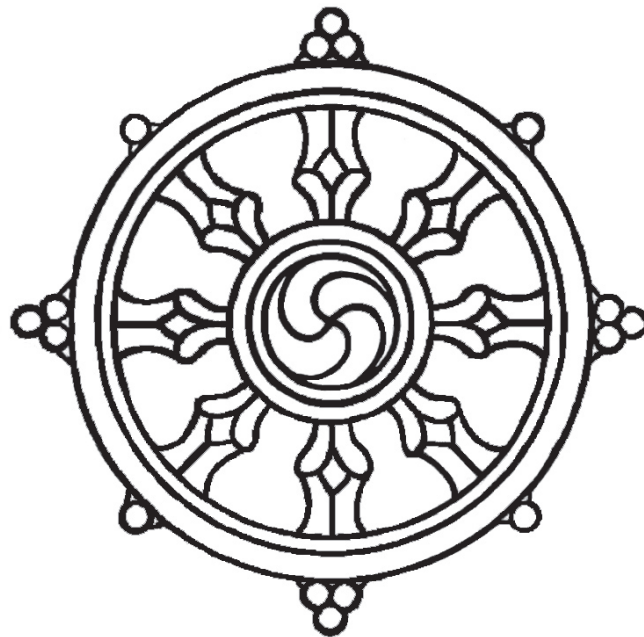


Tonglen Sadhana

with Commentary



TONGLEN PRACTICE

Opening Prayers

Shakyamuni Buddha Mantra

(Calling the Guru)

Repeat many times.

TAYATA OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNI YE SOHA

Prostrations

Sing three times.

OM NAMO MANJUSHRI YE
NAMO SU SHRI YE
NAMO UTTAMA SHRI YE SOHA

Refuge and Bodhicitta

Sing three times.

SANG GYE CHO TANG TSOK KYI CHOK NAM LA
CHANG CHUB BAR DU DAG NI KYAP SU CHI
DA GI JIN SOK GYI PE SO NAM KYI
DRO LA PEN CHIR SANG GYE DRUP PAR SHO

I go for refuge until I am enlightened,
To the Buddhas, the Dharma, and the Sangha.
By the merits from giving and other perfections,
May I attain Buddhahood in order to benefit all
sentient beings.

Four Immeasurable Thoughts

Sing three times.

SEM CHEN TAM CHE DE WA DANG DE
WAY GYU DANG DAN PAR GYUR CHIG

SEM CHEN TAM CHE DUG NGEL DANG DUG
NGEL GYI GYU DAN DREL WAG GYUR CHIG

SEM CHEN TAM CHE DUG NGEL ME PAY DE
WA DANG ME DREL WAR GYUR CHIG

SEM CHEN TAM CHE NYE RING CHAK
DANG NYI DANG DREL WAY TANG
NYOM LA NE PAR GYUR CHIG

May all sentient beings have happiness
and the causes of happiness.

May all sentient beings be free from
suffering and the causes of suffering.

May all sentient beings never be separated from
the happiness that is free from suffering.

May all sentient beings abide in equanimity,
free from attachment and anger that
hold some close and others distant.

Seven-Limb Prayer

Reverently, I prostrate with my
body, speech and mind;
I present clouds of every type of
offering, actual and imagined;
I declare all my negative actions
accumulated since beginningless time,
And rejoice in the merit of all
holy and ordinary beings.
Please remain until the end of cyclic existence,
And turn the wheel of Dharma for living beings.
I dedicate my own merits and those of all
others to the great enlightenment.

Eight Verses on Training the Mind

By Langri Tangpa, translated by Jeffrey Hopkins

With a determination to accomplish
The highest welfare for all sentient beings
Who surpass even a wish-granting jewel
I will learn to hold them supremely dear.

Whenever I associate with others I will learn
To think of myself as the lowest among all
And respectfully hold others to be supreme
From the very depths of my heart.

In all actions I will learn to search into my mind
And as soon as an afflictive emotion arises
Endangering myself and others
Will firmly face and avert it.

I will learn to cherish beings of bad nature
And those pressed by strong sins and sufferings
As if I had found a precious
Treasure very difficult to find.

