

Eight Prayers to Benefit the Dead

*FPMT
Education Services*

Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition, Inc.
1632 SE 11th Avenue
Portland, OR 97214 USA
www.fpmt.org

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Amitabha Buddha

King of Prayers
The Extraordinary Aspiration of
the Practice of Samantabhadra
Zang chö mön lam

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.

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.

Colophons:

Original Colophon:

Thus, *The Extraordinary Aspiration of the Practice of Samantabhadra* ('*phags pa bzang po spyod pa'i smon lam gyi rgyal po*), also known as *The King of Prayers*, from the *Gandavyuha* 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, Ven. Thubten Chodrön, 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 Rolpäi Dorje, and on clarification of many difficult points by the very kind Khensur Rinpoche Konchog Tsering of Ganden Monastery.

A Daily Prayer to Maitreya Bodhisattva Jam päi mön lam

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 buddhas
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 nonexistent,
Abiding nonexistent, awareness of appearance nonexistent.
The nontrue 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 nonexistent,
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.

Praised by all the buddhas,
Blazing with light and brilliance,
Through the joyous effort of the bodhisattvas,
May I fulfill the wishes of myself and others.

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 TRAYĀYA / NAMO BHAGAVATE ŚHĀKYAMUNIYE /
TATHĀGATĀYA / ARHATE SAMYAK SAṂBUDDHAYA / TADYATHĀ /
OṂ AJITE AJITE APARĀJITE / AJITAÑCHAYA HARA HARA
MAITRI ĀVALOKITE KARA KARA MAHĀ SAMAYA SIDDHI BHARA
BHARA MAHĀ BODHI MAṆḌA VIJA SMARA SMARA ASMAKAṂ
SAMAYA BODHI BODHI MAHĀ BODHI SVĀHĀ

Heart Mantra

OṂ MOHI MOHI MAHĀ MOHI SVĀHĀ

Close Heart Mantra

OṂ MUNI MUNI SMARĀ SVĀHĀ

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 Department, April 2003.

The Dedicatíon Chapter from Bodhicharyavatara

Chö jug mön lam

1. By whatever virtue there is due to my having composed
Engaging in the Deeds of a Bodhisattva,
May all transmigratory beings
Engage in the deeds of the bodhisattvas.
2. However many sick people there are
Suffering in body and mind in all directions,
Due to my merit may they obtain
An ocean of happiness and joy.
3. For as long as they remain in cyclic existence
May their happiness never decline.
May transmigratory beings obtain
An uninterrupted flow of unsurpassable happiness.
4. However many hell beings there are
Throughout the realms of the worlds,
May those embodied beings
Be delighted by the happiness of Sukhavati.
5. May those wretched due to cold obtain warmth.
May those wretched due to heat be cooled
By the infinite rivers arising from
The great clouds of the bodhisattvas.

6. May the forest of sword-like leaves
Also become a pleasant grove.
May the *shalmali* trees too
Grow into wish-fulfilling trees.
7. May they be beautified by the melodious calls of
Wild duck, geese, and swans.
May the regions of hell become charming
Due to pools of large and sweetly fragrant lotuses.
8. May the heaps of coals also become piles of jewels.
May the burning iron ground be revealed as crystal floors.
May the mountains of Mass Destruction Hell become
Celestial mansions of offerings filled with sugatas.
9. May the rain of glowing cinders, burning rocks, and weapons
From now on become a rain of flowers.
May the striking of each other with weapons
From now on be a playful tossing of flowers.
10. May those drowning in the fire-like River Without Ford,
Their flesh entirely disintegrated and their bones the color of
kunda flowers,
Attain bodies of gods by the force of my virtue,
And then dwell with goddesses in gently flowing streams.
11. Wondering “Why are the henchmen of Yama and the terrible
ravens and vultures afraid?
Whose strength is the fine strength that utterly dispels
darkness and generates happiness and joy?”,
Upon looking upward they behold Vajrapani abiding blazing in
the midst of space.
By the force of their strong joy, may they be freed from
negativities and be in his company.

