

## Mahayana Prayers and Poetry – table of contents

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1. The Importance of Bodhicitta, from *The Mind in Comfort and Ease*, by the Fourteenth Dalai Lama

This bodhicitta is of extraordinary and crucial importance. Don't you find it truly moving. the more you think about it? We should say to ourselves:

While I live, I will meditate on bodhicitta;  
This is what will give meaning to my life.  
At the moment of death, I will meditate on bodhicitta;  
It will help me to continue onward, on my way toward enlightenment.  
When I am thriving and happy, I will meditate on bodhicitta;  
It will enable me to use my prosperity to serve others,  
and avoid the pitfalls of pride, envy, and lack of respect.  
When I face failure and sadness, I will meditate on bodhicitta;  
It will prevent me from losing heart and losing hope.  
So, all the time and in any situation:  
In life, when death is near, in success or failure, in joy or sorrow,  
Bodhicitta is something I cannot be without.

2. From A Commentary on the Awakening Mind, by Nagarjuna

Just as the blessed Buddhas  
and the Great Bodhisattvas have generated the mind of Great Awakening,  
I, too, shall, from now until I arrive at the Heart of Awakening,  
generate the Awakening Mind,  
in order that I may save those who are not saved,  
free those who are not free,  
relieve those who are not relieved,  
and help to thoroughly transcend sorrow  
those who have not thoroughly transcended sorrow

### 3. From The Susiddhi, as quoted by Lama Je Tsong Khapa

In order to pacify the suffering  
of limitless sentient beings,  
to release them from bad migrations,  
liberate them from afflictions,  
and protect them completely from  
the varieties of sufferings  
when the discomforts of cyclic existence crowd in,  
I will generate the altruistic mind of enlightenment.

May I always be a refuge  
for all destitute sentient beings,  
a protector of the protectorless,  
a support of those without a support,  
a refuge for the unprotected,  
maker of the miserable happy.

May I cause the pacification  
Of all sentient beings afflictions.

May whatever virtuous actions I have accumulated  
in this and other lives  
assume the aspects of the collections  
which are called merit and wisdom.

May whatever effort I make  
by way of the six perfections  
be of benefit to all beings  
without there being any exception.

Making effort until enlightenment,  
I will strive at actions temporarily  
and limitlessly over lives  
so that, in short,  
all the afflictions of all sentient beings may be pacified  
and they be freed.

4. From 'A Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life', by Shantideva,  
Chapter one, The Benefit of the Awakening Mind

Respectfully I prostrate myself to the Sugatas  
Who are endowed with the Dharmakaya,  
As well as to their Noble Sons  
And to all who are worthy of veneration

Here I shall explain how to engage in the vows of the  
Buddhas' Sons,  
The meaning of which I have condensed in accordance  
with the scriptures.

There is nothing here that has not been explained before  
And I have no skill in the art of rhetoric;  
Therefore, lacking any intention to benefit others,  
I write this in order to acquaint it to my mind.

For due to acquaintance with what is wholesome,  
The force of my faith may for a short while increase  
because of these (words).  
If, however, these (words) are seen by others  
Equal in fortune to myself, it may be meaningful  
(for them).

Leisure and endowment are very hard to find;  
And, since they accomplish what is meaningful for man,  
If I do not take advantage of them now,  
How will such a perfect opportunity come about again?

Just as a flash of lightning on a dark, cloudy night  
For an instant brightly illuminates all,  
Likewise in this world, through the might of buddha,  
A wholesome thought rarely and briefly appears.

Hence virtue is perpetually feeble,  
The great strength of evil being extremely intense  
And except for a Fully Awakening Mind  
By what other virtue will it be overcome?

All the Buddhas who have contemplated for many aeons  
 Have seen it to be beneficial;  
 For by it the limitless masses of beings  
 Will quickly attain the supreme state of bliss.

Those who wish to destroy the many sorrows of (their)  
 conditioned existence,  
 Those who wish (all beings) to experience a multitude  
 of joys,  
 And those who wish to experience much happiness,  
 Should never forsake the Awakening Mind.

The moment an Awakening Mind arises  
 In those fettered and weak in the jail of cyclic existence,  
 They will be named 'a Son of the Sugatas',  
 And will be revered by both men and gods of the world.

It is like the supreme gold-making elixir,  
 For it transforms the unclean body we have taken  
 Into the priceless jewel of a Buddha-Form  
 therefore firmly seize this Awakening Mind.

Since the limitless mind of the Sole Guide of the World  
 Has upon thorough investigation seen its preciousness,  
 All beings wishing to be free from worldly abodes  
 Should firmly take hold of this precious 'Awakening Mind.

All other virtues are like the plantain tree;  
 For after bearing fruit they simply perish.  
 But the perennial tree of the Awakening Mind  
 Unceasingly bears fruit and thereby flourishes without end.

Like entrusting myself to a brave man when greatly afraid  
 By entrusting myself to this (Awakening Mind) I shall  
 be swiftly liberated  
 Even if I have committed extremely unbearable evils.  
 Why then do the conscientious not devote themselves to  
 this?

Just like the fire at the end of an age,  
 It instantly consumes all great evil.  
 Its unfathomable advantages were taught  
 To the disciple Sudhana by the wise Lord  
 Maitreya.

In brief, the Awakening Mind  
 Should be understood to be of two types;  
 The mind that aspires to awaken  
 And the mind that ventures to do so.

As is understood by the distinction  
 Between aspiring to go and ( actually) going.  
 So the wise understand in turn  
 The distinction between these two.

Although great fruits occur in cyclic existence  
 From the mind that aspires to awaken,  
 An uninterrupted flow of merit does not ensue  
 As it does with the venturing mind.

And for him who has perfectly seized this mind  
 With the thought never to turn away  
 From totally liberating  
 The infinite forms of life.  
 From that time hence,  
 Even while asleep or unconcerned.  
 A force of merit equal to the sky  
 Will perpetually ensue.

For the sake of those inclined towards the lesser (vehicle),  
 This was logically asserted  
 By the Tathagata himself  
 In The Sutra Requested by Subahu.

If even the thought to relieve  
 Living creatures of merely a headache  
 Is a beneficial intention  
 Endowed with infinite goodness,



Then what need is there to mention  
 The wish to dispel their inconceivable misery,  
 Wishing every single one of them  
 To realise boundless good qualities?

Do even fathers and mothers  
 Have such a benevolent intention as this?  
 Do the gods and sages?  
 Does even Brahma have it?

If those beings have never before  
 Even dreamt of such an attitude  
 For their own sake,  
 How would it ever arise for the sake of others?

This intention to benefit all beings,  
 Which does not arise in others even for their own sake,  
 Is an extraordinary jewel of the mind,  
 And its birth is an unprecedented wonder.

How can I fathom the depths  
 Of the goodness of this jewel of the mind,  
 The panacea that relieves the world of pain  
 And is the source of all its joy?

If merely a benevolent intention  
 Excels venerating the Buddhas,  
 Then what need to mention striving to make  
 All beings without exception happy?

Although wishing to be rid of misery,  
 They run towards misery itself.  
 Although wishing to have happiness,  
 Like an enemy they ignorantly destroy it.

For those who are deprived of happiness  
 And burdened with many sorrows  
 It satisfies them with all joys,  
 Dispels all suffering.

And clears away confusion.  
 Where is there a comparable virtue?  
 Where is there even such a friend?  
 Where is there merit similar to this?

If whoever repays a kind deed  
 Is worthy of some praise,  
 Then what need to mention the Bodhisattva  
 Who does good without its being asked of him?

The world honours as virtuous  
 A man who sometimes gives a little, plain food  
 Disrespectfully to a few beings,  
 That satisfies them for only half a day.

What need be said then of one  
 Who eternally bestows the peerless bliss of the Sugatas  
 Upon limitless numbers of beings,  
 Thereby fulfilling all their hopes?

The Buddha has said that whoever bears an evil thought  
 Against a benefactor such as that Bodhisattva  
 Will remain in hell for as many aeons  
 As there were evil thoughts.

But if a virtuous attitude should arise (in that regard) .  
 Its fruits will multiply far more than that.  
 When Bodhisattvas greatly suffer they generate no negativity,  
 Instead their virtues naturally increase.  
 I bow down to the body of him  
 In whom the sacred precious mind is born.

I seek refuge in that source of joy  
 Who brings to happiness even those who harm him.

## 5. Stabilizing in the Bodhimind, by Shantideva

In the spiritual energy that relieves  
 The anguish of beings in misery and  
 Places depressed beings in eternal joy,  
 I lift up my heart and rejoice.

In the goodness producing illumination  
 I lift up my heart and rejoice.

I rejoice in the beings who have gained  
 Eternal liberation from suffering,  
 And I rejoice in those attained to Buddhahood  
 As well as in their offspring, the noble Bodhisattvas.

In the ocean-like virtue of the bodhimind  
 That brings joy to all beings  
 And in accomplishing the well-being of others,  
 I lift up my heart and rejoice.

To the Buddhas of the ten directions  
 I join my hands in respect.  
 Let blaze the light of Dharma's truth  
 For the beings lost in darkness.

To the Buddhas considering parinirvana  
 I join my hands in prayer.  
 Do not abandon the beings in sorrow  
 But remain and teach for countless ages.

May any spiritual energy thus generated  
 By my devotion to the enlightened ones  
 Be dedicated to dispelling the misery  
 Of living beings without exception.

As long as diseases afflict living beings  
May I be the doctor, the medicine  
And also the nurse  
Who restores them to health.

May I fall as rain to increase  
The harvests that must feed the living beings  
And in ages of dire famine  
May I myself serve as food and drink.

May I be a treasury  
For those desperate and forlorn.  
May I manifest as what they require  
And wish to have near them.

My body, every possession  
And all goodness, past, present and future  
Without remorse I dedicate  
To the well-being of the world.

Suffering is transcended by total surrender  
And the mind attains to nirvana.  
As one day all must be given up,  
Why not dedicate it now to universal happiness?

My bodily powers I dedicate  
To the well-being of all that lives.  
Should anyone wish to ridicule me  
And make me an object of jest and scorn,  
Why should I possibly care  
If I have dedicated myself to others?

Let them do as they wish with me,  
So long as it does not harm them.  
May no one who encounters me  
Ever have an insignificant contact.

Regardless of whether those whom I meet  
 Respond toward me with anger or faith,  
 May the mere fact of our meeting  
 Contribute to the fulfillment of their wishes.

May the slander, harm  
 And all forms of abuse  
 That anyone should direct toward me  
 Act as a cause of their enlightenment.

May I be a protector of the helpless,  
 A guide to those traveling the path,  
 A boat to those wishing to cross over;  
 Or a bridge or a raft.

May I be land for those requiring it,  
 A lamp for those in darkness,  
 May I be a home for the homeless,  
 And a servant to the world.

In order to fulfill the needs of beings  
 May I be as a magic gem,  
 An inexhaustible vase, a mystic spell,  
 A cure-all medicine and a wish-granting tree.

May I act as the mighty earth  
 Or like the free and open skies  
 To support and provide the space  
 Whereby I and all others may grow.

Until every being afflicted by pain  
 Has reached to nirvana's shores,  
 May I serve only as a condition  
 That encourages progress and joy.

Just as all previous Buddhas  
 First gave rise to the precious bodhimind  
 And just as they then carefully followed  
 The stages of the Bodhisattva disciplines,

Likewise for the sake of living beings  
 Do I now myself generate the bodhimind,  
 And likewise will I myself train  
 In the disciplines of a Bodhisattva.

They who out of wisdom  
 Have seized the supreme bodhimind  
 Praise, glorify and rejoice in it,  
 That it may grow to fulfillment.

From today I will reap the fruit of life;  
 Having well won the state of man,  
 Today I am born in the Buddha-family  
 And am now a child of the Buddhas.

Thus in the future I should make every effort  
 To live in accord with the Bodhisattva Ways,  
 And never should I act as would bring shame  
 To this noble, faultless family.

Like a blind man fumbling in garbage  
 Who happens to find a rare and precious gem,  
 Likewise have I discovered  
 The jewel of the precious bodhimind.

Thus was found this supreme ambrosia to dispel  
 The Lord of Death, destroyer of life;  
 An inexhaustible treasure able to cure  
 The poverty of all sentient beings.