When others out of jealousy treat me badly
With abuse, slander, and so on,
I will learn to take all loss
And offer the victory to them.

When one whom I have benefited with great hope
Unreasonably hurts me very badly,
I will learn to view that person
As an excellent spiritual guide.

In short, I will learn to offer to
everyone without exception
All help and happiness directly and indirectly
And respectfully take upon myself
All harm and suffering of my mothers.

I will learn to keep all these practices
Undeiled by the stains of the
eight worldly conceptions
And by understanding all
phenomena as like illusions
Be released from the bondage of attachment.

Short Mandala Offering

SA ZHI PO KYI JUG SHING ME TOG TRAM
RI RAB LING ZHI NYI DA GYAN PA DI
SANG GYA SHING DU MIG TE UL WA YI
DRO KUN NAM DAG SHING LA CHO PAR SHOG

This ground, anointed with
perfume, flowers strewn,
Adorned with Mount Meru, four
lands, sun and moon,
I imagine this as a Buddha-land and offer it to you.
May all beings enjoy this pure land.

IDAM GURU RATNA MANDALAKAM NIRYATAYAMI

I send forth this jeweled mandala
to you, precious gurus.

Tonglen Prayer

Recite.

Self-cherishing is the source of all degeneration
While cherishing my mothers is
the base of all qualities.
Bless me to make the essence of my practice
The exchange of self for others.

(Music score next page) Sing three or seven times.

Oh hence, compassionate,
venerable Gurus, bless me
That all my wand'ring mothers'
suffering and hindrances
Without remnant, ripen on me now.
And by sending my joy and virtue to others,
All beings come to be endowed with Bliss.

Sing at the end of the final verse.

May all beings come to be endowed with Bliss.

Prayer for Exchanging Self for Others

Adapted from the Guru Puja (per.85), translated by David Monk

Recite first section 7 times



Voice Oh hence, com-pas-sion-ate,



ven-era-ble gu-rus, bless me



That all my wand'-ring moth-ers'



suff-ring and hin-dran-ces, with-out



rem-nant ri-pen on me now.---



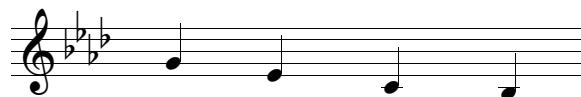
And by send-ing my joy and



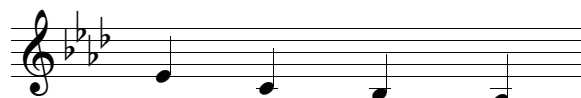
vir-tue to oth-ers,--- all beings



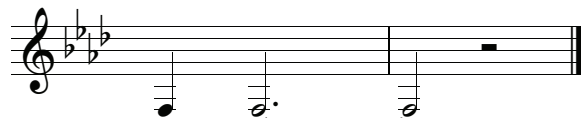
come to be en-dowed with bliss.---



May all beings come



to be en-dowed



with bliss.---

Closing Prayers

Long-Life Prayer for His Holiness the Dalai Lama

KANG RI RA WE KOR WE SHING KAM DIR
PEN TANG DE WA MA LU JUNG WE NEI
CHEN RE ZI WANG TEN DZIN GYA TSO YI
SHAP PE SI TE BAR DU TEN GYUR CHIK

Until worldly existence itself comes to an end,
may Avalokiteshvara, source of all benefit and joy
in this land that snowy mountains encircle,
remain in the form of His Holiness Tenzin Gyatso.

Dedication of Merit

CHANG CHUP SEM CHOK RIN PO CHE
MA KYE PA NAM KYE GYUR SHING
KYE PA NYAM PA ME PA TANG
GONG NE GONG DU PEL WAR SHO

May the priceless bodhicitta be awakened
in those in whom it is absent.
In those for whom it has dawned, may it not
fade but grow always from height to height.

