

Guru Yoga Practice of Lama Je Tsong Khapa
(Ga-den Lha-Gyai-ma)



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PRELIMINARIES

Refuge And Bodhichitta

SANG-GYE CHÖ DANG TSOG-KYI CHOG NAM-LA
JANG-CHUB BAR-DU DAG-NI KYAB-SU-CHI
DAG-GI JIN-SOG GYI-PAI SO-NAM KYI
DRO-LA PÄN-CHIR SANG-GYE DRUB-PAR-SHOG

[3x]

I take refuge in the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha,
Until I attain enlightenment.

By the merit accumulated from practicing generosity and the other perfections,
May I attain Enlightenment in order to benefit all sentient beings.

[3x]

Cultivating Four Immeasurable Attitudes

May all beings have happiness and its causes, (Love)

May all beings be freed from suffering and its causes; (Compassion)

May all beings constantly dwell in joy transcending sorrow; (Joy)

May all beings dwell in equal love for those both close and distant. (Equanimity)

[3x]

MAIN PRACTICE

The Hundreds Of Deities Of The Joyful Land (Gaden Lha Gyai Ma)

Inviting the Merit Field (Lama Tsongkhapa and His two Chief disciples)

From the heart of the Protector of the hundreds of deities of the the Joyful Land,
To the peak of a cloud which is like a cluster of fresh, white curd,
All-knowing Losang Dragpa, King of the Dharma,
Please come to this place together with your two chief disciples.

In the space before me on a lion throne, lotus, and moon,

The Venerable Gurus smile with delight.

Supreme Field of Merit for my mind of faith,

Please remain for a hundred aeons to spread the teaching.

Seven Limbed Prayer

Prostrations

Your minds of wisdom realize the full extent of objects of knowledge,
Your eloquent speech is the ear-ornament of the fortunate,
Your beautiful bodies are ablaze with the glory of renown.
I prostrate to you, whom to see, to hear, and to remember is so meaningful.

Offerings

Pleasing water offerings, various flowers,
Sweet-smelling incense, lights, scented water and so forth,
A vast cloud of offerings both set out and imagined,
I offer to you, Supreme Field of Merit.

Declarations

Whatever non-virtues of body, speech and mind
I have accumulated since time without beginning,
Especially transgressions of my three levels of vows,
With great remorse I declare each one from the depths of my heart.

Rejoicing

In this degenerate age you strove for much learning and accomplishment.
Abandoning the eight worldly concerns, you made your leisure and endowment meaningful.
Protector, from the very depths of my heart,
I rejoice in the great wave of your deeds.

Request for Dharma Teachings

From the billowing clouds of wisdom and compassion
In the space of your Enlightened minds, venerable and holy Gurus,
Please send down a rain of vast and profound Dharma
Appropriate to the disciples of this world.

Request to Remain

May your Vajra Body, created from the purity of clear light,
Free of the rising and setting of cyclic existence,
But visible to the ordinary viewer only in its unsubtle, physical form,
Stay on unchanging, without waning, until samsara ends.

Dedication

Through the virtues I have accumulated here,
May the teachings and all living beings receive every benefit.
Especially may the essence of the teaching
Of Lama Je Tsong Khapa shine forever.

Short Mandala Offering

SA-ZHI PÖ-KYI JUG-SHING ME-TOG-TRAM
RI-RAB LING-ZHI NYI-DÄ GYEN-PA-DI
SANG-GYE ZHING-DU MIG-TE BÜL-WA-YI
DRO-KÜN NAM-DAG ZHING-LA CHÖ-PAR-SHOG

This mandala is built on a base resplendent with flowers, saffron water and incense,
Adorned with Mount Meru, the four lands, the sun and full moon.

By offering this pure mandala to you assembly of Buddhas here before me,
May all living beings experience pure happiness and be reborn in pure lands.

