

*A Collection of Buddhist Methods
for Healing*

Jason Espada, Editor

So, now are we ready to practice the holy Dharma? It is exactly during times like these that we can lean into our intention to attain Buddhahood for the benefit of all sentient beings. You see, in this great crisis, from the suffering of the animals where the virus most likely originated, to the suffering of all those with the disease and the fear and suffering of the whole world being touched by it, there is not one being who wants to suffer. This is the Buddha's point exactly.

- Jetsunma Tenzin Palmo

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

- Shantideva

A Collection of Buddhist Methods for Healing

Introduction

3/23/2020

Since so many people these days are asking what they can do to strengthen their health, and to help others, I thought to offer this collection of Buddhist methods for healing. We have time now, and the strong motivation to practice, so if we connect with a Tradition, the result can only be to the good.

In Tibetan Buddhism, a *sadhana* is a method of accomplishment that uses prayer, mantra, and visualization, based on Buddhist philosophy. These are practices that people have used for centuries in Tibet, China, and India, and that are now becoming known in the West.

The first half of this collection includes sadhanas and commentaries that will hopefully make these practices as accessible as they can be for those new to these methods. For older students, the commentaries can clarify and encourage us to practice well.

The second half of this book is of a more general nature. It has advice on healing, essays, poetry, and prayers.

See what works best for you, and,

May you and all those you care for be blessed in every way.

An Overview of the Contents of this Collection

Part One

Lama Zopa's teaching on Blessing the Speech makes use of the Sanskrit Vowels and Consonants, and the Mantra of Dependent Origination. These can be recited before any practice, or at its conclusion, to further empower and to stabilize the blessings.

The sadhanas, or methods of accomplishment in this collection come from the Tibetan Buddhist Tradition, and they are organized as follows:

First I present texts on the two most common practices used for healing - those of the Healing Buddha, and White Tara;

I am including here commentaries by great contemporary teachers, Lama Zopa Rinpoche, Lama Lodro, Zazep Tulku, Khenpo Tsewang Dongyal, and Geshe Wangdu;

White Tara is considered one of the Three Deities of Long Life, along with Namgyalma, or Ushnishavijaya, and Amitayus. They are often pictured together on thankas, and visualized as well in practice.

Their individual sadhanas are included at this point.

Their mantras can be also done along in a session of White Tara.

A recent message from Geshe Sopa's Deer Park says

His Holiness the Dalai Lama has advised chanting the Tara mantra as much as possible to help stem the spread of the coronavirus.

We can supplicate Tara with deep faith recognizing that she is the embodiment of the enlightened activity of all the Buddhas.

Tara is known for her swift action, and is especially helpful in relieving fears of any kind.

Her mantra is OM TARE TUTTARE TURE SOHA

Here are two videos with the mantra. Right-click and select 'Loop' to play continuously.

Next come the practices that are being recommended for the current conditions, in 2020:

The first is one called Vajra Armor

The Noble Bodhisattva Lama Zopa Rinpoche recently posted a video that includes a teaching on this practice. The accompanying notes read, *'Watching this video attentively qualifies as having received the oral transmission of the following mantra and prayers.'*

The reading transmission begins at the 36:40 mark.

A second practice that has been recommended is that of Black Manjushri

For me, this particular practice feels appropriate at this unique moment in time, dealing as it does with what they broadly call pollution as the cause of illness. Its effects in a short time have been powerful, healing and protecting.

There is a fine introduction to this practice on Buddha Weekly, that includes a wonderful video of a teaching by the Venerable Zazep Tulku.

The Prayer Liberating Sakya from Disease, by the Maha Siddha Tangtong Gyalpo is next. This uses the mantra of Avalokiteshvara, or Chenrezig, along with prayer to accomplish our purpose;

Various groups of practices have been recommended by Lama Zopa Rinpoche over the years for infectious diseases, and these include:

Black Garuda, and

Logyunma, also called Loma Gyonma, or Parnashavari

which is an aspect of Tara.

This is followed by A Vajrasattva Sadhana, and a brief commentary on this practice by Lama Lodro Rinpoche

We can see for ourselves which of these practices are effective for us. Many commentaries exist, online and in books, and if we feel a connection with one or more of these methods, we should seek out those precious teachings.

For the Healing Buddha, there is Lama Zopa Rinpoche's Teachings from the Medicine Buddha Retreat, and Medicine Buddha Teachings, by Thrangu Rinpoche; Khenpo Kathar also has a book on White Tara Practice called The Wish Fulfilling Wheel;

There is an abundance of information online as well. Here is my Concise Set of Buddhist Healing Prayers and Practices. Knowing how to do any one of these practices in the traditional way, we'll understand how to accomplish any of the others that are similar.

Connecting with and choosing a practice

My own feeling is that it's possible for a person can connect with any of these practices by hearing or even just reading a mantra. Other practices take some time and application to have a feeling for their qualities. This much is commonly known in Indian Spirituality. To get the full benefit from any of these practices, in either case, we need to apply ourselves, with compassion for those who suffer, and with faith and energy. Then positive results are sure to come.

For ease of reference, just the names of the practices, and their mantras are on pages 132 to 134.

There is a karmic reason why we would have one practice, and another person would choose another. And there is a reason why a mantra may wake up at some time in our life, or in our world, and be effective. These are interdependent causes functioning in our lives.

For this reason, I don't criticize any person's practice, or even a practice I'm not doing or feeling any result from any particular time. Conditions can change, I have seen, and a mantra and its divine energy can awaken for us, and be a source of healing.

See for yourself what brings the most benefit for you, and all those you care for.

Lama Zopa said:

Because of the flourishing of the five degenerations (lifespan, views, emotions, time, and beings), the diagnosis of sickness has changed and new disease patterns have emerged. Doctors have difficulty in recognizing the new diseases and do not know the treatment. These patterns are just as Padmasambhava predicted...

The tantras have been collected and passed down over the centuries with this very purpose in mind, to help us to respond to difficult conditions as they arise. They are the result of compassionate and accomplished teachers who have preceded us, and left us their blessing in the form of pure energy, sacred texts and images.

In addition, new practices have been formulated, or revealed in response to the needs of the time. These *terma*, or revealed treasures are considered to have fresh blessings, to be more accessible and in some cases more effective methods. If we have a connection, they will work for us, just as they say.

Part Two of this collection has teachings, poetry and prayers, and essays on Vajrayana practice that may be useful, as well as Protective Chants from the Pali Canon.

Whatever methods we have that can help us to help each other should be shared now as widely as possible. This is the time. This is most decidedly what all of our study and practice up to now has been for, and this is why our spiritual ancestors have given us their gifts. They are *exactly* for this hour.

In these needful times, I turn again to my teachers, and with faith to these methods of accomplishment gathered from various sources.

*May these practices be of extensive benefit, now and in the future,
as much as is ever needed*

May all of our practice be deeply healing

May it bring us all complete freedom from fear

May all illness be dispelled

May excellent health and peace be firmly established for us all

and may all beings everywhere enjoy oceans of happiness and good fortune

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A video of this teaching can be found [here](#), and a longer transcript can be found [here](#).

His reciting the Healing Buddha Mantra can be heard [here](#).

All the mantras listed here can be downloaded, and played continuously, so we can listen to them while we meditate, or do other things, or while we sleep. This is very beneficial. The videos also can be played on a loop.

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My commentary to this can be found [here](#).

Here is a video with a recitation of [The Medicine Buddha Sutra](#)

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15. A White Tara Commentary, by Geshe Wangdu, given at Tse Chen Ling Center For Tibetan Buddhist Studies, San Francisco, August, 1996 - page 70

Lama Zopa Rinpoche has given extensive teachings on White Tara practice, that are [online here](#).

Here are [selected notes](#) from these teachings. Highly recommended.

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Part I - Sadhanas and Commentaries

Preface

The following comments apply to all the teachings in this collection

On Self Generation and Front Generation

It's traditionally taught that what's called 'self-generation' - where one visualizes oneself as the divine form, and maintains *Divine Pride*, should only be done by those who have received the initiation of a particular Bodhisattva Divinity, but that 'front generation' - where one visualizes the divine form in space above and in front of oneself - can be done by anyone.

In front generation, we visualize, and vividly see with the mind's eye above us, the Buddha or bodhisattva whose practice we are doing, and whose mantra we are reciting. At this time, it's taught that we should see the Buddha, ourselves and others, as having bodies that are made entirely of light, like a hologram. When doing this recitation and visualization, we can also see pure light and nectar streaming from the image we hold. These represent, or carry the blessings of the Buddha.

Traditionally, light goes out to the sources of benefit, making offerings out of respect, and prayerful requests, and then the light returns, bringing the blessings of these sources of healing benefit. These healing energies 'fall upon us as light and nectar', and dissolve into the front visualization and into us. We then have the thought and image clearly in our mind that all those we pray for, including ourselves, receive this positive energy, and that they are completely healed by it, and made entirely well and strong. This form of prayer is referred to in the Tibetan Tradition as 'gathering and spreading'.

Many teachers advise, too, when doing this kind of practice, that we see ourselves and others in a pure land, made of light, and to make the

meditation as beautiful, peaceful, perfect, and pure as we can. All this is called *Clear Appearance*.

Venerable Jigme explained that when we are visualizing we're working with our imagination... not only are we working with imagined sights, but we're also working with imagined touch and smells and sounds, physical sensations and feelings.

Of course, all this can be as detailed or as simple as we like. We can also do the practice without any elaborate or detailed visualization. For example, we can just see a healing sun, with beautiful light streaming down from above us while reciting. Or without any visualization at all, we can just recite the mantra. We should do whatever works best for us.

As Lama Lodro teaches, even if you just practice for a short while, try and practice as purely and as perfectly as you can. This means concentrating on the visualizations, if any are used, and the sound of the mantra, keeping in mind the meaning and the purpose of what we are doing. This is called *Clear Recollection*.

On The Refuge Tree

Sometimes when doing Vajrayana practice, what is called a Refuge Tree is visualized. All of this is seen to be in the nature of light. Around the central figure, whatever practice we are doing, one can visualize other Buddhas and Bodhisattvas or holy beings that we have a connection with.

For example, White Tara can have the wonderful effect of truly strengthening the constitution and the central nervous system. Among other qualities, I bring this quality of enlightened action to mind at times when doing the Medicine Buddha practice, and imagine that She is there in the retinue of the Healing Buddha, bestowing her blessings as well.

We can include any divine figures we have a connection with to the refuge tree, such as Jesus, Mary, Kuan Yin, Tara or Manjushri, Angels, and the Saints we have devotion to.

We can add to a single visualization simply, or we can just have the sense that those other Buddhas, Bodhisattvas and holy beings are there, whatever brings the best results.

Blessing the Speech According to the Instructions of Great Yogi Khyungpo

Taking Refuge and Generating Bodhichitta

I take refuge in the Three Rare Sublime Ones.

May I become a buddha to benefit transmigratory beings. (3x)

Visualization

Purify the truly existent I in emptiness. Then your wisdom realizing emptiness, which is nondual with great bliss, manifests as a deity.

I clarify myself as the deity. On my tongue, a syllable AH transforms into a moon. On top of it appears a white syllable OM encircled by the white Sanskrit vowels standing clockwise, the red Sanskrit consonants standing counterclockwise, and the blue Heart Mantra of Dependent Relation standing clockwise.

Light beams radiate from the syllable OM and the mantra garlands, hooking back the blessings and power of the speech of those beyond and not beyond the world in the form of the three mantras, the seven sublime precious objects of a king's reign, the eight auspicious signs, [and the eight auspicious substances.

Those who are beyond the world are the buddhas, arya bodhisattvas abiding on the three pure bhumis, and arhats. Those who are not beyond the world are the yogis who are accomplishing the path and the sages who have actualized words of truth. Due to the power of abiding in silence and living in the morality of abstaining from negative karmas of speech, the words of these sages have much power and so whatever they pray for is successful.

All their blessings and power of speech are hooked back in the

form of the three mantras, the seven precious objects of a king's reign, the eight auspicious signs, and the eight auspicious substances, filling the whole sky. They absorb into the mantras on the moon disk on your tongue, like rain falling on the ocean.

Mantras for Blessing the Speech

Concentrate on the visualization and recite the mantras beginning from the inner circle.

Sanskrit Vowels (Ali)

As you recite the vowels, white nectar beams flow down from the mantra and fill your whole body. All negative karmas collected with your body from beginningless rebirths are completely purified.

(3x)

OM A AH I Ī U Ū Ṛ ṚĪ Ḍ ḌĪ E Ē O Ō ANG AH
SWAHA

(3x)

Sanskrit Consonants (Kali)

As you recite the consonants, red nectar beams flow down from the mantra and fill your whole body. All negative karmas collected with your speech from beginningless rebirths are completely purified.

OM KA KHA GA GHA NGA / TSA TSHA DZA GYA ÑA /
 TA THA DA DHA NA / TA THA DA DHA NA / PA PHA BA
 BHA MA/YA RA LA WA/ SHA KA SA HA KYA SWAHA (3x)

Heart Mantra of Dependent Relation

As you recite the mantra, blue nectar beams flow down from the mantra and fill your whole body. All negative karmas collected with your mind from beginningless rebirths are completely purified.

OM YE DHARMA HETU PRABHAWA HETUN TEKÄN
 TATHAGATO HYAVADÄ / TEKÄÑ TSA YO NIRODHA
 EWAM VADI MAHA SHRAMANAYE SWAHA (3x)

Absorption of the Mantras

The Heart Mantra of Dependent Relation absorbs into the consonants, the consonants into the vowels, the vowels into the syllable OM, and the OM into the moon cushion. That transforms into a syllable AH. The AH melts into pink nectar and absorbs into my tongue, which becomes of the nature of a vajra.

Your tongue becomes very heavy and strong, as if difficult to move, and as indestructible as a vajra. Generate very strong faith that all the blessings and power of the speech of all the buddhas, bodhisattvas, arhats, yogis, and sages have entered your speech and made it perfect. Think: "My speech has become perfect."

The benefits of blessing the speech are: (1) the power of your speech becomes perfect; (2) whatever you recite is multiplied ten million times; (3) the power of your speech is not taken away by eating wrong foods; and (4) gossiping becomes the recitation of mantra.

Dedication

May my tongue sense base
Have all the courage of the ones gone to bliss.
By the magnificence and power of my words,
May all sentient beings be subdued.
May all the meanings of whatever words I say
Be accomplished.

The Healing Buddha Section

Why the Buddha is Regarded as the Supreme Healer

The Meaning of the Praise and Mantra of Medicine Buddha, by Lama Zopa Rinpoche

The Healing Buddha – A Practice for the Prevention and Healing of Disease, composed and translated by Lama Thubten Zopa Rinpoche

Heal Your Mind and Body, by Lama Zopa Rinpoche

A teaching on Medicine Buddha, by Zazep Tulku

A video of this teaching can be found [here](#).

The Sadhana of the Medicine Buddha, by H. H. Dudjom Rinpoche

From the Teachings on Mahamudra and Medicine Buddha, by Lama Lodu Rinpoche, Healing Arts Center, St. Louis, August 30th, 2012

A video of this teaching can be found [here](#), and a longer transcript can be found [here](#).

The Healing Buddha Mantra can be heard [here](#).

All the mantras listed here can be downloaded, and played continuously, so we can listen to them while we meditate, or do other things, or while we sleep. This is very beneficial. The videos also can be played on a loop.

A Healing Buddha Practice

My commentary to this can be found [here](#).

Why the Buddha is Regarded as the Supreme Healer

To my mind, there are two reasons why the Buddha has been regarded throughout time as the Supreme Healer:

The first is that the Buddha saw not only suffering, but its causes as well, rooted in ignorance, and, from his very first talk, proposed a remedy to *all suffering*. By developing the wisdom of insight into our own nature, the Buddha taught that we can become free from all karma and delusions, and all harm. This is a radical proposition that, over two millennia, many have investigated and verified.

If a person goes to an ordinary doctor, with one problem or illness, that is what they will be treated for. By comparison, it is said that this profound remedy goes to the cause of the entire range of our sufferings. Next to a medical model that treats only one symptom, or a few symptoms, this is vastly different, as it goes unimaginably further. It aims to cure all the oceans of samsaric sufferings, over countless lifetimes, that living beings experience.

A second reason why the Buddha has been thought of as the Supreme Healer is the scope of the enlightened person's concern, which includes every aspect of our life, health and well being, from the material and psychological, to the most subtle, spiritual levels. It is care that is comprehensive, all inclusive, and it is for all living beings. It is this range, the depth as well as this breadth of love and compassion, that distinguishes the Buddha.

Over two millennia, then, born of wisdom and compassion, many Skillful Means have been developed by the followers of the Buddha, and those with realizations, to meet the needs of beings.

These methods are what are offered in the Traditions.

There are many ways for the Divine Light and Healing Energy to pour into this world. If we feel we have an affinity with these teachings, we are invited to try these methods and see if they work for us. When we do, we may have the experience that we are supported as well by all the great pure energy of the Saints and Noble practitioners of the Lineages.

All of this has its source in the life of wisdom and compassion of the Founder. All of these teachings and practices can be seen as the continuation of activity of that realized life. And so I join my voice with those of the past and present, and sing with them, as part of one traditional verse of praise:

*Homage to the Completely Perfected, Fully Awakened Being,
the Supreme Guide*

*Homage to the Fully Awakened One, The Glorious Conqueror,
the Subduer from the Shakya Clan*

And, from 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.*

May all the benefit that can come from healing practice
be received by all living beings,
each according to their need,
and, in whatever way I can, may I be the cause of that

- From A Collection of Buddhist Healing Prayer and Practices

The Meaning of the Praise and Mantra of Medicine Buddha

Edited and condensed from a talk during Medicine Buddha Puja
by Lama Zopa Rinpoche, Land of Medicine Buddha, 28 July 2001

*To the Bhagawan with equal compassion for all
Whose name when just heard dispels lower realms' suffering
Dispeller of disease and the three poisons
I prostrate to Medicine Buddha Lapis Light.*

tayatha om bekindze bekindze maha bekindze radza samudgate soha.

The Fifth Dalai Lama explains that the first verse expresses what Medicine Buddha is and talks about the qualities.

Bhagawan means “Destroyer Qualified Gone Beyond One” or Chom Den De in Tibetan. “Destroyer” means not only destroyer of one’s own gross and subtle defilements, the delusions, but also destroyer of other sentient beings’ delusions and defilements. “Qualified” refers to six qualities. “Gone Beyond” means gone beyond the oceans of samsaric suffering.

“With equal compassion for all” means Medicine Buddha’s compassion is equal towards all sentient beings, there are no discriminating thoughts. Buddha doesn’t just help those who have faith in him. Medicine Buddha has compassion to every single living being, equally-and that includes us.

Then, “Whose name when just heard dispels lower realms’ suffering”.

Any living being who hears the name of Medicine Buddha never gets reborn in the lower realms-that’s the benefit, the power of just hearing the name, the mantra. The reason there is so much power is due to Medicine Buddha’s compassion. In the past when he was a bodhisattva he made so many prayers and dedications with strong compassion for his name to be wish fulfilling, to bring happiness.

When he became enlightened, one of the ten powers of a Buddha is the power of prayer – that means that all the prayers that have been made get fulfilled. So it is extremely important in our daily life to practice Medicine Buddha and to chant his name for the animals. It's an unbelievably easy way to liberate yourself and to help others too.

Medicine Buddha practice also purifies any broken vows, like Pratimoksha vows, or precepts. It is very powerful for purification and for healing sickness. Normally people think that Medicine Buddha is for healing but it's not only that, it's also very powerful for purifying negative karma and very powerful for success. The Medicine Buddha practice is so precious. It seems that you can do Medicine Buddha Puja for ANY purpose, ANY problem, ANYTHING. You can use the Medicine Buddha practice for any kind of problem, for court cases, to stop wars, to stop violence, anything. It is very good for business, for mothers who are pregnant to give birth successfully, anything.

The practice can be done for anything. It is very powerful for success and of course the most important success is to have the realizations of the Lam Rim, the path to enlightenment: to realize emptiness, develop wisdom, bodhicitta and guru devotion – to be able to give extensive benefit to other sentient beings.

“Dispeller of disease and the three poisons” – the three poisons are ignorance, hatred and attachment, the sicknesses of the mind from which come the physical sicknesses-cancer, depression, etc.

“I prostrate to Medicine Buddha Lapis Light.”

Medicine Buddha's mantra is: tayatha om bekindze bekindze maha bekindze radza samudgate soha.

Tayatha – means “like this”.

Om – is composed of the three pure sounds A U and MA, which signifies one's own body, speech and mind that get transformed into the vajra holy body, speech and mind.

Then bekindze bekindze -“eliminating pain, eliminating pain”. What eliminates pain is medicine. This pain is not ordinary pain – even animals do not want to experience that. The first eliminating pain is true suffering, the second is the true cause of suffering. The medicine that eliminates pain is first the graduated path of the lower capable being, and second the graduated path of the middle capable being.

Then maha bekindze -“the great eliminating pain” is the graduated path of the higher capable being, which eliminates the subtle defilements.

So bekindze bekindze maha bekindze contains the whole path to enlightenment, the ultimate medicine.

Radza – is king.

Samudgate – (ocean of goodness)

Soha – to establish the foundation in the heart, the blessing, the devotion from which the realization comes.

By actualising the meaning of the path contained in bekindze bekindze maha bekindze, the whole Lam Rim, you cease the defilements, gross and subtle, and purify the ordinary body, speech and mind into the vajra holy body, speech and mind. After this you are able to do perfect works for other sentient beings.

The Healing Buddha

A Practice for the Prevention and Healing of Disease

Translated and composed by Lama Thubten Zopa Rinpoche

Motivation

No matter what you do, it is essential to generate a positive motivation. Therefore, think as follows:

"The purpose of my life is to free all living beings from all their problems and the causes of these problems, which are in their minds, and to bring all beings peace and happiness, especially the peerless happiness of full enlightenment, which they desperately need. For me to be able to do this, my mind and body must be perfect, pure and healthy. Therefore, to benefit living beings equal to extent of space, I am going to practice this healing meditation."

Meditation

Visualize yourself in your ordinary body, with your heart at the center of your chest, inverted, pointing upwards. Inside your heart is a white, eight-petalled lotus. At its center is a moon disc, upon which is seated the Healing Buddha in the aspect of the supreme transformation. His holy body is clear and in the nature of dark blue light, and he holds an arura plant in his right hand and a begging bowl in his left.

In front of the Healing Buddha is the white medicinal goddess, Actualized Wisdom; to his right is the yellow medicinal goddess, Simultaneous Wealth; behind him is the red forest goddess, Peacock's Throat; to his left is the green tree goddess, Radiant One. Each goddess is in the nature of blissful radiant light and has one face and two arms.

An arura plant is in each goddess's right hand, with a vase adorned with various ornaments in the left. The four goddesses sit cross-legged, not in the full vajra position but in the aspect of offering respect to the Healing Buddha.

Then make this request:

O Destroyer, Complete in All Qualities and Gone Beyond (1) and you four medicinal goddesses, please pacify immediately the illnesses that afflict me now and help me avoid all future sickness.

Light rays of the appropriate colour emanate from each of the five deities at your heart. Your heart and body are full of blissful light, which completely purifies all disease, spirit harms, and negative actions and their imprints. Beams of five-coloured light radiate from all the pores of your body, while nectar flows down from the Healing Buddha's begging bowl and the vases held by the four goddesses, completely filling your heart and body. Generate the strong recognition that you have vanquished all disease forever and will never be sick again.

While concentrating single-pointedly on this visualization, recite the short or long Healing Buddha mantra seven, twenty one, one hundred and eight, or more times.

Short Healing Buddha mantra

TAYATHA / OM BEKANDZE BEKANDZE /
MAHA BEKANDZE RANDZE /
SAMUNGATE SOHA

Long Healing Buddha mantra

OM NAMO BHAGAWATE BEKANDZE /
 GURU BENDURYA PRABHA RANDZAYA /
 TATHAGATAYA /
 ARHATE SAMYAKSAM BUDDHAYA / TAYATHA /
 OM BEKANDZE BEKANDZE /
 MAHA BEKANDZE RANDZE /
 SAMUNGATE SOHA

If you are sick, after you have finished reciting the mantra, put some saliva on your left palm, rub it with the tip of your right ring finger, place the tip on this finger at the entrance of your right and left nostrils, where the so-called All-Doing King Nerve can be found, and apply the saliva to the afflicted parts of your body. Then recite as many mantras of the Sanskrit vowels and consonants as possible, along with the mantra of the Heart of Dependent Arising.

Sanskrit vowels

OM A AA I II U UU RI RII LI LII E AI O AU
 AM AH SVAHA

Sanskrit consonants

OM KA KHA GA GHA NGA /
 TSA TSHA DZA DZHA NYA /
 TA THA DA DHA NA /
 TA THA DA DHA NA /
 PA PHA BA BHA MA /
 YA RA LA VA /
 SA SHA SA HA KSHA SVAHA

The Heart of Dependent Arising

OM YE DHARMA HETU-PRABHAVA HETUN TESHAN
TATHAGATO HYA VADAT/
TESHAN CA YO NIRODHA / EVAM-VADI/
MAHASRAMANAH YE SVAHA

This practice, a Dharma treasure (terma) of Padma Sambhava, protects you from both the illnesses troubling you now and those you have yet contracted.

Dedication

Because of all my positive actions of the past, present, and future, which bring happiness, may the ultimate good heart - which cherishes all living beings and is the source of the three-time happiness of myself and others - arise in those minds where it has not yet arisen, and increase in those minds where it already has sprung.

Because of my three-time positive actions and those of all holy beings, whose attitude is the purest, may all the kind father and mother sentient beings have happiness. May I alone be the cause of this, and may the three lower realms be empty forever.

May the prayers of all holy beings - those who dedicate their lives to the happiness of others - succeed immediately, and may I alone be the cause of this.

Because of my three-time positive actions and those of all holy beings, may I achieve the peerless happiness of full enlightenment - the state of mind that is free of all error and complete in all positive qualities - and lead all others to that state.

Colophon

This healing practice was translated by Lama Zopa Rinpoche at Tara Institute, Melbourne, Australia, on September 1, 1991. The Motivational and Dedication have been added to the original text.

Notes

1. An epithet for the Healing Buddha.

Visualization from The Medicine Buddha Sadhana,

translated by Lama Zopa Rinpoche

Granting your request, from the heart and holy body of the King of Medicine, Guru Medicine Buddha, infinite rays of white light pour down completely filling your body from head to toe.

They purify all your diseases and afflictions due to spirits and their causes, all your negative karma and mental obscurations.

In the nature of light, your body becomes as clean and clear as crystal.

The light rays pour down twice more, each time filling your body with blissful clean clear light which you absorb.

You are thereby transformed into the holy body of Guru Medicine Buddha.

At your heart appears a lotus and moon disk. Standing at the center of the moon disk, is the blue seed-syllable HUM surrounded by the syllables of the mantra.

As you recite the mantra, visualize rays of light radiating out in all directions from the syllable at your heart. The light rays pervade the sentient beings of all six realms.

Through your great love wishing them to have happiness, and through your great compassion wishing them to be free from all sufferings, they are purified of all diseases and afflictions due to spirits and their causes, all their negative karma and mental obscurations.

* * *

Simplified Visualization

Purifying rays of light pour down from the Guru Medicine Buddha's heart and holy body, eliminating your sicknesses and afflictions due to spirits, and their causes, all your negative karma and mental obscurations.

Your body is completely filled with light and becomes clean-clear like crystal.

Then the rays radiate out in all directions, purifying the sicknesses and afflictions of all mother sentient beings.

Healing Your Mind and Body, by Lama Zopa Rinpoche

There is another way to protect yourself from disease. Experience has shown that diseases such as cancer and AIDS occur when your mind is obsessed with sexual desire and so forth. Because of this attachment to worldly pleasure, you create mistaken actions, which harm yourself and others and cause guilt, and as a result, cancer, arthritis, and so forth manifest. All this comes from your own mind's incorrect attitude.

Since all such problems are caused by an undisciplined mind and the actions it creates, one of the most important things you can do is to live a life of moral discipline. Do not deceive yourself by thinking that this is only a religious viewpoint - it is real protection.

For example, if you let your mind go crazy, your life is unprotected. Preventing your mind from going crazy is the way to protect your life. Just see how many problems plague a country where moral discipline is in short supply. The way to protect, or heal your mind and body is to purify the causes of problems that you have already created, which lie in your mind. To do this, you need to practice one or more of the powerful purifying techniques found in Tibetan Buddhism¹.

There are other powerful healing buddhas such as Vajrapani and Logyunma, a female healing buddha in leaf-wearing aspect, who is well-known as an opponent of epidemic disease. I myself have seen ill people recover completely through these two practices.

Another way to bring purity into your life is to make a commitment in front of a holy being such as the Healing Buddha, or any other spiritually advanced being you choose. If you are not interested in making a commitment to enlightened beings and saints, make a commitment to all living beings.

¹ See, for example, Lama Yeshe's The Tantric Path of Purification

The commitment you should make is to not harm others - harming others only harms yourself as well. Commit yourself to avoiding all ten non-virtuous actions, or as many of them as you can.

These Dharma methods are the only true solution. Unless you transform your mind into a positive state through either the external medicine of actions or the internal medicine of meditation, you will be constantly taking medicine and poison at the same time.

I have added this advice because many people, especially in the West, lead such incredibly miserable lives because their minds swings repeatedly from one extreme to the other.

From Medicine Buddha Healing Meditation and Practice, by Zasep Rinpoche

A video of this teaching can be found [here](#).

From :43 to 13:45, lightly edited

I would like to lead a meditation on the Healing Buddha, Lapis Lazuli Light, the Medicine Buddha, and the visualization of light, and recitation of the mantra.

I would like to ask everyone to sit comfortably, on a cushion, or on a chair. Keep your back straight, and relax your body. And then we visualize Medicine Buddha in front of us, Lapis Lazuli Light Medicine Buddha - not too far, and not too close, about one meter from us, in the beautiful blue sky.

Lapis Lazuli Light Buddha is sitting on a lotus cushion, and moon cushion. The lotus cushion is made with lotus petals, white and pink lotus petals, and on top of that, visualize a moon disc, that is horizontal.

The Lapis Lazuli Light Buddha has one face, and two hands, and he is sitting cross-legged, in the Vajra Asana. He is wearing the beautiful robes of a monk, a saffron and burgundy robe. His left hand is in the mudra of meditative equipoise, and is holding a bowl with white nectar inside. His right hand is holding an arura plant. This is also known as myrobalan. It is an arura plant with seeds, and fruit, and some leaves, and a few flowers.

He is the color of Lapis, deep blue. Also imagine that there is light shining behind his body, behind his head, beautiful light, and golden light...

Then, when you visualize Medicine Buddha, imagine that Medicine Buddha *is here* with you, *a real one... he is alive... he is here with us...*

Also, his body's nature is light, and energy, transparent... it is the nature of light, not a solid, material body like our body, but an energy body.

So, first visualize Medicine Buddha, Lapis Lazuli in front of you, and then say the mantra

OM BEKHANDZYE BEKHANDZYE / MAHA BEKHANDZYE
BEKHANDZYE / RADZA SAMUNGATE SOHA

Sometimes this is pronounced

BHAISHAJYE BHAISHAJYE MAHA BHAISHAJYE
RAJA SAMUDGATE SVAHA

Either way is fine. You can say it the way the Tibetans say it, or according to the Sanskrit - it works. It doesn't matter which way. The most important thing is devotion and faith. It always works. It worked in the past, all those thousands of years, right?

So, OM is the beginning of the mantra, invoking the blessings of the body, speech, and mind of Medicine Buddha;

BEKHANDZYE BEKHANDZYE means *Your are the healer, healer*

MAHA BEKHANDZYE, *Great Healer,*

RADZA means 'King' - *You are the King of Healers*

SAMUNGATE SOHA means You help me and purify and heal my body, speech and mind, and liberate me and others from the sea of samsara -

SAMUNGATE

SAMUN is the Sanskrit word for ocean

SAMUNGATE - *You help me to go beyond this ocean of samsara, the ocean of suffering.*

There is so much suffering in this world - it's like an ocean - the suffering of sickness, death, and so on.

So please help me.

SAMUNGATE SOHA (or SVAHA)

SOHA means 'to accomplish'.

So you can say this mantra as much as possible.

You can say it the way I did it, or you can say it quietly.

OM BEKHANDZYE BEKHANDZYE / MAHA BEKHANDZYE
BEKHANDZYE / RADZA SAMUNGATE SOHA

So, you say the mantra first for a while, and then you do the visualization.

Now, the visualization is a very important one.

While you say the mantra, or after you say the mantra, you imagine a beautiful blue light shining from his heart...

and you visualize a small seed syllable HUM or HUNG at his heart, on the moon disc, and blue light emanating from his heart...

The blue light descends... it comes down and first touches your crown, then slowly the blue light descends to the throat, and then to the heart, then completely fills the inside of your body...

And this light is healing light, this light is holy light, this is divine light, and it purifies your entire body, completely purifies...

and your causes of suffering, pain, sickness, disease, are all gone, immediately, they are all gone...

And also you could imagine that you have received healing energy, not only purifying your body, sickness, but you receive healing energy, healing inspiration to heal yourself. You can heal yourself by reciting the mantra. You receive healing confidence in yourself, and you can also do some healing for others.

Then, you say the mantra again. You can sing it the way I did, or you can say it quietly, and this time nectar comes down...

