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The Essence of Liturgy

Although we offer you the opportunity to join in with our liturgy, it is not essential to the practice and you may well choose not to use any liturgy when you are practising alone. You may prefer to use inspiring words of your own, or no words at all. If you prefer to use lines of your own choice, you might find things you want to say in the Discovering the Heart of Buddhism or Trusting the Heart of Buddhism course materials or elsewhere. However, if you want to use this liturgy, there are all sorts of benefits from doing so.

By ‘liturgy’ we mean the lines that we recite together as, for example, before and after meditation and teaching sessions. Every Buddhist tradition has its own selection of liturgies that it commonly uses and which many people are familiar with and even know by heart. If we use the same lines when practising alone, they remind us of our connection with the whole Sangha past, present and future, and give us a feeling of solidarity and support. It is as if the liturgy links the whole circle or body (mandala) of practitioners together in a special way.

Liturgy as Inspiration to Connect with the Teachings

The liturgy can be used simply as an inspiration with no immediate attempt to try to pin down its meaning, rather as one would read poetry. It speaks to us directly, not through reason, and our response is intuitive. It conveys more than perhaps we would be willing to accept through reason. As it is suggestive of so many things on so many different levels, it simply would be rushing things to try to understand it all at once. We can just let it touch us, and then simply stay with the feeling, perhaps not even considering the meaning of the words very much. Somehow, like children imbibing the culture around them, over time the liturgy becomes part of us and it often happens that, as we try to apply the teachings to our lives, more and more of the meaning of the liturgy spontaneously comes alive for us.

Traditional liturgies are carefully chosen to ensure that they embody the spirit of the lineage and encapsulate the heart of its teaching. This serves as a reminder and helps us align with and honour it. Liturgies are powerful vehicles for connecting to the power and inspiration (adhishtana) of the lineage.

By lineage, here and elsewhere, I mean the lineage of those who have linked into the Awakened Heart of the Buddha and who transmit the power (or *adhishтана*) of that Awakened Heart from person to person, down the ages to us at this time and place. It can be thought of as all the Awakened teachers and their disciples, or of all those ordinary practitioners like ourselves who are affected and inspired by the power of Awakening.

Liturgies are often selected from texts and inspirational lines uttered by yogins of the past that have inspired generations of practitioners. Sometimes new lines are added to capture the spirit and language of a particular time and place. However, since an important function of the liturgy is to preserve the integrity of the tradition, such new lines should be readily recognizable as expressing the heart of the teaching. It is significant by whom, when and how liturgies are composed, arranged or altered because, as liturgy, they go deep into the heart of everyone connected to the mandala or community of people practising together, such as the Awakened Heart Sangha. It is connections of this kind that bind the Sangha together, giving it its particular character and strength.

As the years go by and we understand the teachings more deeply from our own experience, the words start to acquire nuances and depths of meaning that we could not possibly have appreciated at the outset.

Once a liturgy has taken on a life of its own in this way it becomes a powerful mandala structure with its own dynamic, and any attempt to change it becomes an emotionally charged area. People can get very upset when even just one word of a much loved liturgy is changed. This might just be a sign of attachment, but it is also a sign that the forces of the Mandala, the ‘guardians’, are on the alert, making sure that the integrity of the Mandala is not weakened or lost.

Reciting Liturgy Helps Build Confidence in Our True Nature

There are many benefits of reciting liturgy. One important benefit is that as we focus on the words and meaning, even just intuitively without really understanding them, our attention is naturally drawn to a single point and

stabilizes. The more the words speak to our heart the easier it is to focus on them, because we are being drawn towards their significance.

Because the words contain profound meaning they naturally stimulate the clarity of our awareness and strengthen the tendency for insight or understanding to arise. Because we say them from our heart with a great longing to be able to understand their true meaning, they link us directly into the power of the truth (the *adhishtana*, influence of the truth). This is sometimes called 'devotion' in Buddhist books. 'Devotion' is rather an unfortunate translation of 'mogu', which means a longing with deep love and reverence for Awakening and the Truth.

If, as we recite the liturgy, we are aligning with this deep inspiration in our heart in as strong a way as we can, the liturgy energizes us and links us into the world (mandala) of Awakening in a very strong way. By entering that world we leave negative connections and negative emotional energy (*karma* and *klesha*) behind, and it is as if we step into a pure space. This is sometimes called 'purification'. It means that at any instant we can choose to rest in the primordial purity of our true nature and that by doing so, or even by simply attempting to do so, we strengthen our connection with it.

From this place of confidence, we can more easily turn towards all the negative emotions and thoughts that come up during the meditation session and during our daily life with openness, clarity and sensitivity. This is the way to build up genuine confidence.

From The Basic Liturgy Booklet by Lama Shenpen Hookham, October 2002.

General Note on Shrine Room Protocol

“The sacred space is a place of peace, joy and the power to overcome all that is negative.”

Lama Shenpen from Mandala of Sacred Space

These protocol notes are to give you some very basic guidance about what we do in the shrine room and why. You may find that you are not comfortable joining in with some or all of these guidelines. That is fine, but please maintain a basic respectful attitude. If you would like to know more about shrine room protocol see the booklet *Mandala of Sacred Space*.

Arrivals and Departures

Please plan on arriving in the shrine room a few minutes before the session begins. If you must enter or leave during a session, please do so as discreetly as possible.

When entering or leaving the Shrine Room

It is customary to bow to the shrine when we enter or leave the shrine room. Some people prostrate to the shrine in addition. This is a personal choice.

Liturgic books and Dharma texts

It is considered a mark of disrespect to put liturgies or texts on the floor or to step over them. Please place your texts on the shrine cushion in front of your seat when not in use.

When Lama Shenpen enters or leaves

As a mark of respect to the teachers of the Dharma, we stand when Lama Shenpen enters the room, then stay standing while she prostrates to the shrine, then we bow to the shrine and to her before sitting down. As she leaves, she makes a bow at the door to the shrine. It is not necessary to bow to her at this point, though you may if you wish.

Eating and Drinking

It is not appropriate to eat or drink in the shrine room unless it is during a Feast ceremony.

Chanting and Mantras

The omzay leads the chants. Take care not to drown out the omzay and in general aim to keep in unison. Generally when there is a mantra, we spend a few minutes chanting the mantra aloud, fading slowly into silence while we let it speak itself in our hearts. Finally recite the mantra aloud one last time on the omzay's signal.

Lying Down

Ask permission from the omzay if you need to lie down to meditate. Don't lie so that your feet are facing the shrine.

Incense

If you are allergic to incense let the omzay or shrinekeeper know and they won't use it.

Retreat Commitment: Beginning the Retreat

Think that you are in the presence of the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. Think about your intention to do this retreat and how important it is to keep that intention pure for the sake of all beings, not just yourself. You are following in the footsteps of the Buddha and all those who have followed his way and are practising as they have practised. This means that we commit ourselves to adopt the behaviour and conduct of his Sangha who have kept this conduct pure down the ages. This is the conduct that is the necessary basis and foundation for successful meditation practice.

For Individual Retreatants:

Having established exactly what day and time you are going to commit yourself to retreat, you need to set up the boundaries clearly and firmly. At the appointed time for beginning your retreat it is good to follow the procedure for making a formal commitment (as follows, or something similar) before your shrine. Make offerings on your shrine, prostrate and do the opening prayers as usual. If you are at the Hermitage, you may wish to put your upasaka shawl in front of the shrine.

Commitment to Abide by the Precepts

Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, please think of me and be my witness,
Teachers of the lineage please think of me and be my witness.
I open my heart in order to receive your adhishtana.
Please give me the inspiration, vision and fortitude
To always keep to these precepts,
But especially so during this retreat period starting now.
As a follower of the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha,
Who wishes to become free from the suffering of samsara
And reach the peace of Nirvana for the sake of all beings,
I hereby commit myself from now until the end of my retreat
To take special care to abide by the five precepts.

That is to say:

I shall take special care not to kill any fellow creature,
I shall take special care not to take what is not given,
I shall take special care not to utter any falsehood,
I shall take special care not to engage in sexual activity,
I shall take special care not to take intoxicants and substances that befuddle the mind.

Furthermore, I hereby commit myself,
 From now until the end of my retreat
 To take special care to avoid committing the ten unskilful actions
 And to abide by the ten skilful actions.

That is to say:

Physically, I shall not kill, steal, engage in sexual activity or take intoxicants,
 Verbally, I shall not lie, use abusive language, cause disharmony or chatter
 meaninglessly,
 Mentally, I shall not foster ill-will, greed and envy or non-Dharmic views.