DAG-GI CHAG-DANG MONG-SUM KYE-PAY-YUL
DRA-NYEN BAR-SUM LU-DANG LONG-CHÖ-CHAY
P'ANG-PA ME-PAR B'UL-GYE LEG-ZHE-NAY
DUG-SUM RANG-SAR DROL-WAR J'IN-GYI-LOB

The objects of desire, aversion and ignorance,
Friend, enemy, and stranger, my body and all possessions,
These I offer without clinging for your enjoyment,
Please bless me and all living beings to be released
From the three poisonous minds

OM IDAM GURU RATNA MANDALA KAMNIR YATAYAMI
I send forth this jewelled mandala to you, precious gurus.

Mantras of Lama Je Tsong Khapa

MIG-ME TZE-WAI TER-CHEN CHEN-RE-ZIG
DRI-ME KYEN-PAI WANG-PO JAM-PEL-YANG
DÜ-PUNG MA-LÜ JOM-DZE SANG-WAI DAG
GANG-CHEN KAY-PAI TZUG-GYAN TSONG-KHAPA
LO-ZANG DRAG-PAI ZHAB-LA SOL-WA DEB

You are Avalokitesvara, great treasure of unimaginable compassion,
And Manjushri, master of flawless wisdom,
And Vajrapani, Lord of the Secret and destroyer of hordes of maras without exception.
Tsong Khapa, crown jewel of the sages of the land of snows,
Lozang Dragpa, I make requests at your lotus feet.

OM AH GURU VAJRADHARA SUMATI KIRTI SIDDHI HUM

[3x]

[7, 21 or 100x's]

(Visualisation absorbing gurus into one's heart:)

Glorious, precious root Guru,
Please come to the lotus and moon seat at my crown,
And in your great kindness, please remain with me.
Please bestow upon me the blessings of your body, speech and mind.

Glorious, precious root Guru,
Please descend to the lotus and moon seat in my heart,
And in your great kindness, please remain with me.
Please grant me the common and supreme realizations.

Glorious, precious root Guru,
Please remain on the lotus and moon seat in my heart,
And in your great kindness, please remain with me.
Please remain until I achieve the essence of Enlightenment.

(END OF GADEN LHA-GYAI-MA)

Common Mantras

Guru Shakyamuni Buddha	OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNI YEY SVAHA
Chenrezig aka Avalokiteshvara	OM MANI PADMEY HUM
Orange Manjushri	OM AH RA PA TZA NA DHIH
Vajrapani	OM VAJRAPANI HUM
Green Tara	OM TARE TUTTARE TURE SVAHA
Medicine Buddha	OM BEKHANDZE BEKHANDZE MAHA BEKHANDZE BEKHANDZE RANDZA SAMUD GATE SVAHA
Prajna Paramita:	OM GATE GATE PARAGATE PARASAMGATE BODHI SVAHA

[3x, 7x or more each]

Prayer Of The Stages Of The Path *Zhin Ton Gyur Ma*

The path begins with strong reliance
On my kind Teacher, source of all good;
O bless me with this understanding
To follow him with great devotion.

This human life with all its freedoms,
Extremely rare, with so much meaning;
O bless me with this understanding
All day and night to seize its essence.

My body, like a water bubble,
Decays and dies so very quickly;
After death come results of karma,
Just like the shadow of a body.

With this firm knowledge and
remembrance
Bless me to be extremely cautious,
Always avoiding harmful actions
And gathering abundant virtue.

Samsara's pleasures are deceptive,
Give no contentment, only torment;
So please bless me to strive sincerely
To gain the bliss of perfect freedom.

O bless me so that from this pure thought
Come mindfulness and greatest caution,
To keep as my essential practice
The doctrine's root, the Pratimoksha

Just like myself all my kind mothers
Are drowning in samsara's ocean;
O so that I may soon release them,
Bless me to train in Bodhichitta.

But I cannot become a Buddha
By this alone without three ethics;
So bless me with the strength to practice
The Bodhisattva's ordination.

By pacifying my distractions
And analyzing perfect meanings,
Bless me to quickly gain the union
Of special insight and quiescence.

When I become a pure container
Through common paths bless me to enter
The essence practice of good fortune,
The supreme vehicle Vajrayana.

