all my lives by the force of Amitayus
Directly acting as a virtuous friend of the Supreme Vehicle,
May I never turn away, even for an instant,
From this noble path admired by the conquerors.

May I never generate a mind that,
Neglecting sentient beings, hopes for my welfare alone.
May I strive for the welfare of others with skill in means,
Unobscured regarding the way to accomplish their welfare.

Also by merely expressing and remembering my name,
 May all those tormented by the result of their negative actions
 Become rich with the glory of sublime happiness, and
 May they climb the stairway leading to the Supreme Vehicle.

By illustrating a mere fragment of the biographies of
 The conquerors' children, may all the interferences
 To the conduct of the conquerors' children be pacified
 without exception,
 And may helpful necessities be achieved by just calling them to mind.

By the truth of the ruler of the Shakyas,
 The guides Amitabha, Maitreya, Manjushri, the Lord of the Secret,
 Avalokiteshvara, and the sugatas and their retinues,
 May all these prayers be quickly fulfilled.

Notes:

1. The title "Until Buddhahood" is not a direct translation of the original title, which consists of the first four syllables of the first verse of the text literally translated as "until a supreme subduer."
2. Understanding the words and meaning of scriptures without forgetting.
3. Confidence in explaining the words and meaning of scriptures without any limitations.

Colophon:

Translated by Geshe Thubten Sherab, Taos, New Mexico, USA. Scribed and lightly edited by Kendall Magnussen, FPMT Education Services, June 2003. Final editing by Ven. Joan Nicell.

A Daily Prayer to Maitreya Bodhisattva

(taught by Buddha Shakyamuni)

To the awakened ones I prostrate,
 And to the yogis
 With the power of god's eye
 As well as to all the bodhisattvas, hearers, and so forth.

Bodhichitta bars the way to unfortunate destinies;
 It is the great teaching that leads to the highest realms
 And even to the state beyond old age and death.
 To the mind of enlightenment, bodhichitta, I prostrate.

Controlled by negative habits,
 In the sight of the Buddha
 I have often given harm to others.
 I shall confess those actions.

Yet from the beneficial actions of my body, speech, and mind
 I pray that the merit generating the seeds of omniscience may never
 be exhausted.
 May I further accomplish this accumulation of merit
 By performance of the three actions (of body, speech, and mind).

I offer all that I have to the buddhas
 In their pure lands of the ten directions.
 In the wisdom of all the buddha
 And in my own virtues I rejoice.

In short, I confess all harmful actions,
I make prostration to all the buddhas.
I rejoice in all acts of virtue
And I myself wish to obtain supreme wisdom.

Bodhisattvas of the tenth level
In all the ten directions
Need no reminder
To work for enlightenment.

Obtaining buddhahood, supreme enlightenment,
Joining those who have subdued the demon of self-cherishing,
He (Maitreya) will turn the Dharma wheel
In order to benefit all sentient beings.

I pray that sentient beings without exception
May be liberated by the sound of the great Dharma drum.
Please stay to teach the path to enlightenment
For inconceivable millions of eons.

I who am stuck hard in the mud of the desire realm,
Tightly bound by the rope of samsara,
Please watch over me, supreme beings
Who stand on the two feet of method and wisdom.

The love of the Buddha is not obscured
In the same way as love between sentient beings.
The goal of his loving kindness-compassion
Is to lead them across the ocean of samsara.

I will follow with care
The path of the buddhas
Of the past, present, and future.
It is enlightenment that I will practice.

When I have accomplished the six perfections
May I be able to liberate all beings in the six migratory realms.
May I manifest the six supramundane cognitions;
May I touch great enlightenment.

Not born and not coming, self-nature non-existent,
Abiding non-existent, awareness of appearance non-existent.
The non-true existence of things themselves.
I wish to realize the emptiness of phenomena.

Buddha is like a great lord;
Yet sentient beings do not exist, life does not exist.
No being at all is there that exists; even healing does not exist.
I wish to understand the phenomena of the non-self-existent ego.

Since ego's grasping of
All phenomena is non-existent,
I wish to develop charity without limit
In order to benefit all sentient beings.
Phenomena? Phenomena do not exist.
May the lack of material resources not hinder me.
All things are impermanent;
Therefore, I wish to accomplish the perfection of charity.