So, Medicine Buddha is holding a bowl in his left hand, and there is white nectar inside, and as you say the mantra, or after you say the mantra, this white nectar comes down and descends from the bowl. It comes to your crown, and then enters into your body, first the crown, then the throat, then the heart, then the navel, and all throughout your body...

And this nectar is medicinal nectar. It has all the properties of medicine, to heal your body, to nourish your body, to renew your body, and to sustain your body.

Imagine white nectar flowing down like a stream of water, or like a waterfall, like water coming down from the rocks, or from the roof when it's raining - like that, visualize beautiful nectar flowing down from the bowl into your crown, and filling your entire body

and immediately you feel very nourished, and you feel very blissful - the Tibetan word is 'Dewa' - You can feel the happiness, you can feel the joy, you can feel the blessing of Medicine Buddha entering into your heart, and into your body...

Now you are also nourished, and you are also protected. Your body is protected, your mind is protected. Your body is protected from external causes of illness, like viruses, germs, or pollution, and so forth.

You have protection. You have energy inside which has resistance, or the power to neutralize any kind of cause of illness in your body. It will neutralize, and it will purify.

And now, at the very end, you imagine the Medicine Buddha becomes very small, as blue light, the size of your thumb, and the small blue light then enters through your crown and moves down into your heart...

That Divine Light, Medicine Buddha's Divine Light enters your heart. It's here with you as protection, the blessing of Medicine Buddha.

Then you can end the healing meditation.

On Visualization, Receiving the Healing Buddha's Blessings

by Zasep Rinpoche

April 19th, 2020

So at this time, the lapis lazuli light Buddha transforms into blue light, and this light then dissolves through my crown, and into my body. This blue light goes into my body - it goes into all the channels, and chakras, from the crown of my head to the bottoms of my feet...

The blue light pervades everywhere, and your entire body is nourished by the blue light, and the light of the seven Medicine Buddhas.

This is a protection for you - *It's the greatest protection.*

Your entire body - 72,000 channels, are filled with this light. According to tantra, we have 72,000 channels - it's unimaginable, right?

All the channels and chakras, all our body, subtle body and coarse body - everything is totally satisfied, and nourished by the light of seven Medicine Buddhas...

Now my body is very good, and healthy, strong. I am healthy. I'm strong.

If you're a senior, you should think: *For my age, I'm really healthy!*
Super-duper healthy, for my age...

And if you're middle-aged, you should think, *For my middle-age, I'm very healthy;*

Even a young person - a teenaged person should say, *I'm very healthy...*

Whoever you are, you feel *I'm very healthy.*

I'm very grateful to the seven Medicine Buddhas.

I'm so fortunate, I have this blessing in my body and mind...

The Sadhana of the Medicine Buddha, by H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche

All beings are tormented by sufferings in Samsara – externally by physical sickness and internally by emotional disturbances and mental problems. In order to help free others from these sufferings, as well as ourselves, we need to take refuge in the Medicine Buddha.

In order to do the practice of the Medicine Buddha, first take refuge in the Buddha as the ultimate protector, in the Dharma as the path of liberation, and in the Sangha as the companions on the way.

Repeat the Refuge Prayer three times with the image or visualization in front or above.

*Homage! Myself and the limitless sentient beings without exception take refuge in the Medicine Buddha, the Triple Gem.
I will liberate all sentient beings equal to the sky, who have been our parents, to the stage of the Medicine Buddha.*

Repeat the Four Boundless Meditations three times.

*May all beings have happiness and the cause of happiness.
May all beings be free from suffering and the causes of suffering.
May they never be separated from the Supreme Happiness which is free from suffering
May all leave attachment to dear ones and aversion to others and live believing in the equality of all who live.*

As we are all the Primordial Buddha, we have the essence of Buddha Nature. Realizing this, *relaxing* in the natural state is the absolute way of taking refuge and generating Bodhicitta (the mind of enlightenment). When doing the practice, be free of subject, object, and action.

From the voidness, before our mind gets interrupted by other thoughts, we should form the intention to do the practice of the Medicine Buddha.

Preparing to welcome the Buddha, we should gather offerings. Imagine all the nice and beautiful things that exist in the form of offerings. Offer these to the Medicine Buddha. Now begin to practice. Consider the place of meditation as a Buddha Field. The landscape is extremely beautiful. All of space is filled with rainbows. There are gods and goddesses holding offerings (sounds, tastes,... objects of the five senses) for the Buddhas.

Visualize a vast throne in the center of the Buddha Field. Upon that is a vast thousand-petalled lotus. Upon the lotus is a moon disc and upon that the Medicine Buddha. The Medicine Buddha is blue in color and is in the lotus posture. His right hand, in the gesture of granting wishes, holds the Arura fruit (Myrobalam).

His left hand, in the gesture of meditation, holds the begging bowl filled with medicinal nectars. He is surrounded by the eight Bodhisattvas, et al. With the major and minor marks of full enlightenment, wearing the three monastic robes, the Medicine Buddha, as an object of concentration, appears in translucent rainbow light.

With the thought of inviting Him from the Buddha Field to become one with our visualization, make offerings with what we have prepared and blessed. Although Buddhas don't need anything, we make offerings in order to accumulate merit.

Repeat the Seven Branch Offering; recite prayers; do prostrations.

LAMA TONPA CHOMDANDE DESHINSHEGPA
 DRACHOMPA YANGDAGPAR DZOGPAI SANGYE
 MANGYILHA VAIDURYA OD KYI GYALPO
 LA CHAG TSHAL LO CHOD TOD KYAB SU CHIO*

Repeat as many times as possible.

(* for the translation of the Invocation and mantra, see the two pages that follow this sadhana)

OM NAMO BHAGAVATE BHAISHAJYE GURU VAIDURYA
PRABHARAYAYA TATHAGATAYA ARHATE
SAMYAKSAMBUDDHAYA TADYATHA OM
BHAISHAJYE BHAISHAJYE MAHA BHAISHAJYE
RAJA SAMUDGATE SVAHA

or

BHAISHAJYE BHAISHAJYE MAHA BHAISHAJYE
RAJA SAMUDGATE SVAHA

Phonetic key of Tibetan Pronunciations:

Teyatha Om Baikanze Baikanze Mahabaikanze Radza Samungate Soha

Although all the Buddhas have the same nature, each has a particular power. When we recite the mantra, rays of light emanate from the heart of the Buddha, like a hundred rising suns, curing all the diseases and obscurations of the beings, and even their causes. By the power of this practice, by the power of the Medicine Buddha, may all suffering and problems be removed.

Recite while concentrating on the rays of light. At the end of the practice, by the power of these rays of light, sufferings are completely removed, like darkness is dispelled by a torch.

At the end of the recitation of mantra, be free of the concept that beings and Buddhas are different. Buddhas and beings all dissolve in emptiness, as water dissolves in water, as space in space. Remain in the inexpressible

state, which is free from thoughts and concepts, mingling with the nature of Buddha's body, speech and mind.

At the end of the practice, when we arise from meditation, free from notions or concepts, share the merit with all beings.

Meaning of the words of the invocation and the mantra, as provided by
Frederika Fairchild

LAMA	Guru
TONPA	Teacher, 'One who Knows'
CHOM-DAN-DE	Destroyer of demons Possessing the Enlightened Qualities, Gone Beyond, Transcending duality
DESHINSHEGPA	Thus Come, this Gone
DRACHOMPA	Destroyer of the enemy (ego)
YANGDAGPAR DZOGPAI -	Exceedingly pure, Fully Perfected
SANGYE MANGYILHA -	Medicine Buddha
VAIDURYA	Blue Diamond
OD KYI GYALPO	King of Luminosity
LA CHAG TSHAL LO	To you I prostrate,
CHOD TOD	Make offerings, Praise
KYAB SU CHIO	and go for refuge

There are two versions of the Medicine Buddha Mantra presented in the root text. The first is more elaborate and the second is more essential. The first mantra is usually recited as a prelude before beginning the second mantra. If you are unfamiliar with tantric practice, it is recommended that you simply recite the second mantra, and do so as many times as possible.

OM NAMO BHAGAVATE BHAISHAJYE GURU VAIDURYA
 PRABHARAYAYA TATHAGATAYA ARHATE
 SAMYAKSAMBUDDHAYA TADYATHA OM
 BHAISHAJYE BHAISHAJYE MAHA BHAISHAJYE
 RAJA SAMUDGATE SVAHA

or

BHAISHAJYE BHAISHAJYE MAHA BHAISHAJYE
 RAJA SAMUDGATE SVAHA

Phonetic key of Tibetan Pronunciations:

Teyatha Om Baikanze Baikanze Mahabaikanze Radza Samungate Soha

Meaning of the Words in the Mantra

OM	Auspicious in the beginning Seed syllable of the Body of all Buddhas
NAMO	Homage
BHAGAVATE	Buddha (epithet for)
BHAISHAJYE	Medicine, Healing

GURU	Guru
VAIDURYA	Lapis Lazuli, blue diamond
PRABHARAYAYA	King of Light
TATHAGATAYA	Thus Gone
ARHATE	Killed the enemy, ego
SAMYAKSAMBUDDHAYA	- Totally Perfected Buddha
TADYATHA	In such a manner as follows
OM	(same as above)
BHAISHAJYE	Medicine, Healing, Cure
BHAISHAJYE	Medicine, Healing, Cure
MAHA BHAISHAJYE	Great Medicine
RAJA	King
SAMUDGATE	Crossed the Ocean (of Samsara)
SVAHA	Receiving the blessings of all Buddhas

From the Teachings on Mahamudra and Medicine Buddha, by Lama Lodu Rinpoche, Healing Arts Center, St. Louis, August 30th, 2012

So I'll review a little bit about Medicine Buddha.

Medicine Buddha is the Buddha who has dedicated his enlightenment to healing sentient beings from physical and mental disease. And especially in a dark age, when people are afflicted with more (negative) emotions, that make them mentally sick, and when the mind gets sick, unknown to them, that becomes the cause of their physical sickness - so the Buddha has dedicated himself to enlightenment in order to benefit, healing the sentient beings those who have such health and mental sickness.

So that is his dedication. So he worked hard for many lifetimes as a bodhisattva.

He didn't become a Medicine Buddha instantly, but he was a human being, just like us, and he motivated and took the bodhisattva vow. He dedicated his mind to be completely perfect with bodhicitta, with the enlightened attitude.

Then he trained his mind in love and kindness and compassion, and trained his mind in selflessness. So, with all these trainings, he went on many aeons as a bodhsattva but his dedication was always that he wished to heal sentient beings of temporary sickness and disease, and actually, the absolute, ultimate disease, with egolessness.

So, in this way, he finally attained enlightenment as the Medicine Buddha, the Healing Buddha.

So, Lord Shakyamuni Buddha has a sutra - the Medicine Buddha Sutra... there are so many Medicine Buddha Sutras, and Medicine Buddha Tantras, for different levels of practice. And Tibetan Medical Doctors, most of them, memorize the Sutra, or Root Text, and then they have to receive a

commentary from their professor, and they study the Medicine Buddha for 12 years. At the same time, they have to have the empowerment, and they take this as a daily practice.

Before they complete their education as a doctor, they have to go on retreat where they focus on the Medicine Buddha, to accomplish the mantra recitation, then also they have to have some kind of experience of the Medicine Buddha, and they have to accomplish all these different things before they become a doctor and treat people.

Basically, a Tibetan Medical doctor trains very well in bodhicitta, a sense compassion and loving kindness. Before they treat patients, they meditate

on Medicine Buddha and recite the mantra, and then after the practice session, in the post-meditation session of the Medicine Buddha, the activity is the treatment of patients. While they are doing the treatments, they have to carry on the practice.

So that way, they are curing not only the sick people's disease, but also their karmic impurities. And this will greatly benefit the patients.

So the doctor-patient relationship is one where the doctor has compassion, and the patient has devotion, trust and confidence, and whatever the doctor tells them, they listen. For example, if they say, you should not eat such and such a food, or, this is how you should take care of yourself in warm weather, or cold weather, they have to listen to them.

So, at the same time, they have a sense of devotion. If they don't believe in the doctor, they won't listen, and if they won't listen then they won't be effected. In Tibetan medicine, the patient has to have a sense of devotion, and the medical doctor needs to have a sense of love and compassion too. These, devotion and compassion, work together, then the Medicine Buddha can heal. And this is complete healing - not like you heal this year, and next year the illness comes back... This is what the Medicine Sutra says.

Anyway, what we have here is a short sadhana. The Medicine Buddha has so many sadhanas, so many practices, but this is a combination of Tantra and Sutra. It is a very powerful healing practice.

In the beginning we take refuge in the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha, and generate bodhicitta:

Taking Refuge first: The Buddha is my destination, the Dharma is my Path, and the Sangha are my companions.

So I have a sense of respect and devotion to the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha, and this is a kind of protection, in general against any obstacles or hindrances on my path.

Secondly, you have to generate bodhicitta:

You want to practice Medicine Buddha to accomplish the Medicine Buddha's qualities and perfections, so you can free all sentient beings forever from their physical and mental disease; and also bring them everlasting happiness

And this is why you wish to practice Medicine Buddha - to gain the Medicine Buddha's healing power, to benefit other sentient beings.

In the beginning of your practice, this is very important to cultivate.

So, Taking Refuge and generating bodhicitta is the preliminary practice of the Medicine Buddha. This is basic. Without these two, Taking Refuge, and generating bodhicitta, if you practice Medicine Buddha, it's not Buddhist practice. It will be non-Buddhist practice, and it won't be effective either.

Taking Refuge is very important so that the actual practice is intensified, and and can collect great healing power from the whole universe.

Also, you're generating bodhicitta, and that will contribute another power - that of your compassion, and for that reason Medicine Buddha can heal all sentient beings, of whatever disease they have, physical or mental. Because of your compassion, your caring for other sentient beings, it gives great power... You want to free all sentient beings...

So this is a big contribution. One session of actual practice can bring infinite benefit, and you will receive the blessing and power.

So this is important as a preliminary, cultivating devotion, with Refuge, and compassion, bodhicitta, to develop kindness and compassion towards all sentient beings, dedicating your practice for the benefit of other beings.

In the actual practice, simply, you visualize Medicine Buddha in front.

You can look at a picture carefully....

Simply, you can visualize just Medicine Buddha, on a multi-colored fully blooming lotus, on a sun and moon disc, and then Medicine Buddha...

He is sitting in the Lotus Position, his body is blue in color, and he is wearing the monastic robes. In his left hand, he is holding a begging bowl, full of healing nectar, and in his right hand he holds the branch of an arura plant, which is the king of medicine. He holds this with the giving gesture...

Like Buddha Shakyamuni, he is wearing monastic robes, and his expression is very gentle and peaceful. You can see that he is made of clear blue light, transparent, and not substantial... it is like rainbow light, but full of wisdom and compassion. Actually *all* the qualities of the Buddha's perfection are in that form of the Medicine Buddha.

The form of the Medicine Buddha is blue, as described, but actually the healing energy of all divine beings appears in this form of the Medicine

Buddha. He appears very gentle and compassionate, and he is looking towards you.

When you visualize that way, you can focus on this. Just place your mind one-pointedly on the Medicine Buddha, without wavering. Not thinking of the past, not thinking of the future. In the present time, just focus your mind on the Medicine Buddha...

Then at a certain point, you can begin to think of the medicine in his heart. There is a moon disc, and the Tibetan letter *hung*, blue in color. This is the essence of all Buddhas' Mind...

So this blue *hung*, at the heart center of the Medicine Buddha, radiates light - white, yellow, blue, green and red... This is glowing from the *hung* at his heart center, and also from his body, from his aura, emanating from him...

Keep your mind on that.

The white light is the pure form of anger - the Mirror-Like Wisdom, that is radiating from the Medicine Buddha...

The yellow light is the mental poison of pride, transformed into the Wisdom of Equanimity, bright and shining...

The red light, bright and shining, is the pure form of our attachment, transformed into the aspect of Discriminating Wisdom...

The green light is the pure form of our jealousy, transformed into All Accomplishing Wisdom...

These poisons are completely dispelled...

Now blue light is shining, coming from his heart, and that is the purified ignorance, or stupidity, in the aspect of wisdom called Dharmata Wisdom, transcending all ego, and all afflictions. That's called Dharmadhatu Wisdom, or Primordial Wisdom, or Self-Arising Wisdom...

These are Wisdoms the Healing Buddha has accomplished, and he is completely free of these five poisons...

Now, we, ourselves, we have anger, and that brings some disease; desire, and that brings some disease; jealousy, that brings some disease... Pride, that brings some disease, and stupidity, that brings disease...

These poisons are in our mind. All of us have these poisons - no one can say, 'No, I don't have these...' We all do. So, these poisons are the causes of our diseases... We all have some dis-ease, because the source is there. When the conditions come, the dis-ease comes... Then we are sick, and possibly die too...

But this is different than who we are. Our diseases come from our poisons.

All the Buddhist systems - all practice, whether Hinayana, Mahayana, or Vajrayana, all the practices the Buddha taught are the remedy for the ego. Our ego is the big enemy for us, keeping us in samsara, keeping us confused...

If we have ego, then we have these poisons, no choice. We'll have these five poisons continually in our life, whatever we do. And they accumulate more and more, and develop... This is how we live...

So now, we have to know, the Medicine Buddha, the energy of all Buddhas healing - his quality and perfection *is* the Five Wisdoms.

This wisdom is permanently there, no matter where we are. The Buddha's wisdom is with us all the time...

And the Buddha's wisdom is without discriminating, saying, 'You're a devotee, I will give you wisdom and blessing... You're not a devotee' - that's not the way. The Buddha's wisdom is equally for all sentient beings, it pervades all sentient beings...

Wisdom is there already, but we need the cause, the condition. What is the cause, the condition? We need some sense of devotion...

We may not have devotion to anything, but we do have some sense of what we admire... Someone who has no anger at all, no desire at all, no jealousy at all, no pride, no ignorance,

when we see someone like that in the world, we admire their quality and perfection. We think, *'That's great, that someone can be like this!'*

- when we're thinking *'That's great!'*, that's a sense of devotion.

When we think, *'That's great'*, then you're longing to have this wisdom.

This devotion is the cause for the Medicine Buddha's healing blessings to be received.

Your sincere devotion invokes the blessings, as you recite the mantra:

Tayata Om Bekhandze Bekhandze Maha Bekhanze Radza Samungate Soha

It's great, this mantra.

When you recite the mantra, you can see it around the seed syllable hung shining more brightly...

The light is basically blue, but the light manifests five lights and these come from the Buddha to you.

They come to your head, throat, heart, navel and secret place, and the purify the five poisons, it dispels them, it heals them...

These five poisons, and mental dis-ease, first the light pacifies, and purifies them, and then, with the light coming continually, the physical dis-ease is also pacified. Physical discomfort is slowly dispelled...

This light not only temporarily, but completely cuts off the kleshas and sickness coming back and causing you to suffer again. You can be completely liberated, because this is not a temporary practice, this is the practice of the Buddha, and a true Mahayana practice.

So your practice is dedicated to liberation from samsara and attaining enlightenment. The Healing Buddha can serve this purpose at the same time.

In this way, you become clean and pure yourself, also, and, at a certain point reciting the mantra, you become completely transparent, in your visualization, and you become Medicine Buddha also.

After you become Medicine Buddha, identical to the one in front of you, you purify and dispel all these impurities yourself.

You can send light from your heart, shining, and from all around your body, as an aura, and as you keep reciting mantra, this light goes to all sentient beings, whoever needs it:

the realms of hell beings, the realms of hungry ghosts, the realm of animals, the human realm, the demi god realm and the god realm -

all these different realms, the poisons are the cause for being born there.

So, light shines towards them, and dispels their mental poisons and physical discomfort, wherever there are problems.

Specifically, we are in the human world, in the human realm, so we think of the human realm's suffering, the physical and mental problems, particularly those things that you see.

These people, light goes to them, and cures whatever discomfort they may have, it dispels it completely, and removes it completely.

While you visualize that, you keep saying the mantra, and you keep the mind focussed on the visualization in front, and also yourself as the Medicine Buddha.

In the beginning, if you have a hard time visualizing both, focus on the one in front, because that's easy, you can do it.

When you visualize yourself, sometimes it's difficult, but if it's not difficult, visualize yourself as the Medicine Buddha at the same time.

So this is one way we can practice healing. You can help people by reciting mantra and meditating on the Medicine Buddha.

And if you have some kind of medical training, when you are treating someone, for example if you are a masseuse, before you see your patient, you can do this practice.

Your patient has different afflictions. And the result of this practice, in the first place, will be that you will be offering them peace, mentally, and in the second place, what you do for them will really be effective in healing them.

So this is one way you can practice Medicine Buddha.

Another way is you can visualize yourself as Medicine Buddha. You focus on yourself as Medicine Buddha, completely, but then it's important you don't think 'I am Medicine Buddha', because then if you see your body, which is not Medicine Buddha, it will contribute to disbelief.

So what you do is, you have to think, *My mind is Medicine Buddha* not my body.

When you visualize, thinking 'My mind is the Medicine Buddha', then you are making this distinction between body and mind.

Thinking of Medicine Buddha, when you have this kind of sense of confidence that you *are* Medicine Buddha, through the blessing of the Buddha, and through the blessing of the lineage passed down to you, then you can say

I am the Medicine Buddha, I have blessing, and I'm empowered myself to visualize and to think of myself as the Medicine Buddha - in this case you actually, really are Medicine Buddha...

And again, when we talk about Mahamudra, in that case, Medicine Buddha is *within you*. Wherever you are, you are Medicine Buddha. What we are talking about here as the true nature of mind, that is Medicine Buddha. True nature of mind is Mahamudra. You see?

Mahamudra and Medicine Buddha are the same essence, but different technique.

In this case, your mind is here, now. Examine your mind right now. Where is your mind? Is your mind your body? Your body is so many things, lips, hands, arms, head, nose, eyes, feet, fingers, flesh, bones... so are all of these my mind? Then I would have so many minds. That's not possible...

Then I could remove every part, asking, where is my mind? Can I find it inside my body? I've never found it. I've never located it...

Is it outside my body? I haven't found it there either.

So what happens? My mind is... nothing...

My mind is nothing from beginningless time. What is that?

That is Medicine Buddha. That is Mahamudra.

So, nothingness, no matter where you are, in the hell realm, hungry ghost realm, animal realm, human realm, god realm, no matter where, *even enlightenment*, that emptiness will be there. That is Medicine Buddha. That is the Healing Buddha.

So therefore, you, Healing Buddha yourself, even now, each of you are capable of being healed yourself, and healing others. Why? You have protection. You have the true nature of mind. It's powerful! The mind can be powerful.

So that mind, what we are labelling as mind, there's nothing tangible, with shape, or color, There's nothing that can be pointed to, saying 'this is the mind'. So the mind is not really existent. Mind is beyond intellect, beyond concept.

So what you visualize as Medicine Buddha, that is what we are visualizing. When the mind is empty, it's called dharmakaya.

Much less ordinary people, when the Buddha stays completely in the state of the dharmata, even bodhisattvas don't have any communication with that. It's beyond any intellectual concept. But they attain such a state, while being full of love and compassion.

So therefore, out of this emptiness, what you are visualizing - yourself as Medicine Buddha - *is compassion and loving kindness*.

Medicine Buddha's form is compassion and loving kindness.

Out of love and compassion for all sentient beings, Medicine Buddha appears to heal all sentient beings.

So that is what we are visualizing as ourselves - compassion and loving kindness, *boundless* compassion, *boundless* loving kindness...

And you are not removed from the dharmata, total enlightenment, full total awakening, yet you are manifesting yourself as the Medicine Buddha. Ordinary people have to visualize, but this is visible to bodhisattvas. They can talk to them and receive their blessing...

Through the Buddha, appears the Medicine Buddha. Medicine Buddhas appears to other Medicine Buddhas, for the benefit of sentient beings, countless manifestations. This is due to compassion. Extreme, intense compassion comes in the form of the Medicine Buddha, to heal all sentient beings. That is why we can say *We are* Medicine Buddha, because we have the ability to heal sentient beings. *We do have* the potential for the five wisdoms.

The potential for the five wisdoms, right now, is in the deluded state, the negative state. We are ignorant, we are angry, we have desire, we are jealous, we have greed, we are proud... so these five wisdoms, hallucinating the wrong things - this is not the original state...

When these poisons come, we act negatively in body, speech and mind. And this negative continuity obscures our Medicine Buddha more and more. Then Medicine Buddha doesn't effect healing, because we are obscured. The more poisons we have, the more we obscure the purity of our original being.

So, that is the reason, having received the empowerment and instructions, if you are confident for a moment of the session that you *are* the true Medicine Buddha, it can be greatly beneficial to yourself, and greatly beneficial to others. That's why you visualize yourself as Medicine Buddha.

So, in this case, you visualize Medicine Buddha completely, and in his heart there is the syllable hung, on a moon disc.

From the syllable, first we send out yellow light, which gathers the energy of the earth, which returns, and dissolves into you;

Then, second, you sent out white light, which gathers the pure water energies;

Third, sending out red light, it gathers fire energy;

Then sending out green light, this gathers wind energy, which returns and dissolves into the hung at your heart center.

This is also very important, because when we have sickness, or disease, at that time, our elements are imbalanced. Sometimes the fire element is too much, and that makes for discomfort in us; sometimes the water element is too much, and that makes another kind of disease. Sometimes the earth element is too much, or sometimes not enough also. When these elements are out of balance, it causes suffering, discomfort in our health.

So, this way of gathering the four elements, for example, sending out yellow light to gather all of the earth energies - from the top of Mount Meru to the center of the earth - all the energies of the earth you gather and dissolve them into you. Then, if the earth element is not enough, it will augment that, and if it's too much, it will reduce that, or balance it out.

The same can be done with the wind, water and fire elements. White light gathers all the energies of the water element - from the ocean, river, creek, wherever there is water all over the universe, and this light comes back to you and balances your water element.

Same with the fire element - light goes out to all the fire energies, and the light returns back and dissolves into you, and balances out your fire element.

Also, the wind element - the green light goes out and returns and dissolves into you, balancing out the wind element in you.

This will help with healing also.

Like that, in one session, you can recite the mantra, and visualize yourself as Medicine Buddha, and one by one you can send out these lights and gather the energies of the elements that merge with you.

Do this while reciting *Tayata Om Bekhandze Bekhandze Maha Bekhanze Radza Samungate Soha*.

This can also be very helpful.

After you practice this, what you do is then dismiss the visualization. You can dismiss it all suddenly, like a rainbow disappearing in to space, completely gone. There is no Medicine Buddha, no me, nothing on the outside. Everything is empty, spacious, totally relaxed.

At that time you can do anything you are capable of practicing, like mahamudra, or mahasandi. You can practice there, relax, as long as you want. Let your mind quiet down.

(Then dedicate the merit)

A Healing Buddha Practice

O, my ten directions three times family,
all my beloved relations,
may I make a gift of my life

May my life, and this practice benefit us all completely.
May this bring health wherever it is needed,
the balance of the elements, inwardly and outwardly
and the firm establishment of true health and well being,
long life, and happiness for us all

Together with all beings,
May the cultivation of this practice
lead us to the end of every kind of suffering,
and to the enjoyment of all that is good

Contemplating the needs that exist...
May I know ultimate happiness,
the full cessation of all suffering,
and the complete realization of health and peace,
and share that with all...

May all beings have happiness
and all the causes of happiness flourishing...
May all beings be completely and permanently free of suffering
and all the causes of suffering...
I rejoice in all that is beautiful and right in the world,
in all kindness, virtue, and positive action,
and in all success, happiness, and good fortune...
and abide in stable, impartial love

May I always cherish all my family
 with the determination to accomplish for them the highest good
 that is more precious than a wish-fulfilling jewel

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

For myself and all others, unenlightened living is suffering,
 and there is an end to suffering. Enlightened living is happiness,
 health, and peace, and there is a path.

And therefore:

I take refuge in the Buddha, the Enlightened One,
 the Great Compassionate Teacher,
 I take refuge in the Dharma, in all the Liberating Teachings,
 and I take refuge in the Noble Sangha,
 the Accomplished Spiritual Community,
 the Assembly of Saints
 By the merit I have accumulated
 through Generosity and other Virtues,
 may I accomplish Buddhahood for the sake of all beings

Just as my teachers before me have done,
 May I accomplish the full realization of the healing buddha,
 and bring all others without a single exception
 to that very same state

May the Great Healing Light of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas,
 of all Holy Beings,
 and of all that is sacred and pure in the universe
 pacify, completely pacify, and fully remove the sufferings of living beings,
 and bring them all true and lasting health and happiness

May real happiness, health, and peace awaken in us all!
 May all beings benefit!

{Om Namó Bhagavate Bekhandze / Guru Baidurya / Prabha Radzaya /
 Tathagataya / Arhate/ Samyaksam Buddhaya //
 Tadyatha / Om Bekhandzye Bekhandzye / Maha Bekhandzye
 [Bekhandzye] / Radza Samudgate Soha //}

Tayata Om Bekhandze Bekhandze Maha Bekhandze [Bekhandze]
 Radza Samungate Soha

By the merit of this practice,
 and by the virtue of any other good I have done,
 together with that of kind hearted people everywhere,
 and all excellent practitioners,

and by all the virtue and all the blessings
 of all the ten directions three times Buddhas and Bodhisattvas

Saints and Sages, Arhats and Ajahns,
 Lamas, monks and nuns,
 and of all Holy Beings
 May all beings benefit.

By all the blessings we have received,
 and by the strength of our own awakened insight,
 courage, and love,
 may all beings have lasting happiness

From this point forward,
may we all experience only complete liberation
from every form of suffering

May we all experience nibbana,
the remainderless quenching of dukkha
May we all experience only peace, joy,
true health, and happiness.

For myself and all others,
May the supreme Awakening Mind
arise where it has not yet arisen
Where it has arisen, may it not diminish
May it ever grow and flourish

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

May this bring complete health wherever it is needed,
on outer, inner, and secret levels

May this bring about the balance of the elements,
and the firm establishment of true health and well being,
long life, and happiness for us all

By all this virtue
may all the environments where we live be purified,
and may we all together accomplish the full realization
of the Noble healing buddha

By this merit,

Wherever I am, and wherever I may go,
may I further the work of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas,
the awakening of light, complete freedom and peace.

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

White Tara

Instructions and Reminders for White Tara Practice, by Khenpo Tsewang Dongyal Rinpoche

A Short White Tara Practice - Prayers by Dudjom Rinpoche and Khenpo Palden Sherab Rinpoche

The Practice of White Tara – The Wishfulfilling Wheel called ‘Heap of Immortal Essence’, by Kyabje Pabonkha Rinpoche,

and,

A White Tara Commentary, by Geshe Wangdu, given at Tse Chen Ling Center For Tibetan Buddhist Studies, San Francisco, August, 1996

Lama Zopa Rinpoche has given extensive teachings on White Tara practice, that are [online here](#).

Here are [selected notes](#) from these teachings. Highly recommended.

A Short Namgyalma Practice

A Meditation on Amitayus, by Phakchok Rinpoche

This is from the video that can be found [here](#).

Instructions and Reminders for White Tara Practice, by Khenpo Tsewang Dongyal Rinpoche

Please practice according to the "Three Noble Frames" taught by Longchenpa, Mipham Rinpoche, and so many lineage masters:

1. The Noble Beginning of Refuge and Bodhichitta, together with lineage prayers and turning your mind towards the Dharma.
2. The Noble Middle of practicing the Visualization Creation Stage and the Dissolution Completion Stage, while abiding in non-grasping wisdom emptiness-awareness (absolute bodhichitta).
3. The Noble Conclusion of Dedication and Aspiration Prayers.

Begin by reciting the Seven Line Prayer three times, followed by lineage prayers.

Then as the main practice, feel the presence of the White Tara in the sky in front of you. She embodies all the buddhas and bodhisattvas of the three times. Visualize countless rainbow-colored lights emanating from her body, which instantly touch and bless all beings, completely healing all physical and mental disturbances, bringing peace, happiness, and enlightenment to everyone. Bring up compassion and love for all beings including those close to you, and sincerely wish that they all enjoy happy and healthy long lives, all of their obstacles are removed, all their wishes for happiness and peace are fulfilled, that their bodhichitta realization increases, and that everyone quickly achieves enlightenment. Also pray for the long and healthy lives of all the lineage masters and world peacemakers, and that all of their wishes are quickly and perfectly fulfilled.

Recite the mantras of White Tara with devotion while wisdom rainbow light rays continuously stream out from her heart center in every direction.

The light rays then return back to White Tara who blesses you. Continue by accumulating the mantras of White Tara while emanating pure healing lights of wisdom and compassion throughout the entire universe which instantly merge with the blessings of all the buddhas, remove all obstacles, and heal all imbalances, establishing all sentient beings in the great blissfulness of enlightenment:

OM TARE TUTTARE TURE SOHA

OM TARE TUTTARE TURE MAMA AYUR JNANA PUNYE PUTING
KURUYE SOHA

After you accumulate the mantra during your meditation session, White Tara dissolves into you. Then remain in meditation, abiding in the true nature for as long as you have time.

Conclude by dedicating the merit and making sincere aspiration prayers for the immediate health , happiness, and enlightenment of all beings.