The two attainments both depend on
My sacred vows and my commitments;
Bless me to understand this clearly
And keep them at the cost of my life.

By constant practice in four sessions,
The way explained by holy Teachers,
O bless me to gain both the stages
Which are the essence of the Tantras.

May those who guide me on the good
path
And my companions all have long lives;
Bless me to pacify completely
All obstacles, outer and inner.

May I always find perfect Teachers
And take delight in holy Dharma,
Accomplish all grounds and paths swiftly,
And gain the state of Vajradhara.

Dedication Prayers

Dedication

GEY-WA DI-YI NYUR-DU-DAG
LA-MA SANG-GYEY DRUB-GYUR-NEY
DRO-WA CHIG-KYANG MA-LÜ-PA
KYEY-KYI SA-LA GÖ-PAR-SHOG-

By this virtue may I quickly
Attain the state of a Guru-Buddha (Enlightenment),
And then may I lead every being,
without exception, into that state.

JANG-CHUB SEM-CHOG RIN-PO-
CHEY
MA-KYEY PA-NAM KYEY-GYUR-CHIG
KYEY-PA NYAM-PA MEY-PAR-YANG
GONG-NEY GONG-DU PEL-BAR-
SHOG.

May the most precious and supreme bodhicitta
awakening mind
Which has not yet been generated now be
generated.
And may the precious mind of bodhicitta which has
been generated
Never decline, but always increase.

Dedicating Merit so that the Teachings of Lama Je Tsong Khapa may Flourish

So that the tradition of Je Tsong Khapa,
A King of the Dharma, may flourish,
May all obstacles be pacified
And may all favourable conditions
abound.

Through the two collections of myself and others
Gathered throughout the three times,
May the Teaching of Lama Je Tsong Khapa
Flourish for evermore.

Additional Prayers

Immortal Rain

Long-Life Prayer for Venerable Zasep Tulku Rinpoche

Wisdom of all the Buddhas, eternal adamantine nature,
clad in the three maroon robes and displaying the marks of perfection,
Lobsang Gyalwa Tsedzin (Tsongkapa), benefactor of life,
Please grant the joyous occasion for the attainment of immortality, Here and now!

Lobsang Tenzin Gyalsten (Zasep Rinpoche), Treasure of knowledge
of Jamgon's (Tsongkapa's) noble heritage and wish fulfilling power;
Concerned solely with upholding the Dharma in both theory and practice,
You please all the infinite Buddhas immensely,
Oh, learned propagator and holy teacher,
please stay firmly with us!

The pure white light of your peerless wisdom
Reveals the bountiful jasmine garden of Dharma's precepts and training.
May your smile, like full moon in a night in 'the autumn,
Shine undiminished until the end of existence.
Bodhisattva Lobsang Tenzin Gyalsten,
Please remain firmly with us!

Though the pernicious mind, like an elephant, is difficult to tame,
You have controlled it with the sharp hook of mental alertness.
Never crossing beyond the rules of Vinaya,
May you, Reverend Elder, truly live long!

Explaining in detail through exacting discernment,
The lapis-lazuli lineage of the Sutras and Tantras,
In well-spoken rhymes of complete perfection,
May your melodious tones always proclaim the Scriptures
and grace the ears of we fortunate ones!

Thus the teachings of Father Jampal Nyingpo (Tsongkhapa),
are like a wick in a lamp of refined molten gold,
May you through your life of purity and goodness,
Be one who raises its flame higher and higher,
and ever remain steadfastly with us!

By the compassion of the Triple Gem and the ocean of Conquerors;
By the power of the Dharma Protectors long-trusted and honoured;
By the true strength of unequivocal causal interdependence;
May the purpose of this prayer be accomplished,
Spontaneously and without hindrance!

PRAJNAPARAMITA:

The Sutra of the Heart of Transcendent Knowledge

Thus have I heard. Once the Blessed One was dwelling in Rajagrha at Vulture Peak mountain, together with a great gathering of the sangha of monks and a great gathering of the sangha of bodhisattvas.

