

*A Collection of Buddhist  
Healing Prayers and Practices*

with essays

*by Jason Espada*



## Preface

### A Collection of Buddhist Healing Prayers and Practices

#### Preface

For me, the whole of religion in general, and Buddhism in particular can be thought of as having a healing function. From what I can tell, if two conditions are present they can work to heal both the body and the soul, or the inner life of a person.

The first requirement for healing to be accomplished using the resources of a Tradition is that a link be maintained with the deep sources of vitality that can be found in these Traditions. If it happens instead that the contemplative aspect weakens, or if it becomes dissipated by too much intellectualization, or forced to the edges by a religion's search for political power, then a tradition can stop working for people.

The second requirement for the healing values in traditions to continue to work in people's lives is that we intelligently adapt the teachings as they have come to us. By 'intelligently' in this case I mean not changing them so much so that we're just 'winging it', or 'inspired by' what has come before, but also not just repeating the way people from another culture and time thought and practiced. If we do that then teachings then can take on an archaic quality, and it can feel like they are not relevant to our lives as they are now. It's clear to me that we can and should adapt traditional teachings so that they work for us.

Hopefully both of these requirements will be met to some extent in the following pages. May all beings benefit.

May all beings be happy and at peace  
and may their hearts be filled with joy

## Preface

A Note on the use of A Personal Sadhana – for Medicine Buddha practice:  
Hanging all of Buddhist teaching on the peg of Medicine Buddha Practice

The following pages bring together a range of material on healing practices. In Tibetan Buddhism, healing can be accomplished through a number of different methods. For example, the practice of White Tara is excellent, and is something that I know from personal experience can be quite effective. Another of the healing methods from the Buddhist Tradition is the rich and wonderful practice of Medicine Buddha, and this is the framework I'll use in these pages.

It should be noted that the preliminary contemplations included here, and the other thoughts for reflection, can stand alone as meditations in themselves, and they can also be used with other practices.

For example, I've found that thinking along the lines of the article called 'I live in this world' (on page 13) can be useful whenever I need to get my bearings. Thinking about these things can also help me to set a strong, positive motivation.

The 'list of things that are healing' (on page 32) is also something I refer to often, edit and add to, and share with others whenever I can. Sometimes it's a wonderful healing meditation just to sit with these thoughts.

Lama Lodro Rinpoche, in a teaching on healing practice, told us how Tradition refers to '84,000 delusions' that are direct or contributing causes to mental and physical illness and suffering. Of these 84,000, 21,000 come primarily from wrong desires; 21,000 come from anger; 21,000 from obscured consciousness, or ignorance, and 21,000 come from a combination of these.

In Buddhism, all phenomena, including the presence of illness or health, are considered to be dependent arisings. The image to illustrate a dependent arising is that of sticks, leaning together.

## Preface

The meaning is that no one cause equals one result, but a number of causes and conditions have to come together to produce any one effect.

Sometimes, people ask if inner practice alone can accomplish healing, and the answer is that, true healing practices always go in the direction of health. Whether they are enough to tip the balance depends on the other factors that are present (karma, heredity, environment, mental attitude, and so on). Across the spectrum of disciplines and traditions, we are always advised to gather a wealth of positive conditions.

Among the supports for our health that are available, what distinguishes Buddhist, and spiritual practice in general, and their healing practices in particular, is that they aim to remove both the symptoms and the causes of suffering. In so doing, they help us to achieve balance, and restore us to our original state of wholeness and well-being.

As I write this (February of 2009) in regards to Buddhism, we are in a time of transition. These teachings have been here less than a century, which is not a lot of time as traditions go. After a period of receiving the tradition as it was practiced, we are now just beginning to make these teachings our own. Without question, this is something we need to do.

Rather than practicing Tibetan Buddhism, or Japanese style Zen Buddhism, understanding the principles involved, we need to see how these traditions relate to our own lives, and then work with them to create an American Buddhism. This is how the tradition will be able to take root and to continue effectively here.

In terms of the healing practices in the following pages, here then is what I would propose: If it happens that practicing in the following way brings a result that is not equal to or more effective than the traditional methods, then clearly the traditional methods should be used instead of this one.

## Preface

On the other hand, if using a personalized set of reflections and prayers such as this produces a result that is equal to or greater than the traditional methods, then this points in a useful direction for us to take.

For comparison's sake, I've included three complete traditional Medicine Buddha practice texts, as well as a White Tara sadhana, in section V. The word 'Sadhana' is sometimes used synonymously with 'practice text', as in 'The Compassion Buddha Sadhana', or 'A Wisdom Practice Sadhana'. I've heard that the term itself means 'method of accomplishment', and it's with this in mind that I've collected this material. We should use whatever works for us.

I would like to encourage others to bring together the reflections, prayers, selections from practice texts and commentaries that speak to them the most, and if this some or all of collection works for them, they are more than welcome to use it.

Given our situation as human beings, and the suffering that exists in people's lives, it is imperative that we be as compassionate and as skillful as we can.

### A note on what is sometimes called magic

Sometimes the use of prayer, mantra, and visualization, and even the subject of traditional healing is categorized as magic, which I have no problem with, if the term is used in it's best sense. The word, unfortunately has been too often associated with ignorance and superstition. At its best however, what is called magic can be thought of as using subtle laws to bring about a positive result. I've included an article on mantra, also in Part V, that goes into this subject in more detail.

May we all find and make full use of whatever methods actually remove suffering and bring happiness.

May all beings benefit.

## Preface

A Brief note about the organization of these articles

Part I contains preliminary contemplations. As mentioned earlier, these can be meditated on separately, or they can be used with this, or any other practice.

Part II has a shorter form of selections from various sadhanas and commentaries, selected and arranged for personal use.