Rather, physically, I shall do all I can to preserve and protect life,
 Give generously of whatever I have,
 Restrain myself sexually, and remain as sober and clear-headed as I can.
 Verbally, I shall speak honestly, gently, harmoniously and meaningfully.
 Mentally, I shall foster loving kindness, contentment
 And thoughts that accord with the Dharma.

For Individual Retreatants :

If you are at the Hermitage: Having made this commitment you may wish to take the upasaka shawl and wrap it around you, leaving the right shoulder uncovered, as is the Buddhist custom (at non-ceremonial times you can wrap it around both shoulders for warmth). Think to yourself that you are donning the armour of shila (conduct true to your word) and that the shawl will be a continual reminder of that. Keeping our word is our protection from the forces of Mara (the tempter). Donning the shawl is a symbol of our courage and fearlessness.

Prostrate three times and then kneel to continue your retreat commitment as follows.

Commitment to Keeping the Retreat Rules, Schedule and Tasks

Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, please think of me,
 Teachers of the lineage please think of me.
 I open my heart in order to receive your adhishtana.
 Please give me the inspiration, vision and fortitude
 To keep to my retreat rules and schedule.

From now until the end of this retreat
I commit myself to keeping within the boundaries of the retreat
And to following the schedule to the best of my ability.

From my heart,
Longing for the Truth and for Awakening,
I commit myself to all this and
To performing all the tasks I undertake to the best of my ability,
For the sake of bringing the Truth of the Dharma into the world,
Making it known to myself and others,
Like lighting a lamp to dispel the darkness of confusion,
That traps us in endless suffering.
May the truth prevail and all beings be happy!

By my keeping the precepts and this retreat discipline clearly and firmly,
May my shila become strong and my word become powerful.
By means of the goodness and power generated from my acting thus,
May I become well established on the path to Awakening
And become a protector for beings.

I dedicate the punya of this pure intention to the Enlightenment of all beings,
May all beings realize complete and perfect Awakening.

Retreat Commitment: Ending the Retreat

Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, please think of me,
 Teachers of the lineage please think of me.
 I open my heart in order to receive your adhishtana.
 By means of it I have had the inspiration, vision and fortitude
 To keep to my retreat rules and schedule.
 Please forgive me for all my weaknesses and failings,
 All my misunderstandings and rebellions,
 All my mistakes and bad habits and make good all that I have done wrong.

By acting according to my word
 In completing my retreat and all my tasks to the best of my ability,
 May my shila become strong and my word become powerful.
 By means of the goodness and power
 Generated from my acting thus,
 May I become well established on the path to Awakening
 And become a protector for beings.

And by the power of your adhishtana and the purity of my intentions,
 May my shila, study, meditation, wisdom and awareness practice
 Become an ocean of goodness.
 This goodness I now dedicate to the Enlightenment of all beings.
 By this goodness may I remain firmly established on the path of Awakening,
 And establish the Dharma firmly in the world for the benefit of all beings.

If you are an individual retreatant at the Hermitage: You may take the upasaka shawl off, fold it and lay it in front of the shrine thinking that just as you have used it to protect your discipline and remind you of your pure intentions throughout your retreat, you now leave it for the next retreatant to benefit from in the same way. The shawl represents our solidarity with all the followers of the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha who have and will practise here at the Hermitage and everywhere throughout the world and throughout history.

Prostrate three times and then say:

As I now step once more out into the wide world beyond the retreat boundaries,
 May I continue to be a focus and reservoir of the adhishtana of the lineage,

Connecting all I meet to the power of the Awakened Heart
And the mandala of Awakening.

May all be auspicious!

(At this point, if you like, you could toss a few flower petals as you would confetti at a wedding to express this sense of joy and celebration spreading everywhere.)

Commitment for Undertaking Dharma Work

Dharma practice is not just about meditation or teachings. You can use everything as your practice, and especially things that are concerned with making the path to Awakening happen in the world. When you come on a retreat or a weekend, and you take on a job to help in the running of that event, you can remember that that job is helping to bring the Dharma into the world, and you can approach it in a fully committed way.

Stand in front of the shrine and bow, with the sense that you are in the presence of the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. Think about the task, and then commit yourself to it, promising to carry through your intention, to keep your word. All the time you're doing it, because you said you would, that is your discipline, your shila. At the end of the day you then dedicate it for the benefit of all beings.

Before starting your Dharma work make the following commitment:

From my heart,
 Longing for the Truth and for Awakening,
 I commit myself to the task I have undertaken today,
 To perform to the best of my ability,
 For the sake of bringing the Truth of the Dharma into the world,
 Making it known to myself and others,
 Like lighting a lamp to dispel the darkness of confusion,
 That traps us in endless suffering.
 May the truth prevail and all beings be happy!

Upon completion of your Dharma work, make the following dedication:

By acting according to my word
 In completing this task to the best of my ability,
 May my shila become strong,
 And my word become powerful.
 By means of the goodness and power
 Generated from my acting thus,
 May I become well established on the path to Awakening,
 And become a protector for beings.
 I dedicate the punya of this pure wish

To the Enlightenment of all beings.
May all beings realize complete and perfect Awakening.

All the above commitments were written by Lama Shenpen Hookham for her students in 2002 – 2003.

Morning Session: Opening Prayers

Turning the Mind Away from Samsara

Death comes without warning!

It may come today,

Parting me from all that is familiar

And all those I love.

Now is the time to think

Of what heart connections mean.

Now is the time to think

Of what goes beyond birth and death.

Now is the time to discover

And learn to trust

The Openness, Clarity and Sensitivity of my being,

The Indestructible Heart Essence of all beings.

I have today to prepare.

Worldly attachments are useless,

As are anger and delusion.

Now is the time to let them go

And rest relaxed in my own true nature.

What use am I to others

If I am no use to myself?

How can I liberate them

If I cannot liberate myself?

May I and all beings be happy

And have the causes of happiness.

May I and all beings be free from suffering

And the causes of suffering.

May I and all beings have the happiness of complete Awakening

That will never diminish or fail.

Thus may we abide in great equanimity,
Unruffled by attachment and aversion
And with equal love for all beings.

Here we pause for a few minutes to reflect on the meaning of these verses which were written and the melody composed by Lama Shenpen Hookham while staying in retreat at Pen Y Bwlch in 2000.

In Praise of the Three Jewels

Namo Buddha,
Self-awakened, who is peace beginningless,
Without middle, without end,
Having awoken, wakening the unawakened,
Revealing the eternal fearless path.
Holder of the Vajra Sword,
The Wisdom and Compassion that breaks the wall of doubt
Concealed in the dark confusion of wrong views.
You are the only one who cuts the shoots of suffering at their source.

Namo Dharma,
Sun, which is not non-existent nor exists,
It is not both, nor is it other than these two,
Impossible to analyse, escaping all description
And realized by the self alone;
It is peace.
Namo to this light of stainless wisdom whose rays banish darkness,
The fault arising from attachment to the various sense desires. *

Namo Sangha,
Because their mind is by nature Clarity,
They have seen the kleshas are essenceless,
And thus they have correctly penetrated the phenomenal world
As non-self, which is peace.
Their all-pervading intelligence is unveiled,
And sees Buddha everywhere,
With eyes of wisdom beholding the infinity of Pure Being.

* A more accurate translation of this line is: “ The fault arising from attachment, aversion and misperception in regard to the various objects of the senses.”

Verses from the Ratnagotravibhaga translated from the Sanskrit by Lama Shenpen Hookham with the help of Sanjukta Gombrich in Oxford in 1990 while Lama Rigdzin Shikpo was in retreat.

The Homage

NAMO GURUBHYAH	(Homage to the Guru)	
NAMO BUDDHAYA	(Homage to the Buddha)	
NAMO DHARMAYA	(Homage to the Dharma)	
NAMO SAMGHAYA	(Homage to the Sangha)	x 3

Going for Refuge

LAMA LA CHAPSU CHE O	(I take Refuge in the Guru)	
SANJAY LA CHAPSU CHE O	(I take Refuge in the Buddha)	
CHO LA CHAPSU CHE O	(I take Refuge in the Dharma)	
GENDUN LA CHAPSU CHE O	(I take Refuge in the Sangha)	x 3

Rousing Bodichitta

The English translation is recited once, then the Tibetan is chanted three times. English translation of traditional Tibetan verse by Lama Shenpen Hookham at Tyn y Gors in 1999.

