

Awam Meditation Practice Manual

Commentaries by Yogi Khenchen Drimed Dawa

The Practice Manual was developed by myself for our sangha based primarily upon the *Khaton Prayer Book: Practices of the Wish-Fulfilling Gem* by HH Khenchen Lama Rinpoche, Mipham Rinpoche's *The Luminous Path to Liberation*, and adaptations from *The Concise Recitation and Practice of the New Treasure of Dudjom* by HH Dudjom Rinpoche.

Conch – inviting all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas

A traditional way of inviting the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas to join the activity or event, here it is done three times.

Blessing Mantra

Om Sambara Sambara Bimana Sara Maha Zambaba Hung Phat Soha! (3X)

Sometimes referred to as the “blessing mantra”, as here, to bring blessings from the invited guests (Buddhas and Bodhisattvas); or it is called the “multiplying mantra” to multiply the merit of the practice that follows. I think of it as both!

The following text is a version of the “preliminary practices” (*Ngondro*). Variations of these practices are included in most *sadhanas* or practice manuals. There are two main parts: the common and uncommon *ngondro*. (1) The common *ngondro* is also called the *Four Thoughts that Turn the Mind*. These four are (a) suffering (broadly speaking), (b) karma – intentional actions and/or cause and effect, (c) precious human life – this rare opportunity to be born as a human and in this time in which the Buddha taught and his teachings are still available to us (metaphors – the blind turtle, and sperm and seeds), and (d) impermanence and death – everything is subject to change and we all at some point will die, ending this precious opportunity. Change can, of course, be “good” or “bad”, at least as articulated here. In terms of death, there were two primary views in India at the time of the Buddha: (1) nihilism – there is nothing beyond this life, period, and (2) permanence – there is some form of continuation (rebirth or uniting with some god...).

Some of the descriptions of these terms can be rather troubling to Western minds, such as those found in the *Words of My Perfect Teacher* by Patrul Rinpoche (his own teacher even said he had a bit of a harsh approach!). Still, this is the best known and most commonly used source text on *ngondro*, though there are others. So let's look at the first part.

***Four Thoughts that Turn the Mind* - The Common Ngondro**

These four principles are considered to be common to all Buddhist traditions, hence the name. They may be articulated in different ways, but this approach is common within the Tibetan Buddhist lineages.

As I noted, there are four principles here said to “turn the mind” towards the **dharma** ... the teachings of the Buddha. There is an element of “fear” in this particular approach, which can be very effective for some, especially in more primitive times, but even in some situations even today. Others prefer a more positive approach, so there is no need to be concerned about that. The important point is to be motivated to follow the path and practice. There are many benefits for a wide variety of people here.

Homage to Samantabhadra and Samantabhadri!

It is customary to pay homage to one or more of the Buddhas, teachers, or other significant figures in the tradition related to the text that follows. Here, Samantabhadra and Samantabhadri represent the heart-essence of all of Buddhism. Samantabhadra represents the masculine principle of “skillful means” such as lovingkindness and compassion for all. This also symbolizes the “relative” aspect of practice, this life. His consort Samantabhadri represents the feminine principle of “transcendent wisdom”. This also symbolizes the “absolute” or “ultimate” aspect of practice. They are depicted as being in union, which is like two aspects of the same thing. I think of them as being in the form of a single statue, which looks like two figures, but cannot actually be divided or separated. Nevertheless, there are two figures or representations in the one.

Because I suffer...

Dukka is often translated as “suffering”. However, the stories of the Buddha make it clear that he was talking about a much broader topic like: discontent, dissatisfaction and so forth. “Why can’t we all just get along?” for example. Tibetan teachings list three general types of sufferings. (1) Physical pain and mental obscurations – research shows that meditation (not just Buddhist forms) can be helpful for both of these, though rarely does it completely eliminate physical pain. (2) The dissatisfaction from change – “change is inevitable”; so we may not get what we want or we may get what we don’t want, either can cause dissatisfaction. And (3) is all-encompassing change, that broad, sometimes vague sense of general dissatisfaction with life. Or in some versions of the third version, it is called “suffering on suffering” or one on top of the other; while still dealing with one, here comes yet another! Ouch!

...due to my own actions,

“Actions” here refers to karma. In Buddhism generally we are referring to “intentional actions” (though some sources just use “actions”. Primarily this has to do with ethics, that is, how *our* actions affect others (or visa versa). Are we doing “good” or “bad”? And how do we know? Ethics are about relationships. A general rule in Buddhism, and

easy to recall and apply, is to “do good, or at least to no harm, for the benefit of all beings”. Remember, it is about our intention, not necessarily the outcome. But our intention does need to be genuine, not superficial. This may also involve making some sacrifices on our part, since the focus is on *other* beings, not ourselves. Sometimes it doesn’t work out. Then we do what we can to make it better. And sometimes it is beyond anything we can actually do. That is okay. We do the best we can!

“...and I now have this precious human life...”

There are a number of factors that constitute this being a *precious* human life. First, we are human. Because of our ability to make *conscious* choices, communicate with verbal languages, etc., we are in a better state than other life forms to use our time and abilities to achieve “full awakening” (also called enlightenment, realization, liberation, etc.). We have also been born at a time the Buddha lived and taught the dharma. His teachings have survived to our lifetimes. These and other factors make this opportunity precious! But only if we take advantage of it. It is not necessarily simple or easy. It takes time and effort to study and practice, as well as live this life as a Buddhist. But as the Buddha said, it is like awakening from a dream that seemed “real” at the time, but is nothing like the actual awake experience. We are told that he proclaimed, “Profound peace, natural simplicity, uncompounded luminosity, I have found the nectar-like Dharma”.

There is also a story about a blind turtle that lived at the bottom of an ocean. Once every 100 years it would go to the surface, upon which a yoke was tossed about by the wind and waves. The chance of a precious human life is said to be the same as the likelihood of that turtle poking his head through the yoke as it surfaced. Infinitesimally small!

Or just look at the opportunity in terms of your current existence. What was the chance of being born at all? (Consider the odds of one particular sperm among the 20 billion produced by one male in one lifetime meeting one particular egg among 300-500 produced by your mother in one lifetime – about 2,250 generations of *modern* humans would be only 1 in 13,500,000,000,000, ignoring the vast history of life on this planet before that! Again, infinitesimally small odds!

“...without knowing when I will die,”

Life is uncertain. We know neither when we will die or how. We just know that at some time, somehow, we will. This adds an element of urgency to this opportunity. Some will postpone it until later, “I don’t have the time right now. I’ll do it when I retire.” Or other statements. But we never know if that time will actually arrive.

“...for the benefit of all beings”

This is another element. Specifically, this refers to all “sentient beings”. In the East, this means all *sentient* beings, any life form that has a consciousness that differentiates “happiness” and “suffering”. It is said that “all sentient beings want happiness and do

not want suffering”. But that can be difficult to discern. Practically speaking, we consider all visible beings to be “sentient” in Buddhism. There are 5 general ethical guidelines for non-monastics like ourselves that were common at the time of the Buddha across most all traditions:

1. Do not kill
2. Do not steal (take what is not given)
3. No sexual misconduct (adultery – sex with someone not your spouse, or underage, or “protected” – engaged), but has been extended generally to include the laws of the location in which you live like rape, abuse, harassment)
4. Do not lie
5. No intoxication (later changed more broadly to “no greed”)

In Buddhism, these are treated as “guidelines” rather than hard and fast rules. There are just too many possible variations where rigid rules create even worse results, so it depends upon the situation. However, though some degree of flexibility is generally helpful, it can also be abused to make excuses for bad behavior, as well as some cases where it is difficult to know the right thing to do in the first place. Always just do the best you can, and learn from any mistakes you might make.

Getting back to our list – “do not kill”. This includes insects! In my home I just let the tiny ones be. They don’t live long anyway. The larger ones, I do my best to catch and release outside. If by chance I accidentally injure one in the process, I say a short prayer or *mantra* for them, such as *Om Mani Padme Hung* and let them go. If I accidentally kill an insect, I do another practice called *phowa* – transference of consciousness, but that is beyond this talk.

“Do not steal” or take what is not given is self-explanatory. It is especially egregious to take something from a temple or dharma center.

“No sexual misconduct” is also fairly straight forward, but it does have some complications not originally identified in Buddhism due to the inclusion of “sexual yoga” in Tibetan Buddhist practices. Monastics take vows of celibacy, but sex is a powerful force and too often a challenge for even them to control. Most lay practitioners do not take vows of celibacy. Nevertheless, it is important not to abuse others in any way, including sexually. This includes adultery (probably the original form of sexual misconduct), as well as rape, underaged or engaged women, and other forms of abuse or harassment.

“Do not lie” is also fairly straight forward.

“No intoxication” was probably originally “no alcohol”, but this disappeared from some other lists. In other cases it was expanded to “no intoxication”, which could include drugs or other substances. According to the *Vinaya* (the monastic rules, which includes some explanations for each rule), this was later broadened even further to “no greed”. Greed is, of course, one of the key sources of our “suffering” according to the teachings of the Buddha.

“...with joy and devotion!”

It's not just a matter of following the guidelines, doing so with good intention and a strong commitment to do the practices, to follow the ethics, to benefit others ... and to do so with a sense of joy in your heart. *Altruistic intention* means to do it without expecting anything in return. You may feel good about doing it, but you would do it anyway because it is the right thing to do.

“Therefore...” (This is followed by the **Uncommon Ngondro** – refuge, bodhicitta, purification, offerings, and Guru Yoga):

Refuge – *Visualizing the refuge tree:*



In the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, the “refuge tree” is a depiction of the key figure of that lineage surrounded by other objects and key figures. In our *Nyingma* tradition – the old school, the earliest in Tibet – the central is Padmasambhava, the master credited with bringing Buddhism to Tibet. It had already been there for some time, but he was a key figure according to legend at creating the first lineage. On his right are other Buddhas. On his left are Bodhisattvas. Behind him is an ordered stack of dharma texts. Below him are dharma protectors. Above him are representations of the lineage that followed. And in the sky around them are dakinis (female sky dancers or messengers who help us learn and apply the teachings). Together, these are the Buddha (the teacher), dharma (the teachings), and sangha (the other practitioners at various levels – the community of support).

“I take refuge...”

We take refuge; we seek protection, safety, or shelter from the “sufferings” of this life (*samsara*), as well as guidance and support along the way to Full Awakening (enlightenment).

Begin with cupped hands together at your heart. Raise them above your head, then touch your forehead, throat, and heart as reciting the first line. It is customary to do a full prostration with each of the repetitions of the refuge prayer. If unable to do that, a half prostration is acceptable – touching head, hands and knees to the floor. If unable to do that or if too crowded in the room, just a bow is acceptable. Some lamas will simply indicate that it is not necessary at all.

Prostration is a gesture of reverence in the Three Jewels (Buddha, Dharma, & Sangha), purifying our karma and, especially, our pride. Maintain the visualization as you do these.

“...in the Buddha, the Dharma and Sangha most excellent,”

There are four forms of refuge:

1. OUTER REFUGE: Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha are the principle ones, referred to as the “three jewels”. The Buddha refers to Siddhartha Gotama, who became Shakyamuni Buddha –

THE BUDDHA after 6 years of study and practice, engaging in extreme asceticism, and finally going it alone and attaining Full Awakening, which he then began to share with others over 45 years, according to the legend. The “Dharma” refers to his teachings known as the “sutras” (which also include some from his principal disciples). The Sangha is the group of practitioners. The term is used to represent several different specific groups: (a) the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, (b) the Vidyadharas, lamas, and other great accomplished masters, (c) the monastic community, and (d) all other practitioners. In addition, individual groups of practitioners, e.g., participants at the Awam Tibetan Buddhist Institute, and those who receive specific empowerments from a particular teacher are considered to be other forms of sangha.

2. INNER REFUGE: Guru, Yidam, and Dakini (and or Protector) are the “three” or “four roots”. The Buddha is no longer here, so the Guru represents the Buddha, the source of his teachings to us. The Yidam is a “deity” (not a “god” even though the words are synonyms), a form of a meditational Buddha. They may have been a human being at one point, but most are a manifestation of enlightened mind. Similar to the archetypes described by Carl Jung – universal patterns and images that are part of the collective unconsciousness, these represent symbolic characteristics such as: Chenrezig – male deity of compassion, Tara – female deity of compassion, Manjushri – male deity of wisdom, Prajnaparamita – female deity of wisdom... See the thanka paintings on our walls... The Dakini is more difficult to describe as they come in multiple forms. They are nearly always female. The word means Sky Dancer. They are also said to be messengers who bring insights to advanced practitioners to help them on the path. But another form is all women. Protectors (*dharmapala*) are nonhuman beings which take a variety of forms, mostly wrathful in appearance, more male than female, but there are both. They are said to protect the dharma from sources trying to destroy it or that intend to harm its practitioners. Their wrathful nature is intended to help terrify those wishing to cause harm. Examples are Mahakala, Yamantaka, Ekajati (see photos in 4 directions in the gumpa).

3. SECRET REFUGE: Dharmakaya, Sambhogakaya, and Nirmanakaya are the “three bodies” or “three kayas”, three forms of a Buddha. We take refuge in all these forms. (There are fourth and fifth aspects as well, but much more rarely used).

- Dharmakaya = “truth body”, the absolute, without form, substance or concept, including “existence” and “nonexistence” (transcendent) ... but everything arises (manifests in our mind) from it (it is also rigpa, Buddhanature, etc.)
- Sambhogakaya = “enjoyment body”, the play of energy, manifestations of mind, e.g., the five Buddhas and their five forms of wisdom; all “deities”
- Nirmanakaya = “form body”, the physical body, such as Shakyamuni Buddha (Siddhartha Gotama), not limited to “human” form but any form to respond to needs of beings.

4. MOST SECRET REFUGE: Buddhanature is our heart-essence, our innate nature, our universal teacher and many other terms, e.g., the luminous nature of mind, pure undefiled mind, the natural and true state of mind, “emptiness” (various meanings), ability to achieve Buddhahood...

The first is most common across all forms of Buddhism. The second is also fairly common in tantra forms. The other two are much more rare, primarily at times in tantra completion stage practices or in Dzogchen.

“...in order to enable all sentient beings to attain enlightenment.”

Our purpose is more than just self-liberation from suffering in this life, but to also benefit *all sentient beings*, aiding them in the same venture as best we can. This is our “altruistic intent” found in all traditions, but particularly emphasized in the principle of **Bodhicitta**. Ultimately, we want all sentient beings to attain Full Awakening (enlightenment, etc.)

“...(3X)” – refuge is traditionally repeated three times

Bodhicitta – The Four Immeasurables - Each of these has a “relative” (everyday) and “absolute” (Full Awakening) component. This can be problematic as some “relative” can create obstacles to Full Awakening.

- **Lovingkindness** – the wish/action for all sentient beings to have “happiness” and its causes:

“May all mother sentient beings, boundless as the sky, have happiness and the causes of happiness”.

“All mother sentient beings” is a fairly common phrase in Tibetan Buddhism. At its core is the idea of “beginningless time”. It is said that there has been a continuum of universes that come and go. This is just one of them. Because of that, and in conjunction with the principle of *reincarnation*, all beings over infinite time would at some point have been the mother of every other being in the universe. Whether or not you believe this literally is irrelevant to the principle. We should “act as if” it is true. This means that we respect *all* beings. We act as if they have loved us as a loving mother, so we should do likewise to them. This is part of what is known as the “Bodhisattva ideal”. And because time is beginningless, the number of sentient beings is “boundless”, an endless number.

In Buddhism it is common to see the idea that “all sentient beings want happiness and do not want suffering”. The first part of this relates to “lovingkindness”, while the second refers to “compassion”. We, as Bodhisattvas, also want *them* to have happiness. On the relative level, that includes anything that would help them be “happy”, but it should not contribute to their suffering. The actions on our part need to be ethical and should not contribute to their attachments and desires that might take them down “the rabbit hole” or on “the hedonic treadmill” (hedonistic or strong desires for pleasure at any cost). The key here is *our intention*. One could say we do our best without making things worse.

On the absolute level, this “happiness” refers to Full Awakening or Enlightenment. This is generally a much longer and challenging process. What is *their* happiness motivation? One approach is to benefit others by being a role model – BE a Buddha! We may provide instruction, if they ask, or are open to it. But being a role model is one of the best paths for both you and them. (The last thing we want to do is to make them resentful of our efforts!) There are other specific practices that may be done as well, but those are beyond this talk.

- **“Compassion”** – the wish/action for all beings *not* to have suffering and its causes.

“May they be liberated from suffering and the causes of suffering”.

This is like the other half of lovingkindness. Instead of wanting them to have happiness, we want them *not* to have suffering. You might say we want them to have the “good” and not have the “bad” (from a Buddhist view). We talked about forms of suffering earlier. At the relative level, we want them to no longer experience ordinary everyday forms like physical pain and mental anguish. We want them to get what they want, and not get what they do not want. The same principle as above also applies here. Hedonistic desires are not helpful. But perhaps our role model of “altruistic intention” will be noticed and affect their actions. At the absolute level, attainment of Full Awakening eliminates all forms of suffering. That is our goal for both ourselves and for them. Now, to be sure, we may still have some negative experiences. Even the highest of practitioners like HH the Dalai Lama do become ill, lose their loved ones, etc. But they experience minimal affects, knowing the context and the “true nature” of what is going on.

- **“Sympathetic Joy”** – a feeling of peaceful joy that all beings experience happiness or that we feel when we learn of their happiness.

“May they never be separated from the happiness that is free from sorrow”.

This is sometimes expressed as “rejoicing”; we rejoice at the happiness of others (as opposed to being jealous, for example). Their happiness may be at the relative level - ordinary experiences of joy or happiness in everyday life, or it may be absolute level - the happiness of liberation, full awakening, or even progress along the path.

- **“Equanimity”** – an experience of calm or peace and contentment, especially in a difficult situation.

“May they rest in equanimity, free from attachment and aversion.”

Either of the above approaches may represent the relative level. We consider all beings as “precious” (as above in “precious human life”), equal in their opportunity (though perhaps not in their current circumstances) to attain full awakening. We all have the same ability in the nature of our essence: Buddhature. Their challenges or difficulties regarding us or others are considered due to their previous experiences (karma), not us per se. We feel compassion and wish them to be free of attachment and aversion now and in the future.

They may also be seen as a source of our own learning. My favorite example is Atisha’s tea boy. When Atisha was called to go to Tibet around 1000 CE, he decided to take his tea boy with him. His students couldn’t believe it! This man was considered as nothing but trouble! How could he even consider taking him with him? He responded by telling his students that the tea boy was one of his own best teachers. The challenges and difficulties were really opportunities to practice, to overcome the all too human tendencies to fight back or defend ourselves. Instead, he taught that one should use this opportunity to be even more like a Buddha. We all face *many* such opportunities in everyday life.

At the absolute level we embody those lessons and live in peace and contentment, no matter what experiences are happening around us. When the Buddha first became awakened, he said “Profound peace, natural simplicity, uncompounded luminosity, I have found a nectar-like Dharma”. Another of my favorite quotes (*Anonymous*) says: “PEACE – it does not mean to be in a place where there is no noise, trouble, or hard work. It means to be in the midst of those things and still be calm in your heart”. Equanimity.

“...(3X)” – We also recite the Four Immeasurables three times.

Vajrasattva Purification

Vajrasattva practice infers the “Four Powers” as being embedded within the practice:

1. The power of **regret** – a reflection on any negative mental and physical actions we have done or recall doing and regretting those actions, usually as a preliminary to the practice itself, but some versions include this as one of the actual steps of the practice.
2. The power of **the antidote** – this is doing the practice itself.
3. The power of **resolve** – a commitment not to do those negative actions again, ever.
4. The power of **reliance** or **support** – the reliance or support from the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha to fulfill that commitment.

“Vajrasattva and Vajratopa appear above me, purifying me and all beings and phenomena with nectar from the place of their union”.

“Vajrasattva and Vajratopa...” are the Buddha of Purification and his consort¹. We visualize them together.

“...appear above me,” they appear just above our head. You may visualize them as if looking from outside of your body, as looking up, or just imagine them being there.

“purifying me and all beings and phenomena with nectar from the place of their union.”

The nectar of purification is visualized as flowing from their union into the crown of our head and down throughout our body and washing away (purifying) all negative karma, subtle tendencies, and habitual tendencies from our body, speech, and mind.

(Chant 100-Syllable Mantra (p. 2) to melody while receiving water in left hand. Take into mouth, swallow, wipe the remainder on crown of your head. – We are not currently doing this due to Covid.)

There are various translations of this mantra; this is one. Note that the breaks do not exactly match the way it is recited in the text.

Om – Qualities of Buddha’s body, speech, & mind

¹ Vajratopa is also known by other names in other lineages or texts.

Benza Sato (Vajrasattva) – The courageous one with transcendent non-dual wisdom (relative and ultimate/absolute)

Samaya – Sacred word of honor or pledge that cannot be transgressed (commitment, vow)

Manu Palaya – Lead me along the path to you took to enlightenment

Benza Sato Tenopa/ Tishta – Please help me abide closer to the vajra (indestructible) Buddha mind

Drido – Firm and stable based on the absolute true nature

Mé – “I”

Bhawa – Please grant me the ability to realize the true nature of phenomena

Suto Khayo Mé Bhawa – Grant me complete satisfaction

Supo Khayo Mé Bhawa – Increase the positive within me

Anu Rakto Mé Bhawa – Please be in the nature of love that leads me to your state

Sarwa Siddhi Mé Prayatsa – Please grant me all the actual attainments (enlightenment)

Sarwa Karma Sutsa Mé – Please grant me all of the virtuous actions

Sitam Shriya Kuru – Please grant me all of your glorious qualities

Hung – Seed syllable signifying the Buddha vajra mind

Ha Ha Ha Ha – The four immeasurables (lovingkindness, compassion, sympathetic joy or rejoicing), four empowerments (vase, secret, wisdom, word), four joys or blisses (joy, supreme joy, special joy, and innate joy), four kayas (nirmanakaya, sambhogakaya, dharmakaya, svabhavikakaya ... latter symbolized the union of all three)

Ho – An exclamation of joy at this accomplishment; or combined with the “Ha’s” represents the wisdoms of each of the Five Buddhas: Akshobya (Mirror-like), Ratnasambhava (Equanimity), Amitabha (Discriminating), Amoghasiddhi (All-accomplishing), and Vairocana (Dharmadhatu – sphere of absolute reality).

Bhagavan – Conqueror, one who has destroyed all negativity, attained all realizations, and passed beyond the bounds of sorrow.

Sarwa Tathagata – All who have gone beyond into the reality of emptiness as it is

Benza (Vajra) – Thunderbolt, diamond, or indestructible (vajra wisdom)

Mamé Muntsa – Do not abandon me

Benzi (Vajra) Bhawa – Grant me the realization of the vajra nature (or Buddhanature)

Maha Samaya Sato – Great Vajrasattva

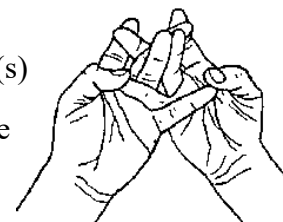
Ah – Seed syllable of Buddha vajra speech

(3X) – It is customary to recite it 3 times (or more in some cases) then snap your fingers and/or ring a dharma bell.

Mandala Offering to the Three Kayas - see hand mudra image

“Om Ah Hung” – offering to the body, speech, and mind of the Buddha(s)

“In the Dharmakaya pure realm, dharmadhatu equality,” - the sphere of absolute reality



“The realms of the five Sambhogakaya families self-appear unobstructedly” – the Five Buddha Families (above, including their consorts, Bodhisattvas, etc.). Each also has a “collection” of attributes (varies): an aggregate, element, color, location, symbol, mudra, poison, wisdom, and activity.

“Along with the array of Nirmanakaya pure realms that fill all of space”. – each Buddha is said to reside with their family in a “pure realm” (like a heaven). These are not physical realms, but mental forms.