It is the highest of medicines  
 To quell the ills of the living,  
 And it is a tree giving shade  
 To those wandering on the paths of life.

It is a strong and mighty bridge  
 By which beings can cross from misery,  
 And it is a moon to shine in the mind  
 To clear away the pains of delusion.

The bodhimind is a great radiant sun  
To disperse the darkness of unknowing,  
And it is the very essence of butters  
Gained from churning the milks of Dharma.

For all guests on the roads of life  
Who would taste the very substance of joy,  
Here is the actual seat of true happiness,  
A veritable feast to satiate the world.

Thus today in the presence of all Awakened Ones  
I invite every living being to this festival  
Giving both immediate and lasting joy.  
May the gods and all others rejoice.

6. The Excellence of the Meditation Upon the Bodhimind,  
by the Seventh Dalai Lama

Honor to Buddha, the supreme sage,  
the cosmic overlord who awakens  
all beings from drunken ignorance  
by manifesting the hundredfold light  
of truth's brilliant door.

Even should the earth be covered  
with a layer of lesser jewels,  
their radiance would be far surpassed  
by one fragment of a sparkling diamond;  
similarly does one with bodhimind  
outshine Hinayana followers.

Of this thing called bodhimind,  
source of all spiritual qualities,  
the supremely significant,  
the psyche of a High One,  
the force producing all Buddhas,  
I now sing this praise.

The expanded mind which thinks  
only of that which benefits others  
is a tree of endless fruit;  
one touch of its divine sap  
quenches even the word 'suffering'.

Merely looking at hunger and deprivation  
turns one's stomach with horror;  
bodhimind is the only medicine able to cure  
all forms of need;  
just as the naga king's jewel  
fulfills the wants of even hungry ghosts.



Animal passion which clouds the mind,  
 animal stupidity blind to spiritual potential:  
 the one sun to dispel them  
 is bodhimind, torch of infinite rays.

For destitute beggars at the door  
 of the treasury of higher delights,  
 bodhimind is the gatekeeper;  
 and he fulfills mundane needs as well.

Only bodhimind, the thought  
 to be a Buddha,  
 totally purges the ugliest of sins –  
 sins which result in suffering,  
 a fraction of which would break a man.

It is a magic thing  
 to destroy misery now and forever,  
 a fabled potion to open  
 the passage of a mother in labor.

The sole thought on everyone's side,  
 the precious mind aiming at enlightenment  
 as a way to further the world,  
 was seen by Buddha to be  
 the highest of spiritual means.

For the sake of both yourself and others,  
 plant the fertile seed of bodhimind,  
 which quickly produces the state of Buddha,  
 freedom from every limitation;  
 and make it firm as a mountain.

Buddha said, 'By cultivating the seeds of bodhimind  
 all spiritual qualities are born;  
 those who have developed it  
 He called kings of doctors.'

It can be read in both the sutras and shastras  
 that the bodhimind is the door to the Mahayana,  
 and that the supreme practitioner who attains it  
 becomes a Bodhisattva, a son of the Buddhas.

Whether or not one is a Bodhisattva  
 is decided by whether or not one has bodhimind;  
 he anointed with its sandalwood fragrance  
 is adorned with the richest of good qualities.

Even the eagle, king of birds, cannot fly  
 if he is missing a wing.  
 Many find the wing 'perception of emptiness'  
 but only those with the wing of bodhimind  
 fly to the omniscient state of Buddhahood.

Were the advantages of bodhimind to take form,  
 the universe could not contain them.  
 Generating it but for a moment produces  
 more goodness than offering  
 a world filled with the seven jewels  
 to the Buddhas of the ten directions.

This is but a drop from the ocean of the  
 beneficial effects of bodhimind,  
 all of which even Buddha could not describe.  
 Therefore wrap closely around your shoulders  
 the cloak of love and enthusiasm  
 for this one path all Buddhas have trod,  
 and become a living legend of one attained  
 to freedom and knowledge.

By virtue of this song  
 on the elixir which transforms gross beings  
 into beautiful, golden Buddhas,  
 may all living beings attain  
 to a state of expanded mind.

## 7. From the Gandhavyuha Sutra

Sentient beings,  
trapped in aging, and sickness,  
and tormented by a hundred pains –  
seeing them assailed by the terrors of birth, death, and sorrow,  
he directs his conduct for their weal

Sentient beings,  
crushed by the wheels of suffering  
within the circle of birth and death –  
seeing this,  
he seeks the thunderbolt of Wisdom,  
that smashed to dust  
these wheels of woe

8. From The Sacred Heart-Essence of the Pith Instructions, by Nyoshul Khen Rinpoche

The pure and supreme precious Bodhicitta.  
Which is uncontrived. should arise in your being;  
Without this, there is no way to attain Buddhahood.

So firstly, the excellent preparation of generating the altruistic mind of enlightenment is important.

Of all beings in the Universe,  
None have not been our parents.  
Through their great kindness they formed our body,  
Gave life and material goods,  
And showed us the ways of the world.  
Although they desire only happiness,  
They are like a blind person without a guiding friend.

In order that all beings tormented in unbearable cyclic existence  
Accomplish everlasting peace. unsurpassable enlightenment,  
Motivated by the altruistic objective of the two-fold benefit with both  
their aspects ,  
You should generate the supreme mind intent upon attaining perfect  
enlightenment.

This Bodhicitta is the all-sufficient wish-fulfilling jewel;  
This is the foundation of all the vast and profound  
teachings; This is the central point of all the paths of Sutra  
and Tantra.

One aspect of the nature of the Two Truths  
Is the relative level, the principal theme of all practice,  
The king of all supreme methods;  
Without this, there is no other means to accomplish Buddhahood  
If you lack either Method or Wisdom  
How will the path be accomplished?

Of the two supreme paths, first  
The path of Skilful Means is praised.

For the preparation on the path. generate the Bodhicitta:  
 “This has immeasurable benefits”, the all-knowing Lord  
 Maitreya said to Norzang.

The Bodhicitta is like the moon which eliminates  
 darkness; Bodhicitta is like the all-illuminating sun.

Bodhicitta expels the chronic disease of obscuring  
 emotions; Bodhicitta protects from the terrors of Samsara.

Bodhicitta repels the obstacles of the four demons.  
 Bodhicitta eliminates the fever of the five poisons.

Bodhicitta acts as the stallion of endeavour.

Bodhicitta is the sturdy armour of patience.

Bodhicitta discards all moral downfalls.

Bodhicitta supports the accomplishment of meditative  
 concentration. Bodhicitta gives birth to excellent tranquility.  
 Bodhicitta causes supreme wisdom to arise in the mind.

Bodhicitta perfects the great accumulation of merit.  
 Bodhicitta brings forth the view of Emptiness.  
 When Bodhicitta is present, the moon of Skilful Means rises.  
 If you meditate on Bodhicitta, the sun of Penetrating Insight  
 is evident.

If you meditate on Bodhicitta, Pristine Awareness fully unfolds.  
 By Bodhicitta, the benefit of others effortlessly arises.  
 Through Bodhicitta, the qualities of the ten Bodhisattva levels  
 are perfected.

All the relative qualities and the one hundred and twelve  
 freedoms Of the great Bodhisattvas dwelling on the first level

Up to the innumerable, ineffable, immeasurable Wisdom-eyes, clairvoyances, miraculous powers and so forth, As well as the thirty-two major and eighty minor signs Of the countless Sugatas' golden bodies and so on. All these enlightenment qualities, arising from the accumulation of merit, Stem from the power of supreme, unsurpassable Bodhicitta.

Bodhicitta subdues the demon of ego-clinging.

Bodhicitta frees from the prison of Samsara.  
Bodhicitta evaporates the ocean of suffering.

Bodhicitta equalizes suffering and happiness.

Bodhicitta is like a brave escort.

Bodhicitta is like the great fire at the end of an aeon.  
Bodhicitta is like the first fruit of a tree.

Bodhicitta opens the door to the treasury of altruism.

Lacking such profound and supreme Bodhicitta,  
Like powerful Ram, who dwelt twelve years in the forest  
But was driven by the goad of attachment to fight his enemies;

Or like Gelong Thangpa, who, although he could fly freely in the sky  
Through having mastered energy and mind, started a battle ...  
The fault was the absence of unsurpassing Bodhicitta.

Brahma himself, even after attaining desireless bliss,  
Will become blazing firewood in Avici Hell;  
And Indra, although venerated by the entire world,  
By the power of karma will fall back to the ground -  
Lacking the kingly mountain of Bodhicitta is the fault.

In this world, so many of those glorified by the highest rank, like great kings, generals, prime ministers and presidents, Finally destroyed themselves and others;  
The fault lay with the rotten root of Bodhicitta.

Innumerable Sravakas, Pratyekabuddhas,  
 and hosts of other superior beings,  
 Possessed the two hundred and fifty vows of pure ethical  
 discipline,  
 But although beautified by the three trainings,  
 related practices, experience and realization,  
 Without Bodhicitta, the root of all Dharma,  
 Sometimes, liberating only themselves, they remained in great Peace.

From among the vast divisions of the Buddha's teaching,  
 Bodhicitta is the very quintessence.  
 Bodhicitta repels the harm of the lower realms;

Bodhicitta reveals the supreme path of liberation.

“If the yogin possesses Bodhicitta,  
 Even if he doesn't accomplish any virtue through body and speech,  
 He will not stray from the path of liberation.”  
 Thus said Chökyi Wangpo, who had mastered the Five Sciences.

“The Five Heinous Evils, etc., all great negative  
 actions Will be overpowered by the unsurpassable  
 Bodhicitta, And all lesser sins will also be removed,”  
 Said the great Indian pandit Shantideva.

"Whoever abides in the supreme Bodhicitta,  
 Their life will be regarded as a pleasant garden;  
 Whether successful or even destitute,  
 The miseries of the lower realms won't terrify,"  
 Lord Maitreya stated in the Sutralamkara.

In brief, the unsurpassable precious Bodhicitta  
 Is the heart-essence of all the Buddhas of the three times;  
 Since without it there is no way to accomplish  
 enlightenment,  
 It is the authentic root of the path  
 Of Sutras, Tantras and Pith-instructions.

This excellent preparatory practice of generating Bodhicitta  
 Is praised with one voice by all the millions of past holy ones;  
 It should not become mere intellectual knowledge,  
 But should be reflected upon again and again  
 And united with your being,  
 my heart-friends!

It's not said merely for the lack of something to say  
 But emphasized because of its great importance,  
 So train your mind with Bodhicitta, my heart-friends!

Don't be distracted, don't be distracted -  
 Train in Bodhicitta.

Don't be mistaken, don't be mistaken -  
 Train in Bodhicitta.

Don't err, don't err -  
 Train in Bodhicitta.

If the foundation of Bodhicitta is not firm,  
 The extremely profound essential Pith-instructions of  
 The Creative and Completion phases  
 And other practices will be difficult to perfect,  
 So the preparatory generation of Bodhicitta is the starting  
 point on the Path.



## 9. Vow

*Think of the Great Aim: bodhicitta is the aim to become a Buddha, in order to bring the greatest benefit to all sentient beings*

## Vow

From this point forward,  
I dedicate myself to removing the suffering of all living beings,  
and to bringing them happiness

I dedicate myself fully to their healing and awakening;  
to their all having comfort,  
strength of body, mind, and spirit,  
most excellent nourishment, health, longevity  
every level of protection,  
shelter, food, clothing, medicine, education,  
joy and wisdom

In order to accomplish the needs of living beings  
in the most effective way,  
I will develop my wisdom and compassion  
just as my teachers have done  
I aim to become free of all faults, and complete in all qualities  
and, day by day, hour by hour  
always offer as much help as I can

In this way, I will make a gift of my life  
In this way, my own life will be fulfilled

I dedicate myself fully, leaving nothing out,  
to the complete healing, fulfillment and enlightenment  
of all living beings

No matter how long it takes  
no matter how difficult it may be  
no matter what it costs

With all my heart and with all my strength,  
I vow to always serve all living beings  
in every way that is necessary for them  
and in every way that will bring each and every one of them  
true and lasting health and happiness

## 10. The Eight Verses for Training the Mind, by Langri Tangpa

May I always cherish all beings  
with the resolve to accomplish for them  
the highest good,  
that is more precious  
than a wish-fulfilling jewel

When among others, I will think of myself  
as lowest among all  
and will hold others to be supreme,  
from the very depths of my heart

I will learn to search into my mind,  
and as soon as an afflictive emotion arises,  
endangering both self and others,  
I will firmly face and avert it.