A Short White Tara Practice

OM Mother of the Victors of the three times,
 Noble Lady Tara, Liberating Mother,
 Wish-Fulfilling Wheel, Increaser of Life Force,
 I pay homage to you, the Divine Mother [Goddess].

by His Holiness Dudjom Rinpoche

* * *

OM TARE TUTTARE TURE SOHA

OM TARE TUTTARE TURE MAMA AYUR JNANA PUNYE
 PUTING KURUYE SOHA

I pray to Life-Force Holder, Wish-Fulfilling Wheel,
 Please protect me from all fears and increase life, merit,
 experience, and realization.

by Venerable Khenchen Palden Sherab Rinpoche

The Practice of White Tara – The Wishfulfilling Wheel called ‘Heap of Immortal Essence’, by Kyabje Pabonkha Rinpoche

One begins the practice by first taking refuge and generating Bodhicitta.

I go for refuge until I am enlightened, to the Buddha, the Dharma, and the supreme assembly. By the virtuous merit that I create by practicing giving and other perfections, may I attain the state of a Buddha, in order to benefit all sentient beings (3 times)

OM SVABAVA SHUDDHA SARVA DHARMA SVABHAVA
SHUDDOHO HAM

Everything becomes empty.

From within the emptiness on top of moon disc on a white lotus, my own mind is represented by the syllable TAM.

The utpala lotus with the TAM then transforms into myself as the embodiment of long life granting Goddess – White Tara.

With one face and two hands, (my) right hand is in the mudra of supreme generosity. (my) left hand is holding the stem of an utpala lotus and (I) have seven eyes; a youthful body adorned with the major and minor marks and a moon disc as a backrest.

The three points are marked by the three syllables.

From the seed syllable (TAM) light rays radiate inviting the wisdom Goddess (White Tara) and empowering deities.

(White Tara) merges into me becoming non-dual and through the initiation of the empowering deities, my crown is adorned with Amitayus.

From the (syllable) Tam at my heart, light-rays emanate extracting all life and essence of all good qualities of samsara and nirvana which dissolve into my heart.

OM TARA TUTTARE TURE MAMA AYUH PUNEY JNANA
PUSHTHIM KURU SOHA (21 times)

OM TARA TUTTARE TURE SOHA (as many times as possible)

Recite either the vowel and consonant mantra or the hundred syllable mantra.

OM A AA I II U UU RI RII LI LII E AI O AU AM AH SVAHA
OM KA KHA GA GHA NGA
TSA TSHA DZA DZHA NYA
TA THA DA DHA NA
TA THA DA DHA NA
PA PHA BA BHA MA
YA RA LA VA
SA SHA SA HA KSHA SVAHA

OM PADMASATTVA SAMAYA MANUPALAYA
PADMASATTVA DENOPA TITHA DIDO MAY BHAWA
SUTOKAYO MAY BHAWA
SUPOKAYO MAY BHAWA
ANURAKTO MAY BHAWA
SARVA SIDDI MAY PAR YA TSA
SARVA KARMA SU TSA MAY
TSITAM SHRIYAM KURU HUNG
HA HA HA HA HOH BHAGAWAN
SARVA TATHAGATA
PADMA MA MAY MU TSA
PADMA BHAWA MAHASAMAYA SATO HUNG PAY

One completes the practice with the dedication:

If I see the signs of untimely death, let me straight away clearly see the form of Mother Tara, the wish fulfilling wheel, and, crushing the might of the Lord of Death, quickly become a deathless vajradhara.

By this virtue may I quickly realize Guru-Buddhahood, and transfer each sentient being into that enlightened state!

May the precious Bodhi-mind, where it is unborn, arise; may that born have no decline, but develop more and more.

Translated by Ven. Geshe Kalsang Wangdu's student and translator Michael Lobsang Yeshe, after Geshe-la granted the White Tara Initiation at Tse Che Ling Center for Tibetan Buddhist Studies in San Francisco on August 16, 1996.

May all holy teachers live long lives and guide us until samsara ends.

A White Tara Commentary, by Geshe Wangdu, given at Tse Chen Ling Center For Tibetan Buddhist Studies, San Francisco.

Lightly edited.

[Note: It's traditionally taught that what's called 'self-generation' - where one visualizes oneself as the deity - should only be done by those who have received the initiation of a particular deity, but that 'front generation' - where one visualizes the deity in space above and in front of oneself - can be done by anyone.]

From August 14th, 1996:

The main motivation for receiving this initiation is that we wish to have a long life, free from illness, in order to practice Dharma for the sake of living beings.

The main focus, and the direct benefit, then, is for one's own long life; indirectly, the purpose is to practice the teachings so we can help all other living beings.

White Tara Commentary, August 28th, 1996:

I thought that it would be beneficial to go over the sadhana of White Tara, the White Tara sadhana practice, and that that would be beneficial for those who wish in the future to do a retreat on White Tara.

So there is here a very brief form of the sadhana, which I will go over first, and then I can go more extensively after that.

The brief form of the White Tara sadhana that I have now and will be commenting upon is a sadhana which the Tibetan great master Pabonkha Rinpoche has composed, and it's a very brief form, in fact only two pages. (Geshe-la, in English: 'I think it's composed especially for westerners!') (laughter).

If one were to do a retreat on White Tara, it would be highly beneficial for oneself and for others. The results would be that one's mind would be much calmer, and one would gain more knowledge and intellect, and also, the other immediate benefits would be that one would have good health, and long life, and also what we call material wealth as well. The particular, immediate benefits of doing White Tara practice are said to be that one will have success in whatever one peruses, whether it's spiritual or material-wise.

In one of the praises to White Tara, which is in the form of a prayer, or in stanzas, one of the stanzas at the end mentions that by praising White Tara, and by praising and respect, and by doing salutations to White Tara, those who wish to have children will have children; those who wish to have sons will have sons; those who wish to have daughters will gain daughters; those who wish to have possessions will gain possessions; and furthermore, all negativity and obstacles for one's practices would be all vanquished- that is one of the stanzas.

The most essential point is to do the sadhana in the proper way, with faith, and if one follows all the commitments and does it sincerely, with faith, then definitely the results will come.

Unlike other Buddhist deities, White Tara is known to be a deity which, if one follows the practice, it is one of the most simple practices. And it is very easy for us to follow and to do- not like other deities, such as Yamantaka or Guhyasamaja, other deities where the forms are even difficult to visualize.

And in fact, the mantra itself being short, one is able to complete a retreat with reciting one hundred-thousand times the mantra in one week, with four sessions or even in three sessions a day. After the retreat then of course it would be highly beneficial to do a fire puja as well, and that of course can be done in places like Vajrapani where people there can help and know about it.

Then, furthermore, one of the main benefits, again, of doing White Tara practice, especially a retreat, is that one will be very influential and powerful in helping others. One of the other deities is also Yamantaka, which is said to be a very powerful, influential practice to do. Particularly one becomes powerful and will get the abilities to help and benefit others, especially people who are sick or unwell in any way.

Now I'll go over the brief sadhana, according to the text.

The first line reads here that, after sitting down, one should do what we call taking the refuge and generating bodhicitta. And after that is done, then one should meditate upon emptiness. Particularly one should visualize oneself as becoming the nature of emptiness.

One should imagine that one's gross body, the physical body, fades away, and transforms into the nature of emptiness.

One can actually imagine that one's physical body is fading away into space. And then one should feel particularly that it is the nature of emptiness.

After one's gross physical body is transformed into emptiness, then within that emptiness one should imagine that a white lotus arises from that empty space, a white lotus.

On the thangka up there, portraying White Tara, the lotus has been portrayed as being a pink lotus, however in the text it is said that the lotus

should be white- a white lotus which has a thousand petals, which of course is quite enormous, quite big.

So then on top of the thousand petaled lotus one visualizes a moon-disk, a full moon-disk, which is flat on its surface.

I'd like to give a description of the significance of the lotus and the moon, and on many portraits of the deity there's also a sun-disk, however, all in common have, definitely, a lotus and a moon-disk, and I'd like to give the significance of them.

The lotus signifies renunciation. So, renunciation, to give a brief definition, is a wish, or the spontaneous wish to be free from cyclic existence, the wish to be free from that and to reach the state of liberation, nirvana. That sort of spontaneous wish or state of mind is renunciation.

Even if one is an ordinary being, without any realizations, if one were to have the renounced mind, then the faults of what we call samsara, the faults of what we call cyclic existence wouldn't hinder that person.

So the manner in which the lotus signifies renunciation is that, even though the lotus itself was born out of a pond, what we call a swamp, or a muddy pond, even though it grows out of that, when it blooms on top of the water, there's not even a bit of mud on its' petals, and it is free of the mud itself. That is how it resembles renunciation.

Having the renounced state of mind in one's continuum would be the same, where even though one is born from the cyclic existence, if one doesn't have the faults or the clinging to the cyclic existence, then the mind itself would be pure, as the lotus is pure, being unstained by the mud.

So the particular lotus we are talking about here, which resembles renunciation, is a particular lotus which grows in a swamp (which means

that the whole surface is full of mud itself), and even though it grows out of a swamp, the mud of the swamp doesn't stain onto the petals.

So, if one knows the significance of a lotus, then as soon as one sees a lotus, it's a reminder of what it signifies, which is renunciation, the renounced state of mind which we should generate.

Then, the moon-disk signifies bodhicitta, the wish to achieve enlightenment. The way the moon signifies that is that, when the full moon is out in the evening, as soon as that light comes forth, whoever is out in the moonlight feels a soothing effect, and particularly when it's very dark and there's no other light around.

When the moonlight is shining upon anyone, one feels a soothing effect, and that soothing effect is felt by everyone in the moonlight. So, similarly, the bodhicitta mind, the altruistic wish to achieve enlightenment, that sort of mind itself is a powerful mind where whoever has that mind brings a soothing effect for whoever is around.

So, whatever deity, or whatever is sitting on top of a lotus and moon-disk, that deity has achieved that state of mind, of renunciation and bodhicitta.

Some deities, as mentioned earlier, have on top of the lotus a sun-disk and a moon disk. First, a sun-disk, and then on top of the sun-disk, a moon-disk. Some deities have what you call the cushion of the lotus, the sun and moon-disk, all three.

The sun signifies emptiness, the understanding of emptiness, the wisdom realizing emptiness, in this way: as soon as the sun-rays come forth, it's very bright, and it illuminates everything; similarly, whoever has that wisdom realizing emptiness, it illuminates the nature of all existence, and the nature of all existence becomes very clear to that being.

That's how, by generating the wisdom realizing emptiness, all other doubts and all other ignorant states of mind are automatically extinguished. Therefore, the sun signifies wisdom, what we call the wisdom realizing emptiness.

So, after one visualizes the lotus and then the moon-disk upon the lotus, then one visualizes the syllable TAM, which is in fact the essence of one's own mind. The syllable TAM signifies our mind.

One should visualize that this syllable is made of white, radiating light.

So that syllable TAM which one has visualized, now we should imagine that transforming into White Tara. You know how like on T.V. ads, or whatever, we see things, there's something there and sometimes, suddenly it transforms, especially on song clips, you see faces transforming into different things. So this TAM we should imagine it transforming, itself, transforming into White Tara deity.

First there's nothing, and that nothingness transforms into a lotus and a moon-disk, and on top of that the syllable TAM, right? So then that syllable TAM now transforms into White Tara deity.

The text mentions the form of the White Tara deity. It says it has 'one face and two arms...' - it may sound strange to us in the beginning to say that. Why should they be mentioning 'one face and two arms'?, because we all have one face and two arms anyway. The reason why they specify one face and two arms is because there are many deities who have many faces and many arms, so it is specifying that this particular deity is with one face and two arms.

The right hand is in the mudra of Supreme Generosity, which means that, 'If you are willing, I will give you the ability to achieve enlightenment in this very lifetime'. That mudra itself signifies that the deity is willing to

grant us the state of enlightenment. It's a mudra of generosity.

And in the left hand one should visualize the deity holding a white lotus flower called 'utpala'. The lotus stem goes out in three branches, and each stem of the branch has a different flower- one which is already opened and in full bloom, one which is about to open, and one which is just a bud. These three represent the Buddhas of the three times.

The three different buds representing the Buddhas of the three times signifies that the Buddhas of the three times all had to rely upon White Tara in order to achieve enlightenment. White Tara is the Mother Goddess for all the Buddhas of the past, present, and the future, and it's only by relying on White Tara deity that the Buddhas have achieved their state of enlightenment. So that's why White Tara is known as the Mother of all Buddhas.

And then there's seven eyes- an eye on the forehead and two eyes where you have eyes normally, one eye each on the palms of the hands and the soles of the feet.

This portrait of the White Tara deity is a very good one. I found it to be very perfect in every way, so of course if you can get copies like this, then it will be very nice for you.

In here it explains that it should be a sixteen year-old youth, the facial expression... This portrait really portrays that. Maybe we can get laser scans of this...

Then of course when we visualize the actual body of the deity White Tara, we should not visualize and imagine it as being like our body, in a gross form, but rather the body itself is a body of light.

This reminds me of a question asked to me once in Dharmasala by a western monk who had difficulty in doing a meditation, particularly a visualization where one absorbs the lama into one's self. And he was relating to me that he finds it very difficult to absorb the lama into himself. When it comes to the top of his crown it feels like it's stuck there. So then I told him that that's maybe because you are visualizing the lama in a normal gross physical body, and in fact that itself is not proper.

We should visualize the lama above our head as having the nature of light, which is what is called an uncontaminated body, which is in the nature of light.

In fact it is mentioned that when we reach the third level of a bodhisattva that the physical body itself transforms into a light body, but in fact it's even more profound than that. The body of the Buddha is in fact all completely light, no stain of contamination, and it is the very nature of what we call a light body.

So therefore that is visualized, and it's even easier when we do the visualization of the body merging into ourselves.

So, although one should be visualizing one's teacher as being the actual Buddha, for that is the practice in general, when we do the meditation it shows that one part of our mind is fixed onto our guru's body as being flesh and bones, and that obstructs our meditation when we do the meditation of absorption, or merging the teacher into ourselves. So there's that conflict in our minds at that time.

Next, the White Tara deity is adorned with many jewels, head ornaments, precious jewels, and the clothes are silk garments, and of different kinds of colors. And again, even the clothing we shouldn't imagine as being like physical material, but in the form of light.

The aura on the back is shaped like a moon. Then one should visualize the three syllables at the three points, which is a white OM at the crown of the head, a red AH at the throat, and a blue HUNG at the heart.

So again, one should visualize at one's heart, even though it's not mentioned particularly here, through other sadhanas I know that one has to visualize a lotus, again a white lotus, and on top of the lotus a moon-disk, and on top of that the syllable TAM again, which is white, white light.

Then after having visualized the white syllable TAM, in white light, one visualizes light rays emanating from that TAM. The light rays go throughout all the ten directions, (which actually, literally means all directions), and then that light invokes all the Buddhas and bodhisattvas from the ten directions, and then by invoking the Buddhas and bodhisattvas from the ten directions, the Buddhas and bodhisattvas from the ten directions merge into one's self, which is the White Tara deity.

One should imagine the merging as being like, for example, if it snows on a lake, as soon as the snowflakes hit the water, it just merges into the water. There's nothing left over. So that should be how we imagine the Buddhas and bodhisattvas all merging into ourselves, which is in the form of the White Tara deity. And we become one with all the Buddhas and bodhisattvas, we merge with all the Buddhas and bodhisattvas. And then at that moment, after we have visualized that all the Buddhas and bodhisattvas have merged into ourselves, at that very instant we should very strongly feel that we have become one with all the Buddhas and bodhisattvas.

It is said that when doing this visualization, where the light rays invoke all the Buddhas and bodhisattvas from all the ten directions, it is not necessary to imagine them merging into oneself from the top of one's crown. That is not necessary. It can be merging from all directions throughout every part of our body.

Then one visualizes that the deity of initiation gives us an initiation. And after having received the initiation from the initiation deity, then on the crown of our heads, which is in White Tara's form, we imagine that the long-life Buddha Amitayus resides there.

After having visualized the Amitayus on the top of our crown, which ornaments the crown, then again we visualize light rays emanating from the syllable TAM at the heart, and this time the light rays radiate into all the directions, and not particularly to all the Buddhas and bodhisattvas, but all throughout the universe, and to the five elements within the universe, the fire, water, wind, earth and space elements, all the five elements, and to what we call all the riches of the kings, all the riches and beauties of the kings and queens in this universe, in fact all the jewels and any beautiful object in the universe is invoked by the light rays emanating from our heart.

And we should imagine that the light rays are extracting all the qualities from the five elements, from all the riches and all the beauties within the universe, and it extracts it and brings forth what we call the essence back into us, in the form of light rays.

An example would be like when a magnet, a powerful magnet is put in the middle, and you have small pieces of iron all around. When the magnet is put amongst those pieces of iron, it suddenly draws in all the small pieces. That would be how we should imagine the essences, all the good qualities, the compassion and the good qualities of all the Buddhas and bodhisattvas, and also the good qualities of the riches and beauties of all the different parts of the universe are extracted and brought to us. And they merge into the syllable TAM.

Also at the same time we imagine that the essence of what we call the life force, the essence of merit, and the essence of all the nourishment from all the different sources in the universe are all merging into ourselves, particularly into the TAM within our heart.

One should, of course, always be aware of the fact that the syllable TAM itself is our mind, the nature of our mind.

So when we visualize and imagine all the good qualities within the universe merging into the TAM, in fact we are visualizing all the good qualities merging into our own mind. And if this is done with strong faith, in fact it is said that one will certainly receive all the good qualities, of long life, nourishment, and so forth.

I feel that extracting the essence from the five elements is actually a very factual practice. Whenever we get sick, or are unwell in any way it is said that it is because of the five elements being out of balance, or being not sufficient in our bodies. So when we visualize that we are receiving the essence of all five elements, in fact that in itself is the proper way to think of how we should be healthy, having the essence of the five elements in balance within ourselves.

So at this point, when we do this visualization, while we are still contemplating the visualization of the light rays going out in all the directions and then invoking all the good qualities, bringing them back and merging them into the syllable, while we are doing this visualization, then at this point we start doing the recitation of the mantra, the long mantra. We do it twenty-one times at the beginning.

Then after having done a twenty-one round of the long version of the mantra, then we begin the actual recitation of the actual mantra of Tara, which is OM TARA TUTTARE TURE SOHA, and at this point we begin counting, because if we're doing a retreat we're supposed to be doing a certain number of recitations.

If I were to relate from my own experience of doing a retreat, it is my own experience that I find it difficult to continue to focus on the visualization, and sometimes it can become too stressful for the mind. So I find it useful,

beneficial, before beginning the recitation to try to focus very attentively on the visualization as explained in the text. And when I come to the point of the recitation, because I have focused very attentively on the visualization initially, because I have imagined that I'm doing the process of invoking the good qualities from all the different directions, then I try to relax the mind a bit from the actual visualization and just contemplate on the recitation itself.

Then, after I reach about one thousand recitations, I can go back into doing the visualization, while still reciting, but focusing more on the visualization- of sending out the light from the syllable TAM, and the light radiating out to all the directions and invoking the good qualities of the Buddhas and bodhisattvas, and the five elements, and all the riches and long life, and so forth, and bringing that back in the form of light rays, and merging them into the TAM, doing that visualization, as explained previously.

You know, I feel that after doing some recitation, one feels that, 'I've done enough work to be able to receive more blessings'. (laughter) It's like even the visualization at that point becomes stronger.

So if one finds it difficult to maintain the visualization all throughout, then, not to be too stressful, but to remember that the main point is to have a relaxed mind, and to feel the blessings being received from all the Buddhas and bodhisattvas.

It is mentioned that when we do any retreat practice, the sessions should be as grain is- so for example if one had committed one's self to doing a one week retreat, let's say on White Tara, then on the first and second days the sessions are more brief, relaxed. Then as one goes into the third, fourth and fifth days, then one increases the length of the sessions, and even the focus and the visualization should be stronger. Then as one comes to the end, one decreases the length, and if one finds it to be quite stressful, the

one can be more relaxed at this time.

So if one were planning to stay for two hours in each session, one begins the first day with maybe only an hour. Then on the second day one could start increasing the length of the session.

Sometimes when I do retreat I'll go into three hours each session in the middle. So then the longest in the beginning can be like two hours. So in the beginning, one hour in a session the first day, and then increasing more the second, and then eventually coming to two hours in a session. Then at the end again decreasing the time, and coming back again to one hour.

The reason why it is said to have shorter sessions in the beginning of a retreat is that if one puts so much time and energy in the beginning, one may lose interest and one may become discouraged. So the time length is said to be like a grain, and the reason why is because the top and the bottom of a grain are pointed, and the middle is thicker. So that is how the duration of the time should be, small or short in the beginning, and then more extensive in the middle, and then short again at the end.

When we come to the middle of our retreat period, then we have to become quite accustomed to visualization, and to the actual meditation itself. Then if we extend our time we don't feel as tired or stressful. Then to decrease the time as one is ending the retreat is so that one will feel enthusiastic about doing a retreat in the future.

So then, to make it brief, at the end, after one does the visualization, then one does the mantra of the Sanskrit vowels and consonants, and then after that the Vajrasattva mantra, and then the dedication.

(Translator: I think it's the last verse of the dedication that's the verse that Geshe-la was mentioning:)

I pray that, by the power of these prayers and praises,

for all beings and myself, wherever they may dwell,
illness, demons, poverty, quarrels and wars
may be pacified,

May the Dharma and good fortune flourish

(The first verse of the dedication, I'm sorry...):

If I see the signs of untimely death, let me straight
away clearly see the form of Mother Tara, the wish-
fulfilling wheel, and, crushing the might of the Lord
of Death, quickly become a deathless vajradhara.

Then after we recite this dedication verse we can end our session. This is
the most brief way of how to do a retreat on White Tara.

So even if one were not able to do a retreat on White Tara, to do the practice
every morning for about half an hour, if one can do the practice and recite
the mantra for, let's say, a thousand times each morning until one reaches a
hundred thousand times, then that would be very beneficial in one's life,
that would be very beneficial. And that could be done just as a practice,
but not in a retreat form. It is similar to doing a retreat, even though it's not
very strict. That could be done even if one is working, before going to
work, one can do it in the morning. There is definite benefit if one is able to
do that.

The particular sadhana which I have given tonight is a sadhana which has
only two pages, so it's a very easy sadhana.

So I will conclude here tonight, and thank you very much, everyone. Let us
do the dedication.

(dedication)

A Short Namgyalma Practice

Homage and praise to Vijaya,
 the Glorious Goddess who is the color of the autumn moon,
 with exceedingly beautiful and peaceful form,
 three faces and eight arms;
 She who grants supreme life,
 and wisdom beyond measure!

OM BHRUM SOHA / OM AMRITA AYURDADE SOHA

Recite as much as possible.

Upon one's merely thinking of her,
 the Glorious Goddess grants the siddhi of abundant life,
 and conquers the hostile demon of the Lord Death.
 Homage to the Supreme Sugata Ushnisha!

English is translated by Ina Bieler

A Meditation on Amitayus, by Phakchok Rinpoche, lightly edited

We begin by visualizing Amitayus (Tibetan tshe dpag med) — the long life Buddha – above the crown of our head.

When we visualize Amitayus, we know that he is our guru and is the same as the guru in your heart. These gurus are not different – they are inseparable. Within our heart center, we visualize a moon and sun disc that are egg-shaped, not flat. When we visualize here, we see them as egg shaped or cone shaped, and that they are open like a locket, or an amulet box.

For the simplest practice, we visualize that inside the open locket is our life force. Then we request Amitayus to please bless us.

Simply visualize like this and chant the Amitayus mantra:

OM AMARANI JIWANTAYE SOHA

In the Sanskrit languages some of these syllables have specific meaning. “A” is a negating sound, meaning something like cut, “mara” refers to obstacle makers, and jivan means life .

Light Visualization

After we have chanted the mantra for a short time, we visualize nectar falling down from Amitayus. When we do this more elaborately, we visualize Amitayus sending light out and then bringing back all of our dissipated life force with the four elements. Whenever our life force is a little bit weak due to obstacles or something like that, this life force dissolves into Amitayus’ vase, which overflows into our body. Then the nectar fills our body completely – from the top of our head down to our toes.

Then we imagine that our whole body is filled with this light, and as a result, the body's five elements become strong. Following that, our body's energy becomes strong. And as a result, our life and our life force – our length of life – becomes revived. Think that we have recharged, just like we would charge a battery... Once we are fully charged, the nectar left over flows down into the open locket. The moon and sun discs then snap closed. This rainbow-colored light mantra then binds the locket.

Requesting Blessings

After the binding of the sun and moon locket, we supplicate Amitayus to please bless us and to keep our life force strong. Then, Amitayus descends from above our head onto the top of the mantra knot on the locket, or amulet box at our heart and remains there.

Summary

Remember that we visualize the sun and moon as an open container, not as flat discs. Nectar flows down from Amitayus who is inseparable from our own guru– into our body. It then overflows into the locket which then closes tightly. The rainbow colored mantra chain itself then binds the locket. After this, Amitayus descends from above our head and he remains on the knot. His presence seals the locket, and improves our life force, making us stronger.

We recite the mantra and visualize this process, and then rest in meditation.

- From the Samye Institute

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In this video teaching, Phakchok Rinpoche physically demonstrates the visualization.

Vajra Armor Protection Wheel - Short Practice, and Meditation

Translated by Lama Zopa Rinpoche and Fabrizio Pallotti Champa Pelgye

Practice Requirements:

Anyone can do this practice. However, you are permitted to generate yourself as Vajrapani only if you have received:

- the initiation (wang) of Vajrapani
- or the initiation of any deity of performance, yoga, or highest yoga tantra and the subsequent permission (jenang) of Vajrapani
- or the initiation of any deity of the tathagata or vajra types of action tantra and the subsequent permission of Vajrapani

Otherwise, you should visualize Vajrapani above your head or in front of you.

Vajra Armor Protection Wheel Short Practice

Herein is the Vajra Armor Protection Wheel meditation and recitation: (1)

I become the very ferocious dark blue Vajrapani, (2)
 Holding a vajra and a snake lasso.
 My holy body is complete with the glorious ornaments of
 the charnel grounds,
 And I stand with my two feet stretched out on a lotus and
 sun.

I abide amidst a blazing transcendental wisdom fire.
 From my holy body fire garudas, iron scorpions,
 Black pigs, wind, fire, and the noxious vapors of poison
 Are emitted like violent winds and hailstorms,
 Destroying all disease, epidemics, spirit harms, and
 interferers.

Mantra Recitation

HUM VAJRA PHAT / OM PADMASHAVARI PHAT / NÄN PAR
 SHIG / NAGANAN / TADYATHA / SARVAVIRITA / HANA HANA /
 VAJRENA RAKSHA RAKSHA SVAHA

*Recite this as many times as possible. At the end of the recitation, [blow
 on] water to bless it. Then, drink and anoint yourself with it.*

*You can also recite the mantra, blow on cream or butter, and apply it to infected
 areas on the skin.*

In your daily practice, blow into your nostrils.

After you finish reciting the mantra, hold your hand in front of your mouth and blow the air up, so it goes into your nostrils.

At the conclusion of the session, think that all disease and spirit harms are totally destroyed. Then, abide for a while in the state of meditation on the actual mode of existence [emptiness], beyond what is to be protected and what protects [conventional truth]. While empty, one arises again as the deity's holy body.

Then, make dedication prayers and prayers of auspiciousness.

Due to all the roots of virtue accumulated in the three times by myself, all sentient beings, and all the buddhas, through any sentient being merely seeing, remembering, or touching me, may I fulfill all the hopes of all transmigrating beings perfectly and completely, just like a wish-fulfilling jewel or a wish-fulfilling tree.

May all the negative karmas and obscurations accumulated since beginningless births be instantly and completely purified.

May the mind of enlightenment that cherishes others more than oneself be generated in one's mental continuum.

Having easily generated the great seal of clear light in their minds, may they quickly achieve the state of highest, complete enlightenment.

In short, by pleasing the holy virtuous master,
 With the activities of much listening that bring to completion
 The realization of the Muni's intent,
 May I spread the teachings of the Victorious One in the ten
 directions.

This text was extracted by Jñāna from The Most Wrathful Chakra of Protecting the Root Attainment for the purpose of use in daily practice.

Colophons:

Original Colophon:

The dedications were composed by the one with the name of Thubten Zopa for the sake of [making] the freedoms and riches meaningful.

Publisher's Colophon:

Initially translated by Lama Zopa Rinpoche, March 2003, and scribed by Ven. Holly Ansett. Edited by Kendall Magnussen, August 2011, relying on a similar translation by Ven. Thubten Pemba, May 2009. The last three dedication verses translated by Fabrizio Pallotti Champa Pelgye, 2014. Mantra transliterated by Ven. Tenzin Tsomo and Joono Repo, FPMT Education Services, May 2019. Reviewed by Joono Repo, FPMT Translation Services, August 2019.

Vajra Armor Protection Wheel - Meditation

Taking Refuge and Generating Bodhichitta

I take refuge until I am enlightened
 In the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Supreme Assembly.
 By my merits of generosity and so forth,
 May I become a buddha to benefit transmigratory beings. (3x)

Eight Verses of Thought Transformation

Determined to obtain the greatest possible benefit
 From all sentient beings,
 Who are more precious than a wish-fulfilling jewel,
 I hold them most dear at all times.

Wherever I am and whoever I am with,
 I always consider myself the lowest of all
 And from the depths of my heart
 Hold others dear and supreme.

In all actions, I examine my mental continuum
 And the minute a delusion arises,
 Since it endangers myself and others,
 I forcefully confront and avert it.

Whenever I see sentient beings who are wicked in nature
 And overwhelmed by negative actions and heavy suffering,
 I hold such rare ones dear,
 As if I had found a precious treasure.

When, out of envy, others mistreat me
 With abuse, insults, or the like,
 I accept defeat
 And offer the victory to them.

When someone whom I have benefited
 And in whom I have great hope
 Gives me terrible harm,
 I regard them as my virtuous friend.

In short, both directly and indirectly,
 I offer every happiness and benefit to all my mothers.
 I secretly take upon myself
 All their harms and sufferings.

Also, I do not defile all these practices
 By the stains of the superstitions of the eight worldly concerns
 And by knowing all phenomena to be illusory,
 Without trusting in them, I am freed from bondage.

Four Immeasurables

Immeasurable Equanimity

How wonderful it would be if all sentient beings were to abide
 in equanimity, free from the closeness of attachment and the
 distance of hatred.

May they abide in equanimity.

I myself will cause them to abide in equanimity.

Please, Guru-Buddha, bless me to be able to do this.

Immeasurable Loving Kindness

Lama Zopa Rinpoche replaces the original words “to have happiness

and the causes of happiness” with “to achieve buddhahood,” because “happiness” tends to bring to mind temporary samsaric happiness, whereas what sentient beings actually need is enlightenment. For the original version, see below.

How wonderful it would be if all sentient beings were to achieve buddhahood.

May they achieve buddhahood.

I myself will cause them to achieve buddhahood.

Please, Guru-Buddha, bless me to be able to do this.

The original version:

How wonderful it would be if all sentient beings were to have happiness and the causes of happiness.

May they have happiness and its causes.

I myself will cause them to have happiness and its causes.

Please, Guru-Buddha, bless me to be able to do this.

Immeasurable Compassion

How wonderful it would be if all sentient beings were free from suffering and the causes of suffering.

May they be free from suffering and its causes.

I myself will cause them to be free from suffering and its causes.

Please, Guru-Buddha, bless me to be able to do this.

Immeasurable Joyfulness

How wonderful it would be if all sentient beings were never separated from the happiness of higher rebirth and liberation.

May they never be separated from these.

I myself will cause them never to be separated from these.

Please, Guru-Buddha, bless me to be able to do this.

Tonglen (Taking and Giving) Practice

Generate great compassion towards sentient beings and think:

“How wonderful it would be if all sentient beings were free from suffering and the causes of suffering.”

Take all of their problems, especially relationship problems and sickness. Take all the suffering and the causes of suffering, all the obscurations - all the undesirable things - in the form of pollutions that are then absorbed into the self-cherishing thought. The self-cherishing thought is completely destroyed and the real I, which the self-cherishing thought grasps at and thinks is so precious, becomes empty. Then, place the mind in emptiness as much as you can.

Spend some time on taking and then some time on emptiness. Also, from time to time, with loving kindness, dedicate your own body, possessions, and three times' merits towards others, especially to the person who hates you. However, mostly do the practice of taking.

Destroying the Self-Cherishing Thought

What you should remember most, again and again:

“These problems are the shortcomings of the self-cherishing thought; that is who gave them to me. There is no reason why I should experience them, so I am returning them back to the self-cherishing thought and letting him suffer.”

All the time, whenever there's a problem, use this. Try to recognize self-cherishing easily and then use it as a weapon to destroy itself by giving the problem back to it.

Whenever a problem arises, instead of blaming it on the outside, blame it on the self-cherishing thought and give it back to the self-cherishing thought. Continuously, keep the self-cherishing thought as your worst enemy. In this way, keep yourself away from the self-cherishing thought, as you would from a poisonous snake. This way, no matter how many problems you have, even if they equal the size of this earth, even if you have hailstorms of problems, immediately they are no longer problems. This is the very essential Mahayana thought transformation, how you can immediately stop the problems.

Visualization

Visualize the deity Vajrapani in oneness with all the gurus that you have relied upon and made a connection with (i.e., having received teachings from them in a guru-disciple relationship).

[Dark blue Vajrapani is very ferocious, holding a vajra and a snake lasso. His holy body is complete with the glorious ornaments of the charnel grounds and he stands with his two feet stretched out on a lotus and sun. He abides amidst a blazing transcendental wisdom fire. From his holy body fire garudas, iron scorpions, black pigs, wind, fire, and the noxious vapors of poison are emitted like violent winds and hailstorms, destroying all diseases, epidemics, spirit harms, and interferers.]