JAM PEL PA WO JI TAR KYEN PA TANG
KUN TU SANG PO DE YANG DE SHIN TE
DE DAG KUN GUI JE SU DAG LOP CHIR
GE WA DI DAK TAM CHE RAP TU NGO

In whatever way valiant Manjushri and
Samantabhadra know how to transfer
merit, so do I dedicate all of my own virtues
that I might train to be like them.

Long-Life Prayer for Our Teacher

Oh Buddhas and Bodhisattvas,
our gratitude for your teachers and
teachings is as deep as the ocean.
Please bless us with the presence of
Geshe Kalsang Damdul for a long time to
come and remove any obstacles to his practice,
so that he may continue to lead us and
others along the path to enlightenment.

TEACHING ON THE TONGLÉN PRACTICE

By Geshe Kalsang Damdul
Shakyamuni Tibetan Buddhist Center
Portland, Oregon, July 23, 2005

First of all I would like to extend my heartfelt greetings to everyone. Some of you are new to me but many have been my good friends. I want to extend tashi delek, heartfelt greetings, to everyone. First we will do the opening prayers, then sit in silent meditation, have a discussion on the practice and, finally, we'll engage in the meditation.

Welcome everybody. I was here last year in June. Now I'm back again in July. Since one year has already passed for me and each of you, all of us have become one year older. This means that from the time we have taken a birth into this world we are constantly in the process of change. Physically we are constantly in the process of decay. Mentally, if we are not able to change our mind via the realization of some subtle mental state that is unrelated to either the physical body or our brain, then all these gross levels of mind are also in the process of decay along with the brain's cells and neurons. In other words, every minute, every second, we are nearing death.

While we are still alive, we must make use of this precious human rebirth for a meaningful purpose. When we are in the near death state and we look back at what we have done in this world, and if we are able to see that we have been able to do something and improve, then we will be able to rejoice and will not regret losing this precious human birth because we will have utilized it for a really meaningful purpose.

On the other hand, if we have not taken the opportunity to create a meaningful purpose for this human birth, then we'll start to regret when we are near death. At that time it is too late. This body will say goodbye to us. As Shantideva says, "This precious human body is like a ship. With this ship we will be able to cross the ocean of suffering." Therefore, try to make the best use of this precious human body to reach across the ocean of suffering. Otherwise, if you forget about this preciousness of the body, when it is time to die, you will have regrets.

We have an old story in Tibet. There was an old blind man who fell from a rooftop, but fortunately there was a horse below. When he fell, he was able to fall right onto the back of the horse. The man exclaimed that there was almost no chance for someone like himself to get on a horse by falling down. So he rode and rode to his satisfaction.

In a similar way, we must use this precious human birth for a really meaningful purpose. From the Buddhist perspective when we speak about the most meaningful purpose we can make of this human birth, it is working to calm our uncontrolled, undomesticated mind. Our mind is under the constant influence of three poisons: ignorance, attachment, and anger. When ignorance manifests in our mind stream, we become blinded about the true nature of self and about the true nature of other phenomena.

When attachment is in a manifest state, it rises within us and subconsciously makes us draw in everything that we wish for. Attachment has the power of drawing in, the power of making everything "mine." Subconsciously, we want to have everything; there is no end to our desire. When we go into the mall we look at everything and subconsciously we say to ourselves, "Oh, I need this. I need that." Then we look in our pocket and say, "Oh, I don't have much money right now." But when the craving becomes so strong, we say, "Okay, I'll pay later." We just run the credit card. When it's time to pay the bill we have regret saying, "Oh, I shouldn't have done that. I shouldn't have bought this." It's all junk of course.

Because you already have so many piles of junk in your house, I really wonder sometimes if all this stuff is really necessary. You already have so many blouses, so many pants, so many shoes. Do you need them all? If you check your closet, you can see your craving for all these things. Check to see if all these things have made you happier. Then maybe it is okay to some extent and you can use your credit card again and again and again. But, it is not so. The craving, the attachment, subconsciously makes us draw in, wanting to make everything "mine."