The material in Part III is made up of poetry and prayers that can be read and reflected on before, interspersed with, or after mantra recitation practice. The reader is encouraged to write his or her own poetry and prayers, and list of things that are healing. This section is more of a suggestion or a model for one way this can be done. Of course, if these prayers are useful, you are welcomed to use them.

Part IV has a more extensive selection of prayers and from traditional texts, and commentaries. If someone is new to this form of meditation, this can be a good place to begin to understand this kind of practice.

Part V contains additional prayers and a few articles that can give a useful framework for Buddhist healing practice.

How to use this book

This collection is not meant to be read straight through, like a novel (unless you want to). Instead, I would suggest reading and reflecting on whatever is here that is useful to you, or whatever you feel you need. These elements all fit together, and I've tried to be as complete as I can.

If the general subjects of prayer in Buddhism, or the bodhisattva vow, or mantra are new to you, it may be useful to read the essays in section V on those subjects first.

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## Part I

### Two Prayers

#### Vow

From this point forward,  
and for however long into the future it is needed  
I dedicate myself to the total removal of suffering  
and the causes of suffering  
from the lives of all living beings  
each and every one of them

I dedicate myself fully to their healing and awakening;  
to their having comfort, strength of body, mind, and spirit,  
most excellent nourishment, health, longevity  
every level of protection,  
shelter, food, clothing, medicine, education,  
joy and wisdom  
I dedicate myself fully to the complete enlightenment  
of all living beings

No matter how long it takes  
no matter how difficult it may be  
no matter what it costs

With all my heart and with all my strength,  
I vow to always serve them all  
in every way that is necessary for them  
and in every way that will bring each and every one of them  
true and lasting happiness

## Part I – Two Poems II

By this practice  
may those who have perfect health  
be firmly established in perfect health  
May those who do not yet have complete and perfect health  
be brought to that level of health, well being and strength  
and may those who suffer in any way  
be it very slight, or with great suffering  
be healed  
may they be brought to the highest level of health  
and may they be firmly established in complete and perfect health

## Part I: Preliminary Contemplations 1. I live in this world

## Part I: Preliminary Contemplations

I live in this world  
of joy, and sorrow

of comfort and ease,  
and of struggle, and pain

of friendship, and community  
and of loneliness and isolation

I live in this world of riches and poverty  
of abundance and hunger

I live in this world where there is health  
and illness

Where some people can only try to care for themselves,  
while others are at the point where more and more they have thinking about  
and caring for others as the aim of their life  
Whatever sources of blessings there are in this world,  
O, bless them all

There are people serving others in this world -  
there are people taking joy in that

I live in this world  
where many are in need of a protector,  
where many are in need of an advocate

where many people do not have even a basic education...

Part I: Preliminary Contemplations 1. I live in this world

Today, in this world, there are many who are kept back from doing good things because of some illness

Today there are many who are broken-hearted  
Today there are many who have been hurt in relationships

There are many who have bad memories

There are many who have had their families broken

There are many who are grieving

Every day in this world there are people experiencing pain:  
children, teenagers, adults, the middle-aged, the elderly;  
those who are alone, those with problems of the mind

I live in this world where many people suffer from depression,  
where many people are blocked by depression

I live in this world where many people don't love themselves,  
they don't cherish their lives,  
where people hate themselves,  
and where people despair,  
even to the point of wanting to end their own lives...

I live in this world where many people are in need of some form of human contact,

I live in this world where many people are experiencing the absence of love

## Part I: Preliminary Contemplations 1. I live in this world

and we can do something

I live in this world where many people use drugs,  
or drink, or food, or sex, to self-medicate, to escape

where many are without peace,  
without control, without any freedom of mind

The root of all these sufferings is self-grasping ignorance  
and the afflictive emotions

Right now, there are people being trapped by their addictions, overwhelmed  
by their delusions, lost

I live in this world where some people are in danger of falling,  
where some are in danger of slipping - and the result can be severe for  
them...

There are many people in need of strength,  
light, and peace,  
wisdom,  
purity, ethics  
transformation, release

I live in this world where we have all done wrong,  
some worse than others  
some, terrible things  
out of ignorance, affliction,  
or fear, desperation, despair;  
out of weakness and limitation -  
not seeing any other way  
not being able to reach any other way

## Part I: Preliminary Contemplations 1. I live in this world

I live in this world where people suffer because of regret

I live in this world where people experience misfortune, accidents...

I live in this world where many people are lonely, or numb,  
self-absorbed, superficial, or greedy, distracted, afraid, or sad,  
where there are those who are feeling ugly, or feeling hopeless  
or who are caught in self-pity

I live in this world where selves arise again and again that are fragmented,  
isolated

Where many people are experiencing stress

I live in this world where most people  
are without any sense at all of the sacred dimension in life

I live in this world where the deluded band together  
and increase ignorance and suffering

I live in this world where, even though there are those with the motivation to  
learn  
many people are misled by false teachers,  
themselves ignorant

In these times, especially,  
wrong views are supported, in hundreds of ways,  
and wisdom is not;  
greed is encouraged, and non-attachment and generosity is not;

Part I: Preliminary Contemplations 1. I live in this world

aggression is supported, and peace,  
sanity, respect, kindness, and being helpful is not

I live in this world where there are many people's  
experience is only that of a lower-realm being

(the hell realm, the hungry ghost realm, the animal realm)

I live in this world where there are people who don't experience even a  
moment of peace;

where there are those who don't have any joy in their lives at all,  
who don't have any happiness,  
not even a little bit

Every day in this world there are people with no perspective on their life,  
coarse, dissatisfied, lacking in gratitude, indulgent

I live in this world where people don't think about death  
or haven't integrated the truth of impermanence

Every day there are people wasting time, not seeing what they have, not  
taking advantage of all the opportunities they have while  
they still can

I live in this world where the vast majority of people are completely without  
any Dharma

(Dharma: Buddhist teaching, or religious teaching; the result of Buddhist  
practice or religious practice; and true medicine for the ills of the world)

## Part I: Preliminary Contemplations 1. I live in this world

I live in this world where few people have received instructions in meditation, and, of these few, most are still unclear about the essential points

I live in this world, where, though we may do some good, though we may improve our lives, those who *have* listened to essential teachings, *and understood*, many times don't practice and, of those who do practice, often they are not able to overcome the obstacles to meditation, and practice in a way that they progress...