Mantra Recitation

As you recite the mantra, five-colored nectar comes to your five places separately: white from the forehead, red from the throat, blue from the heart, yellow from the navel, and green from the secret place. This purifies the five delusions, their imprints left on your mind, the negativities accumulated because of them, and all obscurations and negative karmas accumulated during beginningless lifetimes as well as the harms of nagas and other beings. They all come out through the pores and lower doors of your body in the form of dirty black liquid, like when you wash

very dirty clothes or the body. All diseases - such as cancer or whatever is the main disease that you have - come out in the form of animals, snakes, frogs, and sea animals.

Vajra Armor Protection Wheel Mantra

OM PADMA SHAVARI PHAT / NÄN PAR SHIG / NAGANAN /
TADYATHA / SARVAVIRITA / HANA HANA / VAJRENA RAKSHA
RAKSHA SVAHA

{With each mala recited, purify oneself for eighty-seven recitations and purify other sentient beings for the remaining twenty-one. Blow on the water after that. Another method is to bless the water by visualizing different colored nectar beams emitting from Vajra Armor and going into boiled water, which is in a big jar, bucket, or any other container in front of you. Again, blow on the water.}

Generate faith that the water becomes nectar of the highest transcendental wisdom, understanding, infinite compassion for all sentient beings, and perfect power to immediately purify and pacify all diseases - such as cancer or whatever you have - and all defilements.

After one round of the rosary, blow on the water. In this way, do any number of sessions a day - perhaps three or four. During each session, do one to one and a half hours or more of recitation. Keep going like this, purifying yourself and blessing the water.}

Concluding Visualization

At the end of the session, all those negative karmas and diseases that came out in various forms are piled up like mountains around you, covering the whole earth. A chasm, nine stories deep, appears beneath you. The Lord of Death appears and opens his mouth.

Then, all these go inside his mouth and are transformed into nectar. The Lord of Death is completely satisfied and his mouth becomes sealed with a golden vajra. He then returns to his own place, which is far away and from which it is impossible to return, and the earth closes back up. This way, it becomes a method for long life.

Dedication

May the precious supreme bodhichitta
 Not yet born arise.
 May that arisen not decline,
 But increase more and more.

Lama Zopa Rinpoche does many extensive versions of this dedication prayer, but one common one is:

Due to all the past, present, and future merits collected by me, the numberless buddhas, and the numberless sentient beings, may bodhichitta be generated in the hearts of all the sentient beings of the six realms, and especially in the hearts of everybody in this world, including all the students, benefactors, and volunteers in the FPMT organization. May it be generated in the hearts of all those who rely upon me, all those for whom I have promised to pray, and all those whose names have been given to me. May it be generated in my heart and in the hearts of all my family members, those who are living and those who have died. May the bodhichitta that has already been generated increase.

{Meditate on making charity of one's own body, speech, and mind; possessions; and three times' merits as well as all the resultant happiness - including enlightenment - to all sentient beings.}

Whatever suffering sentient beings have, may I experience it.
 Whatever merit and happiness I have accumulated, may others experience it.

Due to all the past, present, and future merits collected by me, the numberless buddhas, and the numberless sentient beings, in whatever life I am in, may my actions never cause even the slightest harm to any sentient being. Instead, may they only bring the greatest benefit.

Whatever suffering or happiness I experience, may it always be only the cause for all sentient beings to achieve enlightenment as quickly as possible.

Due to all the past, present, and future merits collected by me, the numberless buddhas, and the numberless sentient beings, however many sick sentient beings there are, who have cancer and so forth - all diseases - and those who have the karma to become sick, may they be liberated from these. From now on, may they never experience sickness again.

Due to all the past, present, and future merits collected by me, the numberless buddhas, and the numberless sentient beings, which are completely empty of existing from their own side, may I, who am completely empty of existing from my own side, achieve the state of full enlightenment, which is completely empty of existing from its own side, and lead all sentient beings, who are completely empty of existing from their own side, to that state, which is completely empty of existing from its own side, by myself alone, who am completely empty of existing from my own side.

Practice Advice

It is good to continue at least one session a day, but do more sessions a day if you can. Drink three, four, or five mouthfuls of blessed water at the end of each session. Think that every disease is purified as well as its causes: negative karmas, delusions, and defilements. After drinking the water, think that you have received omniscience, perfect power, infinite

compassion embracing all living beings, and all the infinite qualities of a fully enlightened being.

This is one of the most powerful mantras to cure cancer. It is also commonly used for any disease, black magic, and spirit harm. If you recite it many times every day, you can become a great healer helping other people. You can give others the water blessed with this mantra to drink and, in this way, heal them.

Colophon:

Composed by Venerable Lama Thubten Zopa Rinpoche in Genting, Malaysia, April 1997. Typed and slightly edited by Ven. Jampa Lundrup. Further editing by Kendall Magnussen, August 2011. Words in brackets for the description of the deity were extracted from Vajra Armor Protection Wheel Short Practice and added here for convenience.

Mantra transliterated by Ven. Tenzin Tsomo and Joono Repo, FPMT Education Services, May 2019. The following prayers were updated: Taking Refuge and Generating Bodhichitta, Eight Verses of Thought Transformation, Four Immeasurables, and the first and last dedication prayers, October 2019.

Notes

(1) The Tibetan text starts with a note stating: “I received the oral transmission from Trulshig Rinpoche.”

(2) If one does not have this initiation, one can still do the practice by visualizing the deity, of one nature with your gurus, in the space in front of you. See Practice Requirements.

A Short Practice of Black Manjushri

First visualize Guru Shakyamuni Buddha in front of you.

Refuge and Bodhichitta

I go for refuge until I am enlightened
 To the Buddha, the Dharma and the Supreme Assembly.
 By my merit from giving and other perfections
 May I become a buddha in order to benefit all sentient beings. (3x)

Sang gyä chö dang tshog kyi chog nam la
 Jang chhub bar du dak ni kyab su chhi
 Dag gi jin sog gyi päi sö nam kyi
 Dro la phän chhir sang gyä drub par shog (3x)

Visualization

OM SVABHAVA SHUDDHA SARVA DHARMA SVABHAVA SHUDDHO
 HAM

I and all phenomena become empty.

If you have received the Black Manjushri initiation, generate as follows:

(If you have not received the initiation visualize Black Manjushri above the crown of your head.)

While in the state of emptiness, the syllable BAM appears and transforms into a lotus. On this appears an AH, which transforms into a moon disc.

Above that appears RAM, which transforms into a sun disc mandala.

Above that my own consciousness appears as a very magnificent black HUM. From that, I appear as the extremely wrathful Black Manjushri.

Black Manjushri is extremely wrathful with one face and two arms. The right hand holds a flaming wisdom sword raised up into the sky that eradicates all interferers. The left hand holds a Prajna Paramita text at the heart. Half the hair is bound at the crown of the head, the other half falls loosely in single strands to cover the upper part of the holy body.

His large belly hangs down and he wears a tiger-skin lower garment. He has a crown of five skeleton heads and a garland of fifty freshly slaughtered heads hanging from his neck. His three eyes are red and round and in the nature of YAM, RAM, and BAM. With his right leg drawn in and his left stretched out straight, he stands at the very center of a mass of intensely blazing flames.

Abiding on the crown of his head is my root guru in the aspect of Amoghasiddhi who appears in the form of the lord of the family. At his heart is a sun disc on which stands a black HUM at the center surrounded clockwise by the mantra:

OM TRA SÖ CHU SÖ TUR TA SÖ TUR MI SÖ NYING GO LA CHÖ KHA
LA JAH KAM SHAM TRAM BÄ PHAT SVAHA (21x, 108x, or more)

As you recite the mantra many times, visualize that nectar beams radiate from Black Manjushri's heart, purifying you.

First, the nectar rays flow down pushing all the disease, spirit harms, true sufferings and the causes of true sufferings, all the disturbing thoughts and the three poisonous minds, all the obstacles to having the fully knowing mind out through one's lower doors and pores. You can visualize all sickness coming out of the body in the form of pus and blood, the cancer as nagas and beings that cause harm as spiders, snakes, and scorpions. Visualize all obstacles exiting the body in the form of dirty liquid, smoke, and fog.

Then below you the earth cracks open and nine stories down is Yama, the Lord of Death. All those things that have been washed out of the body collect, transform into nectar, and enter Yama's mouth, completely satisfying him. At the end, his mouth closes and is sealed with a golden double vajra; thus, it is impossible for those things to come back again. Then the earth closes.

Second, purify by again reciting the mantra. Nectar rays are emitted suddenly and very strongly from Black Manjushri's heart. In that very second, no sickness and so forth exists, just as darkness disappears when a light is turned on. Feel that your body becomes very clear and calm like crystal. Completely believe that you are free of all suffering and the causes of suffering, all disturbing thoughts, all the actions done with the three poisonous minds that cause illness, and so forth.

Dedication

Finally dedicate with strong bodhichitta. Bodhichitta is the ultimate good heart, cherishing all sentient beings as yourself – even more than your own life – wishing to free them from all suffering, from all that is undesirable and wishing to lead them to the most desirable, peerless happiness, full enlightenment. Without bodhichitta you cannot benefit others extensively and even the works done for yourself cannot be completely successful.

Due to all these merits created by me and all sentient beings, may any being, just by seeing, hearing, touching, remembering, or talking about me, receive all happiness, and may all their suffering be pacified.

Due to all these merits, may I receive Manjushri and lead all sentient beings to enlightenment as quickly as possible.

The Benefits of This Practice

The practice of Black Manjushri cuts off black magic, spirit harms such as be de bö tong, all contagious diseases, the evil-side maras who interfere with one's Dharma practice and general success, the bad interferers (called kag) who obstruct the attainment of a certain age of life, and all types of interferers.

It also cuts off any superstitions that have arisen from doing initiations or wrathful tantric actions at a place belonging to the Sangha but which has not been purified, and seeing inauspicious signs, pollutions, impurities, or corpses.

It prevents any kind of external or internal disease (nyen) caused by different types of angry spirits, such as the upper level spirits (called de), intermediate level spirits (such as tsen and gyäl gong), and lower spirits (such as nagas and local spirits). It cuts off the disease called lhog pa and any other superstitions that have arisen by digging earth, cutting trees, or moving rocks in dangerous places, i.e., in places where nagas live.

In short, this practice cuts off any superstition that arises from having made any mistakes in one's actions such as eating, walking, etc. It is impossible that this mantra cannot stop these problems, and it has been experienced that this mantra relieves one from ulcers and phlegm disease.

This meditation is very effective if one practices it every day, especially if one has disease, or as a way to help others recover from heavy disease.

Colophon:

This is originally taken from the sadhana of the Wrathful Black Manjushri that was arranged by Changkya Rolpäi Dorje. This text was translated, with commentary, by the Lawudo Lama Thubten Zopa Rinpoche, Tushita Retreat Centre, McLeod Ganj, Dharamsala, India, January 4, 1985. It was originally reformatted by Murray Wright, FPMT Central Office, August 1993.

The above practice is an abbreviated version of the original for the purpose of reciting the mantra of Black Manjushri in order to counteract the spread of SARS disease as recommended by Lama Zopa Rinpoche. Extracted, reformatted, and lightly edited by Kendall Magnussen and Ven. Constance Miller, FPMT Education Services, April 2003.

The Prayer Liberating Sakya from Disease

All sentient beings equal to space go for refuge to the precious Guru-Buddha. We go for refuge to the Buddha, we go for refuge to the Dharma, and we go for refuge to the Sangha.

We go for refuge to the assembly of Gurus, meditational deities, dakas and dakinis. We go for refuge to the empty clarity of our own minds, the Dharmakaya.

Recite these verses as many times as you are able.

Then recite the mantra OM MANI PADME HUM hundreds of times, as many as you are able.

Then:

May all the diseases that sadden the minds of sentient beings and that result from karma and temporary conditions, such as the harm of spirits, illnesses and the elements, not occur in the realms of the world.

May whatever suffering that comes from life-threatening diseases - which, like a butcher leading an animal to be slaughtered, separate the body from the mind in a mere instant - not occur in the realms of the world.

May all embodied beings be unharmed by acute, chronic and other infectious diseases, the mere sound of whose name terrifies beings as though they were placed inside the mouth of Yama, the lord of death.

May all embodied beings be unharmed by the 80,000 classes of harmful interferers, the 360 evil spirits that harm suddenly, the 424 diseases and so forth.

May whatever suffering that comes from disturbances of the four elements, depriving the body and mind of every pleasure, be totally pacified, and may the body and mind have radiance and power and be endowed with long life, good health and well-being.

By the compassion of the Gurus and Triple Gem, the power of the dakas and dakinis, the Dharma protectors and guardians, and by the strength of the infallibility of karma and its results, may these many dedications and prayers be fulfilled as soon as they are made.

Colophon:

Once an epidemic was spreading from one person to another at the great monastery of the Glorious Sakya (tradition). Whatever the mantric masters tried – effigies, tormas, medicines, mantras, protection amulets, and so forth – had no effect, and the monastery was in danger of annihilation. At that time the master Mahasiddha (T'ang T'ong Gyalpo) performed the 'Space' refuge, recited a number of Manis, and proclaimed this prayer called 'Attainment', during which the entire epidemic immediately ceased in dependence upon its performance. Thereby, it became renowned as the vajra speech radiating masses of clouds of blessing entitled 'The Prayer Liberating Sakya from Disease'.

Sarvamangalam.

May all be auspicious.

How to Practice the Instructions of the Fire Sword of Black Garuda

This practice should be done by someone who has previously received a highest yoga tantric initiation. If you do not have a highest yoga tantra initiation (even if you have a lower tantric initiation such as Great Chenrezig), you can still do this practice, but you do not visualize yourself as the deity. Instead, keep your ordinary form and visualize the deity outside of yourself – in the space in front of you, or at the crown of your head. If you are doing the practice with the deity outside of yourself, you will need to modify your visualization as indicated by the instructions in brackets, “[]”.

Namo Guru Vajrapaniye

Refuge

I go for refuge to the gurus.
 I go for refuge to the buddhas.
 I go for refuge to the Dharma.
 I go for refuge to the Sangha. (3x)

Bodhichitta

The bodhichitta motivation for the recitation of Black Garuda should be to have a long and healthy life, to be able to serve other sentient beings, and to actualize the path. One should not be doing the practice just for one’s own protection.

I must achieve full enlightenment for the sake of all sentient beings; therefore, I am going to do the practice and recitation of the mantra of Black Garuda.

(3x)

Purify in emptiness with:

OM SVABHAVA SHUDDHA SARVA DHARMA SVABHAVA SHUDDHO
HAM

Everything is empty.

In the very center of a great ocean of poison is a square Mt. Meru of poison, the essence of which contains the poisons of seeing, touch, feeling, i.e., all the different types of poison.

(On top of this) there is a lotus, sun disc, and spirit possession. On the seat of a three-piled throne I appear as Black Garuda. [On the seat of a three-piled throne is Black Garuda.]

[Look at Black Garuda with the understanding and devotion that this is actually Buddha, who cherishes you billions of times more than you cherish yourself. Buddha manifests into Black Garuda to protect you and numberless sentient beings from harm and to bring all of you to enlightenment.]

[For the description of the deity, replace "I", and "my" with "he" and "his".]

I have a sky iron (meteorite) beak and two horns. At the root of the horns are three-pronged vajras, and at each tip of the horns is a single-pronged vajra. I am in the nature of blazing fire. My head is adorned with jewels, which lie between the two horns. I have golden eyes, swirling and blazing like the sun. My holy mouth is filled with many conch shell teeth. From my wings, which are designed with vajras, 100,000 fire sparks are emitted.

My two hands hold vicious types of nagas that are being eaten in my holy mouth. From my neck down to my knees, it (my body) is in human form, but my feet are the claws of a bird.

From my holy body, many fire sparks fly out in the aspect of Black Garudas and sky iron (meteorites), radiating to the ten directions.

All the dangerous landlords and nagas fall unconsciousness with fright.

At my [his] crown is a white OM.

At my [his] throat is a red AH.

At my [his] heart is a blue HUM.

From the syllable HUM at my [his] heart beams radiate out and invoke the wisdom beings in an aspect similar to that visualized, along with the initiating deities.

JAH HUM BAM HOH

We [they] become non-dual.

Make the offerings

OM VAJRA GARUDA ARGHAM PRATICCHA HUM SVAHA

OM VAJRA GARUDA PADYAM PRATICCHA HUM SVAHA

OM VAJRA GARUDA PUSHPE PRATICCHA HUM SVAHA

OM VAJRA GARUDA DHUPE PRATICCHA HUM SVAHA

OM VAJRA GARUDA ALOKE PRATICCHA HUM SVAHA

OM VAJRA GARUDA GANDHE PRATICCHA HUM SVAHA

OM VAJRA GARUDA NAIVIDYA PRATICCHA HUM SVAHA

OM VAJRA GARUDA SHAPTA PRATICCHA HUM SVAHA

Praise

You, whose wing feathers shake the 3,000 galaxies,
 Dancing with a blazing beak,
 By merely flapping your wings, you instantly destroy the three types of
 spirit possession²,
 I praise the controller, Garuda.

Visualization

From your [his] heart, garlands of mantras blaze like the fire at the end of
 time, becoming a great host of fire. All the animate and inanimate³ become
 in the nature of fire, blazing and burning all the interferers of the upper,
 middle, and below. All are purified.

Mantra recitation

Recite this pacifying mantra a few times:

OM MANI KYUNG KYUNG THUM THUM BÄ BÄ SVAHA

Recite the wrathful mantra as much as possible.

*One can recite this mantra to purify those who have a specific disease and those
 who do not, including yourself. Think that now it is impossible to be harmed by
 others.*

*[Nectar beams like sunbeams emit from Black Garuda into you and totally
 illuminate you, dispelling all the sicknesses, spirit harm, negative karma, and
 obstacles.]*

² Spirit possession abiding above (de), abiding in the middle (spirit kings and tsen), and abiding
 below (nagas and landlords)

³ “animate and inanimate” refers to creatures, land, and planets.

NAGPO KALA RAKYA BÄ BÄ / SÖ SÖ / CHHUNG CHHUNG / PUTRI
ZANG ZANG /

CHAG KYI TERMÖ NYING CHHUNG / NÖ JE DUG PÄ SHA LA ZO /
OM HLANG

HLANG / TSER TSER / ÜB ÜB SO

[Imagine that you receive all the qualities of Black Garuda – omniscient mind, all the realizations, perfect power, infinite compassion etc. Finally, think, “I have received perfect power so that no other beings can harm me and no sickness can be received.”]

At the end complete with dedication.

Dedication

Due to these merits may I quickly achieve the enlightened state of Black Garuda and lead every transmigratory being without exception to that enlightenment.

However many sick sentient beings there are, may they be immediately liberated from all sicknesses. May all sentient beings never experience sickness.

Dedicate in this way and seal with emptiness.

Advice regarding this practice from Lama Zopa Rinpoche

This practice can be done before you get the SARS virus as well as after you get the virus. This practice can also be done if one has cancer, leprosy, ulcers, and other epidemic diseases that are related to harmful beings.

Even if one doesn't have the actual sickness (SARS), you can visualize that the causes to contract the sickness (delusions and karma) are completely purified. Think, "There is not the slightest karma left in my mental continuum."

Colophon:

This was translated by Lama Zopa Rinpoche at Kachoe Dechen Ling, 29 March 2003, for the outbreak of SARS virus (pneumonia) in Asia. It was scribed by Ven. Holly Ansett and reformatted and lightly edited by Kendall Magnussen, FPMT Education Services, April 2003.

Logyunma / A Practice of Parnashavari

Prayer Recitations to Overcome Diseases and Epidemics

Refuge and Bodhicitta

In Buddha, Dharma and Supreme Sangha

I Take refuge until full enlightenment is reached

Through perfecting the deeds of generosity and others

May I attain Buddhahood for the benefit of all sentient beings

(Repeat Three times)

The Four Immeasurables

May all sentient beings have happiness and the cause of happiness

May all sentient beings be free from suffering and the cause of suffering

May all sentient beings never be separated from the happiness that is
sorrowless

May all sentient beings, near and far away, live in the state of equanimity,
free from attachment and hatred

(One time)

Praise to Revered Parnashavari

I pay homage to the goddess who is an illusory emanation of the
primordial wisdom of all the victorious ones; she who completely removes
all inner demons and obstacles.

Mantra Recitation

OM PI-SA-CHI / PAR-NA-SHA-VA-RI / SAR-VA ZO-LA / PRA-SHAMA-
NA YE SO-HA

(repeat many times)

{Om, Recluse(the female holy one who is) clad in leaves, let the foundation be laid (for peace, stability and prosperity) by completely and instantly eliminating all deadly epidemics, svaha.}

Dedication

By the merit of this may all sentient beings as infinite as space
Attain the state of vajradhara swiftly in one life-time
through perfecting the two accumulations of merit and wisdom

May beings everywhere who suffer from mental and physical pain
have by virtue of my merits
Joy and physical happiness in boundless measure like the ocean

May every being ailing with disease
be freed at once from every malady
may all the sicknesses that afflict the living
not occur forever.

This prayer is taken from Sakya Tharpa Ling, Brisbane May 2003,
during the visit of H.H Sakya Trizin.

On Purification and Healing

When it comes to Buddhist methods of healing, special mention should be made of the view of karma as the cause of illness. Karma in general means action and its results, and this is something neutral in itself. Whether it is positive, constructive action, or negative action, the same principles apply - causes bring results, and create seeds for the further repetition and expansion of an action and its effects. This is the way the mind and emotions and body either degenerates or improves.

In Buddhism, from wrong view and self grasping ignorance, the negative emotions of greed, anger, sadness, fear develop and increase, and this has effects energetically, and in terms of the elements, all the way down to the physical level. When these responses to life become habitual, they are imprinted and become a pattern that in some way defines a person's life. This is what we then speak of as a person's karma.

Healing karmic causes is different from just alleviating the temporary suffering of one negative emotion or a physical imbalance and illness. It goes much further than that. When we heal the karmic cause of a disease, we uproot not only the cause of that one effect, but of all the oceans of suffering, mental and physical, that could possibly result from that negative karmic tendency. It is really something joyful and profound.

Ultimately, it's the person liberated by wisdom who is fully healthy, and this should be known by everyone, so we can orient ourselves to the ideal.

Purification is then an ongoing practice for those in a monastic setting, as well as for contemplatives of every tradition. The reason is that we continue to make mistakes until we've completed the path, and we need to correct our way of living, thinking and being with others.

Another reason this practice is needed is that we all have a great store of experiences in the form of karmic impressions from our past actions. Like

seeds, unless they are transformed, we can carry these with us, and when the right conditions come together, they can ripen and bring us suffering.

I remember being in the waiting room with other patients at the hospital where a family member was being seen. Many of them were undergoing treatment for serious diseases, and I prayed and meditated, and tried many different mantras, but the only one that felt like it fit was one for purifying karma, that of Vajrasattva. This makes more sense to me now.

In the visualization used with this practice, we see our body made of light being purified, and becoming pristine, immaculate, and luminous. The four opponent powers are enjoined here: of refuge and the dedication to the ultimate benefit of others; dispassionately naming and relinquishing our past wrong actions; making strong vows that are in accord with our true nature; and virtuous action, in this case recitation. Practicing this way in time can bring radical, deep transformation, and healing.

Like a lot of Westerners, I have difficulty believing in the ideas of rebirth, but as many teachers will tell us, this makes for a narrow view of ourselves, our mind, and our karma. It also effects how we see the spiritual practice we do. Looking within, I find many causes and potentials, positive and negative. This view that says we have a great store of karma is much more workable, and it leads to far greater conscientiousness, and enthusiasm for our own practice, and greater compassion for others.

*May we all totally purify even the most subtle remainder
of negative karma
and its cause in self grasping,
and may we then skillfully lead all others to freedom,
joy and ease,
and the full health of the Noble Ones*

A Vajrasattva Sadhana

Dorje Sempa Meditation and the Recitation of His Mantra

(which purifies harmful actions and removes the obscurations of the mind)

Glorious and precious Root Guru who sits on a lotus-moon seat on the crown of my head, through your great kindness, having taken me as your disciple, grant me the accomplishments of the Body, Speech and Mind (of the Buddhas).

I take refuge, until I attain enlightenment, in the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sublime Assembly. By the merit that I have accumulated through generosity and other virtues, may I obtain Buddhahood for the sake of all beings.

(Repeat 3 times)

On the crown of my head, on a lotus-moon seat,
is Lama Dorje Sempa, white in color and wearing all the ornaments.
He has one face and two arms; in his right hand he holds a vajra
and in his left, a bell; he sits in cross-legged posture.

(Rays of light emanate from Dorje Sempa's heart center, invoking the assembly of absolute knowledge deities [yeshepas] who are absorbed into him. Meditate that Dorje Sempa is in essence the union of all the rare and sublime jewels. Then say:)

"Lama Dorje Sempa, please purify and remove all harmful actions, obscurations of the mind, faults and transgressions which I and other beings limitless as space have accumulated."

After this prayer, in Dorje Sempa's heart center, on a moon disc, the letter HUNG appears, surrounded by the hundred syllable mantra; from the

syllables arises an uninterrupted stream of nectar which flows from his form, enters through the opening in the crown of my head, fills my body and purifies all harmful actions and transgressions.

OM BENZRA SATO SAMAYA MANU PALAYA BENZRA SATO TENOPA
TISHSTA DRI BO ME BHAWA SUTO KAYO ME BHAWA SUPO KAYO ME
BHAWA ANURAKTO ME BHAWA SARWA SIDDHI MEM PRAYATSA
SARWA KARMA SU TSA ME TSI TANG SHRI YA KU RU HUNG HA HA
HA HA HO BA GA WAN SARWA TA TA GA TA BENZRA MA ME MUN
TSA BENZRA BA WA MA HA
SA MA YA SATO AH

By the vow of Vajrasattva, keeping guard, thou Vajrasattva, stay near, steady me, satisfy me, enrich me, be loving towards me. Bestow on me all perfections. In all deeds, also, make my mind virtuous. The four joys. Blessed ones. All the thus-gone. Diamond (one), do not abandon me. Make me adamant. (Thou) being of the great vow!

OM BENZRA SATO HUNG

"Protector! Through ignorance and delusion, I have not kept my commitments and have broken them. Lama, Protector, give me refuge. O Lord of beings, Holder of the Vajra, who possesses the true nature of compassion, I take refuge in you. I openly admit all the Vajrayana commitments of body, speech and mind which I have not fulfilled and have also broken, whether they be primary or secondary commitments. Grant me your blessing so that I am purified, and all harmful actions, obscurations of the mind, faults and transgressions are removed."

Dorje Sempa assures me that I am purified, melts into light and is absorbed into me. We become indivisible.

Dedication Prayer

Through this virtue I pray all beings without exception experience the undying state of permanent bliss by merging supreme knowledge and methods and come to realize Dorje Sempa. Dedicating the merit of traveling the inner Vajra path, may I be granted the stage of Buddhahood.

A Vajrasattva Sadhana, with commentary by Lama Lodo

DORJE SEMPA MEDITATION AND THE RECITATION OF HIS MANTRA

**(which purifies harmful actions and removes the obscurations of the
mind)**

This text was composed more than eight hundred years ago by the Ninth Karmapa.

The Guru embodies all Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. Most important in attaining enlightenment is the Guru-disciple relationship. The Guru's kindness and compassion and the disciple's devotion- these two come together.

The Guru is closer to us, kinder than the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. Due to our ignorance, impurity, we do not see Buddha right now. He is the past, present, and future Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, so it is very important to maintain devotion. His body is the Buddha, speech, Dharma, and mind is enlightenment itself.

The first prayer from our heart is for the blessing of the Gurus.

**Glorious and precious Root Guru who sits on a lotus-moon seat on the
crown of my head, through your great kindness, having taken me as your
disciple, grant me the accomplishments of the Body, Speech and Mind
(of the Buddhas).**

Refuge and Bodhicitta

Guru Vajrasattva, his body is Sangha, speech, Dharma, and mind, Buddha. Vajrasattva mind is Buddha, speech (word) is Dharma, and body, the Sublime Assembly, which shows how to practice with devotion and

compassion. In the Sangha, we learn how to do good things, in group practice. He is the Sangha as the Bodhisattva's perfect activity and example.

Think that you are under the protection of the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. You are completely safe, not only yourself, but all sentient beings.

Enlightenment Mind - The Heart of Enlightenment

You wish to attain perfect Buddha in order to benefit all sentient beings and guide them to enlightenment; to free them all from suffering and discomfort, unconditionally, whoever is suffering. This is wishing and willing to contribute to free them from suffering and the causes, not only temporarily, but forever, and make it so that all have happiness and the cause of happiness, not only temporarily, but happiness that lasts forever.

But this body, this mind, this speech, can only temporarily remove their suffering, only temporarily give happiness, therefore, I must strive, put all my effort into attaining enlightenment like the Buddha.

Great Compassion is without discrimination. This is very powerful. This kind of thought always in your heart, this means the Heart of Enlightenment, this means the heart of altruism, this means the heart of bodhicitta.

Generosity- whatever practice you have

Morality- no anger, desire, jealousy, greed, hope and doubt; none allowed. What you do not allow, that is morality.

Patience- when there is difficulty, either with visualization or laziness, or from pains, you take it, be patient.

Diligence- to visualize, to recite, and not allow distractions, this is the opposite of laziness. During practice, laziness is the main difficulty.

Concentration- on deities, mind not withdrawn from visualization

Wisdom- all these inherently not existent. Truly, they are empty, they are the nature of bliss and joy.

I take refuge, until I attain enlightenment, in the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sublime Assembly. By the merit that I have accumulated through generosity and other virtues, may I obtain Buddhahood for the sake of all beings. (Repeat 3 times)

Next, bring your mind to a sense of emptiness, absence of thought, the natural state.

After you have quieted down your mind, visualize yourself in your usual state with a 'pom' on the crown of your head. This turns into a lotus, upon which is the syllable 'ah'. The 'ah' turns into a moon-disk on this lotus, upon which there is a white 'hung', which changes into a white vajra, with a white hung in the center.

White, red, blue, green, and yellow light radiates to the six realms, realms of confusion and suffering, and pain. These rays of light completely purify suffering and the cause of suffering. The rays of light then return.

The five colors again radiate, this time reaching to all holy beings, from Buddha to your Root Guru, wrathful and peaceful Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, Dharmapalas and Divine Beings. The rays of light return, and Vajrasattva appears. He is the power of purification of all Buddhas. Right leg out, and left leg drawn in, he is very peaceful and completely white, and transparent.

From Vajrasattva's heart, lights radiate to Divine Beings, from Buddha all the way through the lineage Guru's to your own Root Guru, all the tantric

deities, past, present, and future, Dharmapalas. Light reaches to please all the enlightened ones.

Light then returns from them in the form of Vajrasattva. Visualize the Wisdom Beings from their Pure Land merging with the Samaya Being, like rain dissolving into an ocean. They become one.

On the crown of my head, on a lotus-moon seat, is Lama Dorje Sempa, white in color and wearing all the ornaments. He has one face and two arms; in his right hand he holds a vajra and in his left, a bell; he sits in cross-legged posture.

(Rays of light emanate from Dorje Sempa's heart center, invoking the assembly of absolute knowledge deities [yeshepas] who are absorbed into him. Meditate that Dorje Sempa is in essence the union of all the rare and sublime jewels.

Then, think that there is nothing that cannot be purified; affliction (sin), obscuration, disease. Vajrasattva is the purity of all enlightened beings.

Before and during the recitation think (of the Four Powers):

1- In the past, whatever action I have done due to my negative emotions, which cause me suffering and affliction, all these I repent. All these which obstruct, all these, so negative, I repent. Embodiment of enlightenment, I ask that you forgive me.

2nd- Now, even at the cost of my life, I will not do this action anymore. From my heart I repent. Because this causes pain, confusion, obstruction, I will not do this action anymore.

3rd- Trust and devotion. Trust in Vajrasattva. Have faith that this is the embodiment of all Buddhas, stainless purity and compassion, having the power to purify. Any virtuous action is the third power.

4th- You are purified because of the intention to benefit other sentient beings; altruism, bodhicitta.

Cultivate these.

Then say)

"Lama Dorje Sempa, please purify and remove all harmful actions, obscurations of the mind, faults and transgressions which I and other beings limitless as space have accumulated."

After this prayer, in Dorje Sempa's heart center, on a moon disc, the letter HUNG appears, surrounded by the hundred syllable mantra; from the syllables arises an uninterrupted stream of nectar which flows from his form, enters through the opening in the crown of my head, fills my body and purifies all harmful actions and transgressions.

Visualize at the heart of Vajrasattva, the hundred syllable mantra, on a moon disk. As the mantra is recited, a nectar stream uninterruptedly flows down and fills Vajrasattva's body with wisdom nectar. From his right front big toe, on the crown of your head, nectar flows down like a waterfall, through the crown of your head, and flows through your body.

