

Dalai Lama
in Hamburg 2014



The Thirty-seven
Bodhisattva Practices
Prayers

The Thirty-seven Bodhisattva Practices and Prayers

On the occasion of the teachings of
His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama
Hamburg 2014

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Thirty-seven Bodhisattva Practices

(rGyal-sras lag-len so-bdun-ma)
by **Togmey-zangpo** (Thogs-med bzang-po)
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(Literal Translation)

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Homage to Lokeshvara.

I prostrate always respectfully, through my three gateways,
To the supreme gurus and the Guardian Avalokiteshvara who,
Seeing that all phenomena have no coming or going,
Make efforts singly for the benefit of wandering beings.

Fully enlightened Buddhas, the sources of benefit and happiness,
Have come about from (their) having actualized the hallowed Dharma.
Moreover, since that depended on (their) having known
what its practices are,
I shall explain a bodhisattva's practice.

Precious Human Life

(1) A bodhisattva's practice is, at this time when we have obtained
The great ship (of a human rebirth) with respites and enrichments,
difficult to find,
To listen, think, and meditate unwaveringly, day and night,
In order to free ourselves and others from the ocean
of uncontrollably recurring samsara.

The Circumstances Most Conducive for Taking Advantage of a Precious Human Life

(2) A bodhisattva's practice is to leave our homelands,
Where attachment to the side of friends tosses us like water;
Anger toward the side of enemies burns us like fire;
And naivety so that we forget what's to be adopted
and abandoned cloaks us in darkness.

(3) A bodhisattva's practice is to rely on seclusion where,
By having rid ourselves of detrimental objects,
our disturbing emotions and attitudes gradually
become stymied;
By lacking distractions, our constructive practices naturally increase;
And by clearing our awareness, our certainty grows in the Dharma.

Death and Impermanence

(4) A bodhisattva's practice is to give up concern
being totally with this lifetime,
In which friends and relations a long time together
must part their own ways;
Wealth and possessions gathered with effort must be left behind;
And our consciousness, the guest, must depart
from our bodies, its guest house.

The Importance of Having Proper Friends

(5) A bodhisattva's practice is to rid ourselves of bad friends
With whom, when we associate,
 our three poisonous emotions come to increase;
Our actions of listening, thinking, and meditating come to decrease;
And our love and compassion turn to nil.

(6) A bodhisattva's practice is to cherish more than our bodies
Our hallowed spiritual mentors, to whom,
By entrusting ourselves, our faults come to deplete
And our good qualities come to expand like the waxing moon.

Safe Direction (Refuge)

(7) A bodhisattva's practice is to take safe direction
 from the Supreme Gems,
By seeking protection from whom we are never deceived –
Since whom can worldly gods protect
When they themselves are still bound in the prison of samsara?

Refraining from Destructive Behavior

(8) A bodhisattva's practice is never to commit any negative actions,
Even at the cost of our lives, because the Able Sage has declared
That the extremely difficult to endure sufferings
 of the worse states of rebirth
Are the results of negative actions.

Working for Liberation

(9) A bodhisattva's practice is to take keen interest
In the supreme never-changing state of liberation,
As the pleasures of the three planes of compulsive existence
Are phenomena that perish in a mere instant,
 like dew on the tips of grass.

Developing a Bodhichitta Aim

(10) A bodhisattva's practice is to develop a bodhichitta aim
to liberate limitless beings,
Because, if our mothers, who have been kind to us
From beginningless time, are suffering,
What can we do with (just) our own happiness?

Exchanging Self with Others

(11) A bodhisattva's practice is to purely exchange
our personal happiness for the suffering of others,
Because (all) our sufferings, without an exception,
Come from desiring our personal happiness,
While a fully enlightened Buddha is born from the attitude
of wishing others well.

Bodhisattva Behavior: Dealing with Harms

(12) A bodhisattva's practice is,
Even if someone under the power of great desire
Steals or causes others to steal all our wealth,
To dedicate to him our bodies, resources,
and constructive actions of the three times.

(13) A bodhisattva's practice is,
Even if while we haven't the slightest fault ourselves,
Someone were to chop off our heads,
To accept on ourselves his negative consequences,
through the power of compassion.

(14) A bodhisattva's practice is,
Even if someone were to publicize throughout
the thousand, million, billion worlds
All kinds of unpleasant things about us,
To speak in return about his good qualities, with an attitude of love.