Subconsciously, hatred or anger has a repellent force in which we want to get rid of or avoid everything we do not like, our enemies. As we go on labeling, what we do subconsciously is generate a competitive attitude, resentment, or frustration. All of these are subconsciously created with the manifestation of anger. Having let attachment and anger play the role of god or our security person, have we become happier? I think not. There is not one single time when we are under the influence of craving or hatred that we have become happier. Not even for a moment. In this way we really need to in-

investigate how we are faring with our neurosis. We all seem to be becoming more crazy.

By letting afflictive emotions arise in us, we'll never be at peace; we'll never have tranquility. In order to have a quality life, we must work on taming our mind. There is no other way. Now, in domesticating our mind, we need to know which part is making us happy and which part is making us unhappy. Which part traumatizes us? Which part lets us down? Which part makes us smile, makes us physically relaxed? Which part brings self-esteem? If we investigate, the afflictive emotions are the source of all the troubles. The afflictive emotions traumatize us, let us down, and bring trouble to oneself, one's family, the community, and the world at large. When we look back throughout history, all the major conflicts, World Wars I and II, for example, are rooted in the afflictive emotions. All the problems in Iraq, in Israel and Palestine, Pakistan and India, China and Tibet are rooted in the afflictive emotions.

A minute of peace and tranquility, the closeness within the family, the trust and friendship between couples, and the joy to be part of a community or sangha, are all rooted in our positive attitude. When a loving mother smiles at her child, the child responds to the smile. It is the child's innate nature to react to the smile because he has sensed that his mother has shown love through that physical gesture. On the other hand, if a mother says harsh words, even to a very young child, the child reacts immediately in a very negative way. The mother's harsh words have a kind of energy that let the child respond in this way. Therefore, being born as a human and having all the opportunities to make ourselves a worthy person, genuine and respectful, we must work on cultivating the positive qualities that are within us. These are in a state of latency, or what we call the Buddha nature.

From beginningless time we have been carrying this Buddha nature within us, but, unfortunately, we have not been able to harness it and let it blossom. Either we have not had the opportunity or we have been under the influence of other factors. But now we know that we have the Buddha nature within us. We are capable of harnessing this Buddha nature. When we do that, we can generate boundless positive energy with which we will be able to send our vibrations not only to our near and dear ones, but to countless numbers of sentient beings throughout the universe. Making an effort to cultivate bodhichitta is one of

the most powerful methods of harnessing this Buddha nature and transforming it into a very powerful energy.

When we cultivate bodhichitta, we see ourselves as just a particle of dust and other sentient beings as infinite in number. We see that using ourselves for the benefit of countless numbers of sentient beings is the most beautiful way of utilizing this precious human birth. To engage in this kind of positive thought, we need to see the benefits of bodhichitta, not just at an intellectual level, but at an experiential level. We need to see just how much bodhichitta can benefit other sentient beings.

When we have a feeling for someone who is in the hospital, we have an outpouring of concern for that person. When we receive a telephone call from the hospital telling us that our near and dear one has been injured, we are shaken. Our reaction at that moment is a sense of caring. Each one of us gets this kind of feeling when we hear about the problems and the sufferings of someone to whom we are closely linked. This reaction is limited because it is restricted to those that we love. In the cultivation of bodhichitta, we need to make this feeling encompass every individual without any distinction or discrimination. Once we have accomplished this sense of caring, we have achieved the bodhi mind. It is developed within us through contemplation.

In our spiritual journey, however, we are likely to meet with many difficult people. We are not in the mountains! We are in society; we are in this world. Understanding this, we need to establish an attitude to deal with bossy or difficult people. Often we have preconceptions of what colleagues or co-workers are going to be like. What solutions can we devise to live with such people in order to avoid unpleasantness and confrontations in our day-to-day life? Shall we continue in a pattern of confrontation or shall we develop another solution so we both can be at peace?

Do tonglen in the morning after preliminary practice for the benefit of that difficult colleague or co-worker. Receive his suffering upon yourself. Send away your positive energies to him. The mind of the difficult person in your office is in an undomesticated state. Our Lamrim teaching says that we are under the control of mind and mind is under the control of afflictive emotions. Due to this process, we are the ones who suffer. Therefore, in the morning, before going to work, it is really beneficial to do tonglen for the difficult people whom you label as your enemies. Ask yourself what you can do for them. Take their sufferings and afflictive

emotions upon yourself and send away your positive energies to them.