**OM BENZRA SATO SAMAYA MANU PALAYA BENZRA SATO
TENOPA TISHSTA DRI BO ME BHAWA SUTO KAYO ME BHAWA
SUPO KAYO ME BHAWA ANURAKTO ME BHAWA SARWA SIDDHI
MEM PRAYATSA SARWA KARMA SU TSA ME TSI TANG SHRI YA
KU RU HUNG HA HA HA HA HO BA GA WAN SARWA TA TA GA TA
BENZRA MA ME MUN TSA BENZRA BA WA MA HA
SA MA YA SATO AH**

By the vow of Vajrasattva, keeping guard, thou Vajrasattva, stay near, steady me, satisfy me, enrich me, be loving towards me. Bestow on me

all perfections. In all deeds, also, make my mind virtuous. The four joys. Blessed ones. All the thus-gone. Diamond (one), do not abandon me. Make me adamantine. (Thou) being of the great vow!

OM BENZRA SATO HUNG

The hundred wrathful and peaceful deities of the bardo, all tantric deities are embodied in this mantra.

The flow comes in the nine openings as nectar, and pushes out obscurations, as pus and blood, obscurations, sickness, disease, physical and mental disease (soot); cockroach, ugly, nectar pushing out, pushing out impurities coming from your body. All this goes under the earth. Keep reciting, not too slow or too quick. Pronounce each syllable. Completely concentrate your mind. Do not let it wander. Continue reciting while applying the Four Powers (regret, resolve, faith, and altruism).

All disease, any karmic action, especially any that cause obstruction to spiritual practice are completely purified by this.

"Protector! Through ignorance and delusion, I have not kept my commitments and have broken them. Lama, Protector, give me refuge. O Lord of beings, Holder of the Vajra, who possesses the true nature of compassion, I take refuge in you. I openly admit all the Vajrayana commitments of body, speech and mind which I have not fulfilled and have also broken, whether they be primary or secondary commitments. Grant me your blessing so that I am purified, and all harmful actions, obscurations of the mind, faults and transgressions are removed."

Vajrasattva overhead is pleased. Smiling, he speaks,

Dorje Sempa assures me that I am purified, melts into light and is absorbed into me. We become indivisible.

All is purified. Now I think of myself as completely clear and radiating.
(rest mind)

There is no past, no future, no present time mind; no color, no shape, nothing to analyze. Keep mind without contriving effort, relaxed mind, bliss and joy, yet very empty. Keep this as long as you want. If you like you can follow your breath, as long as you want.

Dedication Prayer

Through this virtue I pray all beings without exception experience the undying state of permanent bliss by merging supreme knowledge and methods and come to realize Dorje Sempa. Dedicating the merit of traveling the inner Vajra path, may I be granted the stage of Buddhahood.

Then we practice taking and sending, removing all suffering of sentient beings, giving all happiness.

This is the complete tantric path.

The names of the practices, and their mantras

1. The Healing Buddha

Long mantra:

OM NAMO BHAGAVATE BEHKANDZE / GURU BAIDURYA / PRABHA
RADZAYA / TATHAGATA / ARHATE / SAMYAKSAM BUDDHAYA //
TADYATHA / OM BEKHANDZYE BEKHANDZYE / MAHA
BEKHANDZYE [BEKHANDZYE] / RADZA SAMUNGATE SOHA//

Short mantra:

TADYATHA / OM BEKHANDZYE BEKHANDZYE / MAHA
BEKHANDZYE [BEKHANDZYE] / RADZA SAMUNGATE SOHA

2. White Tara

OM TARA TUTTARE TURE MAMA AYUH PUNEY JNANA
PUSHTHIM KURU SOHA

OM TARA TUTTARE TURE SOHA

3. Namgyalma

OM BHRUM SVAHA / OM AMRITA AYUR DA DAI SVAHA

4. Amitayus

OM AMARANI JIVANTAYE SOHA

5. Vajra Armor

HUM VAJRA PHAT / OM PADMASHAVARI PHAT / NÄN PAR SHIG /
 NAGANAN / TADYATHA / SARVAVIRITA / HANA HANA / VAJRENA
 RAKSAHA RAKSAHA SVAHA

6. Black Manjushri

OM TRA SÖ / CHHU SÖ / DUR TA SÖ / DUR MI SÖ / NYING GO LA
 CHHÖ / KHA LA JAH KAM SHAM TRAM / BÄ PHAT SVAHA

7. Avalokiteshvara

OM MANI PEME HUNG

8. Black Garuda

1.

OM MANI KYUNG KYUNG THUM THUM BÄ BÄ SVAHA

2.

NAGPO KALA RAKYA BÄ BÄ / SÖ SÖ / CHHUNG CHHUNG / PUTRI
 ZANG ZANG /

CHAG KYI TERMÖ NYING CHHUNG / NÖ JE DUG PÄ SHA LA ZO /
 OM HLANG

HLANG / TSER TSER / ÜB ÜB SO

9. Logyunma

OM PISACHI / PARNASHAVARI / SARVA ZOLA / PRASHAMANA YE
SOHA

10. Vajrasattva

The long mantra:

OM BENZRA SATO SAMAYA MANU PALAYA BENZRA SATO TENOPA
TISHSTA DRI BO ME BHAWA SUTO KAYO ME BHAWA SUPO KAYO ME
BHAWA ANURAKTO ME BHAWA SARWA SIDDHI MEM PRAYATSA
SARWA KARMA SU TSA ME TSI TANG SHRI YA KU RU HUNG HA HA
HA HA HO BA GA WAN SARWA TA TA GA TA BENZRA MA ME MUN
TSA BENZRA BA WA MA HA
SA MA YA SATO AH

The short mantra:

OM BENZRA SATO HUNG

Dedication Prayers

By this merit, and by the virtue of any other good I have ever done,
together with that of kind hearted people everywhere,
and all excellent practitioners,

and by all the virtue and all the blessings
of all the ten directions three times Buddhas and Bodhisattvas

Saints and Sages, Arhats and Ajahns,
Lamas, monks and nuns,
and of all Holy Beings
May all beings benefit.

By all the blessings we have received,
and by the strength of our own awakened insight,
courage, and love,
may all beings have lasting happiness

From this point forward,
may we all experience only complete liberation
from every form of suffering

May we all experience nibbana,
the remainderless quenching of dukkha
May we all experience only peace, joy,
true health, and happiness.

For myself and all others,
May the supreme Awakening Mind
arise where it has not yet arisen
Where it has arisen, may it not diminish
May it ever grow and flourish

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

May this bring complete health wherever it is needed,
on outer, inner, and secret levels

May this bring about the balance of the elements,
and the firm establishment of true health and well being,
long life, and happiness for us all

By all this virtue
may all the environments where we live be purified,
and may we all together accomplish the full realization
of the our Spiritual Practice

By this merit,
Wherever I am, and wherever I may go,
may I further the work of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas,
the awakening of light, complete freedom and peace.

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

* * *

From Lama Zopa Rinpoche

A preceding reflection

All phenomena – including the I, the action of dedicating, the merits that are dedicated, the goal of enlightenment to which they are dedicated, and the sentient beings for whom they are dedicated – are completely empty of existing from their own side. With the continual awareness of this, I now impute labels, and dedicate...

Due to all the merits of the three times collected by me, by all the ten directions three times buddhas and bodhisattvas, and all other sentient beings, may sentient beings immediately be liberated from all sickness, spirit harm and negative karma and defilements.

May they develop faith in refuge and karma, and quickly achieve enlightenment, by actualizing the whole path, especially bodhichitta.

By my hearing that someone is sick may it immediately cause that person to completely recover and have the most meaningful life by practicing the Mahayana path.

By my hearing somebody has died may it cause that person to immediately be reborn in a pure land where they can get enlightened.

* * *

Due to all the past, present, and future merits collected by me, the numberless buddhas, and the numberless sentient beings, may all wars, sickness, famine, torture, poverty, and economic problems in the world, and all dangers of earth, water, fire, and wind, be pacified immediately, and may perfect peace and happiness prevail in everyone's hearts and lives.

May the Buddhadharma last for a long time, and may the sentient beings in this world meet the Buddhadharma and achieve enlightenment as quickly as possible.

* * *

Due to all the past, present, and future merits collected by me and all the merits of the three times collected by the numberless buddhas and numberless sentient beings, which are completely empty of existing from their own side, may I, who am completely empty of existing from my own side, achieve the state of full enlightenment, which is completely empty of existing from its own side, and lead all sentient beings, who are completely empty of existing from their own side, to that state, which is completely empty of existing from its own side, by myself alone, who is completely empty of existing from my own side.

* * *

Due to this virtue, may I quickly
 Become a Guru-Buddha,
 And lead all transmigratory beings,
 Without exception, to that state.

Shantideva's Dedication of Merit
(excerpt)

May all beings everywhere,
Plagued by sufferings of body and mind,
Obtain oceans of happiness and joy
By virtue of these 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 all wholesome prayers bear fruit.

May all who are sick and ill
Quickly be freed from their ailments
And may whatever diseases there are in the world
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 endures,
And for as long as living beings remain,
Until then, may I too abide,
To dispel the misery of the world.

Dedication, based on a prayer by His Holiness, Kyabje Dudjom Rinpoche

For myself and all others,
May the Victory Banner of the accomplishment
of spiritual practice be raised.

May the Victorious Drum of the teaching and practice
of liberating and enlightening instructions resound in the Ten Directions.

For myself and all others,
May the Lion's Roar of reasoning pervade
and the Light of unequalled virtues increase

Everywhere, may the study, practice,
and realization of the Dharma Paths flourish.
May the Sanghas always be in harmony,
And may all the aspirations of the Nobles Ones be achieved.

At this very moment, for the peoples and nations of the earth,
May not even the names disease, famine, war, and suffering be heard,
But rather may pure conduct, merit, wealth, and prosperity increase,
And may supreme good fortune and well-being always arise.

Part II - Advice, Prayers, Essays, and Discourses

26. Lama Zopa Rinpoche's Advice to Protect from the Coronavirus

27. The Method to Transform a Suffering Life into Happiness_the motivation

His commentary on this practice can be found here.

28. Advice On Healing from Lama Zopa Rinpoche

29. In Praise of the Precepts

30. Three Metta Meditations - The Discourse on Love; Metta Bhavana - Loving Kindness Meditation; and, The Cultivation of Loving Kindness

See also: Mindful Breathing as a Loving Kindness Practice

For more on this wonderful practice, see Living in Beauty - Buddhist Loving Kindness Practice

31. Protective Chants from the Pali Canon_I - From Paritta Recitation - A Selection of Texts

{This collection has an introductory essay on this Tradition, called The Blessings of Paritta}

Recollecting the Qualities of the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha, Praise, and Taking Refuge;

Invitation to Recite the Parittas; Invocation and Prayer;

The Metta Sutta - The Discourse on Loving Kindness;

32. Ending a plague, a poem based on the Jewel Sutta;

33. Protective Chants from the Pali Canon_II

The Ratana Sutta - The Jewel Discourse; and Dedication Prayers

34. Seeing the world of sentient beings, from The Avatamsaka Sutra

35. Refuge and Bodhicitta Prayers by Lama Zopa Rinpoche

36. For the sake of those who struggle and suffer

37. A prayer for degenerate times

38. Two poems from *This is the Way Light Moves - Collected Poems 2018 to 2020*: From Finding Refuge, and, Angels, Devas, Shining Ones

Essays

39. Speaking of Angels

{To generate more faith, see also the Miracle Stories, from A Belief in the Miraculous; see also, this article on Buddha Weekly, on Sacred Outlook}

40. Tantric Refuge

41. The Continual Practice of Right View

42. A few additional mantras that I've found to be useful

43. A list of things that are healing

44. An Introduction to the Bodhisattva-Divinity Tara

45. Ocean of Saints

46. The Parable of the Medicinal Herbs, from The Lotus Sutra

Three beautiful and meaningful prayers recommended by Lama Zopa Rinpoche:

47. The Swift Fulfillment of Wishes in Dependence on the Great Jetsun Tsongkhapa

48. A Prayer to Pacify the Fear of Famine

and,

49. Words of Truth Pacifying Danger of Weapons, by Thangtong Gyalpo

50. A Prayer

Lama Zopa Rinpoche's Advice to Protect from the Coronavirus

Lama Zopa Rinpoche has offered a collection of mantras and prayers to recite in response to the coronavirus pandemic. This page will be updated as more advice and resources become available.

In March 2020, Rinpoche recorded this video at Kopan Monastery in Nepal. The video begins with a teaching and motivation for doing the practices. Then Rinpoche gives additional advice along with the oral transmission of a mantra and four prayers.

The following are from his previous teachings

I.

January 25th, 2020

Lama Zopa Rinpoche was recently asked what can be done for the recent outbreak of the deadly coronavirus in China.

Rinpoche advised the arrangement of a Most Secret Hayagriva wrathful puja in Sera Je Monastery.

Individual students can do the following mantra recitation practice:

As a motivation before reciting the two mantras, Rinpoche said it's best if people can do The Method to Transform a Suffering Life into Happiness (Including Enlightenment), which is the daily motivation Rinpoche has put together. That is best. But if that is too much, then do the lamrim motivation, which is the beginning part of The Method up to the "Blessing the Speech" section. So at least do that part as a motivation before reciting the mantras.

1. Recite Vajra Armor mantra, which is a famous mantra for healing. You can do the entire Vajra Armor Protection Wheel if you want. Otherwise, just do the mantra:

HUM VAJRA PHAT* / OM PADMASHAVARI PHAT / NÄN PAR SHIG / NAGANAN / TADYATHA / SARVAVIRITA / HANA HANA / VAJRENA RAKSAHA RAKSAHA SVAHA

*Lama Zopa Rinpoche often gives the oral transmission of the mantra with the additional syllables “HŪṀ VAJRA PHATṬ,” as was taught by Trulshik Rinpoche. These syllables are recited with each recitation of the mantra. There are other lineages of the mantra that do not contain these syllables.

After you finish reciting the mantra, hold your hand in front of your mouth and blow the air up, so it goes into your nostrils.

2. Then also recite Black Manjushri mantra. The Meditation-Recitation of Black Manjushri is also good to do if you want. Otherwise, just do the mantra:

OM TRA SÖ / CHHU SÖ / DUR TA SÖ / DUR MI SÖ / NYING GO LA CHHÖ / KHA LA JAH KAM SHAM TRAM / BÄ PHAT SVAHA

Then at the end, do dedication prayers:

May the precious supreme bodhichitta
Not yet born arise.
May that arisen not decline,
But increase more and more.

Due to this virtue, may I quickly
Become a Guru-Buddha,
And lead all transmigratory beings,
Without exception, to that state.

Due to all the merits of the three times collected by me, the numberless buddhas, and the numberless sentient beings, may all wars, sickness, famine, torture, poverty, and economic problems in the world, and all dangers of earth, water, fire, and wind, be pacified immediately, and may perfect peace and happiness prevail in everyone's hearts and lives.

May the Buddhadharma last for a long time, and may the sentient beings in this world meet the Buddhadharma and achieve enlightenment as quickly as possible.

Due to all the past, present, and future merits collected by me and all the merits of the three times collected by the numberless buddhas and numberless sentient beings, which are completely empty of existing from their own side, may I, who am completely empty of existing from my own side, achieve the state of full enlightenment, which is completely empty of existing from its own side, and lead all sentient beings, who are completely empty of existing from their own side, to that state, which is completely empty of existing from its own side, by myself alone, who is completely empty of existing from my own side.

II.

January 28th, 2020

Rinpoche now offers this additional advice to protect from the coronavirus:

Rinpoche says that in addition to his earlier advice people should also recite The Prayer Liberating Sakya from Disease (page_)

The prayer comes from the great yogi Thangtong Gyalpo (1385–1464) and is for healing from disease.

While doing this prayer, students should look at an image of Thangtong Gyalpo.

Rinpoche added, “the previous mantras are to protect yourself and others, but this prayer from Thangtong Gyalpo is to heal the disease in China and for it not to spread out to other countries. And anyone in the world can recite this prayer.”

III.

March 2020

{In this advice, Rinpoche recommends Vajra Armor mantra and The Prayer Liberating Sakya from Disease as the main practices for protection and healing from coronavirus COVID-19. Rinpoche also advises that bodhicitta and tonglen are essential practices at this time.}

My most dear, most kind, most precious, wish-fulfilling one,

I don't know if students are doing this: I told Chinese students in Mainland China that they must do Vajra Armor to not get the disease, coronavirus (COVID-19). If they get the disease, by doing this practice they will recover, otherwise they may die.

Many people became great healers by reciting the Vajra Armor mantra in the past. There is one lama who helped an American monk's father, a long time ago, before we got the land for Maitreya Institute in Bodhgaya. The monk's father had cancer and I think this lama did some puja for him and maybe he recovered. So this lama became famous as a healer after doing that, and he healed other people too.

When this lama, who was known as a great healer, went to Holland, there was Drepung Loseling geshe at our FPMT center there, who asked him

what mantras he used to heal people. The lama said White Tara, but he didn't mention exactly the mantra. Then the geshe asked him for White Tara initiation, which that lama then gave him. Later in my room in Bodhgaya, the lama told me that actually the main mantra that he uses is Vajra Armor.

There are many healers at Sera Monastery. I met one man who was the father of Lama Pasang's disciple. He became a great healer and he healed many people. I don't know who he is. It seems he didn't know much Dharma and lamrim, but he became a great healer by reciting this mantra. This is what I have come to know, that there are many healers who use this mantra.

If you recite one mala of the Vajra Armor mantra a day it is so powerful to heal people, besides giving protection.

HUM VAJRA PHAT / OM PADMASHAVARI PHAT / NÄN PAR SHIG /
NAGANAN / TADYATHA / SARVAVIRITA / HANA HANA / VAJRENA
RAKSHA RAKSHA SVAHA

The other practice is a prayer by the great yogi Thangtong Gyalpo. In the past there was this contagious disease that happened amongst the Sakya [practitioners] and many people died, so he wrote The Prayer Liberating Sakya from Disease and then all the Sakyas were healed from the disease. This amazing miracle happened. This prayer is good for oneself and also for China and other countries to not get diseases such as coronavirus, and to be healed if you have it. So this is good to recite to help, including for oneself.

The other practice is Black Manjushri but its OK if you mainly do these two things - Vajra Armor and The Prayer Liberating Sakya from Disease - unless you are doing Black Manjushri normally. It is very important to do these two practices, otherwise just reading this or just reading that, you are not doing much specifically for this disease.

Please tell the students at the centers, before they get too much suffering, before the disease comes to the centers and spreads to the centers. Please make an announcement. Tell the students, however you make announcements. Thank you very much.

If you get this disease, don't worry. Anyway, without the disease we can die at any time. There are so many conditions and we can die at any time, even without the disease. Now with the disease, people come to know that we can die any time, just suddenly. This is what people who don't know, who don't think, who haven't met the lamrim, who haven't met Dharma, are afraid of. But as we are Dharma practitioners, we know about impermanence and death. We know we can die at any time - any day, any hour, any minute, any second. So, we have to think like that.

The essential idea is bodhicitta practice. If you get the disease, experience it on behalf of all sentient beings. Do tonglen, so then you die with tonglen, you die with bodhicitta. His Holiness the Dalai Lama said that this is the best way to die, with bodhicitta. So you die with tonglen, taking all the sufferings and their causes into your heart and destroying your mara, the self-cherishing thought, the ignorance holding the I.

Or at least you can recite this prayer by Choje Gotsangpa. He was a great Kagyu lama who didn't like having a monastery or center or any group. He didn't like that and he didn't have that, so he went to other monasteries and groups of people; he went there but he never made a center or monastery himself. Anyway, he said:

By my experiencing this [disease]

*May all sentient beings be free from disease and spirit harm,
May they be free from these conditions and their cause, created from
beginningless rebirths—the negative karma and defilements.
May all beings be free from that and be totally pacified, and may they*

achieve enlightenment.

Recite this verse as if you are reciting OM MANI PADME HUM. Recite this verse in the same way you recite a mantra, reciting it as much as you can—for example, while you are walking - in the same way that Tibetans recite OM MANI PADME HUM. Probably Western people only recite mantras when they are sitting down, but Tibetan people recite them while walking or shopping. So you can recite prayers like that.

So do the meditation and the prayer that I just mentioned with bodhicitta, and make the best use of your death to achieve enlightenment quickly for sentient beings, so that sentient beings may achieve enlightenment quickly. You turn poison into medicine, into nectar, like that.

Thank you very much.

With much love and prayers ...

The Method to Transform a Suffering Life into Happiness (Including Enlightenment)

At the beginning of each day, after you open your eyes, until enlightenment is achieved and until death, and especially today, so that all the activities of your body, speech, and mind - hearing, thinking, and meditating, as well as walking, sitting, sleeping, doing your job, and so on - do not become causes of suffering and instead become causes of happiness, and especially that they become causes to achieve buddhahood, (that is, that you transform them into a method for accomplishing benefit and happiness for all sentient beings), here is a method for transforming the mind into holy Dharma and especially into bodhichitta.

A Direct Meditation on the Graduated Path Containing All the Important Meanings

By Dorje Chang Lozang Jinpa

Essence encompassing all the buddhas,
 Originator of all the holy Dharma of scripture and realization,
 Principal of all the aryas intending virtue:
 In the glorious holy gurus, I take refuge.

Please, gurus, bless my mind to become Dharma,
 Dharma to become the path,
 And the path to be without obstacles.

Until I achieve buddhahood, please bless me
 To be like Youthful Norsang and Bodhisattva Always Crying
 In correctly following the virtuous friend with pure thought
 and action,
 Seeing whatever is done as pure,
 And accomplishing whatever is said and advised.

This is how to correctly follow the virtuous friend, [the root of the path to full enlightenment].

Please bless me to see that this greatly meaningful body
 with freedoms and riches
 Is difficult to find and easily perishes,
 That action and result are so profound,
 And that the sufferings of the evil-gone transmigratory beings
 are so difficult to bear.
 Therefore, please bless me to take refuge from the depths
 of my heart in the Three Rare Sublime Ones,
 To abandon negative karma, and to accomplish virtue
 according to Dharma.

This is the graduated path of the lower capable being.

In dependence upon that, even if I achieve the mere higher
 rebirth of a deva or human,
 I will still have to experience suffering endlessly in samsara
 Because of not having abandoned, and being under
 the control of, the disturbing thought obscurations.
 Therefore, please bless me to reflect well upon the way of
 circling in samsara
 And to continuously follow, day and night,
 The path of the three types of precious trainings—
 The principal method for becoming free from samsara.

This is the graduated path of the middle capable being.

In dependence upon that, even if I achieve mere liberation,
 Since there is no sentient being of the six types who has not been
 my father and mother,
 Please bless me to think, "I must fulfill their purpose,"
 And turn away from the lower happiness of nirvana.

Then, please bless me to generate precious bodhichitta
 By equalizing and exchanging myself with others,
 And to follow the conduct of the conquerors' sons,
 the six paramitas and so forth.

This is the common graduated path of the great capable being.

Having trained my mind in the common path in that way,
 I will not be upset even if I have to experience the sufferings
 of samsara for a long time.

However, please bless me to look at sentient beings
 with extraordinary unbearable compassion,
 And to enter the quick path of the Vajrayana teachings.
 Then, please bless me to protect my vows and samayas
 more than my life,
 And to quickly accomplish the unified Vajradhara state
 In one brief lifetime of this degenerate time.

This is the graduated path of the secret mantra vajra vehicle of the greatest capable being.

Recite the following verses and meditate on the guru entering
 your heart.

May I not give rise to heresy for even a second
 In regard to the actions of the glorious guru.
 May I see whatever actions are done as pure.
 With this devotion, may I receive the guru's blessings in my heart.

Magnificent and precious root guru,
 Please abide on the lotus seat at my heart,
 Guide me with your great kindness,
 And grant me the realizations of your holy body, speech,
 and mind.

Recite the following verses on how to live your life for sentient beings.

From Kadampa Geshe Langri Thangpa's Eight Verses of Thought Transformation

Determined to obtain the greatest possible benefit
From all sentient beings,
Who are more precious than a wish-fulfilling jewel,
I shall hold them most dear at all times.

From Aryasura's Prayer in Seventy Stanzas⁴

May I become like a wish-granting jewel
Fulfilling all the wishes,
And like a wish-granting tree,
Fulfilling all the hopes of transmigratory beings.

From the Conquerors' Son Shantideva's A Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life

The following translation of verses 11–22 from chapter 3 and verse 55 from chapter 10 of Shantideva's text contains additional clarifying words in italics from Lama Zopa Rinpoche, who has also added the comments that appear between the verses.

11. For the sake of accomplishing the two purposes of all sentient beings,
Without any sense of loss or concern
I give away my body and likewise my enjoyments,
such as food and clothing,
And even all my virtues accumulated over the three times.

"By abandoning attachment and giving everything away, I will attain

the state beyond sorrow. Since sentient beings are the supreme field of generosity, I will give everything to them.”

12. By abandoning attachment and giving everything away,
I will pass beyond sorrow,
And my mind will achieve the nonabiding sorrowless state,
the state of omniscience.

Since I will have to give up everything all at once when I die,
It’s best for me to give it away to sentient beings, because
buddhahood is attained in that way.

13. As I have already given this body, an impure aggregate,
To all beings to use for their pleasure,
Even if they always kill me, criticize me, beat me,
and so forth,
I will let them do whatever they like.

“I will allow them to do whatever makes them happy and give up being
attached to my body and getting angry at others.”

14. From now on, whether they play games with my body
Or make it an object of laughter by ridiculing and making
fun of it to hurt me,
Since I have already given this body of mine to sentient beings,
Why would I resist by protecting it and so forth?

15a. I will also use it to do any virtuous action
That doesn’t harm and benefits others.

Praying for virtues to become causes that do not go to waste includes:
praying for yourself to become a cause of only benefit for others (v. 15b),
praying for others’ attitudes to become causes that do not go to waste (v.
16), and praying for others’ actions to become causes that do not go to

waste (v. 17).

15b. Whenever any sentient being encounters me,
May it never be meaningless for them and always be
meaningful.

16. Whenever someone has an angry or devotional thought arise
Just by looking at me,
May that attitude alone become a cause that always
Accomplishes all the temporary and ultimate purposes
of that being.

17. Whenever others criticize me with their speech,
Harm me with their bodies,
Or likewise insult me behind my back,
May all of them have the fortune to achieve great
enlightenment.

18. May I be a savior for those who lack a savior,
A guide for all the beings who enter a road,
A boat, a ship, and a bridge
For those who want to cross the water.

19. May I be an island for those who seek the safe shore
of an island,
A light for those who want a light,
Bedding for those who wish for bedding,
And for all beings who desire a servant,
May I become a servant of them all.

20. May I be a wish-granting jewel and a wish-fulfilling vase
giving rise to whatever is desired, such as food
and clothing;

Powerful mantra accomplishing the actions of
pacification, increase, and so forth; great medicine
curing every sickness;

A wish-fulfilling tree satisfying every need;
And a wish-granting cow for all beings.

21. Like the four great elements, the earth and so forth,
And like the sky, may I always be
A means of living in every way
For the innumerable sentient beings.

22. Likewise, may I be a means of living,
At all times and in all ways, for the realms of
Sentient beings equaling the extent of space,
Until they all attain the sorrowless state.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama often recites these words of the conquerors'
son Shantideva after taking the bodhisattva vows.

55. As long as space remains,
As long as transmigratory beings remain,
Until then may I too remain
To dispel the suffering of transmigratory beings.

Gampopa, Milarepa's heart disciple, said: "After waking from sleep and before you get out of bed, think: 'Today I am going to use my body, speech, and mind in virtue [for sentient beings].' It is so important to generate this precious thought of bodhichitta, the ultimate good heart. Whatever you do that day is then done with bodhichitta, so everything then becomes virtue and the cause of enlightenment. If your motivation is wrong, everything then becomes negative karma and a cause of the evil-gone realms.

“When you then go to sleep at night, dedicate all your actions of body, speech, and mind for sentient beings. This is extremely important.

“It is said that, without difficulties, this becomes the path to the dharmakaya.”

Advice On Healing from Lama Zopa Rinpoche

You can only receive SARS if you have created the karma, which is created by delusion, which is negative. The karma is basically the result of an unethical life, immorality, harming others, and this also harms you. It is the result of unrighteous actions done with negative thoughts. If you receive SARS, it is the result of past karma ripening; the outer condition is the manifestation of this disease in the world.

According to Tibetan medical texts and also in the teachings, it explains that cancer and other diseases are caused by the individual's negative karma; in addition, it is caused by mamos (evil beings) who want to harm others. The mamos send out poisonous breath that spreads out. Anyone who has the karma then comes in contact with the poisonous breath. This is the condition that causes cancer.

Sentient beings who have created negative karma through jealousy, having broken samayas (vows), living unethically, living life without a good heart and with the thought of the three poisonous minds, having an unrighteous mind, and doing harmful actions and so forth will receive harm from outer beings, those evil-doers (mamos) who harm other living beings. Thus, sentient beings who have created the karma are then infected by their poisonous breath (similar to how airborne viruses and diseases spread). That manifests into sicknesses such as cancer and SARS. It is for these reasons that these various practices and mantras, especially Black Garuda, are helpful.

Ultimately, we need to cease the delusions and negative karma of sentient beings, which are the source of all the sufferings, including rebirth, death, and all the sufferings experienced in between. Ultimately, we need to bring sentient beings to liberation and to everlasting happiness, full enlightenment, by ceasing even the subtle defilements.

In the meantime, Buddha manifested with unbearable compassion that embraces us sentient beings as these various forms such as Black Garuda, who is the enemy of nagas and who eats snakes, etc. Buddha manifested as Black Garuda so that sentient beings could be protected from various diseases, especially those that come from naga harm. Black Garuda protects and heals these sicknesses (which are the conditions) to help sentient beings.

Similarly, Buddha manifests as a rich person to help the poor. Buddha can even manifest as a butcher to subdue evil beings, to transform their consciousnesses by splitting them from the body. Buddhas and bodhisattvas can manifest as armies for similar reasons, to destroy those evil ones who are continuously harming other sentient beings and harming the peace and happiness of the whole world, as well as to stop evil beings from creating so much heavy karma because of their actions. Buddha's actions only come from pure compassion and concern for sentient beings, as they have unsurpassable compassion toward the sufferings of evil beings and all sentient beings.

The clinical way of explaining the sickness (SARS) in the West, even if it is correct, is not a complete explanation. This is because to fully understand the cause of the sickness you have to understand and have full knowledge of the mind. There is so much to learn about even just the conventional nature of the mind. In the sutras there is the explanation of the gross mind and in the tantras the explanation of the subtle mind and its functions. If the education of the mind is limited in its understanding of the causes of sickness, then the explanation of how to cure it will always be incomplete.

Usually in the West they explain about the conditions of the sickness, but they do not mention the causes, which one cannot see with human eyes and or with machines.

From positive thinking and having positive thoughts, the result can only be beneficial, causing happiness to others and, along the way, happiness for

oneself. If our thoughts are very heavy and negative, the effect is harmful to ourselves and also harmful to others.

By knowing what is right and what is wrong in our life, we can similarly create positive actions with discriminating wisdom that knows what is beneficial and what is not. If one does not know and is ignorant, then we will receive the opposite effect. The result will be harmful to our life as well as to others who are numberless.

From ignorance, you cause danger to others. But with wisdom, as well as compassion, patience, and tolerance, you give only peace and happiness to numberless sentient beings as well as to yourself. You also bring peace and happiness to the whole world, to numberless living beings in numberless universes. You are able to do this from life to life, with a continuous positive mind, having patience and compassion. The opposite to that is having an angry, jealous mind, which is harmful to numberless living beings in numberless universes, which is harmful to the world; there is no question that it is harmful to you.

Liberating yourself from the mental sickness of desire is like letting go of the cause of confusion, suffering, and pain. You are freeing yourself from being overwhelmed and overpowered by the external object of desire, and you are giving yourself inner peace because you achieve inner satisfaction.

In the teachings of Buddhism, giving yourself satisfaction and contentment is called renunciation because you are renouncing the cause of suffering: the negative, troubling, emotional mind, which is the source of all our general life problems.

So here, you can see very extensively the negative effects of desire, the cause of suffering. You can also see the positive effects of renunciation – so much peace and happiness, inner strength, freedom wherever you go, whether you are alone or with people. This comes from letting go and freeing yourself from desire.

Then there is the self-cherishing thought that opens the door to all problems in life and harms numberless others from life to life, directly and indirectly, and is also of great harm to yourself. By transforming, by changing the mind into cherishing others, it is like giving happiness to numberless living beings. It is similar to the sun shining in the world and is best way to achieve happiness for yourself, which comes by the way.

Ignorance is also very harmful. For example, in business if you are ignorant and cannot see the present or the future, there is the risk that you may completely lose all your money that you collected for so many years, for your whole life, from kindergarten onward. So you can lose all your money, and the next day you become a beggar. This is due to ignorance. Therefore, it is very important and necessary that you have knowledge, understanding, and foreseeing.

Ignorance is also very harmful in relationships. When you are married or living together, throughout your whole life you fight and quarrel and there is so much suffering, no peace day or night. You have such a sad life, such an angry life. It is as if you are caught in prison; instead of enjoying life, you are caught in prison, and it becomes like hell. Your relationship, your family life, becomes like hell. Then there is also the suffering of separation, especially if you are very attached. The shortcoming is ignorance, not understanding, not having knowledge or the ability to foresee.

Ignorance is also very harmful in medical treatment. You can get the wrong treatment or the treatment takes a long time to work. Then maybe the treatment is right, but another sickness comes by the way, or you experience life obstacles and death. Again, you need knowledge, understanding, and foreseeing to overcome these things.