I live in this world where even those people who have received, and practiced, and accomplished a great deal of Dharma still suffer they still fall into experiences that are like the lower realms

and I live in this world where some of the people who have become stable in realization don't share the Dharma as much as they could

I live in this world where though we can help others too often we don't

where though can remove others suffering and give them happiness, too often we don't

I live in this world where people don't live in the present Where people don't know their own worth, or the worth of others, where people don't know their own potential...

Part I: Preliminary Contemplations 2. Taking and Giving Prayer

Taking and Giving prayer

May the realization of all other beings' suffering and need  
completely destroy whatever selfishness I have  
and keep it from arising again

May I have a compassionate mind,  
and may I develop and increase the causes  
for all these people to be free from all their suffering  
and the causes of suffering

(vow)

like becoming able, and then opening a dungeon door  
and carrying them out  
lifting a far too heavy burden from their back  
or encouraging them,  
welcoming them to walk

May I be cure for whatever ails them

May I become a capable being,  
and then like a vacuum, like a magnet,  
like a sun dispersing fog  
from 10,000 directions at once,  
May I completely remove the suffering that all these people experience

‘like removing a thorn from flesh‘,

mending bones  
binding up wounds  
and restoring them

Part I: Preliminary Contemplations 2. Taking and Giving Prayer

For them, may I be a cooling rain, a balm  
 if that's what's needed  
 or a gentle warm sun after long winter  
 in an instant, completely dispelling all their suffering  
 and the causes of their suffering

For them, if it is needed, may I be  
 rain washing away thousands of sorrows  
 or like music, or light for them, for their world  
 pure water, nourishing food and drink  
 or like the full noon-day sun, destroyer of sorrow

For them, may I be as  
 a great wind,  
 a swift river,  
 a laser,  
 medicine clearing the way,  
 friendship, land, virtue, peace, medicine  
 arriving when its needed most  
 solid, firm, stable

all of one meaning

May I have a mind of love

and, may I, in a single moment, develop and increase  
 the causes for people to be richly blessed, in every way  
 May they have all joys  
 every happiness  
 and may these blessings remain for them,  
 stable, firm

For them, may I be wealth eliminating every type of poverty,  
 and the illusory perception of poverty

Part I: Preliminary Contemplations 2. Taking and Giving Prayer

outside, inside

May I be wisdom-knowledge replacing ignorance

comfort, health and strength

replacing all wrong views, discomfort, and dis-ease

*“May our intentions equally penetrate  
every being and place  
with the true merit of Buddha’s Way”*

I pray that whatever hardships I have experienced or know about, whatever  
lack whatsoever, may others not experience any of those

I pray they will have it easier than I’ve had

May they not experience any privation or difficulty at all-  
not even the slightest

And I pray that whatever good things I have known in this life, or even just  
heard about, may they all experience these, and more,  
knowing the love and support of teachers, family and friends...

May the force of goodness increase in me

## Part I: Preliminary Contemplations 3. Various Short Prayers

Such is the nature of this dependent arising:  
perceiving the needs of living beings  
produces the wish to benefit them  
naturally, spontaneously, wholeheartedly, abundantly

May the fulfillment of this wish be unobstructed,  
may it be fulfilled without hindrance

May I myself become sure medicine for every pain.

All you who work to heal  
I pray, may I always serve and support you

And I pray to all healers  
I pray to gather and share with all others in need  
all that is life-giving, health giving  
O, hear my prayer!  
Please give me your blessing!

May the force of caring  
increase in me

May the power of love and compassion  
increase in me

May my thoughts be healing  
May my words be healing  
May my actions be healing  
May my breath be healing  
May my look be healing

May my touch be healing

May my mind be healing

Part I: Preliminary Contemplations 3. Various Short Prayers

May my consciousness be healing

May everything I do be healing

May everything I do promote health and healing in this world  
and in the lives of living beings

May I hold as my delight  
the removing of suffering of living beings  
and giving them happiness

May I dedicate myself to others

May I increase my ability to help others  
in every way that is necessary  
and for as long as is necessary

May virtue increase

At all times, may I produce, maintain and increase this life giving vision  
for all

May whatever is good within me increase

May that which is beneficial within me increase

## Part I: Preliminary Contemplations 4. Why don't we

Why don't we  
invoke the blessings  
of billions of angels  
to pour down upon  
everyone we see,  
hear, or think of

Why don't we settle thoroughly  
that we have it in our power  
to feed each and every one  
with the food that matches their deepest need and desire  
and then do it

Why don't we do this?  
It costs us nothing if we do  
and costs us so much if we don't

Why don't we  
wash the feet of all weary travelers,  
offer them humble sustaining fare  
and a soft bed  
for them to be able to continue  
laden with gifts  
on their way

Why not  
spread lotus blossoms  
on the ground for each person to walk on  
every step of their way

Why don't we

Why don't we  
wash away the murk  
of our confused thinking

## Part I: Preliminary Contemplations 4. Why don't we

so we stand resplendent  
and as light for everyone's eyes

Why don't we pick up  
in both our precious hands  
that part of the wounded staggering world soul  
we've each been given  
to restore to health

Why don't we cup  
in our hands  
the dreams of future generations  
and heal all injury  
as our gift to be passed forward in time

Why don't we  
abide in fullness  
with every gift passed around  
from one house to another  
no limit

all the broken  
isolated  
born but not able to be fully born –  
this, plus the heart

and there is vow  
this path made entirely of  
somehow wanting,  
needing to say  
a mighty yes

Part II: Prayers from Various Medicine Buddha Sadhanas

Part II:

Prayers from Various Medicine Buddha Sadhanas, and Commentaries,  
selected for personal use, shorter version

Motivation I – from ‘The Healing Buddha’, translated by Lama Zopa Rinpoche (excerpts are in quotes, the rest are my own notes)

‘No matter what you do, it is essential to generate a positive motivation. Therefore, think as follows: “The purpose of my life is to free all living beings from all their problems and the causes of these problems, which are in their minds, and to bring all beings peace and happiness, especially the peerless happiness of full enlightenment, which they desperately need. For me to be able to do this, my mind and body must be perfect, pure, and healthy.’