You can also do these things for your friends, relatives, and whoever is suffering. When you do tonglen, receive their sufferings upon yourself in the form of smoke. When it reaches your heart, feel that you have generated a firm conviction that your self-cherishing attitude is completely extinguished. Then send away your positive energies in the form of blue, green, red, yellow, or white light. It's like sending your positive energies in the form of laser beams. When you do this for those who are sick and need help, you have to have a firm conviction and feeling that these beings are now completely healed. This will have a very powerful healing effect.

When you see someone at home or in the hospital who is physically, mentally, or emotionally sick, you can touch their hand. You don't need to say anything to him or her. Just do the tonglen. Just touch their hand and feel that you are receiving their sufferings into yourself and sending your healing energies to them.

When visiting hospital patients in Dharamsala, we generate a very powerful healing effect by letting them touch the mala while we recite the mantra. Then we recite the mantra together. Here in the West you bring flowers to hospital patients. Enhance this beautiful gesture by sending your positive energies into the flowers, blessing them. Then place the bouquet on the patient's table. Feel that the fragrance of the flowers conveys your positive energy and completely heals the patient.

There is a healing ritual in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition that cleanses feelings and the environment. It involves a ritual cake into which you transfer any emotional problems. These feelings are mixed with the ritual cake through meditation and the cake is later thrown out. We generate a firm feeling that the suffering of the person is no longer there. At the same time, we instruct the evil spirits or demonic forces to leave that person alone.

One is likewise able to heal so many people through the tonglen practice. The mind of bodhichitta that we have generated becomes very much stronger. We are not avoiding the troublesome or bad people in the practice. We are, rather, trying to generate a very positive attitude by saying we are not against them, but we are against their afflictive emotions.

Buddha Shakyamuni says that afflictive emotions are the enemy, not the person who has them. Normally we

see the person who has them as our enemy, but this is not the case. Our approach is totally different because we want to reinforce the mind of bodhichitta. Once this mind is reinforced, the door for practicing the six perfections is open.

The mind of bodhichitta is the foundation for practicing the six perfections: the perfection of generosity, the perfection of moral ethics, the perfection of joyous effort, the perfection of patience, the perfection of concentration, and the perfection of wisdom of reality. Once the bodhichitta is strong enough, as Shantideva mentions, we become sons and daughters of the Buddha, objects of reverence and objects of protection by the Buddhas and bodhisattvas. We become closely connected to the Buddhas and bodhisattvas. They come into us, into our visions and dreams, and show us the path. There is no better practice than cultivating the mind of bodhichitta.

A great Kadampa master of mind training compared the mind of bodhichitta to a diamond, a sun, and a medicinal plant. If a diamond is broken into parts, it is still the crown of all the jewels. The mind of bodhichitta, even if it is just a moment in your heart, is still a million times more precious than acquiring thousands and thousands of diamonds. It gives you inner peace and tranquility.

This mind of bodhichitta is like the sun because you are able to send out warmth not only to your relatives, but to the entire universe. When we examine this mental quality of warmth, we understand it to be like the mother's attitude toward her child or the attitude of a loving couple toward one another. But everywhere we are short of warmth! We need to understand that bodhichitta, like the sun, warms us.

Viewed as a medicinal plant, the mind of bodhichitta heals us emotionally. With the mind of bodhichitta, the afflictive emotions are diluted. Gradually, gradually, they are completely dispelled from our mindstream. Once the afflictive emotions are removed, we will be at peace. Therefore, we reinforce the mind of bodhichitta with tonglen practice. This is how we grow spiritually and emotionally. With this kind of growth, many physical and emotional problems become healed. In this way we will have led a very meaningful life. Having no regrets whatsoever when it is time to leave this body, we will be able to leave peacefully. This is why we practice tonglen.

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It is the sincere wish of the Shakyamuni Tibetan Buddhist Center members that all sentient beings achieve ultimate happiness and the greatest of benefits due to their regular practice of Tonglen as established in this Sadhana.

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