May the heart's awareness
Awaken in the unawakened.
Where it has begun to stir, may it never fade
And may it awaken fully. x 1

CHANG CHUP SEMNI RINPOCHE
MA CHE PANAM CHE JUR CHIG
CHEPA NYAMPA MAYPA TANG
GONGNAY GONGDHU PELWA SHO x 3

Refuge

We go for Refuge to all the Buddhas
So that all sentient beings may realize Buddhahood. x 3

The Heart Sutra

Thus have I heard.

Once the Blessed One was dwelling in Rajghir, at Vulture Peak Mountain, together with a great gathering of the sangha of monks and a great gathering of the sangha of bodhisattvas. At that time the Blessed One entered the samadhi that expresses the Dharma called 'profound illumination', and at the same time noble Avalokiteshvara, the Bodhisattva Mahasattva, while practising the profound Prajnaparamita, saw in this way: he saw the five skandhas to be empty of self-nature.

Then, through the power of the Buddha, venerable Shariputra said to noble Avalokiteshvara, the Bodhisattva Mahasattva, "How should a son or daughter of noble family train, who wishes to practise the profound Prajnaparamita?" Addressed in this way, noble Avalokiteshvara, the Bodhisattva Mahasattva said to venerable Shariputra, "O Shariputra, a son or daughter of noble family who wishes to practise the profound Prajnaparamita should see in this way: seeing the five skandhas to be empty of self-nature.

Form is emptiness; emptiness also is form. Emptiness is no other than form; form is no other than emptiness. In the same way, feeling, perception, formations and consciousness are emptiness. Thus Shariputra, all dharmas are emptiness. There are no characteristics. There is no birth and no cessation. There is no impurity and no purity. There is no decrease and no increase.

Therefore, Shariputra, in emptiness, there is no form, no feeling, no perception, no formations, no consciousness; no eye, no ear, no nose, no tongue, no body, no mind; no appearance, no sound, no smell, no taste, no touch, no dharmas; no eye dhatu up to no mind dhatu, no dhatu of dharmas, no mind consciousness dhatu; no ignorance, no end of ignorance up to no old age and death, no end of old age and death; no suffering, no origin of suffering, no cessation of suffering, no path, no wisdom, no attainment, and no non-attainment.

Therefore, Shariputra, since the bodhisattvas have no attainment, they abide by means of Prajnaparamita. Since there is no obscuration of mind, there is

no fear. They transcend falsity and attain complete Nirvana. All the Buddhas of the three times, by means of Prajnaparamita, fully awaken to unsurpassable, true, complete Enlightenment.

Therefore, the great mantra of Prajnaparamita, the mantra of great insight, the unsurpassed mantra, the unequalled mantra, the mantra that calms all suffering should be known as truth, since there is no deception. The Prajnaparamita mantra is said in this way:

OM GATE GATE PARAGATE PARASAMGATE BODHI SVAHA

Thus, Shariputra, the Bodhisattva Mahasattva should train in the profound Prajnaparamita.”

Then the Blessed One arose from that samadhi and praised noble Avalokiteshvara, the Bodhisattva Mahasattva, saying, “Good, good, O son of noble family; thus it is, O son of noble family, thus it is. One should practise the profound Prajnaparamita just as you have taught and all the Tathagatas will rejoice.”

When the Blessed One had said this, venerable Shariputra and noble Avalokiteshvara, the Bodhisattva Mahasattva, that whole assembly and the world with its gods, humans, asuras and gandharvas rejoiced, and praised the words of the Blessed One.

Lotsawa Bikshu Rinchen De translated this text into Tibetan with the Indian pandita Vimalamitra. It was edited by the great editor-Lotsawas Gelo, Namkha, and others. This Tibetan text was copied from the fresco in Gegye Chemaling at the glorious Samye vihara. It has been translated into English by the Nalanda Translation Committee, with reference to several Sanskrit editions, with several small amendments made by Lama Shenpen Hookham.

Morning Session: Closing Prayers

Meditator's Verse

(The omzay recites this alone five minutes before the end of the session.)

Here there is nothing to remove and nothing to add.
The one who sees the Truth of Being as it is,
By seeing the Truth, is liberated.

Verse from the Ratnagotravibhaga translated by Lama Shenpen Hookham in Oxford 1989.

Dedication

We dedicate this punya to the Enlightenment of all sentient beings.
May all sentient beings realize complete and perfect Awakening.

Rousing Bodichitta

(The English translation is recited once, then the Tibetan is chanted three times.)

May the heart's awareness
Awaken in the unawakened.
Where it has begun to stir, may it never fade
And may it awaken fully.

x 1

CHANG CHUP SEMNI RINPOCHE
MA CHE PANAM CHE JUR CHIG
CHEPA NYAMPA MAYPA TANG
GONGNAY GONGDHU PELWA SHO

x 3

Alternative Opening Prayers

The liturgy used to begin sessions can vary depending on the occasion. Follow the lead of the omzay or teacher. We generally open each session by taking Refuge and often also with a specific invocation. The following prayers are the most frequently used.

Refuge

We go for Refuge to all the Buddhas

So that all sentient beings may realize Buddhahood.

x 3

Refuge with Paramitas

We go for Refuge to the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha until we reach Enlightenment.

By virtue of our practice of the six paramitas, may we,

For the benefit of beings, attain Buddhahood.

x 3

Translated by Lama Shenpen Hookham from traditional Tibetan Refuge prayer at the occasion of the Jewel Ornament of Liberation retreat at the Hermitage 2009.

Invocations

The Four Dharmas of Gampopa

Please bless me that my heart and mind turn towards the Dharma.

Please bless me that the Dharma open as a path.

Please bless me that the path clear away confusion.

Please bless me that confusion manifest as wisdom.

Original Tibetan text

Lo cher su drowa chin chi lob tu sol

Cher lam tu drowa chin chi lob tu sol

Lam trulpa sel wa chin chi lob tu sol

Trulpa yeshay su char wa chin chi lob tu sol

English translation of Tibetan by Lama Shenpen Hookham at the Hermitage 2009.

Homage to Prajnaparamita

Homage to Intuitive Awareness,
Playing in space,
Prajnaparamita,
Mother of the Buddhas of the past,
Mother of the Buddhas of the present,
Mother of the Buddhas of the future,
Beyond thought, beyond words,
Non-arising and non-ceasing,
Essence of space.

Translated from the Tibetan by Lama Shenpen Hookham at the Hermitage in 2007.

Milarepa Invocation

NAMO GURU HASA VAJRA YE!

You see that everything in samsara and Nirvana
Is merely dependently arisen.
You see the Dharmata of True Being
That is the essence of all dependent arising.
The power of your great insight
Fills the universe with auspicious light.
Oh mighty Shepa Dorje
Please rise up now from within my heart.

JE MILA SHEPA DORJE LA SOLWA DEB SO

Lord Mila, Laughing Vajra, I call to you.

The Milarepa invocation is taken from a song written by Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche called 'Auspiciousness that Lights up the Universe' .

Evening Session: Opening Prayers

In Praise of the Three Jewels

Namo Buddha,
Self-awakened, who is peace beginningless,
Without middle, without end,
Having awoken, wakening the unawakened,
Revealing the eternal fearless path.
Holder of the Vajra Sword,
The Wisdom and Compassion that breaks the wall of doubt
Concealed in the dark confusion of wrong views.
You are the only one who cuts the shoots of suffering at their source.

Namo Dharma,
Sun, which is not non-existent nor exists,
It is not both, nor is it other than these two,
Impossible to analyse, escaping all description
And realized by the self alone;
It is peace.
Namo to this light of stainless wisdom whose rays banish darkness,
The fault arising from attachment to the various sense desires.

Namo Sangha,
Because their mind is by nature Clarity,
They have seen the kleshas are essenceless,
And thus they have correctly penetrated the phenomenal world
As non-self, which is peace.
Their all-pervading intelligence is unveiled,
And sees Buddha everywhere,
With eyes of wisdom beholding the infinity of pure being.

The Homage

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Going for Refuge

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CHO LA CHAPSU CHE O	(I take Refuge in the Dharma)	
GENDUN LA CHAPSU CHE O	(I take Refuge in the Sangha)	x 3

Rousing Bodichitta

The English translation is recited once, then the Tibetan is chanted three times.