To you who can help, I pray: help me to cut the root of suffering, and share the fruit of that with all others.

Moreover, all these beings, my dear family, friends, and all my relations need health to be able to even hear teachings on how to be truly free from their sufferings and attain happiness; to be able to receive encouragement and to be able to practice they definitely need health, long life, and freedom from affliction and distress.

Therefore to accomplish this purpose, of benefiting self and others, I am going to do this practice.

May this be the practice of all-inclusive universal love and compassion.

‘To benefit living beings equal to the extent of space, I am going to practice this healing meditation.’

Part II: Prayers from Various Medicine Buddha Sadhanas

Motivation II – from The Sadhana of the Medicine Buddha, by H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche

‘All beings are tormented by sufferings in Samsara – externally by physical sickness and internally by emotional disturbances and mental problems. In order to help free others from these sufferings, as well as ourselves, we need to take refuge in the Medicine Buddha.’

(Through devotion, we generate as a protective force the power of the Healing Buddha.)

*‘Homage! Myself and the limitless sentient beings without exception take refuge in the Medicine Buddha, the Triple Gem. I will liberate all sentient beings equal to the sky, who have been our parents, to the stage of the Medicine Buddha.’*

(Not being an enlightened being myself, I admit that I don’t know all of what enlightenment is, and so I aim to clarify my mind, to purify, to bring out good qualities as far as I have known them, and to benefit others as far as I know how to.

Furthermore, through this practice I aim to continue to learn what is possible, to awaken potentials, to gather and receive graces, and to help others as much as I can.)

I take refuge, until I attain that state of Enlightenment,  
in the Buddha,  
who is my own root-guru  
manifesting in the form of Medicine Buddha;  
I take refuge in the Dharma,  
in all the teachings on healing  
and the Sangha  
all helpful, Noble companions

Part II: Prayers from Various Medicine Buddha Sadhanas

By the merit I have accumulated through practicing Generosity  
and other virtues as much as I can  
May I always accomplish Buddhahood for the benefit of all  
sentient beings

May I always aim to accomplish this practice  
of Buddha activity  
to the fullest extent possible

May all beings have true and lasting happiness and all the causes of perfect  
health and happiness

May they accomplish these causes perfectly

May all beings be free of suffering and all the causes of suffering  
whatever causes there may be for them

I rejoice in all virtue,  
everywhere and in all times

All are completely equal in deserving our love and our care  
May I be blessed to see this

‘As we are all the Primordial Buddha, we have the essence of Buddha  
Nature. Realizing this, *relaxing* in the natural state is the absolute way of  
taking refuge and generating Bodhicitta (the mind of enlightenment). When  
doing the practice, be free of subject, object, and action.’

Om swabhava shuddho sarva dharma  
swabhava shuddho hum

Part II: Prayers from Various Medicine Buddha Sadhanas

Requesting Prayers – I – From The Healing Buddha’, translated by Lama  
Zopa Rinpoche

O Destroyer, Complete in All Qualities and Gone Beyond,  
and you four medicinal goddesses,  
please pacify immediately  
the illnesses that afflict me now,  
and help me to avoid all future sickness

and

please pacify immediately  
the illnesses that afflict the ones we pray for now,  
and help them to avoid all future sickness

II - from The Sadhana of the Medicine Buddha, by H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche

Lama  
Teacher, ‘One who Knows’  
Destroyer of demons  
Possessing the Enlightened Qualities,

Gone Beyond,  
Transcending duality

Thus Come, Thus Gone  
Destroyer of the enemy (ego)

Exceedingly pure, Fully Perfected

Medicine Buddha

Blue Diamond

Part II: Prayers from Various Medicine Buddha Sadhanas

King of Luminosity

To you I prostrate,  
make offerings,  
Praise  
and go for refuge'

Please bestow your blessings

Instructions for visualization and mantra recitation

I - From The Healing Buddha', translated by Lama Zopa Rinpoche

Light rays of the appropriate color emanate from each of the five deities at your heart. Your heart and body are full of blissful light, which completely purifies all disease, spirit harms, and negative actions and their imprints. Beams of five-colored light radiate from all the pores of your body, while nectar flows down from the Healing Buddha's begging bowl and the vases held by the four goddesses, completely filling your heart and body.

Generate the strong recognition that you have vanquished all disease forever and will never be sick again.

While concentrating single-pointedly on this visualization, recite the short or long Healing Buddha mantra seven, twenty-one, one hundred and eight, or more times.

II - from The Sadhana of the Medicine Buddha, by H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche (lightly edited)

When we recite the mantra, rays of light emanate from the heart of the Buddha, like a hundred rising suns, curing all the diseases and obscurations

Part II: Prayers from Various Medicine Buddha Sadhanas

of beings, and their causes. By the power of this practice may all sufferings and problems be removed.

Recite while concentrating on the rays of light. At the end of the practice, by the power of these rays of light, sufferings are completely removed, like darkness is dispelled by a torch.