When meeting with those  
who have especially strong sins and suffering,  
I will learn to cherish them  
as if I had found a precious treasure,  
very difficult to find

When others treat me badly,  
with slander, abuse, and so on,  
I will accept all loss  
and offer the victory to them

When one I have benefitted hurts me,  
I will learn to view that one as my own Supreme Guru

In short, I will learn to offer all help and happiness  
to all beings,  
both directly and indirectly,  
and I will remove as much suffering  
as these beings may have

I will keep these practices undiminished  
by the usual worldly preoccupations,  
and by knowing appearances to be  
like illusions,  
I will be without the limitations  
that accompany ego-grasping

11. From 'A Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life', by Shantideva,  
chapter seven, Enthusiasm

Having patience I should develop enthusiasm,  
For Awakening will dwell only in those who exert themselves.  
Just as there is no movement without wind,  
So merit does not occur without enthusiasm.

What is enthusiasm? It is finding joy in what is wholesome.  
Its opposing factors are explained  
As laziness, attraction to what is bad,  
And despising oneself out of despondency.

Because of attachment to the pleasurable taste of idleness,  
Because of craving for sleep,  
And because of having no disillusion with the misery of cyclic  
existence,  
Laziness grows very strong.

Enmeshed in the snare of disturbing conceptions,  
I have entered the snare of birth.  
Why am I still not aware  
That I live in the mouth of the lord of death?

Do I not see  
That he is systematically slaughtering my species?  
Whoever remains soundly asleep  
( Surely behaves) like a buffalo with a butcher.

When having blocked off every (escape) route  
The lord of death is looking (for someone to kill),  
How can I enjoy eating?  
And likewise how can I enjoy sleep?

For as long as death is actually approaching,  
Then I shall accumulate merits.  
Even if I then put a stop to laziness,  
What will be the use? That is not the time!

When this has not been done, when this is being done,

And when this is only half finished,  
 Suddenly the lord of death will come.  
 And the thought will occur, "Oh no, I am done for! "

Their faces flowing with tears,  
 And their eyes red and swollen with sorrow,  
 My relatives will finally lose hope,  
 And I shall behold the vision of the messengers of death.

Tormented by the memory of my evils,  
 And hearing the sounds of hell,  
 In terror I shall clothe my body in excrement.  
 What virtue can I do in such a delirious state?

If even in this life I shall be gripped with fear  
 Like that of a live fish being rolled (in hot sand)  
 Why even mention the unbearable agonies of hell  
 That will result from my unwholesome deeds?

Now can I remain at ease like this  
 When I have committed the actions (that will bear fruit)  
 In my delicate infant's body encountering boiling acids  
 In the hell of tremendous heat?

Much harm befalls those with little forbearance,  
 And those who want results without making any effort.  
 While clasped by death they shall cry like the gods,  
 "Oh no, I am overcome by misery! "

Relying upon the boat of a human ( body) ,  
 Free yourself from the great river of pain!  
 As it is hard to find this boat again,  
 This is no time for sleep, you fool.

Having rejected the supreme joy of the sacred Dharma  
 That is a boundless source of delight,  
 Why am I distracted by the causes for pain?

Why do I enjoy frivolous amusements and the like?

Without indulging in despondency, I should gather the supports (for enthusiasm)  
 And earnestly take control of myself.  
 (Then by seeing) the equality between self and others,  
 I should practise exchanging self for others.

I should never indulge in despondency by entertaining such thoughts as,  
 "How shall I ever awaken?"  
 The Tathagatas who speak what is true  
 Have uttered this truth:

"If they develop the strength of their exertion,  
 Even those who are flies, mosquitoes, bees and insects  
 Will win the unsurpassable Awakening  
 Which is so hard to find."

So, if I do not forsake the Bodhisattvas' way of life,  
 Why should someone like myself who has been born in the human race  
 Not attain Awakening, since I am able to recognise  
 What is beneficial and what is of harm?

But, nevertheless, it frightens me to think  
 That I may have to give away my arms and legs,  
 Without discriminating between what is heavy and what is light,  
 I am reduced to fear through confusion.

For over countless myriads of aeons  
 I have been cut, stabbed, burned,  
 And flayed alive innumerable times  
 But I have not awakened.

Yet the suffering  
 Involved in my awakening will have a limit.  
 It is like the suffering of having an incision made  
 In order to remove and destroy greater pain.

Even doctors eliminate illness  
 With unpleasant medical treatments.  
 So in order to overcome manifold sufferings  
 I should be able to put up with some discomfort.

But the Supreme Physician does not employ  
 Common medical treatments such as these.  
 With an extremely gentle technique  
 He remedies all the greatest ills.

At the beginning, the Guide of the World encourages  
 The giving of such things as food.  
 Later, when accustomed to this,  
 One may progressively start to give away even one's flesh.

At such a time when my mind is developed  
 To the point of regarding my body like food,  
 Then what hardship would there be  
 When it came to giving away my flesh?

Having forsaken all evil there would be no suffering  
 And due to wisdom there would be no lack of joy.  
 But now my mind is afflicted by mistaken conceptions  
 And my body is caused harm by unwholesome deeds.

As their bodies are happy due to their merits,  
 And their minds are happy due to their wisdom,  
 Even if they remained in cyclic existence for the sake  
 of others,  
 Why would the Compassionate Ones ever be upset?

Due to the strength of his Awakening Mind,  
 The Bodhisattva consumes his previous evils  
 And harvests oceans of merit,  
 Hence he is said to excel the Shravakas.

So, having mounted the horse of an Awakening Mind  
 That dispels all discouragement and weariness,  
 Who, when they know of this mind that proceeds from joy  
 to joy,



Would ever lapse into despondency?

The supports when working for the sake of living beings  
 Are aspiration, steadfastness, joy and rest.  
 Aspiration is developed through fear of misery  
 And by contemplating the benefits of (aspiration) itself.

Thus in order to increase my enthusiasm  
 I should strive to abandon its opposing forces,  
 To (amass the supports of) aspiration, self-confidence,  
 joy and rest,  
 To practise in earnest and to become strong in self-control.

I shall have to overcome  
 The boundless faults of myself and others,  
 And (in order to destroy) each of these faults (alone)  
 ( I may have to strive until) an ocean of aeons is exhausted.

But if within myself I do not perceive  
 Even a fraction of the perseverance ( required) to exhaust  
 these faults,  
 Then why do I not have a heart attack?  
 For now I have become an abode for infinite misery.

Likewise I shall have to realise  
 Many excellent qualities for myself and others,  
 And (in order to attain) each of these qualities (alone)  
 I may have to acquaint myself with its cause until an ocean  
 of aeons is exhausted.

But I have never developed acquaintance  
 With even a fraction of these excellences!

How strange it is to squander  
 This birth I have found by some coincidence.

I have not made offerings to the Lord Buddhas,  
 I have not given the pleasure of great festivals,  
 I have not performed actions for the teachings,

I have not fulfilled the wishes of the poor,  
 I have not granted fearlessness to the frightened,  
 And I have not given happiness to the weak.  
 All I have given rise to is  
 The agonies in the mother's womb, and to suffering.

Both now and in previous lives  
 Such deprivation has arisen  
 Because of my lack of aspiring for the Dharma.  
 Who would ever reject this aspiring for Dharma?

The Mighty One himself has said  
 That aspiration is the root of every facet of virtue;  
 Its root is constant acquaintance  
 With the ripening-effects (of actions).

(Physical) pain, mental unhappiness,  
 All the various kinds of fear,  
 As well as separation from what is desired  
 All arise from an unwholesome way of life.

(However) by committing wholesome actions  
 Which are (motivated by aspiration) in the mind,  
 Wherever I go I shall be presented with  
 Tokens of the fruit of that merit.

But by committing evil ( actions),  
 Although I may wish for happiness,  
 Wherever I go I shall be completely overcome  
 By weapons of pain ( caused) by my evil life.

As a result of virtue I shall dwell in the spacious,  
 fragrant and cool heart of a lotus flower,  
 My radiance will be nourished by the food of the  
 Conqueror's sweet speech,  
 My glorious form will spring from a lotus unfolded  
 by the Mighty One's light,

And as a Bodhisattva I shall abide in the presence of  
 the Conquerors.

But as a result of non-virtue my skin will be ripped off  
 by the henchmen of Yama.  
 In this feeble state liquid copper melted by tremendous  
 heat will be poured into my body.  
 Pierced by flaming swords and daggers, my flesh will be  
 cut into a hundred pieces,  
 And I shall tumble upon the fiercely blazing iron ground.

Therefore I should aspire for virtue  
 And with great respect acquaint myself with it.  
 Having undertaken the wholesome in the manner of  
 Vajradhvaja.  
 I should then proceed to acquaint myself with  
 self-confidence.

First of all I should examine well what is to be done  
 To see whether I can pursue it or cannot undertake it.  
 (If I am unable) it is best to leave it,  
 But once I have started I must not withdraw.

( If I do), then this habit will continue in other lives  
 And evil and misery will increase,  
 Also other actions done at the time of its fruition  
 Will be weak and will not be accomplished.

Self-confidence should be applied to (wholesome) actions,  
 The ( overcoming ) of disturbing conceptions and my  
 ability ( to do this).

Thinking, "I alone shall do it,"  
 Is the self-confidence of action.

Powerless, their minds disturbed,  
 People in this world are unable to benefit themselves  
 Therefore I shall do it (for them)  
 Since unlike me these beings are incapable.

(Even) if others are doing inferior tasks  
 Why should I sit here ( doing nothing)?

I do not do those tasks because of self-importance -  
It would be best for me to have no such pride.

When crows encounter a dying snake,  
They will act as though they were eagles.  
(Likewise) if (my self-confidence) is weak  
I shall be injured by the slightest downfall.

How can those who out of faint-heartedness have  
given up trying  
Find liberation because of this deficiency?  
But even the greatest (obstacle) will find it hard to  
overcome  
One with self-confidence who is developing exertion.

Therefore with a steady mind,  
I shall overcome all faults,  
For if I am defeated by a fault  
My wish to vanquish the three realms will become a joke.

I will conquer everything  
And nothing at all shall conquer me!  
I, a son of the Lion-like Conqueror,  
Should remain self-confident in this way.

Whoever has self-importance is destroyed by it:  
He is disturbed and has no self-confidence.

For those with self-confidence do not succumb to the  
power of the enemy,  
Whereas the former are under the sway of the enemy of  
self-importance.

Inflated by the disturbing conception of my  
self-importance,  
I shall be led by it to the lower realms.  
It destroys the joyous festival of being human.  
I shall become a slave, eating the food of others.

Stupid, ugly, feeble and everywhere disrespected.  
 Tough people bloated by conceit  
 Are also counted among the self-important.  
 Tell me, what is more pathetic than this?

Whoever seizes self-confidence in order to conquer  
 the enemy of self-importance,  
 He is the self-confident one, the victorious hero.  
 And in addition, whoever definitely conquers the spread  
 of this enemy, self-importance,  
 Completely (wins) the fruit of a Conqueror, fulfilling  
 the wishes of the world.

If I find myself amidst a crowd of disturbing conceptions  
 I shall endure them in a thousand ways;  
 Like a lion among foxes  
 I will not be affected by this disturbing host.

Just as men will guard their eyes  
 When great danger and turmoil occur,  
 Likewise I shall never be swayed by the disturbances  
 within my mind,  
 Even at times of great strife.

It would be better for me to be burned,  
 To have my head cut off and to be killed,  
 Rather than ever bowing down

To those ever-present disturbing conceptions.  
 (So likewise in all situations  
 I should do nothing other than what is fit)

Just like those who yearn for the fruits of play,  
 (A Bodhisattva) is attracted  
 To whatever task he may do.  
 He never has enough, it only brings him joy.