May I never transgress the discipline of morality and free
myself from pride,
Since by having pride in the appearance of morality and purity,
One is without morality.
I wish to accomplish the perfection of morality.

Patience must be as steady as earth or water,
Not changeable like the wind.
Knowing that both patience and anger do not exist,
I wish to accomplish the perfection of patience.

It is by effort that I must practice the perfection of effort
Without enjoying laziness.
By the power of mind and body
I wish to accomplish the perfection of effort.

Like the concentration called Magic
And the concentration of Going Heroically
And the concentration Like a Thunderbolt,
May I accomplish the perfection of concentration.

May I gain the great wisdom
That has realized the practices of all three vehicles,
The three doors to liberation,
And the three exact concentrations.

Thus, there was one who followed a completed practice like this.
He was named Maitreya,
Accomplishing well the six perfections,
He quickly reached the tenth level.

Mantra of Maitreya Buddha's Promise

NAMO RATNA TRAYAYA / NAMO BHAGAVATE SHAKYAMU-
NIYE / TATHAGATAYA / ARHATE SAMYAKSAMBUDHAYA /
TADYATHA OM AJITE AJITE APARAJITE / AJITAÑCHAYA HA RA
HA RA MAITRI AVALOKITE KARA KARA MAHA SAMAYA SIDDHI
BHARA BHARA MAHA BODHI MANDA BIJA SMARA SMARA AHS-
MA KAM SAMAYA BODHI BODHI MAHA BODHI SVAHA

Heart mantra

OM MOHI MOHI MAHA MOHI SVAHA

Close heart mantra

OM MUNI MUNI SMARA SVAHA

When my death comes to me in this place,
May I pass with ease to the pure land of Ganden.
May I quickly please the bodhisattva Maitreya
And learn from him the time and place of my awakening.

Colophon:

Translator unknown. Lightly edited by Ven. Constance Miller, FPMT Education Services, April 2003.

Prayer for a Statue of Maitreya

Jam-pä-ku zug-ma

May the embodied beings who have fulfilled all requirements
For building an excellent statue of Maitreya
Be in the presence of the savior, perfect, pure Maitreya, and
Enjoy the splendor of the Mahayana Dharma.

When the mighty sun, the savior Maitreya,
Shines atop the elevated place of Bodhgaya
And the lotus bloom of my wisdom has opened,
May a swarm of bees of fortunate ones be satisfied.

At that time Buddha Maitreya is extremely pleased, and
As he lays his right hand upon my head and
My supreme incomparable enlightenment is prophesied,
May I then quickly attain buddhahood for the sake of all sentient beings.

Even in all future lifetimes while I am completing enlightenment,
After gathering as one all the great waves of deeds, whatever there are,
Of all the buddhas and bodhisattvas of the three times,
May I properly give teachings.

Draped in delicate drawing-like scriptures of good explanation,
Supported on a golden center pole of discernment, and
Decorated with a jeweled tip of the three trainings,
May the victory banner of Buddha's teachings be planted everywhere.

May the teachings, the source of all well-being, spread and flourish, and
May all holy beings, the repository of the teachings, enjoy good health.

May the source of happiness for all embodied beings,
The teachings of the Buddha, always spread.

By the continual force of cultivating the three aspects of love,*
May there be the auspiciousness of the savior, Buddha Maitreya,
Who destroys the hosts of maras with the power of his love and
Nurtures all sentient beings with the strength of his love.

* In the last verse the three aspects of love are: immeasurable love (from among the four immeasurables), affectionate love (from the seven-limb prayer), and superior thought love (also from the seven-limb prayer.)

Colophon:

Composed by the omniscient master, Gendun Drub. Translator unknown. Revised edition, FPMT Education Department, June 1999. Updated June 2004.

Prayer for Spontaneous Bliss

De chen lhun drub ma

by the Second Dalai Lama, Gendun Gyatso

Respectfully I prostrate to the mighty protector, Maitreya,
Who pervades the world with clouds of love and compassion
From the space of dharmakaya, which spontaneously completes
great bliss,
And who rains down deeds in a continuous shower.

From your wisdom manifestation that sees, just as they are,
The minds and natural elements of countless disciples,
By the power of faith, please come down here in all places
unimpeded,
Like the reflected image of the moon in water.