“All this I offer as Samantabhadra’s clouds of great bliss”. – Samantabhadra is the Primordial Buddha or Absolute, sometimes called the All Good; the “clouds” represent the entire universe or multiverse, as the case may be, i.e., “everything that is”. “Bliss” refers to the mind of clear light (is that clear and luminous knowing); “emptiness” or transcendent wisdom, or pure awareness.

Mantra recitation (the actual offering):

“Om Ratna Mandala Pudza Mégha Samudra Saparana Samayé Ah Hung” <Snap fingers and/or bell>

Meaning: By the virtue of this offering, may all beings here and now attain the happiness of enlightenment.

Short Seven Limb Prayer

“Whatever merit I have gathered through prostrations, offerings, confession, rejoicing, requesting, and praying – for the sake of the enlightenment of all sentient beings – all this I dedicate.” Self-explanatory. This is said to generate “merit”, which combined with “wisdom” results in our enlightenment. Dedicating it to others is said to result in their enlightenment.

The Seven Line Prayer & Guru Yoga - Based upon combining these two into a form of Guru Yoga.

“HUNG In the northwest of the land of Orgyen,” - also Oddiyana, located in northern Pakistan area of the Swat Valley, where the Taliban destroyed large cliff statues of the Buddha.

Also area of Gandhara kingdom, a source of new texts mostly on birch bark that date to around the 1st century BCE, much older than any other physical text except the steels and stone carvings of Ashoka, the first to unite most of the Indian subcontinent about 250 BCE who became a Buddhist and sent “missionaries” as far as Greece and Alexandria, as well as north and south.

“In the heart of a lotus flower,” - Padmasambhava is said to have been born at age 8 with full Buddhist knowledge and understanding in the middle of a (very large) lotus flower in a lake.

“Endowed with the most marvelous attainments,” - fully awakened, but also became a master of tantra and a key figure in the transmission of Buddhism to Tibet in the late 700s. Along with Shantarakshita and King Trisong Detsen, helps oversee the construction of Samye, the first Buddhist monastery in Tibet. He is also said to have hidden many documents and other objects all over Tibet with help of his consort in Tibet, Yeshe Tsogyal, to be found later when they would be more suitable to the practitioners of that time.

“You are renowned as the lotus-born,” - A reference to his name: Padma (lotus), sambhava (born).

“Surrounded by many hosts of dakinis.” – Described in legends as having many dakinis (“sky dancers”) involved in his activities to spread the dharma.

“Following in your footsteps,” - We choose to follow him as a Buddha (known in Tibet as the second Buddha).

“I pray to you: Come and bless me with your grace!” – We request his blessing in our efforts to achieve Full Awakening.

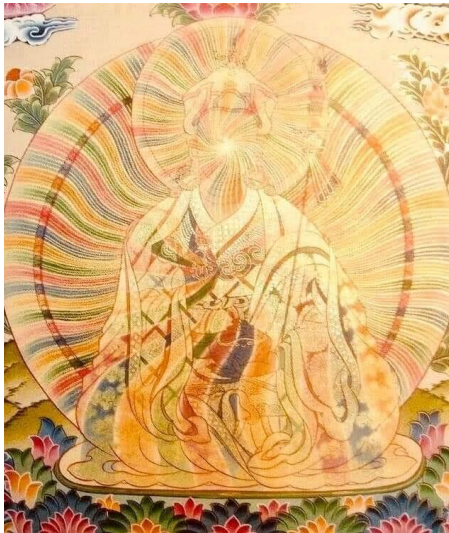
“Guru Pémé Siddhi Hung” – Guru is great teacher, Peme is a Tibetan pronunciation of Padma (lotus), siddhi (accomplishment: relative are achievements or sometimes magical powers; ultimate or absolute is Full Awakening), Hung is a “seed syllable” at the heart chakra – immovable, unfluctuating, that cannot be disturbed; indestructible heart essence.

“Om Ah Hung Benzra Guru Pémé Siddhi Hung” (108X) – one mala of beads = 108 repetitions or 21 times. This is the mantra of Padmasambhava. Reciting a mantra is the Buddha’s speech. The meanings are: **Om** – reference to Buddha’s body; **Ah** – reference to Buddha’s speech; **Hung** – reference to Buddha’s mind; **Benzra** – Tibetan pronunciation of Vajra, best translated as “indestructible”; **Guru** – a great teacher; **Pémé** – Tibetan pronunciation of Padma (lotus); **Siddhi Hung** - accomplishments, especially Full Awakening.

Secret Rigpa Guru Yoga - Guru Rinpoche Day is the 10th on the Tibetan calendar; a special day for practice.

- Secret = not widely shared
- Rigpa = “pure awareness”, our *ability* to be aware of things, including awareness of awareness itself.
- This is a different version of Guru Yoga than *ngondro*/preliminary practices.

- In Dzogchen, often considered to be the “true nature of mind” or *rigpa* – pure awareness (instead of “emptiness”).



The first verse is “refuge and bodhicitta or mind of awakening”:

Ah, the seed syllable of Dzogchen

Rigpa (see above) **Guru Padma Gyalpo**,

- Padmasambhava 8th C, legendary for bringing Buddhism to Tibet,
- but no historical evidence (King Songtsen Gampo 7th C was first; and Shantarakshita before Padma).

I take refuge in the self-recognizing nature of my mind.

- Awareness of awareness, rigpa

Because of their ignorance ...

- Lack of understanding the “true nature” of mind
 - Empty of permanence, independence, uncompounded OR impermanence, interdependence, compounded
 - Innate Buddhanature
 - Emptiness itself – prajnaparamita (perfection of wisdom)

sentient beings are wandering in samsara,

- Sentient beings – having senses or consciousness, insects on up in Buddhism
- Samsara – this life, life of unhappiness, discontent, suffering...

May all sentient beings reach the great liberation.

- Liberation from sufferings of samsara
- Also Awakening, Realization, Enlightenment

By recognizing their nature as the primordial awareness of Samantabhadra,

- Their nature – “true nature” as above
- Primordial awareness – innate, intrinsic; heart-essence; transcendent wisdom – Rigpa
- Samantabhadra – the Primordial Buddha, beyond conceptualization (but *is* conceptualized!)

All demons and malicious forces, even their concepts and names fall apart.

- Inner demons – imagined or blamed for all the forms of “suffering” in the world
- Concepts and names – are transcended, unreal

The nature of all phenomena is dharmadhatu and

- Innate nature, intrinsic nature of everything
- Dharmadhatu – the sphere of absolute reality; similar – dharmata = nature of mind, tathata = suchness or transcendent wisdom

The unchanging self-arising wisdom is your only protection.

- “Unchanging” = *permanent*! But it appears that because this is not a “thing”, it transcends the principle of *impermanence*, changing.
- “Self-arising” = *independent*! Same here. Then...

Jnana Rakcha Hung

- Wisdom, protection, seed syllable, i.e., “the unchanging protection of wisdom”

Phenomena perceived through the six kinds of consciousness

- “The five senses and the mind consciousness” (should be a comment, not part of the text) – “mind consciousness” includes thoughts, feelings, memories

Without attachment are recognized as the rays of rigpa,

- The afflictive emotion of “attachment” (and “aversion” – often omitted)
- Rigpa – pure awareness – phenomena are manifestations or experiences of our consciousnesses, i.e., mind (somewhat like the “Mind Only” school view)

All surroundings appear as Buddhafields and sentient beings as Buddhas,

- “Pure view” – all beings are Buddhas, all sounds are mantra, all thoughts are wisdom, and all other phenomena are the mandala

Everything is the blessing of wisdom,

- All things and appearances comes through our insight (wisdom) into their “true nature”, appearing in our mind!

Jnana Ahwé Shaya Pem/

- The wish that Buddha wisdom will appear in my mind! As things “are” vs. as things “appear”

Primordial self-arising ultimate Padmasambhava

- A reference to our innate “Buddhanature”: conceived as primordial, self-arising, and ultimate

Appears as my rigpa space – there is no face, no limbs, no image,

- There is no visualization (Dzogchen approach), “rigpa space” – pure awareness itself, thus no face, limbs or image...

Primordial rays of rigpa fully encompass the three kayas

- All appearances are just appearances, transcendent, yet also symbolic of pure Buddha body, speech, and mind (which is also transcendent) ... using words to transcend words, like *shentong* vs. *prasangika* (can vs. cannot use words, although even that requires words!)

Without the impurity coming from discursive mediation.

- All are “pure”, no impurity as is in “samsara”, the source of which is “discursive meditation” – rambling from one thing to another, also a reference here to “cognitive” forms of meditation

Primordial nature of my rigpa is my guru.

- Rigpa is considered to be “primordial” (transcendent) in nature, beyond rational thought
- Rigpa is my “real” guru (pure awareness), sometimes considered as the quality of Buddhanature, or sometimes stated as my “ultimate” guru...

There is no coming and going – in every moment I welcome his presence.

- No coming and going – change/impermanence, i.e., at the ultimate level it is considered to be transcendent, thus beyond change or impermanence
- I am open to and welcome that transcendent view, and “his” assistance
- I like to combine Padmasambhava and Yeshe Tsogyal (masculine & feminine principles – skillful means, the “relative”, and transcendent wisdom, the “ultimate”, – as one!)

Everything firmly abides in dharmadhatu.

- “Dharmadhatu” – the sphere of absolute reality ... beyond words or concepts

I prostrate to the understanding of the real nature that eliminates ignorance.

- We normally prostrate to the Buddha, dharma, and sangha
- Here we prostrate to the ultimate, primordial, rigpa, transcendent... guru of the “real” nature of our mind itself
- This is what “eliminates ignorance”, through transcendent insight, thus there is no more ignorance!

I offer recognition of the Buddhanature in objects of the six kinds of consciousness.

- The six consciousnesses are also viewed as “transcendent” (as it is, as they are, beyond conceptualization)
- There is a “purity” of awareness beyond good/bad, right/wrong (not that those do not exist in the relative world, but not in the ultimate view itself)
- This *does* raise pragmatic issues for living in the relative world! Here we do acknowledge right/wrong in “ethical” behavior with lovingkindness and compassion for all.

I praise the nature of the vajra three kayas of the body, speech and mind.

- The nature = essence, vajra = indestructible, three kayas – nirmanakaya, sambhogakaya, dharmakaya

In the great unchanging Dharmadhatu,

- Unchanging = ultimate view, dharmadhatu = sphere of ultimate truth (transcendent view)

All moral ethics are encompassed in the pure guru mind.

- In Dharmadhatu, ethics are transcended, no rules; relative does not exist in the ultimate world of the “*pure* guru mind”
- Shakespeare – (Hamlet) “There is no right or wrong, but thinking makes it so.” And so it does! But in our deluded empirical world, it is necessary. That is why the Buddha established various *precepts* and wholesome actions.

(Thus) I recognize the deepest empty nature of all sounds and speech,

- Empty nature – transcendent, “purity” of sounds and speech

In all my activity I recognize its Dharmadhatu nature and recite the mantra:

- Continuously, at *all times*
- I recognize its ultimate nature ... and recite Padmasambhava’s mantra (as a *rigpa* Buddha-form, as opposed to a *Yidham* or Sambhogakaya or celestial form as normally used in sadhana practice)

OM AH HUNG BENZRA GURU PÉMÉ SIDDHI HUNG/

- Om Ah Hung = Buddha body, speech, and mind
- Benzra or Vajra = indestructible
- Guru = teacher or lama
- Peme = lotus flower
- Siddhi = powers or accomplishment (Awakening, Realization, Liberation, Enlightenment)
- Ignore magical or mythical “powers”, rejected by the Buddha!

Recite 108X, 21X or as many times as you can, then rest in the natural state of pure awareness.

- One mala, or ...
- Rest in the meditative state of peace or mental calm while *aware* of being in that calm

Dedication

Afterwards, we dedicate the merit from having done the practice, a custom of Tibetan Buddhism specifically. NOTE: *The following prayer is not included in the Four Roots Practice text, but is in the Awam Meditation Practice Manual:*

With all the good virtue (merit and wisdom) I have accumulated in samsara and nirvana,

- Actions (*karma*) have consequences (good or bad ... or neutral)
- Here, refers to the “good karma” (accumulated through good or wholesome actions, altruism, lovingkindness, and compassion for *others*)
- Samsara = this life of delusion, suffering, unhappiness, discontent...; *but* we can still overcome that through good or wholesome actions, altruism, lovingkindness and compassion for others
- Nirvana = liberation, transcends karma, so no further “accumulation” of merit, but we continue to take positive actions that benefit beings (as the Buddha did in his remaining life)

I pray that discursive thought of all sentient beings would be eliminated,

- Discursive thought = rambling, the thought train, especially negative or harmful thoughts due to “ignorance” of the true nature of things
- A prayer that such thoughts will be eliminated!

That they would achieve the ultimate liberation

- Complete, transcendent, or paranirvana at the time of death (the *last* death, no more rebirth)

And obtain the rainbow body just like Rigpa Guru Padmasambhava’s.

- Rainbow body = sambhogakaya; but “rigpa” is transcendent (dharmakaya), so considered a “rainbow body”:
 - Small transference – the body shrinks and vanishes, leaving hair and nails behind (most commonly referenced)
 - Small rainbow body – body shrinks and vanishes without a trace
 - Great rainbow body – transmutation like a rainbow vanishing into the sky (Padma was described like this by [or attributed to] attributed Yeshe Tsogyal)
 - Great Transference – full transmutation of the body into the energy of primordial consciousness, Dharmakaya

- Padma is said to have disappeared into his pure land or buddhafield called the Copper Colored Mountain, where we can potentially join him through our own rainbow body transference or *phowa* practice at the time of death (practice using his mantra instead of Amitabha's, the more common version).

<Bell & Drum>

- The symbolic end of the practice, yet the experience should continue on (everything is meditation!)

Nature of Phenomena Prayer: “Nature of phenomena” – the essence, here all we see, hear, and think (body, speech, mind).

Do this towards all you see:

Outside, inside, environment and beings, all things – Outer – things we see on the outside of our body; inner – things we “see” (imagine) inside our body, and environment – things we see outside of our body, including other beings and other objects of all kinds, especially those that lead us to attachment, desire, greed, etc.

While seeing them, remain without grasping. Desire or grasping is one of the main causes of unhappiness (suffering); don't do it! See them as they are without extremes of attachment or aversion (with moderation is ok – take it or leave it).

This freedom from the trap of duality, subject-object clinging, “Freedom” means liberation ... from “duality – subject and object” (self and other) – us and what we are seeing (gotta have that Ferrari!); also “one taste” – heart essence is the same, no judgment, can take it or leave it; not the same as something we actually “need” such as a doctor visit or prescription.

Is the very form of the deity – luminous and empty. “The deity” is not a god, but a Buddha-form, like a “yidam” or practice figure (Sambhogakaya – celestial being, energy, light...). “Luminous” is pure or illuminating, making something cognitively or experientially clear. “Empty” refers to “lack of any innate or inherent self-existence” (or like “space”), i.e., being interdependent (cause and effect); also “luminous emptiness” is used as a translation for “Buddhanature” – our innate, inherent essence that enables us to attain Buddhahood. It is often explained as being “ultimate” in nature, but technically this is not accurate as it is a concept, a word, an expressing, etc. Yet, it can be viewed “as if” it is ultimate (a term that itself infers “by comparison”, meaning *not* independent).

To this lama, the very self-liberation of desire and attachment, we pray! “This lama” is not our human teacher, but a transcendent concept of a lama like Samantabhadra or, perhaps, Padmasambhava, “real” in our mind, like everything else. “Self-liberation” appears to assert that we can do it ourselves, and ultimately we can. Here “the lama” is “self-liberation” itself, not a human or even yidam form, though we often visualize it that way, which is ok as long as we know that is what we are doing, i.e., manufacturing it in our mind. “Desire and attachment” implies “aversion and anger” as well, the opposite afflictive emotion.

To the Lotus-born Guru of Orgyen, we pray! The “Lotus-born” is Padmasambhava said to have been born fully enlightened at 8 years of age in the middle of a large lotus bud and floating

in a lake (as noted before). “Orgyen” is also articulated as “Oddiyana” and “Uddhiyana” in some translations.

Do this towards all that you hear:

All sounds, grasped as sweet or harsh, As above with “seeing”, to “hear” is linked, in this case to “speech” or “energy”. It may include actual sounds, imagined sounds (though this is more accurately associated with “mind”), “sweet” - those we find alluring, attractive leading to attachment, or “harsh” – those we find unpleasant or worse leading us to aversion, among others.

While hearing them remain empty without after-thought. When we hear sounds, we are to “remain empty”, don’t label them, don’t judge them, don’t let them lead you towards attachment or aversion. Let go, let be.

This empty sound, with no beginning and no end, “Empty sound” refers to it’s lack of any inherent self-nature. It is relative, interdependent, the result of a cause. Ultimately, it is “transcendent” - even beyond having a beginning or end. (Of course, all sounds, relatively speaking, *do* have a beginning and an end. But this “transcendent” view asserts that it is even possible to be beyond that!

Is the speech of the victorious ones. Continuing the sentence, this is referring to the speech of a “Buddha” (“the victorious ones”). That is why it is considered to be “transcendent”. This is not a literal explanation, as that is not possible in a literal way. This is said to be beyond that; it is in the realm of myth and magic, if you will, not because that is the way it “actually” is, but because it is considered to be beyond the “literal”. Whether you agree with that or not does not matter. It is simply a way of expressing something that is considered to be beyond words!

To this empty sound, the speech of all the Buddhas, we pray! Thus, we have “empty sound”, a sound articulated as beyond “empirical reality” as we normally perceive it. That is the “speech of the Buddhas”. That speech is also expressed in the form of “mantras”. Tibetan Buddhism is often called Mantrayana, and Tibetans are often seen carrying their “malas” and reciting mantras. Even long practices are conducted around days and days of reciting mantras without stop (well, with a few stops for periods of “silence”). But conducted nonstop 24/7 otherwise (in shifts). That’s the moment you can truly experience the “speech of the Buddhas”!

To the Lotus-born Guru of Orgyen, we pray! – Same as above.

Do this towards all that stirs in the mind:

Whatever thoughts and emotions of the five poisons arise, Having reflected on the Buddha’s “body” and “speech”, we not look at “mind”. Thoughts and emotions arise in our mind. Although they may be neutral, they are often related in some way to one of the five or six poisons, also linked to the 6 “desire realms”:

- Hells – anger/hatred
- Hungry ghosts or pretas – greed
- Animals – delusion, in the sense of harming or being harmed without knowing
- Humans – desire/lust
- Demi gods – jealousy

- Gods – pride/arrogance

Don't invite them, don't chase after them, Pretty self-explanatory – let go, let be – at least those things beyond what we need for survival and continued existence. This can be a “problem” because on one hand – the idealized view of a Buddha – we are told NO attraction or aversion. But that can only realistically apply to that idealized view. We would either suffer from extremes, exactly what the Buddha himself rejected, or from imperfection from our humanitarian needs, both individually and socially – family, friends, and society. Nevertheless, we *can* act without “grasping” after things we do not need, with moderation, and following the core principles of Buddhism.

Don't let mind fabricate or contrive. Continuing this sentence, we are advised not to get caught in the tangle of words and concepts that can lead us down the “rabbit hole”, so to speak. We need to be mindful of what is going on through our senses and in our mind at all times (ideally). Notice the thoughts, concepts, labels and judging as it occurs. This enables you to use your cerebral cortex to engage in critical thinking and not be overtaken by these desires and aversions. Mind is constantly trying to manufacture or “fabricate” things and we are very gullible to making up reasons for doing things that are either unnecessary or even harmful to ourselves or others. Don't do it!

Simply allowing them to settle in the face of their own arising

Is liberation into the Dharmakaya. Instead, we let them “self-liberate”, to naturally come and go, while we remain in a state of awareness of what is going on in our senses and our mind at all times. “Dharmakaya” means the “truth body” of a Buddha. It is the “transcendent” aspect, beyond all other forms of body, speech, and mind. We let all thoughts liberate themselves, just as Buddhas have done.

To this lama, rigpa's self-liberation, we pray! This ultimate lama is none other than “rigpa's self-liberation”, that is, the liberation that comes naturally from abiding in “pure awareness” (rigpa) itself. Paying attention to your mind and senses, without attachment or aversion. “Like an old man watching children at play”.

To the Lotus-born Guru of Orgyen, we pray! - as before.

This concludes with a final verse of aspiration:

Thus, outwardly purify appearances of their allure;

Inwardly, free mind from grasping;

And, by the self-recognition of luminosity, [clarity or purity, knowing or understanding]

May the compassion of all the Sugatas of past, present and future [Buddhas]

Inspire and bless beings like us with self-liberation! [innate, Buddhanature, pure awareness...]

Closing Prayers

Aspiration Prayers

Aspiration Prayer by Khenchen Tupten Chöpel:

“Profound peace, natural simplicity, uncompounded luminosity; I have found the nectar-like nature of reality” – (Buddha),

- **“Profound peace”** is a deeply pervasive principle that the Buddha used in a variety of ways described with several related terms such as “equanimity, calm, contentment”, and is a key factor in several forms of practice – mindfulness, *shamata* (calm abiding), *jhanas/dhyanas*, some forms of *vipassana* (insight), some forms of tantra, *mahamudra*, and *Dzogchen*. It is also closely associated with a number of other core concepts and views.
- **“Natural simplicity”** is represented within the “four stages of life” in the Indian culture (student, householder, *forest dweller* (or retirement), and renunciate), and the role of *asceticism* in the life and teachings of the Buddha, what became known as the “Middle Way” (which now relates to a more contemporary term of “moderation”), articulated by the Buddha in the context of the goal – liberation, realization, awakening, or enlightenment.
- **“Uncompounded luminosity”** touches on issues of philosophy and some of the related core Buddhist principles such as the essence of “change” (impermanence), “no-self” and no “soul”, consciousness, emptiness, and (lightly) some of the philosophical views that have emerged, which needs to be considered in terms of science on some of the core principles of Buddhism, along with related social and survival issues that emerge.
- **“The nectar-like dharma”** is a reference to key principles and “training the mind”, Buddhist ethics, and practices, as well as, and how we live our lives as a Buddha, if that is even possible today. *To these, the next two lines state:*

May I gain the ability to guide infinite beings

Through the skillful conduct of training each according to their needs [our Bodhisattva commitment to guide all beings to the best of our ability].

An Aspiration by Dudjom Lingpa:

Through the compassion of an ocean of victorious Buddhas of the three times,

And by the force of the profound Secret Mantrayana’s interdependence,

May we devote our whole lives to Dharma practice,

And thus, awaken into the rainbow body of great transference!

Through the compassion of an ocean of victorious Buddhas of the three times,

“Compassion” is one of the two principles of Buddhism: (1) insight or wisdom and (2) compassion for all beings. More specifically, it is the idealized wish is that all beings be free from all suffering, discontent, and unhappiness in life. It invokes “boundless” compassion of all Buddhas of the three times (past, present, and future). The “ocean” emphasizes the vastness and depth of this compassion. It infers that is not limited to our personal efforts, but is also dependent upon the blessings of compassionate enlightened beings.

And by the force of the profound Secret Mantrayana's interdependence,

This highlights the specific path or method: the profound Secret Mantrayana (Vajrayana, particularly the Dzogchen teachings). This path is described as having a unique "interdependence" or interconnectedness. In Vajrayana, all phenomena, including the physical body, are understood as a manifestation of the five elements and ultimately, pure light. The practices of Mantrayana leverage this subtle energetic potential and the non-dual nature of reality to achieve results swiftly, often through practices like *tögal* (direct crossing).

May we devote our whole lives to Dharma practice,

This asserts a “strong commitment” to the path. It recognizes that achieving such a high realization requires intense, long-term, and dedicated practice, conventionally involving solitary retreat and guidance from a qualified master. It's a statement of aspiration to prioritize spiritual practice *above all else*, a challenge to say the least! [But the reality is that many practitioners are not fully committed as inferred here. Nor does it consider the continuing advancement of science and contributions of human integrity.]