The Medicine Buddha mantra is:

Tayata Om Bekandze Bekandze Maha Bekandze  
Radza Samungate Soha

At this point, any additional prayers or reflections can be read, as one wishes and as time allows. It can be done in any of these ways: reading first, then recitation; alternating reading and recitation a little at a time, or practice and then reading, in the manner or prayer.

After recitation, quiet meditation. Then dedicate the merit.

Part III: Material that can be read and reflected on before, during or after recitation practice:

A list of things that are healing

Beauty is healing  
and love is healing

peace is healing  
and harmony is healing

fresh fruit is healing

and joy,  
and a sense of humor and laughter are healing

kindness is healing -  
the soft voice  
the peace in a voice,  
the friendliness and warmth in a voice  
and the strength in a voice,  
the encouragement in a voice  
these are healing

gratitude is healing

Traditions are a source of healing  
great teachers are healing  
and our respect and devotion connects us to them

Part III: Material for reflection – A list of things that are healing

drawing on the strength,  
vision, and courage of our ancestors  
this is healing

natural light is healing,  
and human touch, when there is love, is healing  
friendship is healing, and

the morning is healing,  
and the afternoon,

and the night and the moon and stars  
so lovely

Grandmothers and Grandfathers,  
with their kindness and gentleness and wisdom are healing

Mothers and Fathers are healing

the masculine,  
the feminine,  
balance,  
these are healing

children are healing  
with their purity, playfulness and wonder

ethics are healing

regret,  
remorse for wrongdoing is healing  
apology is healing,  
as is self worth  
shining from within

Part III: Material for reflection – A list of things that are healing

feeling sadness,  
tears, the grieving process, when needed, is purifying, is healthy,  
is natural, is healing

optimism, and hope are healthy  
and healing

hope is healing  
and generosity is healing

maturity,  
wisdom  
perspective  
stability,  
composure  
these are healing

and dreams are healing  
visions, sacred songs,  
dances,  
inspired drawing

the awe and wonder we feel,

and art is healing  
need I say it? -  
endless burgeoning diversity,  
the loveliness of one thing well done,  
with great care, and boldness too...

a child's drawing

and

painting

Part III: Material for reflection – A list of things that are healing

frescoes,  
silk miniatures,  
the Dutch Masters  
impressionists  
Picasso –

what wonders!

sculpture

dance

jig, waltz, ballet, tap, swing, pogo, pavane...

and

photography, poetry  
architecture needlepoint  
dress caress teaching

and on it goes

music is healing  
melody, harmony, rhythm,  
invention,  
expression

and remarkable, unique instruments, one of a kind  
with all their individual textures and qualities

oboe clarinet guitar piano drum cello  
trumpet xylophone flute sitar lute  
viola da gamba kettle drum  
harp voice (with kind and encouraging words written, like torn secret  
messages, or spoken or sung)

Part III: Material for reflection – A list of things that are healing

these and more

all of it,  
all of it, healing

Dvorak, Bach, Mozart, Schubert, Handel,  
Telemann, Boccherini, Rodrigo, Beethoven, Corelli  
make your own lists today from these bright oceans...

the painters, the photographers eye

the authors and speakers' visions

the beauty and brilliance of writers is health  
is life  
is healing

Pablo Neruda, Walt Whitman, Julio Cortazar, Rumi, Hafiz –  
the wonders of the world they show us  
and their delight in showing us  
is healing

nature is healing  
the sunlight itself  
like food we eat, nourishment we enjoy  
live juice  
the fresh air  
streams and shade, clouds, mountains,  
and trees are extraordinary things,  
if we look we can see it,

awesome and healing

as is the wood and the grass we stand and walk on –

Part III: Material for reflection – A list of things that are healing

The pure elements are healing  
pure fire, truly pure water  
pure air, pure earth  
metal,  
gemstones

and wide open spaces,  
the sky,  
and the ocean  
these are healing

May whatever is healing  
touch whatever needs healing

an easy walk in the park,  
or on forests paths, fragrant  
with leaves on the ground and  
wind in the tall trees  
delightful

this is healing

all the wonderful smells of the earth  
flowers, of all varieties

rose, tulip  
lily  
iris  
freesia  
sunflower  
bird of paradise  
daisy

and  
herbs, and teas,

Part III: Material for reflection – A list of things that are healing

mint, lemon, orange

fruit with the glorious blossom of their ripening colors and flavors  
strawberry, blueberry, apple, pear, pluot  
all of these are healing

and vegetables and grains and bread  
give to our bodies and to our souls the power of the sun,  
and the pure rain

all of these are  
healthy and beautiful

and if needed, they are healing

food cooked with love is healthy, life giving

gifts given generously with love are divine, and are health and life  
and if need be, they are healing to us all, the whole circle

the food we receive with love and thankfulness  
is healing

gifts received with gratitude are healing

simplicity, healing

sacred places, healing

loving pets, healing

friendships,  
now and recalled to mind

people of good will,

Part III: Material for reflection – A list of things that are healing

and stories of heroes,  
famous or less known  
these are healing

these gifts continue

all the memories of a lifetime's happiness  
well-being and peace  
beauty, release

wonder, and celebration,

gratitude

are healing

gentleness  
love  
forgiveness  
contentment  
and relaxation  
are healing

generosity  
patience (made of humility and deep knowing)

divine discontent is healing

vigor, zeal  
clarity about  
and devotion to our highest ideals  
aspirations, the vows we make,

these are healing

Part III: Material for reflection – A list of things that are healing

compassion,  
the intention to remove another's suffering  
this is healing  
both for ourselves, and for others' sake

prayer,  
mantra  
sometimes talking something out,  
sometimes quiet

depending on what we need  
sometimes movement,  
and exercise  
sometimes stillness, and rest

sometimes eating well  
and sometimes fasting

these are healing

sometimes tenderly taking care of ourself  
and sometimes getting outside of ourself for a while

these are healing

faith  
humility  
quieting the mind  
respect for the fundamental,  
immutable value of oneself and others  
these are healing

ethics  
meditation  
and wisdom –

Part III: Material for reflection – A list of things that are healing

in the sense of a transcendent insight  
an awakened perspective  
energetically seeing through all the concepts of self -  
these are healing

breathing in and out  
peacefully  
with an awareness of our body and our feelings  
with gentleness

and with love  
is healing

friendliness,  
warmth

walking meditation  
sitting meditation

breathing and smiling  
these are healing

Part III: Material for reflection

I believe in the power of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas to benefit living beings, in temporary, provisional, relative and ultimate ways.