12. Having seen the fire of the hells splattered and extinguished
By a falling rain of flowers mixed with scented water,
Immediately satiated with bliss and wondering what had
caused this,
May the hell beings behold Padmapani.
13. Friends, discarding fear, come from the distance!
Why flee when directly in front of us is the one
By whose strength we are freed from suffering and the force
of joy emerges,
The one who thoroughly protects all transmigratory beings
and has generated bodhichitta and mercy,
The youthful one with a blazing topknot who removes all
fears?
14. “Behold him in an attractive mansion resounding with
the melodious eulogies of thousands of goddesses,
With hundreds of gods paying homage at his lotus feet with
their crowns,
And his eyes moist with compassion, a rain of clusters of
many flowers falling upon his head.”
Upon seeing Manjugosha in this way, may the hell beings
exclaim!
15. Thus, by my roots of virtue,
Having seen the comfortable, cool, and fragrant rain falling
From the unobscured clouds of bodhisattvas such as
Samantabhadra,
May the sentient beings of hell become joyful.
16. May the animals be freed from
The fear of being eaten by one another.
May the hungry ghosts be as happy
As the human beings of Unpleasant Sound.

17. May the hungry ghosts be satiated
By the flow of milk descending from
The hand of Arya Lord Avalokiteshvara,
And by washing in it may they always be refreshed.
18. May the blind see
And the deaf always hear sounds.
Just as it was for Mayadevi,
May pregnant women give birth without being harmed.
19. May the naked obtain clothing,
The hungry obtain food,
And the thirsty obtain water
And delicious drinks.
20. May the destitute obtain wealth.
May the wretched with sorrow find joy.
May the depressed be comforted
And attain perfect steadfastness.
21. However many sick sentient beings there are,
May they quickly be freed from their illnesses.
May all the diseases, without exception,
Of transmigratory beings never occur again.
22. May the frightened be fearless.
May those bound be released.
May the weak be strong,
And may their minds be mutually friendly.
23. May all travelers be happy
In every direction whatsoever.
May their aims for which they travel
Be effortlessly accomplished.

24. May those who sail in boats and ships
Fulfill their wishes.
Having happily returned to shore,
May they be joyfully united with their relatives.
25. May anguished wanderers who have gone astray in deserts
Meet with other travelers
And, without fear of robbers, thieves, tigers, and others,
May they proceed easily without fatigue.
26. May the unprotected children and elderly,
Lost and anxious in desolate places and the like,
Those intoxicated with sleep and the insane,
Be watched over by the gods.
27. May beings be liberated from the nonleisures
And be endowed with faith, wisdom, and mercy,
And through food and conduct becoming perfect,
May they always recollect their lives.
28. May everyone, just like Space Treasury,
Have uninterrupted resources.
Without conflict and without harm,
May they enjoy themselves in freedom.
29. May the sentient beings with little splendor
Become greatly magnificent.
May the poor forms of ascetics
Become fine and perfect forms.
30. However many women there are in the world,
May they all become men.
May the lowly attain high status
And may the proud be subdued.

31. Due to this merit of mine,
May all sentient beings without exception
Abandon all negativities and
And always create virtue.
32. May they never be parted from the mind of enlightenment,
Exert themselves in the bodhisattva conduct,
Be cared for by the buddhas,
And abandon the actions of the maras.
33. May all these sentient beings
Have immeasurably long lives.
May they always live in happiness
And not even know the term “death.”
34. May gardens of wish-fulfilling trees
Be full in all directions
With buddhas and the buddha’s children
Filled with the hearing and the proclaiming of the Dharma.
35. May the ground everywhere be pure,
Without pebbles and so forth,
As even as the palm of the hand,
The nature of *vaidurya*, and soft.
36. For all the circles of retinues that exist,
May many bodhisattvas abide,
Adorning the surface of the earth
With their excellence.
37. May all embodied beings
Continually hear the sound of the Dharma
Coming from the birds and the trees,
From every ray of light as well as from the sky.

38. May they always meet
Buddhas and the buddhas' children.
May they present offerings to the gurus of transmigratory
beings
With infinite clouds of offerings.
39. May the gods also send down timely rain
And may crops be plentiful.
May kings act in accordance with the Dharma.
May worldly beings also prosper.
40. May medicines be potent
And the recitation of secret mantras be effective.
May dakinis, rakshasas, and so forth
Be endowed with minds of compassion.
41. May sentient beings never suffer,
Commit negativities, or become ill.
May they not be afraid or despised,
And may they never have unhappy minds.
42. May the monasteries flourish and excellently remain
Due to reading and recitation.
May the Sangha always be concordant
And may the aims of the Sangha also be accomplished.
43. May monks who wish to train
Also find solitude.
Having abandoned all distractions,
May they meditate with serviceable minds.
44. May nuns have material things
And abandon quarrelling and afflicting harm.
Likewise, may all the ordained
Not degenerate their morality.