Although people work in order to be happy,  
 It is uncertain whether or not they will find it;  
 But how can those whose work itself is joy

Find happiness unless they do it?

If I feel that I never have enough sensual objects,  
Which are like honey smeared upon a razor's edge,  
Then why should I ever feel that I have enough  
Merit which ripens in happiness and peace?

Thus in order to complete this task,  
I shall venture into it  
Just as an elephant tormented by the midday sun  
Plunges into a (cool, refreshing) lake.

When my strength declines, I should leave whatever I am  
doing  
In order to be able to continue with it later.  
Having done something well, I should put it aside  
With the wish (to accomplish) what will follow.

Just as an old warrior approaches  
The swords of an enemy upon the battlefield,  
So shall I avoid the weapons of the disturbing conceptions  
And skillfully bind this enemy .

If someone dropped his sword during a battle,  
He would immediately pick it up out of fear.

Likewise if I lose the weapon of mindfulness  
I should quickly retrieve it, being afraid of hell.

Just as poison spreads throughout the body  
In dependence upon the (circulation of) blood,  
Likewise if (a disturbing conception) finds an opportunity,  
Unwholesomeness will permeate my mind.

Those who practise should be as attentive  
As a frightened man carrying a jar full of mustard oil  
Who is being threatened by someone with a sword  
That he will be killed if he spills just one drop.

Just as I would swiftly stand up  
If a snake came into my lap,  
Likewise if any sleep or laziness occur  
I shall quickly turn them back.

Each time something unwholesome occurs  
I should criticise myself,  
And then contemplate for a long time  
That I shall never let this happen again.

Likewise in all these situations  
I shall acquaint myself with mindfulness.  
With this (motivation) as a cause I shall aspire  
To meet ( with teachers) or accomplish the tasks (they  
assign me).

In order to have strength for everything  
I should recall before undertaking any action  
The advice in (the chapter on) conscientiousness,  
And then joyfully rise (to the task).

Just as the wind blowing back and forth  
Controls (the movement of) a piece of cotton,  
So shall I be controlled by joy,  
And in this way accomplish everything.

12. The Thirty Seven Verses on the Practice of a Bodhisattva,  
by Thogme Zangpo

Nama Lokeshvaraya

Though he sees that in all phenomena there is no coming and going,  
He strives solely for the sake of beings:  
To the sublime teacher inseparable from Avalokiteshvara,  
the Protector of Beings,  
I pay constant homage with respectful body, speech, and mind.

The perfect buddhas - source of happiness and ultimate peace -  
Exist through having accomplished the sacred Dharma,  
And that, in turn, depends on knowing how to practice it;  
This practice of the bodhisattvas I shall therefore now explain.

1

Now that I have this great ship, a precious human life, so hard to obtain,  
I must carry myself and others across the ocean of samsara.  
To that end, to listen, reflect, and meditate  
Day and night, without distraction, is the practice of a bodhisattva.

2

In my native land waves of attachment to friends and kin surge,  
Hatred for enemies rages like fire,  
The darkness of stupidity, not caring what to adopt or avoid, thickens-  
To abandon my native land is the practice of a bodhisattva.

3

When unfavorable places are abandoned, disturbing emotions gradually  
fade;  
When there are no distractions, positive activities naturally increase;  
As awareness becomes clearer, confidence in the Dharma grows-  
To rely on solitude is the practice of a bodhisattva.



4

Close friends who have long been together will separate,  
 Wealth and possessions gained with much effort will be left behind,  
 Consciousness, a guest, will leave the hotel of the body-  
 To give up the concerns of this life is the practice of a bodhisattva.

5

In bad company, the three poisons grow stronger,  
 Listening, reflection, and meditation decline,  
 And loving-kindness and compassion vanish -  
 To avoid unsuitable friends is the practice of a bodhisattva.

6

Through reliance on a true spiritual friend one's faults will fade  
 And good qualities will grow like a waxing moon  
 To consider him even more precious  
 Than one's own body is the practice of a bodhisattva.

7

Whom can worldly gods protect  
 Themselves imprisoned in samsara?  
 To take refuge in the Three Jewels  
 Who never fail those they protect is the practice of a bodhisattva.

8

The Buddha taught that the unendurable suffering of the lower realms  
 Is the fruit of unvirtuous actions.  
 Therefore, to never act unvirtuously,  
 Even at the cost of one's life, is the practice of a bodhisattva.

9

Like dew on grass, the delights of the three worlds  
 By their very nature evaporate in an instant.  
 To strive for the supreme level of liberation,  
 Which never changes, is the practice of a bodhisattva.

10

If all the mothers who have loved me since beginningless time are suffering,  
 What is the use of my own happiness?  
 So, with the aim of liberating limitless sentient beings,

To set my mind on enlightenment is the practice of a bodhisattva.

11

All suffering without exception arises from desiring happiness for oneself,  
While perfect buddhahood is born from the thought of benefiting others.  
Therefore, to really exchange  
My own happiness for the suffering of others is the practice of a  
bodhisattva.

12

If someone driven by great desire  
Seizes all my wealth, or induces others to do so,  
To dedicate to him my body, possessions,  
And past, present, and future merit is the practice of a bodhisattva.

13

If, in return for not the slightest wrong of mine,  
Someone were to cut off even my very head,  
Through the power of compassion to take all his negative actions  
Upon myself is the practice of a bodhisattva.

14

Even if someone says all sorts of derogatory things about me  
And proclaims them throughout the universe,  
In return, out of loving-kindness,  
To extol that person's qualities is the practice of a bodhisattva.

15

Even if in the midst of a large gathering  
Someone exposes my hidden faults with insulting language,  
To bow to him respectfully,  
Regarding him as a spiritual friend, is the practice of a bodhisattva.

16

Even if one I've lovingly cared for like my own child  
Regards me as an enemy,  
To love him even more,  
As a mother loves a sick child, is the practice of a bodhisattva.

17

Even if my peers or my inferiors  
 Out of pride do all they can to debase me,  
 To respectfully consider them like my teachers  
 On the crown of my head is the practice of a bodhisattva.

18

Even when utterly destitute and constantly maligned by others,  
 Afflicted by terrible illness and prey to evil forces,  
 To still draw upon myself the suffering and wrongdoing of all beings  
 And not lose heart is the practice of a bodhisattva.

19

Though I may be famous, and revered by many,  
 And as rich as the God of Wealth himself,  
 To see that the wealth and glory of the world are without essence,  
 And to be free of arrogance, is the practice of a bodhisattva.

20

If one does not conquer one's own hatred,  
 The more one fights outer enemies, the more they will increase.  
 Therefore, with the armies of loving-kindness and compassion,  
 To tame one's own mind is the practice of a bodhisattva.

21

Sense pleasures and desirable things are like saltwater-  
 The more one tastes them, the more one's thirst increases.  
 To abandon promptly  
 All objects which arouse attachment is the practice of a bodhisattva.

22

All that appears is the work of one's own mind;  
 The nature of mind is primordially free from conceptual limitations.  
 To recognize this nature  
 And not to entertain concepts of subject and object is the practice of a  
 bodhisattva.

23

When encountering objects which please us,  
 To view them like rainbows in summer,

Not ultimately real, however beautiful they appear,  
And to relinquish craving and attachment, is the practice of a bodhisattva.

24

The various forms of suffering are like the death of one's child in a dream:

By clinging to deluded perceptions as real we exhaust ourselves.  
Therefore, when encountering unfavorable circumstances,  
To view them as illusions is the practice of a bodhisattva.

25

If those who wish for enlightenment must give away even their own bodies,  
How much more should it be true of material objects?  
Therefore, without expectation of result or reward,  
To give with generosity  
is the practice of a bodhisattva.

26

If, lacking discipline, one cannot accomplish one's own good,  
It is laughable to think of accomplishing the good of others.  
Therefore, to observe discipline  
Without samsaric motives is the practice of a bodhisattva.

27

For a bodhisattva who desires the joys of virtue,  
All who harm him are like a precious treasure.  
Therefore, to cultivate patience  
toward all,  
Without resentment, is the practice of a bodhisattva.

28

Merely for their own sake, even shravakas and pratyekabuddhas  
Make efforts like someone whose hair is on fire trying to put it out:  
Seeing this, for the sake of all beings,  
To practice diligence, the source of excellent qualities,  
is the practice of a bodhisattva.

29

Knowing that through profound insight thoroughly grounded in sustained calm

The disturbing emotions are completely conquered,  
To practice the concentration which utterly transcends  
The four formless states is the practice of a bodhisattva.

30

In the absence of wisdom, perfect enlightenment cannot be attained  
Through the other five perfections alone.

Therefore, to cultivate wisdom  
combined with skillful means  
And free from the three concepts is the practice of a bodhisattva.

31

If I do not examine my own defects,  
Though outwardly a Dharma practitioner, I may act contrary to the Dharma.  
Therefore, continuously to examine my own faults  
And give them up is the practice of a bodhisattva.

32

If, impelled by negative emotions, I relate the faults  
Of other bodhisattvas, I will myself degenerate.  
Therefore, to not talk about the faults of anyone  
Who has entered the Mahayana is the practice of a bodhisattva.

33

Offerings and respect may bring discord  
And cause listening, reflection, and meditation to decline.  
Therefore, to avoid attachment  
To the homes of friends and benefactors is the practice of a bodhisattva.

34

Harsh words disturb the minds of others  
And spoil our own bodhisattva practice.  
Therefore, to give up rough speech,  
Which others find unpleasant, is the practice of a bodhisattva.

35

When emotions become habitual, they are hard to get rid of with antidotes.  
 Therefore, with mindfulness and vigilance, to seize the weapon of the  
 antidote  
 And crush attachment and other negative emotions  
 The moment they arise is the practice of a bodhisattva.

36

In short, wherever I am, whatever I do,  
 To be continually mindful and alert,  
 Asking, "What is the state of my mind?"  
 And accomplishing the good of others is the practice of a bodhisattva.

37

Dedicating to enlightenment  
 Through wisdom purified of the three concepts  
 All merit achieved by such endeavor,  
 To remove the suffering of numberless beings, is the practice of a  
 bodhisattva.

Following the teachings of the holy beings,  
 I have arranged the points taught in the sutras, tantras, and shastras  
 As The Thirty-seven Verses on the Practice of a Bodhisattva  
 For the benefit of those who wish to train on the bodhisattva path.

Since my understanding is poor, and I have little education,  
 This is no composition to delight the learned;  
 But as it is based on the sutras and teachings of holy beings  
 I think it is genuinely the practice of the bodhisattvas.

However, it is hard for someone unintelligent like me  
 To fathom the great waves of the bodhisattvas' activities,  
 So I beg the forgiveness of the holy ones  
 For my contradictions, irrelevancies, and other mistakes.

Through the merit arising from this  
 And through the power of the sublime bodhichitta, relative and absolute,  
 May all beings become like the Lord Avalokiteshvara,  
 Who is beyond the extremes of samsara and nirvana.

For his own benefit and that of others, Thogme, a teacher of scripture and logic, composed this text at Rinchen Phug, in Ngulchu.

### 13. Aryasura's Aspirational Prayer in Seventy Stanzas

Homage to the Awakening Warrior:  
the entirely good Samantabhadra

1. Homage to the Buddhas Gone to Bliss, endowed with an accumulation of immeasurable precious qualities, who have uprooted every last poisoned tree of moral failings and who abide during the three times throughout the ten directions.
2. Homage to the Truth of Dharma that opens the wisdom-eye of beings in all three realms, that disperses the gloom of unknowing and is the means for extracting the poisonous arrow of latent tendencies.
3. Homage to the Sons of Those Gone to Bliss, the Sangha intent on virtue who never revert (to worldliness) and whose thoughts are motivated by great compassion. Unceasingly I bow my head to all who have opened the eye of their mind.
4. Whatever slight non-virtue I have committed throughout my lifetimes, or have encouraged, or rejoiced in, I lay bare before the Conquerors And pledge never to commit them again.
5. Without an exception, I rejoice in the virtue accumulated by Those Gone to Bliss, Solitary Realizers, Listeners and Conquerors' sons and in other wholesome deeds of worldly beings
6. Whatever non-virtue creatures commit confounded by venomous emotional afflictions, for them may I surely plunge alone with pleasure in the realms of hell.
7. Having satiated the world with the nectar of peaceful delight, may everyone's mind become active in virtue. May I willingly take on myself As much misery as beings may have.