May the heart's awareness Awaken in the unawakened. Where it has begun to stir, may it never fade And may it awaken fully.		x 1
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CHANG CHUP SEMNI RINPOCHE MA CHE PANAM CHE JUR CHIG CHEPA NYAMPA MAYPA TANG GONGNAY GONGDHU PELWA SHO		x 3
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Refuge

We go for Refuge to all the Buddhas So that all sentient beings may realize Buddhahood.		x 3
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Seven Line Prayer

HUM

In the north west of the land of Urgyen,
 In the heart of a lotus flower,
 Bearer of the most wonderful supreme Siddhi,
 Thus are you known as Lotus Born.
 Many Dakinis surround you,
 I follow your way,
 Please come now and grant your presence.
 GURU PADMA SIDDHI HUM

x 3

Translation of Seven Line Prayer by Lama Rigdzin Shikpo 1982.

Original Tibetan text

Urgyen yul kyi nub jang tsam
 Pema gesar dong bu la
 Ya tsen chok ki ngo drub nye
 Pema jungnay she su drag
 Kor tu khandro mangpo khor
 Khye kyi je su dag drub chir
 Chin kye lob chir shek su sol
 Guru pema siddhi hum

Guru Rinpoche Union of All the Buddhas

Guru Rinpoche,
 Union of all the Buddhas of the three times,
 The gathering of all siddhis,
 And embodiment of great bliss,
 The fierceness of your skill subdues Mara and clears away all obstacles.
 We beg you for your adhishtana
 To calm all outer, inner and secret obstacles
 And spontaneously fulfil all our wishes.

x 3

English translation by Lama Shenpen Hookham 2002.

Original Tibetan text

Du sum sangjay Guru Rinpoche
 Ngo drup khun dak dewa chenpo shab
 Barche kun sel du dul drag pay tsal
 Sol wa deb so chin chi lob tu sol
 Chi nang sangwa barche shi wa dang
 Sampa lhun chi drub pa chin chi lob.

Guru Rinpoche, You Are The Living Truth

Guru Rinpoche, you are the Living Truth,
 The vast open expanse of Awareness beyond time,
 Simply and naturally, all that is and will be,
 Ungrasped infinity, all is complete in you,
 Nothing at all to do, responding naturally,
 Not thinking anything, a mandala of joy.
 Your all-pervading love, like space the same for all.
 Guru Rinpoche please hear, I open my heart and call to you.
 Guru Dharmakaya hear, I open my heart and call to you.

Guru Rinpoche, from within that space,
 Manifests your being, body speech and mind,
 Qualities and action, a mandala of bliss,
 The bliss of the Unborn, your presence is alive,
 In the solidness of earth, in the fluidness of water,
 In the motion of the wind, in the burning heat of fire,
 In unobstructed space, as Awareness outside time,
 This five-aspected display, an eternal play of youth,
 Showing compassion for all beings, in countless skilful ways.
 Guru Rinpoche please hear, I open my heart and call to you.
 Guru Sambhogakaya hear, I open my heart and call to you.

Guru Rinpoche, to you this world is pure.
 For us suffering in this world, you come in deepest love,
 Appearing in what forms are going to tame us beings,
 Past future and right now in whatever form we need.
 Guru Rinpoche please hear, I open my heart and call to you.
 Guru Nirmanakaya hear, I open my heart and call to you.
 OM AH HUM VAJRA GURU PADMA SIDDHI HUM

Adapted by Lama Shenpen Hookham at Pen Y Bwlch in 2000 based on a terma revealed by Orgyen Chok-gyur Dechen Lingpa (see 'Guru Rinpoche – his life and times' by Ngawang Zangpo p219).

Evening Session: Closing Prayers

Meditator's Verse

(The omzay recites this alone ten minutes before the end of the session.)

Here there is nothing to remove and nothing to add.
The one who sees the Truth of Being as it is,
By seeing the Truth, is liberated.

Prayer for the Teachers of the Lineage

May those teachers of the lineage who have passed away
Look on us with compassion and not disappear from this world.
May those who are still with us live long
And their activity for the benefit of beings flourish.

May our connection with the teachers of the lineage remain strong,
And we meet again and again,
So that their Heart Wish and ours always be in unison,
And our actions for the benefit of beings be effective.

Written by Lama Shenpen Hookham 2000.

Prayer for Khenpo Rinpoche, Lama Rigdzin Shikpo and Lama Shenpen Shikmo *(said by the omzay.)*

And we pray especially for the long life, good health and activity of Khenpo
Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche, Lama Rigdzin Shikpo and Lama Shenpen
Shikmo.

Long Life Prayer for Khenpo Rinpoche

Khenpo Rinpoche, Tsultrim Gyamtso, to you we pray.
Please live long and stay in this world where you're so needed!
It's our connection with the guru that gives our practice special power
So come again to bless us and teach Awakened Heart—True Being.

Ha Ha! Dechen Rangdrol's conduct that's attachment free,
A Ho! It's time to fly in the expanse of sky, spacious Mother.

Verse by Lama Shenpen Hookham. Last two lines from 'Sky Dragon's Profound Roar' - a song written by Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche.

Long Life Prayer for Lama Rigdzin Shikpo

Guru Rigdzin Shikpo, Precious Teacher
 Who expresses the Vastness and Depth of Mahayana Maha-Ati,
 The inseparability of Guru Padmakara and Buddha Shakyamuni,
 Please grant us the Dharma we can live and die by.
 May your life be long and firm,
 Your intention realized,
 May the vision of Lord Longchenpa be fulfilled.

Composed by Kunzang Jigme (David Hutchens) at the conclusion of a retreat on Lojong at Sutton Courtenay in August 1994.

Long Life Prayer for Lama Shenpen Hookham

Issuing from the groundless space of light
 To spread the magnificent Dharma of Shentong
 For the benefit of all sentient beings throughout the Dhatu,
 May your life extend to the end of the kalpa and beyond!

Composed by Lama Rigdzin Shikpo, December 2007.

Dedication of Punya

We dedicate this punya to the Enlightenment of all sentient beings, and especially for...

(Pause while omzay reads the dedication list.)

May they and all sentient beings realize complete and perfect Awakening.

Rousing Bodichitta

The English translation is recited once, then the Tibetan is chanted three times.

May the heart's awareness
 Awaken in the unawakened.
 Where it has begun to stir, may it never fade
 And may it awaken fully.

CHANG CHUP SEMNI RINPOCHE
MA CHE PANAM CHE JUR CHIG
CHEPA NYAMPA MAYPA TANG
GONGNAY GONGDHU PELWA SHO

x 3

Pranidhana

All you wondrous beings, we have a good or bad connection with,
As soon as you have left this world that we are sharing,
May your connection with the Sangha of Awakening
Link you eternally to the power of the Truth.

Composed by Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche 1999 and adapted by Lama Shenpen Hookham.

Milarepa's Pranidhana

May we live long and be free of illness,
Enjoy freedom, great resources, and happiness.
Next life, may we meet in the pure realms—
May we always practise Dharma and benefit beings.

A verse of a song by Milarepa.

It is customary to sing a final song at the end of the session.

Request for Transmission

In order to take hold of this precious jewel, the Awakened Heart,
I make the best offerings I can to that ocean of goodness,
The flawless Three Jewels,
The Buddhas, the Dharma
And the bearers of their lineage, the Bodhisattvas.

I offer as many flowers and fruits as there are,
All the many kinds of healing and precious substances,
Pure and pleasing water,
Jewel mountains and peaceful forest hermitages,
Great flowering trees adorned with jewels,
Bowed down with their loads of fruit.

May heavenly delights appear in this world as offerings,
Such as sweet perfumes, incense and wish-fulfilling trees,
Jewel trees, miraculous harvests that appear without labour,
Silks, jewels and ornaments suitable as offerings,
Lakes and pools adorned with lotuses,
And the touching cry of wild geese,
Filling the whole of space and worlds without end.

Having encompassed it all in my mind,
I offer it without the slightest attachment,
To the supreme of beings, the Munis and the bearers of their lineage.
Oh compassionate ones,
You who are truly worthy to receive gifts,
I beseech you to look on me with love and accept this of me.

With hands folded in reverence,
We beseech Lama Shenpen,
The bearer of the Buddha's lineage,
Requesting her to grant the transmission of Dharma
To illuminate the dark ignorance of our suffering.

*Selected verses from the Bodhicharyavatara translated by Lama Shenpen Hookham
1990. Last verse adapted by Jonathan Shaw in 2006.*

Prayer for Realization

Commentary

For Mahamudra we are relying on the adhishtana of the Living Truth. It cannot be realized by self-effort by the self-clinging mind. So we have to rely on something else, which is our living connection with the power of the adhishtana of the lineage of practitioners. This is what links us to the mandala of Awakening, the source of the adhishtana of the Living Truth. This source is Shakyamuni Buddha, the Awakened One, the Guru who connected this world to the mandala of Awakening. Linking into the adhishtana of the lineage of teachers and practitioners who connect us to the Guru is called Guru Yoga.