45. Through being disenchanted by corrupt morality,
May negativities forever be exhausted.
Also having attained good migrations,
May disciplined conduct not decline even there.
46. May the wise be honored
And may they also receive alms.
May their continua be completely pure
And may they be renowned in all directions.
47. May beings not experience the suffering of the bad migrations
And also not undergo any austerities.
With bodies superior to those of gods,
May they quickly achieve buddhahood.
48. May all sentient beings many times
Make offerings to all the buddhas.
Due to the infinite bliss of the buddhas,
May they always be endowed with happiness.
49. May bodhisattvas accomplish
The welfare of transmigratory beings as intended.
May sentient beings also acquire
Whatever the protectors intended.
50. Likewise, may solitary realizers
As well as hearers be happy.
51. May I too, until I attain the Very Joyous Ground
By the kindness of Manjugosha,
Always recollect my former lives
And always receive ordination.
52. May I be robust,
Even though the food may be simple, and live.
In all my lives may I find
Ideal isolated places.

53. Whenever I desire to look or
Even if I wish to ask the slightest question,
May I behold without any hindrance
The protector Manjugosha himself.
54. In order to accomplish the welfare of all sentient beings
Who extend to the ends of space in the ten directions,
May my deeds also be just like
The deeds of Manjugosha.
55. For as long as space endures
And for as long as sentient beings remain,
For that long may I abide
And eliminate the sufferings of transmigratory beings.
56. May the sufferings of transmigratory beings,
No matter how many there are, all ripen upon me.
Due to the bodhisattva Sangha,
May transmigratory beings enjoy happiness.
57. May the sole medicine for the sufferings of transmigratory
beings,
The source of all happiness—
The teachings—together with gain and honor
Remain for a very long time.
58. I prostrate to Manjugosha
By whose kindness, virtuous minds arise.
I prostrate also to my virtuous friends
By whose kindness, I develop.

Colophon:

Translated by Toh Sze Gee from Shantideva's Chapter 10, *Dedication Chapter* in *Bodhicharyavatara (spyod 'jug smon lam)* based on earlier translations by Stephen Batchelor and other translators, 2006. Revised 2014.

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

Thog tha ma

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 in 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 the 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:

Translated by Gavin Kilty from Je Tsongkhapa's *A Prayer for the Beginning, Middle, and End of Practice* (*thog ma dang bar dang tha mar dge ba'i smon lam; thog mtha' ma*) in *The Splendor of an Autumn Moon: The Devotional Verse of Tsongkhapa*, Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2001, 193–207. Reprinted here with permission from the publisher.

Prayer to Be Reborn in the Land of Bliss

De mön

I prostrate to Amitabha, leader of humans and gods.
Through compassion you always see each transmigrator as your
own child;
Remembering you just once leaves the fear of the Lord of Death
far behind;
May your eminent activities for transmigrators be glorious and
without end.

The Buddha praised the supreme buddhafield
Many times in an excellent manner.
Moved by compassion, various prayers were composed
Mentioning the potential to be born in Sukhavati.

Being obscured by thick ignorance, [not knowing what to] adopt
and [what to] discard,
The weapon of anger deprives me of the life of a higher rebirth.
Through the rope of attachment and craving, I am bound to
samsara's prison.
Carried about in the ocean of samsara due to karma,
Wandering around through the waves of suffering of sickness
and old age,
Entering the mouth of the terrifying sea monster, the Lord of
Death,

Buried under loads of unwanted suffering,
Helplessly tormented, with an anguished voice
I make this prayer from my heart.

As witness to my yearning mind,
My guide and sole friend, Amitabha, draw me out of this
miserable [state]!

With respect, I also make requests to your retinue,
And to the bodhisattvas Avalokiteshvara and Vajrapani:
Please don't forget the commitment of your supreme mind
Made over immeasurable eons for our benefit.
And just as the king of birds flies through the sky, the path of
the gods,
Please come here by your miraculous power and compassion.

By the power of combining oceans of the two accumulations
created in the three times by myself and others, may I, at the
time of death, directly see the guide Amitabha together with his
retinue, his two chief disciples, and so forth. At that time, may I
generate intense strong faith by focusing on the Victorious One
and his retinue.