And thus, awaken into the rainbow body of great transference!

This is the ultimate goal or fruition of the prayer and the practice. The **rainbow body** is an advanced practice in which one's body transforms into a body of “pure light” at the time of death (or during cremation). The "rainbow body of great transference" is an even higher level of this phenomenon, where the practitioner is said to dissolve entirely into light without leaving behind any physical remnants like hair and fingernails. [In some stories one may even achieve this state while still alive, able to exist as a non-material body of light (a Sambhogakāya) with the ability to appear and disappear at will for the benefit of sentient beings. This phenomenon is considered the complete liberation from the cycle of death and rebirth (samsara).

Long Life Prayers

H.H. the Dalai Lama

For this realm encircled by snow-covered mountains

You are the source of every benefit and bliss without exception.

Tenzin Gyatso, you who are one with Avalokiteshvara,

May you remain steadfast until Samsara's end!

For this realm encircled by snow-covered mountains,

- This is a reference to Tibet (but now considered to be the world or even universe).

You are the source of every benefit and bliss without exception.

- Although the text says “*the* source” (as if he is the only one), it also applies equally to all Bodhisattvas, all who follow the path to enlightenment and are helping all other sentient beings ... without exceptions, i.e., altruism – acting for the benefit of others without expecting anything in return. No exceptions. (Not always easy; can be rather challenging at

times, even with our loved ones!) It begins with the *commitment*, followed by ethics and practice.

Tenzin Gyatso, you who are one with Avalokiteshvara,

- Tenzin Gyatso is the birth name of HH the Dalai Lama. Avalokiteshvara or Chenrezig is the Buddha, or some say Bodhisattva of Compassion.

May you remain steadfast until Samsara's end!

- We pray for his support for ourselves and all beings until no sufferings remain!

H.H. Khenchen Lama Rinpoche

**In the Dharmadhatu appearing as Amitabha,
In the Sambhogakaya form as wisdom Buddha Manjushri,
Padmasambhava's heart son Sangye Yeshe,
Incarnated as Padma Dagnag Lingpa in previous life
And Paljea pa Dorjee in this lifetime,
May your life be longer than the duration of samsara
So that all your virtuous intentions can be accomplished.
Please give me your heart blessings so that
My mind is united with yours in the Buddha nature.
So, I pray!**

Long Life Prayer for HH Khenchen Lama Rinpoche Commentary

by Chodpa Lama Tashi Dorjee

In the dharmadhatu appearing as Amitabha,

- Dharmadhatu is the realm of ultimate reality. Amitabha means “boundless light” is one of the Five Buddhas and the head of his Pure Land called Dewachen. Through prayers and *phowa*, the practice of transference of consciousness to Dewachen (or other intentional Buddha realm) where we avoid the sufferings of samsara while we continue our practice until becoming either a Bodhisattva or a Buddha to help all beings.

In the sambhogakaya form as wisdom Buddha Manjushri,

- Sambhogakaya is the celestial or yidam form of a Buddha, in this case Manjushri, one of the Buddhas of Wisdom, usually in the form of “transcendent” wisdom, i.e., beyond the conceptual understanding, as seen in the popular Heart Sutra.

Padmasambhava's heart son Sangye Yeshe,

- There are alternative beings with this name. One is considered to be one of Padmasambhava's disciples, and the one that manifested a giant scorpion in the sky to cause

fear in Lang Dharma who was trying to eliminate Buddhism from Tibet but backed off to only removing the Buddhist temples and monasteries.

- Another, Nubchen Sangye Yeshe, is considered to be the source of the ngakpa/ngakma or White Sanga lay practitioners (and also linked in some cases with the controversial practice of “crazy wisdom”).

Incarnated as Padma Dagngag Lingpa in your previous life

- HH Khenchen Lama was said to be the rebirth of Padma Dagngag (like Daknak) Lingpa, the master of a small and little-known Nyingma lineage. Khenchen Lama is working to renew the lineage, part of which is this text on the Four Roots Practices. [Learn more on our website at AwamInstitute.org and “About Us”, scroll down to our Spiritual Director, including a separate link to his lineage.]

And Palgye pa Dorjee in this lifetime,

- Rinpoche currently lives in England and teaches at centers in Europe, Asia, and America, including our Awam Tibetan Buddhist Institute.

May your life be longer than the duration of samsara

So that all your virtuous intentions can be accomplished.

- This is our intention for him, so that his teachings and other altruistic intentions to benefit beings will be accomplished.

Please give me your heart blessings so that

My mind is united with yours in the Buddha nature.

So I pray!

- At the same time, we pray for his blessings, and we view him as having a united mind in the Buddhanature. (In Buddhism, having a “united mind” does not infer some kind singularity as in some other religions, but having the same *nature* or essence.)

Long-Life Prayer for All Gurus

I pray the Lamas may have good health.

I pray that the Lamas may have long life.

I pray that your Dharma activities spread far and wide.

I pray that I may not be separated from you.

- These lines are self-explanatory. We pray for *all* the gurus, no matter their tradition or lineage, fame or not.

Wish for Bodhicitta (for ourselves and all other beings)

Om Ah Hung Shri Ananta Benzra Sarwa Siddhi Phala Hung Ah

A powerful, protective mantra. **Om Ah Hung** can be translated as “purify and empower the body, speech, and mind with the indestructible infinite fruit of all spiritual attainments”.

Shri – a Sanskrit term meaning holy or auspicious

Ananta – a Sanskrit word meaning infinite, endless or unending. Here it refers to the infinite nature of the spiritual accomplishments being invoked.

Benzra – *Vajra* in Tibetan, which means diamond or thunderbolt, symbolizing being indestructible, immutable, and powerful, representing the enlightened mind.

Sarwa – a Sanskrit word meaning all or whole.

Siddhi – a Sanskrit word referring to spiritual accomplishments, attainments, or powers.

Phala – a Sanskrit word meaning fruit or fruition, i.e., the result or consequence of practice.

Hung Ah – a concluding repetition and intensification of the starting *Ah* and *Hung* syllables.

[This is followed by a traditional Tibetan Buddhist prayer requesting the blessings of our teacher, considered to be a foundational practice for developing a deep, inseparable connection with the wisdom and compassion of your teacher.]

Glorious, precious root lama, [your principle teacher]

Sit on the lotus seat on the crown of my head. [he/she is sitting on a lotus flower as a seat on top of our head]

With your great kindness please accept me. [as your student]

Please bestow the realizations of body [the enlightened body of the teacher transforms one’s own body into a vessel for enlightenment], **speech** [the pure speech of the teacher effectively and compassionately helps us through the dharma (teachings), mantra (a word or sound repeated to aid concentration in meditation), **and mind** [receiving the blessings of the enlightened mind purifies and transforms our own consciousness for a deeper understanding of the *true nature* of reality (vs. the *appearance* of reality)].

In all the activities of the glorious lama,

May no wrong view arise even for a moment.

By the devotion of seeing whatever he or she does as perfect,

May the blessing of the lama enter my mind.

Throughout the succession of my lives, [*rebirths*, viewed literally or symbolically]

From the perfect lamas may I never be separated and,

Enjoying the glory of the Dharma,

Perfect all the qualities of the stages and the paths

And swiftly attain the stage of Vajradhara. [The ultimate primordial Buddha in many schools of Buddhism, but usually as Samantabhadra in the Nyingma lineage.]

The lamas who have become the glory of the Dharma, may their lives be stable;

May the land be entirely filled with Doctrine-holders; [a teacher entrusted with transmitting the teachings and practices of a specific tradition].

May the wealth and power of the patrons of the Doctrine increase, [a common aspiration; the prosperity is not an end in itself, but increased resources are seen as being beneficial to other wider Buddhist community.]

And may the auspiciousness [beneficial or favorable and brings about happiness and positive outcomes such as wisdom and peace] **of the Doctrine** [*Dharma* teachings of the Buddha] **remain forever.** [This is a wish for the everlasting presence and positive influence of the *Dharma* on the path to liberation]

This is followed in the text with a separate prayer:

Bodhicitta [the mind of enlightenment], **the excellent and precious mind.** [This is a common prayer in Mahayana Buddhism, a path that emphasizes the goal of attaining enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings.]

Where it is unborn, may it arise. [This is a request that bodhicitta will emerge in those who have not yet developed it, in order to become enlightened for the benefit of *all* beings.]

Where it is born, may it not decline, [This is a wish that for those who already have this mind, it will not weaken or be lost.]

But ever increase, higher and higher. [This is asking that *bodhicitta* grow and flourish continuously and endlessly not just for oneself, but for all beings to achieve liberation, considered to be a powerful and essential motivation on the path to awakening.]

A Prayer for Peace by Yogi Khenpo Drimed Dawa [*self explanatory...*]

Homage to all the Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, Dakinis, Protectors, gurus, ourselves, and all other sentient beings; we are all interrelated, interconnected, and interdependent.

May we abide softly and deeply in the innate happiness of deep peace and lovingkindness for all beings.

May we directly experience complete peace and compassion for the wellbeing of all.

May the sufferings caused by our greed, hatred, and lust vanish into peace for the greater good of all.

May peace fulfill our inherent nature of altruistic generosity [*expecting nothing in return*] to softly and deeply help, support, and care for all beings.

May warfare, killing others, and all crimes be dissolved softly and deeply into peace for all.

May pride, arrogance, and selfishness dissolve softly and deeply into emptiness beyond renewal or harm, for the benefit of all.

May all beings abide softly and deeply in peace, with mental calm and contentment ... always and all ways!

(“You may say I’m a dreamer. But I’m not the only one. I hope someday you’ll join us, and the world will be as one” and “All we are saying is give peace a chance”. – John Lennon)

Dedication: I dedicate the merit of this practice for the benefit of all sentient beings! **(3X) <Bell & Drum>**

Tantra Sadhana Practices - Overview

Tantra relates primarily to a type of text, based on “yidam practice”, known also as esoteric [mystical interpretations and practices] There are three main categories of Tantra practices: peaceful, wrathful, and non-conceptual or Dzogchen.

In general, the peaceful forms involve a single central figure (male or female). Examples include, Shakyamuni Buddha, Chenrezig or Avalokiteshvara, Vajrasattva, Green and White Tara, Medicine Buddha, Amitabha, Manjushri, to name a few. The practices include three key parts (and may include others): visualization, mantra recitation, meditation. In addition, they begin with reciting a refuge vow and closing with a dedication of merit from doing the practice. The Yidam is seated on a lotus seat that includes a “moon seat” and is dressed in royal garb.

Early texts were primarily collections of “mantras” mostly for worldly ends. By 8th century texts included union with a deity or Buddha-form, mantras (as sacred sounds), techniques for manipulation of what became known as the “subtle body” (visualized as an “inner body”), leading to swift attainment of Buddhahood.

Later, some tantras (Highest Yoga Tantras) contain what is called “transgressive practices” such as consuming alcohol, other forbidden substances and sexual rituals. Tantras are characterized by attainment of “great bliss, increasing emphasis on the role of women and female Buddha-forms, and the use of “negative” mental states for liberation. For example, the Hevajra Tantra says that “the world is bound by passion, also by passion it is released”. Tantra quickly spread across Asia, including Tibet (attributed to Padmasambhava).

We will look at several concise versions of these texts from our Practice Manual, beginning with Green Tara – the Female Buddha of Great Compassion or Mother of All Buddhas. This is an example of an “outer” tantra: peaceful, single form, outside of us, wearing royal clothing, and seated posture (among others), living in a palace reminiscent of extravagant Indian palaces.

Peaceful Yidams

Shakyamuni Buddha

Focus: *Male Buddha of Compassion to benefit all beings.*

The historical Buddha – Siddhartha Gotama (483 – 403 BCE?): “Shakya” – Shakya clan or the Shakya Republic, “muni” – sage, thus “sage of the Shakya clan”. From “Profound Peace”:

We know almost nothing of Siddhartha’s (the Buddha to be) actual early life.² The various stories in the sutras and commentaries are almost certainly from other popular sources in an attempt to create a life-story for him. Evidence shows little or no interest in his early life for about 300 years after he died. By then, authentic information and stories are highly unlikely.

It may help to look into some of the research being done regarding the context of the Shakya Republic in the foothills of the Himalayas around the border between what is now India and Nepal, in which Siddhartha grew up, along with the religious culture there. It is said to have been an aristocratic oligarchic republic, ruled by an “assembly” of “*rajas*” with hereditary positions transmitted to the eldest son of the holder. This group rarely met, but there was a more select “council” that met more often, and a “college” group that was in charge of everyday public affairs. The head of the republic was an elected *maharaja*, great king and a “first among equals”. This was Siddhartha’s father. As the future *raja*, Siddhartha would have been a *viceroys*.³

The culture was non-vedic and did not subscribe to the supremacy of the Brahmins. In the Shakya Republic, the aristocratic landowners (roughly equivalent to the Vedic *Khattiya* class of rulers and warriors) were the *highest* rank. We see some evidence of this in the teachings of the Buddha rejecting the superiority of Brahmins, who also described the Shakyas as “fierce, rough-spoken, touchy, and violent”. The Shakya religious worship rituals and mythology included the worship of the sun, trees (specifically the sala tree, reminiscent of the Bodhi Tree), and serpents (reminiscent of the legend of the Naga King protecting the Buddha), vastly different than the Brahmin view of that time.

There was also a significant number of followers of the yogi tradition of the *shramana* movement, which embraced a number of different approaches to liberation, but all within the general approach of *extreme* asceticism.

For 6 years, the Buddha-to-be engaged in these practices and nearly starved to death (one of the extreme practices), was discovered and fed some “rice milk” and recovered. Then went off on his own and sat under the Bodhi tree near Bodhgaya until he was “awakened” and became “liberated” from the “sufferings” (*dukkha* – broadly all forms of discontent or unhappiness) of

² Scholars believe that “Siddhartha” was a name attributed to the Buddha at a later date and was not his real name. But it is the tradition and is useful for our purposes.

³ Although these titles are used by some authors, others deny that they were used in these republics. For example, “Kings” are not elected, and it is unlikely to have been used by the Indian republics.

“samsara” (this life). A couple of centuries after his death, he became known as the “Buddha” – the Awakened One.

The Sadhana Commentary

I take refuge in the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha most excellent for the benefit of all sentient beings. (3X) We take refuge in the (historical) Buddha, Dharma (his teachings, although none were written down at the time and may never have been part of his teachings, nevertheless we take refuge in him at the original teacher), and Sangha (followers or practitioners, or groups therein). We do this not just for ourselves, but to benefit *all* sentient beings (variously described, generally humans, animals, birds, fish, but sometimes even insects and other forms, as if they too have Buddha nature and may in some future life attain liberation, and thus Buddhahood. The key ethical issue is “killing” such beings. Many are harmless to humans, but some can cause us to die. This could be considered even more negative karma for the insects, etc., leaving only a delusion! One approach I have read about is “praying” for them and their next lives.

Om Svabhava Shuda Sarva Dharma Svabhava Shudo Ham – an “emptiness” mantra commonly recited at or near the start of a sadhana practice. We empty our mind of all other thoughts, feelings and so forth, concentrating on the text of the sadhana recitation and mental image.



Without focus on any phenomena (emptiness or pure awareness – rigpa), **within the expanse of emptiness** (*dharmadhatu*, non-conceptual) **and compassion** (for all sentient beings), **from the syllable HUNG radiating and absorbing light instantly**, (radiates out and returns as Shakyamuni) **I am Buddha Shakyamuni** (we merge into one), **golden** (as in thanka paintings vs. the statue in our text photo) **and radiantly clear** (easily recognized). **With Nirmanakaya attributes complete** (form body – physical presence), **touching the ground** (mudra symbolic of the Buddha’s response to the appearance of Mara [our *inner demons*] calling on the earth as his witness) **in meditation gesture and sitting in vajra posture** (sitting cross-legged, usually with hands in one’s lap), **as a vivid presence of five-colored light**.

(Sambhogakaya form, like a rainbow. Also symbolic of the 5 Buddha Families – Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, their consorts, protectors, etc. and their respective 5 wisdoms.)

With the three syllables in the three places (Om Ah Hung at forehead, throat, and heart), **light emanates from the seed syllable at my heart** (seed syllable HUNG, standing just above a lotus with white [peaceful] “moon disc”), **inviting the wisdom beings** (all Buddha’s, usually in the

same form as the Buddha figure) **which dissolve inseparably into myself** (merge together as one). <Bell>

I am empowered by the deity (empowered to do the practice [may involve a formal ritual for followers), **receiving the crown of the Lord of the lineage**. (“Crown” is symbolized as the top knot.)

With a limitless Samantabhadra cloud of offerings (Samantabhadra is the Primordial Buddha, Dharmakaya) **of appearance and existence** (relative and ultimate truths – the way things appear and the way things are), **samsara and nirvana**, (this life with all its “sufferings” vs. liberation into “peace”) **I offer pure perception** (seeing things the way they are) **to the deities of purity** (the Buddhas, not gods/deities). **In the expanse of awareness** (rigpa – pure awareness), **the primordially unfabricated all-ground** (dharmadhatu – the sphere of reality; and the innate source, dharmata [the “nature” of mind itself], “unfabricated” implies uncompounded, something the Buddha rejected, but is commonly found in Vajrayana tantric practices as a characteristic of the “ultimate” as differentiated from the relative), **I praise the miraculous display of all appearances of the mind of the deity – myself** (“I” am creating these appearances in my own mind as the yidam/deity). <Bell>

Around the HUM on moon-disk at my heart (the “Hung” syllable standing upright and slightly above the center of the moon disc at the “heart chakra”), **the mantra circles** (circles clockwise, viewed from outside, in male yidam forms), **radiating offerings to the Victorious Ones** (offerings as “light” to the Buddhas – usually would form a mandala around the yidam) **and absorbing blessings** (the light is absorbed into the Buddha forms) **purifying the two obscurations of beings** (generally described as the afflictive emotions and cognitive obscurations [and many other categories]. <Bell>

Appearance and existence (relative and ultimate) **become the spontaneous presence of the three vajras** (the indestructible body, speech, and mind of a Buddha; the 3 kayas – Nirmanakaya, Sambhogakaya, and Dharmakaya). (The mantra is divided into two parts, the first with 3 lines:)

Om Muni Muni Maha Muni Yé Soha (as above – praise to the great sage of the Shakyas)

(Repeat 108X, 21X, or as many times as you can. Then dissolve the visualization and rest in the natural state of pure awareness.)

Hri (body, speech, and mind as one) **I offer an ocean of offering clouds, actual and imagined**. (A massive offering of *everything*! Of course, he doesn’t need it, so this is primarily a symbolic gesture that reinforces our sense of generosity for all beings.)

I praise the deities of the all-expansive purity (beyond or transcendent) **of samsara and nirvana**. (Samsara and nirvana are both seen as pure, transcending pure or impure.) **Forgive me for any faults, errors or wrongs I have done**. (I confess my faults, wrongs or errors.) **Accept my apology and bestow the siddhi of purity**. (Full Awakening or Enlightenment)

Appearances, sounds and thoughts are the nature of the deity, mantra and dharmakaya.
(Body, speech, and mind)

In the practice of this great yogi of the profound secret (tantrayana), may the infinite display of the wisdoms and kayas be inseparable – one taste within the heart-drop. (The “dynamic radiant display” – all perceptions, understood as the play of our mind [which science has definitely validated!] is definitely inseparable from and one-taste with our heart-mind, our essence, Buddhanature, rigpa, Dharmakaya...)

Dedication: **I dedicate the merit of this practice for the benefit of all sentient beings. (3X)**
<Bell & Drum> (A symbolic commitment to our generosity for all beings.)

Chenrezig (Avalokiteshvara)

Focus: *Male Buddha of Compassion to benefit all beings.*



From now until the heart of enlightenment is reached (until I reach enlightenment), **I and all sentient beings** (all other sentient beings) **as limitless as space** (infinite numbers), **go for refuge** (I commit to the Buddhist path) **to the glorious, supreme Lamas** (our precious teachers), **Yidams** (Buddha forms, usually sambhogakaya – a “luminous” form, often compared to a rainbow), **Buddhas** (fully realized and in a dharmakaya or “transcendent” form or “truth body”), **the sublime Dharma** (teachings) **and the noble Sangha** (followers in different levels and groups – monks and nuns, groups such as a practice group or those receiving the empowerment together, or groups receiving a teaching together).

We go for refuge to the dakas (a male form of “enlightened energies”), **dakinis** (female forms of the same), **guardians** (supernatural beings that protect places, sacred objects, and the teachings), **and the Dharma protectors** (wrathful forms that guard the teachings and practitioners from obstacles and enemies internal and external) **who are endowed with the vision of pristine wisdom** (the ultimate nature of our mind – the true nature of reality as it is vs. as it appears and free of conceptualizations or misconceptions). **(3X)**

Om Svabhava Shuda Sarva Dharma Svabhava Shudo Ham

(The *pure essence* of all things is pure in their deepest nature; all beings and phenomena arise from this pure essence.)

Through the merit I create by practicing giving and the other

Perfections (we create good merit or karma from our generosity, ethics, patience, persistence (or joyful effort) and meditative concentration – the first 5 of the 6 Perfections), as well as other forms of helping others in their wellbeing), **may I attain Buddhahood for the sake of all sentient beings** (pretty self-explanatory).

Crowning the heads of all beings throughout space (visualized as sitting on the top of one’s head), **Chenrezig appears from Hri** (a “seed syllable” that is a monosyllabic symbol and sound that encapsulates the essence of the particular yidam) **upon a white lotus and full moon seat** (the lotus seat symbolizes purity and spiritual emergence, representing the ability to remain untainted by the world's imperfections; the moon on a lotus seat represents the Buddhist concept of compassionate means, [while the sun (or both) in wrathful forms represents wisdom. Together, these elements on



a lotus throne symbolize the balanced and harmonious path to enlightenment, achieved through the combination of wisdom and compassion]. **Five colored light rays** (symbolize the five wisdoms of the five Buddha families, which are the enlightened qualities of mind that manifest from our “pure awareness” (rigpa, an advanced practice found mostly in Dzogchen) that **shine from his clear white body** (symbolizing transformation into profound states of purity, wisdom, and compassionate awareness).

He is smiling and watching with compassionate eyes [he is the male Buddha of Compassion]. **Of his four hands, the first pair are joined in the meditation mudra** [at the heart], **the other right hand holds a crystal rosary** [mala] **and the left a white lotus** [flower].

He sits with legs in vajra position [legs crossed], **a stainless moon as his backrest** [a large disk]. **He is adorned with silks and precious jewels, with a deer-skin over his shoulder.** **Buddha Amitabha** [the Buddha of Boundless Light] **crowns his head** [just above his head]. **He is the essence of the union of all refuges.** [Refuges in the Buddha (the teacher), Dharma (the teachings), and Sangha (the Buddhist community)]

Oh Lord of whitest form [he is white in color], **not sullied by faults**, [he is pure]

Crowned by the perfect Buddha, [Amitabha on lotus above his head in this case]

Viewing all beings with compassionate eyes, [seeing all beings as Bodhisattvas, with Bodhicitta – the mind of enlightenment]

To you, Chenrezig, I bow.

I pray to you, great, noble Chenrezig, lord of love. Great compassionate victor, embrace us with compassion, the innumerable beings wandering endlessly within samsara, experiencing unbearable suffering. [Bodhicitta, boundless lovingkindness and compassion for all beings overcomes our sufferings in this life.] **Please bestow the blessing of omniscient Buddhahood.** [the supreme state of enlightenment with “complete and perfect knowledge of all existence and the true nature of reality”.]

Praying intently, light emanates from Chenrezig’s noble form and purifies all manifestations of impure karma [“karma” means “actions”, “impure” refers to *intentional*, negative or harmful actions] **and confusion.** [ignorance of the true nature of things]

The place becomes Dewachen [Amitabha’s “pure land” – the Land of Great Bliss (of Buddhahood), where one attains complete realization of ultimate compassion and insight into the true nature of things; one perceives our “ordinary environment” as a pure, blissful, and awakened reality]. **The body, speech, and mind of all beings becomes Chenrezig’s appearance, sound, and thought** [all beings are viewed as being Buddhas already] **inseparable from emptiness.** [Here, emptiness is a lack of any inherent, independent existence, i.e., everything is *interdependent*.]