To understand this, we need to understand emptiness and the meaning of interpenetration. In other words, we need to realize what heart connections mean. We are connected to the Living Truth through our heart. We meet the Guru in the heart. We need to learn to open our hearts, so that the adhishtana can work within us and on us, connecting us to the power of the Truth. It is no different from resting in the Awakened Heart, but it is the only way to let go completely of every trace of ego-clinging and ambition. So all that we do to open our hearts to the adhishtana of the lineage is Guru Yoga.

If you want to deepen your connection to this way of practising, then I suggest you recite this prayer. You can recite it any time and as much as you like. You may like to adopt it as part of your opening or closing prayers each day, or as a special prayer you do on full-moon days. You may decide you want to set yourself a goal of reciting it a certain number of times or for a certain number of hours.

For several hundred years the Karma Kagyus have adopted the custom of reciting this 100,000 times as a standard practice for everyone. It is good to set yourself an ambitious number like this in order to galvanize your energy. However, there are many good practices to choose from. Make your choice, make up your mind what you are going to do, do it and then dedicate the punya. If you want to set yourself the goal of reciting this prayer a particular number of times, it's good to tell me. That will help you keep to it.

If you are going to adopt this prayer as a regular practice it is good to ask me for the transmission of it. I can give that to you by phone or, even better, at an interview. If you do it together with me in a group, you can take that as transmission. The important thing is to feel a strong sense of a living connection with the lineage as you recite the words.

The Prayer for Realization

Guru, the Buddha, beyond price and compare,

I open my heart and call to you.

I open my heart to your adhishtana.

By the power of your adhishtana may I abandon the self-clinging mind.

By the power of your adhishtana may contentment arise in my being.

By the power of your adhishtana may all non-Dharmic thinking cease.

By the power of your adhishtana may I realize the Chitta, the Unborn.

By the power of your adhishtana may confusion liberate itself.

By the power of your adhishtana may I realize the world is Dharmakaya.

From Mahamudra: The Ocean of Definitive Meaning, by Wangchuk Dorje.

Translation by Lama Shenpen Hookham.

Alternative translation of The Prayer for Realization

I supplicate the Precious Guru.

Bestow your blessings so that my mind abandons fixating on a self.

Bestow your blessings so that a state free from need arises in my mind-stream.

Bestow your blessings so that non-Dharmic thoughts cease.

Bestow your blessings so that I realize my mind to be unborn.

Bestow your blessings so that delusion is purified in its own place.

Bestow your blessings so that all of existence manifests as Dharmakaya.

Alternative translation by Elizabeth Callahan.

Seven Branch Prayer

How joyful I feel,
When I think of you, Lord Buddha.
You who brought the Dharma into this world.
Just as all your disciples, the Bodhisattvas
Who follow your way
And keep the Dharma alive in this world
Praise you, so I praise you
And fall at your feet,
Gazing at your glory
And overcome with awe.

You are always present in the hearts of all beings,
So in order to show us the power of your adhishtana,
Please appear now in and around us,
So that faith, love and wisdom
Be quickened in our hearts.

How can I thank you for your kindness?
How can I make you welcome here?
How can I show you the depths of my devotion?
I can only think of offering my all.

Even then this is insufficient
To match the splendour of your presence.
Let me multiply my bodies to infinity,
As the pleasures of the senses
Manifest spontaneously as beautiful forms,
Such as flowers and lovely lands to please the eye,
As sounds of music and singing for the ear,
As wafting fragrances to delight the nose,
As delicious tastes of every kind,
As tactile sensations that soothe and comfort,
As all that is pleasing to the heart
And thoughts that are an endless source of joy.

All that is alluring and attractive,
Everything that I long to grasp and hold,
I make of it endless offerings
Begging you to accept them.

Once you have accepted them
They can never be returned.
Thus may my punya become exhaustless,
And forever at your service.

Oh, how I regret my misdeeds of the past!
Even when I have the good fortune
To know right from wrong,
And true from false,
These bad habits of mind,
Developed over countless lives
Cause me not to act as I would, even now.
All I can do is sincerely repent
And beg your help and forgiveness
As again and again I fail
In so many ways.

I am stingy instead of generous,
Lazy at keeping true to my word,
Impatient and quick to blame others,
Lacking interest and enthusiasm for Dharma,
Unfocused and distracted,
Letting myself be swept away by delusion.

Help me to repair my faults
And clear away my bad karma before I die.
I confess my faults before you with regret,
And resolve never to commit them again.

May I never harbour thoughts of jealousy
Towards those more worthy than myself.
May I simply rejoice in their goodness
That will bring good fortune to themselves and others.
May I look only to the good done by others
And not dwell on their faults.
By praising the qualities of those on the path to Awakening
May those qualities also increase in me.

You who are Awakened, come now to teach us.
Guide us and keep us on the true way.
By the power of your adhishtana
May we hear the teachings we need most,
Take them to heart and never forget them.
May the great treasury of your profound teachings
Remain open and accessible,
For generation after generation to come.

You who are Awakened, remain here in this world.
Stay here where you are needed,
Where we are begging you to stay.
As many times as we need to ask you
In order for you to stay,
That many times and a thousand times more
We implore you to remain before our eyes.

Ah, the goodness that flows forth from good deeds.
The goodness that is never destroyed
And that is truly ours to give,
May it alleviate the sufferings of all beings
And bring them to perfect Enlightenment.

Written by Lama Shenpen Hookham.

Meal Offerings in Openness, Clarity and Sensitivity

Think that all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, all the Awakened beings throughout time and space are aware of you and that you are offering them all the pleasures of the senses; you are offering them to Awakened awareness without grasping or attachment. Offering your meal is a reminder of that. Think that they receive the essence of the food and drink and you now eat the remainder, blessed by their loving awareness.

Before the meal recite:

We open our hearts to the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha offering them all the pleasures of the senses. Please accept this offering in order to strengthen our connection with you. By making this self-existent offering of food and drink in the true nature of mind, may Openness, Clarity and Sensitivity be accomplished!

Openness is the essence of offering, free from grasping and attachment, holding nothing back. May it be accomplished!

Clarity is the wisdom of offering, knowing that the true nature of a gift is beyond thought. May it be accomplished!

Sensitivity is the fullness of offering, establishing bonds of love between those who give and those who receive. May it be accomplished!

After the meal recite:

May the benefits of this offering be received by all beings and in particular by those who helped to create it, no matter how seemingly remote their connection. May they and all beings realize complete Awakening.

The bold lines can be recited as a short version.

Composed by Lama Rigdzin Shikpo in Oxford 1993. First two sentences added by Lama Shenpen Hookham 1999.

Metta Sutta

This is what should be done
By one who is skilled in goodness,
And who knows the path of peace:
Let them be able and upright,
Straightforward and gentle in speech,
Humble and not conceited,
Contented and easily satisfied,
Unburdened by duties and frugal in their ways,
Peaceful and calm, and wise and skilful,
Not proud and demanding in nature.
Let them not do the slightest thing
That the wise would later reprove.
Wishing: in gladness and in safety,
May all beings be at ease.
Whatever living beings there may be,
Whether they are weak or strong, omitting none,
The great or the mighty, medium, short or small,
The seen and the unseen,
Those living near and far away,
Those born and to-be-born,
May all beings be at ease!
Let none deceive another,
Or despise any being in any state.
Let none through anger or ill-will
Wish harm upon another.
Even as a mother protects with her life
Her child, her only child,
So with a boundless heart
Should one cherish all living beings;
Radiating kindness over the entire world:
Spreading upwards to the skies,
And downwards to the depths;
Outwards and unbounded,
Freed from hatred and ill-will.
Whether standing or walking, seated or lying down,
Free from drowsiness,
One should sustain this recollection.

This is said to be the sublime abiding.
By not holding to fixed views,
The pure-hearted one, having clarity of vision,
Being freed from all sense desires,
Is not born again into this world.

Translated from the Pali. As used by the Amaravati Forest Sangha community.

Verses based on the structure of the 'Jewel Ornament of Liberation'

The Primordially existent Buddha Nature
 In a precious human birth,
 Cultivated by spiritual friends
 By following their instructions,
 Results in the perfect Buddha Kayas
 And their endless spontaneous activity
 For the benefit of all beings. *(when sung this line is repeated)*

Original Tibetan text

Ju ni deshek nyingpo te
 Ten ni mi lu rin chen chok
 Chen ni gay way shenyen yin
 Tab ni dayi dam ngak te
 Dray bu dzo sang jay chi ku
 Trinlay tok may dro dern dzer.