May I not experience the suffering of death and may I remember
the object of faith when death draws near. As soon as my con-
sciousness has left [this body], may the eight bodhisattvas come
in a magical way and show me the path to Sukhavati. May I be
reborn with great intelligence in a precious lotus in the lineage of
the Great Vehicle.

Directly after birth, may I hold up a collection of immeasurable
qualities such as retention, meditative stabilization, bodhichitta of
nonapprehension,¹ and inextinguishable courage. Having pleased
the unsurpassed teachers such as Amitabha, the victorious ones,
and the bodhisattvas of the ten directions, may I receive the pure
teachings and transmissions of the Great Vehicle.

Realizing the true meaning of these [teachings], may I be able to go, during every moment, to boundless buddhafi elds using magical powers without obstruction and complete all the great deeds of the bodhisattvas.

After birth in the pure land, may I also be motivated by resilient compassion, and, with magical powers without obstruction, mainly go to impure worlds and establish the pure paths praised by the victorious ones through teaching the Dharma to all sentient beings in accordance with their dispositions.

May I, for the purpose of all limitless transmigrators, quickly obtain the state of the victorious one by completing all these marvelous deeds without delay.

When the activities of this life are spent,
May I clearly behold in my path of vision
Amitabha and his ocean of retinues,
And may my mind be filled with faith and compassion.

As soon as the appearance of the intermediate state arrives,
May the eight bodhisattvas show me the unmistakable path,
And may I be reborn in Sukhavati
To guide the transmigrators of impure worlds with my emanations.

Even if I do not achieve such a supreme state, may I, through all my lives, always obtain the perfect basis for hearing, contemplation, and meditation upon the victorious one's teachings of scriptures and realizations.

May I never be separated from this basis, ornamented with the seven qualities of the higher realms.² May I, in all those circumstances, achieve the recollection of remembering all previous states [of rebirth].

Throughout all future lives, may I see samsara as being completely without essence and be attracted to nirvana's qualities. With this state of mind, and through the Bhagavan's excellent teachings on vinaya, may I go forth for ordination. When ordained, may I not even commit the smallest downfall or misdeed and, just as Bhikshu Mitrugpa did, achieve great enlightenment by completing the collection of morality.

Furthermore, throughout all future lives, may I realize the correct ways of knowing how afflictions arise and how to purify them, and obtain the marvelous recollection of the apprehension of never forgetting all the words and meanings of the Dharma, the branch of perfection. May I obtain the perfect courage of teaching others that which I apprehend, without obstruction.

Furthermore, throughout all future lives, may I obtain and never be parted from the doors of meditative stabilizations, such as the brave-like one,³ the supernatural eyes, the fleshy eye, clairvoyance, and the ability to perform miraculous deeds.

Furthermore, throughout all future lives, may I obtain great wisdom, the ability to self-reliantly differentiate between what to adopt and what to discard. May I obtain clear wisdom, the ability to differentiate between the diversity of the most subtle points without joining them, of the way afflictions arise and how to purify them. May I obtain quick wisdom, the ability to stop as soon as they arise, all incomprehension, wrong views, and doubts. May I obtain profound wisdom, which penetrates inexhaustibly the words and meaning of scripture unfathomable to others.

In short, may I become like the foremost Manjushri, reaching the perfection of all the bodhisattvas' deeds with skillful wisdom differentiating the words and meanings of the scriptures, without the fault of imperfect knowledge. Having easily gained great,

clear, quick, and profound wisdom, may I, in order to gather the fortunate, crush false expounders and, to please the wise, may I perfect the skill of teaching, debating, and composition that focuses upon all the scriptures of the victorious one.

Furthermore, throughout all future lives, may I stop all apprehension that is primarily concerned with self and all laziness of inadequacy⁴ and weaknesses regarding the great deeds of the bodhisattvas. May I become like the foremost Avalokiteshvara, reaching the perfection of all the bodhisattvas' deeds with skillful bodhichitta, perfecting supreme courage and taking responsibility for others.

Furthermore, throughout all future lives, whenever engaging in the welfare of self and others, may I become like the foremost Vajrapani, reaching the perfection of all the bodhisattvas' deeds with the skillful abilities to destroy maras, those with extreme views, and opponents having wrong views.

Throughout all future lives, may I become like the unequalled King of the Shakyas, reaching great enlightenment. And in order to complete the bodhisattvas' deeds with effort lacking laziness, may I, after generating bodhichitta without being distracted for even an instant, work with great fervor.