I believe the great kindness and compassion of my teachers is healing.

I know there are healing angels that will come if we call on them,

and that there are benefactors in the world who offer their prayers on behalf of others.

I believe in the great benefit that comes about because of dedicated souls praying for us.

I believe the sacred name of Jesus always has the power to heal.

I believe the blessings of the saviors of mankind are available to us all.

I believe in the healing power of the Three Jewels.

I know mantra can heal, comfort, nourish,  
assist us in our lives,  
and in awakening the enlightened aspect of our nature.

I believe the world is rich with health and healing conditions.  
I believe sky, earth, animal, plant, flower, wind, fire, sunlight, music,  
Traditions, ancestry, and all the love this world has known  
is health for us all.

## Part III: Material for reflection

## A Prayer to the Saints

Ajaan Mun

Ajaan Lee

I invoke you! I call to you!

Come! Bring your presence here, now

Ajaan Buddhadasa

Ajaan Chah

I invoke you! I call to you!

U Pandita Sayadaw

Ajaan Maha Boowa

Maha Ghosananda

I invoke you! I call to you!

Come! Bring your presence here, now

Tsong Khapa,

Gyalwa Karmapa, Rangjung Rigpay Dorje

Dalai Lama Tenzin Gyatso

Lama Yeshe

Lama Zopa

I invoke you! I call to you!

Come! Bring your presence here, now

Kyabje Sakya Trizin

Jetsun Chimay Luding

Chogye Trichen Rinpoche

I invoke you! I call to you!

## Part III: Material for reflection – A Prayer to the Saints

Dezhung Rinpoche  
 Thrangu Rinpoche  
 Bokar Rinpoche  
 I invoke you! I call to you!  
 Come! Bring your presence here, now

Kyabje Kalu Rinpoche  
 Lama Lodo  
 Kenpo Karthar  
 I invoke you! I call to you!  
 Come! Bring your presence here, now

Ananda Mayi Ma  
 Swami Sivananda  
 I invoke you! I call to you!

Ramana Maharshi  
 Nisargadatta Maharaj  
 Swami Vivekananda  
 Paramahansa Yoganandaji  
 Swami Satchitananda  
 Swami Yatiswarananda  
 I invoke you! I call to you!

Meher Baba  
 Hazarat Inayat Kahn  
 Pir Vilayat Kahn  
 Rumi  
 Hafiz

I invoke you! I call to you!  
 Come! Bring your presence here, now

## Part III: Material for reflection – A Prayer to the Saints

Lord Jesus  
 Lord Buddha  
 Mother Mary  
 I invoke you! I call to you!  
 Come! Bring your presence here, now

Mother Teresa  
 Abraham Isaac Kook  
 Padre Pio  
 I invoke you! I call to you!

William Butler  
 Dion Fortune  
 I invoke you! I call to you!

Uchiyama Roshi  
 Deshimaru Roshi  
 Master Dogen  
 Bodhidharma  
 Patriarch Hui-Neng  
 Venerable Hsuan-Hua  
 I invoke you! I call to you!  
 Come! Bring your presence here, now

Kenpo Tsultrim Gyatso  
 Thay Nhat Hahn  
 I invoke you! I call to you!  
 Come! Bring your presence here, now

Jamgon Kongtrul  
 Jamyang Khyentse Chokyi Lodro  
 Dudjom Rinpoche  
 Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche  
 Tsultrig Rinpoche  
 Chatral Rinpoche

## Part III: Material for reflection – A Prayer to the Saints

Chagdud Tulku  
I invoke you! I call to you!

Lama Tharchin  
I invoke you! I call to you!  
Come! Bring your presence here, now

Khyabje Ling Rinpoche  
Khyabje Trijang Dorje Chang Rinpoche  
Serkong Rinpoche  
Song Rinpoche

Kenpo Palden Sherab Rinpoche  
I invoke you! I call to you!

Geshe Rabten  
Geshe Sopa  
Nyoshul Khen Rinpoche  
Gen Lamrimpa  
I invoke you! I call to you!

Geshe Dhargyey  
Geshe Tsultrim  
Milarepa  
Gampopa  
Atisha  
Serlingpa  
Longchenpa  
Nagarjuna  
Padmasambhava  
I invoke you! I call to you!  
Come! Bring your presence here, now

All you Christian Saints  
Native Healers,

## Part III: Material for reflection – A Prayer to the Saints

with your allies, helpers,  
and the elements  
Angels  
I invoke you! I call to you!  
Come! Bring your presence here, now

Tulku Urgyen Rinpoche  
Geshe Wangdu  
Akong Tulku  
Lama Kunga  
Lama Jigme Rinpoche  
Tulku Thondup  
Pabonkha Rinpoche  
Penor Rinpoche

Za Choe Rinpoche  
Kirti Tsenshab Rinpoche

I invoke you! I call to you!  
Come! Bring your presence here, now

Please be my witness  
I pray to you  
Please grant me your blessings  
You Living Buddhas,  
Masters of the Great Perfection  
You who have Jewel-like bodhicitta  
You who are like the sun and the moon

Glorious Sages,  
Foe-Destroyers,  
Exemplars,  
Benefactors of living beings,  
protectors of living beings,  
teachers,