We need confidence that we have Buddha Nature,
 Like gold ore pervaded by gold.
 Since we can Awaken if we make the effort,
 We are like the sun emerging from behind clouds.
 The nature of all Buddhas is boundless,
 It is all pervading and within each being.
 Since emptiness means no separation
 The nature of beings and Buddhas is the same.
 Since different means are taught for different kinds of beings
 And even the worst can be redeemed,
 There is no reason to doubt our capacity
 To remove all the many layers of confusion
 That bind us to samsara and obscure our wisdom.

The precious human birth is to have freedom
 To do more than just to survive,
 To hear the Dharma, have faith and understand it;
 Understanding it, putting it into practice,
 Practising incessantly without being discouraged,
 Gaining experience and realization without pride,

Keeping up the practice till Enlightenment,
Such is a truly precious human birth.

Without spiritual teachers the four hindrances
Prevent us using our precious human life well.
The instructions of the spiritual friend
Are antidotes to the four hindrances.

Mindfulness of impermanence remedies
Attachment to the things of this life.
Reflection on the faults of samsara,
Karma, cause and result,
Remedies attachment to spiritual goals
Based on ego-grasping.
Cultivation of loving-kindness and compassion
Remedies attachment to one's own salvation.
Instruction in the various elements of Bodhichitta training
Remedies ignorance of how to follow the Bodhisattva Path.

Naturally good-hearted and kind towards others,
Honest and withstanding difficulties with forbearance,
Delighting in the teachings of the Mahayana,
Undeterred by truth that is ungraspable,
Having faith, vast vision and determination to help others,
Are the signs of the Mahayana potential,
Just as smoke is a sign of fire
And aquatic life a sign of water.

Having the Mahayana potential,
And having taken Refuge in the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha,
Maintaining the Pratimoksha precepts of non-harming,
And the Bodhichitta of aspiration,
Are the basis for activated Bodhichitta,
The actual practice of the six paramitas.

*Verses to aid reflection on the 'Jewel Ornament of Liberation' by Gampopa, written by
Lama Shenpen Hookham June 18th 2009.*

Intensifying Devotion of One's Heart: The Supplication 'Calling to the Lama from Afar'

Guru think of me.

Kind root guru, think of me.

Essence of the Buddhas of the three times,
Source of the holy Dharma –taught and realized
Master of the Sangha, the noble assembly,
Root guru think of me.

Great treasure of blessing and compassion,
Source of the two siddhis,
Buddha activity that bestows whatever is desired,
Root guru, think of me.

Guru Amitabha, think of me.
Look upon me from the realm of Dharmakaya, simplicity.
Lead us of evil karma who wander in samsara
To the Pure Land of Great Bliss.

Guru Avalokiteshvara, think of me.
Look upon me from the realm of Sambhogakaya, luminosity.
Pacify completely the suffering of the six realms.
Shake us from the depths of the three realms of samsara.

Guru Padmakara, think of me.
Look upon me from lotus light of Chamara.
The wretched people of the world who are without refuge in this Dark Age,
Quickly protect with your compassion.

Guru Yeshe Tsogyal, think of me.
Look upon me from the celestial realm, the city of Great Bliss.
Help us who commit evil deeds to cross the ocean of samsara
To the great city of Liberation.

Gurus of the Kama and Terma lineages, think of me.
Look upon me from the Wisdom realm of Unity.
Break through the dark dungeon of my confused mind.
Make the Sun of Realization arise.

Omniscient Longchen Trime Öser, think of me.
Look upon me from the realm of the five spontaneous wisdom lights.
Help me to strengthen my primordially pure mind
And master the four stages of Ati yoga.

Incomparable Father Lord Atisa, and sons, think of me.
Look upon me from amidst one hundred devas in Tushita.
Arouse in me Bodhichitta,
The essence of Emptiness and Compassion.

Three supreme siddhas – Marpa, Mila, and Gampopa – think of me.
Look upon me from the Vajra realm of Great Bliss.
May I attain the supreme siddhi of Mahamudra, Bliss and Emptiness,
And awaken Dharmakaya in my heart.

Karmapa, lord of the world, think of me.
Look upon me from the space which tames all beings everywhere.
Help me to realize that all dharmas are insubstantial and illusory.
Make appearance and mind dawn as the Three Kayas.

Kagyus of the four great and eight lesser lineages, think of me.
Look upon me from the land of sacred outlook.
Help me to clear away my confusion in the fourth time
And perfect my experience and realization.

Five Sakya forefathers, jetsüns, think of me.
Look upon me from the realm of inseparable samsara and Nirvana.
Help me to unite the completely pure view, meditation and action
And walk upon the supreme secret Path.

Incomparable Shangpa Kagyus, think of me.
Look upon me from the completely pure Buddha land.
Help me to learn properly the practice that liberates through skilful means
And attain the unity of non-learning.

Great siddha, Thangtong Gyalpo, think of me.
Look upon me from the realm of effortless compassion.
Help me to practise the yogic action of realizing insubstantiality.
Help me to master prana and mind.

Only father, Phadampa Sanggye, think of me.
Look upon me from the realm of accomplishing the highest action.
May the blessing of your lineage enter my heart
And may auspicious coincidence arise in all directions.

Only mother, Machik Lapkyi Drönma, think of me.
Look upon me from the realm of Prajnaparamita.
Help me to uproot ego-fixation, the cause of pride.
And realize the truth of egolessness beyond conception.

Omniscient Enlightened one of Dölpo, think of me.
Look upon me from the realm endowed with all the supreme aspects.
Help me to still the shifting breaths in the central channel
And attain the immovable Vajra body.

Jetsün Taranata, think of me.
Look upon me from the realm of the three mudras.
May I tread the secret Vajra path unhindered
And attain the rainbow body in the celestial realm.

Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo, think of me.
Look upon me from the wisdom realm of the two kinds of knowing.
Help me to remove the obscurations of my ignorance
And expand the vision of supreme knowledge.

Son of victorious ones, Lodrö Thaye, think of me.
 Look upon me from your nature of Love and Compassion.
 Enable me to realize that all beings are my kind parents
 And wholeheartedly accomplish the benefit for others.

Wisdom guru Chökyi Gyatso, think of me.
 Look upon me from the realm of suchness.
 Help me to subdue my spiritual materialism
 And attain utter fearlessness and freedom.

Wandering yogin Dechen Rangdrol, think of me.
 Look upon me from the realm of Appearance and Emptiness Inseparable.
 Help me to realize that Appearances are my Friends
 And attain the Great Bliss Self-Liberated.

Precious teacher Rigdzin Shikpo, think of me.
 Look upon me from the realm of the Three Spheres Inseparable.
 Help me to understand the great mystery of Self and Other
 – the Ultimate Reality.

Vajra-mother Shenpen Shikmo, think of me.
 Look upon me from the realm of the Awakened Heart.
 Help me to realize the Nature of my own Mind,
 And by it free the hearts of all beings.

Kind root guru, think of me.
 Look upon me from the top of my head, the place of great bliss.
 May I meet my own mind, the face of Dharmakaya
 And attain Buddhahood in one lifetime.

Alas!
 Sentient beings like myself, evildoers with bad karma,
 Have wandered in samsara from beginningless time.
 Even now we experience endless suffering,
 And yet not even an instant of remorse has occurred.
 Guru, think of me; look upon me quickly with compassion.
 Grant your blessing so that I give rise to renunciation from my depths.

Although I have obtained a free and well-favoured human body,
I simply waste it in vain.
I am constantly distracted by the activities of this futile life.
Unable to accomplish the great objective of Liberation and overcome by
laziness,
I return empty-handed from a land of jewels.
Guru, think of me; look upon me quickly with compassion.
Grant your blessing so that I fulfil the purpose of human birth.

There is no one on earth who will not die.
Even now, one after another we pass away.
I also will die very soon,
And yet like an idiot, I prepare to live for a long time.
Guru, think of me; look upon me quickly with compassion.
Grant your blessing so that I curtail my worthless schemes.

I will become separated from my lovers and friends.
The wealth and food which I hoarded in miserliness will be enjoyed by others.
Even this body I hold so dear will be left behind.
My consciousness will wander in the unknown bardos of samsara.
Guru, think of me; look upon me quickly with compassion.
Grant your blessing so that I realize the futility of life.