Like jeweled inlay work of many kinds of precious gemstones
Set into a Mt. Sumeru of piled exquisite refined gold,
Your supreme form, which by seeing one remains unsatisfied,
I request to remain firmly for as long as cyclic existence lasts.

You, savior, hold closely with your compassionate hands
All sentient beings who have provided the requirements
For constructing a statue of affectionate love [Maitreya], and
Please lead them definitely to the land of Tushita.

Inseparable from your face, amrita for their eyes,
Nurtured by your speech, the Mahayana scriptures,
And having perfected all the bodhisattva's practices,
Please bestow your blessings for them to quickly attain buddhahood.

In the meantime, may all wishes be fulfilled;
 May all sentient beings have a loving attitude;
 May the teachings of the Buddha spread and extend in all directions;
 And may all sentient beings enjoy wonderful well-being.

May this place be filled by an assembly of ordained monks and nuns
 Clad in saffron robes and upholding the three trainings, and
 May deeds of explanation and practice bring good fortune of extending
 The Buddha's teachings everywhere for as long as cyclic existence lasts.

By the truth of the infallible Three Precious Jewels,
 The blessings of the power of Buddha Maitreya,
 And the enlightened deeds of the mighty Dharma protectors,
 May the complete essence of this pure prayer be fulfilled.

Colophon:

This aspirational prayer of truthful words for achieving excellence was composed at Chokhor Gyäl monastery by Gendun Gyatso [the Second Dalai Lama], a monk who expounds the Dharma, at the request of the great woman leader, Nyima Päl, an incarnation of Bishwakarma [the legendary King of Artistry who designed the main temple in central Lhasa].

Translated by Geshe Lhundub Sopa for members of the Maitreya Project, Singapore, February 1998. Updated June 2004.



Maitreya

The Practice of Prostrations to the Thirty- Five Confession Buddhas



The Five Dhyani Buddhas

Motivation

The purpose of my life is to free the numberless sentient beings who are the source of all my past, present, and future happiness, temporary as well as ultimate happiness – including all the realizations of the path, liberation from samsara, and enlightenment – from all the oceans of samsaric suffering, including the causes: delusion and karma. In order to do this, I must achieve full enlightenment. Therefore, I need to actualize the path. Therefore, I need to purify the defilements.

If I were now born in hell, it would be so unbearable. Even one tiny fire spark on my body is hundreds of thousands of times hotter than the whole entire fire energy in this world. It is so unbearable that experiencing it for even an instant is like suffering for many eons. I have created numberless causes to be born in the hell realms by creating the ten non-virtuous actions countless times in this and beginningless past lives. I have created numberless causes to be born in the hell realms by breaking the pratimoksha vows, by breaking the bodhisattva vows, and by breaking the tantric vows countless times in this and beginningless past lives. And I have created numberless causes to be born in the hells by creating the heaviest negative karma in relationship with the holy virtuous friend, which includes harming the holy body, breaking the advice, disturbing the holy mind, having non-devotional thoughts, and rising heresy and anger, which produce the greatest obstacles to achieve realizations and create the greatest suffering.

Every single one of these negative actions has four suffering results: the ripening result (a rebirth in the lower realms), the possessed result (the

type of environment I'm born into when again a human), the result similar to the cause in my experience, and the worst one, the result similar to the cause in my actions, which means that again and again I am driven to create the same negative actions in the future, and so again and again I have to experience the four suffering results. In this way, samsara has no end.

Not only that, but karma increases, so from even a small negative action can come huge suffering results. And karma is definite to be experienced, so every negative action I have created will definitely bring its result, no matter how long it takes, until it is purified. So from one negative karma, I have to experience the result over and over again for so many hundreds of lifetimes. Understanding this, how can I stand to live life without purifying myself and getting rid of all these negative karmas, just as I would try to get rid of a deadly poison in my body?

Not only that, but I'm going to die, and death can come even today, any moment. Therefore, I must purify all my negative actions right this second. In order to do that, I am going to do these prostrations with the practice of confessing downfalls, and I'm going to do this so that I can develop myself in order to work for the happiness of all sentient beings.