8. May perfect awakening itself be produced soon in the minds of these beings. May those who have generated the pure awakening thought perfectly accomplish the collections for enlightenment.

9. By accomplishing the collections of virtue and attaining the spiritual levels, by remaining the lineage of Protectors of all three worlds and by annihilating the foes (of Dharma), may the abode of the Great Kingdom of Truth over the three worlds be attained.

10. No matter how many days there have been since the Awakened Beings became enlightened under the Bodhi-tree, I beseech those who are alive and abiding, Hereafter to cause the incomparable nectar of Truth to rain upon ongoing beings.

11. I entreat those nobly-minded ones who have completed their sublime activities for the sake of others and who are about to enter the supreme state beyond sorrow to remain for a long time acting to benefit others.

12. How ever many sentient beings there are wandering in the gloomy three worlds I shall invite them as my guests to savor the blissful nectar of extreme peace.

13. Whatever virtue has been accumulated in this way shall be dedicated totally for perfect awakening. Thus, may I never be apart for even an instant from bodhicitta - the mind intent on enlightenment.

14. Until the rank of those gone to Bliss - the basis of complete perfection - is gained, may I never be apart from the leader of the Subduers and the Awakening Warriors.

15. They are the ones who finely elucidate the path of activities for benefiting others. May I also advance, free from despondency, through every spiritual level of the Sons of the Awakened Ones.

16. May my body be complete with the physical attributes of a human and amassed with qualities worthy of praise by all creatures; may I recollect past lives, be born to an honorable family and have an attractive body.

17. Having discarded the vile action of ceasing to aid others but zealously working for my welfare alone, (aroused) by thoughts tormented with compassion may I cherish dearly all creatures without favoring one.

18. May there be not the slightest grasping in the thoughts of others at my possessions that I consider the wealth of others, but may they take and use whatever they wish like someone who never doubts his own wealth.

19. Even if someone should demand my flesh, may I offer it with pleasure in my eyes; may I always donate my limbs and so on for the welfare of all embodied beings.

20. May I, like a wish-fulfilling gem, provide all that beings desire and may I, like the wish-granting tree, completely fulfil their hopes.

21. May I spontaneously banish evil actions far away like filth and may I never breach the dam of precepts proclaimed by the supreme Subduer.

22. By abolishing concern for my body and life, may I always enjoy places of solitude; may my thoughts turn away from all gains and honor as if they were poisoned food.

23. Like a child of lowly status, I will discard arrogance, self-importance and pride toward beings and shall act to establish harmonious relations like in a gathering of kin from a noble family.

24. May I be accustomed to ethical discipline, an ornament utterly pacifying all (obscurations); stainless like the moonlight and the root of a lotus, untorn, unmixed and unsoiled.

25. Although someone against whom I have done no wrong should saw my head, splitting it into hundreds of pieces, I shall unceasingly hold him dear in my mind just as (a mother) cherishes an only son.

26. Should someone become angry with me from his heart and needlessly rob me of my life, may the unbearable and bitter fruits of his actions never arise.

27. Although anger, abuse, provocation and aggression should besiege me, may I never forsake patience but willingly take on all adversity to practice the deeds of the Conquerors' Sons.

28. Thus, may the dangling rope of doubt never sway in my mind for even an instant over the extremely profound and highly logical Dharma of the Subduer, that never before did I find.

29. May I who am born from lifetime to lifetime, by earnestly acting to benefit all beings, never fail to engage in vast virtues for even a mere moment of time.

30. Like a servant, may I accomplish all the tasks of every living being and, having accepted the burden of working for all, may sentient beings abide in happiness.

31. Since my body acts as a servant for others, even when speaking, may I be pleased to teach them Dharma and may even my thoughts constantly be empowered by the mind endeavoring to benefit others.

32. Even if I alone have to undergo misery for innumerable aeons in hell, still may I ripen sentient beings spiritually without ever becoming weary.

33. Surely, in the very process of accomplishing (the welfare of others) I actually will do this very armor of spiritually nurturing the three types of beings so that they may become disciplined.

34. May I joyfully cross without hesitation pits so filled with burning embers of fire that there is no space, so as to hear even one word of the good doctrine.

35. In abandoning being enticed by the results of all concentration and formless absorptions, but by dwelling on the Supreme Limit of Perfection, may I be accustomed purely to the bliss that arises.

36. Having mounted the horse that is calm abiding that is not obsessed, (with the warm experience of meditative absorption), may I tame the elephant of the mind that naturally roams, is most difficult to tame and ventures along the wrong path.

37. Since the supremely fine riches possessed by Rulers of Gods and Universal Emperors, being in the nature of desire are just like filth, may I never hold them in high regard.

38. There is no joy drifting through this existence similar to a burning house of iron, but being led by compassion, may I be reborn wherever it is conducive to assist others.

39. Whatever absorptions all spiritual children of Universal Protectors have mastered such as the Stance (of a Lion), the Inconceivable, the Sport of a Hero, the Various Activities,

40. The Going Bravely, the Treasure of Space and the Stainless, having attained all myself, I will bestow their bliss on the three kinds of beings, thus allowing them to enjoy their sublime accomplishments.

41. May I thoroughly and supremely perfect the ocean of craft, literature and art, and may every sentient being be wise in knowing the entire meaning of their own language.

42. Having gained the stainless, sharp and infinite intelligence distinguishing all words and meanings may I share with sentient beings the extremely profound and logical teachings.

43. To every living being without exception who does not perfectly understand Buddha's word may I finely elucidate many teachings as though inscribing letters on their minds,

44. Having surely ascended to the state of the ten fruitful powers may I actualize those practices that are the means for making the purpose of living beings completely worthwhile.

45. Just as all prayers of the Subduers are a cause for helping sentient beings, so too may I work constantly to attain the perfection of prayer.

46. By immediately suppressing as they arise all overwhelming masses of foe-like emotional afflictions and, not wavering from mental activities, may I remain only to be of benefit on earth.

47. By having perfectly realized these phenomena to be like illusions, mirages and magical emanations and having discarded the mesh of conceptions may I be of benefit throughout the three worlds.
48. Just as fathers especially cherish an only son, so will I continuously remain in meditation on pure love for every ongoing being by removing all stains (of aggression).
49. Just as mothers out of affection for an ailing son, in taking his burden on themselves, (suffer) accordingly, so will I work to enhance my compassion towards each and every ongoing sentient being.
50. When I see success delighting others may I, in especially generating much pleasure, remain meditating on joyfulness as if my only dear son were happy.
51. Having dispensed with anger and attachment towards sentient beings that correspondingly cause me to harm or to favor them, may I accomplish the tasks of all three worlds like completing one's work for one's son.
52. Having realized the powers, heightened awarenesses, analytical knowledges, mystical spells and the doors to liberation may I simultaneously be of benefit to sentient beings throughout the immeasurable expanse of the universe.
53. Whatever countries where the name of "Buddha" has not entered the ear, there may I act according to the deeds of Buddha through imparting his various methods.
54. Until the sun, the teacher of the three worlds, rises here in this universe, may I, like the sun, dispel the darkness (of ignorance) from each and every embodied being.
55. Whatever beings there are whose thoughts are saturated with evil and who have been rejected by many beings Gone to Bliss, may they be tamed by relying upon the sphere of action of my speech.
56. So that I may serve everyone in the universe I will be loving like a relative, kind like a mother and, like a father, shall give beneficial advice.

57. Even by merely recollecting my name may all beings immediately be protected from fear and may all misery of the three worlds be dispelled.
58. May I be a vase of goodness and medicine against illness for people who are destitute in hundreds of ways. May I also provide a cool pool of nectar continuously for the masses of hungry spirits.
59. May I be warmth for the cold hells and cause rain with sweet breezes to shower on the hot. As well, may I placate every harm in the very low realms of bad migration.
60. Even by beings merely remembering me may I be a true friend to those who face destitution, solid armor for those stricken by rain of arrows and cooling water from those afflicted by fire.
61. When beings remember me may I be an opponent for the venom of defilements, a firm bridge over the torrent of the three worlds, and may I bar the door to unfortunate destinies.
62. May even merely recollecting my name, be enough to prevent all beings from falling into the abyss of worldly existence. May I become the foundation of the stairway leading them to the pinnacle of pure peace.
63. Even if someone out of anger should recall my name for just an instant of time, may he never plunge into bad destinies and may he surely accomplish perfect Buddhahood.
64. May my excellences, stainless like moonlight, bring happiness throughout the whole universe; may I work to generate immeasurable delight for others even by merely breathing.
65. Having attained perfect awakening itself where all is fully complete may I also settle all ongoing beings in that ultimate awakening itself.
66. At that time, may not even slightly faulty actions arise in the minds of whoever (may be my disciples). May they always help other creatures and remain on the path of ten virtues.

67. May the realms of bad migration never be seen even in dreams of anyone fitting (to be my disciple) and may the far reaches of places of bad destiny be pleasurable like the realms of celestial beings.

68. As long as anyone remains in the midst of the ocean of the three worlds' non-virtues, may I remain in this world for them.

69. When I have enacted my passing into the state Beyond Sorrow may my teachings not become disordered and may none of my followers be swayed for even a moment by the dangling rope of doubt.

70. Thus by delighting in the performance of the Conquerors' Children, may whatever virtues I have gathered all be shared by each and every living being without exception.

Colophon: This venerable master "whose voice benefits others, a man of solitude" has realized all scriptures. Once on entering the midst of a forest he was attacked by a tiger and, overwhelmed with compassion, composed the Aspirational Prayer in 70 Stanzas to accomplish the welfare of living beings.

The Indian abbot Dharma-Shri-prabha and the Tibetan translator Bande (the monk) Pal-gyi Lhun-po'I-de have translated, checked and settled (the text into Tibetan from Sanskrit).

14. On the Bodhisatta Vow, by Chandragomin

Even a cow knows how to take care of himself,  
to eat a few clumps of grass  
he easily comes across

Even the beast can merrily drink  
from a pool of water he finds  
as bitter thirst torments him

But think now what it is  
to put your whole heart  
into taking care of others;  
This is glory,  
This is a park of pleasure,  
This is the ultimate.

The Sun  
climbs aboard his fantastic chariot,  
flies across the sky,  
and lights up all the world.

The Earth  
raises up his mighty arms,  
bears the load,  
holds up all mankind.

And so is the way of those great beings  
who wish nothing for themselves,

Their lives devoted  
to a single song:  
the well-being and the happiness  
of every living thing.



## 15. Three Bodhicitta Poems, by Jason Espada

at once  
it is the sun and moon  
the sun and the rain  
that brings everything out beautifully

it's balm,  
and nectar

it's food,  
water,  
and medicine

it is the embrace  
of a mother  
or a wife

the encouraging voice of an old friend,

there is no end to bodhicitta

it is a candle  
a scripture,

it's clearing the ground to build a house,  
or a library, or a school

clearing the path so we can walk  
clearing away clouds so we can see

there's no end to this

it's poetry-  
showing all good things

and it's hope restored,  
mistakes forgotten,

gotten over, gotten past

it's freedom,  
and welcoming arms to someone  
learning to walk

it's the joy that speeds healing  
and it's miracles in abundance

it is paradise itself  
and it's every small, kind act  
containing worlds

Tell me, Who can speak of this fully?  
We all can

this is our birthright,  
our very nature wanting to be born,  
it's the sun of wisdom and compassion inseparable

drawing all things together  
leaving nothing out  
no one, no teaching,  
no person or place or time

it is universal  
and personal  
our teacher  
our very self  
our Lord  
and worthy of every praise

it is selfless prayer  
wonder of wonders- actually praying itself  
it is self existing - just like this...

this goes beyond

anything we can say about it  
and yet, it's somehow still

always fully present

awakening, actualizing  
from life, bringing forth life,  
love itself  
our true life

this essential sun  
beyond words and the ground of all words  
saying, if we were to put words to it,  
aah, may all beings be happy...

and we all must find a way to speak,  
to reply,

because of this  
to say what's in us

how will we live?

this says  
“dedicate yourself to the ultimate purpose of all beings”

and, “Don't waste time” “Everyday, every hour is precious”

this says, “here- sweeten your disposition”

and, “see time”,

and, “give yourself”

how will we reply?  
how will we live?

just this- for me, this is the one point containing all

for me, this is the golden road, with heaven worlds all around

where all benefit, in some way  
this, is the most satisfying path,

regardless of struggle, the most fulfilling  
regardless of how hard it is to say, it's the biggest joy,  
the brightest joy

this is what is reliable  
for me, the safe haven,  
it is breath, it is sight...

for me, it is giving,  
and knowing even now  
the pleasure of having its gift received

this is love  
and this will, purpose, of human life, lived to the fullest-  
oh, many voices, many hearts celebrate this with me now

(What is bodhicitta?)