Ignorance is also harmful in war. You make mistakes because of not knowing where the enemy is or the time that the enemy will attack. Thus, you lose the war and so many people get killed. Again, you need foreseeing, knowledge, and understanding to overcome that.

Ignorance is also harmful with regard to how you bring up your children. If you have no knowledge, understanding, or foreseeing, you will not know what is right for the child and what is wrong, what is to be abandoned. You will not know how to bring up the child according to their different karmic imprints left from the past. Again, because of ignorance you encounter so many hardships, problems, and sufferings. You can't really benefit the child and are not really able to make the child's life meaningful. Even though you have given birth, shelter, food, and common education, but still the child's life is very destructive, not only inside but also outside, in the family and in the world. This is because of the lack of education in the good heart and wisdom.

So due to ignorance not knowing what is real happiness and the real cause of happiness (even ordinary happiness, success) and not knowing what is the cause of suffering (which is negative karma and delusion), due to ignorance not knowing what is the cause of liberation and the path to achieve it and not knowing what is the path to achieve full enlightenment, the child is selfish, having no respect, even toward the parents who have sacrificed so many years of their lives to bring the child up in the way that they think is good.

This is the most harmful ignorance as it means that you can't really help others to achieve happiness; you can't really educate others in what is the real cause of happiness and the real cause of suffering; you can't really liberate them because you don't know the path yourself; and you can't bring them to full enlightenment because you do not know how to do this. All this is due to ignorance.

Ignorance is also harmful to your spiritual practice. Because of not having knowledge, understanding, and foreseeing, you are unable to know what is right or wrong to practice and then you get stuck. Life is very short, and of course, death can happen at any time, so then you lose this great opportunity to liberate yourself from suffering and its causes and to liberate others.

Whatever life you live, whatever you do in your daily life, do everything with the thought of loving kindness, with the thought of compassion, and with the precious thought of benefiting others as well as with wisdom. You need to develop both. Without wisdom you may do silly things that are actually meant to benefit others but are totally silly, empty, and impractical; so you encounter problems. Without wisdom you can use your life and actions in a negative way, and so what could be used to benefit others instead results in harming others. This is because of not having knowledge, so you engage in negative karma or in things that have very small benefit. For example, you may be able to benefit so many hundreds or millions of people or animals, saving their lives and liberating them from creating suffering and causing them to create happiness; but instead, you give your life, you sacrifice your life for one tiny insect; you choose to die, giving your life to one tiny insect, instead of benefiting so many people. That is an example of compassion without wisdom.

Colophon:

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{Reaffirming my commitment to the precepts}

In Praise of the Precepts

{Note: in this piece, one can substitute the words sila, vinaya, ethics, ethical sense, moral sense, morality, virtue, fundamental goodness, discipline, conduct, moral guidelines, or any other term with the same meaning.}

Homage to the precepts that give life

I bow to the ethics that heal, that soothe, and pacify,
and that are the foundation for all the good that arises in this world

I bow to the moral conduct that protects the mind and the body from
suffering
and that brings peace to oneself and others in the community

I praise the Noble conduct that restores the balance of the elements

I bow to the fundamental goodness that gives health
that gives strength
and that purifies all beings

I bow to the pratimoksha-precepts,
the guidelines and embodied ways of living
that are the basis for individual liberation

that are the expression of great respect between people
that are the expression of reverence for life,
that are the expression of this wisdom

I honor the virtue that is the manifest essential character of all good people,
and that is the guardian and protector of oneself and of all beings

I pay homage to the morality that supports meditation
that tames the mind, and keeps it humble
and that awakens the sense of dignity

I bow to the ethical integrity that is cool and refreshing
whose practice ennobles
whose practice uplifts
whose practice purifies and transforms,
whose practice beautifies the world

I bow to the sila that is true wealth
I bow to those wholesome instincts, those good roots,
that bring safety to self and others
and that bring freedom from fear to self and others

I bow to the wise, compassionate, disciplined conduct
that creates the causes for happiness,
now and in the future,
for oneself and for others

I bow to the far-seeing, impeccable morality whose beneficial influence,
when practiced by even just one person, reaches far

I honor the kindness and decency that clarifies the mind,
and that is a true compass for life in the world

Even the worst person,
as soon as they turn their mind to ethical conduct,
gains some improvement in their mind

I bow to the goodness that is the essential nature of the nectar that relieves the sufferings of the six realms

I bow to the sila that liberates

I pay homage to the vinaya - precepts from their origin in wisdom, and as spoken, written, practiced, and realized

Any person in whom the moral sense is strong is an object of refuge, whether they be a layperson or ordained

They are a source of safety and strength

Even without speaking, their presence alone comforts, and can heal

I bow to the virtue that is the essential, abundantly clear character of all good persons, and that is perfected in all arhats, bodhisattvas and saints

I bow to the practice of ethics that nourishes, that heals, that revitalizes, and that brings happiness

Three Metta Meditations

The Discourse on Love - Thich Nhat Hanh translation

Metta Bhavana - Loving Kindness Meditation

The Cultivation of Loving Kindness

The Discourse On Love {Thich Nhat Hanh translation}

He or she who wants to attain peace should practice being upright, humble, and capable of using loving speech. He or she will know how to live simply and happily, with senses calmed, without being covetous and carried away by the emotions of the majority. Let him or her not do anything that will be disapproved of by the wise ones.

(And this is what he or she contemplates:)

May everyone be happy and safe, and may their hearts be filled with joy. May all living beings live in security and in Peace - beings who are frail or strong, tall or short, big or small, visible or not visible, near or far away, already born or yet to be born. May all of them dwell in perfect tranquility. Let no one do harm to anyone. Let no one put the life of anyone in danger. Let no one, out of anger or ill will, wish anyone any harm.

Just as a mother loves and protects her only child at the risk of her own life, we should cultivate Boundless Love to offer to all living beings in the entire cosmos. We should let our boundless love pervade the whole universe, above, below and across. Our love will know no obstacles, our heart will be absolutely free from hatred and enmity. Whether standing or walking, sitting or lying, as long as we are awake, we should maintain this mindfulness of love in our own heart. This is the noblest way of living.

Free from wrong views, greed and sensual desires, living in beauty and realizing perfect understanding, those who practice Boundless Love will certainly transcend Birth and Death.

Metta Bhavana - Loving Kindness Meditation

To begin with, I sit upright, and relax. I close my eyes and allow myself to settle, becoming more calm, relaxed and harmonious.

I let go of thoughts, feelings, and sensations.

I observe how the breath is flowing in smoothly, and flowing out easily; free and harmonious.

Now I see a wonderful sun over my head, shining with warm, golden light.

This bright light of loving-kindness is streaming throughout my entire being. I can feel it; I feel well, and I am happy.

I. First person: Now I imagine one person who I love the most.

I see the warm, golden light of loving-kindness streaming to that person.

This wonderful bright light is flowing through this person. This beloved person is surrounded by this light of higher love and kindness.

I can see the smile on their face. This beloved person feels well, and is very happy.

II. Second person: Next, I imagine one person who I like and respect.

... (as above)

III. Third person: Next I can see one person toward whom I have a neutral relationship. ... (as above)

IV. Fourth person: The last person I think of is one whom I have had difficulties, or someone who I dislike. ... (as above)

Now I see all four persons together, with the sun above them, and I see them all receiving the same amount of this warm golden light of loving-kindness.

They all feel well; they are all smiling, and they are all shining, and happy.

Then I let them go in peace and happiness.

Now, once more I see the warm sun above my head, and once again I am filled with feelings of happiness and well-being.

(optional:)

If necessary, at this point, I practice equanimity meditation:

Now, I allow myself to feel calm, and peaceful.

To conclude, I take a deep breath, and exhale slowly. I come back to the here and the now, and slowly open my eyes.

May all beings be happy.

The Cultivation of Loving Kindness

Having seen that like oneself
all beings seek for happiness,
one patiently then cultivates love for all beings

May all the precious children of this world
be entirely well and at their ease...

May I be happy, healthy, and peaceful
May I be free from suffering

May my family, friends,
neutral ones, and all honored guests
have every happiness
May they be free from all suffering
May they be free from all danger, and all difficulty

Within the boundaries of this town,
may all beings have happiness
Likewise those in other places,
in other cities, and countries,
in all places,
may they all have happiness, health and peace

All creatures and all breathing things,
all persons and all entities...
men, women and children,
the Noble Ones, the unawake,
Devas, and unhappy ones
who in the ten directions dwell -

*May all beings be happy and at peace,
and may their hearts be filled with joy*

Protective Chants from the Pali Canon

From Paritta Recitation - A Selection of Texts

Recollecting the Qualities of the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha, Praise, and
Taking Refuge, from Traditional Sources

Invitation to Recite the Parittas

Invocation and Prayer

Paritta

The Metta Sutta - The Discourse on Loving Kindness

Ending a Plague

The Ratana Sutta - The Jewel Discourse

Dedication Prayers

Chants of Protection, from Paritta Chants for Special Blessings

Dedication prayers, from The Book of Protection

Recollecting the Qualities of the Three Jewels, Praise, and Taking Refuge

Homage to the Founder,
 the Endowed Transcendent Destroyer (of defilements),
 the One Gone Beyond,
 the Foe Destroyer,
 The Completely Perfected, Fully Awakened Being,
 the Glorious Conqueror, the Subduer from the Shakya Clan

(Recollection of the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha)

(This fine report of the Buddha's reputation has spread far & wide,
 that) He is

Worthy of honor and reverence,
 being the Great Benefactor of us all,
 He is an Arahant, completely purified,
 A Fully Enlightened One,

Accomplished in Knowledge and Conduct,
 Well-gone,
 Knower of the world

He is an Incomparable teacher for those to be trained,
 A Teacher of devas and humans,
 The Awakened One
 He is a blessing to the world.

(Recollection of the Dhamma)

His Liberating Teachings
 are well explained,

They are timeless,
to be seen here and now,
They are inviting,
leading onwards,
and to be experienced individually by the wise

(Recollection of the Sangha)

And His Spiritual Community has practiced well,
with understanding, and integrity;
They have practiced with faith and clear intelligence,
with diligent effort and dedication,

They are worthy of praise and respect,
They are worthy of love and support
They are worthy of gifts,
Worthy of hospitality,
Worthy of offerings,
They are an incomparable field of merit for the world!

I take refuge in the Buddha, the Enlightened One, the Great Compassionate
Teacher

I take refuge in the Dharma, in all the Liberating Teachings,

and I take refuge in the Noble Sangha, the Accomplished Spiritual
Community, the Assembly of Saints

Praise and Taking Refuge

Endowed with excellent qualities,
 of purity, transcendental wisdom, and compassion,
 The Great Teacher has enlightened the wise
 like the sun awakening the lotus -
 I bow my head to that peaceful chief of conquerors.

The Buddha, who is the supreme, secure refuge of all beings -
 As the First Object of Recollection, I venerate Him with bowed head.
 The Buddha is sorrow's destroyer, and He bestows blessings

I take refuge in the Buddha

To the Buddha I dedicate this body and life,
 And in devotion I will walk the Buddha's path of awakening.
 By my devotion to the Buddha, and by the blessing of this practice,
 By its power, may all obstacles be overcome.

The Dhamma is excellent because it is so clear and inspiring,
 It's actual nature is known when put into practice -
 it can be seen then as Path and Fruit, Practice and Liberation.
 The Dhamma holds those who uphold it from falling into delusion.
 I revere the excellent teaching, that removes darkness from the mind

The Dhamma, which is the supreme, secure refuge of all beings -
 As the Second Object of Recollection, I venerate it with bowed head.
 The Dhamma is sorrow's destroyer, and it bestows blessings

I take refuge in the Dhamma

To the Dhamma I dedicate this body and life,
 And in devotion I will walk this excellent way of Truth.

By my devotion to the Dhamma, and the by blessing of this practice,
By its power, may all obstacles be overcome.

Born of the Dhamma, that Sangha
Is guided in body and mind by most excellent virtue.
I revere that assembly of Noble beings perfected in purity.

The Sangha, which is the supreme, secure refuge of all beings
As the Third Object of Recollection, I venerate it with bowed head.
The Sangha is sorrow's destroyer and it bestows blessings

I take refuge in the Sangha

To the Sangha I dedicate this body and life,
And in devotion I will walk the well-practiced way of the Sangha.
By my devotion to the Sangha, and by the blessing of this practice,
By its power, may all obstacles be overcome.

To the Buddha,
The Savior having Great Compassion and Great Wisdom,
with qualities like a vast ocean,

To the purity which makes one free from attachment,
The virtue which frees one from the lower realms,
To that Dharma which pacifies, brings freedom,
and reveals our true nature,

And to those who are liberated and who also show the path to liberation,
The holy field qualified with realizations,
Who are devoted to the moral precepts,
and to the benefit of beings,
To the Sangha, the sublime community intending virtue -

Homage

I take refuge in the Buddha

I take refuge in the Dharma

and

I take refuge in the Noble Sangha

May all beings share in these blessings.

Invitation to Recite the Parittas

For the warding off of danger.
For the accomplishment of all Happiness.
For the destruction of all suffering.
Let us recite together the auspicious protective chants.

For the warding off of danger.
For the accomplishment of all Happiness.
For the destruction of all fear.
Let us recite together the auspicious protective chants.

For the warding off of danger.
For the accomplishment of all Happiness.
For the destruction of all illness.
Let us recite together the auspicious protective chants.

Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Samma Sambuddhasa

Homage to the Blessed One, the Noble One, the Perfectly Enlightened One

Invocation and Prayer

1.

O devas,
residing in ten thousand universes,
may you come here to this place,
and listen to the sacred doctrine of the Lord of Sages,
which can yield divine bliss and perfect emancipation.

2.

O devas this is the right time to listen to the doctrine.

3.

May our veneration be dedicated to Him, the Mighty, the Infallible, the Supreme Buddha.

4.

Those who are tranquil and peaceful in mind,
who have taken refuge in the three holy jewels,
here in this world or in other spheres;

the devas terrestrial and celestial,
who always wish to cultivate merits.

Those devas, and the King of devas residing on royal Meru,
the majestic golden mountain,

and all virtuous ones
 may you come here in unity to listen to the noble words of the Great Sage,
 which are the root cause of peace and well being

5.

The demons, the devas, and gods in all universes
 hereby may rejoice, in whichever meritorious deeds we have done for the
 accomplishment of all enjoyments.

6.

Having rejoiced in this sharing of merit,
 may all be comfortable and unanimous in His Teachings.

May all be free from negligence especially in the duties of protection.

7.

May there always be prosperity in the religions as well as in the world.

May the devas always guard the religion as well as the world.

8.

May all of you together with your retinues be happy.

May you together with all of your relatives be free from suffering
 and may you be joyful.

9.

May you take care in protecting from the dangers of tyrants, robbers, human enemies, inhuman beings, conflagrations, floods, demons, tree-stumps, thorns, evil planets, village diseases, law-breakers, heretics, impious men, and of dangers from wild elephants, horses, beasts, bulls, dogs, serpents, scorpions, copper-head snakes, panthers, bears, hyenas, boars, buffaloes, ogres, devils, and so on,

and also of dangers from various fears, various diseases and various disasters.

The Metta Sutta

This is what should be done
by those who are skilled in goodness,
and who know the path of peace:

Let them be able and upright,
humble and not conceited,
contented and easily satisfied,
unburdened with duties
and frugal in their ways.

Peaceful and calm,
and wise and skillful,
not proud and demanding in nature.
Let them not do the slightest thing
that the wise would later reprove.

Wishing: in gladness and in safety,
may all beings be at their ease.

Whatever living beings there may be,
whether they are weak or strong,
omitting none,
the great or the mighty,
medium, short or small,
the seen and the unseen,
those living near and far away,
those born and to-be-born –
May all beings be at ease!

Let none deceive another,
or despise any being in any state.

Let none through anger or ill-will
wish harm upon another.

Even as a mother protects with her life
her child, her only child,
so with a boundless heart
should one cherish all living beings;

radiating kindness over the entire world,
spreading upwards to the skies,
and downwards to the depths,
outward and unbounded,
freed from hatred and ill-will.

Whether standing or walking,
seated or lying down,
free from drowsiness,
one should sustain this recollection.
This is said to be the sublime abiding.

By not holding to fixed views,
the pure-hearted one,
having clarity of vision,
being freed from all sense desires,
is not born again into this world.

Ending a plague

{Based on the story of the Jewel Sutta}

Once, when disease had spread
claiming lives from house to house
and village to village,

when foul, rotting corpses were everywhere,
and mournful cries could be heard from far,

when ghosts and evil minded ones
terrorized those who were left,

just then with his arrival
the torrential rains of the Buddha's compassion
came pouring down,
sweeping away the filth, and clearing the air

Just as he and his disciples walked through the streets
and exorcised that town then
bringing light, speaking swift flowing rivers of deep truth,
washing away disease and despair,
rescuing living beings,
just so, may it be this way for us now

to cleanse all those who suffer today, tonight,
to wash away their delusions,
their afflictions,
their spiritual and physical illness

We invoke the presence of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas,
the Saints and Sages,
the Devas, guardians and protectors,

and a rain of the holy Dharma
in America and the world, in this, the 21st century,

to cleanse the streets of the putrefying corpses
destroyed by the epidemics
of materialism and greed,
of indifference,
of cruelty, and neglect

of rampant addictions,
of violent thoughts and actions,
of wars,
and destruction,
and of the blindness sweeping through nations

technology enabling the rapid spread of deep delusion
until right thought, speech and action are all but forgotten

evil spreading fast and far,
creating debased humans,
walking corpses,
and hungry ghosts, vengeful spirits

Oh, who can we call to now?
Who but you,
o saviors of humankind, all species,
and the earth!

You who are endlessly dedicated
to the healing of our sorrows and afflictions,
pour down the holy rain of your teachings!

as words,
as light,

*as peace,
as insight
arising in the hearts of men and women,
animals and spirits*

*as empowered prayer
and mantra
and medicines,
enabling compassionate works for our family
and planet to be completely fulfilled!*

Transform the terrible hungry ghost-like minds
inspire us with your grace and wisdom and compassion,
and with your great love and power

Bring light, harmony, joy and rest again to this land
and to these people,
moved by your presence, I pray

And just as the Buddha in his time
utterly tamed those unruly spirits,
completely cleared the airs,
and thoroughly cleansed the streets and homes
and those people's hearts and minds and bodies,
so too, exactly in that same way,
may this place and the minds and hearts of these people here
be thoroughly purified and renewed

The Jewel Discourse

The occasion for this discourse, in brief, according to the commentary, is as follows: The city of Vesali was afflicted by a famine, causing death, especially to the poor folk. Due to the presence of decaying corpses, evil spirits began to haunt the city; this was followed by a pestilence. Plagued by these three fears of famine, non-human beings and pestilence, the citizens sought the help of the Buddha who was then living at Rajagaha.

Followed by a large number of monks including the Venerable Ananda, his attendant disciple, the Buddha came to the city of Vesali. With the arrival of the Master, there were torrential rains which swept away the putrefying corpses. The atmosphere became purified, the city was clean.

Thereupon the Buddha delivered this Jewel Discourse (in Pali, The Ratana Sutta[2]) to the Venerable Ananda, and gave him instructions as to how he should tour the city with the Licchavi citizens reciting the discourse as a mark of protection to the people of Vesali. The Venerable Ananda followed the instructions, and sprinkled the sanctified water from the Buddha's own alms bowl. As a consequence the evil spirits were exorcised, and the pestilence subsided. Thereafter the Venerable Ananda returned with the citizens of Vesali to the Public hall where the Buddha and his disciples had assembled awaiting his arrival. There the Buddha recited the same Jewel Discourse to the gathering: [3] This is what the Buddha spoke. He said:

1. "Whatever beings are assembled here,
terrestrial or celestial,
may they all have peace of mind,
and may they listen attentively to these words:

2. "O beings, listen closely.
May you all radiate loving-kindness to those who, by day and night,
offer merit to you.
May you protect them with diligence.

3. "Whatever treasure there be either in the world beyond,
whatever precious jewel there be in the heavenly worlds,
there is nothing comparable to the Tathagata, the perfect One.

This precious jewel is the Buddha.[4]
By this truth may there be happiness.

4. "That Cessation, that Detachment,
that Deathlessness, Nibbana supreme,
the calm and collected Sakyan Sage, the Buddha, had realized.
There is nothing comparable to this Nibbana Dhamma.

This precious jewel is the Dhamma.[5]
By this truth may there be happiness.

5. "The Supreme Buddha extolled a path of purity,
the Noble Eightfold Path,
calling it the path which unfailingly brings concentration.
There is nothing comparable to this concentration.

This precious jewel is the Dhamma.
By this truth may there be happiness.

6. "The eight persons extolled by virtuous men and women constitute four
pairs.
They are the disciples of the Buddha and are worthy of offerings.
Gifts given to them yield rich results.

This precious jewel is the Sangha.[6]
By this truth may there be happiness.

7. "With a steadfast mind,
and applying themselves well in the dispensation of the Buddha Gotama,
free from defilements,

they have attained to that which should be attained,
 encountering the Deathless.
 They enjoy the Peace of Nibbana freely obtained.[7]

This precious jewel is the Sangha.
 By this truth may there be happiness.

8. "As a post deep-planted in the earth stands
 unshaken by the winds from the four quarters,
 so, too, I declare is the righteous man
 who comprehends with wisdom the Noble Truths.

This precious jewel is the Sangha.
 By this truth may there be happiness.

9. "Those who realized the Noble Truths
 well taught by him who is profound in wisdom, the Buddha,
 even though they may be exceedingly heedless,
 they will not take an eighth existence.[8]

This precious jewel is the Sangha.
 By this truth may there be happiness.

10. "With his gaining of insight he abandons three states of mind,
 namely self-illusion, doubt,
 and indulgence in meaningless rites and rituals, should there be any.
 He is also fully freed from the four states of woe,
 and therefore, incapable of committing the six major wrongdoings.[9]

This precious jewel is the Sangha.
 By this truth may there be happiness.

11. "Any evil action he may still do
 by deed, word or thought,

he is incapable of concealing it;
 since it has been proclaimed
 that such concealing is impossible
 for one who has seen the Path (of Nibbana).[10]

This precious jewel is the Sangha.
 By this truth may there be happiness.

12. "As the woodland groves in the early heat of summer
 are crowned with blossoming flowers,
 even so is the sublime Dhamma
 leading to the (calm) of Nibbana
 which is taught (by the Buddha) for the highest good.

This precious jewel is the Buddha.
 By this (asseveration of the) truth may there be happiness.

13. "The Peerless Excellent one, the Buddha,
 the Knower of Nibbana,
 the Giver of Nibbana,
 the Bringer of the Noble Path,
 taught the excellent Dhamma.

This precious jewel is the Buddha.
 By this truth may there be happiness.

14. "Their past (kamma) is spent,
 their new (kamma) no more arises,
 their mind to future becoming is unattached.
 That seed is gone.

Of those Wise Ones it can be said:

The kamma impelling them to take uncontrolled rebirth

in the six realms is no more -
that kamma has faded away,
just as the flame of this lamp
which has just faded away.

This precious jewel is the Sangha.
By this truth may there be happiness.

Then Sakra said:

15. "Whatever beings are assembled here,
terrestrial or celestial,
come let us salute the Buddha, the Tathagata, the perfect One,
honored by gods and men.
May there be happiness.[11]

16. "Whatever beings are assembled here
terrestrial or celestial,
come let us salute the perfect Dhamma, honored by gods and men.
May there be happiness.

17. "Whatever beings are assembled here
terrestrial or celestial,
come let us salute the perfect Sangha, honored by gods and men.
May there be happiness."

Notes

1. Khp. No. 6; Sn. 39
2. Ratana means precious jewel. Here the term is applied to the Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha.
3. KhpA. 161.
4. Literally, in the Buddha is this precious jewel.
5. Literally, in the Dhamma is this precious jewel.
6. Literally, in the Sangha is this precious jewel.

7. Obtained without payment; "avyayena," KhpA. I., 185.
8. The reason why it is stated that there will be no eighth existence for a person who has attained the stage of sotapatti or the first stage of sanctity is that such a being can live at the most for only a period of seven existences in the realm of sense spheres.
9. Abhithanani; i. matricide, ii. patricide, iii. the murder of arahants (the Consummate Ones), iv. the shedding of the Buddha's blood, v. causing schism in the Sangha, and vi. pernicious false beliefs (niyata micca ditthi).
10. He is a sotapanna, stream-enterer, one who has attained the first stage of sanctity. Also see Notes at the end of the book.
11. The last three stanzas were recited by Sakka, the chief of Devas (gods), KhpA. 195.

Dedication Prayers

Chants of Protection, from 'Paritta Chants for Special Blessings'

1.

Whatever bad omens, inauspiciousness, undesirable sounds of birds, unlucky planets, or unpleasant bad dreams there are, may they vanish by the power of the Buddha.

2.

Whatever bad omens, inauspiciousness, undesirable sounds of birds, unlucky planets, or unpleasant bad dreams there are, may they vanish by the power of the Dhamma.

3.

Whatever bad omens, inauspiciousness, undesirable sounds of birds, unlucky planets, or unpleasant bad dreams there are, may they vanish by the power of the Sangha.

4.

May those afflicted with pain be free from pain,

May those afflicted with fear be free from fear,

May those afflicted with grief be free from grief,

For all beings, may it be so.

5.

May you all practice generosity with faith in the Triple Gem.

May you always keep moral precepts.

May you all rejoice in bhavana.

6.

All Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, Pratyekabuddhas and Arhats are powerful.
By their power, may you all be blessed

Dedication prayers from The Book of Protection, lightly edited

May the blessings of all the Buddhas,
Bodhisattvas, and Arhats be upon you

May all misfortunes be warded off,
May all ailments cease;
May no calamities befall you;
May you live long in peace.

May all blessings be upon you.
May all devas protect you.

By the protective power of all the Buddhas, Dharma, and Sangha,
may safety ever be yours.

By the power of this recitation,
may you be free from all dangers
arising from malign influences of the planets, demons, and spirits,
May all your misfortunes vanish.

By the power of the Buddha
may all evil omens and untoward circumstances,
the ominous cry of birds,
the malign conjunctions of the stars,
and evil dreams be neutralized.

By the power of the Dhamma, may these be nullified.
By the power of the Sangha, may they be rendered harmless.

May those beings who suffer be free from suffering.
those who are in fear be free from fear.
those who are in grief be free from grief.

May the rains fall in due season;
 May there be a rich harvest;
 May the world prosper;
 And May the ruler be righteous.

May beings, celestial and terrestrial,
 Devas and Nagas of mighty power,
 share this merit of ours.
 And May they long protect the Dispensation.

May all beings share this merit which we have thus acquired.
 And May it be a cause of their happiness.

Let this merit be received by my relatives;
 May they be well and happy.

From the highest realm of existence to avici hell,
 whatever beings that are born -
 those with form and the formless ones,
 those with or without consciousness -
 may they all be free from suffering!
 May they all attain Nibbana!

By the power of the merit of paying homage
 to the the Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha,
 those that are eminently worthy of reverence,
 may all dangers cease!

May all beings be entirely well and at their ease!

Seeing the world of sentient beings,
 so full of afflictions,
 bodhisattvas arouse their energy,
 thinking,

'I should rescue and liberate these beings;
 I should purify and emancipate them;

I should lead them,
 direct them,

make them happy,
 develop them,
 and cause them to reach perfect peace.'

Thus dedicated to the salvation of all beings,
 the bodhisattva reflects thus,

'By what means can these beings,
 fallen as they are into such misery,
 be lifted out of it?'

and it occurs to these bodhisattvas,

'The means to do this is nowhere else
 but in the knowledge of liberation...'

The bodhisattvas thus devote themselves
 to their realization of the Buddha's Way,

From The Avatamsaka Sutra - 722

Refuge and Bodhicitta Prayers, by Lama Zopa Rinpoche

I go for refuge to Buddha, Dharma, Sangha,
until I achieve enlightenment

Due to the merits of having done
Charity, and so forth, the Six Paramitas,
having listened to teachings...

By the three times merits collected by me, the three times merits, past,
present, future, collected by numberless sentient beings, and the three
times merits collected by numberless Buddhas,
May I achieve total cessation of mistakes of mind, and the total completion
of all realizations of Buddhahood

in order to free from oceans of samsaric suffering the numberless hell
beings, numberless hungry ghosts, numberless animals, numberless human
beings, numberless sura beings, numberless asura beings, numberless
intermediate state beings,
to free them from oceans of samsaric suffering and bring them to
enlightenment...

like that...

For the sake of those who struggle and suffer,
 all those who have not yet reached the highest state of freedom and peace,
 to relieve their suffering and to bring them happiness,

I take refuge in the Buddha,
 the Great Compassionate Teacher,
 the Remover of suffering,
 I take refuge in the Dharma,
 in all the Liberating Teachings,
 and I take refuge in the Noble Sangha,
 the Accomplished Spiritual Community

By this practice,
 just as my teachers before me have done,
 May I realize the state of Peace,
 Perfect Freedom, and happiness,
 and Great Love, ~ the Mind of Enlightenment,
 and may I bring all others to that very same state

{The concerns of others are my concerns,
 is that not so?

For their sake, then}

May I accomplish this Path,

and,

May all temporal and ultimate aims be fulfilled

A prayer for degenerate times

{The five degenerations: lifespan, views, emotions, time, and beings}

Wars, and the threat of wars
that would end life on earth;

epidemics, and new diseases appearing

famines,
the increasing rate of species extinction,
and environmental destruction;

Look on these if you have the courage,
and if you can bear to:

fires, hurricanes, floods, and earthquakes

food and medicines deteriorating,
and causing even more illness,
and addiction

lifespan, and views, emotions,
and the environments in which we live in this time,
people becoming more and more difficult to reach,
their minds more difficult to tame

people losing the ability to practice,
the motivation, and the understanding,
despite all the wise and holy beings who have come before
and left us their teachings

extreme views these days,
more and more are taken as normal,

racism, materialism, hedonism,
and fanaticism

false teachers proliferating,
divisions between genuine students,
and between students and their teachers
relationships are harder to form and are easily broken -

All these were foretold,
and such are these very times,
and I call out
Where are we to turn to now?

There is a tradition I heard of,
and have felt to be true
that said
when times get really bad,
and when it seems that nothing works,
then these particular practices -
tantra and the revelations known as terma -
would become effective
that said
when the conditions became truly dire
they would work to change the conditions,
and liberate beings from their suffering

We need you now
to stop the terrible flood of suffering
to end the great dangers we face
so whatever prayers you have made, or embodied
may they be effective now
May they ripen for us now
Now is the time

Guru Rinpoche, not many have heard of you,
and even fewer believe
in the compassionate pledges you made
when you saw what was to come

While we can still hear you,
and receive the blessings you intend,
O all you great compassionate ones
extend your hand and your power
While there is still time
make your blessings known to us

Two poems from *This is the Way Light Moves - Collected Poems 2018 to 2020*

From Finding Refuge

One Person spoke a true word
and storms have been stilled in every direction since

*Namo Tassa Bhagavato
Arahato Samma Sambudassa!*

*Homage to the Blessed One,
the Worthy, and Fully Awakened One!*

* * *

Angels, Devas, Shining Ones

Sometimes a strong prayer opens the door
for you to manifest,
sometimes a few words on a page;

Sometimes you arrive unbidden,
and you are always welcomed

You always bring comfort,
and encouragement,
and increase faith
in divine activity in our world

Whenever I hear stories about you,
no matter the distance,
or how long ago they happened,
they feel as if they are talking about *today*,
and *this place* where I am now

Honored Friend,
companion throughout all my lives,
guardian and protector,
help me to remember you

and may Devas kindly guard and protect
all children,
all mothers and fathers,
all elders,

all those who are poor,
the vulnerable,
the infirm

all travelers,
all those who struggle and suffer,
all those who are lost,
and all who are in need of healing

I pray,
comfort them,
and lead them to safety,
health, and peace

Essays

Speaking of Angels

Tantric Refuge,

and,

The Continual Practice of Right View

Speaking of Angels

Preface

There's a story only I can tell. If it were not so, I'd leave it to others to say. Trying to use other people's language doesn't quite work for me either. I find myself stuttering, and getting lost too easily.

By far most of what people write never makes it into print, or it is not seen by others - indeed, it is not *intended* for that - but is set down just for the sake of clarity for the one writing it.

Sometimes there is a part of ourselves that understands perfectly, while another part is in the dark. The writer stands between the two, making apparent what had been obscure, making tangible what had seemed remote, making practical what had been inaccessible before.

When I read others' accounts the spiritual life, I enter their world view, and I'm constantly aware of the need to translate what they say so that it makes sense to me. Another part of me flows on, understanding the inner world in my own way.

So much is not born because it receives no encouragement from others in this world. A very few truths make their way to the surface on account of some encouragement felt from within. There's freedom in this, since the work then is only partly my own, shaped as it is by these finer forces I've come to know and write about for my own understanding.

On World View

For me, telling these stories is an act of faith, more than for curiosity. Since a world view *is comprehensive*, it covers all we think and feel, and do, and aim to do. Starting anywhere, as with a circle, will soon bring the full sense of the view that is intended.

Having an experience of a different order from the common life, whoever we are, changes *everything* for a person. It can be denied - 'I must have been dreaming', or it can turn a person's world upside down. It can also fit, somehow, and then our world is made larger, more beautiful, and interesting, with more possibilities.

The knowledge of angels or shining ones is usually kept secret, because of how personal these experiences are for people. We naturally draw back from any disbelief, or doubt, or denigration from others. We organize our inner life around these truths as we've experienced them, and so, until our knowledge is firm, we protect the light that guides our lives.