[Overall, this practice is a profound spiritual experience from visualization practice.]

Om Mani Padme Hung (21X) Then relax your brain, body and abide in peace for 15 minutes. [The mantra is a powerful tool for spiritual development, believed to invoke compassion, wisdom, and enlightenment by transforming impure body, speech, and mind into pure, enlightened states. The mantra is often translated as “the jewel in the lotus”.]

- **Om** – represents the pure body, speech, and mind transformed through practice into those of a Buddha
- **Mani (jewel)** – symbolizes the practice of altruistic intention to become enlightened and filled with love and compassion for all.
- **Padme (lotus)** – symbolizes wisdom that can remove obstacles and realize the true nature of things (impermanent and interdependent).
- **Hung** – symbol of the union of method and wisdom, enlightenment, and transformation of all negative actions (*karma*) into a Buddha.

Prayer of Bodhicitta and Dedication of Merit

This prayer is a popular Buddhist aspiration to generate and develop bodhicitta—the precious mind of enlightenment—for the benefit of all beings. It expresses the deep wish to follow the path of a bodhisattva, dedicating one's spiritual progress to the liberation of everyone.

Bodhicitta [the compassionate wish to attain enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings], **the excellent and precious mind.** [the root of the Bodhisattva path, changing one's self-interest into universal altruism (acting without an expectation of anything in return)]

Where it is unborn, may it arise. [an altruistic motivation for *all* beings]

Where it is born, may it ever increase higher and higher. [a wish that those who have accomplished Bodhicitta will continually deepen and strengthen their compassionate resolve]

Through this virtuous action, [even prayer is a action to benefit others]

May I quickly attain the state of Chenrezig, [the male Buddha of Compassion; female Buddhas include Green Tara and White Tara]

And lead every being without exception [the final aspiration with selfless intent to help all beings, even our enemies]

Into that pure world. [a “state of being” where we are free from suffering and can swiftly attain full enlightenment and become a powerful guide (a Buddha or Bodhisattva) to benefit others]

I dedicate the merit of this practice for the benefit of all sentient beings. (3X)

<*Bell and Drum*>

Green Tara

Focus: Female Buddha of compassion, wisdom, and fears

Tara originated as a local “folk goddess” around the 2nd century CE, the “Mother of Liberation”. She was well established by 4th-6th centuries (emergence of “tantra” practices), but elements appearing as early as 3rd century. One of the earliest texts was mentioned and collected by the Chinese pilgrim Wu-xing c. 680 CE. There is also similar content in the Upanishads around this time, as well as in other movements such as Shaiva and other Hindu sources. Tantra became a dominant force in North India. She is said to have been born from a tear in the eye of Chenrezig (the male Buddha of Great Compassion).

First, there is a short refuge prayer, traditionally recited 3 times (3X):

I take refuge in the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha most excellent for the benefit of all sentient beings. (3X)

This is followed by one of the “emptiness” mantra, often recited at the beginning of the practice:

Om (Buddha mind) **Svabhava** (true nature) **Shuda** (pure) **Sarva** (all, everything is complete) **Dharma** (phenomena [also *teachings*]) **Svabhava** (true nature) **Shudo Ham** (maintain). Reading backwards: Maintain the true nature of phenomena, complete in the pure, true nature of our Buddha mind. Alternately, the nature of all phenomena is pure, maintain that nature in mind.

One of the unique characteristics of tantra practices is this “transgressive” nature, which flips traditional views on its head. So when the Buddha says everything is “empty” of being permanent, independent, and/or uncompounded, tantra asserts the opposite! Therefore...

From emptiness (reference to the emptiness mantra above; **appears the letter Pam which transforms into a lotus seat.** (A stylized lotus as a seat for the Buddhaform) **On the top of this appears the letter Ah which transforms into a moon seat** (usually, but not always, a white disc, in the center of some forms of an actual lotus) **on which my mind appears in the form of the green letter Tam.** (Imagine. “Ta” and “m”) **From this green letter Tam** (samadhi-sattva – commitment being), **rays of light are manifested** (radiate out) **which make offerings to all the Aryas** (lit. precious, pure, noble ones...virtuous beings on the Path toward Buddhahood) **for the benefit of all sentient beings.** **<Bell>** (Bell is used when you invite the yidam, s/he bestows blessings, you make offerings [here], making praises, or end of practice.)



The light then reabsorbs into myself, and I become Tara. (Then the visualization...) **The color of my body is green and I have one face and two hands. My right hand rests on my right knee in the giving mudra.** (Palm out.) **In it I hold a Vessel of Life.** (Tara is connected to long life) **My left hand is at my heart with the ring finger and thumb pressed together**



holding the stem of the blue upala flower (lotus), which blossoms at my left ear. I am peaceful and smiling and am fully matured. (About 30 or more) I am adorned by all precious ornaments and garments. (Royal garb) My right foot is slightly extended (prepared to act – with compassion – when needed or called upon), and my left foot is tucked in. (Traditional) My back rests against a moon disk. (Colors vary, but shape is round) At my forehead is a white *Om*. (Syllable or “letter”) At my throat is a red *Ah*. At my heart is a blue *Hung*. From the *Hung* light rays radiate and invoke all the *Tatagatas* (Buddhas/yidams; jnana-sattvas – wisdom beings) of the ten directions (4 cardinal directions, 4 intermediate, up and down) in the form of Green Taras. <Bell> (invited; form of the yidam is almost universal)

Om (Buddha’s) **Benzra** (vajra, indestructible) **Samaya** (vow) /

Dza (hooks) **Hung** (merge) **Bam** (remain) **Ho** (commit) [mudras (vary)]

The wisdom beings (Buddhas/yidams) absorb into me. Again from the seed syllable at my heart (Tam) , light rays are extended and invoke the five initiating **Dhyani Buddhas** (Five Buddhas of the Five Buddha Families: Vairocana - Buddha Family, Akshobya – Vajra Family, Ratnasambhava – Jewel Family, Amitabha – Lotus Family, and Amoghasiddhi – Karma Family). <Bell> (having been invited)

Om Benzra Samaya (Buddha’s indestructible vow)

Please, all **Tatagatas** (Buddhas, yidams), bestow on me all empowerments. (Here, the vase empowerment ... usually the only one for peaceful yidam forms; empowers us to do the generation-stage practice)

Then the **Tatagatas** pour water from a vessel on top of my head. (Symbolic purification) The water goes through my body purifying my bodily defilements. (Washes them away) It fills up my body to the top of my head. Then on top of my head appears **Amitabha**. (Buddha of Boundless Light, Lotus family)

Recite with the (8) offering mudras

Om Arya (noble) **Tara Sapariwara** (retinue – Tatagatas, with their families of Bodhisattvas, Dakinis, Protectors, etc.) **Argham** (water for drinking) **Partiza** (pleased) **Soha** (well said or “may the meaning of the mantra take root in my mind”)

Om Arya Tara Sapariwara **Padyam** (water for washing) **Partiza Soha**

Om Arya Tara Sapariwara **Pupé** (flowers) **Partiza Soha**

Om Arya Tara Sapariwara Dhupé (incense) Partiza Soha é

Om Arya Tara Sapariwara Aloké (lamp/candle) Partiza Soha

Om Arya Tara Sapariwara Gandé (perfumed water) Partiza Soha

Om Arya Tara Sapariwara Newide (food) Partiza Soha

Om Arya Tara Sapariwara Shapta (music) Partiza Soha

<Bell>

In my heart on the moon seat, there is a green letter *Tam* (as above) surrounded by the syllables: *Om Ta Ré Tu Ta Ré Tu So Ha*. (Her mantra)



From these syllables rays of light are extended and make offerings to the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. <Bell> All the powers, blessings and compassion of all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas manifest in the form of rays of light which absorb into the rosary of seed syllables (mantra). (Rays of light radiate out to the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas and then return to the mantra syllables, which rotates counter-clockwise [for female yidam] around the central seed syllable; OM in front)

***Light rays emanate from the Tam and mantra syllables, purifying all and performing activities of compassion, recite* (the mantra):**

Om Taré Tutaré Turé Soha (108X [one mala], 21X, or as much as possible. Then dissolve the visualization (this is done either instantly or in stages: all outer Buddha forms, in form of Tara – the mandala, dissolve into us as Tara, then we dissolve from the bottom up and top down into the lotus at our heart center, then it (and mantra syllables) dissolve into the seed syllable, which then dissolves from the bottom up into the bindu above (some have other parts – later) and finally into “emptiness” – understood as a void of all sensory and mental experiences, particularly thoughts or other distractions) and rest in the natural state of pure awareness.) (Pure awareness is “pure” like “crystal clear” – mentally, and awareness is a “direct knowing” or “insight” – luminous or illuminating our experience)

Dedication

By this merit (the reward gained from doing the practice) may I quickly reach

The enlightened state of Green Arya (noble, precious, pure) Tara,

So that I may lead all living beings without exception (sets our intention on the Bodhisattva path, one who intends to achieve enlightenment for the benefit of all beings, not just ourselves)

To the same Enlightenment. (3X) <Bell & Drum> (Both are traditionally used at the completion of the practice)

White Tara

Focus: Long life, health, healing, compassion and serenity

White Tara also began as a local goddess. Like Green Tara, she is also said to have emerged from a tear from the eye of Chenrezig, the Buddha of great compassion. Specifically, she is known as the female Buddha of compassion, long life, and healing. I often recite her mantra for those who are ill or otherwise suffering, or anyone requesting prayers.

You who are the bridge from the ocean of samsara (*this life*), I take refuge in the noble Tara who leads sick and suffering sentient beings of the three realms to liberation. (3X)

Om Svabhava Shuda Sarva Dharma Svabhava Shudo Ham (*emptiness mantra – the nature of all phenomena is pure; maintain that nature*)

I perceive all inner and outer phenomena (*things – aggregates, senses, external objects*) as the indestructible union of emptiness and wisdom (*empty of permanence, independence, and having no parts – transcendent in nature*). All my feelings, thoughts, perceptions of phenomena (*a reference to the 5 aggregates*), and discursive thoughts (*six consciousnesses*) are understood as being empty (*true nature is empty of being permanent, independent or being uncompounded – without parts, as above*).

(*Much of this is the same or similar to Green Tara.*) **From the emptiness arises a lotus sitting on the top of my head with thousands of white and red petals (*white and red referring to male and female qualities respectively*); in the center of the lotus is a moon seat. On the top of**



the moon seat is the heart syllable of Tara – Tam – emanating and receiving beams of light. The seed syllable transforms into stunningly beautiful White Tara of radiating white color like a full moon, having one face and two arms, wearing the thirteen adorations of the Sambhogakaya Buddha: auspicious bracelets, anklets, rings, bracelets on the arms, crown, earrings, necklace, ribbons hanging over ears, jewel garland hanging down to the heart level and navel, and the shawl. (*like royal garb*)



Tara's right hand is displaying the mudra of generosity and holding a stem of a white lotus (*not in this image*); her left hand is positioned at the heart level with tips of thumb and ring finger touching, holding the stem of the upala lotus (*blue*). Inside the upala flower is a vase with the nectar of longevity (*long life*). Tara's legs are bent but not crossed and her right leg is in front (*usually on top*) of her left leg on the full moon cushion.

She has seven eyes (*an early mark used later in wrathful forms*); one eye on the palm of each hand, one on the sole of each foot, one on the forehead in addition to her two eyes. From the toes of her right foot flows nectar of radiating white color like a melting full moon. As the nectar enters my body, I am full of pure bliss and transform into the immortal indestructible diamond form. (*Similar to purification of Vajrasattva*)

Make offerings to Tara

Om Argham (water for drinking) Padyam (water for washing) Pupé (flowers) Dhupé (incense) Aloké (lamp/candle) Gandé (perfumed water) Newide (food) Shapta (music) **Partiza Soha** <snap fingers and/or *Bell*> *Then...*

Recite the mantra

Om Taré Tuttaré Ture Mama Ahjur Puyé Jyana Putring Kuru Soha ÷

Om (*Buddha body, speech, and mind*) **Taré** (*Mother Tara liberates*) **Tuttaré** (*from the 8 fears, as before*) **Ture** (*from disease - ignorance*) **Mama** (*mine or like to have*) **Ahjur** (*longlife*) **Puyé** (*merit of ethical living*) **Jyana** (*wisdom*)(*these two: merit and wisdom – the two accumulations*) **Putring** (*increase*) **Kuru** (*make it so*) **Soha** (*may blessings be upon me*). *THUS you liberate me from the 8 fears and ignorance, and with the two accumulations, bless me with increase and long life!*

Repeated: (108X, 21X, or as many as you can. Then relax your brain, body and abide in peace for 15 minutes.)

Homage, Mother [Tara] whose face is filled [showing reverence for Tara]

With the light of an array of a hundred full autumn moons, [her radiant and luminous face]

Shining with the brilliant open light [the dazzling, brilliant, and widespread nature of her light]

Of the hosts of a thousand stars. <Bell> [*the light of liberation.*]

Victorious pure Tara, [an address to Tara, recognizing her enlightened and triumphant nature] **through this practice** [refers to engaging in specific meditations, recitations, or rituals dedicated to Tara] **may all my sickness, demons, unfavorable conditions, curses on my body, speech and mind be swiftly finished** [a request for the removal of obstacles, both physical (sickness) and spiritual (demons, curses, unfavorable conditions), affecting all aspects of one's being], **and may I achieve liberation** [the ultimate goal of Buddhist practice (Nirvana or full awakening), freedom from suffering and the cycle of rebirth (samsara)]. **<Bell>**

Noble Tara, you are helping beings in samsara [this identifies Tara as a figure actively helping all sentient beings who are trapped in the cycle of suffering known as *samsara*],

You remove all suffering and fears of samsara [this highlights her ability to liberate beings from the anxieties and pain associated with this cycle, including the challenges of birth, old age, sickness, and death],

You heal all sickness [this points to her role as a healer, with practices like those dedicated to White Tara being particularly associated with long life, health, and healing for both physical and mental wounds],

I praise you – Mother of all Buddhas. [“Mother of all Buddhas” is a powerful title that emphasizes her status as a divine mother figure, and a common reference to all female buddha-forms]. *<Bell>*

Dedication

By this virtue may I quickly achieve the state of Noble Tara, and establish every being without exception in that state. (3X) [This phrase is a translation of a line from a common prayer or aspiration used in Tibetan Buddhism, typically recited after a meditation or practice focused on the female Buddha Tara. It expresses a bodhisattva's aspiration to quickly attain the enlightened state of Noble Tara for the benefit of all sentient beings. It is a dedication of merit, a core practice in Buddhism where any positive energy or understanding gained from a spiritual practice is directed towards the awakening and liberation of all others.]

<Bell & Drum>

21 Taras – *Insert notes from Lama Gursam file?*

Tara day is the 8th of the Tibetan calendar; special day for practice.

Focus: 21 peaceful and wrathful forms to benefit all beings



Twenty-One Taras – Tara is the most popular goddess in the Buddhist pantheon. She is the female Buddha of Compassion and represents virtuous and enlightened activity. Her compassion is said to be even stronger than a mother's love for her children. In the Tara tradition, twenty-one forms have developed to describe a range of specific qualities of Tara. The most popular forms are Green Tara and White Tara. Green Tara is the central figure in this tanka painting, representing all of the Taras. She is depicted as a young girl having a *mischievous and playful nature*, who often manifests herself in the lives of practitioners who take themselves or the spiritual path too seriously. *In Praise of the Twenty-One Taras* is recited by all four major lineages of Tibetan Buddhism, often each morning.

The Twenty-One Praises to Tara:

Om! Homage to the Noble Lady Tara!

- The twenty-one Taras can be distinguished by the color of their bodies, adornments and postures. They protect people from eight and sixteen kinds of fears (actual and symbolic each). **The eight fears are** (*Bokar Rinpoche*): the danger of...
 - (1) pride and lions,
 - (2) lethargy (*torpor*) and elephants,
 - (3) anger and blazing fire,
 - (4) jealousy and poisonous snakes,
 - (5) violence of false views and thieves,
 - (6) insatiable greed and imprisonment,
 - (7) desire and waters (*flooding, drowning*),
 - (8) doubts and demons.

The sixteen fears are (*Khenchen Thrangu Rinpoche*): the fears of
 (1-5) the five elements: earthquakes (*earth*), floods (*water*), wind, fire, and space),
 (6) weapons,

- (7) tyrannous authority,
- (8) criminals,
- (9) spirits,
- (10) elephants,
- (11) wild animals,
- (12) poisonous animals,
- (13) sickness,
- (14) accidents and untimely death,
- (15) poverty and
- (16) frustrations of hopes and plans.

According to old tradition the twenty aspects of Tara are visualized around the main figure. According to new terma tradition the twenty-one aspects are visualized below the main Green Tara who is thus visualized twice, because Atisha added a verse, which praises the main deity.

1. (Noble Lady Tara Nyur-ma Pamo)

**Homage, Tara, quick one,
Heroine whose eyes flash like lightning,
Born from the opening corolla of the lotus face
Of the lord of the triple world.**

- **Tara Swift and Heroic** is red in color. Her specific function is to control, and there is a ceremony in which a practitioner invokes this Tara to turn back the power of others who are trying to exert harmful power over us. We can reverse that power or turn it away by requesting Tara's help.

2. (Noble Lady Tara Yang-chenma)

**Homage, Mother, whose face is filled
With the light of an array of a hundred full autumn moons,
Shining with the brilliant open light
Of the hosts of a thousand stars.**

- This Tara is called **Tara White as the Autumn Moon**. Like a hundred luminous autumn moons, she is radiant white, indicating that she liberates sentient beings by peaceful methods and can purify all the mental afflictions that keep them bound in cyclic existence.

3. (Noble Lady Tara Ser-mo Sonam Tob-ched)

**Homage, Mother, golden one,
Her hand adorned with a blue lotus,
Whose field of practice is generosity, effort,
Austerity, calm, acceptance, and meditation.**

- **Golden Tara, Giver of Supreme Virtue** is gold with a bluish tint, and her specialty is prolonging life and increasing resources, wisdom, and merit.

4. (Noble Lady Tara Tsug-tor Nam-gyal-ma)

**Homage, Crown of Tathagata,
Her actions endlessly victorious,
Venerated by the sons of the conqueror
Who have attained every single perfection.**

- **Tara, the Victorious Ushnisha of Tathagatas** has a crown protuberance, or ushnisha, on the top of her head. Its cause is a bodhisattva's great accumulation of merit on the path to Buddhahood. She is gold in color, and her specialty is to neutralize poison, increase life, and counteract premature death. She can stop accidents and untimely death—anything that might cause us to die before our full life span, as conditioned by our previous karma, has been lived out.

5. (Noble Lady Tara Rig-jed Lhamo)

**Homage, Mother, filling all regions, sky and the realm of desire
With the sounds of Tuttara and Hum,
Trampling the seven worlds with her feet,
Able to summon all before her.**

- **Tara Proclaiming the Sound of Hum** (or **Tara Summoning the Three Worlds**) is gold in color and slightly wrathful. Her specialty is influencing and subjugating. This verse praises her ability to suppress adverse factors.

6. (Noble Lady Tara Jig-jed Chenmo)

**Homage, Mother, worshiped by Indra, Agni, Brahma,
By Marut and different mighty ones.
Honored by the hosts of spirits, of yakshas,
Of gandharvas and the walking dead.**

- This Tara is called **Tara Victorious Over the Three Worlds**. She is ruby red, although in some cases she is reddish black. Her specialty is to purify obscurations and negativities. Here we praise her because the worldly gods offer their respect and service to her.

7. (Noble Lady Tara Tummo Zhen-gyi Mi-thub-ma)

**Homage, Mother, destroying the magical devices of outsiders
With the sounds of Trat and Phat,
Trampling with her right leg bent and left extended,
Ablaze with a raging wildfire.**

- Standing amidst a raging fire, **Tara Crushing Adversaries** is black and fierce. Her specialty is *powa*—the transference of consciousness to Akanishta pure land at the time of death.

8. (Noble Lady Tara Zhen Mi-gyal-wa'i Pamo)

**Homage, Ture, terrible lady,
Who annihilates the warriors of Mara,
Slaying all enemies with a frown**

Of wrath on her lotus face.

- **Tara Who Crushes All Maras and Bestows Supreme Powers.** Starting with this eighth Tara, we praise the fierce sambhogakaya (resource body of a Buddha) aspects. She is golden in color and sits on a crocodile. Fierce, her specialty is the completion stage practice of Highest Yoga Tantra.

9. (Noble Lady Tara Seng-deng Nag-chi Drolma)

Homage, Mother, her hand adorns her heart

In a mudra that symbolizes the Three Jewels.

Adorned with the universal wheel,

She radiates turbulent light.

- **Tara Granter of Boons** [blessings, benefits; favors, requests] is ruby red. This verse praises her hand gestures; her left hand is in the mudra or gesture of the Three Jewels. The thumb and ring finger touching symbolizes uniting method and wisdom on the path, and the three upward fingers represent Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha, the three refuges. Her specialty is consecration.

10. (Noble Lady Tara Jig-ten Sum-lea Gyal-ma)

Homage, Joyful Mother, whose brilliant diadem

Spreads out garlands of light,

Subjugating Mara and the world

With mocking, laughing Tuttara.

- **Tara Dispelling All Sorrow** is red, and her specialty is destroying maras, controlling the world of sentient beings, and fulfilling all wholesome wishes. Tara will help us fulfill our virtuous aspirations by instructing us on how to create the causes for happiness, liberation, and full enlightenment. Her ritual is for entering the mandala.

11. (Noble Lady Tara Nor-ter Drol-ma)

Homage, Mother, able to summon before her

All the hosts of protectors of the earth.

Moving her frowning brows, she saves

From all poverty by the sound of Hum.

- **Tara Dispeller of All Misfortune** is the color of darkness. Her specialty is to increase enjoyment and wealth and to eliminate poverty. Here Tara is praised because she can activate the ten directional protectors who are inclined toward virtue and are leaders of other spirits.

12. (Noble Lady Tara Tashi Don-jed)

Homage, Mother, whose diadem

Is a crescent moon, blazing with all her ornaments,

Ever shining with the brilliant light

Of Amitabha in her piled hair.

- **Tara of Auspicious Light** is gold, and we praise her crown ornaments. From her crescent moon crown ornament, white light radiates and eliminates sickness, suffering, sorrow, poverty, and depression. Following this, yellow light radiates from her crown ornament and performs the action of increasing, enhancing sentient beings' life span, merit, wisdom, and good qualities.

13. (Noble Lady Tara Yul-lea Gyal-jed)

**Homage, Mother, residing amidst the garland that blazes
Like the fire at the end of the world era,
Right leg extended, left bent, encompassed by joy,
Annihilating hosts of enemies.**

- Ruby red, **Tara the Ripener** is standing, and her specialty is to subdue hindrances and to protect from fear and danger. She is completely confident and free from all anxiety and fear. The verse praises her fierce posture of standing in a blazing wreath.

14. (Noble Lady Tara Tron-yer-chen)

**Homage, Mother, who hits the earth with the palm of her hand,
Who pounds on it with her feet.
Frowning wrathfully, she shatters
The seven underworlds by the sound of Hum.**

- **Tara the Wrathful Summoner** is stamping her foot, saying, "Enough with the obstacles to liberation and enlightenment! Enough with the suffering of sentient beings! I'm going to destroy these!" Her body is made of black light, and she stands amidst a protective blaze of wisdom. Forming a protective circle of light, she destroys interferences to the flourishing of the Dharma and interferences to the happiness and well-being of sentient beings.