(15) A bodhisattva's practice is,
Even if someone exposes our faults or says foul words (about us)
In the midst of a gathering of many wandering beings,
To bow to him respectfully,
distinguishing that (he's our) spiritual teacher.

(16) A bodhisattva's practice is, even if a person
Whom we've taken care of, cherishing him like our own child,
Were to regard us as his enemy, to have special affection for him,
Like a mother toward her child stricken with an illness.

(17) A bodhisattva's practice is,
Even if an individual, our equal or inferior,
Were to treat (us) insultingly out of the power of his arrogance,
To receive him on the crown of our heads respectfully, like a guru.

Two Critical Situations Requiring Dharma Practice

(18) A bodhisattva's practice is,
Even if we are destitute in livelihood and always insulted by people,
Or sick with terrible diseases, or afflicted by ghosts,
To accept on ourselves, in return, the negative forces and sufferings
of all wandering beings and not be discouraged.

(19) A bodhisattva's practice is, even if we are sweetly praised,
Bowed to with their heads by many wandering beings,
Or have obtained (riches) comparable to the fortune
of Vaishravana (the Guardian of Wealth),
Never to be conceited, by seeing that worldly prosperity
has no essence.

Overcoming Hostility and Attachment

(20) A bodhisattva's practice is to tame our mental continuums
With the armed forces of love and compassion,

Because, if we haven't subdued the enemy which is our own hostility,
Then even if we have subdued an external enemy, more will come.

(21) A bodhisattva's practice is immediately to abandon
Any objects that cause our clinging and attachment to increase,
For objects of desire are like salt water:
The more we have indulged (in them,
our) thirst (for them) increases (in turn).

Developing Deepest Bodhichitta, the Realization of Voidness

(22) A bodhisattva's practice is not to take to mind
Inherent features of objects taken and minds that take them,
by realizing just how things are.
No matter how things appear, they are from our own minds;
And mind-itself is, from the beginning,
parted from the extremes of mental fabrication.

(23) A bodhisattva's practice is,
When meeting with pleasing objects,
not to regard them as truly existent,
Even though they appear beautifully, like a summer's rainbow,
And (thus) to rid ourselves of clinging and attachment.

(24) A bodhisattva's practice is,
At the time when meeting with adverse conditions,
to see them as deceptive,
For various sufferings are like the death of our child in a dream
And to take (such) deceptive appearances to be true
is a tiresome waste.

The Six Far-Reaching Attitudes

(25) A bodhisattva's practice is to give generously
Without hope for anything in return and something karmic to ripen,
Because, if those who would wish enlightenment
 must give away even their bodies,
What need to mention external possessions?

(26) A bodhisattva's practice is
To safeguard ethical self-discipline without worldly intents,
Because, if we can't fulfill our own purposes
 without ethical discipline,
The wish to fulfill the purposes of others is a joke.

(27) A bodhisattva's practice is to build up as a habit patience,
Without hostility or repulsion toward anyone,
Because, for a bodhisattva wishing for a wealth of positive force,
All who cause harm are equal to treasures of gems.

(28) A bodhisattva's practice is to exert joyful perseverance,
 the source of good qualities for the purposes
 of all wandering beings,
Since we can see that even shravakas and pratyekabuddhas,
Who would accomplish only their own purposes,
 have such perseverance
That they would turn from a fire that has broken out on their heads.

(29) A bodhisattva's practice is to build up as a habit
A mental stability that purely surpasses the four formless
 (absorptions),
By realizing that an exceptionally perceptive state of mind,
 fully endowed with a stilled and settled state,
Can totally vanquish the disturbing emotions and attitudes.

(30) A bodhisattva's practice is to build up as a habit
The discriminating awareness that's together with methods

and which has no conceptions about the three circles,
Because without discriminating awareness,
the five far-reaching attitudes
Cannot bring about the attainment of complete enlightenment.

A Bodhisattva's Daily Practice

(31) A bodhisattva's practice is continually
to examine our self-deception and then rid ourselves of it,
Because, if we do not examine our self-deception ourselves,
It's possible that with a Dharmic (external) form
We can commit something non-Dharmic.

(32) A bodhisattva's practice is not to speak about
the faults of a person who has entered Mahayana,
Because, if under the power of disturbing emotions and attitudes,
We talk about the faults of others who are bodhisattvas,
We ourselves will degenerate.

(33) A bodhisattva's practice is to rid ourselves of attachment
To homes of relatives and friends and homes of patrons,
Because, under the power of (wanting) gain and respect,
We will quarrel with each other and our activities of listening,
thinking, and meditating will decline.

(34) A bodhisattva's practice is to rid ourselves of harsh language
Displeasing to the minds of others,
Because harsh words disturb others' minds
And cause our bodhisattva ways of behavior to decline.

(35) A bodhisattva's practice is to have the servicemen
of mindfulness and alertness hold the opponent weapons
And forcefully to destroy disturbing emotions and attitudes,
like attachment and so forth, as soon as they first arise,
Because, when we are habituated to disturbing emotions and attitudes,
It is difficult for opponents to make them retreat.

(36) In short, a bodhisattva's practice is (to work)
to fulfill the purposes of others

By continually possessing mindfulness and alertness to know,
No matter where or what course of behavior we're following,
How is the condition of our minds.

(37) A bodhisattva's practice is, with the discriminating awareness
Of the complete purity of the three circles,
To dedicate for enlightenment the constructive forces
realized by efforts like these,
In order to eliminate the sufferings of limitless wandering beings.

Conclusion

Having followed the words of the hallowed beings
And the meaning of what has been declared
in the sutras, tantras, and treatises,
I have arranged (these) practices of bodhisattvas, thirty and seven,
For the purposes of those who wish to train in the bodhisattva path.

Because my intelligence is feeble and my education meager,
They may not be in poetic meter that would please the erudite.
But, because I've relied on the sutras
and the words of the hallowed ones,
I think that (these) bodhisattva practices are not deceived.

Nevertheless, since it is difficult for someone dull-witted like myself
To fathom the depth of the great waves of bodhisattva behavior,
I request the hallowed ones to be patient with my mass of faults,
Such as contradictions, lack of connection, and the likes.

By the constructive force coming from this, may all wandering beings,
Through supreme deepest and conventional bodhichittas,

Become equals to the Guardian Avalokiteshvara,
Who never abides in the extremes of compulsive samsaric
existence or nirvanic complacency.

This has been composed in Rinchen cave in Ngulchu by the disciplined monk
Togmey, a teacher of scripture and logic, for the sake of his own and others' benefit.

Prayers

The Three Practices of Purifying the Mind

1. Homage

To the founder, the endowed transcendent destroyer, the one gone beyond, the foe destroyer, the completely perfected, fully awakened being, perfect in knowledge and in good conduct, Sugata, knower of the world, supreme guide of human beings to be tamed, teacher of gods and human beings; to you, the completely and fully awakened one, the endowed transcendent destroyer, the glorious conqueror, the subduer from the Shakya clan, I prostrate, make offerings, and go for refuge.(3x)

When, O supreme amongst humans, you were born on this earth,
You paced out seven strides,
Then said, “I am supreme in this world.”
To you, who were wise then, I prostrate.

With pure bodies, form supremely pure;
Wisdom ocean, like a golden mountain;
Fame that blazes in the three worlds,
Winner of the best – Lord, to you I prostrate.

With the supreme signs, face like spotless moon,
Color like gold – to you, I prostrate.
Dust-free like you, the three worlds are not.
Incomparably wise one - to you, I prostrate.

The savior having great compassion.
The founder having all understanding,
The field of merit with qualities like a vast ocean –

To you, the one gone to thusness, I prostrate.

The purity that frees one from attachment,
The virtue that frees one from the lower realms,
The one path, the sublime pure reality –
To the Dharma that pacifies, I prostrate.

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 –
To you, the sublime community intending virtue, I prostrate.

Homage to the supreme Buddha!
Homage to the Dharma refuge!
Homage to the great Sangha!
To all three, ever-devout homage!

To all worthy of respect,
Bowing with bodies as many as
All realms' atoms, in all aspects,
With supreme faith I pay homage.

2. Sutra Recitation

Do not commit any non-virtuous actions,
Perform only perfect virtuous actions,
Subdue your mind thoroughly –
This is the teaching of the Buddha.

A star, a visual aberration, a flame of a lamp,
An illusion, a drop of dew, or a bubble,
A dream, a flash of lightning, a cloud –
See conditioned things as such!

3. Homage

Through these merits may sentient beings
Attain the rank of all seeing, subdue the foe of faults,
And be delivered from samsara's ocean,
Perturbed by the waves of aging, sickness, and death.

The Heart of the Perfection of Wisdom Sutra

I prostrate to the Arya Triple Gem.

Thus did I hear at one time. The Bhagavan was dwelling on Mass of Vultures Mountain in Rajagriha together with a great community of monks and a great community of bodhisattvas. At that time, the Bhagavan was absorbed in the concentration on the categories of phenomena called “Profound Perception”.

Also, at that time, the bodhisattva mahasattva arya Avalokitesvara looked upon the very practice of the profound perfection of wisdom and beheld those five aggregates also as empty of inherent nature.

Then, through the power of Buddha, the venerable Shariputra said this to the bodhisattva mahasattva arya Avalokitesvara: “How should any son of the lineage train who wishes to practice the activity of the profound perfection of wisdom?”

He said that, and the bodhisattva mahasattva arya Avalokitesvara said this to the venerable Sharadvatiputra. “Shariputra, any son of the lineage or daughter of the lineage who wishes to practice the activity of the profound perfection of wisdom should look upon it like this, correctly and repeatedly beholding those five aggregates also as empty of inherent nature.

Form is empty. Emptiness is form. Emptiness is not other than form; form is also not other than emptiness. In the same way, feeling, discrimination, compositional factors, and consciousness are empty.

“Shariputra, likewise, all phenomena are emptiness; without characteristic; unproduced, unceased; stainless, not without stain; not deficient, not fulfilled.

“Shariputra, therefore, in emptiness there is no form, no feeling, no discrimination, no compositional factors, no consciousness; no eye, no ear, no nose, no tongue, no body, no mind; no visual form, no sound, no odor, no taste, no object of touch, and no phenomenon. There is no eye element and so on up to and including no mind element and no mental consciousness element. There is no ignorance, no extinction of ignorance, and so on up to and including no aging and death and no extinction of aging and death. Similarly, there is no suffering, origination, cessation, and path; there is no exalted wisdom, no attainment, and also no non-attainment.

“Shariputra, therefore, because there is no attainment, bodhisattvas rely on and dwell in the perfection of wisdom, the mind without obscuration and without fear. Having completely passed beyond error, they reach the endpoint of nirvana. All the buddhas who dwell in the three times also manifestly, completely awoken to unsurpassable, perfect, complete enlightenment in reliance on the) perfection of wisdom.

[Therefore, the mantra of the perfection of wisdom, the mantra of great knowledge, the unsurpassed mantra, the mantra equal to the unequalled, the mantra that thoroughly pacifies all suffering, should be known as truth since it is not false. The mantra of the perfection of wisdom is declared:

TADYATHA [OM] GATE GATE PARAGATE PARASAMGATE
BODHI SVAHA

“Shariputra, the bodhisattva mahasattva should train in the profound perfection of wisdom like that.”

Then the Bhagavan arose from that concentration and commended the bodhisattva mahasattva arya Avalokitesvara saying: “Well said, well said, son of the lineage, it is like that. It is like that; one should practice the profound perfection of wisdom just as you have indicated; even the tathagatas rejoice.”

The Bhagavan having thus spoken, the venerable Sharadvatiputra, the bodhisattva mahasattva arya Avalokitesvara, and those surrounding in their entirety along with the world of gods, humans, asuras, and gandharvas were overjoyed and highly praised that spoken by the Bhagavan.

(This completes the heart sutra)

Dispelling Interferences

I prostrate to the gathering of dakinis in the three chakras
Who abide in the holy yoga of using space.
By your powers of clairvoyance and magical emanation,
Look after practitioners like a mother her child.

AH KA SA MA RA/TSA SHA DA RA / SA MA RA YA PHAT (21 x)

TADYATHA [OM] GATE GATE PARAGATE PARASAMGATE
BODHI SVAHA

By the teachings of the three supreme jewels possessing the power of truth,
May inner and outer hindrances be transformed, (clap 1x)
May they be dispelled, (clap 1x)
May they be pacified, (clap 1x)

SHINTIM KURU YE SVAHA

May all negative forces opposed to Dharma be completely pacified.
May the host of eighty thousand obstacles be pacified.
May we be separated from problems and harmful conditions to Dharma;
May all enjoyments be in accord with the Dharma;
And may there be auspiciousness and perfect happiness here right now.

Mandala Offering to Request the Teachings

This ground, anointed with perfume, strewn with flowers,
Adorned with Mount Meru, four continents, the sun and the moon.
I imagine this as a Buddhafield and offer it.
May all living beings enjoy this pure land!

Request to turn the Wheel of Dharma

O holy and perfect, pure lama, from the clouds of compassion
That form in the skies of your Dharmakaya wisdom,
Please release a rain of vast and profound Dharma,
Precisely in accordance with the needs of those to be trained.

IDAM GURU RATNA MANDALAKAM NIRYATAYAMI

Refuge and Bodhichitta before the Teachings

I go for refuge until I am enlightened
To the Buddha, the Dharma and the Supreme Assembly.
By the virtuous merit created by listening to the Dharma
May I attain the state of a Buddha in order to benefit all migrators.

Mandala Offering of Thanks for the Teaching

This ground, anointed with perfume, strewn with flowers,
Adorned with Mount Meru, four continents, the sun and the moon.
I imagine this as a Buddhafield and offer it.
May all living beings enjoy this pure land!

Request for the Teacher to remain long

May my venerable lama's life be firm,
His white divine actions spread in the ten directions.
May the torch of the teachings of Losang always remain,
Dispelling the darkness of all beings in the three realms.

IDAM GURU RATNA MANDALAKAM NIRYATAYAMI

Dedication Prayers

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

Just as the brave Manjushri and Samantabhadra too,
Realized things as they are,

Also I dedicate all these merits in the best way,
That I may follow their perfect example.

I dedicate all these roots of virtue
With the dedication praised as the best
By the victorious ones thus gone of the three times,
So that I might perform the noble bodhisattvas' deeds.

Due to all these merits, may all the father and mother sentient beings
have all happiness,
And may all the lower realms be empty forever.
Wherever there are bodhisattvas, may all their prayers be
accomplished immediately.
May I cause all this by myself alone.

Savior of the Snow Land Teachings and transmigratory beings,
Who makes extremely clear the path that is the unification of
emptiness and compassion,
To the Lotus Holder, Tenzin Gyatso, I beseech –
May all your holy wishes be spontaneously fulfilled!

Short long Life Prayer for His Holiness the Dalai Lama

In the land encircled by snow mountains
You are the source of all happiness and good;
All-powerful Chenrezig, Tenzin Gyatso,
Please remain until samsara ends.

The Melody of the Nectar of Immortality

A Prayer for the Long Life of
His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama,
Supreme Victor and Omniscient One

by Jamyang Khyentse Chökyi Lodrö

Om svasti!

The vast love and primordial wisdom of the buddhas
All are embodied in Lokeshvara, white like a dazzling
snow mountain,
Sublime and holy Lord of the World. You who are his emanation,
A guru for each and every being in the three realms:
may you be victorious!
Wondrous and without equal in the three worlds,
Omniscient and as unique as the udumbara flower,
Great crown jewel for the teachings and all beings on earth:
Supreme victorious one, Holder of the Lotus
– I pray for your long life!

Always and forever enlightened, yet in this age of conflict
You gather living beings within your embrace,
Your resolve and your commitment unshakeable like a vajra:
Great lord on the tenth bhumi – I pray for your long life!

All the realizations of the stages of the path to enlightenment
Are merged as one with your secret body, speech and mind,
Your qualities of knowledge and love inconceivable:
Second buddha of the north – I pray for your long life!

Of teaching, debate and composition, your mastery is unimpaired,
In you the eight great treasures of brilliance have opened wide,
With ‘specific perfect understanding’, you teach the Dharma:
You who are victorious in every direction – I pray for your long life!

Through your explanation, accomplishment and activity, you spread
The enlightened Tsongkhapa’s precious teaching in a
 hundred directions,
Annihilating the deluded arguments of malicious opponents,
Fearless Lion of Speech, Mañjushri – I pray for your long life!

On the secret mantra’s gradual path of the triple vision
 and triple tantra,
As the four mandalas are absorbed through the profound
 yogas of the four empowerments,
You realize directly the wisdom of the four kayas:
All-pervading lord vajradhara – I pray for your long life!

Mahamudra is the natural state of all things,
Profound emptiness and clarity, indivisible:
With the sunlight of its innate wisdom you dispel the darkness
 of samsara and nirvana:
Great lord of yogins, Milarepa – I pray for your long life!

From the treasury of all the mysteries in the ocean of tantras
You make the exquisite water of the four rivers that mature
 and liberate
Flow into the fields of fortunate disciples:
Vajrapani, Lord of Secrets – I pray for your long life!

Everything in samsara and nirvana occurs as
 the play of interdependence,
Arising yet primordially unborn, a state of utter peace:

Wise teacher of this profound Madhyamaka that is free
from all conceptual elaboration,
'Lord of Nagas' – Nagarjuna – I pray for your long life!

Kulika Pundarika, skilled and perfect exponent of the Kalachakra,
With its inseparable outer, inner and alternative cycles,
Has appeared in the land of Tibet in the form of a spiritual friend:
You who are in essence the original buddha, Kalachakra
– I pray for your long life!

All phenomena of samsara and nirvana are the expanse
of the sphere of luminosity –
Unfluctuating, spontaneously Great Perfection:
In self-liberation, beyond all action, you attain the kingdom
of fruition,
Primordial lord Samantabhadra – I pray for your long life!

Fearless, and without mixing or confusing them,
You steer onwards the great chariot of all the Buddha's teachings;
Sole refuge for the teachings and for all beings:
Lord Tenzin Gyatso – I pray for your long life!

A hundred times with reverence and awe,
The jewelled heads of the mighty ones of the three worlds,
Bow to the auspicious wheels of your lotus feet:
Great sovereign of Dharma – I pray for your long life!

As the lord of the gods, annihilating the demonic forces of the asuras
With the hundred-pointed vajra of power, energy and strength,
Destroying the rocky mountains of wrong and perverted views,
Fearsome Shri Heruka – I pray for your long life!

As long as this earth, Mount Meru, sun and moon endure,
May you remain secure, invincible, on your vajra throne
In the celestial mansion of Potala, Avalokiteshvara's delight,
Your secret body, speech and mind forever changeless!
Through the grace of the three supreme deities of Long Life,
And the power of the truth of masters, yidams, buddhas
and bodhisattvas,
May all that we have prayed for be blessed
And so accomplished without any obstacle!

Paying reverence with his body, his speech and his mind, the one who bears the name of the incarnation of Jamyang Khyentse, Jamyang Chökyi Lodrö from the realm of Dokham in the east, wrote this as he prayed with fervent devotion, at the Samdrup family house, to the south of the great temple of Rasa Trulnang (the Jokhang), in Lhasa in Central Tibet. He then offered this prayer to the great omniscient one himself. May it become a cause for his life to be secure for countless aeons! Sarwada kalyanam sushreyo bhavatu: All is perfectly complete!

Based on the translation made by the late Khenpo Migmar Tsering, Principal of Sakya College, and Dr. Peter Della Santina, to mark His Holiness the Dalai Lama's visit to Sakya College in November 1992. © Rigpa Translations, 2000.

Taking Refuge and Generating Bodhichitta

I go for refuge until I am enlightened
To the Buddha, Dharma, and the Supreme Assembly.
Through the collections [of merit and wisdom]
 created by giving and others,
May I attain buddhahood to help all sentient beings. (3x)

Generating the Mind for Enlightenment (Bodhichitta):

With a wish to free all sentient beings
I shall always go for refuge
To all Buddha, Dharma and Sangha
Until I reach the essence of enlightenment.

Enthused by wisdom and compassion,
Diligently, for the sake of sentient beings,
In the presence of the buddhas
I generate the mind for full awakening.

As long as space remains
As long as sentient beings remain
Until then, may I too remain
And dispel the miseries of the world. (3x)

Taking the Lay Person Vows:

Master, please pay attention (to me)!
I, known by the name (say your name), from this time on
 and as long as I am alive,
Seek refuge in the Buddhas, the best of the bipeds.
I seek refuge in the Dharma, the best of freedom from attachment.

I seek refuge in the Sangha, the best of the congregations.
Master, please consider me as an upasaka/upasaki (devout lay
follower) until my death.

The Lay Person Vows

The five branch vows to be kept by a lay person are to avoid:

1. Killing
2. Taking what has not been given
3. Sexual misconduct
4. Telling lies
5. ...Drinking alcohol

Taking the Bodhisattva Vows:

I seek refuge in the Three Jewels.
I confess all misdeeds individually.
I rejoice in the virtuous deeds of all beings.
I take to mind the buddha's enlightenment.