* * *

Angels I have known

I can tell of healing angels, guardian angels, and those who support my life in this world, 'money angels' I have called them.

As others have pointed out in their traditions, as with God, the angels, devas, and all those we can say are of a higher order of being are not bound by time and space, as most humans believe experience themselves to be. They can appear as a circumstance, illuminated with the same feeling of warmth and intelligence as when they appear to us clothed with divine form.

One thing their appearance very often has in common across traditions and folk's telling of angels is that they come when they are most needed.

They can permeate our dreams, or rise up as a feeling when we're just walking down the street one day; they can come as a voice, or as a righteous impulse, or a sense of direction when we're lost.

Their nature is love and wisdom and power, beyond our usual thoughts. They communicate spiritual truth, and help us wherever we are in our lives. As an order of spiritual being, they have this function everywhere they are found. This is most personal. If we're receptive, we can learn a lot from them.

* * *

When the Buddha taught, it's often recounted that the light of devas filled the grove. Beings from other levels came to hear him teach the path to liberation and enlightenment. In subtle ways, they celebrated his teaching, with songs of praise and offerings of celestial flowers.

* * *

There is a class of beings who respond to our spiritual efforts. At times we can feel how they rejoice even when we just have the thought to practice.

I remember once when I was on retreat in 2012 and I thought of studying an in depth introduction to the Pali Sutras, and sensing what felt like happiness and encouragement from the local spirits. I don't know the extent of their powers, only that they can facilitate learning in myriad ways.

I've heard one definition of blessing as 'removing obstacles'. There was a time in my early 30's when I felt like the road was cleared of obstructions to learning, and that whatever I turned to study came to me with very little effort on my part. We can say part of it was karmic affinity, but, truth be told, it felt like there was more to it than that. I felt like a part of it was help from the spirit world, surely.

Back before the days of the internet, I found out about the existence of *transcripts* by one of my beloved teachers, Lama Yeshe, and I sent letters out to centers all over the world, asking if they'd be willing to send me copies of whatever they had. Lo and behold, within a couple of months, from

every continent, photocopies of the books of these teachings appeared on my doorstep.

Now, you can say there was nothing exceptional happening, but the *inner feeling* was one of being helped.

* * *

An experience at work

I worked for an unusual bookstore for about six years, and there was a period of time when I would do my prayers and meditations at the beginning of every work day there. This sometimes took up to three hours, and it often happened that I had not a single sale during that whole time, but that *within a minute* of completing my practice, someone would approach the counter with books they wanted to buy. This happened so regularly that I almost came to expect it - and this was during a recession, mind you. I knew it was unusual, and that I was being helped by unseen, benevolent forces, and yet, such is the life of a person who is on their contacts, as they say, in touch with the spiritual world, and divine helpers, the shining ones.

* * *

When I was living in the South West, I heard a story from the father of my host. He was disabled, without the ability to walk without crutches, and he told me about the day his second son was born. He said he pulled into the hospital parking lot, and felt unable to move and be with his wife. He told me he felt so angry and and that he prayed powerfully, in a way that shook heaven and earth, and he felt a heat moving from the soles of his feet upwards, unlike anything he had ever felt before. Once this power entered his body, he was able to walk without difficulty to the maternity ward. He also said nothing like that happened again to him.

We keep stories like these in some hidden place, since they don't fit in with our culture's consensus reality. I imagine in another time and place and culture we'd openly discuss these things, and encourage our receptivity to the divine.

* * *

How it feels at times

I recall staying at Tushita Retreat Center, in Dharmasala, India, in the late 1990's. By that time, I'd already had my fill of the theory of meditation, and the wisdom teachings, and I wanted to practice. Soon after arriving, I remember I made what felt like a half hearted prayer that, if there was anything I could learn while there about what is meant by Wisdom in that tradition, may it be so. Right away, I felt like a gentle breeze had blown open a door - that was the image that came to mind - and, sure enough, I was able to take another step in my study while I was there.

I'm reminded of a verse by Rumi where he says,

*Bring even your dry, hypocritical prayers
God, in his Mercy, accepts even bad coin....*

Why sometimes great effort is needed, and why at other times the slightest movement of thought can change the world is a mystery to me. All I know for sure is that there is this interchange between the worlds that people speak of, and that we can know and facilitate in our own lives. If it weren't for that, I'd not be writing these words.

* * *

Our Guardian and Protector

The divine has these two sides to it. One is what we feel and see, and trust in; the life we share with others, and our family. The other side of this divine realm is far more personal than that. It is uniquely individual, and can only be talked about in terms of its being a feeling of Companionship, beyond this one life even; of a Guardian and Protector; like an older, wiser, loving guide. This connection is one we cherish, and can learn from our whole lives.

It comes to us as healing most often, because when we suffer and are stripped down to what is essential, this is what we spontaneously turn to. This is the one that reaches out to us, and that carries us through the most difficult times; that reminds us of our heritage, and of all the other times that a way was made out of no way;

If we have any capacity to care for others, it's a reflection of the grace and encouragement, the warmth and love we've received from our guardian and protector.

Some may say we're anthropomorphizing - giving a human form to experience, but it does feel true to say it this way.

There is an intimacy, and a trust that isn't being referenced if we're just calling it our true nature, though it is that too. These incredible gifts come to us, inspiring many to try to find language that begins to express the extraordinary.

What to make of these few hints? Well of course that our world is richer, more complex and benevolent than we commonly believe. There are intimations of a greater world, invisible to a gross worldly view - one that is truer, more hopeful than reductive materialism.

The way is open. Our world is filled with loving and intelligent, spiritual force, and if we trim our sails we can receive these blessings. The current of divine help can carry us to the shore of freedom, fulfillment, and peace.

* * *

Deities and Their Retinues

What I have been calling 'The Shining Ones' are naturally existent phenomena. They are talked about in every time and culture. That being the case, there are some ways of thinking about them, and their Activities.

If we read about them, and approach them from the outside, they appear to us in one way, and if we relate to these truths from within, then it is a completely different experience.

We use art and poetry to communicate about things that don't come across when we only use ordinary language. An example of this can be found in the descriptions of Deities in Tibetan Buddhism - which are not creator gods, as in monotheism, but are *enlightened beings*, and aspects of our own nature. I remember something I wrote a number of years back called *The Power of Symbols*. In it, I said that what are called Archetypes are aspects of the universal soul we all share. They also exist outside of ourselves, or we could say in the realm where the inside and outside are one.

It's axiomatic across spiritual traditions that we don't fully know ourselves. Vajrayana practice can be a great help in that respect. Meditating on these divine forms brings out their qualities, helps us to awaken to who we are, and gives us the means of benefitting others.

It is often asked if that's all there is to these 'Yi-dams' - the names and forms used in meditation, and the question is an interesting one if we look into it carefully. It assumes we are here, our ordinary selves, in an ordinary world, with perhaps, we hope, some light in the sky we can use to help us

see and make our way through life. The Divine, as I understand it, has no such limits. We can't say it is there, but not here, or that it works in one way, but not in others.

How can we begin to speak of these things? And, what does this have to do with liberation and enlightenment?

If we take the Buddhist path as exclusive, in the sense of it being the one and only way to Universal Truth, and to living fulfilled lives here, helping each other as much as we can, then it would seem that Enlightened Beings as represented can be a help, but only somewhat. Another view is that the Buddha discovered and taught a universal path, with many ways to express liberating teachings, including though visionary forms that then get passed down as poetry and religious art.

Such is the case, I believe, when we come to the Tibetan Buddhist Deities. They are given names and forms, and they act to free us from confusion, and to benefit us in countless ways. How to speak of them more fully? Art does this with a *mandala*, with the main divine form in the center, surrounded by his or her *retinue*.

One way I heard to describe the retinue is that when a King travels, he has his Queen and Ministers, his doctors and Generals and soldiers with him at all times. Wherever we have one, we have the others.

Esotericists would say that the retinue of Divinities are elements that are 'enfolded' in their nature. Practicing any mantra and visualization will make all this clear as can be. These are qualities that are here for us to be revealed from within, and then they are fully self evident.

In the Vajrayana practices from Tibetan Buddhism, they take refuge in the Three Jewels, and they also have what they call Tantric Refuge, which is refuge in the Lama, the Yidam, and the Dharma Protectors (Devas). Here are lines used for this combined practice:

*I take refuge in all the Glorious, Holy Lamas;
 I take refuge in all the Yidams, the Deities gathered in the mandalas;
 I take refuge in all the Buddhas, those who have conquered and gone beyond;
 I take refuge in all the Supreme Dharma;
 I take refuge in all the Noble Sangha;
 I take refuge in all the Dakas, Dakinis, Protectors and Defenders of Dharma,
 who possess the Eye of Transcending Awareness*

In this practice, it's taught that the Lama is the Blessing Root, the Yidam is the Accomplishment Root, and the Dakini is *the Activity Root*. This is a way of talking about Divine Activity.

Dakinis are called 'Sky Goers', and the reference is clearly to their abiding in the space of the mind.

Without understanding the poetics of these practices, we'll take them all too literally, and they will become fixed in our perceptions and traditions, instead of liberating us, and moving throughout our lives, illuminating and healing, providing for our needs, and and those of our loved ones.

A couple of examples: in Medicine Buddha practice, both in its Sutra and Tantric forms, the main Medicine Buddha is accompanied by healers and what they call oath bound protectors, who are described as having the ability to help us with material resources;

The well known practice of the loving Bodhisattva Divinity Tara often makes use of prayer to Twenty One Taras, which are different expressions manifestations of Tara, that meet different needs. Experiencing these individually increases the sense of richness, and our understanding of the basic practice.

Tara is also known as 'the Queen of the Dakinis', since she is the Activity of all the Buddhas.

One verse of praise says:

*Homage to Tara, she swift and fearless,
whose eyes flash like lightning,
born from a lotus in an ocean of tears of Avalokiteshvara,
Lord of the Three Worlds...*

And one teaching has it that the Bodhisattva of Compassion, on seeing how much more needed to be done in samsara, felt great sorrow, and from his tears Green Tara and White Tara manifested, and told him, *We will help you!*

With love and compassion, and an understanding of Buddhist Wisdom, all this makes much more sense than reading about it as if it were something separate from the Mahayana in general.

In practice from the heart, all that is said in the mytho-poetics, about the mandala, the Buddha and retinue unfolds beautifully, and quite naturally.

Engaging in these practices from within, faithfully, and over time reveals everything we need to know about them, and accomplishes the purpose of both ourselves and others.

* * *

Devas and the Arts

There are countless ways the divine can communicate with us, and remind us of our true nature, our heritage, that to be born here is to be in a sacred place at all times. We forget, remember briefly, and then forget again, and we struggle and suffer so, having lost our true identity, having misconceived who we are and who others are, and the nature of this our holy earth.

There is *no limit* to the arts, and often they are the nearest we come to remembering, to embodying this profound knowledge of the sacred. What *is* voice and instrument, color and movement, the inspired word, the unity and enrichment we experience through the arts? We know it as ancient and eternal, and we know ourselves and all others as worthy of reverence and celebration.

When I think of experiences of listening to Bach, or Mozart, for example, and being lifted out of the sense of this struggling, suffering world, it seems the angel of grace herself is with me then. I know it is this way for others also today, and every day, and I'm left wanting to clarify and enjoy just what has moved through this day and this form. It is light and subtle nourishment I wish for everyone, for all beings, at all times, this wonder and ease.

The arts will go on forever because these are eternal truths we are graced to be here with, and to enjoy. There is no end to the inspiration today, and it is something altogether outside of time, reaching into our experiences of name and form, and time. My joy will also go on forever because of this.

And oh how we need the grace of inspiration in our lives! We need this as we do air and food and water, and we need to share the gifts we have received every day, in as many ways as we can. This is all entirely natural, without effort.

Praise to the holy form, the sound of the divine, the loving heart of the world!

* * *

Can we become angels?

In the Taiwanese Buddhist and Taoist Tradition, a person can ascend to the level of a God, through having lived an exemplary life. If we ask how can we become an angel, I have to admit my vision dims at this point. The most I can say is that it seems we'd be speaking not of lifetimes, or aeons of spiritual development to reach that level, but of evolutionary time.

What we can do is aim to go in that direction, of being more purely loving, more dedicated to the benefit of others, more gentle, and patient, and more generous. We can celebrate all the things the angels do, the right efforts people make, every small success, and every positive motivation, and every great action that benefits living beings. If we do these things, we feel we are in the company of the angels, holy beings, sharing in their work, being cared for and supported by them.

* * *

Healing with angels

It's natural to ask whether we can use prayer and meditation to heal ourselves and to help others heal with the help and support of this Divine Activity. It seems to me there are Beings of Light that exist for exactly this purpose, that we can align ourselves with them, and their energy can flow through us. This quickly reaches the limits of language, but at least this much should be said. For those who disbelieve, it's almost but not completely impossible to offer convincing evidence. For anyone with receptivity, and a willingness to consider other possibilities far from the usual, some perception of this pure spiritual life can happen.

* * *

The 'How-to', in part

For accessing angels and witnessing their extraordinary Activity, the first thing I think we would need is a world view that allow for such things. Even without that, at times, the working of the Divine makes itself known, but, we may also block out any awareness of such subtle and profound events.

We can be open to the thought that such beings exist, and that they communicate in many ways. This is a start, and it makes the rest, of contact, and understanding, and being in harmony with them easier, beyond anything that can be expressed in language.

In addition to this *receptivity*, we can *take care of our physical environment, and our ethics*. When we keep these clean, the spirits are happy, and we can feel their presence and support.

Angels can come through in times of despair and disarray, but then it's a more difficult revelation. We are loved, and for the divine, for holy ones, there is no barrier to that. When we *pray* for help in times of need, we can feel the presence of what can be called the angels of comfort. When we pray for others, if our inner vision is open, we can see and feel their blessings being shared.

Celebrating all the wonderful things in this life, in particular those of a spiritual nature, puts us in accord with the divine. When we praise and rejoice in activities of good people, and of the Buddhas and bodhisattvas, we join the angelic host.

We can also practice *gratitude*, and *humility*, a part of which bis *deep listening* and attentiveness throughout our lives. Then we'll see more and more of what is happening in the spirit realm, woven throughout our own lives.

It may seem strange to add, but because it's so obvious we may miss it, and that is to say that if we want help in some area of our lives, *we should ask*. There is some spiritual help that comes to us in part because of our willingness. It's as if it's waiting eagerly for our assent, for our own openness, to change or to learn.

* * *

More can and should be said on this subject, but for now, perhaps this is enough.

May all beings benefit.

May we all receive all the help we need in our lives

May the sick and injured be completely healed,

May the lonely find good friends all their lives,

*May those who need work and material resources receive all they need
in abundance,*

*and may this whole world be a manifest place of love and harmony,
peace and celebration!*

Tantric Refuge

When a Westerner takes up Vajrayana practices, I think it's because they have a sensitivity to those finer spiritual forces woven throughout this world, and they are able to make use of their benevolent influence in their lives. Without this sensitivity, such practices as prayer, mantra and visualization would not make very much sense, and indeed we hear them criticized by outsiders to these traditions. There's not much value in debating people with greatly different perceptions, but perhaps describing the world view and ways of engaging the divine in the Vajrayana will be of interest and even practical to some and so I thought to write out a few thoughts on this subject. Mostly I do this for my own benefit. If others find some advantage in these ideas, even better.

All Buddhists are familiar with the practice of Taking Refuge in the Three Jewels, The Buddha as our Teacher, the Dharma as the Teachings we follow, and the Noble Sangha as our support, those who have accomplished the teachings, and whose practice we can emulate.

People who follow the Mahayana and then, based on that take up a Vajrayana world view and practices also Take Refuge in what are called The Three Roots: The Lama, Yidam, and Dharma Protector.

A combined verse of Refuge is sometimes recited and reflected on in Tantric Sadhanas, or methods of accomplishment:

I take refuge in all the Glorious, Holy Lamas;

I take refuge in all the Yidams, the Deities gathered in the mandalas;

*I take refuge in all the Buddhas,
those who have conquered and gone beyond;*

I take refuge in all the Supreme Dharma;

I take refuge in all the Noble Sangha;

*I take refuge in all the Dakas, Dakinis,
Protectors and Defenders of Dharma,
who possess the Eye of Transcending Awareness*

Although these are usually thought of as preliminary practices, coming before the main method, they are actually profound practices in themselves that deserve to be praised and taken up. It's a great advantage to understand the nature of Refuge and these sources of benefit for our lives.

The Role of Devotional Practices in Buddhism

Not everyone has a devotional temperament, but we do all need some amount of receptivity to truth as taught and embodied by our teachers, and those throughout time who have transmitted liberating teachings. If our understanding is just in our intellect, that is but the seed of accomplishment. It helps us a great deal to be able to feel in our heart the love and wisdom of our spiritual ancestors. When we resonate with them, beyond the language that is used, we are connecting with a rarified energy that can help us a great deal in our lives.

Buddhism has a reputation for being a do it yourself kind of religion, but that's just how it is seen by outsiders, or by those who prefer to practice by themselves, with the strength of their own will. There are other ways to connect with these lineages and practices though, and all are equally valid approaches. We're all so different in our makeup, there's no one way, honestly.

As Ani Tenzin Palmo said:

'We are not alone. This universe is full of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas who are on our side. And, as is known in all Buddhist countries, although it is not always emphasized in the West, we can pray to them.'

Ani-la added that: *'This is not being theistic – this is being practical. If there's help out there, why not invoke that help? ...'*

In Zen Philosophy Zen Practice, Thich Thien An describes what he calls Self Power and Other Power, and optimally, how they work together.

The methods of self-power and other-power were both originally taught by Sakyamuni Buddha, the founder of Buddhism. According to the teaching of the Buddha, every living being has a Buddha nature. Therefore, it is within the potential of every man to realize that Buddha nature and to become enlightened. But to reach that state is a tremendously difficult task, calling for dauntless courage and unflinching will power. Thus, very few people are capable of reaching enlightenment by themselves; very few have the required spiritual qualification. For the majority of people it is necessary to rely upon the help of others, and here we find the germ of the "other-power" schools.

We could also say that here is the reason we have the devotional practices. Connecting to wise teachers, and to the benevolent forces in the universe supports and helps us to to develop ourselves, to transform, to experience states of greater freedom and ease, and to help others. They can miraculously appear and provide just the help we need, against all disbelief. More commonly, they are a steadying influence, gentle encouragement, synchronicity or what mundane thinking would simply call good timing.

We do live in a magical universe, with an abundance of spiritual forces around and within us, permeating all of our lives here. That we don't often know them is on account of our obscurations, and our ordinary conceptions, but they are there.

The purpose of changing our thinking is that it leads to more openness, more receptivity to these positive spiritual forces, which facilitates their functioning in our lives. This can be done more formally, through reciting verses, but the actual change happens within, and is more subtle than that.

It's worthwhile to consider each of the practices of taking refuge in the Three Roots. Each of these are profound means of transformation, healing, liberation and enlightenment; they provide help, support and strength in various areas of our lives. This illuminates the meaning of taking refuge, and the advantages that are available.

When we contemplate

I take refuge in all the Glorious Holy Lamas

inwardly, we are turning towards our teachers. There are many ways this can be done. What they all have in common, I think, when they are effective means, are that these are heart-practices. Here especially, I think we have to find our own way, and that we can be open to learn from what works for others. Here is a simple verse I reflect on at times, along with directing my mind and opening my heart to the gifts and the light of my guides and mentors:

With gratitude,

I turn to my spiritual ancestors

I ask them for their support, protection and strength

and I open myself to their inspiring, positive energy...

Traditional Guru Yoga practices describe merging with the mind of the teacher, and this is surely one way we can connect with their wisdom mind. I also like to think that the function of a teacher is to help us to awaken our own wisdom, love, and strength. Reflecting on their lives and teachings and inspiring example, from our heart, awakens the sense of their presence in

us. This comes as assurance, guidance and revelation beyond what we knew before.

Taking *Refuge in all the Glorious Holy Lamas* is uplifting; it brings energy and inspiration. The Lama is called *the Blessing Root*, as connecting with our wise and loving teachers always has this joyful, exhilarating, and enlivening quality to it.

I've heard one definition of *a blessing* in Buddhism as that which removes obstacles.

In one teaching I was listening to recently, Lama Lodro Rinpoche mentioned that the Three Roots are included in the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha. Why then would they be mentioned separately, meditated on in this way? I think the reason has to do with our teachers being closer to us than the Buddhas. They are the ones that make the teachings available, and cause them to appear to our minds as something we ourselves can achieve. There is no way to measure the great value of such a blessing in our lives.

I take Refuge in all the Yidams, the Deities gathered in the Mandalas...

The Yidams are referred to as *the Accomplishment Root*. These are the names and forms, and mantra practices we take connect with and take up to bring the result of our own and others benefit, in accord with the Holy Dharma. More than this, the spiritual life we are connected with has profound influence. This is so personal it's not easy to talk about, but something should be said, I think.

If you ask someone who is steeped in the Indian Spirituality whether they are monotheistic, or polytheistic, they may say they are both, or neither, or that such terms don't accurately apply. Truth is One, and the help that comes to us appears in many forms. Even for one person it can be that way.

Lama Zopa Rinpoche has said:

'You are not alone because all the time there are numberless buddhas and bodhisattvas surrounding you, loving you, guiding you, that is what they do....'

It can be surprising to find that others relate to the Divine in the same or even similar way as we do. It's uplifting to find that there are traditions we can relate to deeply, but the source of this feeling of being inspired by teachings on Buddhist Divinities is within us, as our own experience on some level, even just that of faith and intuition.

The *Yi-dams* are Buddhas and Bodhisattvas we take up as practices, either over the course of our whole lives, or when we have the need for certain qualities and powers to manifest.

When I think of the Buddhas on this level, I remember more fully that they are always with me, always available. I know in the next instant that these same Divine Qualities, of love, strength, and wisdom are in everyone, all throughout this world.

To Take Refuge in all the Yidams, the Deities Gathered in the Mandalas, changes what we think of ourselves, and others, and our world. A mandala is a sacred symbol we enter into in meditation, with a center, the particular aspect of the divine life, surrounded by all that we could say naturally emanates from and supports that Divinity. This includes His or Her Pure Land, and Hosts of Bodhisattvas, Protectors. We contain all this within us.

It's true, we are inherently rich, all of us, and this practice makes that abundantly clear. We all have access to resources we can make use of throughout our lives, for the sake of all beings in every realm, to ease their various sufferings and to provide whatever they need.

Avalokiteshvara

Tara

*The Healing Buddha
Manjushri
and Vajrasattva*

When we engage in Vajrayana practice, it's universally taught that we visualize ourselves and the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas and Pure Lands not as flesh and bone, but as beautiful light, transparent forms, communicating, love. This is entirely in accord with how things are, as expressed in the Avatamsaka teachings:

*To all internal and external worlds
Bodhisattvas have no attachment at all,
Yet do not abandon works beneficial to sentient beings;
The great ones cultivate this kind of knowledge.*

*In all lands in the ten directions
They do not depend or dwell on anything;
They do not grasp things, such as livelihood,
And do not arbitrarily create distinctions.*

*They engage with all sentient beings
In all worlds in the ten directions;
Observing their essential nature,
They practice dedication reaching everywhere.*

There are a couple of ways we can hear the term 'non-attachment'. One assumes there is something there, and we are not going to take it up, or pursue it. This is ordinary non attachment. The other way, based on Buddhist Wisdom is to see there is nothing to be grasped, as far as an ego or identity goes, and so the mind is naturally liberated from attachment in a different way. We are then free to receive and give without obstruction, *unimpededly*, as they say.

The lines:

I take refuge in all the Dakas, Dakinis, Protectors and Defenders of the Dharma who possess the Eye of Transcending Awareness...

bring us to the third of the Three Roots. In general *the Dakinis* are referred to as *the Activity Root*. I have elsewhere written about these as the Buddhist equivalent of what we in the West refer to as angels. There are many levels of Divine Life, and safety and protection, healing and comfort, guidance and care comes to us in this form, at times, whether we see it or not. Being open to it makes for greater receptivity, appreciation and confidence in our lives that we are not alone, that we are helped in inconceivable ways on spiritual levels.

Taking Refuge in this Divine Activity is a gesture on our part of faith and a way of honoring the sacred help we have received in the past, are upheld by now, and will continue to be guided by and cared for in the future, until we reach an advantageous rebirth, liberation from samsara, and enlightenment.

Over the course of our lives, we're going to meet all manner of conditions that need to be responded to skillfully, with various means. We should all know the resources we have, simply by virtue of being human, and because we live in this world where there so many capable, compassionate spiritual lives dedicated to helping others. The way we find out just what we can access to help us is through faith and devotion. We move from a mundane world view to sacred outlook. The way opens just like that, and we learn gradually, almost imperceptibly, until we find ourselves one day standing on a very different ground, with this divine life all 'round.

The Continual Practice of Right View

Before, during, and after meditation

When we practice any meditation method, there are always either the realization of truth, or some degree of a mistaken conception in it. The best possible way of practicing, of course, would be to have no wrong view from the very beginning, then during the practice itself, and at its conclusion, and between sessions. This is not easy to do, especially when starting out. It should be known why and how this can be done, though, and so I've assembled these reasonings and reflections from Traditional and modern sources and added a few comments, for my own sake, and for the sake of all those who would realize freedom and peace, and have the best gift to offer all beings.

I've divided how this can be understood, and how the practice of right view can be applied into *three parts*, what comes before meditation, sometimes thought of as giving rise to our motivation; then the actual session of meditation itself, and finally the concluding practices, which includes the dedication of merit, and how we go about living our daily lives. All these three periods then can be the continuous practice of wisdom.

Part I. If sentient beings don't exist as we believe...

In Buddhism, the cause of human suffering is a self grasping ignorance that is habitual and pervasive. When this is seen through, or seen for what it is, we experience ourselves and others and our world differently. Grasping at a self unconsciously cuts us off from our ancestors, our teachers, from one another and from our natural world. Removing this false view, we awaken to our connectedness, and inner treasures, joy, compassion, and peace. We enter into a dynamic, creative involvement with all our family and world.

This is the realization that brings an end to samsara, the potentially endless wandering in states of suffering, born of ignorance of our true nature, the nature of everyone else, and this world. This is the knowledge that enables us to help others in provisional ways, becoming sensitive to their needs, with energy and awareness, and it is the means of our being able to help in ultimate ways, by our teaching and example, being a catalyst for their own realization of truth.

How then can we make our way to freedom and to being able to help others? What is the method? There is learning involved, surely, and reflection, questioning, quiet meditation, refining the mind, and working our way through difficult points by ourselves, and with the help of our teachers.

We can begin here: It's taught that the way ordinary people conceive of themselves and others is not the truth. It is fragmentary at best. We think of ourselves as permanent selves, independent, and unitary, as in - of a single nature. This is wrong view, continually appearing to untrained minds. How to proceed?

From Metta and Wisdom:

The freedom from problems, and the attainment of the highest happiness is naturally what all wish for ourselves, and those we care for, and so, of course the question, or sticking point presents itself: how can we wish happiness for ourselves or another if they don't exist as we imagine?

When this question comes up, it's something of a landmark, I think. It means we're trying to integrate these two aspects of the path, of love and wisdom, and something doesn't seem to fit. But this only means that we haven't yet taken the wisdom side far enough. Resolving this question is of central importance in Mahayana Buddhism, with its vow to help all beings to freedom and ease.

What our senses and concepts present to us, and what we then fixate on, is not what is actually there. We can learn to see through our imaginings, and in fact, out of compassion, this is something we need to learn to do. The way we can have both wisdom and compassion present in our mind is explained by the Eighth century saint, Shantideva, in his *Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life*, where he asks,

'If no beings exist [in ultimate reality], toward whom should we have compassion?'

and he answers:

'To attain the result [of buddhahood, which is to be achieved only through the awakening of great compassion], one should direct one's compassion toward whatever it is that unenlightened beings call 'beings'.

The modern day Tibetan teacher, Dzhung Rinpoche, also taught on this same subject, when he said:

'On the conventional level of reality, beings do not exist as they are perceived by other unenlightened beings. The bodhisattva realizes that, in ultimate reality, there are no beings who exist as unenlightened beings think, but he directs his mind toward those beings as they perceive themselves.

'On the ultimate level, he sees no beings, but he realizes that on the conventional level, beings think they exist and do experience suffering. Out of objectless compassion, therefore, he directs his mind toward them.'

Integrating this insight

The insight that is gained through deep practice is different from intellectual understanding alone, and that has to be fully integrated into our lives and all our interactions. We do this by continued learning and reflection, and by continually cultivating our understanding, both in meditation time and during our daily lives.

Part II. During practice itself

'The Buddha's activities are magical displays that dispel the nightmare visions of sentient beings', said Khenpo Palden Sherab Rinpoche.

Freda Bedi said, *'Mahayana is the philosophy, Vajrayana is the practice'*.

We can represent *our motivation and Right View* to our minds symbolically in practices that use visualization.

The following is adapted from a teaching by Khenpo Palden Sherab Rinpoche:

(In Vajrayana) We aspire to a nonconceptually performed practice, free from grasping or clinging. This means that when we practice or meditate, we should not relate to our visualization as if it were a solid object.

Our visualization must be experienced as a dynamic display of the true nature, like a transcendent wisdom rainbow body. We must understand that the visualization is totally empty of inherent existence, yet totally full of dynamic energies of love, compassion, and wisdom.

Here is where we can use meditation to integrate our understanding. We train in seeing the world we live in as translucent, made of light, and holy, and that we are upheld by countless Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, Saints and Sages, ancestors, and the sacred powers of the earth, sky, water, and fire. In this way, the tantras affirm that divine help is always available in abundance. Visualization in this way can be the expression of Right View.

We can represent the way things are by the practice of seeing ourselves and others and this world as transparent like a rainbow, with light shining through, appearing and yet ungraspable. What's more, when we realize our inherent worth and the preciousness of ourselves and others and this

world, we can intentionally visualize all this as being divine in nature, poetically adorned with jewels, exalted, and uplifting to behold in every way.

Part III. Dedicating the merit of formal practice and carrying Right View into our daily lives

Khenpo Choga has said:

'The strongest way to dedicate merit is called 'a dedication that does not conceptualize the three factors'. This dedication is done while recognizing the buddha nature. In that recognition there is no subject who dedicates the merit, no merit to be dedicated and no object who receives the merit. A mind that has truly realized the buddha nature actually does pervade the totality of space so the dedication of such a mind actually reaches all beings in all universes. This is the most powerful form of dedication.'

In the words of the Avatamsaka Sutra:

*To all internal and external worlds
Bodhisattvas have no attachment at all,
Yet do not abandon works beneficial to sentient beings;
The great ones cultivate this kind of knowledge.*

*In all lands in the ten directions
They do not depend or dwell on anything;
They do not grasp things, such as livelihood,
And do not arbitrarily create distinctions.*

*They engage with all sentient beings
In all worlds in the ten directions;
Observing their essential nature,
They practice dedication reaching everywhere.*

May all beings have happiness, and the causes of happiness.

May they all enjoy and abundance of well being and peace.

How else can we continue the practice of wisdom in our daily lives?

Unless we are on retreat, most of the time we are not engaged in study or formal meditation, so it's of vital importance that we find ways to continue through our days whatever insights we have gained from our study and contemplation. If we're only wise when we're sitting or walking then the experience is still only a precious seed that needs mindfulness to flower into realization, which is stable, and with us at all times.

Integrating Wisdom begins with our understanding and insight. By our study and practice, quiet meditation, and our own investigations and analysis, we can then tell when ignorance / wrong view or Transcendent Intelligence is functioning in our daily life. This is like telling the difference between being asleep or day dreaming, and believing in the reality of our dreams, or waking up, and knowing they were just thoughts, just dreams.

Khenpo Karthar taught:

'There is nothing wrong with appearances. They are not in themselves an obstacle. It is our confusion about them that is the obstacle. Because of our confused habit of fixating on appearances as being true and real, we cling to them and to our concepts about them and experience suffering. When we realize at the moment they arise that these appearances have no true existence, then appearances will never be a problem or obstacle for us again.'

To continue this practice, there are phrases we can keep in mind throughout the day. For example,

The Eight Verses of Thought Transformation concludes with

*Realizing the nature of appearances,
I will liberate my mind from the bondage of attachment*

And the Seven Point Mind Training Teachings has the instruction:

Between sessions, be a child of illusion...

Geshe Rabten said:

'When we are out of formal meditation on emptiness and again have to experience our external environment, we should regard the mistaken view we have of it, which will still continue to arise, as merely the illusory creation of the ignorant propensities in our mind. Since we have seen previously in the meditational period that the object of such a mistaken view is empty of independent existence, we should regard this deceptive view of things as completely false, just as the conjurer regards his illusory creations... This will help to diminish the force of the ignorance that clings to the independent existence of all phenomena. Thus, meditation and post-meditation sessions will be mutually beneficial.'

This is as important as formal practice itself.

The thought 'this is my karmic perception...'

In preparation for dream yoga, students are encouraged to view their experience with the thought, *this is my karmic perception*. Hard as it may be to believe, we can see how this is true when we engage some practice that changes our mind, and our experience. Usually we don't regard our own mind as contributing anything at all to the way we experience things, but carrying this thought with us, and experimenting with it, shows us the nature of our thoughts and experience. It helps us to awaken, see through our projections, and touch reality.