Visualization at the Beginning of the Practice

Visualize in the space in front of you your Guru in the aspect of Shakyamuni Buddha, with thousand-arm Chenrezig at his heart. At the heart of thousand-arm Chenrezig is the syllable HRIH, and from this beams of light emanate, forming six rows in the space below. At the end of each beam is a throne supported by elephants and adorned with pearls. On each throne is seated a buddha. In the first row are six buddhas, blue in color and in the aspect of Akshobhya, with the exception of the third buddha, King Lord of the Nagas, who has a blue-colored body, but a white head. In the second row, there are seven buddhas, white in color and in the aspect of Vairochana. In the third row are seven buddhas, yellow in color and in the aspect of Ratnasambhava. In the fourth row are seven buddhas, red in color and in the aspect of Amitabha. In the fifth row there are seven buddhas, green in color and in the aspect of Amoghasiddhi. These are the Thirty-five Buddhas. Each one is in the posture of that particular dhyani buddha. In the final row are the Medicine Buddhas.

Think that each one of these buddhas is the embodiment of all three times ten directions Buddha, Dharma, Sangha, and all statues, stupas, and scriptures. Think they embody all holy objects, whose essence is the Guru. Have complete faith that each one has the power to purify all your negative karmas and imprints, accumulated since beginningless time.

Now imagine that you emanate numberless bodies, and that as you prostrate, all these bodies prostrate along with you from all directions, covering every atom of the earth.

Now recite the increasing mantras, refuge, and the Confession of Downfalls to the Thirty-five Buddhas on the next page, repeating each buddha's name over and over as many times as you can with each prostration. It is the recitation of the name of each buddha that brings the purification, so there is a big difference when you recite just a few times or many. Even if you do the recitation by listening to a CD or tape, still recite the name yourself as much as you can. Try to do three prostrations to each buddha, with the exception of the final buddha; do nine prostrations to that one. Either recite the prayer three times straight through making one prostration to each buddha each time, or do three prostrations to each buddha as you go through the prayer once. At the end, recite the names of the Medicine Buddhas. This can be followed by Vajrasattva mantra and the "Po" Praise to Chenrezig, according to time. Then recite the prayer at the end, followed by the General Confession.

The Actual Practice

OM NAMO MANJUSHRIYE NAMAH SUSHRIYE NAMA UTTAMA SHRIYE SVAHA (3x)

CHOM DÄN DÄ DE ZHIN SHEG PA DRA CHOM PA YANG DAG PAR DZOG PÄI SANG GYÄ RINCHHEN GYÄLTSHÄN LA CHAG TSHÄL LO (7x)

OM NAMO BHAGAVATE RATNA KETU RAJAYA / TATHAGATAYA / ARHATE SAMYAK SAMBUDDHAYA / TADYATHA / OM RATNE RATNE MAHA RATNE RATNA BIJA YE SVAHA (7x)

Homage to the Confession of the Bodhisattva's Downfalls!
 I, (say your name) throughout all times, take refuge in the Guru;
 I take refuge in the Buddha;
 I take refuge in the Dharma;
 I take refuge in the Sangha. (3x)

To the founder, bhagavan, tathagata, arhat, perfectly completed buddha, glorious conqueror Shakyamuni Buddha, I prostrate.

To Tathagata Thoroughly Destroying with Vajra Essence, I prostrate.

To Tathagata Radiant Jewel, I prostrate.

To Tathagata King, Lord of the Nagas, I prostrate.

To Tathagata Army of Heroes, I prostrate.

To Tathagata Delighted Hero, I prostrate.

To Tathagata Jewel Fire, I prostrate.

To Tathagata Jewel Moonlight, I prostrate.

To Tathagata Meaningful to See, I prostrate.

To Tathagata Jewel Moon, I prostrate.

To Tathagata Stainless One, I prostrate.

To Tathagata Bestowed with Courage, I prostrate.

To Tathagata Pure One, I prostrate.

To Tathagata Bestowed with Purity, I prostrate.

To Tathagata Water God, I prostrate.

To Tathagata Deity of the Water God, I prostrate.

To Tathagata Glorious Goodness, I prostrate.

To Tathagata Glorious Sandalwood, I prostrate.

To Tathagata Infinite Splendor, I prostrate.

To Tathagata Glorious Light, I prostrate.

To Tathagata Sorrowless Glory, I prostrate.

To Tathagata Son of Non-craving, I prostrate.