Bodhicitta is our own true nature,  
of wisdom and compassion inseparable...)

how to speak of this?

it's the rain that nourishes growing things  
it's the sun that makes everything flourish  
it's the embrace of a mother,  
or a wife,  
melting troubles away

bodhicitta  
it's like the encouraging voice of an old friend

it's selfless prayer, naturally  
having a purpose past what we see now

it is a word, it is magic,

parting clouds so we can see,  
or clearing a path

or building a house, or a library, or a school

this one source everywhere  
becomes a hospital, and doctors, and medicine

in lost times, it is inspiration

this is pure light  
this is warm touch  
and it is clarity, and strength

it reaches over every ocean  
over every rocky climb  
through whatever barred gates  
past any disbelieving mind  
giving life

who can ever speak of this,  
and what can compare to this?  
there is no end, from what I can see  
and all day, my heart sings that this is in me

What can compare to this?

it's like a hero,  
calling captives out of their dungeon  
it's like a fresh morning  
after one was given up for dead  
(astonishment! disbelief! and then, a great wave  
moving through everything,  
of praise, and generosity...)

it's like fragrance, or memory, or dream that speeds healing  
it is a true word spoken when that's needed  
it is direction, and food, and gifts appearing in our hands to give,  
it is learning, and giving to match someone's need

it is song, universal language,  
universal and for all times currency

and a true friend,  
it's meeting our own true nature  
what can compare to this?

so then, it is ethics, and wisdom,  
meditation,  
patience, and effort,  
all, natural, and effortless in a way

it is all the forms created to express one intent  
and, it is all the names given,  
it is tradition and all our seeing past form and tradition

today I write this because it's the only thing I can think of that draws all  
things to itself  
the only thing I can think of that gives everything else some place in the  
world  
all the teachings, all the differences, all the wonder, all the pain

this- is the ultimate name the one thing most worth praising  
this- is the activity of all buddhas,  
the very nature of all heroes, and heroines,  
angels and saviors

with my little notes at home, today, this is all I wanted to write

it's an elixir  
reviving the dead

a teacher  
filling your mind with great things

it's a compass

a key

or a lock when you need a lock

it's an oar when you need an oar

an umbrella when you need one

a net holding back poisonous creatures

a shield  
first into battle

a word spoken  
and not just any word  
but just the word you need to hear,  
a magic word...

it's encouragement  
fresh life  
inspiration to continue your journey  
with wisdom,  
with clear eyes  
and with joy

it's food  
it's big love...

this is music  
and grace

and love's power

love pouring itself

it's the friendliness you meet  
and it's food

it's simplicity itself-  
good things

for now,

and for generations to come

everything contributes to the power of this practice

it can be like  
the first rain after a blazing summer

or it can be like a lion's heart  
a warrior who's never known fear...

it's setting things in order

it's saying your name  
calling your name  
(not like all the others-  
your true name)

the graver the danger  
the stronger the will to protect

the more something is worth  
the greater the will to give

this is peace, and action, as one

moving worlds  
not fading  
giving to be given  
awakened in teachers  
to be awakened in me  
the fullness of love, given  
to be awakened in you  
and on and on...

what words are there to express this...?

look!  
this is you



this is for you

## 16. Nine Similes on Buddha-Nature, by Maitreya

The heart of buddha abides in the hollow of delusions.  
It can be understood by these images:

a buddha inside a muddy lotus,  
the honey of a bee,  
grain inside its husk,  
gold in a sewer,  
treasure under the earth,  
the germ within a seed,  
a statue wrapped in filthy rags,  
an emperor in an ugly hag's womb,  
and an icon covered with slime.

Thus does the essence of buddhahood abide within all beings,  
obstructed by the stains of transient delusions.

As for the transient delusions,  
they are likened to the muddy lotus, the bee, the husk,  
the sewer, the earth, the seed, the rags,  
the woman afflicted by the flames of misery,  
and the slime.

The Buddha within, the Supreme Sphere of Natural Perfection,  
is likened to the buddha, the honey, the grain, the gold,  
the treasure, the germ of the seed, the statue,  
the emperor, and the precious icon.

When a man with stainless clairvoyance  
sees a buddha radiant with a thousand signs sitting inside a muddy lotus,  
he removes him from that lotus.

Likewise, the Ones Thus Gone, possessing the buddha-eye,  
see truth itself in every being, even those in the deepest hell;  
out of compassion, those unobstructed lords work until time's end  
to free all from aberration.

When a man with stainless clairvoyance

sees a buddha inside a dirty lotus, he cuts down that lotus.  
Likewise, the accomplished ones see that all beings have buddha-essence obscured by stain of attachment and aversion,  
and, out of compassion, they work to destroy those obscurations.

When an intelligent beekeeper with ambitious eyes sees honey surrounded by a swarm of bees,  
he tries to separate the bees from the honey.  
Likewise, the maharishis, the great seers, being omniscient,  
see the honey-like essence of buddhahood  
and work to destroy totally its bee-like obstacles.  
That ambitious man disperses those billions of bees  
and then uses the honey as he wishes.  
Likewise, when one eliminates the bee-like delusions surrounding  
the honey-like primordial awareness,  
one becomes a king of sages.

One cannot eat a grain which still lies in its husk;  
he who wishes to eat a grain removes it from its husk.  
Likewise, the stains of mental aberration are mixed with the buddha in beings,  
and for as long as that buddha is not separated from those stains, for that long its buddha-activity does not manifest in the triple world.  
Rice or wheat not removed from its husk  
and not cleansed of its bristles  
is not fit to be used as food by men;  
similarly, as long as the lord or reality abiding within all beings  
is not freed from the husk and bristles of mental distortion,  
that long one cannot give the taste of blissful truth  
to beings tormented by the hunger of confusion.

When a god with the eye of clairvoyance  
sees gold which has fallen from a wandering man's pockets  
into a foul and filthy place – gold which for centuries has lain waste –  
he tells someone just where that gold is;  
he tells them to clean that precious substance and to make jewelry from it.  
Likewise, the wise see the excellent in beings,  
but see that that excellence is sinking in the filthy sewers of delusion;  
they release the rains of the holy Dharma unto those beings,  
in order to wash away the slime of their delusions.

When a god sees gold which has fallen into a foul and filthy place,  
he attempts to show that supreme substance to men so that it may be  
cleansed and utilized.

Likewise, the victorious ones see that the jewel-like buddha-essence  
possessed by all beings  
has fallen into the sewers of delusion,  
and they point out reality to those living,  
so that it may be purified.

Under the floor of some poor man lies an uncorroded treasure,  
but because he does not know of its existence  
he does not say that he is rich.

Similarly, inside one's mind lies truth itself, firm and unfading,  
yet, because beings see it not, they experience a constant stream of misery.  
The pauper with a treasure buried under his shack  
does not say that he has a treasure, for he knows it not;  
likewise, the treasure of truth lies within the house of the mind,  
yet we live impoverished through lack of it.

Therefore the seers take a pure birth into the world, so that it may be known.

From the fertile germ found within a banyan's seed  
comes a sprout, which, if planted and tended, gradually produces a kingly  
tree.

Likewise, within the seed of beings' ignorance is the precious germ of  
perfection,  
and by relying upon that germ the state of a king of wise men is produced.  
With the conditions of water, sun, air, earth, time, and space,  
the germ inside a banana or mango seed eventually develops into a tree;  
similarly, given the proper conditions,  
the sprouting germ of innate buddhahood, which abides in the shell of  
delusion,  
gradually produces the vision of reality.

And when a god sees a buddha statue made of gems  
covered in stinking rags and lying on the roadside,  
he speaks of it to a pilgrim, to salvage it.

Likewise, those with unobstructed vision see  
that the very substance of buddha exists even in animals  
but is wrapped in the rags of mental aberration,  
and teach all the various spiritual methods so that it may be salvaged.

When one with the eye of clairvoyance sees a precious buddha statue  
 wrapped in rags and lying on the roadside,  
 he shows it to man, to salvage it.

Similarly, the cosmic conquerors have seen that  
 the seed of perfection exists even in animals,  
 but lies on the roadside of worldliness,  
 wrapped in the stinking rags of mental distortion,  
 and teach the Dharma, to release it.

A friendless hag, living in a slum, is carrying in her womb  
 one who is destined to become an emperor,  
 but she does not announce that in her womb is an emperor,  
 for she knows is not.

Similarly, in the slums of the worldly realms  
 live impure beings, who, like that hag  
 carry within themselves the stainless seed  
 which will become their own protector.

Although that hag carries an emperor in her womb,  
 she is clothed in tattered rags, is hideous,  
 lives in a slum, and experiences every form of suffering.  
 Likewise, although we all carry our own protector within,  
 we think that we are helpless, and consequently  
 out of the power of mental delusion we live  
 in confusion, propelled by misery and turmoil.

When someone sees a precious icon of pure gold, covered with slime,  
 he, knowing of the gold within, clears away the covering of filth.

Similarly, the all-seeing ones perceive that  
 our truth nature, clear light, is stained,  
 but that these stains are transient.

These wish-fulfilling gems amongst men  
 inspire beings to purify their obscurations and attain full enlightenment.  
 The wise one who knows that inside the slime  
 is a beautiful icon, made of stainless, radiant gold,  
 removes that slime.

Just so, the omniscient ones know of the mind of peace,  
 likened to gold,  
 and, by demonstrating the path to knowledge, they disperse  
 and purify the obstacles obstructing it.

Thus it is, that, like a buddha in a dirty lotus,  
 the honey of a bee, grain in its husk, gold in a sewer,  
 treasure under the earth, the germ within a seed,  
 a statue in filthy rags, an emperor in an ugly hag's womb, and an icon  
 covered in slime,  
 the ultimate nature of mind, stainless and unobstructed,  
 abides in the coverings of worldly thoughts,  
 yet is unmixed with and unhindered by them.

By these nine similes are shown nine delusions:  
 attachment, aversion, narrow-mindedness,  
 obsession, instinctual ignorance, and  
 the stains abandoned by the paths of vision, meditation, impurity, and purity.  
 Thus one travels to the end of the millions of mental distortions.

It is pleasant to see a fresh lotus,  
 but a faded and rotting lotus is not pleasing;  
 pleasure gained through attachment is the same.  
 When a bee becomes angry, it stings;  
 when anger arises it brings misery to the mind.  
 Obsession is likened to filth and slime,  
 for its cause is based upon lustful greed.  
 A hidden treasure cannot be used, for its existence is unknown;  
 the self-originated nature of beings, buried  
 in the earth of instinctual ignorance, lies ignored.

The gradual growth of a sprout cracks open the shell encompassing it;  
 just so, the growth resulting from perception of ultimate truth  
 destroys the objects to be abandoned by the path of vision.  
 The heart of destructive views is related to the path of a high one,  
 the negativities destroyed by the wisdom of the path of meditation,  
 are likened to tattered rags.  
 The stains abandoned by the first of the seven of the ten levels of a  
 bodhisattva  
 are likened to the ugly hag's womb;  
 the baby leaving that womb is likened to the ripening of nonconceptual  
 wisdom.  
 The stains dealt with on the three pure levels  
 should be understood as the covering of slime.  
 Thus do the nine delusions destroyed by a great being's diamond samadhi

resemble the nine examples.

The ultimate truth that is discovered within, the self-born essence,  
is an object found only by the bold;  
Just as the light of the sun is not seen by those without eyes,  
although it shines equally on all.  
There is nothing to be eliminated from this,  
nor is there anything to add.  
It is the very perfection seen by a perfect one,  
and when it is perfectly seen,  
there is perfect liberation.