15. (Noble Lady Tara Rab-zhi-ma)

**Homage, Mother, blissful, virtuous, calm,
Whose field of activity is peaceful nirvana,
Endowed with the true perfection of Svaha and Om,
Destroying great evils.**

- **Tara the Great Peaceful One** is white in color. There's an external cleansing or purifying ritual that goes with her practice, and her specialty is to pacify destructive karma that causes suffering and prevents realizations of the path to enlightenment. The verse praises her speech and her dharmakaya (truth body) mind. All her actions are done within the peace of nirvana.

16. (Noble Lady Tara Rig-ngag Tob-jom)

**Homage, Mother, encompassed by joy,
Who shatters the bodies of enemies,
Savioress manifesting from the rigpa of Hum,
Arraying the sounds of the ten-syllable mantra.**

- **Tara the Destroyer of All Attachment** is coral red. She amplifies the power of mantras and cuts harmful thoughts that impede the increase of positive energy. This verse praises the activity of both her peaceful and fierce mantras. When she teaches the Dharma through the action of her speech, all afflictions are pacified. This doesn't mean that Tara teaches and afflictions magically vanish. Rather, from our side, we sentient beings respond to the teachings and put them into practice. While Tara can guide and instruct us, we need to make effort to cease our afflictions and develop our good qualities.

18. (Noble Lady Tara Ma-ja Chenmo)

**Homage, Mother, holding the rabbit-marked moon,
Which is like a heavenly lake,
Dispelling all poison with the sound of Phat
And the twice-spoken Tara.**

- **Tara the Victorious** is white, and her specialty is to dispel diseases caused by nagas, such as leprosy, tumors and boils. She also pacifies diseases caused by poisons—toxins in the environment, air pollution, and food poisoning. This verse praises her activities that dispel the poisons of the world and the environment.

19. (Noble Lady Tara Dug-kar-mo)

**Homage, Mother, served by the ruler of the hosts of gods,
By gods and kimnaras,
Dispelling conflicts and bad dreams
With her armor of joy and splendor.**

- **Tara Consumer of All Suffering** (or **Tara Invincible Queen**) is white and her specialty is to free from poison. This verse praises her activity of dispelling conflict, bad thoughts, and nightmares. Relying on this Tara when we are depressed or if we have suicidal thoughts is very effective in overcoming such disturbing emotions and thoughts.

20. (Noble Lady Tara Rit-rod Lo-jon-ma)

**Homage, Mother, whose two eyes
Are the sun and full moon, shining with brilliant light,
Who dispels deadly disease
With Tuttara and twice-spoken Hara.**

- **Tara Source of All Attainments** is orange and grants the power to make oneself invisible. This verse praises her ability to dispel fevers and epidemic diseases. Just as some illnesses drag on, so too cyclic existence drags on and flares up. She frees us from both. “Twice spoken *Hara*” means reciting, a wrathful mantra (not in the text) - *om nama, tare namo, hare hum, hare soha*, and “with *tuttara*” means reciting the (main) peaceful mantra, *om tare tuttara ture soha*.

It is said that when we are ill, relying on the fierce and the peaceful aspects of Tara and reciting their mantras are helpful. This meditation is good for illnesses such as cancer, AIDS, Covid, new diseases, environmental pollution, and illnesses that are difficult to cure.

21. (Noble Lady Tara Lhamo O-dzer Chen-ma)

Homage, Mother, endowed with the power to pacify

By the array of the three natural states,

Destroying the hosts of evil spirits, yakshas, and the walking dead,

Ture, most excellent Mother.

- **Tara the Perfector** is white, and her specialty is taking practitioners to Akanishta Pure Land in this very life. This verse praises her activity of subduing evil spirits and zombies. Her three natures are her body, speech, and mind appearing as *om* at her crown chakra, *ah* at her throat chakra, and *hum* at her heart chakra. These pacify internal poisons such as afflictions, and external interferences such as non-human beings and spirits who take away the power of medicine, the power of our body, or the power of food. This Tara is very effective in dispelling mental illness due to spirit interference.

This is the praise with the root mantra,

And these are the twenty-one homages.

Reverently recited by whoever has intelligence

And genuine devotion to the goddess,

Arising at dawn or evening to remember it,

It grants complete fearlessness.

All evil deeds are pacified; all evil destinies are destroyed.

Quickly, one will be initiated by the seventy million buddhas.

Attaining greatness by this practice,

One will proceed to the ultimate state, buddhahood.

Even if one has eaten or drunk

A dreadful poison, vegetable or animal,

By remembering the praise, the poison is completely dispelled.

One completely abandons the hosts of sufferings

Caused by evil spirits, contagious diseases and poisons.

This applies to other beings as well.

If one recites the praise clearly,

Two, three and seven times,

Those wishing for children will gain children,

Those wishing for wealth will gain wealth,

All desires will be fulfilled.

- (Some *samsara* wishes are included... commonly found in *tantra*, but not in earlier traditions, where “cessation” of such wishes is the heart of the path to “liberation”. But in tantra, “pure view” asserts that there are no innate hindrances, except in our mind. Like Shakespeare’s Hamlet – “There is no good or bad, but thinking makes it so”.)

Then: **There will be no hindrances, all obstacles will be destroyed.** And the mantra:
Om Tare Tuttare Ture Soha (as many times as you can, 21X, or 108X)

- **Om** – Buddha’s body, speech, and mind
- **Tare** – liberate discontent
- **Tuttare** – liberate the 8 fears
- **Ture** – liberate from duality
- **Soha** – take root in my mind

The twenty-one homages and praises to Noble Lady Tara are completed.

Return to p. 14 to continue with the “protector” root with King Gesar...

(Adapted from: The Smile of Sun and Moon: A Commentary on the Praise to the Twenty-One Taras by Khenchen Palden Sherab, translated by Anna Orlova, Sky Dancer Press 2004)

Amitabha

***Focus:** Buddha of Boundless Light; also Amitayus – known for longevity ...*

- “Poison” being addressed – strong desires, *wisdom* – discriminating wisdom – know what is or is not appropriate to give, what is helpful on their path
- *Realm* – Dewachen (Sukhavati) – land of great bliss (transcendent, not ordinary), *location* – west, Lotus Family

Homage to the Three Jewels (Buddha, dharma, sangha) **and Three Roots** (Guru, yidam, dakini (or protector), **the sources of refuge; I go for refuge.**



In order to establish all beings in Buddhahood (altruistic intent), **I generate the supreme enlightenment mind of Bodhicitta** (mind of awakening, altruistic intent – do good without expectation of anything in return, do it anyway). (3X)

On a water-born lotus flower, I appear as the white Bodhisattva Chenrezig. I am Chenrezig. *Bodhisattva* – one who postpones final liberation in order to benefit beings (compassion). *Chenrezig* – male Buddha/Bodhisattva of compassion. Here there are two, you as the bodhisattva, and him (below) as the Buddha or Yidam.

In front of me (outside of yourself), **on a lotus and moon disc** (standard seat of a peaceful yidam form), **sits the Lord of Boundless Light – Amitabha, red in color.**

He sits in the vajra posture (standard cross-legged), wearing **dharma robes** (pieced together scraps, later cut up cloth, resewn – basic asceticism).

He has one face and two hands (basic human form), **resting in the mudra** (hand gesture) of **equanimity** (mental calm; left hand with palm up, holding right hand with palm up) **and holding a begging bowl** (alms bowl, begging for food in the morning, no eating after noon; generosity).

On his right side (your left) **is the powerful Lord of the Universe, Chenrezig** (male Buddha of Compassion), **white in color.**

He has one face and four arms. (Number of faces and arms may vary, four is most common for Chenrezig)

He holds the palms of the first two hands together at his heart. (Usually described as holding a wish-fulfilling jewel in these two hands.)

In his right hand he holds a circle of beads (mala); **and in his left a lotus** (symbol of Buddhism generally; metaphor of growing out of the “mud” into “fresh air and sunshine”).

He stands on a lotus and moon disc. (Lotus and moon disc same, standard “throne”, but very unusual to be standing – couldn’t even find a picture of him standing).

On the left side of Amitabha (your right) **is the Great Powerful One – Vajrapani** (means one holding a vajra, a symbol of Buddha’s power; one of the first bodhisattvas and as a yidam/protector of the Buddha.)

He has one face, two arms, and is blue in color. Conveys a feeling of infinity, purity, health, ascension and coolness, and if you meditate on this color when you are angry, that anger will turn into wisdom and intelligence.

In his right hand he holds a dorje; (vajra, indestructible; “Vajrayana” – indestructible vehicle; also symbolizes the “masculine” principle of skillful means)

in his left hand a bell. (Symbolizes the “feminine” principle of wisdom; these two bring about Bodhicitta – the mind of Awakening)

He is standing on a lotus and moon disc. (same)

Countless Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, Shravakas (hearers – monastics), **and Arhats** (worthy, having attained nirvana and liberated from rebirth) **surround them.** (Collectively, the “mandala” of all the Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, and their “families”. Later in Mahayana, Shravakas and Arhats are considered lower because they are “said” to not seek liberation for *all* beings, the Bodhisattva ideal.)

Lights radiate from the three syllables (Om Ah Hung) **in the three places** (between eyebrows, at throat, and at heart chakras) **of the three main “deities”** (literally “gods”, but yidam is preferable, meaning a “practice Buddha form” – a symbolic, metaphorical, celestial form) **and invite the wisdom deities** (fully enlightened) **from Dewachen** (or Sukavati – western land of “great bliss” – enlightenment. Said to be a buddhafield one can go to upon death [with transference of consciousness – *phowa* – to continue on your path until attaining full enlightenment).

OM AMI DÉWA HRIH (mantra: OM – Buddha’s body, speech, and mind; AMI – Amitabha; Dewa – desire and god realms; HRI – seed syllable of compassion)

Benza Samaya Dza (Benza = Vajra, indestructible; Samaya = vow or commitment; Dza = invocation; we invoke an indestructible commitment)

Dza Hung Bam Ho (Dza = invoking or hooking transcendental wisdom; HUNG = the wisdom enters you, samaya being; BAM = joined into oneness; HO = pleased at having that wisdom; or hook, merge, remain, commit).

Tik Thra Lhen (?)

A Ti Pu Ho (homage and prostration)

Om Hung Tram Hrih Ah

Abhi Khen Tsa Mam (together – the “great empowerment”)

Om Argam Padam Pupé Dupé Aloké Gendé Néwidé Shapta Ah Hung (8 offerings: water for drinking, water for washing, flowers, incense, lamp, food, music)

<*Snap fingers and/or bell*> (common after an offering)

Hung (seed syllable)

In the Land of Great Bliss (Dewachen) you turn the wheel of dharma (teaching) and always look upon sentient beings with compassion, fulfilling your commitment to protect all beings. (Bodhisattva intention)

We offer praise and prostrations to you, Lord of Boundless Light, whose hands rest in the mudra of equanimity. <*Bell*> (as above)

Emaho (wonderous, fantastic...) **the wondrous Buddha of Infinite Light, to the Great Compassionate Chenrezig, to the Great Powerful Vajrapani, and to all the countless Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, I pray with a mind of one-pointed devotion. Please bestow the supreme siddhi.** (enlightenment) **Bless me with the realization of Amitabha** (boundless luminosity/light as understanding/clarity). <*Bell*> (receiving blessings).

Lights radiate to the west (toward Dewachen) **from the bodies of the assembled deities** (yidams – buddhas and bodhisattvas). **Amitabha's form** (Buddha's body), **strings of his mantra** (speech), **and hand symbols** (hands – meditation, mental calm; offering bowl – generosity; transcending strong desires and replacing ordinary bliss with transcendent bliss of full awakening) **in countless numbers fall like rain from the pure land of Dewachen and flow into me.** <*Bell*>

Om Ami Déwa Hri (*mantra*: Tibetan pronunciation of his name; *meaning*: OM – Buddha's body, speech, and mind; AMI = deathless; DEWA = radiant; HRI – seed syllable of compassion). **Recite 108X** (one mala) **or as many times as you can.** (In Pure Land Buddhism it is said that reciting his name only 10 times will take you to his upon death. In Vajrayana, we practice *phowa* for transference of consciousness at the time of death to go to his or other pure land. You can recite Padmasambhava's mantra with a wish to go to his pure land – the Copper-Colored Mountain or Vairochana's mantra for the Dakini's Akanishta Pure Realm).

Hri Then the Buddha in front (Amitabha) dissolves into light and melts into me (we merge as one taste). (*Dissolve the visualization, then meditate in the natural state of pure awareness for as long as you can.*) Some say dissolve into “emptiness” – a state of mental calm – or metacognition – awareness of awareness or mind watching mind, also a state of mental calm.

My body reappears like a rainbow in the sky (transparent or imagined) **and appears in the form of Buddha Amitabha. Luminosity and emptiness have become inseparable.** (Luminosity is a sense of clarity as in “is that clear” and emptiness (varies) is empty of negative or afflictive emotions and mental obscurations, replaced with peace, calm, contentment with lovingkindness, compassion and altruism for *all* beings, deserving or not!

Émaho (a celebratory expression) **The wondrous Buddha of Infinite Light – to his right is the Lord of Great Compassion (Chenrezig), and to his left stands the Bodhisattva of Great Power (Vajrapani). All are surrounded by countless Buddhas and Bodhisattvas** (the mandala). **There is miraculous, immeasurable happiness and joy in the Buddha field called Dewachen. Instantly, when I pass from this life (not now!), without taking another birth (no**

more rebirth – real or imagined), **may I be reborn in Dewachen and see Amitabha’s face** (some texts describe entering into his Pure Land inside a lotus bud, then the bud opening and you see his face looking at you).

Having made this aspiration prayer, by all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas of the ten directions, “may I be blessed with unhindered accomplishment” (the mantra below). <Bell>

Tayata Bentsa Dri Awa Bodha Na Yé Soha

Om May all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas abiding in the ten directions (4 cardinal directions, 4 intermediate directions, plus up and down, i.e., all directions) **and three times** (past, present, and future) **think of me. I rejoice in their accomplishments** (the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas) **of the two accumulations** (merit and wisdom). **I offer all the virtue** (merit) **I have gathered in the three times to the Three Jewels** (Buddha, dharma, sangha).

May the teachings of the Victorious One (Buddha Amitabha) **flourish. <Bell> I dedicate this virtue to all sentient beings that they may attain enlightenment** (generosity). **May all virtue accumulated ripen in my mind stream** (conscious or aware of those virtues). **May the two obscurations** (afflictive emotions and mental obscurations) **be purified and the accumulations** (merit and wisdom – 1st 5 of the *Six Perfections* are “merit” [generosity, ethics, patience, persistence or joyful effort, and concentration or meditation] and 6th perfection is wisdom, usually considered to be “transcendent wisdom”) **be perfected** (or sometimes “realized” as in the “true nature of things” or the difference between “the way things appear” and “the way things are”). **May life, health, practice, and realization increase. May the tenth level** (10th Bodhisattva level – enlightenment) **be reached in this very life. <Bell>**

When we leave this life may we instantly be reborn in Dewachen. (Still conscious ... Vajrayana says 3 to 3 ½ days.) **Once born there, may the lotus open and may we achieve enlightenment in that very body.** (Strongly characteristic of the “soul” the Buddha rejected ... “real or imagined”?) **After reaching enlightenment may we manifest** (emanate as an enlightened human being (form body), or perhaps some other “disguise” (rainbow body, sambhogakaya) **in order to guide sentient beings until samsara is empty.** (???)

Add dedication: I dedicate the merit of this practice for the benefit of all sentient beings. (3X) <Bell & Drum> (At the end of each practice, out of our generosity, we dedicate the merit from our practice to *all* sentient beings, that they too may attain enlightenment.)

Samaya Gya Gya Gya (The commitment is sealed, sealed, sealed!)

Manjushri

Focus: Wisdom and/or insight

Manjushri was a Bodhisattva in Mahayana Buddhism, associated with the path of “wisdom”. He is considered to be the oldest and most significant bodhisattva in Mahayana literature, including the *Prajnaparamita* literature. In Vajrayana he is known as the male Buddha of Wisdom.



I prostrate to the Bhagavan Natha Manjushri. Your mind is completely pure and luminous, (perfect in every way) like the sun free from the clouds of the two obscurations. (Afflictive emotions and mental obscurations) You hold a text at your heart, (actually he holds the stem of a blue upala flower with his hand at his heart, with the text – from *Prajnaparsamita*) since you see all the variety of objects just as they are. (Instead of just as they “appear”, which is an optical illusion) You love like your only child (considered to be the strongest form of love in Tibet) all the multitude of beings, who are trapped by the darkness of ignorance in the prison of Samsara and afflicted by suffering. (All beings are viewed as being deluded in samasara – this world – afflicted by suffering due to our ignorance of

the true nature of things – the way things “are” vs. the way they “appear” our “ignorance” or “delusion” that blocks us from attaining full Liberation.)

Your speech, possessing the sixty kinds of melody, roars mightily like a dragon. (The speech of a Buddha, especially compassion.) Thus, you awaken from the sleep of the kleshas, (liberation is described as awakening from a dream) liberate from the chains of karma, (we are bound by the “chains” of karma – literally “actions”, but here the “unwholesome” actions that prevent us from attaining liberation – bad karma) and dispel the darkness of ignorance. (Like a dream, we awaken from all sufferings).

You hold aloft a sword, since you cut all the sprouts of suffering. (The causes of suffering to be cut, eliminated.) You are primordially pure (transcended all impurities, sources of sufferings, etc.) and have completed the ten bhumis. (10 stages on the path of a Bodhisattva (see *Innate Happiness* or Wikipedia online). You have perfected all the qualities. (You have all the qualities of full Buddhahood.) The kaya of the elder son of the Victorious One (kaya is body, here viewed as a “son” of the Buddha) is adorned with the 122 ornaments. (You have all[the marks and signs attributed to being a buddha. [Not clear what is the source of that number; usually would be the 32 physical characteristics and 80 minor marks, totally 112, perhaps a typo, as I was unable to locate 122 of anything associated with Manjushri.]) You dispel the darkness of my mind. (We awaken from the dream or light over darkness.) I pay

homage to Manjushri. <Bell> (*Repeat all of above 3X*) (The full text is recited three times, then the mantra:)

OM AHRA PATSANA DHI (*108X, then dissolve the visualization and rest in the natural state of pure awareness.*) This mantra is understood by syllable, from a “transcendent view” beyond words, etc.:

1. *AH* is a door to the insight that all phenomena are innate, unproduced (contrary to Buddha’s assertion that all phenomena are compounded (produced), but Vajrayana is based on an alternative view, a transcendent view beyond “good or bad”, etc.
2. *RA* is a door to the insight that all phenomena are unsoiled by good or bad.
3. *PA* is a door to the insight that all phenomena have been understood in the *ultimate*.
4. *CA* (cha, Tibetans say “tsa”) is a door to the insight that phenomena do not decrease nor are they reborn.
5. *NA* is a door to the insight that the names of all phenomena have vanished; but the essential nature cannot be gained or lost.

(Reciting the mantra is said to enhance our wisdom.)

By the rays of your kind, supreme knowledge, (the wisdom radiates out to all beings) **dispel the dark ignorance of mind**. (Eliminate my lack of transcendent understanding). **That I might understand the teachings and the commentaries as in the canon**, (teachings are the sutras - *Kangyur*; commentaries are the *Tengyur*. Together they are known as the “canon”. There are Pali, Chinese, and Tibetan canons.) **I beseech you to grant the luminosity of confident wisdom**. (Luminosity means “knowing” or “experiential knowing” as insight or wisdom of the “true nature of things – the way things are vs. the way things appear.)

Add dedication: I dedicate the merit of this practice for the benefit of all sentient beings. (*3X*) **<Bell & Drum>**

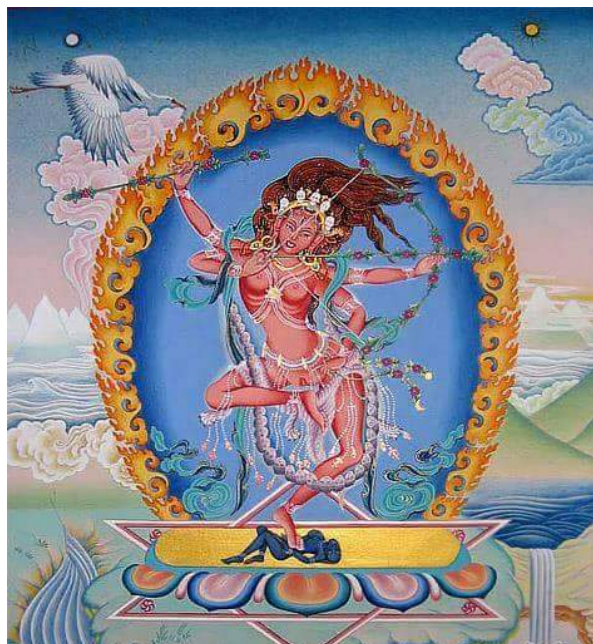
Semi-Wrathful and Wrathful Yidams

Kurukullé

Focus: *Magnetizes all good things to benefit beings*

Tibetan Buddhism embraces “magic” actions, but in a different way that is typically understood in the West. Briefly, there are four categories: (1) **white magic** for calming, pacifying and healing, (2) **yellow magic** for increasing wealth, prosperity, abundance, merit, knowledge, etc., (3) **red magic** for bringing people under one’s power by enchanting, bewitching, attracting, subjugating, and magnetizing, and (4) **black magic** of destroying evil and obstructions to the spiritual path.

Science tends to reject these, influencing our western views. But here it is considered as a form of “energy” *between* the mental and physical, just as religions view the “soul” as between spirit and flesh. The west also tends to view such “magic” as black and white, good and bad. In Tibetan Buddhism the rituals are simply one way to *access and direct energy*, albeit secondary to other practices. Here, the distinction is based on “**function**”, not intention. The intention is always *compassionate* and aims at preventing evil acts, to help others and alleviate suffering. The **motivation** is always white (calming, pacifying, and healing). **Without bodhicitta** – the mind of enlightenment and compassion – no action or ritual is considered to be genuinely Buddhist.⁴ Kurukulle is a strong representation of these principles.



Kurukulle (Skt. Kurukulla) is a semi-wrathful, yet wildly charming aspect of Tara, a fully-enlightened Buddhist goddess. She confronts our inner demons with an undaunted demeanor, a fierce expression, and holding a bow and arrow of flowers as symbolic means to pierce misguided reasonings, and a hook to draw them near through her “magnetizing” activity to benefit all beings. She can also bless beings with ultimate love, compassion, joyful peace, and tranquility.

She dances upon a corpse amidst the circular flames of *pristine awareness*, proclaiming conquest over *ego*. She wears a garland of

⁴ Summarized from Vajranatha.com: The Passionate Lotus Dakini Kurukulla.

skulls that symbolize mastery of all ideas and knowledge, the wisdom of enlightened nature. She is otherwise unadorned as the *naked truth of ultimate wisdom*.

Refuge (3X): **Namo** is a Sanskrit word meaning "to bow, homage, or reverence".

In the self-existing awareness as the wisdom dakini,

I take refuge beyond coming together and separation [We take refuge in the wisdom dakini as the goddess Kurukulle (or Kurukulla), who is a manifestation of awakened awareness. "Beyond coming together and separation" refers to transcending the dualistic experience of life and death, existence and non-existence.]

The confused mind of unrealized beings clings to duality. [This acknowledges that ordinary, unenlightened beings are trapped in confusion because they perceive the world as a collection of separate, dualistic entities, such as self and other, subject and object.]

I arouse the awakened mind of natural liberation. This is the vow to cultivate the mind of a Buddha, which is motivated by compassion for all beings and a desire to achieve enlightenment for their benefit (*Bodhicitta* – the mind of enlightenment).

"Natural liberation" refers to a state of freedom that is already present within, not something to be created, but something to be realized by seeing through confusion.

Mantra: *Om Svabhava Shuda Sarva Dharma Svabhava Shudo Ham* [The emptiness mantra as before]

Seven-Line Prayer [as described previously]:

**HUNG In the northwest of the land of Orgyen,
In the heart of a lotus flower,
Endowed with the most marvelous attainments,
You are renowned as the lotus-born,
Surrounded by many hosts of dakinis.
Following in your footsteps,
I pray to you: Come and bless me with your grace!
Guru Pémé Siddhi Hung (prayer 3X)**

From the very nature of unfabricated mind and the dynamic energy of its emptiness,
The phrase "the very nature of unfabricated mind and the dynamic energy of its emptiness" refers to core concepts in Tibetan Buddhism, particularly within the Dzogchen and Mahamudra traditions.

"Unfabricated mind" refers to the primordial, unconditioned nature of the mind, which is free from all conceptual constructs, mental elaborations, and artificial modifications. It is the mind in its natural, pristine state, prior to dualistic thought and emotional afflictions. It is often described as being like the boundless void or empty space.

“The dynamic energy of its emptiness” describes the radiant, luminous, and potential-filled aspect of the “empty” nature of mind. Emptiness (*shunyata*) [not the most accurate term here] in Buddhism is not a mere nothingness [which is the definition in English] or a vacant void, but an “infinite potential” [this is far more accurate] from which all phenomena (thoughts, emotions, the entire universe) arise “without obstruction” [an ideal not found in science, especially astronomy]. This dynamic energy allows anything to manifest, change, or disappear [or more accurately, everything is interrelated, interconnected, and interdependent, as well as impermanent or changing], and is often said to be linked to the concept of “clarity, lucidity, or awareness”.

awareness, as the syllable Hri, radiates and reabsorbs light. [The phrase points to the inseparable experience of union with clarity, luminosity, or awareness, a central theme in these advanced Buddhist teachings, especially “pure awareness” in Dzogchen. Realizing this non-dual nature of the mind is the path to liberation and full spiritual awakening as the HRI radiates and reabsorbs light.]



From Hri, [the symbolic syllable that represents compassion and insight, as well as to transform one’s longing for enlightenment]. **I appear as the magnetizing dakini: red, the color of the rising sun** [She is red or vermillion, “the color of the rising sun,” which symbolizes the power of magnetizing or enchanting. The core principle behind practicing this visualization is not worldly seduction, but the transformation of desire and passion into enlightened wisdom and compassion for the benefit of all sentient beings.

Sixteen years of age [the ideal number that signifies perfection; 4 times 4], **youthful and beautiful, with a passionate expression** [her single face – symbolizes non-dual wisdom beyond conventional distinctions such as “good and evil”; she is beautiful and her body is voluptuous and alluring, as above; not mentioned is that she has four arms symbolizing the four immeasurable states of mind – love, compassion, joy, and equanimity. She holds a bow and arrow entwined with flowers because she can give rise to thoughts of *desire* for liberation in the minds of others]; **holding a lotus hook and a lasso** [in her other two arms, in which she holds a hook that attracts and summons them into here presence and a noose by which she binds them to here will]; **naked** [naked, she is unconditioned by ordinary discursive thoughts] **and adorned with utpala flowers and jewels** [a common depiction of deities and spiritual beings; **dancing on a lotus and sun** [the imagery of dancing on a lotus and sun represents a being who has fully realized their inner potential, rising from the “mud” of worldly existence into the “sun” of enlightenment, while remaining pure and unattached to the material world; this figure embodies the ultimate state of spiritual perfection, wisdom, and compassion], **and manifest within a vast mass of light, the bliss of meditative heat** [the “bliss of meditative heat” refers to the experience of *Tummo*, an advanced tantric yoga practice where practitioners generate intense internal heat through specific

breathing techniques and visualizations to achieve a deep meditative state and experience great bliss. In the context of Vajrayana Buddhism, the deity or yidam is visualized this way to aid practitioners in spiritual magnetizing activities and attaining liberation].

At the heart center [this is the heart chakra, considered the residence of the innate, pure mind, and the source of compassion and inner realization], **above a sun disc** [which serves as a seat or throne for the deity's seed syllable, and symbolizes the wisdom of emptiness and the ability to "burn" away ignorance], **a red Hri** [is the "seed syllable", embodying the essence of her mind-stream and compassionate nature; the color red is associated with the fire element, life force, preservation, and the transformation of the *delusion of attachment* into the *wisdom of compassion*], **encircled by the mantra** [the seed syllable is surrounded by the mantra around the outside edge and just above the sun disk; continuous recitation of the mantra is visualized as a garland of letters], **blazes with light that radiates forth pervading all countless realms**. [The light emanating from the syllable and mantra symbolizes the abundant emanations of the Buddha's enlightened qualities, such as infinite compassion and wisdom. This light is visualized as reaching all sentient beings in all realms of existence, purifying their suffering and negative karma.]

It magnetizes all matter, animate and inanimate [magnetizing all favorable conditions], **and dissolves back into the heart life-force syllable [Hri], engendering splendor and blessings** [the light then reabsorbs, symbolizing the non-duality of appearance and emptiness, leading the practitioner to liberation, which describes the visualization and mantra recitation of the deity Kurukulle (below), known as the magnetizing dakini].

Changeless bliss-emptiness is co-emergent [This concept from certain Buddhist traditions, particularly Dzogchen, suggests that ultimate reality has two qualities that are not separate but arise together: Emptiness (the understanding that all phenomena are interdependent, without a fixed, independent self or essence) and bliss (the inherent, unchanging happiness that is realized when the *illusion of a separate self* is dissolved).]

and the mastery of natural liberation is attained [achieving a state of liberation, like Nirvana, which is seen as the cessation of the cycle of suffering and rebirth. The phrase "natural liberation" implies that this state is not an artificial construct but the spontaneous, effortless state of being that is already present when ignorance is removed].

OM KURUKULLE HRI SOHA (21X) *Then relax your brain, body and abide in peace for 15 minutes.* [The mantra is used to invoke Kurukulla's energy for purposes that align with enlightened intentions, such as softening hostility and attracting the

conditions for Dharma practice. While "Kurukulle" directly calls upon the goddess, **Hrih** acts as the spiritual heart of the mantra, anchoring the practice in the enlightened qualities. Chanting this mantra is seen as a way to use the "magnetizing" energy of Kurukulle for enlightened purposes — turning one's own desires into a path for awakening. The mantra is not for selfish or harmful intent, but requires an intention of Bodhicitta (the wish to benefit all sentient beings) to be effective. When practiced with correct intention, it can be a powerful tool for attracting the conditions needed for one's spiritual practice and softening hostility.]

Self-arising awareness [the innate, primordial knowing quality of the mind which is not created by external conditions], **the deity of characteristics** [a symbolic way of expressing that this awareness, though formless, manifests *in* all forms and appearances (or characteristics) of reality, visualization of Kurukulle as an embodiment of this awareness], **pervades great nonduality beyond the conceptual mind** [the ultimate nature of reality, or *shunyata* (emptiness), where there is no fundamental separation between subject and object, self and other, or form and emptiness, considered to be "beyond the conceptual mind" because it cannot be fully grasped or defined through dualistic, intellectual thought].

Once again, indivisible unity, illusory dynamic energy [this refers to the core Buddhist concept of the union of form and emptiness (or appearance and reality). "Indivisible unity" points to the non-dual nature of ultimate reality, while "illusory dynamic energy" refers to the way all phenomena appear vividly yet lack inherent, independent existence (they are "empty" of any self-nature)], **arises as the wisdom display of the universe and its beings** [this indicates that the entire world, with all its phenomena and sentient beings, is not a collection of solid, separate objects, but rather the vibrant, self-displaying manifestation of this non-dual wisdom. It is seen as a pure and perfect display, even amid what appears to be samsara (cyclic existence)]. **Om Ah Hung** [this is a powerful and very common mantra or seed syllable set in Vajrayana Buddhism; it is often associated with the body, speech, and mind of the enlightened beings (Buddhas):

- **Om:** Symbolizes the enlightened body.
- **Ah:** Symbolizes the enlightened speech.
- **Hung:** Symbolizes the enlightened mind

Dedication and Verse of Auspiciousness:

This phrase is a Buddhist dedication prayer, a type of offering that transforms accumulated merit into a blessing for all beings. It expresses the intention to dedicate one's virtuous actions — whether from the past, present, or future — to the ultimate goal of enlightenment, free from the conceptual grasp of the ego or a limited "self".

All virtues accumulated in the three times [This refers to any good deeds, merits, or positive actions from the past, present, and future.], **without conceptuality** [This means the dedication is done without a fixed, ego-driven concept of "self" or "I" as the doer. It is the practice of offering virtues from a non-conceptual state of mind, which is thought to be more powerful and pure], **I dedicate in the expanse that is free of limits** [This is the act of directing the merits towards the goal of achieving the state of a Buddha, a state that is beyond all conceptual limitations and is expansive like space. This is often associated with the "expanse of emptiness", which is the ultimate reality in many Buddhist traditions].

Next is a powerful prayer expressing the desire for every sentient being trapped in the cycle of samsara (cyclic existence) to fully awaken to buddhahood and achieve the purity of nirvana. **May all sentient beings** [all living, conscious beings] **in the three realms of cyclic existence** [the realms of existence in which beings are reborn due to karma, representing different states of being from suffering to bliss, but none are permanent until enlightenment is achieved] **awaken as buddhas** [to achieve **bodhi**, or final enlightenment, which frees one from the cycle of rebirth and suffering] **in great equal purity** [to achieve the ultimate, pure state of nirvana, which is beyond all suffering and conceptual frameworks].

By the power of the blessings of the three roots [in this context, the "three roots" are the Guru (the root of blessings), the Yidam (the root of accomplishment), and the Protectors [who act as guardians, protecting the community and its followers from harm; their terrifying appearance is meant to frighten away evil forces and symbolizes their powerful and uncompromising activity in removing obstacles and creating favorable conditions for practitioners.] **and the dakinis** [these are spiritual beings, often depicted as female, who represent enlightened energy and activity], **for myself and the retinue of excellent practitioners** [This refers to a group of fellow students, devotees, or a lineage of people engaged in spiritual practice], **pacify all unfavorable circumstances and fulfill our wishes** [the main purpose is to remove hindrances (unfavorable circumstances) and achieve spiritual and worldly goals (fulfill wishes) by drawing on the power of these enlightened sources].

May there be the auspiciousness [a state of good fortune, positive conditions, and favorable circumstances for spiritual growth] **of stirring the depths** [this is a metaphor for engaging with, challenging, and transforming the deepest levels of consciousness, including subconscious patterns, attachments, and ignorance. It implies moving beings from a state of spiritual complacency or suffering (samsara) to one of clarity and liberation (nirvana)] **of sentient beings** [beings capable of feeling, perceiving, or experiencing consciousness]. **With flowers falling from the sky** [real or imagined, symbolize divine approval, auspiciousness, and reverence for the spiritual path being followed or a significant event that is unfolding], **everything is imbued with happiness and excellence** [genuine, lasting happiness that surpasses fleeting pleasure; the ultimate

goal is not just personal happiness, but the happiness of all sentient beings, leading to a greater state of well-being for everyone]. *<Bell & Drum>*

Gurkhukma Vajrakilaya

Focus: *The most powerful for removing obstacles and destroying the forces hostile to compassion.*

The "Gurkhukma" or "Sole Kilaya of the Sacred Bond of the Heart" is a specific terma revealed by Khenpo Jigmey Phuntsok Rinpoche. Vajrakilaya is a wrathful emanation of the Buddha Vajrasattva, representing the powerful, uncompromising force of enlightened activity. The deity is typically depicted with three faces and multiple arms, and always holds the *phurba* (a three-sided dagger) which is used to "pin down" or transform negativity.



In the deity of my own intrinsic awareness, [the practitioner takes refuge not in an external deity, but in "the deity of my own intrinsic awareness," recognizing their own inherent Buddha-nature or pure consciousness as the ultimate source of safety and guidance on the path to enlightenment.] **I take refuge** [In Buddhism, "going for refuge" involves committing to the Buddha, Dharma (teachings), and Sangha (community)]. **In order to liberate beings practice and wisdom** [I will follow a path with ethics, meditation, and insight or wisdom, which is also tied to the liberation of all beings], **I generate the Awakened Mind** [this includes both wisdom and compassion, leading to a deeper understanding of reality, clarity and profound understanding of the interconnectedness of all life, and a state of profound inner peace.] **All words of honor associated with the accomplishment of Vajrakilaya** [the samayas (sacred commitments or

vows) that are undertaken when one enters into tantric practice, especially a high-level one such as Vajrayana and specific yidam practices such as Vajrakilaya], **at the cost of my life** [these vows are considered the foundation of the path and are taken with the understanding that breaking them has serious spiritual consequences, **shall never be ignored** [the commitment to upholding these samayas is considered paramount, often described *metaphorically* as being more important than one's life]. **(3X)** [This vow is repeated 3 times.]

Om Swabhava Shuda Sarwa Dharma Swabhava Shudo Ham [the emptiness mantra is recited just once]

From the sphere of the nature of emptiness [this is considered as "ultimate reality", all things are "empty" of permanence, independence, and self-existence, also referred to as the way things "are" vs. the way things "appear"], **unceasing clouds of compassion arise** [great compassion includes the wish for *all* sentient beings to achieve liberation. **Discriminating wisdom** [this

refers to the wisdom that discerns reality as it is, cutting through illusion and seeing the true nature of phenomena without distortion. It is an aspect of the enlightened mind], **one's pure awareness** [one's fundamental, pure, and non-dual awareness, the natural state of the mind or "awareness of awareness" itself, also referred to as "metacognition"], **appears as a blue-black** [often symbolizes wisdom, the coolness that transforms anger, vastness, and the ultimate, absolute reality beyond all qualities and forms], **HUNG** [HUNG represents the essence of the enlightened mind and the primordial union of emptiness and form. It is an "indestructible point" of awareness that is the basis for tantric visualization and practice].

By its flaming rays, clinging to the substantiality of the universe and its contents is cleansed [this refers to the wisdom activity (symbolized by the "flaming rays") that purifies the fundamental misconception of inherent existence in all phenomena, both the external world ("universe and its contents") and the inner experience]. **Grasping to objectivity becomes the mandala of the blazing fire mountain, self-arisen, spontaneously present, arranged as utter vastitude** [the very act of "grasping to objectivity" (which is typically seen as an affliction or a cause of suffering in Buddhism) is transformed through the practice into a pure perception—the "mandala of the blazing fire mountain" (the enlightened environment or pure land of the deity, often associated with the Wrathful Deity Vajrakīlaya). This transformation highlights the non-duality of samsara and nirvana, where the afflicted mind is recognized as the basis of the enlightened state], **within which, the purified grasping mind is the principle cause of the radiation and reabsorption** [the "purified grasping mind" (which has been transmuted into pristine awareness or wisdom) is the source of enlightened activity (radiation and reabsorption), manifesting and reabsorbing phenomena spontaneously for the benefit of all beings. This passage illustrates core tantric Buddhist concepts of transformation, where one ceases to see the world through the lens of ordinary, deluded perception and instead perceives it as the divine mandala and activity of the enlightened deity.]

Becoming the essential expression of all the buddhas, the great Glorious One, blue-black [color of his body], **with three heads, the right white, the left red,** [and central one blue-black] **and six arms, with the right two holding nine and five pronged vajras** [a sacred ritual object, weapon, and symbol that represents indestructibility and power, and symbolizes the indestructibility of the enlightened mind], **the left two holding a fire flame** [skullcup with butter-lamp flame] **and a trident** [a ritual staff symbolizing the triumph of wisdom over illusion and the victory of spiritual power over demonic forces], **and the final two rolling and piercing with a purba** [a three-bladed dagger that symbolizes cutting through mental afflictions like ignorance, attachment, and anger, and is used to subdue negative forces].

His four legs are in the treading posture, suppressing Mahadeva and devi [triumphing over the worldly gods Mahadeva (a form of Shiva) and his consort Devi (Parvati), which symbolizes the subjugation of attachment, aversion, and ignorance]. **Possessing the strength of unbearable wrath** [his fierce and powerful nature, which is used to overcome obstacles and negative forces], **with vajra wings** [these represent his swift and all-pervasive enlightened activity, symbolizing his ability to cut through obstacles and reach *all realms* to protect beings and the Dharma] **he sports** [wears] **all the glorious charnel ornamentation** [the traditional ornaments worn by

wrathful deities in Tantric Buddhism, which are symbolic representations of their ability to “conquer” or transcend death and impermanence (e.g., bone ornaments, garlands of skulls)].

(He is) joined in union with his consort Gye-deb [his consort or partner], **light blue in color. She holds a trident tipped khatvanga and a skull-cup full of blood.** [She is in union with Vajrakilaya.] **Overhead a primordial wisdom Garuda circles** [providing protection].

(They stand) upon a variegated lotus [represents purity and the practitioner's or deity's ability to remain unsullied by the impurities of the world, a common symbol in Buddhism.] **and blazing sun-seat** [wisdom that burns away ignorance] **displayed in the expanse of a fiercely swirling fire of this eon** [this refers to the fire that consumes the universe at the end of a cosmic eon (a kalpa), a powerful image representing the destructive force of wisdom that eradicates all defilements and obstacles].

Within the heart [refers to the heart chakra or the subtle heart center, a key focal point for meditation in tantric practices], **in a shining garnet tent of light** [the "garnet tent" symbolizes a specific, protective, and luminous inner space or mandala where the wisdom presence resides. The garnet color may relate to a specific energy, element, or emotional quality being transformed within the practice, **is the primordial wisdom presence, Vajrasattva, clear blue** [Vajrasattva, the Buddha of purification, is visualized not in his typical white form (as in general purification practices) but as **clear blue**. This specific color and description relate to a particular aspect or emanation of Vajrasattva within the context of that specific sadhana, embodying the essence of primordial wisdom].

[The description is a precise instruction for the generation stage of the practice:] **Within his heart is the samadhi presence** [refers to a focal point of meditation within the heart center of the practitioner, visualized as the heart center of the deity.], **a vajra** [a ritual object symbolizing the indestructible nature of enlightenment, which in this context is visualized in the heart], **in the center of which is a HUNG** [at the core of the vajra is the syllable Hung (ॐ), a seed syllable representing the essence of the deity Vajrakilaya] **surrounded by the mantra-mala, the color of clear lapis lazuli** [around the syllable "Hung" is a mala of mantra syllables, visualized in the brilliant blue color of lapis lazuli. These syllables are recited as part of the practice, rotating around the central seed syllable, to generate the qualities and wisdom of the deity and purify obstacles. The color "lapis lazuli" is associated with powerful healing (and the Medicine Buddha), and also represents the indestructible, luminous nature of reality (the dharmadhatu) in this context].

Rotating clockwise, light rays beyond imagination proceed, making offerings to the aryas [a central noble or worthy being], **clearing the obscurations** [mental and emotional defilements and cognitive hindrances that prevent beings from recognizing their true nature or "buddha nature" and attaining enlightenment: (1) afflictive emotions are emotional defilements like anger, attachment or ignorance that are the root cause of sufferings and prevent liberation, and (2) cognitive obscurations are more subtle habitual tendencies of intellectual barriers that hinder the direct, simultaneous perception of both the superficial and ultimate truths of reality; the practitioner engages in various purification practices, such as Vajrasattva meditation and mantra recitation, with the motivation that all beings may be free from these obscurations and their

resulting suffering] **of sentient beings** [all living beings, for whose benefit the practice is performed] **and invoking the oath-bound guardians** [powerful, often worldly, spirits and deities who were subdued by enlightened masters (such as Guru Rinpoche) and bound by oath to protect the Buddhist teachings and practitioners], **annihilating enemies and obstructors** [the internal and external obstacles to spiritual practice and enlightenment; these include the fundamental ignorance, attachment, hatred, and other afflictive emotions (kleshas) that harm oneself and others, as well as external negative forces that hinder the path to compassion and wisdom; "annihilation" (more accurately, subjugation or clearing) is a non-dualistic, compassionate action using "vajra wrath" to swiftly cut through these obstacles].

This assertion outlines a core principle of advanced Vajrayana practice and view: **All form, sound, and thought arise as the primordial wisdom play** [the spontaneous, dynamic, and unceasing manifestation of the universe, which is not separate from the enlightened state of awareness (rigpa). It is a "play" in the sense that it is a natural, effortless expression that is ultimately without substantial, independent existence, yet appears vividly] **of the deity** [All forms and visual appearances are recognized as the form of the Yidam, or meditational deity, which is an expression of enlightened energy and wisdom, not an ordinary physical entity], **mantra** [all sounds are perceived as the natural resonance and presence of mantra, the audible manifestation of wisdom, beyond conventional language or meaning.] **and Dharmata** [all thoughts and mental events, in their essence, arise within the fundamental nature of reality (dharmata), which is empty of "inherent existence" (shunyata/emptiness) but spontaneously luminous and aware]; **luminously present** [Describes the *rigpa* (awareness) itself, which is inherently clear, radiant, and present within this vast expanse of emptiness. It is a state of clear, non-conceptual awareness, untainted by flaws and stains] **within a blazing expanse** [the *dharmadātu*, or the fundamental expanse of reality, which is open, spacious, and beyond conceptual boundaries (emptiness). The "blazing" aspect emphasizes the intense, dynamic, and powerful nature of this reality] **of primordial-wisdom fire** [this fire is not ordinary physical heat but a manifestation of *primordial wisdom* (rigpa), the innate, pure awareness that is the essence of a buddha, which symbolizes the transformative energy that burns away all ignorance and defilements]:

All apparent phenomena are the deity [this refers to the view that all forms and appearances in the phenomenal world are not ordinary or substantial, but rather the spontaneous manifestation of enlightened energy, the pure appearances of the Buddha fields (mandala). Recognizing this prevents attachment to appearances as solid or "inherently real" and purifies the perception of the external world], **all sound arises as the play of mantra** [this means that all sounds, including speech, environmental noises, and the subtle inner sounds, should be perceived as the unstained, natural resonance of reality, having the nature of mantra. This purifies auditory perception and dissolves attachment to sounds as conventional language or noise], **all thoughts dwell within the clear light of the Dharmata** [this instructs practitioners to recognize that the nature of their own mind, and all thoughts arising within it, is intrinsically empty of solid existence but luminous (*clear light*). Thoughts naturally arise and self-liberate within the spacious, unobstructed nature of mind, which is the *Dharmata* (the fundamental nature of phenomena, the absolute)].

OM BENZAR KILI KILAYA HUNG PHET (21X) *Then relax your brain, body and abide in peace for 15 minutes.* ["Om" represents the body, "Benzar" is the essence of the indestructible family, "Kili" and "Kilaya" refer to the phurba's (ritual dagger) piercing action, which removes hindrances, and "Hung" represents the enlightened mind and "Phet" signifies the mind's fierce, *awakened activity* to destroy obstacles and negative forces.]

Hung [a powerful, foundational syllable (mantra seed syllable) in Vajrayana Buddhism, often associated with the union of emptiness and form and the invocation of deities. It sets the stage for the tantric context of the praise] **Fierce is (your) wrathful demeanor** [Fierce is often used to describe a wrathful demeanor, emphasizing its intensity and power. The word "fierce" suggests a wild, untamed, or highly aggressive quality to the anger or wrath being displayed]. **Where peaceful means are unable to beneficially intervene, this wrathful enlightened embodiment is displayed** [the role of wrathful deities]. **To the vajra activity of gathering and dispersing, I render praise** ["gathering and dispersing" refers to the impermanent and interdependent nature of all existence. It is a metaphor for the transient cycle of arising (gathering/coming together) and passing away (dispersing/ separating) that characterizes all phenomena, including life, material possessions, relationships, and even our sense of self.].

Hung [same] **May all Vidyadharas of the Youthful Vajra (Vajrakilaya)** [this refers to the accomplished masters (knowledge holders) who have realized the siddhi (accomplishment) of Vajrakilaya practice], **accomplish the Kilaya of existence** [this is a request for the complete mastery and piercing through of all aspects of cyclic existence (samsara), transforming them into enlightened reality]. **May the Vajrakilaya deities of apparent phenomena** [this refers to the understanding that all phenomena in the world, in their true nature, are the manifestation of the Vajrakilaya mandala and deities] **receive the accomplishment of the primordial wisdom heruka** [this is a prayer that these apparent phenomena be realized as the 'Primordial Wisdom Heruka' (a wrathful male deity symbolizing enlightened awareness), signifying the attainment of ultimate, non-dual wisdom].