At that time the Blessed One entered the samadhi that expresses the dharma called “profound illumination” and at the same time noble Avalokitesvara, the bodhisattva mahasattva, while practicing the profound Prajnaparamita, saw in this way: he saw the five skandhas to be empty of nature.

Then, through the power of the Buddha, Venerable Sariputra said to Noble Avalokitesvara, the Bodhisattva Mahasattva, “How should a son or daughter of noble family train, who wishes to practice the profound Prajnaparamita?”

Addressed in this way, Noble Avalokitesvara, the bodhisattva mahasattva, said to Venerable Sariputra, “O Sariputra, a son or daughter of noble family who wishes to practice the profound Prajnaparamita should see in this way: Seeing the five skandhas to be empty of nature. Form is emptiness, emptiness also is form. Emptiness is no other than form, form is no other than emptiness. In the same way, feeling, perception, formation and consciousness are emptiness.

Thus, Sariputra, all dharmas are emptiness. There are no characteristics. There is no birth and no cessation. There is no impurity and no purity. There is no decrease and no increase. Therefore, Sariputra, in emptiness, there is no form, no feeling, no perception no formation, no consciousness; no eye, no ear, no nose, no tongue, no body, no mind; no appearance, no sound, no smell, no taste, no touch, no dharmas; no eye dhatu up to no mind dhatu, no dhatu of dharmas, no mind consciousness dhatu; no ignorance, no end of ignorance, up to no old age and death, no end of old age and death; no suffering no origin of suffering, no cessation of suffering, no path, no wisdom no attainment, and no non attainment.

Therefore, Sariputra, since the bodhisattvas have no attainment they abide by means of Prajnaparamita. Since there is no obscuration of mind, there is no fear. They transcend falsity and attain complete nirvana. All the Buddhas of the three times, by means of Prajnaparamita, fully awaken to unsurpassable, true, complete enlightenment. Therefore, the great mantra of Prajnaparamita, the mantra of great insight, the unsurpassed mantra, the unequaled mantra, the mantra that calms all suffering should be known as truth, since there is no deception.

The Prajnaparamita mantra is said in this way:

OM GATE GATE PARAGATE PARASAMGATE BODHI SVAHA

Thus, Sariputra, the bodhisattva mahasattva should train in the profound Prajnaparamita.

Then the Blessed One arose from that samadhi and praised Noble Avalokitesvara, the bodhisattva mahasattva saying, “Good, good, O son of noble family; thus it is, O son of noble family, thus it is. One should practice the profound Prajnaparamita just as you have taught and all the tathagatas will rejoice. ”When the Blessed One had said this, Venerable Sariputra and Noble Avalokitesvara, the bodhisattva mahasattva, that whole assembly and the world with its gods, humans, asuras, and gandharvas rejoiced and praised the words of the Blessed One.

The Eight Verses Of Mind Training

1. Determined to obtain the greatest possible benefit from all sentient beings, who are more precious than a wish-fulfilling jewel, I shall at all times practice holding them most dear.
2. When in the company of others, I shall at all times practice considering myself the lowest of all, while from the depths of my heart holding others dear and supreme.
3. Vigilant, the moment a delusion appears in my mind, endangering myself and others, I shall at all times practice confronting and averting it without delay.
4. Whenever I see beings wicked in nature and overwhelmed by violent negative actions and suffering, I shall at all times practice holding such rare, difficult-to-find ones dear, as if I had found a precious treasure.
5. When, out of envy, others mistreat me with abuse, insult, or the like, I shall at all times practice accepting defeat and offering the victory to others.
6. When someone whom I have benefited and in whom I have great hopes gives me terrible harm, I shall at all times practice regarding that person as my holy guru.
7. In short, both directly and indirectly, do I offer every happiness and benefit to all my mothers. I shall at all times practice secretly taking upon myself all their harmful actions and suffering.
8. Through my perceiving all dharmas as illusory, may all the above practices never be defiled by the stains of the superstitions of the eight worldly dharmas, and may I, free of clinging, be released from the bondage of attachment.