Lama Yeshe prayed:

May all sentient beings discover that all the appearances of their ego are projections of their mind. Whatever self-existent thoughts, whatever concrete concepts of

*objects, whatever fears they have, may they discover them to be mental projections.
and also may the nature of mind be recognized as non-dual.*

This completes a description of how to practice Buddhist Wisdom teachings in a cycle of three periods of time, before, during, and after meditation, supportive of each other.

*May all beings realize the nature of mind,
liberating wisdom, uprooting suffering,
May that knowledge not decline,
and may it be integrated throughout all their lives*

A few additional mantras that I've found to be useful

I've heard that any one mantra, if a person has an affinity to it, and practices well enough, can accomplish every purpose. That said, there are times when another mantra can have a particular beneficial effect for a person.

Revealing mantras in a book, generally, is 'not the done thing'. However, I'm not saying anything here that hasn't been taught elsewhere, and I thought, simply, that it might just be advantageous to some to mention these mantras, and their effect for the right person – a person with a karmic connection to their practice – at the right time.

It's best to learn these directly from a teacher, but, undeniably, because of the power of these mantras, benefit can certainly come for some people. So there's my motivation. Who am I to withhold anything that could be helpful to another?

As far as knowing if they would work for you, I would say, without a doubt, if you have a connection this any of these, you will know it right away, or almost right away. There will be some positive effect.

The mantra of Manjushri: OM AH RA PA TZA NA DHI

This is the mantra of the Bodhisattva of Wisdom, and it always has the effect, for me, of tangibly giving the emotional body a rest. It's useful when things are difficult, and tiring to deal with so much on a feeling level. It helps to see clearly. This, in itself can have a liberating function.

The White Tara mantras, as mentioned earlier in the White Tara Sadhana, are:

OM TARA TUTTARE TURE MAMA AYUH PUNEY JNANA PUSHTHIM
KURU SOHA , and OM TARA TUTTARE TURE SOHA

This can have the wonderful effect of truly strengthening the constitution and the central nervous system. Among other qualities, I bring this quality of enlightened action to mind at times when doing the Medicine Buddha practice, and imagine that She is there in the retinue of the Healing Buddha, bestowing her blessings as well.

Then at times, when I feel I especially need this quality to be a stronger factor, I'll do the White Tara practice.

Tara is known for her 'swift action', which translates to: the benefits of Tara practices are relatively easy to connect with and receive in our lives.

A mantra that can be very helpful, quickly, especially when there are disharmonious or when there are jeopardous conditions of any kind is the Green Tara Mantra:

OM TARE TUTTARE TURE SOHA

This is another mantra and practice with amazing, really inconceivable benefits. Anyone with a connection with Tara I would consider to be very very fortunate indeed.

One variation of the Green Tara mantra that I found worked in a unique and helpful way comes from The Selected Works of the First Dalai Lama: it is:

OM TARE TUTTARE TURE SARVA JHAVAN BHAYAH SHANTIM KURU YE SOHA

This is given as 'the mantra for eliminating diseases'. For me, this I've found always helps with tangibly improving the breathing, and the circulation of good breath energy in the body.

The mantra of Avalokiteshvara, the Bodhisattva of Compassion is:

OM MANI PEME HUNG

This mantra has inconceivable benefits.

The mantra of Amitabha, the Buddha of Infinite Light:

OM AMITABA HRI, or, NAMO AMITABA SOHA

This mantra and practice is especially used in relation to death and dying, with prayers to purify the causes of unfortunate rebirths, and to be born in the Pure Land of the Buddha Amitabha. From there, spiritual progress is said to be unhindered, and advancement, purifying negativities and developing positive qualities can happen quickly.

The following is a mantra I have learned from the teachings of Lama Zopa Rinpoche, and used to good effect. It is referred to as The Mantra Eliminating Phlem Disease. It is:

OM SHANTI SHANTI BITI SHANTI SARBA BITI MUL NYAK SVAHA

The Vajrapani mantra, the mantra of the Bodhisattva of Great Power is:

HUNG BENZRA PE, or OM VAJRAPANI SOHA

This can help to purify the blood, or if there are troubles with spirits, particularly those called 'nagas'.

The Vajrasattva mantra is used for purification. This is also called 'The Hundred Syllable Mantra:

OM BENZRA SATO SAMAYA MANU PALAYA BENZRA SATO TENOPA
TISHSTA DRI BO ME BHAWA SUTO KAYO ME BHAWA SUPO KAYO ME

BHAWA ANURAKTO ME BHAWA SARWA SIDDHI MEM PRAYATSA
 SARWA KARMA SU TSA ME TSI TANG SHRI YA KU RU HUNG HA HA
 HA HA HO BA GA WAN SARWA TA TA GA TA MENZRA MA ME MUN
 TSA BENZRA BA WA MA HA SA MA YA SATO AH

The shorter form is:

OM BENZRA SATO HUNG

This is also used as a foundational practice, in order to make more subtle and profound practices have a solid basis, and a greater positive effect.

Vajrasattva purification practice is done with what are called the Four Powers, to maximize its effectiveness. These are: 1. regret for negative actions and the suffering they cause ourselves and others; 2., depending purely on our spiritual teachers and their advice (refuge), and aiming to help others out of selfless compassion, in the best possible ways (bodhicitta); 3., the actual practice, in this case of the mantra recitation, visualizing purifying light and nectar flowing through us, cleansing us, filling us with bliss, and the experience of the purification from our faults, and fundamental, original purity; and, 4., the determination not to repeat the negative action again, to whatever extent we are able.

There are detailed teachings available on each of these practices. If any of these resonate with you, please do follow up with more study and practice.

and

May all beings benefit.

A list of things that are healing

Beauty is healing
and love is healing
and peace is healing

and laughter,
and kindness is healing

the friendliness and warmth in a voice
and gratitude is healing

friendship is healing
and human touch, when there is love,
is healing

drawing on the strength of our ancestors is healing

natural light is healing
enjoying the peace, freshness
and joy of a new day

Our blue sky, and the magnificent oceans,
and the trees,
and flowering plants,
all the wonderful colors and scents of the earth,
these are healing

and all our family in the natural world,
mammal, bird, insect and fish-
these are healing...

fresh fruit, and vegetables, grains and bread, and homemade soup
give to our bodies and to our souls the power of the sun,
and the pure rain

all of these are
healthy and beautiful
and if needed, they are healing
food cooked with love is healthy, life giving

gifts given generously with love are divine,
they are health and life itself
and if need be, they are healing to us all,
the whole circle

children are healing
with their beauty, and purity,
and playfulness and wonder,
with their overflowing joy
they are angels among us...

Friends and family, kindred spirits,
beautiful souls, delight of the world, wherever they go
these are healing

Grandmothers and Grandfathers,
with their kindness and gentleness and wisdom are healing

Mothers and Fathers with us even now
these are healing

optimism, looking up,
and having a great aim
this is healing

patience and gentleness,
smiling to ourselves,
and to each other
this is healing

our dreams are healing
our visions, and our sacred songs,
our dances,

the awe and wonder we feel,
knowing the Divine
this is supremely beneficial,
this is supremely healing
and art is healing
need I say it? -
all of these gifts,
the loveliness of one thing done well,
with great care, and with boldness too...

drawing,
and
painting
what wonders!

sculpture
dance
photography,

poetry
architecture
needlepoint
dress
and on and on it goes...

music is healing

these and more
all of it,
all of it, healing

make your own lists today from these bright oceans...
from all this wonder and joy...

the artist's vision
is health
it is life
it is healing

sacred places, such as this one, healing

loving pets, healing

angels and ancestors,
friendships,
now and recalled to mind
these are healing

learning about people of good will,
and stories of heroes and heroines,
famous or less known
these are healing
and how these gifts continue – oh!

Traditions are a source of healing
Saints and great teachers are healing
and our faith and devotion connects us to them

Oh Great Song!,
Ethics, meditation and wisdom,
prayer, mantra, and samadhi,
these are healing

wonder, joy and celebration,
and gratitude
these are healing

stillness, and quieting the mind,
and thinking, rightly used too
these are healing

honoring the tremendous richness of oneself and others
this is healing

breathing in and out
and smiling
peacefully
with an awareness of our body and our feelings
with great gentleness,
and with love
this is healing

An Introduction to the Bodhisattva-Divinity Tara

In order for us as Westerners to engage in practices that have come from the Tibetan Buddhist Tradition, without misunderstanding their nature or purpose, there are a few ideas that need to be spelled out. As Americans, we have certain common ideas, and so the same questions naturally arise, and these can be addressed at any point, but probably the earlier on in our study the better.

I would like to introduce Tara as an example of a practice that can be beneficial, and, when I think of doing this, I can see right away the kinds of questions I would propose we consider so the communication can have a better chance of success.

First, as with any divine being – or bodhisattva, we have the question, ‘Who is Tara?’ Of course we can see that there are different ways to answer this kind of a question. There are different levels to it. When we speak about the ultimate nature of anything, be it God, or Buddha, then this is a really deep question, maybe taking a lifetime to ask or to answer. If we are asking this type of deep question, this holds up a mirror to our own self. We can ask, ‘Who am I?’, and ‘Who do I conceive myself to be?’

Then again, especially if we are beginners, we really need more of an answer in terms of what we can all easily recognize and understand and work with. Maybe this approach will be helpful: using the simplest, least esoteric language to describe something that is both accessible and also profound.

Historically, and now in Western culture too, Tara is regarded as a protectress, a savior, a benefactor. The practice of calling on Tara in times of need has been successful for many people. She is called on

to help liberate us from problems, and especially from fears. She has a reputation for quick action, for responding very quickly, with loving kindness and compassion.

Her practice can be done in different ways - with prayer, or through visualization and mantra recitation. Tara's mantra is Om Tare Tuttare Ture Soha (pronounced Om Tah-ray Too-tah-ray Too-ray So-ha). A person can also simply think of her and feel her presence with faith and devotion.

Meditators will tell us that we all have Tara within us; that all these qualities and wonders are contained within our fundamental nature. They tell us that if we do the practice these qualities awaken and are expressed in the world, and that in a sense we become Tara, and this I don't doubt. For the time being though, let's just stay with the outer, common belief and function, that calling on Tara works, that increasing what we can call *the Tara energy* in our lives works, even if we don't know all of why or how it does. If we have some karmic affinity, and some receptivity or openness, and we give these methods a fair try, we can see the result for ourselves.

'If I could only give you the moon...'

Another question that often comes up when talking about any of the bodhisattva-deity practices, calling on Tara for example, and praying for a husband or a wife, or for health, or wealth is, 'How is this Buddhist?', and I think I'm just now able to say what I've been thinking and feeling for a while now that Tara is of a certain class I call 'the Bodhisattva Sangha'. The word bodhisattva means someone who is dedicated to helping others in the fullest possible ways, and sangha means a spiritual community.

As a member of the Bodhisattva Sangha, Tara responds as we would, with kindness, to someone asking for something... If they ask for water, we give them water; if they ask for a coat, we give them a coat...

There's a Zen story about a monk who was told that a thief was coming, and so he threw his bowl and his robes out the window as the thief approached. The thief scooped them up, somewhat startled, I'd imagine, and the monk called after him, saying, 'If I could only give you the moon! ...'

Such is the wish of Bodhisattva Sangha – their deep wish is for our true happiness, our freedom, peace and health, and so if we ask for food or shelter or medicine, they give us these without holding anything back, as a mother or father would give to their child, or a friend to a friend. They give out of their great means. They will give to us according to our needs, and they will give to us as much as we can receive. Their wish for us includes both the relative, provisional, day to day needs, and also those things that are of ultimate benefit, such as teachings and encouragement, and good conditions for spiritual growth. Their love and their kind wish for us is of one nature.

I heard someone give the definition of blessing, in the Buddhist sense, as that which removes obstacles to spiritual practice, which I think is a good definition because it includes both relative and ultimate things.

Making a distinction – the word 'deity'

If I had to choose one term that isn't translated well from Eastern culture to Western culture, it is the word 'deity'. More often than not, translators are not communicating the intended meaning. The reason

is this: whether or not we identify with the Western religious traditions, as Westerners we have ideas about God as part of our culture. We have all these associations, automatically, for the word God and its synonyms that, in this case does not apply. When trying to understand what words are referring to that come from non-theistic cultures, some effort is needed to get at a clear sense of their meaning.

We can say for certain that Buddhism does not make use of the idea of a creator God, all powerful, and all knowing. It does however have teachings, and it does make use of practices that call upon and access what can be called 'help from the other side'. There is calling upon beings that help.

When Tibetan teachers speak in English, sometimes they don't translate the word 'yi-dam', and they explain it as keeping the bodhisattva – divinity 'held tightly in the mind', as a method of meditation, as a path, and as a means of benefit.

A first level bodhisattva, in some teachings, is described as having at least the experience of insight into the cause of the end of suffering, that freedom and joy. And Buddhist teachings on what is called refuge tell us that if someone or some being is still subject to suffering or change, then that is not a reliable source of protection in the long term. We should seek true refuge, true and lasting protection and support. This, in Buddhist teachings, is what distinguishes Buddhas, or enlightened beings as true refuge.

Perhaps, rather than use the word 'deity', sticky, or perhaps misleading as it is, I would propose the term 'divinity' – since we do have the idea that the sacred can be here in this world; that it is here for us, available, and to be received with deep respect. The sense of divinity can be cultivated and awakened throughout our lives.

One more thought: regarding a question such as 'Where is Tara?' We usually divide the world up in our thinking in ways it is not actually divided. We say there is an inside and an outside to our life. Looked at energetically though, the so-called inside and outside are one.

If we think of Tara as an archetype, an aspect of the universal soul we all share, this can have connotations of being purely something inside. My

sense is that it's truer to say that Tara, and the other Buddhas, Saints, or Bodhisattva Sangha exist in the realm of one-ness, where the inside and outside are both included, where they are one. I think this accounts, at least in part, for the effectiveness of these methods.

A note on the prayer that follows:

I usually don't comment on anything I write out that is more lyrical, since these sorts of things should speak for themselves, but in this case maybe it would add something to say the following.

I had the idea that describing a bodhisattva, or a guardian or benefactor can be likened to talking about a person. We may say the person has this quality, or likes to go here or there, or spend their time like this, all of which would be for the sake of trying to give us some idea of the person. All the different things we could say would be to introduce us to the essence of the person. So it is with this poem about Tara. The different aspects or qualities mentioned refer to something that is one essential nature – that is Tara. The purpose of writing this, and reflecting on it is to get in touch with what is being talked about.

One more thing may be worth mentioning. While much of this is very personal, I've been surprised to learn that others have had similar experiences with Tara. And so here I am writing this out this prayer and sharing it with others, with the hope that it brings others, my dear friends and family, the same, and greater, benefit.

In Praise of Tara

Holy Tara, Protector of living beings,
 May your blessings flow throughout all of our lives
 and by Your Compassionate Activity,
 may all the myriad needs of all the myriad beings
 be completely fulfilled

Tara

Your beauty tames the minds of living beings.
 You draw all beings to yourself.
 Your virtue calms their fears and brings them all fresh happiness.

You are the one who makes what seems to be the impossible entirely
 possible
 You conquer disbelief, and dispel doubt
 without leaving even a trace
 You are miraculous activity, beyond comprehension.

You are 'swift to regard', quick to respond,
 the remover of obstacles.

You are our protector

You are grace and blessings,
 the relative and ultimate liberator of beings

Your beauty inspires uprightness of moral character
 You pacify habit energy
 We shed our skins, lose our old ways,
 like leaves falling off of trees

You bring new birth, and give new strength

You purify the mind - like the stream-clearing jewel
 You uplift and brighten the mind

For those with positive aims,
 You are their Great Benefactress

You set all things right
 You bring about reconciliation without impediment
 without anything blocking it
 You bring harmony to every surrounding circumstance

You help us to gather all positive conditions
 You bring out the best that is in us all
 You make all practices effective
 It has always been this way
 It is this way now
 It will always be this way

You are the spring-like feeling of 'yes',
 the sum of all optimism,
 joyful positive energy,
 the feeling of 'I can'

Tara,
 May your blessings completely illuminate all of our lives
 and may all the myriad needs of all the myriad beings
 be completely fulfilled now

O, Bright Virtue!
 You are light
 You are grace in my life
 and subtle nourishment
 The blessing of all the women who have ever wished me well

You are instinctive love,
all-accommodating
naturally inclusive
comprehensive

You are embodied enlightened intelligence,
intuitive awareness, the heart awake,
and the flourishing of joy

You are playful, youthful, joyful, quick, charming, elegant, inspiring, wise,
warm, strengthening, encouraging, healing,
calming, stabilizing;

How can I call you? Tara - hope, positive energy, joyful, pure, wholesome
energy

With your rivers
nurture my limbs, these fields
With your warmth, your light
bring about the total flowering of goodness...
Tara,
May your blessings be established in all of our lives

Because this is Divine Feminine energy, quick to respond
with magical activity,
the equivalent of the patron saint of lost causes,
grace,
spiritual beauty bringing light, giving hope,
removing obstacles,
calming fear, pacifying suffering,
and protecting
bringing harmony to every surrounding circumstance,
bringing life, health, happiness, good fortune, and stability

and, being the Spring-like sum of all optimism, inspiring,
positive energy,
enabling all the good things we would do to become effective,
to become fulfilled,
to become complete,
This is called Green Tara
May all share in these blessings...

{Here is [a page with audio](#) of my reading this poem - J. E.}

Ocean of Saints

Ananda Mayi Ma, Amma, Karuna Mayi Ma...

Mother Teresa, Dorothy Day,
Sister Carol, Mother Theodore Guerin...

Sister Annabel Laity, Kamala Masters,
Dipa Ma, Cheng Yen...

Ani Tenzin Palmo, Jetsunma Kushok Chimay Luding,
Jamyang Dagmo Kusho, Khandro-la...

Yeshe Tsogyal, Mandarava
Saraswati, Lakshmi

Indigenous Grandmothers,
Keewaydinoquay Peschel

Holy Women of prayer and action,

Mother Mary, Kuan Yin, Tara

Divine Activity,
gracing our world,

All you holy women, pray for us!

May your blessings be upon us!

...

*Ocean of Saints,
Holy Women of prayer and action,
May your blessings be upon us!*

*Om Tare Tuttare Ture Sora
Om Mani Peme Hung*

From the Lotus Sutra, Chapter Five, The Parable of the Medicinal Herbs

The Buddha, the Dharma-king,
Smashing ideas of being,
Appears in this world.

According to the needs of all beings,
He teaches the Dharma in varied ways.

The Buddha teaches people
According to their strengths,
With various explanations
To bring them to helpful views.

The Buddha is like a great cloud
Rising above the [parched] world,
Covering everything everywhere.

A beneficent cloud full of moisture,
Bringing gladness and ease to all,
Where flashes of lightning shine and glint,
And the voice of thunder vibrates afar.

The [hot] sun's rays are veiled,
And the earth is cooled;
The cloud lowers and spreads
As if it might be caught and gathered.

[Then] its rain everywhere equally
Descends on all sides,
Streaming and pouring without stint,
Enriching all the land.

On mountains, by rivers, in steep valleys,
In hidden places, there grow
The plants, trees, and herbs.

Trees, big or small,
The shoots of all the ripening grain,
Sugar cane and grapevine,

All these are fertilized by the rain,
And abundantly enriched.
The dry ground is all soaked,
And herbs and trees flourish together.

From the same water which issued from that cloud,
Plants, trees, thickets and forests,
According to their need, receive moisture.

All the [plants],
Each according to its scale,
Can grow and develop.

Roots, stalks, branches, and leaves,
Blossoms and fruits in their brilliant colors,
By the pouring of the one rain,
All become fresh and glossy.

Just as their forms and capacities
Are some great and some small,
So the enriching [rain], though one and the same,
Enables each to flourish.

The Buddha is like this.
He appears in the world,
Like a great [monsoon]-cloud

Universally covering all things;

And having appeared in the world,
 He, for the sake of all living beings,
 Teaches in varying ways
 The reality of all things.

The great World-honored One
 To human and heavenly beings,
 And to all the other beings,
 Declares this:

“I am the Tathagata,
 Honored by people;
 I appear in the world
 Just like a great rain cloud,
 To pour enrichment on all parched living beings,

“To free them all from suffering
 And so attain the joy of peace,
 Joy in this world,
 And the joy of nirvana.

“Humans and heavenly beings and all!
 Give me your full attention,
 Gather around
 And behold the Buddha.

“For the hosts of the living
 I teach the Dharma, pure as sweet dew:
 The Dharma with one taste
 Of freedom and nirvana.

“With one wonderful voice
I explain this meaning,
Constantly taking the great way
As my subject.

“I look upon all [living beings]
Everywhere [with] equal [eyes],
Without favoring anyone,
With no mind of {partiality or aversion} love or hate.

“I have no preferences
Nor limitations [or partiality];
At all times to all [beings]
I teach the Dharma equally;

“As I would to one person,
So [I teach] to all.
Constantly I proclaim the Dharma,
Never occupied with anything else.

“Going or coming, sitting or standing,
I never weary or get downhearted,
Pouring it abundantly upon the world,
Like the rain, enriching everywhere.

“Eminent and humble, high and low,
Those who keep the precepts and those who break them,
Those of admirable character
And those of imperfect character,

“With right views or wrong views,
Quick-witted and dull-witted,
[With] equal [mind] I rain the rain of the Dharma,
Neglecting no one.”

So the Buddha's unbiased teaching
Is {just} like the one rain.

[But] beings, according to their capacities,
Receive it differently,
Just as the plants and trees
Each take a varying supply.

The Buddha by this [image]
Skillfully reveals [his methods],
And with various expressions
He proclaims the one single Dharma,

The one essential Dharma,
To be practiced according to ability,
Just as those thickets, forests, herbs, and trees,
True to their type, grow lush and beautiful.

Just so,
Practicing it step-by-step,
All can gain the fruit of the way.

The Dharma taught by the Buddha is like this.
It is just like a great cloud
Which with the same kind of rain
Enriches humans like blossoms,
So that each will bear fruit.

The way in which you all walk
Is the Bodhisattva-way;
By gradually practicing and learning,
You will all become Buddhas.

Based on the translations by Kato et al and Reeves, abridged and adapted by Ratnaprabha.

Swift Fulfillment of Wishes in Dependence on the Great Jetsun Tsongkhapa

By Serkong Rinpoche, Ngawang Tsultrim Donden

Translated by Gelong Tenzin Namjong

Namo Guru

Supreme embodiment of the wisdom and compassion of all the victorious ones of the three times

Manifesting as a monk wearing the three saffron robes -

The spontaneous exalted wisdom dharmakaya possessing the five bodies -

To you, Jetsun Lozang Dragpa, I make request:

Please bless me that my wishes be swiftly fulfilled.

With a nature of primordially pure clear light,

Uninterrupted natural expression of the complete sambhogakaya,

Great being who unifies body and mind,

To you, Jetsun Lozang Dragpa, I make request:

Please bless me that my wishes be swiftly fulfilled.

Displaying an array of manifold nirmanakaya-emanations

Appropriate to the limitless living beings

Equaling the expanse of space,

To you, Jetsun Lozang Dragpa, I make request:

Please bless me that my wishes be swiftly fulfilled.

Through the power of having made single-pointed requests to you,

May all the unfortunate natural manifestations of the degenerate age -

Illness, famine, quarreling, epidemic disease, graha-spirits,

interferers, and so forth - be pacified.

Then, when I request that the excellent collection of conducive conditions increase,
Please bless me that my wishes be swiftly fulfilled.

Having completely cleared away the darkness of ignorance and confusion,
And fully developed the illumination of supreme intelligence,
Virtuous friend who causes the hundred-petalled lotus of
the scriptural tradition to bloom -

The sun radiating benefit and happiness -
to you, I make request:
Please bless me that my wishes be swiftly fulfilled.

Since I and others - the assembly of faithful disciples -
Have no other lord of refuge to turn to for hope,
When we make requests in all the six sessions of day and night,
Please bless us that the guru's blessings may enter our minds.

Also, at the end of this life,
May I see you, Glorious Lozang Dragpa, along with your retinue
And immediately have a vision of you saying assuringly,
"Son, go to the celestial realm of Tushita!"
Care for me with your compassion, Precious Guru.
Please bless me that my wishes be swiftly fulfilled.

Colophons

Original Colophon:

Thinking that a requesting prayer to swiftly fulfill wishes in dependence on the great Jamgon Lama Tsongkhapa was necessary, the clarifier of the teachings of the Yellow Hat sect, the supreme emanation from Tehor, Trongsar Lozang Palden, with an offering of a white scarf and ten pieces of

foreign currency, made sincere entreaties with insistent requests for such a text to be written. Therefore I, Serkong, who looks like a monk and whose birth name is Ngawang Tsultrim Donden, possessing unshakeable faith in the Second Victorious One, respectfully wrote this at my dwelling in the great monastery of Drepung.

Publisher's Colophon:

Translated by Gelong Tenzin Namjong with the help of Ven. Jampa Khedrup, March 2020, from Serkhong Ngawang Tsultrim Donden (ser khong ngag dbang tshul khrim don ldan) rje btsun tsong kha pa chhen po la brten pa'i bsam pa myur 'grub ma. s.l.: s.n., s.d. Translation reviewed and edited by Geshe Tenzin Namdak and Joona Repo, March 2020.

Translator's Colophon:

Kyabje Lama Zopa Rinpoche advised that this prayer would be beneficial to help quell the novel coronavirus responsible for coronavirus disease (COVID-19). Therefore, Gelong Tenzin Namjong quickly translated the text with some helpful comments from Ven. Jampa Khedrup. Due the merit generated by making this translation, may the holy gurus' lives be long and stable and all their holy wishes succeed immediately. Completed on March 9, 2020, the fifteenth day (Chotrul Duchen) of the Fifteen Days of Miracles.

SARVA MANGALAM.

The Speech of Mahasiddha Thangtong Gyalpo:

A Request to Pacify the Fear of Famine

Translated by Joona Repo

Having generated the mind aspiring to the highest supreme enlightenment,
In order to truly liberate all infinite living beings,
You, the compassionate Victorious One, completed the two accumulations.

The assemblies of guiding-buddhas, bodhisattvas, hearers,
pratyekabuddhas,
Gurus, yidams, dakinis, and Dharma guardians of the ten directions;
Yaksha wealth gods, the lords of treasures, along with your retinues,

Think of these protectorless living beings of the degenerate times with love
And then, in order to truly protect these embodied beings
Who are tormented by the sufferings of hunger, thirst, and poverty,
Let fall a rain of whatever attractive enjoyments are needed-
Jewels, food, wealth, grains, bedding, and so forth-
On this world's Land of Snows.

Please pacify the harms of the four elements -
Untimely wind, fire, drought, rain, floods, and so forth -
And may nourishing grains from crops, harvests, and so forth
Ripen and increase like they do during the Age of Completion.

By the force of having made extensive requests
With strong entreaties through the force of love and compassion,
May the eon of sickness, fighting, and famine be pacified
And may we possess a happy long life free from illness.

Through the great compassion of the victorious ones and their children,
 And the force of the infallible truth of cause and effect,
 May the teachings of the Victorious One spread and increase,
 And may all living beings swiftly attain the highest enlightenment.

Colophons

Original Colophon:

In U-Tsang, when a great fear of famine caused by bad harvest, frost, hail, and the like arose, the Great Lord Mahasiddha Thangtong Gyalpo offered a begging bowl full of grain in front of the Jowo Rinpoche in Lhasa and made prayers. As a result of this, those endowed with the appropriate karma saw Arya Avalokiteshvara bringing down a rain of grain from the sky over the land of Tibet. This blessed vajra speech also liberates all living beings from the sufferings of hunger and thirst. Virtue!

Publisher's Colophon:

Translated by Joona Repo, March 2020 from Thangtong Gyalpo (thang stong rgyal po), grub chen thang stong rgyal po'i gsung mu ge'i 'jigs pa zhi ba'i gsol 'debs, s.l.: s.n., s.d. Translation reviewed by Ven. Steve Carlier, March 2020.

The Vajra Speech of Mahasiddha Thangtong Gyalpo:

Words of Truth Pacifying the Danger of Weapons

By Thangtong Gyalpo

Translated by Lama Zopa Rinpoche

OM MANI PADME HUM

Great Loving Victorious One, (1)

Arya Sublime Compassionate-Eye-Looking One, (2)

Wrathful Victorious Hayagriva, Perfect Pure Tara, and so forth -

Objects of refuge whose holy names eliminate all dangers upon mere hearing -

Who are compassionate in nature, please pay attention to me.

When the sentient beings of the time of quarreling

and of flourishing of the five degenerations

Are tormented by fighting and intense suffering

From the explosion of a great ocean of evil karma and jealousy,

Please dry [this ocean] up by the strength of your transcendental

wisdom and compassion.

Also, by letting fall a great nectar rain of loving kindness

On the transmigrating beings whose hatred is a blazing fire,

Please grant your blessings for happiness and auspiciousness to increase

By their recognizing each other as being like parents.

Through your defeating the multitude of vicious evil spirits,

Who, by entering someone's mental continuum,

Change it instantly into the mind of an asura,

From now on may they never roam in this region.

Please also cause all the sentient beings who have died in war
 From now on to abandon all evil karma, the cause and result,
 And be miraculously reborn in Blissful Land. (3)
 Please also lead all others to that pure land.

Please cause all those who are born and die (4) to have long lives
 And not have sicknesses, to stop all their quarreling and fighting,
 and to enjoy a life in the ten virtues.
 Please make rain fall at the right time, harvests to always be good,
 And auspiciousness to increase in all habitats and for all inhabitants.

By the ultimate reality, which is pure in nature,
 Unbetraying cause and result, which has that ultimate reality,
 And the compassionate guru, mind-sealed deity, and Rare Sublime Ones,
 May my pure and extensive prayers be accomplished.

Colophons

Original Colophon:

Once, when there was uninterrupted fighting in the Mi Nyag district of
 Dokham, Tibet, and no one was able to reconcile [the warring factions],
 Master Tantric Adept [Thangtong Gyalpo] came to the area by chance. By
 his generating bodhichitta, harvests became good, crops grew, the deadly
 fighting ceased, and everyone came to have a mind of loving kindness and
 received the perfectly arisen blessed vajra speech.

May there be virtue.

Translator's Colophon:

Translated by Lama Zopa Rinpoche and scribed by Ven. Holly Ansett at Kachoe Dechen Ling, Aptos, CA, USA on September 11, 2001, the day that the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon in Washington were attacked and many people were killed and injured.

Translator's Note:

This is one of three prayers composed by Great Tantric Adept Thangtong Gyalpo. The other two prayers are to stop famine and epidemics.

When His Holiness Chogye Trichen Rinpoche, a guru of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and also one of the main teachers of His Holiness Sakya Trizin, was invited by the Nepalese government to visit a part of Nepal, Rinpoche checked what would be the most beneficial prayer for the people there. It came out that the best practice for them to do was to recite the three prayers composed by Thangtong Gyalpo. Due to this, Rinpoche decided to give them the oral transmission of these three prayers. I found out about the existence of these prayers when I received these oral transmissions from His Holiness Chogye Trichen Rinpoche.

Translator's Dedication:

Wherever this text is (in whichever country), by whatever merits there are from making this translation available and also from reading this prayer, may everyone's heart be filled with loving kindness, bodhichitta, and the thought to only benefit and not harm others. May the sun of peace and happiness rise.

May any wars that are happening stop immediately. May there be harmony and peace, and may there never be war or violence again.

Publisher's Colophon:

Checked against the Tibetan and edited, and the original colophon translated, by Ven. Joan Nicell, FPMT Education Services, March 2020. Further editing by Ven. Ailsa Cameron.

Notes

1. Maitreya Buddha. Tib. byams chen rgyal ba.
2. Chenrezig, or Avalokiteshvara. Tib. spyen ras gzigs.
3. The pure land of Amitabha Buddha. Tib. bde ba can. Skt. Sukhavati.
4. Living beings or samsaric beings. Tib. skye rgu.

A Prayer

May all the suffering we are aware of
only clarify and strengthen our vows

May it cause us to give rise to greater courage and commitment,
fearlessness in the face of delusion, and affliction,
and power to our limbs and to our thoughts and prayers

May it cause us to awaken to the preciousness of this time,
and each life,
and work day and night to heal the sick,
to rescue the lost,
to comfort the stricken,
to encourage the fearful,
to give to the hungry,

to clothe those exposed to the bitter elements,
to liberate those caught in addictions of all kinds
to hold a mirror to the beauty of the world
to be a song of remembrance
to rekindle the sense of our innate dignity,
our belonging,
and our joy

May the fullness of love manifest in us all now

May we take up the gifts of our spiritual ancestors
and read aloud each day from the rooftops and in the parks
and on the trains
from the holy letters they have left us

May all our prayers for each other pour forth
May we find that every action is meaningful

May we create the world that from within us longs to be born

Tirelessly, compassionately, for all who struggle and are lost,
for all who are closed in on themselves, or mesmerized
for all those who know only violence
whose world is already hell

May I go there without hesitation,
forever,
and lead them out

for all who do not know the treasures we hold within
or who do not know the beauty of our children, and our elders,
and our brothers and sisters everywhere -

May there be nothing less than full awakening for them

With gratitude for all my family
and for all my near and distant relations

With abundant gratitude for our teachers,
for all the healers of the world,
for our ancestors,
and for our natural home

I too dedicate all positive energy today
to the comfort and healing of all who need it.

May peace awaken.
May greater love awaken in me,
and in all my friends and family,
and in all the world.