To Tathagata Glorious Flower, I prostrate.

To Tathagata Pure Light Rays Clearly Knowing by Play, I prostrate.

To Tathagata Lotus Light Rays Clearly Knowing by Play, I prostrate.

To Tathagata Glorious Wealth, I prostrate.

To Tathagata Glorious Mindfulness, I prostrate.

To Tathagata Glorious Name Widely Renowned, I prostrate.

To Tathagata King Holding the Victory Banner of Foremost Power,
 I prostrate.

To Tathagata Glorious One Totally Subduing, I prostrate.

To Tathagata Utterly Victorious in Battle, I prostrate.

To Tathagata Glorious Transcendence Through Subduing,
 I prostrate.

To Tathagata Glorious Manifestations Illuminating All, I prostrate.

To Tathagata All-Subduing Jewel Lotus, I prostrate.

To Tathagata, arhat, perfectly completed buddha, King of the Lord of Mountains Firmly Seated on Jewel and Lotus, I prostrate. (3x)

All those [you thirty-five buddhas] and others, as many tathagatas, arhats, perfectly completed buddhas as there are existing, sustaining, and residing in all the world systems of the ten directions; all you buddha-bhagavans, please pay attention to me.

In this life and in all the states of rebirth in which I have circled in samsara throughout beginningless lives, whatever negative actions I have created, made others create, or rejoiced in the creation of; whatever possessions of stupas, possessions of the Sangha, or possessions of the Sangha of the ten directions that I have appropriated, made others appropriate, or rejoiced in the appropriation of; whichever among the five actions of immediate (retribution) I have done, caused to be done, or rejoiced in the doing of; whichever paths of the ten non-virtuous actions I have engaged in, caused others to engage in, or rejoiced in the engaging in: whatever I have created, being obscured by these karmas causes me and sentient beings to be born in the hell realms, in the animal realm, and in the preta realm; in irreligious countries, as barbarians, or as long-life gods; with imperfect faculties, holding wrong views, or not being pleased with Buddha's descent. In the presence of the buddha-bhagavans, who are transcendental wisdom, who are eyes, who are witnesses, who are valid, and who see with omniscient consciousness, I am admitting and confessing all these negativities, I will not conceal them nor hide them, and from now on in the future I will abstain and refrain from committing them again.

All buddha-bhagavans, please pay attention to me. In this life and in all other states of rebirth in which I have circled in samsara throughout beginningless lives, whatever roots of virtue I have created by generosity, even as little as giving just one mouthful of food to a being born in the animal realm; whatever roots of virtue I have created by guarding morality; whatever roots of virtue I have created by following pure conduct; whatever roots of virtue I have created by fully ripening sentient beings; whatever roots of virtue I have created by generating bodhichitta; and whatever roots of virtue I have created by my unsurpassed transcendental wisdom: all these assembled and gathered, combined together, I fully dedicate to the unsurpassed, the unexcelled, that higher than the high, that superior to the superior. Thus, I completely dedicate to the highest, perfectly complete enlightenment.

Just as the previous buddha-bhagavans have fully dedicated, just as the future buddha-bhagavans will fully dedicate, and just as the presently abiding buddha-bhagavans are fully dedicating, like that I too dedicate fully.

I confess all negativities individually. I rejoice in all the merits. I urge and implore all buddhas to grant my request: may I receive the highest, most sublime transcendental wisdom.

To the conquerors, the best of humans – those who are living in the present time, those who have lived in the past, and those who will likewise come – to all those who have qualities as vast as an infinite ocean, with hands folded, I approach for refuge.

How to Meditate on the General Confession

As you confess each of the negative actions contained in this prayer, think to yourself that you have created this negative action not just once, but countless times in this and beginningless lives, whether you remember it or not. Generate very strong regret. The stronger the regret, the greater the purification.

Then reflect on the emptiness of each of these negative actions, remembering that even negative actions do not truly exist from their own side. They arise in dependence on causes and conditions and are merely labeled by the mind. You can either think they are completely non-existent from their own side, or that they are merely labeled by mind, or that they are hallucination. Whichever method you use to understand emptiness, the conclusion that should

come in your heart is that each of these negative actions are completely empty, not existing from their own side, even the slightest atom.