17. From The Prayer of the Lord of Sutras, Holy Golden Light

By the sound of the great drum  
of the Holy Golden Light,  
in these three worlds,  
the three thousands of worlds,  
May the sufferings of cruel migrations,  
the sufferings of the Lord of Death's domain,  
and the sufferings of privation be brought to an end.

By the thunder of that mighty drum  
May all want in the world be ended,  
and just as the Lords of Subduers are without fear,  
their fears allayed,  
so too may all sentient beings be without fear,  
parted from their fears.  
Just as the All-knowing Able Lords,  
though dwelling within the cycles of existence,  
possess all holy qualities,  
so too may the meditative concentrations of all beings  
possess the qualities of the Harmonies of Enlightenment  
and may those qualities become oceans of qualities.

By the thunder of that mighty drum,  
May all beings come to possess the voice of Brahma,  
May they attain the most blessed Enlightenment of the Buddhas,  
May they turn the virtuous Wheel of Doctrine,  
May they live for unimaginable eons,  
May they teach the way for the welfare of wanderers,  
May they relieve suffering and destroy afflictions,  
and may they extinguish desire, hatred and delusion.

May those beings who abide in places of tortured existence,  
those whose bodies and bones are burning in flames of pain,

May they hear the beating of the drum  
and may they cry, 'I bow to you, the Buddhas.'  
May all beings remember their births  
in hundreds of lives,



in thousands of lives,  
 in tens of millions of lives.  
 May they be ever mindful of the Lords of Sages  
 and may they heed their vast words.

By the thunder of that mighty drum  
 May all beings find constant companionship in the Buddhas,  
 May they abandon actions of ill deed,  
 May they practice those of good.

May all the suffering  
 of all that lives  
 in all the lands of all the worlds  
 be forever stilled,  
 And those creatures  
 crippled in their limbs,,  
 impaired of sense,  
 all be made whole.

May those afflicted with sickness,  
 weak and frail,  
 without refuge in the ten regions,  
 all swiftly be relieved of their ills,  
 and be renewed in their organs and strength.

May those threatened with death by rulers and thieves,  
 those who lie at the mercy of a hundred different miseries,  
 those living beings besieged and suffering  
 all be freed  
 from their hundreds of unendurable fears.

And those tortured by bonds,  
 bound and beaten,  
 those who live amid manifold poverty,  
 oppressed by many thousands of afflictions,  
 incurring all manner of misery  
 and terrors which they cannot bear,

May they be released from their bonds,  
 May the scourged be delivered from their beatings,

May the condemned have life,  
and the troubled be unafraid.

May those who hurt with hunger and thirst  
partake of a feast;  
May the blind see a myriad of shapes,  
the deaf hear a symphony of sounds,  
the naked be clothed,  
and the poor find a treasure.

May all have the pleasure  
of possessing many precious jewels;  
May none be tormented by feelings of pain;  
May they all be fair of face and figure,  
their bodies subdued,  
their minds abounding with unremitting bliss.

By the mere thought,  
May their wishes for merit and riches,  
food and drink,  
at once be made manifest.

May their longings for the melodies of lute and drum,  
for streams, lakes, and ponds,  
pools full of golden lotus and utpala,  
their dreams of clothes and wealth,  
pearls, gems, exquisite golden ornaments,  
and lapis lazuli  
all be instantly be fulfilled.

May there not arise  
an anguished cry  
in any world.  
May none know unhappiness,  
May they all be beautiful,  
and may they be a light for one another.

Whatever is held most high by humanity  
May it be theirs simply through thought.  
May all their desires

immediately upon conception  
 be altogether realized  
 as the fruit of their merit.

Throughout the three times,  
 may they have incense and garlands,  
 scented oils, aromatic powders,  
 variegated flowers, and flowering trees.  
 May they take them and  
 May they be happy.

May they worship in the ten directions  
 all the inconceivable Ones Gone Thus,  
 the Bodhisattvas,  
 the Hearers,  
 and the immaculate, pure teachings of Dharma.

May migrators shun all that is unworthy,  
 pass beyond the eight states of unrest,  
 and attain crowning, kingly leisure.

May all beings always have the Buddhas at their side;  
 May they always be born into noble families  
 May their affluence and fortune flourish  
 May they be richly adorned for endless eons  
 with praise and fame,  
 and with lovely, radiant bodies.

May they be brave  
 May they be strong  
 May they be wise and lucid

May they ever strive for Enlightenment  
 May they engage in the Six Perfections  
 May they behold in the ten quarters  
 the Buddhas beatifically seated  
 upon thrones of precious lapis lazuli  
 before the supremely sanctified Tree of Enlightenment,  
 and there may they hear  
 the Truth revealed.

18. From the Noble Vajra Banner of Victory Sutra

That suffering,  
 that mass of suffering,  
 the suffering of all sentient beings  
 and their various obstructions  
 and hindering actions  
 because of which they do not see the Buddhas  
 nor do they hear the Dharma  
 nor know the Sangha,  
 do I now take upon this  
 my own body –  
 a bundle of pain  
 accumulated through three defiled actions.

The suffering of those beings  
 who are born in hell,  
 who dwell in realms of cruel migrations –  
 may death take them beyond such migrations –  
 That awesome mass of suffering do I assume,  
 to that end I strive,  
 in that end I take joy,  
 from that end I shall not turn away  
 nor shall I run away  
 nor towards that end shall I be dismayed  
 or afraid  
 or draw back  
 or be apathetic

If you question, why?  
 It is because I bear the burden of all that lives.

This is not out of desire for my own pleasure,  
 but that I have vowed to free all sentient beings  
 and thus to fully unfold them.  
 I shall free all wandering beings:  
 free them from the desolation of being born,  
 from the desolation of old age,

and of disease;  
 free them from the desolation of the rounds of birth and death,  
 from the desolation of all bad migrations  
 and of never-ending unrest;  
 free them from the desolation of all that is conditioned,  
 of all obscuring views;  
 from the desolation of the depletion of virtuous actions,  
 and of unknowing arising from the depths.

From all shall I liberate all:  
 all those creatures entangled in the nets of their own desires,  
 shrouded in veils of ignorance,  
 clinging to their worlds of conditioned-being,  
 in their final moments afraid;  
 all those creatures plunged into the depths of pain,  
 subsisting in prisons of repeating patterns of existence,  
 without wisdom,  
 without honor in their words,  
 in doubt,  
 irresolute,  
 knowing only sadness;  
 unknowing of dependent-arising,  
 alone,  
 swept-round in whirlpools of afflicted minds and subjugated lives,  
 all these creatures shall I establish  
 in the kingdom of sovereign wisdom.

My struggle is not for liberation for myself alone,  
 but by the mind of very omniscience  
 shall I unbind all others  
 from the wheel of existence,  
 The ever-turning wheel  
 from which it is so hard to be freed.  
 I shall deliver them out of the awful abyss,  
 save them from all harm,  
 rescue them from the torrent  
 of their own swirling minds;  
 Upon myself do I rest the load of sorrow  
 of all of them.

It is my pleasure  
 to suffer the pain  
 of each and every tortured existence  
 In all ,  
 however many realms of existence,  
 I shall not defraud all the world  
 of my roots of virtue.  
 I shall strive to abide  
 in even a single bad migration,  
 I shall,  
 without exception,  
 abide in all bad migrations  
 in all the realms of existence  
 for the sake of liberating living beings.

If you question why –  
 is it not reasonable for but one being to suffer  
 rather than all beings  
 fall to realms of ruin?

I, myself,  
 here let my blood  
 that I might redeem  
 all wandering beings  
 from the wilderness of the Lord of Death's domain,  
 from places of birth as animal,  
 and as hell-being.  
 With this very body  
 shall I endure all suffering aggregates of feeling  
 for the sake of all sentient beings.  
 I take joy in reaffirming  
 the trustworthy truth of my proclamation:  
 'I am the yoke-bearing nape  
 of all sentient beings  
 for the sake of all sentient beings.'  
 I shall not forsake even one sentient being.

If you question why –  
 with all that lives as my object

I shall engender  
 the very mind of Omniscience itself.  
 that is,  
 not for my own pleasure,  
 but that I may altogether liberate all living beings  
 have I wholly set forth  
 towards unsurpassed, perfect,  
 complete enlightenment.

Thus, whenever and for however long  
 all beings are attaining great happiness,  
 from happiness never before known  
 up to the ecstasies of very Omniscience,  
 shall I wholly dedicate my roots of virtue:  
 dedicate them that I may be  
 a leader drawing others along,  
 a bearer of a lamp,  
 a guide for those on their journey to peace,  
 provisioner for those  
 on their journey towards leisure;  
 dedicate them that I may be skilled in methods  
 and wise in meanings;  
 that I may abide on the furthestmost shore  
 having navigated the seas of cyclic existence  
 in the wisdom-ship of All-knowing;  
 that I may be a master of pure dedication,  
 and a teacher pointing the way  
 to transcendence.

I shall in every way  
 cultivate the roots of virtue  
 for the sake of every living thing.  
 I shall totally dedicate these roots of virtue:  
 dedicate them that I may  
 liberate all sentient beings,  
 that I may be known to all,  
 and free all sentient beings;  
 that I may care for them,  
 spiritually mature them,

fulfill the needs,  
and dispel the doubts of all sentient beings.

I am like the sun;  
I depend upon no other.  
I shall not surrender  
the Bodhisattva's armor to another;  
indeed, I shall eliminate the very need for others.

I shall not pause from effort  
to protect but even one being  
and as one, all,  
all living beings.  
I shall not cease from utter devotion  
to assuage all suffering;  
I shall not settle for trifling roots of virtue;  
I shall know no peace  
with less  
than all-consuming dedication.



## 19. The Lam Rim Dedication Prayer

From my two collections, vast as space, that I have amassed  
 From working with effort at this practice for a great length of time,  
 May I become the chief leading Buddha for all those  
 Whose mind's wisdom eye is blinded by ignorance.

Even if I do not reach this state, may I be held  
 In your loving compassion for all my lives, Manjushri  
 May I find the best of complete graded paths of the teachings  
 And may I please all the Buddhas by practicing.

Using skillful means drawn by the strong force of compassion,  
 May I clear the darkness from the minds of all beings  
 With the points of the path as I have discerned them:  
 May I uphold Buddha's teachings for a very long time.

With my heart going out with great compassion  
 In whatever direction the most precious teachings  
 Have not yet spread, or once spread have declined,  
 May I expose this treasure of happiness and aid.

May the minds of those who wish for Liberation  
 be granted bounteous peace.  
 And the Buddha's deeds be nourished for a long time  
 By even this Graded Course to Enlightenment completed due to  
 The wondrous virtuous conduct of the Buddhas and their Sons.

May all human and non-human beings who eliminate adversity  
 And make things conducive for practicing the excellent paths  
 Never be parted in any of their lives  
 From the purest path praised by the Buddhas.

Whenever someone makes effort to act  
 In accordance with the ten-fold Mahayana virtuous practices  
 May he always be assisted by the mighty ones  
 And may oceans of prosperity spread everywhere.

## 20. No place I'd rather be

In good times,  
hard times,  
and the worst of times,  
there is no place I'd rather be  
than *right there*

If you ask me why,  
it is because,  
by the power of love,  
I can share the joy with you, and make it more  
I can help to make the pain less,  
and I can offer happiness

That is why,  
through it all,  
and when things get tough,  
and even,  
or *especially* in the worst of times  
in the worst of worlds,  
there is no place that I would rather be

If this were the only world  
where there is both happiness and suffering,  
still, I would choose just this one  
to be with you

By being here together,  
we can make the way better for one another  
Don't you see?  
That means more  
than anything else to me

For this very reason,  
it's worth every effort

whatever we need to go through,  
it is, all of it, then,  
*completely* worthwhile

Giving of ourselves,  
Measured next to this world's pleasures –  
there is no comparison, really  
People don't know of this, or else they don't feel capable,  
and so they hide  
or run to small pleasures  
that disappear even in the moment and are gone

But because we can be light for one another,  
make each other's trials that much less,  
and offer food, and shelter  
even for future times,  
through love,  
there is no place that I would rather be  
than right here

This thought  
strengthens me in hundreds of ways

If we only get one song,  
and that song is our life,  
then let this be my song

Let everything else be done, or left undone,  
no matter –  
but just this, to aim to care for you  
in the best of ways -  
this brings life,  
freshness that does not fade

Every other gain and loss,  
no matter -  
but just this

of all worlds, of all paths,  
to be with you,  
and to offer you my hand,  
for your whole life  
oh, the joy of this!