The black darkness of fear escorts me along.
The fierce red wind of karma chases after me.
Yama's hideous messengers beat and hack me.
Thus, I experience the unbearable suffering of the lower realms.
Guru, think of me; look upon me quickly with compassion.
Grant your blessing so that I free myself from the chasm of the lower realms.

My faults are as large as a mountain, but I conceal them within me.
Others' faults are as minute as a sesame seed, but I proclaim and condemn
them.
I boast about my virtues, though I don't even have a few.
I call myself a Dharma practitioner and practise only non-Dharma.
Guru, think of me; look upon me quickly with compassion.
Grant your blessing so that I subdue my selfishness and pride.

I hide the ego-fixation within, which will ruin me permanently.
All of my thoughts are the causes of perpetuating kleshas.
All of my actions have unvirtuous results.
I am not even approaching the Path of Liberation.
Guru, think of me; look upon me quickly with compassion.
Grant your blessing so that I uproot my selfishness.

Just a little praise or blame makes me happy or sad.
A mere harsh word causes me to lose my armour of patience.
Even when I see helpless ones, compassion does not arise.
When needy people come to me, I am tied up by a knot of miserliness.
Guru, think of me; look upon me quickly with compassion.
Grant your blessing so that my mind be mixed with the Dharma.

I hold on dearly to futile samsara.
For the sake of food and clothing, I completely abandon permanent objectives.
Though I have everything I need, I constantly want more and more.
My mind is duped by insubstantial and illusory things.
Guru, think of me; look upon me quickly with compassion.
Grant your blessing so that I am not attached to this life.

I cannot endure even the slightest physical or mental pain,
Yet I am so stubborn that I have no fear of falling into the lower realms.
Though I actually see unerring cause and effect,
Still I do not act virtuously, but perpetuate evil.
Guru, think of me; look upon me quickly with compassion.
Grant your blessing so that conviction in karma arises in me.

I am hostile towards enemies and attached to friends.
I am stupefied in darkness as to what should be accepted and rejected.
When practising the Dharma, I fall under the influence of discursiveness, sloth and sleep.
In non-Dharma pursuits, I am clever and my senses are alert.
Guru, think of me; look upon me quickly with compassion.
Grant your blessing so that I conquer my enemy, the kleshas.

My outer appearance is that of an authentic Dharma practitioner,
But inside, my mind is not mixed with the Dharma.
Like a poisonous snake, the kleshas are concealed within me.
When I encounter bad circumstances, my hidden faults as a bad practitioner
are revealed.
Guru, think of me; look upon me quickly with compassion.
Grant your blessing so that I can tame my own mind.

I don't realize my own bad faults.
I maintain the form of a practitioner while engaging in various non-Dharmic
pursuits.
Because of the kleshas, I am naturally accustomed to unvirtuous actions.
Again and again I give birth to wholesome thoughts, but again and again they
fall apart.
Guru, think of me; look upon me quickly with compassion.
Grant your blessing so that I see my own faults.

As each day passes, my death is nearer and nearer.
As each day passes, my being is harsher and harsher.
Though I attend my guru, my devotion becomes gradually obscured.
Love, affection, and sacred outlook towards my Dharma companions grow
smaller and smaller.
Guru, think of me; look upon me quickly with compassion.
Grant your blessing so that I tame my stubborn nature.

I've taken Refuge, aroused Bodhichitta, and made supplications,
But devotion and compassion are not born in the depths of my heart.
I give lip service to Dharmic action and spiritual practice,
But they become routine and I'm not touched by them.
Guru, think of me; look upon me quickly with compassion.
Grant your blessing so that I may be one with the Dharma.

All suffering comes from desiring happiness for oneself.
Although it is said that Buddhahood is attained by considering the welfare of others,
I arouse supreme Bodhichitta but secretly cherish selfishness.
Not only do I not benefit others, I casually cause them harm.
Guru, think of me; look upon me quickly with compassion.
Grant your blessing so that I exchange myself for others.

The guru is Buddha in person, but I regard him as an ordinary person.
I forget his kindness in giving profound instructions.
When he doesn't do what I want, I lose heart.
His actions and behaviour are clouded over by my doubts and disbelief.
Guru, think of me; look upon me quickly with compassion.
Grant your blessing so that unobscured devotion will increase.

My own mind is the Buddha, but I never realize this.
Discursive thoughts are Dharmakaya, but I don't realize this.
This is the unfabricated, innate state, but I cannot keep to this.
Naturalness is things as they really are, but I have no conviction in this.
Guru, think of me; look upon me quickly with compassion.
Grant your blessing so that my mind will be spontaneously liberated.

Death is certain to come, but I am unable to take this to heart.
The holy Dharma truly benefits, but I am unable to practise it properly.
Karma and its result are certainly true, but I do not properly discriminate what to accept or reject.
Mindfulness and awareness are certainly necessary, but not stabilising them, I am swept away by distractions.
Guru, think of me; look upon me quickly with compassion.
Grant your blessing to enable me to persevere in practice.

In the beginning I had no other thought but Dharma.
But in the end what I have achieved will cause me to go to the lower realms of samsara.
The harvest of freedom is destroyed by an unvirtuous frost.
Stubborn people like me have achieved bad consequences.
Guru, think of me; look upon me quickly with compassion.
Grant your blessing so that I maintain undistracted mindfulness.

Because of my former evil actions, I was born at the end of the Dark Age.
All that I have previously done has caused me suffering.
Because of evil friends, I am darkened by the shadow of evil deeds.
My Dharma practice has been sidetracked by my meaningless chatter.
Guru, think of me; look upon me quickly with compassion.
Grant your blessing so that I completely accomplish the holy Dharma.

Grant your blessing so that I give birth to deep sadness.
Grant your blessing so that my worthless schemes are curtailed.
Grant your blessing so that I take to heart the certainty of death.
Grant your blessing so that conviction in karma arises in me.
Grant your blessing so that the path is free from obstacles.
Grant your blessing so that I am able to exert myself in practice.
Grant your blessing so that unfortunate circumstances are brought to the path.
Grant your blessing so that I continually apply antidotes.
Grant your blessing so that genuine devotion arises in me.
Grant your blessing so that I glimpse the natural state.
Grant your blessing so that insight is awakened in my heart.
Grant your blessing so that I uproot confusion.
Grant your blessing so that I attain Buddhahood in one life.

Precious guru, I supplicate you.
Kind lord of the Dharma, I cry to you with longing.
I am an unworthy person who relies on no one but you.
Grant your blessing so that my mind mixes inseparably with yours.

Jamgön Kongtrül Lodrö Thaye wrote this at the great meditation centre Dzongshö Deshek Düpa. It was translated by the Nalanda Translation Committee under the direction of Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche in 1981. It has been slightly abridged here and additional verses were added in 2007. The verse to Trungpa Rinpoche (Chökyi Gyatson) was added by Katie Morrow. The verses to Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche (Dechen Rangdrol), Lama Ridzin Shikpo and Lama Shenpen Shikmo were added by Pema Ozer.

**The Shakyamuni Practice
called
The Treasury of Blessings by Mipham Jamyang
Gyatso Rinpoche**

Homage to Guru Shakyamuni!

In the Samadhiraja Sutra it is said: while walking, sitting, standing or sleeping, anyone who brings to mind the Buddha, the moon-like sage, he remains constantly in front of them and they will attain full nirvana.

The body of the World Protector is pure and like gold in colour, making him extremely beautiful in all respects. Anyone who focuses their mind upon him is a Bodhisattva in meditative equipoise. The way to perform the yoga of recollecting our matchless teacher, Lord of the Sages, is to go for refuge, develop bodhichitta and cultivate the Four Immeasurables.

To the excellent Buddha, Dharma and Supreme Assembly I go for refuge until the attainment of Awakening.

Through the punya of my dana, shila, kshanti, virya, dhyana and prajna, may I attain Buddhahood for the welfare of all sentient beings. 3x

May I and all beings be happy and have the causes of happiness;

May I and all beings be free from suffering and the causes of suffering;

May I and all beings have the happiness of complete Awakening that will never diminish nor fail.

Thus may we abide in boundless equanimity, unruffled by attachment and aversion, and with equal love for all beings. 3x

Reflect that all dharmas, although manifesting, have no self-nature.

AH!

Like a magical illusion, unborn emptiness and unobstructed appearances arising from nidhana [connections] appear simultaneously. In this manner in the sky in front of me, amidst ocean-like cloud-banks of offerings, is the Peerless Teacher, Lion of the Shakyas [the Buddha], upon a bejewelled lion-

throne, lotus, sun and moon. He is golden-hued, with the major signs and minor marks, attired in the three Dharma robes, and seated in vajra posture. His right hand is fully outstretched in the earth-touching gesture, and his left hand in the gesture of meditative equipoise holds a nectar-filled alms bowl.

