

USEFUL PRAYERS AND PRACTICE TEXTS

A) These two are standard verses recited before meditation in many Mahayana traditions, especially in Tibet.

Taking refuge and generating the altruistic aspiration

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

Enthused by wisdom and compassion,
Today in the Buddhas' presence,
I generate the mind for full awakening
For the benefit of all sentient beings.

Seven Limb Preliminary Prayer

(1) I prostrate to all you Buddhas who have graced the three times, to the Dharma and to the Highest Assembly, bowing down with bodies as numerous as all the atoms of the world.

(2) Just as Manjushri and others have made offerings to you, the Buddhas, so do I also make offerings to you, our awakened guides, and to your spiritual offspring.

(3) Throughout beginningless samsaric existence, in this and other lives, I've unwittingly committed negative acts, or caused others to commit them. Oppressed by the confusion of ignorance, I've rejoiced in this. Whatever I've done, I see them as mistakes and openly declare them to you, my Guardians, from the depths of my heart.

(4) With pleasure, I rejoice in the ocean of positive force of developing developed bodhichitta, aiming to bring every limited being joy and in your deeds that have aided limited beings.

(5) With palms pressed together, I beseech you Buddhas of all directions: please shine the lamp of Dharma for all sentient beings suffering and groping in darkness.

(6) With palms pressed together, I beseech you Buddhas who would wish to pass beyond sorrow: I beg you, remain for countless eons so as not to leave in their blindness these wandering beings.

(7) By whatever positive force I've built up through all of these actions I've done here, may I remove every suffering of all sentient beings.

The Four Immeasurables

May all sentient beings have happiness and its causes.

May all sentient beings be free from suffering and its causes.

May all sentient beings never be parted from sorrowless bliss.

May all sentient beings abide in equanimity, free from bias, attachment, and hatred.

B) Here are some other texts that I'm fond of and that inspire me.

Three Principle Aspects of the Path, by Tsongkhapa

<http://www.lotsawahouse.org/tibetan-masters/tsongkhapa/three-principal-aspects>

Foundation of All Good Qualities, by Tsongkhapa (14th century Tibetan founder of the Gelugpa order)

<http://www.lamayeshe.com/article/foundation-all-good-qualities>

On Giving Rise to the Enlightened Mind, by Dogen (13th century Japanese Zen master) [Note "enlightened mind" here means *bodhicitta*, the altruistic aspiration to awaken]

http://www.thezensite.com/ZenTeachings/Dogen_Teachings/Shobogenzo/085hotsuBodaiShin.pdf

Verses on Faith in the Mind, by Seng-ts'an (6th century Chinese Chan master)

<https://creativesystemsthinking.wordpress.com/2016/12/27/verses-on-faith-in-mind-seng-ts'an/>

C) Below are verses that were commented on, and chanted, by the Dalai Lama during his two weeks of teachings on the "stages of the path to enlightenment" (*lam rim* in Tibetan) at Tashi Lhunpo Monastery in Bylakuppe, India, in December 2016, which I attended with my wife and some friends from Colorado Springs.

Praise to Satisfying Sentient Beings: A Commentary on the Awakening Mind by Nagarjuna, 2nd century Indian master

[The Dalai Lama commented on many verses from this wonderful text but here are some choice selections.]

(Available at: https://www.jangchuplamrim.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Nagarjuna-Teaching-Booklet-English-Chinese_KKC_PDF_Final.pdf)

Selected verses:

3

It is with a mind moistened by compassion
That you must cultivate [awakening mind] with effort.
The Buddhas who embody great compassion
Constantly develop this awakening mind.

Support others with all possible factors;
Protect them as you would your own body.
Detachment towards other sentient beings
Must be shunned as you would a poison.

106

To accomplish self and others' welfare
No other means exist in the world;
Apart from the awakening mind
To date the Buddhas saw no other means.

107

The merit that is obtained
From mere generation of awakening mind,
If it were to assume a form
It will fill more than the expanse of space.

108

A person who for an instant
Meditates on the awakening mind,
The heap of merit [obtained from this],
Not even the conquerors can measure.

109

A precious mind that is free of afflictions,
This is the most unique and excellent jewel;
It can be neither harmed nor stolen by
Such robbers as the *mara* of afflictions.

110

Just as aspirations of the Buddhas
And the bodhisattvas are unswerving,
Likewise those who immerse themselves in
Awakening mind must hold firm their thought.

112

By praising the awakening mind hailed by the excellent
conquerors,
The incomparable merits I have obtained today from this act,
May through this all sentient beings submerged in the waves of
existence ocean
Travel on the path trodden by the leader of the bipeds.

Final Lam-Rim Dedication Prayers

[Chanted by the Dalai Lama and all 30,000 present at the end of each day's teachings.]

(Excerpts from p. 60-61 in https://www.jangchuplrim.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/2013hhdteachingprayerbookjangchuplrim_13Jan2014rf.pdf)

Using skillful means drawn by the strong force of compassion,
May I clear the darkness from the minds of all beings;
With the points of the path as I have discerned them,
May I uphold Buddha's teachings for a very long time.

With my heart going out with great compassion
In whatever direction the most precious teachings
Have not yet spread, or once spread have declined,
May I reveal this treasure of happiness and aid.

May the minds of those who wish for liberation be granted bounteous peace,
And the buddhas' deeds be nourished for a long time
By even this graded path to enlightenment completed,
Due to the wondrous virtuous conduct of the buddhas and their sons.

May all human and non-human beings who eliminate adversity
And create conducive conditions for practicing the excellent paths
Never be parted in any of their lives
From the purest path praised by the buddhas.

Whenever someone makes effort to act
In accordance with the ten-fold Mahayana virtuous practices
May he always be assisted by the mighty ones [spiritual aids and protectors of various sorts],
And may oceans of prosperity spread everywhere.