I dedicate the merit of this practice for the benefit of all sentient beings. (3X) <Bell & Drum>

Yeshe Tsogyal

***Focus:** Consort of Padmasambhava and female Buddha and Master in her own right*

Dakinis - The *dakini* (Sky Dancer) is very special, a symbol of all that is sacred and spiritual. Like so many things though, a dakini is not so simple to explain. When asked, Ven. Trungpa Rinpoche said, "One never knows." But I will try. The dakini is a central religious symbol in Tibetan Buddhism. She is secretive and powerful, intimate and transformative. She is feminine in gender, but not a conventional female. Rather, she embodies the "feminine principle" or the wisdom of ultimate reality, beyond gender. (The masculine principle is "skillful means" - especially compassion and lovingkindness.) When depicted with a yogi, they represent the nondual union with ultimate reality, i.e., the union of compassion and wisdom.

There are classifications of dakinis. *Worldly dakinis* are the human form. There are "wrathful" and peaceful forms. They embody worldly magic and power.... At the same time, they may give guidance and teachings. The *wisdom dakini* is the symbol of mind itself. She also takes many forms: often depicted as dancing naked - the quality of awareness itself "with nothing to hide." She wears ornaments from a charnel ground (graveyard), symbols (or warnings) derived from the early practice for monks of meditating on decaying bodies as a form of "aversion therapy" for sexual desires.

There are also four aspects. The *most secret* dakini is the ultimate nature of mind - personified as Samantabhadri. The *secret* aspect is the realization of the wisdom of nonduality - bliss and emptiness, relative and ultimate as one. Deity yoga and sexual yoga are practiced as a symbolic union to achieve the actual union of relative and ultimate *bodhicitta*. The *inner* dakini is the subtle or illusory body, nondual wisdom manifesting in physical form. She is the mind's manifestation of the play of wisdom. And the *outer* dakini is the human form.

Recognition of a dakini can be tricky. They are said to teach through actions rather than words, and to "speak in highly symbolic language." Either believing a person to be a dakini who is not or not recognizing one who is can be detrimental to one's spiritual progress. Encounters have "an intensely intimate quality ... sometimes expressed as a gift put directly in the practitioner's hand ... or evoked by a touch, a whisper, or a gaze...."

In addition, the dakini may be a human guru, a meditation deity, or a "protector" of the teachings. There are peaceful and wrathful versions. You can also think of the dakini as a spiritual messenger - one with whom you have a karmic connection. As a spiritual messenger, a dakini often teaches through actions. The messages may be intensely intimate, as are all genuine encounters with a dakini.

Yeshe Tsogyal - ca. 777-837, Karchen family; consort of Padmasambhava (Guru Rinpoche); recognized as a female Buddha (manifestation of Vajravarahi, Saraswati and

Tara); documented teachings of Padmasamvara and buried them as treasures (termas) to be discovered later by tertons; became known as a master in her own right; and is said to be reborn as Machig Labdron.

Namo – homage. **In my own pure awareness** – *rigpa*: the ability to be aware – **as the Wisdom Dakini**, – a symbol of mind itself – **I take refuge beyond coming together and separation**. – “coming and going”, a reference to being beyond “impermanence”, here infers being beyond the “lower” standards of the other “yanas” or vehicles of Buddhist practice. **The confused mind of unrealized beings** – ordinary sentient beings – **clings to duality** – self/other, asserting being independent instead of being interdependent. **I arouse the awakened mind** – Bodhicitta – **of great natural liberation**. – Dzogchen (3X)



AH – a reference to our fundamental basic nature. **From thusness** (or suchness, beyond description, transcendent in nature) – **unmodified primordial purity** (Dharmakaya or “wisdom”, as follows) **and its dynamic energy of compassion**, wisdom and compassion together) **naturally manifest ... and all-illuminating** – **BAM**, the syllable of **discerning wisdom**, **ris** like a **rainbow** in the sky (a symbol of being transcendent in nature, visible but not “solid”. **Its** (BAM) **radiating light** – radiates light in all directions – **purifies impure grasping to substantiality** (grasping at things as being “real”; cannot grasp a rainbow or light). **The universe and its beings ... become the Lotus Light pure realm of great bliss** (Padmasambhava’s Copper-Colored Mountain pure realm and Lotus Light palace; in our mind).



At the center of its wondrous citadel of purity (Dharmadhatu – sphere of reality or purified mind in its natural state), **on a lotus-sun-moon seat** (a lotus base with two discs lying on top [colors vary] as sun and moon, the “seat” or throne seen in Highest Yoga Tantra), **I am Yeshe Tsogyal** (Victorious Ocean of Knowledge and also known as Lady of Karchen, said to have been the wife or consort of King Trisong Detsen who then “gifted her” to Padmasambhava, though there is no historical evidence for her, though there is evidence of a clan by that name), **with the rosy white complexion** (reddish-white or pink) **of inseparable bliss-emptiness** (transcendent), **perfectly resplendent with the beauty of enlightenment’s marks and qualities** (marks of a Buddha – 32 major marks [4 fearlessnesses, 10 powers, 18 unshared qualities]); **face, serene and smiling, the single sphere of totality** (one face); **two arms, the unity of means and wisdom** (skillful means [generosity, ethics, patience, persistence or joyful effort, and concentration] and wisdom; **holding a curved blade** (*drigug* in right hand) **that severs the root of self-identity** (*atman*))

→ to no-self [*anatman*] and a skull cup that bestows the supreme accomplishment (enlightenment).

Standing evenly on both legs, I am naked (nothing to hide), **yet adorned with various silks, jewels, and a garland of flowers** (reminiscent of peaceful Yidams). **Above my crown, the supreme method** (Guru Yoga), **the Lord of the Enlightened Lineage, Pema Garwang Thotrengtsal** (burned on a pyre with Mandarava on the lake at Tso Pema) **with sambhogakaya ornaments** (peaceful garb, like Indian royalty) **and holding bell and vajra** (symbolizing the feminine principle, wisdom, and the masculine principle, skillful means) **and shines brilliantly in an expanse of rays and spheres of rainbow light** (symbolizing his final departure in rainbow light).

Arranged in the three seats of his wisdom form (3 kayas), **countless victorious three roots** (guru, yidam, and dakini), **overflow like sesame seeds in a pod** (vast numbers of Buddha forms) – **distinct and perfect**. **From the beginning, the commitment** (skillful means and vows) **and wisdom aspects are inseparable** (skillful means and wisdom, the 2 wings of a bird).

At my heart center (heart chakra) **inside a hollow sun-moon amulet box** (as if inside of a box; sun and moon correspond to masculine and feminine), **BAM** (the sacred feminine seed syllable – **encircled by the turning mantra garland** (circling around the seed syllable that is standing upright in the center is her mantra that is arranged and turning counterclockwise [viewed from the center]) – **radiates light which pervades all matter, animate and inanimate** (radiates out to all beings and inanimate objects, reflecting the shamanistic and animistic material and immaterial spirits, powers, and rituals from the indigenous Bon religion of Tibet). **All phenomena – forms, sounds, and mental events – are perceived as the display of deity, mantra, and wisdom** (Buddha body, speech, and mind; pure view).

OM JNANA DAKINI BAM HA-RI-NI-SA SIDDHI HUNG (no specific meaning – mantra of “yogi song”; BAM is seed syllable of most wrathful female Buddhas)

(Recite 108X, or as many as you can, then dissolve the visualization [outside in, i.e., mandala into her body – no specific designation of being either outside or inside of you] and rest in the natural state of pure awareness [rigpa – an equivalent for “emptiness” usually specified, but here “pure awareness” is the ability to be aware. Although fairly often described as a separate concept, it is “empty” unless combined with sensory or mental perceptions – “awareness of”].)

HO (an expression for calling attention). **Self-manifest** (innate) **pure awareness** (*rigpa*, the ability to be aware), **the deity of characteristics** (mental, not physical), **pervades great nonduality** (emptiness) **beyond conceptual mind** (transcendent). **Once again indivisible unity** (one taste) – **illusory dynamic energy** (not “real”, the way things appear, sensory appearances) – **arises as the wisdom display of the universe and its beings** (the “real”, the way things are, true nature or essence inherent in all appearances).

Om Ah Hung (body, speech, and mind of a Buddha; also used as a mantra for purification of ordinary body, speech, and mind)

HO All virtues (wholesome actions) **accumulated** (karma, actions retained in the “storehouse” consciousness) **in the three times** (past, present, and future; infers a commitment to future actions as well) **without conceptuality** (transcendent view), **I dedicate** (we dedicate the merit of all wholesome actions as soon as we can, but at least each day, or the benefits are said to be lost; this is also a helpful practice for reinforcing habitual tendencies) **in the expanse that is free of limits** (beyond boundaries; this and all universes and pure realms). **May all beings in the three realms of cyclic existence** (desire realm – six forms of beings, form realm, formless realm) **awaken as buddhas** (may all beings attain Buddhahood) **in great equal purity** (the wish for equanimous great purity of all Buddhas). <Bell>

By the power of the blessings of the Three Roots (guru, yidam, and protector) **and the dakinis** (sky dancers), **for myself and the retinue of excellent practitioners** (the great sangha of all practitioners), **pacify all unfavorable circumstances** (eliminate causes of negative karma) **and fulfill our wishes** (our wish for all sentient beings to attain full liberation). **May there be the auspiciousness of stirring the depths of sentient beings** (may all sentient beings engage and participate so that they too may attain enlightenment [unlike some religions, no one else can do it for you]). <Bell>

With flowers falling from the sky (based on the vision of a sheet of rain or mist with rainbow light), **everything is imbued with happiness and excellence** (this is the symbolism of “flowers falling from the sky”).

Add dedication: **I dedicate the merit of this practice for the benefit of all sentient beings. (3X) <Bell & Drum>**

Simhamukha

Focus: Repels discursive thoughts that shroud the nature of mind

Simhamukha, the Lion-Faced Dakini, is a “wisdom dakini” (as are *all* dakinis). Yeshe Tsogyal is considered to be her emanation. Her wrathful aspect skillfully overcomes and subdues violent negative energies and obstacles to practice. The Lion-Faced Dakini represents the wisdom that enables one to clear away the negativity of one’s mind, and through her practice one is imbued with spiritual power to gain mastery over samsara *and* nirvana. She is appropriate for clearing obstacles of the most pervasive and malignant kinds and cutting through the “three poisons” of mind (ignorance, strong attachments, and strong aversions). The practice is said to be a reliable source of protection when obstacles arise. Defilements attract the maras (our inner demons) of hindrances and enemies, just as a magnet attracts iron filings. When you clear away the negativity of your own poisons, there is nothing to attract the maras. This ancient practice has been important in Tibetan Buddhism since the time of Padmasambhava.

I take refuge in the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha most excellent for the benefit of all sentient beings. (3X)

- Same as before...

Om Svabhava Shuda Sarva Dharma Svabhava Shudo Ham

- An emptiness mantra as before meaning the nature of all phenomena is pure; maintain that nature.

From emptiness appears a HUM on a lotus and sun disc. From the HUM rays of light shine forth establishing the vajra-ground. Around it is a vajra-fence, and above it a vajra-tent, all surrounded by the blazing fire of wisdom. In the center of the vajra-tent is the syllable É, which transforms into a dark-blue dharmakara.

- From the emptiness established (or recognized) from the mantra above...
- Hum (HUNG in Tibetan)
- On a lotus throne with a sun disc seat (sun = wrathful form)
- Surrounded by features of the mandala, although not shown in the image here: vajra-fence, vajra-tent, and blazing fire (in this case around her).
- A syllable É (AH with long “A” mark above)
- Becomes the dark-blue dharmakara (same as tetrahedron in Vajrayogini, but blue)

In the center of the dharmakara is the lotus and a sun disc. On top of corpses of the Maras stands my mind in the form of a dark-blue HUM from which light rays emanate destroying all demons and gathering all the powers and accomplishments of the dakas and dakinis to be absorbed into the HUM. Due to that, I myself arise out of the HUM as Simhamukha.

- Corpses of the Maras are my own inner demons
- My mind is symbolized as the HUNG.

- Light rays destroy my demons and gathers symbolic “powers” absorbed into the HUNG.
- Then I arise as Simhamukha.



My body is dark-blue with one face, two arms and three red rounded eyes. My mouth shows the bared fangs with the tongue curled upwards, looking extremely ferocious. In my right hand I am holding a curved knife; in my left hand I am holding a skullcup filled with blood. On my left shoulder leans a khatvanga. My hair and brows are yellow-red, streaming upwards. A crown of five skulls adorns my head; a necklace made of fifty freshly cut human heads hangs around my neck. I am wearing a tiger-skin skirt and the five bone ornaments.

- Dark-blue is like the dawn of first light in the morning sky, symbolizing an Awakened being
- Her one face, two arms and three eyes symbolize her as a dakini, the third eye being the “wisdom eye”.

- Her “bared fangs” symbolize her wrathful nature to deal with more difficult obscurations; as are also her curled tongue and ferocious appearance.
- She holds the traditional curved knife in her right hand symbolizing severing our demons; and a skull cup in her left, symbolizing transcendent knowledge – beyond words, filled with blood – symbolizing the nectar of that wisdom, and held at the heart symbolizing the union of skillful means and wisdom.
- Her khatvanga symbolizes that she has a consort and the union of great bliss and emptiness.
- Her hair symbolizes her untamed fury or not bound by conventional rules.
- The crown of 5 skulls represent the 5 wisdoms or 5 buddha families.
- The 50 fresh skulls around her neck symbolize afflictive emotions.
- The tiger-skin skirt symbolizes her fearlessness.
- Five bone ornaments are necklaces, armlets, bracelets, anklets, “skirt” illustrate impermanence.

I am in dancing posture with the left leg extended and the right one tucked in, surrounded by the blazing flames of the wisdom fire. At my forehead is white OM, at my throat red AH, at my heart dark-blue HUM from which light rays spread forth summoning the wisdom-being surrounded by all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. <Bell>

- Same dancing posture of Vajrayogini and surrounded by wisdom fire.
- Same Om, Ah, Hung with light summoning all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.

Om Vajra Sama-dza / Dza Hum Bam Hoh

- Om – Buddha’s body, speech and mind
- Vajra – indestructible
- Sama-dza – invite the wisdom beings
- Dza Hum Bam Hoh – hook, merge, remain, commit

I become one with the wisdom beings. Then again from the HUM at the center of my heart, light rays shine forth summoning the five Buddha families and their retinue. <Bell>

- And they are absorbed into you, and you become a Buddha.
- From the seed syllable Hung at MY heart summons the Buddha families.

Om Vajra Sama-dza

- We are united as one

Om Panja Kula Sapari-wara Argham, Padyam, Pupé, Dupé, Aloké, Ghandé, Néwidé, Shapta Pratitsa Soha <Snap fingers and/or bell>

- We make the 8 offerings as before.

Request the initiation: Please bestow the empowerment on me. *They reply:* **Om Vajri Bhawa Abhishékata Samaya Hum <Bell>**

- We request the empowerment and it is given

My whole body is filled with initiation water from the vase and is purified of all its defilements. The water overflowing the crown of my head is the totality of becoming, out of which appears a blue five-pointed vajra to adorn the head.

- This only lists the first or vase empowerment, but as a wrathful form it would also include the secret, wisdom, and word empowerments:
 - The vase empowerment authorizes generation stage practices.
 - The secret empowerment authorizes the completion stage practices.
 - The wisdom empowerment authorizes the trekcho practices.
 - The word empowerment authorizes the togal practices.
- The 5-pointed vajra symbolizes the 5 poisons *and* 5 wisdoms.

In the center of my heart, residing on a sun disc, stands a dark-blue HUM, surrounded by the mantra syllables arranged counter-clockwise. The flames coming from the mantra garland incinerate all maras.

- The sun disc (on a lotus) with seed syllable Hung, encircled by the mantra arranged counter-clockwise (female view).
- Flame emanate to destroy all our inner demons.

AH-KA-SA MA-RA-TSA SHA-DA-RA-SA MA-RA-YA PHAT (*Recite 108X or as much as you can.*)

- The mantra has no words, only sounds. The meaning is equanimity of the ground (mental calm), love is the moisture, compassion is the seed, bodhicitta (mind of Awakening) is the result.

Dakini Simhamukha, please bestow the common and uncommon siddhis upon me and all sentient beings. This requested, the lotus seat and sun disc are absorbed into me in the form of light. (*Meditation: Dissolve the visualization, then rest in the natural state of pure awareness.*)

- Common siddhis are “relative”, like magical powers (which the Buddha said to avoid!)
- Uncommon siddhis are “ultimate”, broadly referred to as “accomplishments”, but more specifically to Full Awakening or Enlightenment.
- Followed by dissolution into “pure awareness” (vs. “emptiness”) – gradual or instant.

By the virtue of this may I and all sentient beings accomplish the state of the dakini. Without leaving a single sentient being behind may I be able to liberate them to the state of the dakini. (3X) <Bell & Drum>

- The dedication, then closing bell and drum.

Vajrayogini/Vajravarahi

***Focus:** Transformation of ordinary desire into altruistic enlightenment,
transcendent suchness*

Tantra is the Path of Transformation. **Vajrayogini** is a female Buddha (originally as consort of Chakrasamvara (10th – 12th centuries), later became an independent Buddha in her own right). They represent the essence of all Buddhas – wisdom. As a female Buddha, her practice is both generation stage (as here) and completion stage: tummo, 4 blisses, 4 empties, clear light, phowa, and the bardos (the 6 Yogas). Another practice version is the 11 Yogas. Another form is **Vajravarahi**. Here, she is described as both Vajrayogini and Vajravarahi.

In the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha most excellent, I take refuge until enlightenment is reached. By the merit of generosity and other good deeds (the 6 Prajnaparamitas – perfections), may I attain enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings. (3X)

Om Svabhava Shuda Sarva Dharma Svabhava Shudo Ham (an emptiness mantra as before meaning the nature of all phenomena is pure; maintain that nature. **OM** – we purify our body, speech and mind. **Svabhava** – nature, **Shuda** – pure, **Sarva** – all, **Dharma** – phenomena, **Svabhava** (again) – nature, **Shudo Ham** – maintain. The nature of all phenomena is pure; maintain that nature.)

From emptiness comes the sound of Hum Hum (the Buddha's speech). **Then the foundation of the universe arises** (vast and expansive with no center or periphery, the elements – earth, water, fire, air, and space – are stacked on top of each other with Mt. Meru at the top – four sides – gold, lapis lazuli, ruby, and mother of pearl), **establishing the vajra ground** (the celestial mansion with 1000-petaled white lotus [may vary] **with a moon disc. Around it is a vajra-fence**, crossed vajra and blue square; walls, landing with offering goddesses, great pillars, four entrances with pillared porticos) **and above it a vajra-tent, all surrounded by** (eight charnel grounds, vajra fence, violent wind and stormy ocean, and) **the blazing fire of wisdom.** (Along with many other details.)

In the center of this circle of protection is the syllable É, which transforms into a tetrahedron (2 intersecting 3-sided pyramids), **the small point of which is down, expanding upward** (see pix). **It is blue on the outside and red on the inside. On top is a red Pam, which changes into a multicolored lotus. Above that is an Ah, which is transformed into a moon disk. On that is a Ram, which is transformed into a sun disk. On this is the essence of my mind in the form of a red Bam. Red light radiates out as an offering to all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, and purifying all sentient beings, who are transformed into Vajrayoginis. The light returns and transforms me into Vajrayogini.**

ÉPamAhRamBam

My body is red (tummo, inner fire) and brilliant, like 100,000 suns. I have (one face) three eyes (two normal and one on my forehead) and bared fangs, showing wrath (the fangs) and affection (the watchful eyes – see in past, present, future). From the right rear of my head is a grunting black sow (symbol of Vajravarahi). My head is adorned with a crown of five skulls (see Troma – 5 wisdoms, 5 buddha families). My hair is partially loose (not bound by conventional rules). I wear a garland of 51 fresh skulls (around her neck like mala, symbolize 51 afflictive emotions or the 16 vowels and 35 consonants in Sanskrit) and am adorned with the five bone ornaments (necklaces, armlets, bracelets, anklets, skirt). My right hand holds a vajra (indestructible, or a curved knife – cutting through obscurations) and my left hold at skull cup filled with blood at my heart (symbolizing clear light bliss). On my left shoulder rests a khatvanga. I am naked (nothing to hide) with the body of a 16 year-old girl with upright breasts. I stand on my bent left leg with my right leg folded in the dancing posture (vs. traditional Vajrayogini in “warrior pose” turning to her left and holding the skull cup up above her head). I am surrounded by the flames of primordial wisdom (burn away all afflictive emotions and mental obscurations).

(Body armour – 6-pointed star and 6 dakinis). **At my navel is a red Vajravarahi, at my heart a blue Yamani, at my throat a white Mohani, at my forehead a yellow Shobhani, at the crown of my head a green Bhariavi, and at all my limbs smoke-colored Chandali, each in the same form as Vajrayogini (inner circle of the mandala).**

At the secret place of Vajrayogini (vagina) is a red tetrahedron (inner copy) at the center of which is a red Hri, which radiates light and invites all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas and their retinues in the form of Vajrayoginis (common to see all Buddhas and Bodhisattvas in form of the form of the yidam for that practice; all Buddhas are the same as all others). These dissolve into my crown, generating bliss and energy throughout my body. Their voices manifest the red vowels and consonants (Sanskrit vowels and consonants) at my throat (red syllable Ah is



usually also at the throat), **generating the energy of voice** (Buddha's speech). **Their minds manifest streams of Bodhicitta** (heart of awakening, love and compassion) **into my heart, generating the wisdom of bliss and emptiness** (compassion and wisdom; yet my appearance as Vajrayogini is experienced as an illusion; emptiness is the clear nature of the Dharmakaya).

Om Vajravarahi Mahayogini Atmako Ham

Om (Buddha's body, speech, and mind) **Vajra** (indestructible) **varahi** (sow or yogini ... triumph over ignorance) **Mahayogini** (great yogini) **Atmako** (nature) **Ham** (maintain), so "maintain the nature, great yogini, an triumph over ignorance with Buddha body, speech, and mind)

Om Vajravarahi Argham Padyam Pupé Dupé Aloké Ghandé Néwité Shapta Pratitsa Soha *<Snap fingers and/or bell>* (Traditional 8 offerings: water for drinking, water for washing, flowers, incense, butter lamp, perfumed water, food, and music)

I prostrate and praise the glorious Vajradakini, wheel turner (teacher) **of the Dakinis, embodiment of the five wisdoms** (all-accommodating [Dharmadhatu – the sphere of reality], mirror-like, equanimity, discriminating, and all-accomplishing wisdoms of the 5 Buddha families) **and the three kayas** (Nirmanakaya, Sambhogakaya, and Dharmakaya), **who protects all sentient beings.** *<Bell>*

At the secret place (symbolic of the womb and symbol of wisdom) **of myself as Vajrayogini is a red tetrahedron glowing like a flame. In the center is a red lotus, upon which is a red sun disk and a red Bam, surrounded by the mantra circling counterclockwise** (male mantras circle clockwise and female counter clockwise, male's viewed from the outside, female's from the inside). Then the 3-OM mantra:

OM OM OM (representing the 3-fold dakini; outer, inner, secret or 3 kayas)

SARVA BUDDHA DAKINIYÉ (dakini who is the essence of all – Dharmakaya)

VAJRA VARNANIYÉ (color of the true nature – Sambhogakaya)

VAJRA VAIROCHANIYÉ (outer nature - Nirmanakaya)

HUM HUM HUM (seed syllable of Herukas, wrathful yidam forms)

PHAT PHAT PHAT (protect or remove all obstructions)

SOHA (may it be auspicious – or "amen")

(Recite the mantra 108X or as many times as you can.)