Throughout all future lives, may I become like the one gone to bliss, the King of Medicine Buddhas, and in order to destroy all illnesses of body and mind, the obstacles to the achievement of enlightenment, may I have the ability to pacify all suffering of body, speech, and mind by merely mentioning his name.

Furthermore, throughout all future lives, may I, by merely mentioning his name, become like the victorious Amitayus in having the ability to destroy untimely death and complete my life span as

I wish.⁵ When life-threatening obstacles approach, by seeing the appearance of the body of the protector Amitayus that subdues through the four activities,⁶ may all life obstacles be completely pacified.

Throughout all future lives, may I, through the power of having generated uncontrived stable faith in recognizing teachers as being the protector Amitayus himself, whose body appears in accordance with whoever needs to be subdued, never be separated from the victorious Amitayus, who directly acts as spiritual teachers.

Furthermore, throughout all future lives, may I be fostered by spiritual teachers of the Mahayana, the root of all mundane and supramundane qualities. During this care, may I only please them with all my [three] doors through stable, unshakable faith and never, even for an instant, displease them.

May spiritual teachers instruct me with all teaching in its entirety, and may I have the ability to realize the complete meaning as intended and bring my practice to perfection. May I never, even for an instant, fall under [the influence of] misleading teachers and harmful friends.

Throughout all future lives, may I have faith in the law of cause and effect, and enter a continuous, effortless experience of the realizations of renunciation, bodhichitta, and the complete, pure view. Throughout all future lives, may all my virtuous activities of body, speech, and mind be causes solely for the benefit of others and perfect enlightenment.

Colophons:

Original Colophon:

Composed by the glorious Losang Dragpa in the temple of Dzing Jhi and written down by Sang Gyong.

Translator's Dedication and Colophon:

By any merit created through this translation, may His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Lama Zopa Rinpoche, and all of our other precious gurus have long and healthy lives. May their holy wishes be spontaneously fulfilled. May they, at the time of our deaths, lead us to the pure land of Sukhavati, and may we quickly obtain the state of full enlightenment for the benefit of all mother sentient beings.

Translated by Gelong Tenzin Namdak, Sera Je Monastery, Saka Dawa, June 2014, at the request of the most compassionate and kind lama, Lama Zopa Rinpoche. Many thanks to Ven. Gyalten Lekden for proofreading the translation.

Being unrealized, low in acquired knowledge, and learning,
Saturated with wrong views and defilements,
Taking the lamas and deities as my witness,
I confess my mistakes to the wise.

Publisher's Colophon:

Lightly edited by Sarah Shifferd, FPMT Education Services, July 2014. One sentence amended by Ven. Joan Nicell and Joona Repo, FPMT Translation Services, June 2016 (see *Notes*). Very lightly edited by Ven. Joan Nicell, FPMT Translation Services, June 2016.

Until Buddhahood⁷

Jí sí thub chhog ma

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,⁸
confidence,⁹
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.

Colophon:

Composed by the omniscient master, Gendun Drub. 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.

Prayer for a Statue of Maitreya

Jam päi 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 attain buddhahood quickly 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 give teachings properly.

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,¹⁰
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.

Colophon:

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

Prayer for Spontaneous Bliss

De chhen lhün drub ma

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.

Notes

- 1 “Bodhichitta of nonapprehension” refers to a bodhichitta that is conjoined with the realization of emptiness.
- 2 The seven qualities of a higher (human) realm are: (1) to be born into a good caste, (2) to have a complete form, (3) to have a long life, (4) to be without sickness, (5) to have fortunate activities, (6) to have wealth, and (7) to have wisdom.
- 3 Skt. *shurangama samadhi*, Tib. *dpa' bar 'gro ba*.
- 4 “Laziness of inadequacy” (Tib. *sgyid lugs pa'i le lo*) is the laziness of having low self-esteem and using that as an excuse to not engage in Dharma practice.
- 5 Sentence amended by Ven. Joan Nicell and Joona Repo, FPMT Translation Services, June 2016.
- 6 The four activities are those of pacification, increase, control, and wrath.
- 7 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.”
- 8 Tib. *gzung*. Understanding the words and meaning of scriptures without forgetting.
- 9 Confidence in explaining the words and meaning of scriptures without any limitations.
- 10 In the last verse the three aspects of love are: immeasurable love (from among the four immeasurables), affectionate love, and superior thought love (from the sevenfold cause and effect instruction).



Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition