

*Beginning of Session
Prayers*

for the accumulation of merit and purification of obscuration
according to
Lama Tsong Khapa's
Great and Middle Stages of the Path



Visualization

In space in front of you upon a lotus, sun and moon seat imagine Buddha Shakyamuni. He is the manifestation of the omniscient mind of all the Buddhas. His body is very magnificent and is in the nature of golden light ; he wears the three robes of a monk. His face is very beautiful and he has a loving smile. His eyes are long, narrow and fine; his gaze is very peaceful. His hair is black. On the crown of his head is a pinnacle. The palm of his right hand rests on his right knee. His left hand rests on his lap in the mudra of meditation, holding a bowl filled with nectar. He sits in the vajra posture in the center of an aura of light. Each feature of his holy body represents an aspect of his omniscient mind and he is looking at me with compassionate eyes.

He is surrounded by countless buddhas and bodhisattvas.

Refuge and bodhicitta motivation

I go for refuge until enlightenment
To the Buddha, dharma and sangha
By my training in the six perfections
May I become a buddha to benefit all beings 3x

The Four Immeasurables

May all beings abide in equanimity, free of attachment and
aversion
May all beings have happiness, and the causes of happiness
May all beings be free of suffering, and the causes of suffering
May all beings find good rebirths, and the bliss of liberation

Seven limbs

Prostration combining the three doors

To you, O lions amongst humans
Who come in the past, present and future
In the worlds of the ten directions,
I bow down with body, speech and mind

Physical prostration

By my wish for the bodhisattva's life,
Many buddhas appear to my mind
And I bow down to every one of you
With bodies equal to the world's atoms

Mental prostration

On every atom are countless buddhas
Each amidst countless bodhisattvas,
I imagine all phenomena
Like this, completely filled with buddhas

Verbal prostration

In celebration to all gone to bliss
With inexhaustible seas of praise
And with sounds of melodious verse

I sing of the Buddha's qualities

Worldly offerings

Beautiful flowers, precious garlands,
Sweet music, scented oils, and parasols
Radiant lights and heavenly incense
I offer to you victorious ones

Fine clothing and sweet fragrant perfumes
Sandalwood powder piled high as Meru
A spectacular array of offerings
I offer to you victorious ones

Unsurpassable offerings

With deep admiration for all buddhas
And faith in the bodhisattvas' life
With transcendent offerings, peerless and vast
I bow down and offer to the victors

Confession

Every harmful action I have done
With my three doors of body speech and mind
Besieged by greed, anger and confusion,
All I openly lay bare before you

Rejoicing

In my heart I rejoice in virtues
Of all buddhas and bodhisattvas,
Solitary realizers, hearers,
And in the virtues of all beings

Requesting to teach

You, lights of the worlds in ten directions,
Who have gained a buddha's omniscience
All you who are my spiritual guides,
Please turn the supreme wheel of dharma

Requesting to remain

With hands in prayer I earnestly request:
You who may actualize nirvana
Please stay with us for eons countless
As the number of atoms of the world
For the happiness and the benefit
Of those wandering in samsara

Dedication

Whatever slight virtue that I may
Have created, by paying homage,
Offering, and acknowledging my faults,
And by rejoicing, and praying that
Buddhas will always stay and teach us,
I dedicate for full awakening

Offering of the Universe

This ground adorned with perfume and flowers
Mount Meru, four worlds, sun and moon
Imagined and offered as a pure land
May all beings enjoy this pure land

I send this jeweled mandala to you, my precious guru

Glorious and precious root Guru Shakyamuni
Please abide on the lotus and moon seat at my crown
Take care of me with your great kindness
And bestow upon me the attainments of your holy body, speech
and mind.

Mantra recitation

(As you recite the mantra, first visualize that white light flows from Buddha Shakyamuni's heart. It enters your body, speech and mind and purifies you of all disease, spirit harms, negative karma and obscurations.

Second, visualize that golden light flows from Buddha Shakyamuni's heart and grants you all the spiritual realizations.)

TADYATHA: OM MUNE MUNE MAHA MUNAYE SVAHA 21x

Absorption

Now visualize that Buddha Shakyamuni melts into light and this light absorbs into you. Your body, speech and mind become one with Buddha Shakyamuni's holy body, speech and mind. Remain in this oneness as long as possible.

Calm-Abiding Meditation

Determination: what am I going to meditate on and how long

Mindfulness: of not forgetting the meditation object

Introspection: checking how the meditation is progressing, whether one is still focusing on what one had decided, and whether laxity or excitement has arisen

Applying antidotes: to laxity or excitement and returning to the object of meditation if it was forgotten

No more applying antidotes: when the meditation is proceeding well.

Contemplation on the Graduated Path

Whatever you want for yourself and others
With a human form is easily attained;
Disengage yourself from meaningless efforts,
Strive to accomplish the highest goals.

Because all things composite are impermanent,
Life changes and never abides;
That change is the basis of suffering,
For the samsaric mind fills with frustration
On watching its creations continually fade.

The higher you climb in samsara,
The higher the cliff on which you perch;
The more things you own,
The tighter you are bound.

The dearer you hold someone,
The greater the chance he will hurt you.
The faster you subdue enemies,
The faster their numbers increase.

This body is a thing borrowed for a moment,
And possessions are things stored for others.
Now we dally with them,
But quickly are they lost and misused,
And only are sources of misery.

Therefore no worldly possession
Is worth the effort of gaining.
Turn your back on that which only handicaps:
An unburdened mind is joy supreme.

The pinnacle of aims is to follow this path:
Body, speech and mind kept stainless with pure self-discipline,
Mind held in samadhi blissful and clear,
And wisdom seeing all realities of every situation.

The mother beings wandering in the six realms,
To me, their child, are pieces of my heart.
For many times have they soothed my troubles

And in infinite ways have they brought me joy.

These infinite beings, so kind,
Are covered by the fog of ignorance.
Constantly lashed by whips of delusions,
They have no chance to lay down
The burden of misery from their minds.

Therefore whenever you meet anyone,
Greet them with eyes smiling with love.
Why mention that you should not even consider
Holding evil intentions or deceptive thoughts?

The way people and things seem to be
Other than projected labels
Is a distortion created by deluded mind.
If we look at the root of things,
Emptiness is clearly understood.

And in the vast space of perception of emptiness,
Mental grasping for ultimate subsides.
Then one looks into the face of the world,
Everything is seen without essence.

Understanding interdependence we understand emptiness,
Understanding emptiness, we understand interdependence;
This is the view which is the middle,
And which is beyond the terrifying cliffs of
Eternalism, nihilism, neither or both.

*Colophon: The Complete Path by the Seventh Dalai Lama translated by
Glenn Mullin.*

Dedications

By merit of this virtue
May I become buddha and
Lead all beings, every one
Into that enlightened state.

May the precious bodhi mind
Not yet born arise and grow
And may that born not decline
But increase more and more.

Appendix: Why we make prayers before meditation?

Tsong Khapa says in *Middle Stages of the Path*:

It is exceedingly difficult for spiritual realization to arise in our mind if the favorable conditions for their arising, the collections of virtue have not been accumulated, and their adverse conditions, the obscurations, have not been purified.

Therefore you need to purify the mind by means of the seven-limb practice, which brings together the key points of the accumulation and purification.

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