The King of Prayers

O lions amongst people,
Buddhas past, present, and future,
To as many of you as exist in the ten directions
I bow down with my body, speech, and mind.

On waves of strength of this king
Of prayers for exalted sublime ways,
With bodies as numerous as atoms of the world
I bow down to the buddhas pervading space.

On every atom is found a buddha
Sitting amongst countless buddha sons,
I look with eyes of faith to the victorious ones
Thus filling the entire dharmadhatu.

Of these with endless oceans of excellence
Endowed with an ocean of wondrous speech
I sing praises of the greatness of all buddhas,
A eulogy to those gone to bliss.

Garlands of flowers I offer them,
And beautiful sounds, supreme perfumes,
Butter lamps and sacred incense,
I offer to all the victorious ones.

Excellent food, supreme fragrances,
And a mound of mystic substances high as Mount Meru
I arrange in a special formation
And offer to those who have conquered themselves.

And all peerless offerings I hold up
In admiration of those gone to bliss;
With the strength of faith in sublime ways
I prostrate and make offerings to the conquerors.

Long overpowered by attachment, aversion, and ignorance
Countless evils I have committed
With acts of body, speech, and mind.
Each and every one of these I now confess.

In the perfections of the buddhas and bodhisattvas,
The arhats, training and beyond,
And in the latent goodness of every living being,
I lift up my heart and rejoice.

O lights into the ten directions,
Buddhas who have found the passionless stage of
enlightenment,
To all of you I direct this request:
Turn the incomparable wheel of Dharma.

O masters wishing to show parinirvana,
Stay with us and teach, I pray,
For as many eons as there are specks of dust,
In order to bring goodness and joy to all beings.

May any small merits that I may have amassed
By thus prostrating, making offerings, confessing, rejoicing,
And asking the buddhas to remain and teach the Dharma,
Be dedicated now to supreme and perfect enlightenment.

May my offerings be received by all past buddhas
And by all those now abiding in the ten directions,
And may all the buddhas who have not yet come
Quickly perfect their minds and reach buddhahood, the state
of supreme full awakening.

May all the buddha-realms of the ten directions
Remain forever vast and completely pure,
May the world be completely filled with buddhas who have
attained illumination under sacred trees,
And may they all be surrounded by bodhisattvas.

May all living beings in the ten directions
Always abide in health and joy.
May they live in accord with the way of Dharma
And may their every wish become fulfilled.

By my living in the ways of enlightenment
May I remember my past lives in all my reincarnations,
And in all cycles of death, migration, and rebirth
May a sensitivity for truth be ever strong in me.

By my following in the footsteps of the buddhas
May I utterly perfect the sublime ways of the bodhisattvas,
And may I practice the faultless, undegenerating, stainless,
And pure ways of self-control.

May I master all languages that exist, including those of
The gods, yakshas, spirits, and varieties of men,
As well as all forms of communication of living beings,
That I may be able to show the Dharma in every way.

Striving thus and in the transcending perfections
May I never forget the bodhi mind,
And may I totally cleanse from within my mindstream
All negativities and mental veils.

May I gain freedom from karma, delusion, and karmic maras
To be able to live in the world unaffected by its stains
Like an unstained lotus grows in the mud,
And like the sun and moon shine without obstruction in the
sky.

For as long as there are buddha-fields and directions
May I strive to quell the misery of the lower realms,
May I place all beings only in happiness
And bring them all only happiness and joy.

May I strive to complete the ways of enlightenment
And to abide in ways harmonious with the world;
May I expose to others the ways most sublime
And myself abide in them throughout all future eons.

May my ways and the ways of a bodhisattva
 Always go together hand in hand.
 In body, speech, and mind
 May I attune to their sublime ways.

May I never be separated from the good friends
 Who reveal the path of the sublime ways
 And who wish only to benefit me;
 May I never disappoint them for even a moment.

May I constantly envision the perfect buddhas,
 The protectors who are surrounded by bodhisattvas,
 And in the future may I never weary
 Of devoting myself to them with all my strength.