## Part III: Material for reflection – A Prayer to the Saints

healers

Pray be my witness  
Please help me to pacify my mind,  
and, just as you have done,  
to accomplish the qualities and stages of the path

Pray, grant me your blessing  
help me to control my mind and emotions;  
to live a good life  
so that I can benefit others  
as it should be

You beings of great wisdom and compassion  
I bow to you  
I pray to you

You liberated beings  
Great compassionate spiritual guides

Please help me to purify the two obscurations-  
and complete the two collections

Please help me in this, my hour of need

Immaculate Buddhas,  
Foe-destroyers,  
Liberators,  
Arhats,  
Bodhisattvas  
you who have indestructible vows  
Please give me your blessing

Pray help me to be free of suffering and the causes of suffering  
and to have happiness and the causes of happiness

Part III: Material for reflection – A Prayer to the Saints

and please help me to help others to be free of suffering  
and to have happiness

You who have the qualities of being ripened and free  
mature understanding  
stable realization  
always present kindness and compassion

Please give me your blessing

By the power of the unfailing Three-Jewels' compassion,  
and by the natural force of the need that exists  
in me and in the world,  
in response to the cries and prayers of living beings  
in the six realms and bardo,  
may the aims of this prayer be fulfilled  
exactly as they were made

## Part III: Material for reflection

## A Prayer to the Saints – alternate version

Ajaan Mun  
Ajaan Lee  
Ajaan Buddhadasa  
Ajaan Chah

U Pandita Sayadaw  
Ajaan Maha Boowa  
Maha Ghosananda

Tsong Khapa,  
Gyalwa Karmapa,  
Dalai Lama  
Lama Yeshe  
Lama Zopa

Sakya Trinzin  
Jetsun Chimay Luding  
Chogye Trichen Rinpoche  
Dezhung Rinpoche

Thrangu Rinpoche  
Bokar Rinpoche  
Kalu Rinpoche  
Lama Lodro  
Kenpo Karthar

Part III: Material for reflection  
A Prayer to the Saints – alternate version

Ananda Mayi Ma  
Swami Sivananda  
Ramana Maharshi  
Nisargadatta Maharaj  
Swami Vivekananda

Swami Yogananda  
Swami Satchitananda  
Swami Yatiswarananda

Meher Baba  
Hazarat Inayat Kahn  
Pir Vilayat Kahn  
Rumi  
Hafiz

Lord Jesus  
Lord Buddha  
Mother Mary

Mother Teresa  
Abraham Isaac Kook  
Padre Pio

William Bulter  
Dion Fortune

Uchiyama Roshi  
Deshimaru Roshi

Dogen  
Bodhidharma  
Hui-Neng  
Hsuan-Hua

Part III: Material for reflection  
 A Prayer to the Saints – alternate version

Khenpo Tsultrim Gyatso  
 Thay Nhat Hahn

Jamgon Kongtrul  
 Jamyang Khyentse Chokyi Lodro  
 Dudjom Rinpoche  
 Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche

Tsultrig Rinpoche  
 Chatral Rinpoche  
 Chagdud Tulku

Lama Tharchin

Ling Rinpoche  
 Trijang Rinpoche  
 Serkong Rinpoche  
 Song Rinpoche

Kenpo Palden Sherab Rinpoche

Geshe Rabten  
 Geshe Sopa  
 Nyoshul Khen Rinpoche  
 Gen Lamrimpa

Geshe Dhargyey  
 Geshe Tsultrim

Milarepa  
 Gampopa  
 Atisha  
 Serlingpa  
 Longchenpa

Part III: Material for reflection  
A Prayer to the Saints – alternate version

Nagarjuna  
Padmasambhava

All you Christian Saints  
Native Healers,  
with your allies, helpers,  
and the elements  
Angels

Tulku Urgyen  
Geshe Wangdu  
Akong Tulku  
Lama Kunga  
Lama Jigme  
Tulku Thondup  
Pabonkha Rinpoche  
Penor Rinpoche  
Za Choe Rinpoche  
Kirti Tsenshab Rinpoche

Please give me your blessings

## Part III: Material for reflection

## A prayer to friends and benefactors

Christiane Buchet  
Susan Aldous  
Sister Carol  
Gregory Wood

Robert Koagedal  
Patti Gehman  
Krissy Keifer  
Andy Morgan  
Bill Cohn  
Lenka Cohn

Nellie  
Chris Mende  
Wendy Brunner  
Kim Underwood  
Peter J

Phra Ingo  
Bhikkhu Fa-Kuan  
Jhampa Shaneman  
Jakusho Kwong

Thomas Ashley-Ferrand – Namadeva  
Robert A. Johnson  
Greg Mortenson

Part III: Material for reflection – A prayer to friends and benefactors

Fred Lecomte  
Giny Pinto  
Sarita

Sue  
Sophia  
Connie

Father  
Mother  
Sister  
Auntie Cusin

Cousin Giselle  
Cousin David  
Grandmother  
Grandfather

Please give me your support

Part III: Material for reflection – A prayer to friends and benefactors

Beloved Avalokiteshvara

Tara

Manjushri

Medicine Buddha

Vajrapani

Maitreya

Amitaba

Amitayus

Namgyalma

Vajrasattva

Rama, Sita

Dhanvantri

Saraswati

Lakshmi

Durga

Kali

Part III: Material for reflection – A prayer to friends and benefactors

Chamundi

Shiva

Hanuman

Subramuniya

Ganesha

Narasimha

Vishnu

Krishna

Please give me your blessings

## Part IV

Prayers from Various Medicine Buddha Sadhanas, and Commentaries,  
selected for personal use,

A longer form of practice, with additional instructions for visualization and  
recitation

Motivation I – from ‘The Healing Buddha’, translated by Lama Zopa  
Rinpoche (excerpts are in quotes, the rest are my own notes)

‘No matter what you do, it is essential to generate a positive motivation. Therefore, think as follows: “The purpose of my life is to free all living beings from all their problems and the causes of these problems, which are in their minds, and to bring all beings peace and happiness, especially the peerless happiness of full enlightenment, which they desperately need. For me to be able to do this, my mind and body must be perfect, pure, and healthy.’