At the end of the confession prayer, pause to make the determination not to commit these negative actions again in the future. This is the power of restraint. Make this promise realistic, even if you are promising simply not to do the negative action even for just the next five minutes or seconds. This is to make sure you that you do not tell a lie to the merit field.

General Confession

U hu lag! (Woe is me!)

O great guru Vajradhara, all other buddhas and bodhisattvas who abide in the ten directions, and all the venerable Sangha, please pay attention to me.

I, who am named [say your name], circling in cyclic existence since beginningless time until the present, overpowered by mental afflictions such as attachment, aversion, and ignorance by means of body, speech, and mind have created the ten non-virtuous actions. I have engaged in the five uninterrupted negative karmas and the five nearing uninterrupted negative karmas.¹ I have transgressed the vows of individual liberation, transgressed the vows of bodhisattvas, and transgressed the samaya of secret mantra.² I have been disrespectful to my parents, have been disrespectful to my vajra masters, and to my abbot, and have been disrespectful to my spiritual friends living in ordination.³ I have committed actions harmful to the Three Jewels, avoided the holy Dharma,⁴ criticized the arya Sangha,⁵ harmed sentient beings, and so on. These and many other non-virtuous negative actions I have done, have caused others to do, have rejoiced in others' doing, and so forth.

In the presence of the great guru Vajradhara, all the buddhas and bodhisattvas who abide in the ten directions, and the venerable Sangha, I admit this entire collection of faults and transgressions that are obstacles to my own higher rebirth and liberation and are causes of cyclic existence and miserable lower rebirths. I will not conceal them, and I accept them as negative. I promise to refrain from doing these actions again in the future.⁶ By confessing and acknowledging them, I will attain and abide in happiness, while by not confessing and acknowledging them, true happiness will not come.

Visualization at the End of the Confession Prayer

Think that through the force of reciting these names of the thirty-five Buddhas of Confession and Medicine Buddhas, through the power of their pure prayers and vows, through the power of generating regret and the other opponent forces, and through the power of having made these prostrations, nectars and light rays descend from the holy bodies of the buddhas, completely purifying all negative karmas, defilements and imprints collected on your mental continuum since beginningless time. Generate strong faith that your mind has become completely pure.

Then reflect on emptiness. In emptiness there is no I, the creator of negative actions. In emptiness there is no creating of negative actions. In emptiness there are no negative actions created. Even though there are infinite phenomena, in emptiness nothing exists at all. There is no this and that, no me and you, nothing. In emptiness everything is one taste. From this emptiness, everything comes into existence. Whatever exists is the manifestation of emptiness.

Dedication

Due to all the three time merits accumulated by myself, all the buddhas and bodhisattvas and all sentient beings, which are completely empty of existing from their own side, may the I, which is completely empty of existing from its own side, quickly achieve the state of full enlightenment, which is completely empty of existing from its own side, in order to lead all sentient beings, who are completely empty of existing from their own side, to that state by myself alone, who is completely empty of existing from its own side.

Due to all the three time merits accumulated by myself, all the buddhas and bodhisattvas and all sentient beings, may the precious supreme enlightened thought, bodhichitta – letting go of self and cherishing others – which is the source of all success and happiness for myself and all sentient beings, immediately be generated within my own mind, and within the minds of all sentient beings. May that which has already been generated never decline, but increase more and more.

FPMT Education Department

The aim of the Education Department at FPMT International Office is to serve the needs of Dharma centers and individuals in the area of Tibetan Buddhist educational and spiritual materials. This includes prayers and practice texts, retreat sadhanas and other practice materials, a variety of study texts and translations, deity images for meditation, and curricular materials for study programs in FPMT Dharma centers.

One of our principal objectives is to serve as a repository for a wide variety of practice texts primarily within the Gelug tradition, especially those authored or translated by Lama Zopa Rinpoche and Lama Thubten Yeshe. We work in close collaboration with the Lama Yeshe Wisdom Archive, Boston, Massachusetts, which serves as a repository for the commentaries and transcripts of teachings by Lama Zopa Rinpoche and Lama Yeshe.

If we can be of service to you in any way, please contact us at:

Education Department
 FPMT International Office
 1632 SE 11th Avenue
 Portland OR 97214
 (503) 808-1588
 education@fpmt.org
 www.fpmt.org



FPMT Education Department