Light radiates from the Bam and all phenomena dissolve into me. I dissolve from the top down and the bottom up into the Bam. The Bam dissolves from the bottom up into the crescent, the bindu, the nada and into emptiness. (Meditation: Rest in the natural state of pure awareness.)

I arise as Vajrayogini with one face and two arms. (Remain as if... the actual practice and power of deity yoga ... act as if you are a buddha or express the buddha (already) within – Buddhanature.)

Dedication: By this virtue may I quickly attain the state of Vajravarahi, and may I lead all sentient beings into that state with none left behind. (3X) <Bell & Drum>

The Essence of the Kalachakra Tantra

Focus: *Nondual wisdom of the innate mind of immutable bliss-emptiness and compassion*

I take refuge in the Buddha (teacher), **the Dharma** (teachings), **and the Sangha** (community of practitioners) **most excellent** (with highest regard for all) **for the benefit of all sentient beings** (the wish that *all* sentient beings attain liberation from the sufferings of this life). **(3X)**

Om Svabhava Shuda Sarva Dharma Svabhava Shudo Ham [an emptiness mantra as before



meaning the nature of all phenomena is pure; maintain that nature. **OM** – we purify our body, speech and mind. **Svabhava** – nature, **Shuda** – pure, **Sarva** – all, **Dharma** – phenomena, **Svabhava** (again) – nature, **Shudo Ham** – maintain. The nature of all phenomena is pure; maintain that nature.]

Kalachakra is blue color. He holds a vajra [a ritual knife meaning “diamond” or “thunderbolt”, representing indestructibility and clarity] **in his right hand and a bell in his left hand** [symbolizing the union of wisdom and skillful means; the vajra represents the feminine principle of wisdom and “emptiness”, and the bell represents masculine principle of compassion and skillful actions]. **He is in union with his golden dakini consort, Vishvamata** [meaning "Mother of All" and the feminine principle, but can also be worshipped individually for purifying sickness, suffering, and removing obstacles].

The Maras [a demon that represents temptation] **from all directions become contentious. Unoppressed by their**

painful analytic exertion [unaffected by the Maras], **the excellent and precious qualities of the gurus’ wisdom-mindstream are transmitted into my heart-essence** [they center on a profound state of enlightenment (*bodhi*), characterized by the inseparability and perfect realization of wisdom and compassion, the direct, non-conceptual understanding of the true nature of reality beyond appearances and conceptual fabrications, such as ignorance, egoism, and grasping for “self” (as “soul”). **And thus, the mind stream** [the continuous flow of mental events and perceptions] **tantra is communicated into me** [a personal spiritual or psychological experience].

The outer Kalachakra [the external world, including the physical elements (earth, water, fire, wind, space), geographical features like mountains and continents, and celestial bodies such as planets and stars, all of which undergo cycles of formation, endurance, disintegration, and emptiness] – **the mountains, countries, planets, stars – taking form arise from the expansion and contraction of the inner channels, winds, and drops** [as the subtle energy system within the human body in Vajrayana Buddhist anatomy; this system involves:

- Channels: an invisible set of three (central, right, and left channels) connected in the lower abdomen that carry the “wind” energies that form the basis of advanced yogic and tantric practices;
- Winds: the subtle energies or *prana* flow through the channels driven by karmic forces (the effect of one's intentional thoughts, words, and actions, “cause and effect”, influencing future physical and mental experiences leading to liberation or other consequences);
- Drops: the creative energy (*bindus*) are generally located in the *chakras*, central points where channels converge],

in their own shapes, as the union of appearance [our sensory experiences] **and emptiness** [variously defined as “the ultimate nature of things”, “the *lack* of any *inherent* self-existence”, or “the way things *are*” (vs. the way they appear, i.e., interdependent). These are the core cosmology and psycho-physiology from the Kalachakra Tantra, including “the wheel of time” (the profound interconnectedness and parallelism between the external universe and the internal universe of the human body).]

The *inner* Kalachakra is all inner phenomena, which are pure by nature. [The internal, physical, and psychological cycles of a sentient being, particularly the human body's subtle energy system (channels, winds, and drops above) and its life cycle, which is seen as a microcosm of the external universe. It encompasses the processes of death, birth, and the mind-body complex, and is a key component of the Kalachakra Tantra's practice, which aims to purify these cycles to achieve liberation or enlightenment.]

The *innate* Kalachakra is residing in the yidam [the Kalachakra him/or her self].

Together they [the outer, inner, and innate] **are the great unchanging bliss and emptiness** [a profound sense of wellbeing with the understanding that phenomena lack any inherent, independent existence (or *emptiness*)] **indivisible as Mahamudra** [advanced meditation on the true nature of mind, described as empty, luminous, and aware], **taking its place of rest as the Heruka** [an enlightened deity in Vajrayana Buddhism that represents wisdom and compassion, often depicted with a fierce or wrathful appearance – Kalachakra as deity] **who pervades all of samsara-nirvana, the natural mode of spontaneous rigpa** [pure awareness], **that of indivisible primordial purity and effortless presence, which gives the final teaching – the very being of the dharmakaya** [“truth body”], **the body of vajra wisdom** [the “ultimate” view of the “true nature of things”].

The *essence* of Kalachakra is the mantra made of ten seed syllables [Ya, Ra, Va, La, Ma, Ksha, Ha, plus a crescent, bindu, and nada] known as the **Tenfold Powerful One**: (illustrated here) the *outer* is the vessel of the realms of the world; the *inner* is the vajra body; the *innate* is the mandala of the mind.

Homage to the Adi Buddha [Kalachakra], the **uncontrived, space-pervading vajra** [a state of primordial, non-conceptual awareness that is both inherently free and all-pervading, like space; the nature of reality and consciousness as pure, empty clarity that needs no modification or manipulation. The "uncontrived" aspect means it is natural and not artificially created, while "space-pervading" indicates its all-encompassing and unobstructed quality], **wholly arisen as the constant consort of form!**



We have blissful feelings of our self [a state of deep happiness, fulfillment, and peace that can be achieved through practices like mindfulness, gratitude, and self-analysis] **and the bliss of Buddha wisdom nature** [the ultimate happiness and profound wisdom inherent in a being's true nature, which is a state of being free from suffering, achievable through spiritual practice], **while reciting the mantra continuously** [below]. **The deity whose truth is undivided outer, inner, and innate, may glorious Kalachakra give constant protection.**

The É syllable, emptiness free of extremes, is Vish-vamata [Kalachakra's consort], **embodiment of the feminine principle of wisdom; Vam, great bliss, is the masculine principle as glorious Kalachakra; their non-dual play** [union of masculine and feminine] **is the Ten-Fold Powerful One. The three – outer, inner, and innate – undivided, are the natural** [ultimate] **environment.**

The space-pervading vajra stripped bare [there is no known meaning, but points towards the all-encompassing nature of this reality or awareness], **totally isolated from particles of change** [this describes the ultimate reality or the enlightened state of a Buddha, which is a state of "permanence and stability" beyond the impermanence of conventional existence, a state no longer subject to these continuous fluctuations and the suffering they cause], **is the true view.**

Oh, glorious gift of the wheel of space, É Ma! Wondrous!

OM AH HUNG HO HACHA MALA VARA YAM SOHA [a simplified version of the Kalachakra mantra:

"Om Ah Hung Ho" represents the body, speech, mind, and wisdom of the Buddhas

"Hacha" is an abbreviation of **Ham Kshah**, the seed syllables for the Kalachakra and his consort.

"Ma La, Va Ra" stand for the four elements: earth, water, fire, and air.

"Yam" is a symbol of vitality and energy

“Soha” is well said or so be it, or the establishment of the mantra's blessing in the heart

(21X) Recite the mantra 21 or other number of times, *then relax your brain, body and abide in peace for 15 minutes.*

A **“tilaka”** mark **between the eyebrows condenses the essential points of the Kalachakra**

Tantra: *rigpa* [pure awareness] **and the “wheel of time”** [the cyclical nature of time and existence, from the cosmic to the personal, connecting outer cosmic events with inner bodily processes and the path to enlightenment, which involves advanced meditation and ritual practices.

Dedication: By this virtue may I quickly attain the state of Kalachakra and Vishvamata, and may I lead all sentient beings into that state with none left behind. (3X) **<Bell & Drum>**

Prajnaparamita – The Heart Sutra

Focus: Realization of the transcendent understanding
of things beyond ordinary sensory experiences

Transcendent or Nonconceptual Wisdom [OR the heart essence of ultimate wisdom]

Adapted from multiple sources and comments by Khenpo Drimed Dawa

Background: The most popular and well known of all Buddhist “scriptures”, often recited daily. Written in China (adapted) from the Maha Prajnaparamita Sutra from. Long version – 25 lines; short version – 14 lines. This is the long version with contextual information at beginning and end.

Literature

- Prajnaparamita – Transcendent wisdom, Heart of the Perfection of Wisdom – personification as “Mother of All Buddhas”
 - Best known – *Heart Sutra, Diamond Sutra, Perfection of Wisdom in 8000 Lines, Perfection of Wisdom Sutra in 25000 Lines...* about 40 texts 100 BCE to 500 CE; most likely from recent research, it emerged from the Duhuang manuscripts in Chinese version as early as 7th century CE.
 - These texts are a collection also, known as the Second Turning of the Wheel – teachings on “emptiness” as a “transcendent” experience (beyond thoughts).
 - Nagarjuna (and others) 150-250 CE, influenced by Prajnaparamita but based on known teachings of the Buddha
 - Sanskrit versions: there are two versions: short (14 lines or verses) and long (25 lines or verses adding the setting and context at beginning and end) and they do not use “sutra” in title (i.e., not considered a direct teaching of the historical Buddha or his closest disciples)
- Many consider it to be the “most beloved” of all Buddhist texts – often recited daily as part of morning prayers, especially in monasteries
- Awam Practice Manual includes a newer version that illustrates a newer view with more specific meaning. Following that is a more traditional example and commentary on the long version; *Innate Happiness* also has the short version (p. 132, 3rd Edition).



Prajnaparamita

Avalokiteshvara – the bodhisattva [or the Buddha] of great compassion – going deep into the profound practice of transcendence [experience beyond normal, a transcendent or non-conceptual experience] **saw clearly that the heart-essence** [the innate or ultimate nature] **of the five aggregates** [form (the physical body), feeling (sensations), perception (identifying and recognizing), mental formations (volition and intention), and consciousness (awareness)] **is “emptiness”** [i.e., the heart-essence is emptiness] **being empty of** [the *qualities* of] **complete permanence, independence, and self-existence.** [These qualities are mere “conceptualizations”, not something that is “real”, as they appear to our senses].

Thus, the heart-essence transcends *all* sufferings [sufferings, discontent, and unhappiness are just “conceptualizations” in our mind!]. **The heart-essence of the form aggregate is emptiness** [transcendent, ineffable, nonconceptual], **and emptiness is the heart-essence of form**; [again] **the heart-essence of form is not other than emptiness, emptiness is not other than the heart-essence of form** [or form is no other than emptiness and emptiness is no other than form; in essence they are one and the same - transcendent or ineffable ... beyond conceptualizations]. **The same is true with the other aggregates: feelings, perceptions, thoughts, and consciousness.** [Thus, all of these aggregates ultimately are said to transcend conceptualizations (somewhat ironically though, this “transcendence” itself is but another level of conceptualization).]

Thus, all phenomena are fundamentally marked with [defined by the quality of] **emptiness** [or transcendence]; **they are not produced nor destroyed** [not “defined by birth or destruction”], **not defiled nor pure, not deficient nor complete** [all of these are “really real” the way they conventionally appear to be].

Therefore, there is no *other* heart-essence in form, feelings, perceptions, mental formations, and consciousness;

There is no *other* heart-essence in eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, or mind;

There is no *other* heart-essence in seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, or thinking;

There is no *other* heart-essence in the realm of sight and so on up to the realm of consciousness;

There is no *other* heart-essence in ignorance or extinction of ignorance;

There is no *other* heart-essence in old age and death, or extinction of old age and death;

There is no *other* heart-essence in suffering, origination of suffering, extinction of suffering, the path;

There is no *other* heart-essence in wisdom or attainment; all are transcended in the heart-essence of mind.

Since there is *nothing other* to be attained, bodhisattvas abide in this transcendent heart-essence without fear. Liberating themselves from delusions, they awaken *ultimate* liberation [or enlightenment].

Therefore, one should know that perfect transcendence is the greatest mantra, the highest mantra, the incomparable mantra, the mantra that clears all suffering, the deepest truth. The mantra of perfect transcendence is:

(Tayata) (Om)⁵ Gaté, gaté, paragaté, parasamgaté, bodhi soha! *Gone, gone, gone beyond, gone far beyond; be rooted in the ground of Awakening!* This is often also “chanted” with the beat of the individual syllables.

(21X) Then meditation for 15 minutes. Ending with the **<Bell & Drum>**

⁵ “Tayata” and/or “Om” are sometimes included

A Very Concise Self-Explanatory Version

When practicing deeply in the Perfection of Wisdom, the Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara perceived that all five aggregates are empty, thus transcending all suffering and distress.

Turning to Shariputra, he explained. Form is no other than emptiness, emptiness is no other than form. Form is exactly emptiness; emptiness is exactly form. Feeling, thought, impulse and consciousness are likewise just like this.

Shariputra, all phenomena are fundamentally emptiness – *ultimately* there is no birth, no death, nothing is pure, nothing is defiled, nothing increases or decreases.

Hence, in emptiness there are no forms, no feelings, no thoughts, no impulses, no consciousness.

No eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, or mind; no seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, or touching; no thinking, no realm of vision, up to and including no realm of thought.

No ignorance and no end of ignorance, up to and including no old age and death and no end to old age and death.

No suffering, cause, cessation, or path; no wisdom or attainment. Indeed, there is nothing to be attained.

The Bodhisattva depends on the Perfection of Wisdom with no hindrance in the mind and therefore no fear. Far beyond delusive thinking, they finally *awaken* to complete Nirvana.

All Buddhas of the past, present, and future depend on the Perfection of Wisdom and, thus, attain Unsurpassed Supreme Enlightenment.

Therefore, know that the Perfection of Wisdom mantra is the highest mantra, the brightest mantra, the peerless mantra, the supreme mantra, which completely ends all suffering. Know this as truth and do not doubt.

So, proclaim the Perfection of Wisdom mantra; proclaim this mantra; and declare:

Tayatha Om Gate Gate Para Gate Para Sam Gate Bodhi Soha (3X)

Ta-ya-tha _Om Ga-te Ga-te Pa-ra Ga-te Pa-ra Sam _ Ga-te Bo-dhi So_ha (*rhythmic format*)

Re-edited by Dharmacharya Andrew. J. Williams 2016, and slight changes by Khenchen Drimed Dawa 2025.

A Commentary on the Traditional Long Heart Sutra

Essence – Sometimes identified as “emptiness” or “empty of” one or more qualities: (1) Buddha said – empty of or lacking any innate or inherent quality of “self-existence” or “separate-self”, (2) he rejected Vedic terms of independent, permanent and partless, using their opposites: interdependent, impermanent, having parts, (3) he taught Buddhanature – luminous emptiness [it illuminates our understanding] and is beyond a “void”, (4) bliss-emptiness [ultimate “happiness” – eudaimonia – or peace], (5) **pure** awareness – innate, the ability or potential to become **aware of** things (like potential energy vs. kinetic (action) energy).

The Philosophy of the Heart Sutra – This is what philosophers sometimes call via negativa, inferring that you can't say **what it is**, only **what it is not**, OR reducing it to its essence (ignoring the fact that they still use words to say this, of course). **Keep this principle in mind when reading or chanting the text.**

HOMAGE to the Noble Lady [*Prajnaparamita – a female deity, not just a text*]: **Transcendent Conqueror – Heart** [*or essence*] **of Transcendent Wisdom** [*transcendent – peerless, incomparable, unequalled, unrivaled, unique, superior, supreme, sublime, magnificent, marvelous; transcendental – innate in the mind; Thich Nhat Hanh refers to Prajnaparamita as “the insight [wisdom] that brings us to the other shore” (Awakening)*].

Thus I have heard [*a stock prefix to sutras – teachings attributed to the Buddha or his closest followers*].... **Once the Transcendent Conqueror** [*Buddha*] **was dwelling in Rajghir** [*a town in NE India in the area of Bodhgaya – the place of Buddha's Awakening*] **on Vulture Peak** [*small peak with steep climb above the town of Rajghir where he is said to have given teachings; the place of the Second Turning of the Wheel – the teachings on Emptiness (1st Turning of the Wheel was the 4 Noble Truths in Sarnath at Deer Park)*], **together with a great sangha of Bhikshus** [*monks*] **and a great sangha of Bodhisattvas** [*those committed to helping others attain Full Awakening*]. **At that time from among the different Dharmas** [*teachings*], **the Transcendent Conqueror** [*Buddha*] **entered the samadhi** [*concentration or meditative absorption*] **called “profound illumination.”** [*Infers concentration on emptiness*]

[*Start of the short version*]

At the same time the noble and powerful Avalokiteshvara [*Chenrezig*] – **the Bodhisattva-Mahasattva** [*bodhi = Awakened; maha = great; sattva = being, so Awakened Great Being*] – **looked clearly at the profound practice of transcendent wisdom and saw clearly that the five aggregates** [*also skandhas or heaps: (1) form, (2) feelings [pleasant, unpleasant, neutral], (3) perceptions, (4) thoughts [mental formations], (5) consciousness*] **are empty by nature** [*that is, lacking 3 specific qualities: independent [vs. interdependent], permanent [vs. interdependent], partless [vs. having parts, components, elements, etc.]; i.e., nothing existent has those*].

Then by the Buddha's power, the venerable Shariputra [*one of Buddha's top two disciples*] **asked the noble and powerful Avalokiteshvara – the Bodhisattva-Mahasattva, “How should noble men and women, who wish to engage in the profound practice of transcendent wisdom, train?”** Thus he spoke.

The noble and powerful Avalokiteshvara – the Bodhisattva-Mahasattva – answered the venerable Shariputra with these words: “Shariputra, noble men and women who wish to engage in the profound practice of transcendent wisdom should see this clearly – the five aggregates [*form [body], feelings, perceptions, thoughts, consciousness*] **are empty** [*interdependent, not self-entities*], thus transcending [*beyond*] all suffering [*e.g., the 3 sufferings – (1) suffering of suffering: physical pain and mental anguish (mostly the latter), sometimes listed as “suffering on top of other suffering”, (2) suffering of change, including not getting what*

you want or getting what you don't want, (3) all pervasive suffering: general discontent, dissatisfaction, etc.

Oh, Shariputra, form is emptiness [or form is empty, i.e. is interdependent, impermanent (changes)], **emptiness is form** [has the same essence, interdependent; “yet there is this body of mine” – the Buddha]; **form is not other than emptiness** [empty], **emptiness is not other than form**. [They lack the quality of inherent self-existence. Each is interdependent, so their essence is the same. Two examples: (1) the sun and its rays – no sun, no rays; no rays, no sun; (2) a mirror and its reflection – no mirror, no reflection; no reflection, no mirror. They are interdependent.] **The same is true with feelings, perceptions, thoughts, and consciousness**. [All 5 aggregates that compose the person (sentient being) lack or are empty of any inherent self-existence.]

[What follows here are lists of traditional Buddhist teachings or topics, which are shown here to be “empty” of or “lacking” any inherent self-existence; so all are the same in their essence, at least on the ultimate level of insight. All beings lack specific qualities, not a void.] **Oh, Shariputra, all phenomena are** [“bear the mark of”] **emptiness** [empty or lack of independent existence; they are interdependent]; [list of opposite pairings follows] **they are not produced nor destroyed** [their true essence is the same, unchanging, so that nature cannot be either produced or destroyed], **not defiled nor pure** [same], **not deficient nor complete** [same]. [The sutra continues illustrating the principle with other Buddhist concepts.] **Therefore, in emptiness there is no form, no feelings, no perceptions, no mental formations, and no consciousness** [repeating the list of 5 aggregates, then...sense organs also lack any independence]. **There is no eye, no ear, no nose, no tongue, no body, no mind** [the 6 sense organs; “mind” is included in the Buddhist list of sense organs and senses. Then, perceptions, too.]. **There is no seeing, no hearing, no smelling, no tasting, no touching, no thinking** [the 6 senses or perceptions]. **There is no realm of sight and so on up to no realm of consciousness** [Buddhism describes separate consciousnesses related to each of the 6 perceptions, e.g., seeing and eye consciousness]. **There is no ignorance and no extinction of ignorance** [a reference to the 12 links of dependent origination]. [The next sentence refers to the four sufferings: birth, old age, sickness and death.] **There is no old age and death, and no extinction of old age and death**. [Then, the Four Noble Truths.] **Likewise, there is no (1) suffering, no (2) origination of suffering, no (3) extinction of suffering, no (4) path**; [adding the fruition] **there is no wisdom, no attainment** [no Awakening itself!]. [Those last two, seemingly the very theme of the Heart Sutra itself, are not self-existent entities either! So what is left?! Via negativa. A “non-conceptual” direct experience beyond words, like Nagarjuna’s tetralemma: not a thing, not nothing, not both, not neither.]

Since there is **nothing** to be “attained”, the Bodhisattvas rely on this “**perfection of wisdom**” [beyond words, labels, concepts, etc., i.e., nonconceptual insight] and abide in it without fear. Liberating themselves from illusion [that our perceptions and common understandings are “real”], they awaken ultimate enlightenment [Full Awakening]. **All Buddhas in the past, present, and future attained ultimate enlightenment** [or Full Awakening] by relying on this perfect transcendent wisdom [nonconceptual insight, perfect just as it is].

Therefore, one should know that perfect transcendent wisdom [*nonconceptual insight*] is the **greatest** mantra, the **highest** mantra, the **incomparable** mantra, the **mantra that clears all suffering**, the **deepest truth** [*i.e., transcendent, terms we saw at the beginning*]. The mantra for perfect transcendent wisdom is proclaimed:

[Tat-yata and/or Om] Gaté, gaté, paragaté, parasamgaté, bodhi soha! [1X or 3X]

[Usually: Gone, Gone, Gone Beyond, Gone Far Beyond; expression of the joy of Awakening!]

[Another: Go, Go, Go Beyond, Go Totally Beyond; be rooted in the ground of Awakening!]

[*This is the end of the short version and remainder of the long version follows:*]

Shariputra, this is how a Bodhisattva-Mahasattva should train in the profound transcendent.”

Then the Transcendent Conqueror [*Buddha*] arose from that samadhi [*meditation*] and praised the noble and powerful Avalokiteshvara – the Bodhisattva-Mahasattva – saying, “Excellent, excellent noble son; it is so; it is just so profound. Transcendent wisdom [*nonconceptual insight*] should be practiced just as you have taught. All the tathagatas [*Buddhas*] rejoice.”

When the Transcendent Conqueror [*Buddha*] said this, the venerable Shariputra, the noble and powerful Avalokiteshvara – the Bodhisattva-Mahasattva, the whole retinue and the world with its gods, people, demigods [*jealous gods*], and gandharvas [*lower level nature-deities*] rejoiced and praised these words of the Transcendent Conqueror. [*Buddhism does not reject the idea of gods or deities, although they are not Buddha-forms.*] Thus ends the Mahayana Sutra [*the Great Vehicle or Bodhisattva Path*] called Noble Lady [*Prajnaparamita*], the Transcendent Conqueror, the Heart [*or essence*] of Transcendent Wisdom [*or nonconceptual insight that brings us to the “other shore” of Full Awakening*].

This concludes the commentaries for the Awam Practice Manual, Awam Tibetan Buddhist Institute, Tucson, Arizona, USA, by resident Yogi Khenchen Drimed Dawa. May this be of assistance in understanding the practices and texts. Any errors or misunderstandings are my own. (Khenchen Dean)