May I forever uphold the holy Dharma of the buddhas
 And illumine the sublime way of enlightenment;
 May I practice throughout all future ages
 The ways of deeds of the sublime path.

Circling in the various realms of existence
 May I amass inexhaustible goodness and wisdom,
 And may I become an unending treasure of qualities
 Such as methods, wisdom, samadhi, and the experience of a
 bodhisattva.

In every atom are buddha-fields numberless as atoms,
 Each field is filled with buddhas beyond conception,
 And each buddha is surrounded by myriad bodhisattvas:
 To all these dwellers in sublime ways I turn my attention.

Thus, in all atoms within the directions
 Abide within the space of a single hair
 An ocean of buddhas within an ocean of buddha-fields
 Performing enlightened activities for an ocean of eons.

Each buddha with his perfect speech releases
 An ocean of sounds with every word he says
 To satisfy the infinitely diverse tendencies of beings:
 Thus does the speech of a buddha constantly flow.

All these conquerors past, present, and future
 Continually turn the methods of Dharma wheels;
 With all the powers of my mind I listen
 For the inexhaustible sound of their words.

All future eons that could possibly be,
 Manifest within me in a single instant;
 And I myself in a fraction of a moment
 Enter into all these eons of the three times.

All past, present, and future lions among men
 I envision with the instantaneous wisdom
 And by the power of the bodhisattvas' examples
 I focus upon the objects of their experience.

I manifest buddha-fields past, present, and future
 Upon one single atom of existence,
 And then I transform every single atom
 Of existence into a buddha-field.

By this, when the future lights of the worlds
 Eventually gain bodhi, turn the Dharma wheels,

And reveal the passing to nirvana's supreme peace,
 May I take rebirth in their very presence.

Then may I attain the ten powers:
 The power of instant magical emanation,
 The power which is a vehicle with every door,
 The power of excellent activity,
 The power of all-pervading love,
 The power of constantly positive energy,
 The power of passionless wisdom,
 The powers of knowledge, method, and samadhi,
 And the power of enlightenment itself.

May I purify the power of karma,
 May I crush the powers of delusion,
 May I render powerless the powerful maras,
 And may I perfect the powers of sublime ways.

May I purify an ocean of realms,
 May I liberate an ocean of sentient beings,
 May I see an ocean of truths,
 And may I realize an ocean of wisdom.

May I perform an ocean of perfect deeds,
 May I perfect an ocean of prayers,
 May I revere an ocean of buddhas,
 And may I practice untiringly for an ocean of eons.

Through my practice of the sublime bodhisattva ways
 May I gain the enlightenment of buddhahood
 And then fulfill the enlightened and sublime aspiration
 Of the buddhas past, present, and future.

In order to match the ways of the sage
 Called Samantabhadra, the always-sublime one,
 Chief amongst the awakened ones' sons,
 I now dedicate all virtues that I possess.

Just as the sublime sage Samantabhadra
 Dedicated all pure practices of body, speech, and mind
 To the attainment of a pure state and pure realms,
 So do I now dedicate the fruit of all my efforts.

In order to engage in all sublime virtues
 I offer the prayer of Manjushri;
 In the future may I never become faint
 In striving to perfect the exalted bodhisattvas' way.

May my deeds never reach a limit,
 May my qualities of excellence become boundless,
 And by abiding in immeasurable activity
 May I find buddhahood, the state of limitless manifestation.

Limitless is the extent of space,
 Limitless is the number of sentient beings,
 And limitless is the karma and delusions of beings
 Such are the limits of my aspirations.

One may offer supreme ornaments of the buddha-fields
Of the ten directions to the conquerors,
And also offer the highest joys of men and gods
For eons numerous as atoms of the world.

But to read or hear the King of Prayers
With eyes looking toward supreme illumination
And faith shining in one's heart for even an instant
Gives birth to a far more superior merit.

Should anyone recite this aspiration of sublime ways
They will pass beyond all states of sorrow,
Rise above all inferior beings, and gain
A vision of Amitabha, Buddha of Infinite Light.