Radiating glory and splendour, he is like a golden mountain. Nets of wisdom light-rays fill the sky. He is completely surrounded by an ocean-like retinue of Noble Ones, including the eight close sons and the sixteen elders. The mere recollection of him opens us to the glory of supreme bliss, free from false positions in regard to samsara and Nirvana. He is present as the great embodiment of all Refuges.

As one focuses on the Buddha's body, as soon as one develops the attitude that the Buddha is actually present, then he will indeed be present because for the Jñana Kayas of the Buddhas there is no near or far in terms of direction, time and distance. In a sutra it states: "The Buddha is present before whoever brings him to mind – receiving blessings continuously one will be liberated from all faults."

The accumulation of punya through focusing on the Buddha will be an inexhaustible root of virtue which will never diminish. In the Avatamsaka Sutra it is said: "By seeing, hearing and making offerings to the Buddhas, an immeasurable amount of punya will accumulate; all the sufferings of samsara and kleshas will be abandoned; all these conditions¹ will continuously augment." Whatever pranidhanas are made in his presence will be achieved. In the Manjushri Ksetravayuha it is said: "Whatever pranidhanas are made in his presence will be accomplished as wished for. All dharmas are conditioned by what goal we set our heart on. We will receive the fruit of whatever pranidhanas we make."

Develop a firm conviction in these statements, and then recite and practise the following Seven Branch Prayer:

The Great Compassionate One accepted this turbulent degenerate world and made five hundred pranidhanas. He is praised as the White Lotus, whoever hears his name shall not fall back [from the path]. To this gracious Teacher I pay homage!

¹ samskaras

Visualising the accumulation of punya through the three gates [of body, speech and mind] and the enjoyments of myself and others as Samantabhadra's offering cloud, I offer it.

All my misdeeds and failings accumulated since time immemorial I confess, each and every one, with fervent heartfelt repentance.

In all the punya the Noble Ones and ordinary beings have accumulated throughout the three times, I rejoice!

Turn, I pray, the profound and vast Dharma Wheel unceasingly throughout the ten directions!

While your space-like wisdom body dwells immutably throughout the three times, in the perception of disciples you nonetheless demonstrate birth and decay. May you forever display your emanation body!

Through the punya I have gathered throughout the three times, in order to benefit the host of infinite beings, may I always delight the Dharma King and attain the state of the Victorious Lord of Dharma.

Out of kindness you completely embrace with compassion all of us defenceless beings in this degenerate age: whatever light of the Triple Gem exists in this realm and time is your enlightened activity. So I pray to you from the bottom of my heart with trust and faith, only Refuge, peerless and sublime. Bear in mind your great covenant of the past, embrace me with compassion until I reach enlightenment!

Thus with fervent trust and devotion think that the Buddha is actually present and focus one-pointedly on his form.

Guru, Teacher, Bhagavan, Tathagata, Arhat, Completely Perfect Buddha, Glorious Victor, Shakyamuni, I pay homage, make offerings, and seek refuge in you. 3x

Lama - tönpa - chomdendé - deshin shekpa - dra chom pa - yang dakpa - dzokpai sangyé - pal gyalwa - shakya tupa la - chaktsal lo - chödo - kyapsuchio
3x

Guru, Teacher, Bhagavan, Tathagata, Arhat, Completely Perfect Buddha, Glorious Victor, Shakyamuni, I pay homage, make offerings, and seek refuge in you!
3x

To invoke the continuum of the Buddha's mind, recite the dharani from the Concise Prajnaparamita as much as you can. While recalling the Teacher's qualities, concentrate one-pointedly and devotedly upon his clearly manifesting form, utter his names and recite his dharani. Strive in this to the best of your ability, perceiving that through this the following occurs:

From the Teacher's form, multicoloured light-beams of wisdom shine forth brightly and dispel all obscurations of myself and all sentient beings. The good qualities of the Mahayana path arise flawlessly and the state of a non-returner is achieved.

TADYATHA OM MUNI MUNI MAHAMUNAYE SVAHA

OM MUNI MUNI MAHAMUNAYE SVAHA

(Recite the mantra "Tadyatha Om Mune Mune Mahamunaye Svaha" followed by the mantra "Om Mune Mune Mahamunaye Svaha". It doesn't matter how long you recite each; if there is an omze present they will indicate when to change mantras.)

From the Teacher's form, multicoloured light-beams of wisdom shine forth brightly, and dispel all obscurations of myself and all sentient beings. The good qualities of the Mahayana path arise flawlessly, and the state of a non-returner is achieved.

(Optional formless practice of Guru Yoga. The omze will indicate when to start closing prayers.)

Between sessions make offerings of mandalas and so on and read any sutras that you wish, such as The Praises of The Buddha, Karunapundarika, Lalitavistara, Accounts of Buddha's Previous Lives, and the Hundred and Eight Names of the Tathagata.

Conclude by dedicating the roots of virtue to unsurpassable enlightenment and seal this with pranidhanas.

Just as all the Sugatas and their children have developed bodhichitta, and just as their deeds, pranidhanas, wisdom, love and power are a miraculous display of unsurpassable wisdom, may all beings develop in exactly the same manner.

Through the good action [of practising like this] may I quickly accomplish perfect Buddhahood for myself, and establish all beings, without a single exception, in that very state. The Teacher has appeared in this world, and the teachings have illuminated it like the light of the sun. May the holders of the teachings be in harmony, like siblings, and may there be the auspiciousness that the teachings endure.

May the heart's awareness awaken in the unawakened. Where it has begun to stir, may it never fade and may it awaken fully.

May all sentient beings be happy. May the lower realms become forever emptied. May the pranidhanas of all the Bodhisattvas on whatever level² they are, be entirely fulfilled. By the good karmic action [of practising like this] may I attain omniscience. Having thus defeated all misdeeds [the enemy] may I free all beings from the ocean of existence, with its stormy waves of birth, old age, sickness and death.

In general, whatever we are doing – whether moving, walking, sleeping or sitting – we should constantly remember our Teacher, the Buddha. At night also, we should fall asleep thinking of the Teacher as actually present, shining light in all directions, like the light of a very clear day.

Within a state of perfect observance of the precious bodhichitta commitment, in which we continuously emulate the lives of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas of the three times, beginning with how the Teacher himself engendered this attitude, we should likewise make this precious life meaningful by exerting ourselves in the conduct of a Bodhisattva in general and the practice of shamatha and vipashyana in particular.

² bhumis

In many sutras it is said that by merely hearing the name of our Teacher, one will not be diverted from the path of great enlightenment. In the Concise Prajnaparamita Sutra it is said that the above-mentioned dharani is the source of all the Buddhas. By means of this dharani the king of the Shakyas himself achieved Buddhahood and Avalokiteshvara became the supreme exemplar among Bodhisattvas.

Just by hearing this dharani, one will effortlessly accumulate vast punya and purify all karmic obscurations: if one practises mantra negative forces will not arise.

Other canonical scriptures also have mentioned the immeasurable virtues of this dharani, such as one recitation of the dharani will purify all the negative karma accumulated for eighty thousand million kalpas. It is said to be the sacred essence of the Tathagata, Shakyamuni.

Colophon

It occurred to me to write this sadhana when Won Ugyen Tenzin Norbu, who holds the treasure of the three trainings, made auspicious offerings and urged me to do so. Then recently, the Won Rinpoche sent Tulku Jigme Pema Dechen with auspicious offerings, such as gold, saying “Please, finish it quickly!” So, at the request of these two noble men, I, Mipham Jamyang Gyatso, a follower of Shakyamuni bearing merely the name of a dharma teacher in this final age, having gained unwavering faith in the Sublime Teacher, completed it at Phuntsok Norbu Ling below Mount Dza Dorje Penchuk on the eighth day of the Great Miracle month of the Year of the Iron Rat (February 9th 1900). May it be of continual benefit to the doctrine and beings; may the incomparable blessings of the Teacher, the lord of sages truly enter all beings who see, hear, remember or touch this sadhana.

- A Liturgy of Buddha Shakyamuni by Mipham Rinpoche

“Treating the representations of Body, Speech and Mind with respect and veneration creates a tremendous amount of punya. Please do not place Dharma texts where people walk and sit.”

- Chökyi Nyima Rinpoche

This sadhana is a Dharma offering translated by Dharmachakra Practices and revised by Lama Shenpen Hookham for use of the Awakened Heart Sangha (May 2nd 2018)