To the Buddha, Dharma and the Highest Assembly
I seek refuge until I reach enlightenment.
To fulfill the interests of oneself and others
I shall generate the mind for awakening.

Having generated the mind for highest awakening
I shall invite all sentient beings as my guests.
I shall engage in the delighting supreme practices of enlightenment.
May I attain buddhahood for the benefit of sentient beings. (3x)

Rejoicing in Bodhisattva Vows:

Today my life has borne fruit;
I have attained an excellent human existence.
Today, I am born into the buddhas' family,
And now I have become a buddha's child.

Vowing not to cause decline the Bodhisattva Vows and Bodhichitta:

Now, come what may,
I shall act in accord with this lineage
Never causing this impeccable
Noble lineage to be tarnished.

Invocation of the seventeen Great Learned Nalanda Scholars

Illuminating the threefold faith - an invocation of the
Seventeen Great Scholarly Adepts of Glorious Nalanda

1.

The god of gods, arisen from the compassionate wish to benefit wandering beings, has attained transcendent protection, abandonment and realization, and liberates sentient beings through the teaching of dependent arising, I bow my head to you, the Conqueror, Sun among Teachers.

2.

I call to mind the esteemed Nagarjuna, who, as prophesied, introduced the Madhyamika system, the excellent path, and who was skilled in clarifying the meaning of suchness, free of extremes, the intention of the Mother of the Conquerors, through the profound logical presentation of dependent arising.

3.

I call to mind the Bodhisattva Aryadeva, his principal spiritual son, peerlessly learned and accomplished, who traversed the ocean of Buddhist and other philosophical systems, who is the glorious crowning jewel amongst all the holders of Nagarjuna's teachings.

4.

I call to mind the esteemed Buddhapalita, who clarified the ultimate meaning of dependent arising, the thought of the Superior, the essential point of the profound, (existence as) mere designation and name and who has ascended to the utmost state of accomplishment.

5.

I call to mind Acharya Bhavaviveka, who introduced a philosophical system that refuted such extremes as truly existent production and accepted the shared perception of valid cognitions and external objects.

6.

I call to mind Chandrakirti, who promulgated the complete path of the Sutras and Tantras, who was skilled in expounding the profound and the vast Middle Way system, in which appearance and emptiness eliminate the two extremes through dependent arising and the merely conditional (nature of things).

7.

I call to mind the Bodhisattva Shantideva, who was skilled in teaching the host of fortunate disciples the truly marvellous path of great compassion with the versatile means and reasons of the profound and the vast.

8.

I call to mind the great abbot Shantarakshita, who introduced the Middle Way to suit the disciples' mental disposition, was well versed in expounding the rationale of the Middle Way and valid cognition, and disseminated the teaching of the Conqueror in the Land of Snows.

9.

I call to mind the esteemed Kamalashila, who, thoroughly explained how to meditate systematically on the Middle Way thought, free from extremes, and the union of calm abiding and special insight according to the Sutras and Tantras, flawlessly clarified the Conqueror's doctrine in the Land of Snows.

10.

I call to mind the esteemed Asanga, who Maitreya inspired and looked after, who was adept in disseminating all the Mahayana sets of discourses, who revealed the vast path and as prophesied blazed the trail of the Mind Only system.

11.

I call to mind the esteemed Acharya Vasubhandu, who, by maintaining the doubly empty system of the Seven Treatises of Abhidharma, clarified the philosophical theories of the Vaibhashikas, Sautrantikas and Vijnavadas, the foremost scholar, renowned as a second Omniscient One.

12.

I call to mind the esteemed Dignaga, the logician who gave us the discerning eye of fine discrimination by thoroughly opening a hundred epistemological doors to reveal the system of Buddha's scriptures through the power of natural logic.

13.

I call to mind the esteemed Dharmakirti, who fathomed the vital points of Buddhist and others' systems of knowledge, granting conviction in the vast and profound paths of the Sautrantika and Chittamatra, and who was adept in expounding the marvellous ways of the Dharma.

14.

I call to mind the esteemed Vimuktisena, who lit the lamp illuminating the meaning of the Ornament (of Clear Realisation) in accordance with the Middle Way system, free from the extremes of existence and non-existence, the meaning of the Perfection of Wisdom as it came from the Asanga brothers.

15.