Even in this very lifetime
All sublime joys will be theirs;
The experiences of the all-sublime Samantabhadra,
Without obstructions, will quickly be theirs.

Merely by giving voice to these aspirations
Of the sublime ways of a bodhisattva,
The effects can only be known by an omniscient buddha.
Therefore, doubt not that it leads to enlightenment.

In order to follow the excellent examples set
By the wisdom of the bodhisattva Manjushri
And the always-sublime Samantabhadra,
All virtues I dedicate to their peerless ideals.

All conquerors passed into the three times
Have praised as supreme this peerless dedication.
Therefore, I also surrender all roots of my activities
To the sublime goals of a bodhisattva.

When the moment of my death arrives,
May I remain free from the spiritual obscurations;
May I perceive the face of Amitabha
And transmigrate to Sukhavati, the pure land of joy.

Having arrived there, may I fulfill
All aims of this prayer of aspirations
And benefit the countless living beings
Residing throughout the ten directions.

In the joyous mandala of Amitabha Buddha
May I be reborn from a beautiful lotus,
And may I there have the pleasure of gaining
A pure prophecy from Amitabha himself.

Having won this word of prophecy,
By the power of mind may I fill all directions
With many millions of mystical emanations
And bring limitless benefits to the world.

If by reciting this prayer of the sublime ways
I have amassed a tiny fragment of goodness,
May it work immediately to fulfill
All Dharmic hopes of living beings.

Dharma Etiquette

Here are some elements of respect and etiquette when receiving teachings from a Lama (Teacher) in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition.

Teacher's entrance. Stand and bow slightly when the Lama enters the room. Remain standing while s/he prostrates to the Buddhas and his/her own Teachers (visualized on the throne) and takes his/her seat.

Prostration. After the Lama is seated, practicing Buddhists will perform three formal prostrations as a sign of respect to the Lama and teachings. Others may join in or stand quietly. For those wishing to participate, the form is: with palms together touch crown of head/ forehead, throat and heart; kneel on hands and knees, touching forehead to ground very briefly and rising quickly. Perform the entire act three times altogether. At the conclusion, once more touch hands to crown, forehead, throat and heart, pausing briefly at the end for contemplation; then take your seat.

Opening prayers and chants. These are to mark a break from ordinary activities and engender in ourselves good motivation to receive the teaching. Prayers will be read from the books and sheets available throughout the room. Please share if there aren't enough. Students and visitors may join aloud, or contemplate silently.

General etiquette. Other than the usual respectful behaviour, such as sitting quietly and alertly during the teaching, there are some points of etiquette specific to Eastern traditions and Buddhism. Avoid stretching your legs toward the Lama or altar, as pointing the soles of one's feet is considered disrespectful. Do not place spiritual texts on the floor or rug (O.K. on a folder, pack, pillow, handbag, etc. which is on the floor). When moving about, try not to step directly over such texts or over other people's cushions. Do not interrupt the formal teaching, but reserve your questions for later, when the Teacher indicates it is appropriate.

Dedication. The teaching ends with prayers that dedicate, to the benefit of others, any improvements and insights we may have gained during the teaching. Again, one may join in or contemplate silently.

Teacher's exit. As the Teacher stands to leave, stand and bow slightly until s/he is out of the room. Students will again perform three prostrations, except at the last teaching session, where the omission conveys our wish for the Teacher to return.

Addressing the teacher. Our resident Teacher's name is the Ven. Zasep Tulku Rinpoche (pronounced ZA-sep TUL-ku RIN-po-shay). In face-to-face discourse, as when asking questions during a teaching, address him as "Rinpoche," a term of respect for teachers who are incarnate lamas. In the third person, it is customary to always include the honorific, referring to him as "Zasep Rinpoche /" "Zasep Tulku Rinpoche," or "Rinpoche." The term Tulku" refers also to an incarnate lama but is not used in addressing the lama.

Colophon

These prayers were assembled under the guidance of the Venerable Zasep Tulku Rinpoche. Edited by Chuck Damov and formatted by Peter Lewis. Suggestions and comments are invited.