## 21. Dedication Prayers, by Jason Espada, with Traditional Prayers

By this merit,  
 gathered together with all the virtue,  
 of all the ten-directions and the three times  
 Buddhas and Bodhisattvas,  
 Saints and Sages,  
 Realized Beings,  
 Lamas, Monks and Nuns,  
 Yogis and Yoginis,  
 Contemplatives of all Traditions, and excellent practitioners,

gathered together with all the merit and good wishes  
 of family, friends,  
 and noble, kind hearted people everywhere,

by the merit and positive energy of all the good that exists,

by all the virtue of the Ultimate Nature,

By all this merit,  
 May the benefit of beings everywhere effortlessly arise:  
 May all beings benefit.  
 May all beings have happiness and causes of health and happiness.

May this bring healing wherever it is needed.  
 May this bring about the firm establishment of true health and happiness for  
 us all.

By this merit, may all those who are unhappy in any way,  
 (confused, angry, anxious, afraid, attached, sad or depressed,  
 with distorted views),  
 instantly be completely freed from those states.  
 May they be comforted,  
 and may they have perfect peace, wisdom, strength and lasting joy

By the virtue of this practice, by all this merit,  
 may we all be completely free from all illness, spirit harm,

and from all of the hallucinated afflictive emotions forever  
 May we all be completely free from all samsaric states forever  
 May all beings completely realize the Dharmakaya

May this be the medicine that frees everyone from suffering  
 (a prayer by the Noble Spiritual Friend Lama Zopa Rinpoche)

By this merit, may all those who are suffering from pain or illness  
 immediately be totally freed from that pain,  
 may they immediately be completely healed,  
 and may they be firmly established in true and lasting health and happiness  
 well being and strength,  
 comfort and ease

By all this merit,  
 may all those who want to go on retreat  
 have the opportunity to do so without delay;  
 may they all have the resources they need,  
 may they find all suitable conditions,  
 and may their retreat go exceedingly well  
 may they have all excellent realizations

By all this merit,  
 May health increase everywhere  
 May ethics, and meditation and wisdom increase  
 May loving kindness and compassion increase, and  
 May peace and harmony increase everywhere

By all this merit,  
 may all monasteries, monks, nuns, and lay practitioners,  
 Dharma Centers, and social service centers  
 have everything they need to serve beings most effectively  
 May monastics and laity the everywhere all keep completely pure ethics,  
 develop the supreme good heart, and wisdom,  
 and may all their good works flourish forever

By all this merit,  
 may all beings have all they need in their lives  
 May those who need a job find a job

May those who need a place to live find a place to live  
 May those who need food and drink find good food and drink  
 May those who need a friend find a friend

By all this virtue,  
 May we all have everything we need to be truly happy

By all this merit,  
 May everything we see, hear, think about and dream be auspicious

By all this merit, may all the pure positive wishes we have for each other  
 be completely fulfilled,  
 instantly, and effortlessly,  
 just as in a Pure Land

(the following two prayers I have heard and admired from Lama Zopa Rinpoche)

May those I hear about that are sick immediately be healed

May all those who have come to my attention  
 who have any illness,  
 or who are unhappy, or in need in any way  
 be blessed  
 May they be healed  
 May they all benefit  
 May they all have happiness  
 and the all the completely actualized causes of health and happiness

and

May those I have heard about who have passed away be reborn in a Pure  
 Land, without taking birth any place else

May their families be comforted  
 May they all know blessed peace

By all this merit,  
 May those I hear about who are experiencing difficulties

be free from those difficulties,  
and may all fortunate circumstances come to them right away

May the supreme jewel, bodhicitta  
arise where it has not yet arisen  
Where it has arisen, may it not diminish  
May it ever grow and flourish

By the merit of this practice,  
gathered together with all the virtue,  
of all the ten-directions and the three times  
Buddhas and Bodhisattvas,  
Saints and Sages,  
Realized Beings,  
Lamas, Monks and Nuns,  
Yogis and Yoginis,  
Contemplatives of all Traditions, and excellent practitioners,

gathered together with all the merit and good wishes  
of family, friends,  
and noble, kind hearted people everywhere,

by the virtue and positive energy of all the good that exists,  
by all the merit of the Ultimate Nature

May warfare cease,  
may all injury be healed,  
and all danger pacified

May we all produce the conditions  
for countless generations, starting now,  
to experience genuine peace

May our intentions equally penetrate  
every being and place  
with the true merit of Buddha's Way.

without grasping or clinging to anything at all,  
may it be this way



By all this merit,  
 may all those to whom I am connected  
 by good or bad karma,  
 have every happiness  
 May they be free of all suffering  
 and receive every joy, and all good fortune,  
 May they all have good health, wisdom,  
 long life,  
 well being, and strength,  
 comfort and ease

May all the prayers of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas  
 be completely realized now  
 and may all of my prayers succeed immediately

By this virtue,  
 May those who are in need in any way whatsoever  
 receive every benefit  
 May all have happiness  
 and all the actualized complete causes of health and happiness

{at this point, a review of the names and circumstances of those particular  
 individuals that you wish to pray for can be inserted here}

By all this virtue,  
 May those who are in need in any way whatsoever  
 receive every benefit  
 May all have happiness  
 and all the fully actualized complete causes of health and happiness

By this merit,  
 In my mind, may I not withhold any gift whatsoever  
 from any being in any place,  
 wishing them all a great abundance of joys!

By all the limitless good that exists,  
 may all the needs of all living beings everywhere be completely fulfilled

By all this merit, for every one of us,

when this life is over, may we each be born immediately in a Pure Land,  
and in all our lives

May we never be separate from qualified teachers,  
and from conducive environments, with all the supportive conditions for  
continuing our practice of the Dharma

By all this virtue

May I attain the complete realization of all practice  
and bring all others to that same state

May we all individually attain the complete realization of our practice,  
genuine happiness, health and peace, and all good things,  
wisdom, compassion, and ability

By all this merit,

May all holy teachers live long, and guide us until samsara ends.  
And may there be peace and joy in all the world.

## 22. Dedication Prayers, by Lama Zopa Rinpoche\_I

Due to all the past, present, and future merits collected by me and the merits of the three times collected by all the buddhas, bodhisattvas, and other sentient beings, may any sentient being just by seeing me, touching me, talking about me, remembering me, or dreaming about me never ever be reborn in the lower realms from that time forward. May they immediately be liberated from all disease, spirit harms, negative karma, and defilements.

May anyone who sees me, touches me, talks about me, or remembers me immediately be cured of cancer, AIDS, coma, arthritis, migraine, and other heavy diseases. May those possessed by spirits be immediately released from the harm of those spirits. May anyone who is dying immediately stop experiencing terrifying emotions and karmic appearances and feel incredible bliss in their heart. May they then be born in a pure land of Buddha, where there is no suffering of rebirth, old age, sickness, or emotional problems. Totally free from all suffering and its causes, may they become enlightened there.

### 23. Dedication Prayers, by Lama Zopa Rinpoche \_II

Due to all the past, present, and future merits collected by me, all the three times' merits collected by numberless sentient beings and numberless buddhas, may bodhichitta be actualized in one's heart.

May it be generated in the hearts of all sentient beings, especially the supporters, those who are serving the organization in the past, present, and future, especially those serving Kadampa Center, in the hearts of our family members; for bodhichitta to be generated and in those whose hearts it has been generated may it increase.

May the supreme jewel bodhichitta  
That has not arisen, arise and grow;  
And may that which has arisen not diminish  
But increase more and more.

Due to all the past, present, and future merits collected by me, all the three times' merits collected by numberless sentient beings and numberless buddhas, may bodhichitta be actualized in the hearts of all the leaders of the world, especially in those countries where there is unbelievable suffering, may bodhichitta be generated in their hearts...

May the supreme jewel bodhichitta  
That has not arisen, arise and grow;  
And may that which has arisen not diminish  
But increase more and more.

Due to all the past, present, and future merits collected by me, all the three times' merits collected by numberless sentient beings and numberless buddhas, may bodhichitta be actualized in the hearts of all the people who follow different religions, may this world be filled with perfect peace and happiness, may whatever we do never harm and may it become only the cause of perfect peace and happiness.

May the supreme jewel bodhichitta  
That has not arisen, arise and grow;  
And may that which has arisen not diminish  
But increase more and more.

Every single understanding of Buddhism that we have, every single purification we do every day by doing the practice, every single merit we collect, every time we generate bodhichitta and it becomes cause of enlightenment, every time we meditate on lam rim and plant seeds of enlightenment, all this is due to the kindness of His Holiness the Dalai Lama; and, secondly, due to the kindness of Lama Yeshe. So pray for His Holiness the Dalai Lama to have a stable life and all his wishes to be successful; and pray for whatever wishes Lama Yeshe had to become successful; for Lama Osel to be like sunshine in the world, especially for young people, to turn their minds toward enlightenment.

Pray to actualize immediately all the prayers that Chenrezig made for Tibet in the presence of the buddhas and bodhisattvas.

Due to all the past, present, and future merits collected by me, all the three times' merits collected by numberless sentient beings and numberless buddhas, may all the father and mother sentient beings have happiness, may the lower realms be empty forever... May I be able to cause all this by myself, alone.

Whatever suffering other sentient beings have may it ripen upon me.  
Whatever happiness I have may it ripen upon other sentient beings.

Due to all the past, present, and future merits collected by me, all the three times' merits collected by numberless sentient beings and numberless buddhas, may oneself and one's own family members, all the students in the organization, all the supporters who have served the organization in past and are serving now, everyone in this world; may we be guided by Lama Tsongkhapa being the Mahayana direct guru in all our lifetimes, never be separated from the pure path admired by all the buddhas.

Due to all the past, present, and future merits collected by me, all the three times' merits collected by numberless sentient beings and numberless buddhas, which exist but *totally* do not exist from their own side, may the I who exists but who *totally* does not exist from its own side, achieve Guru Shakyamuni Buddha's enlightenment, which exists but *totally* does not exist from its own side, and lead all sentient beings who exist, but who *totally* do not exist from their own side to that Guru Shakyamuni Buddha's enlightenment which *totally* does not exist from its own side by myself alone

who *totally* does not exist from its own side.

May the organization, the FPMT, be most beneficial to sentient beings, to spread the lam rim teachings, cause the sentient beings to have lam rim realizations, and in particular the Kadampa Center (center wherever we are) to be most beneficial and to spread the lam rim teachings, the cause of realizations, in the hearts of sentient beings, and for oneself to spread the lam rim realizations in the hearts of all sentient beings.

May Lama Tsongkhapa's teachings, which unify sutra and tantra and are like refined gold, spread in the hearts of everyone in this world.

## 24. Dedication Prayers, by Shantideva

May all beings everywhere,  
Plagued by sufferings of body and mind,  
Obtain an ocean of happiness and joy  
By virtue of my merits.

May no living creature suffer,  
Commit evil or ever fall ill.  
May no one be afraid or belittled,  
With a mind weighed down by depression.

May the blind see forms,  
And the deaf hear sounds.  
May those whose bodies are worn with toil  
Be restored on finding repose.

May the naked find clothing,  
The hungry find food.  
May the thirsty find water  
And delicious drinks.

May the poor find wealth,  
Those weak with sorrow find joy.  
May the forlorn find hope,  
Constant happiness and prosperity.

May there be timely rains  
And bountiful harvests.  
May all medicines be effective  
And wholesome prayers bear fruit.

May all who are sick and ill  
Quickly be freed from their ailments.  
Whatever diseases there are in the world,  
May they never occur again.

May the frightened cease to be afraid  
And those bound be freed.  
May the powerless find power  
And may people think of benefiting each other.

For as long as space remains,  
and for as long as sentient beings remain,  
until then, may I too remain,  
to dispel the suffering of the world