I call to mind the esteemed Haribhadra, who clarified the three Mothers, the supreme Perfection of Wisdom scriptures, in line with Maitreyanath's pith instructions and who the Conqueror prophesied would expound the meaning of the Mother.

16.

I call to mind the esteemed Gunaprabha, excelling in stability and learning, who integrated the intentions of a hundred thousand categories of Vinaya and in accordance with the Mulasarvastivadin system thoroughly and unmistakably explained individual liberation.

17.

I call to mind the esteemed Shakyaprabha, the ideal Vinaya holder, master of the treasure of the three precepts' qualities, who, in order to ensure the longevity of the flawless Vinaya teaching, thoroughly explained what the vast scriptures meant.

18.

I call to mind Jowo Atisha, the kind lord who caused the Conqueror's teaching to flourish in the Land of Snows, who expounded in the paths of the three individuals the doctrines of the vast and profound that are the complete teaching of the Conqueror.

19.

Making such invocations with an unflinchingly pure mind to these exceedingly fine scholars, who are ornaments for the world and the source of stupendous, elegant teachings, may I be blessed that I may mature my mindstream and achieve liberation.

20.

By understanding the meaning of the two truths, the way things exist, we ascertain through the four truths how we arrive in and how we leave

the cycle of existence. Engendered by valid cognition our faith in the three refuges will be firm. May I be blessed to establish the root of the path to liberation.

21.

May I be blessed to perfect an uncontrived awakening mind of Bodhichitta, which is rooted in renunciation – the aspiration for liberation and the total purification of suffering and its source – and that boundless compassion that wishes to protect wandering beings.

22.

May I be blessed to be able to develop a quick and easy conviction about the profound points of all the paths of the Perfection of Wisdom and the Vajrayana by listening to, contemplating and meditating on the meaning of the commentaries of the great pioneers.

23.

May I, in life after life, obtain the good basis (of a human life) possessing the three precepts and contribute to the doctrine as the great pioneers did, with respect to upholding and propagating the words and insights of the teachings through explanation and practice.

24.

May all religious assemblies be filled with noble scholars and practitioners passing their time in hearing, contemplation and explanation and having totally given up wrong livelihood. May the ground of this great world be adorned in this way.

25.

By such power may all the grounds and paths of the Sutras and Tantras be traversed and by quickly achieving the state of an Omniscient Conqueror, spontaneously fulfilling the two purposes, may I work for sentient beings as long as space remains.

Concerning the teachings of the profound and vast given by the Fully Enlightened Supramundane Victor, the Buddha, the foremost scholars of the Holy Land of India have, as mentioned above, composed numerous excellent, meaningful texts that can open the eyes of those possessing a fine discriminative awareness. During this time more than two thousand five hundred years have passed, but still those teachings (dealing with) hearing, contemplation and meditation survive undiminished. Therefore, I recollect the kindness of those who were the cream of scholars and aspire to follow them with unflinching faith.

At the present time, when in the ordinary world there is great advancement in the fields of science and technology, but we are also distracted by the hustle and bustle of our busy lives, it is extremely important that those of us who follow the Buddha should have faith based on knowledge of his teaching. Therefore, we should examine the reasons for it with an unbiased and inquisitive mind, analysing them closely. If we are to develop faith supported by an understanding of the reasons, these excellent texts concerning the profound and the vast by such renowned masters among the Six Ornaments and Two Supremes as Buddhapalita and Arya Vimuktisena are indispensable.

With this in mind I have had a new thangka composed depicting the seventeen scholarly adepts of Nalanda. This collection was achieved by adding nine teachers to the existing way of depicting the Six Ornaments and Two Supremes. Consequently, I developed an urge to compose an invocation with whole-hearted respect for each of these supreme scholars and some of my aspiring dharma friends encouraged it. This is how it came about that I, the Shakya Bhikshu, Tenzin Gyatso, who am placed in the back row of those studying the works of these scholars, have composed this text: Illuminating the Threefold Faith – an invocation of the seventeen great and renowned scholars of Nalanda, having developed unfeigned conviction in the superb works of these sublime masters. It was completed at Thekchen Choeling, Dharamsala, Kangra District, Himachal Pradesh, India on the 1st day of the 11th month of the Iron Snake Year in the seventeenth Tibetan rabjung, corresponding to 15th December 2001 of the western calendar, 2545 years, according to the Theravada system, after the Buddha's passed away.

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Tibetisches Zentrum
Event gGmbH