To you who can help, I pray: help me to cut the root of suffering and to obtain true health and happiness, for all of our sake.

Moreover, all these beings, my dear family, friends, and all my relations need health to be able to even hear teachings on how to be truly free from their sufferings and attain happiness; to be able to receive encouragement and to be able to practice they definitely need health, long life, and freedom from affliction and distress.

Therefore to accomplish this purpose, of benefiting self and others, I am going to do this practice.

Part IV – Prayers from Various Medicine Buddha Sadhanas, and Commentaries

May this be the practice of all-inclusive universal love and compassion.

‘To benefit living beings equal to the extent of space, I am going to practice this healing meditation.’

Motivation II – from The Sadhana of the Medicine Buddha, by H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche

‘All beings are tormented by sufferings in Samsara – externally by physical sickness and internally by emotional disturbances and mental problems. In order to help free others from these sufferings, as well as ourselves, we need to take refuge in the Medicine Buddha.’

(Through devotion, we generate as a protective force the power of the Healing Buddha.)

*‘Homage! Myself and the limitless sentient beings without exception take refuge in the Medicine Buddha, the Triple Gem. I will liberate all sentient beings equal to the sky, who have been our parents, to the stage of the Medicine Buddha.’*

(Not being an enlightened being myself, I admit that I don’t know all of what enlightenment is, and so I aim to clarify my mind, to purify, to bring out good qualities as far as I have known them, and to benefit others as far as I know how to.

Furthermore, I aim through this practice to continue to learn what is possible, to awaken potentials, to gather and receive graces, and to help others as much as I can.)

Part IV – Prayers from Various Medicine Buddha Sadhanas, and Commentaries

I take refuge, until I attain Enlightenment,  
in the Buddha,  
who is my own root-guru  
manifesting in the form of Medicine Buddha;  
I take refuge in the Dharma,  
in all the teachings on healing

and the Sangha  
all helpful, Noble companions

By the merit I have accumulated through practicing Generosity  
and other virtues as much as I can  
May I always accomplish Buddhahood for the benefit of all  
sentient beings

May I always aim to accomplish this practice  
of Buddha activity  
to the fullest extent possible

May all beings have true and lasting happiness and all the causes of perfect  
health and happiness

May they accomplish these causes perfectly

May all beings be free of suffering and all the causes of suffering  
whatever causes there may be for them

I rejoice in all virtue,  
everywhere and in all times

All are completely equal in deserving our love and our care  
May I be blessed to see this

Part IV – Prayers from Various Medicine Buddha Sadhanas, and Commentaries

‘As we are all the Primordial Buddha, we have the essence of Buddha Nature. Realizing this, *relaxing* in the natural state is the absolute way of taking refuge and generating Bodhicitta (the mind of enlightenment). When doing the practice, be free of subject, object, and action.’

Om swabhava shuddho sarva dharma  
swabhava shuddho hum

Requesting Prayers – I - from The Sadhana of the Medicine Buddha, by  
H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche

Lama  
Teacher, ‘One who Knows’  
Destroyer of demons  
Possessing the Enlightened Qualities,

Gone Beyond,  
Transcending duality

Thus Come, Thus Gone  
Destroyer of the enemy (ego)

Exceedingly pure, Fully Perfected

Medicine Buddha

Blue Diamond  
King of Luminosity

To you I prostrate,  
make offerings,  
Praise  
and go for refuge’

Part IV – Prayers from Various Medicine Buddha Sadhanas, and Commentaries

Please bestow your blessings

II – from ‘A Drop of Ambrosia’ (as best as I remember)

I pray, please pacify all this intolerable suffering

III - A Prayer to Medicine Buddha

Guru Medicine Buddha

You have taken a vow

to remove every level of mental, emotional, and physical pain

and to replace it with peace, health, strength, well-being and happiness

Because I have this same aim in my life,

I pray you will help me

Please give me your blessing to become like you

May I become you in this world

IV – from The Medicine Buddha Sadhana (Tushita Retreat Center)

I pray your vows to benefit others will now ripen for myself and all these  
other living beings

V – From A Stream of Lapis Lazuli

The supplication:

NAMO BEKENDZE MAHA RADZAYE

You are endowed with an oceanic treasury of qualities and  
merit;

By the blessing of your inconceivable compassion

Part IV – Prayers from Various Medicine Buddha Sadhanas, and Commentaries

You calm the suffering and torment of sentient beings.  
I supplicate you, Light of Lapis Lazuli.

Those bound by very intense greed  
Are born in the hungry ghost realm.

If they hear your name, they are said to be born human and  
take delight in generosity.  
I supplicate you, victorious Menla.

Violating morality and abusing others,  
Beings are born in the hell realms.

Hearing your name, they are said to be born in the higher  
realms.  
I supplicate you, King of Medicine.

Whoever by repeated dissension and slander  
Creates serious schisms and takes life,  
Hearing your name, they cannot harm others.  
I supplicate you, King of Medicine

VI – From The Healing Buddha’, translated by Lama Zopa Rinpoche

O Destroyer, Complete in All Qualities and Gone Beyond,  
and you four medicinal goddesses,  
please pacify immediately  
the illnesses that afflict me now,  
and help me to avoid all future sickness

and

please pacify immediately  
the illnesses that afflict the ones we pray for now,

Part IV – Prayers from Various Medicine Buddha Sadhanas, and Commentaries

and help them to avoid all future sickness

VII – from the book Images of Enlightenment by Jonathon Landaw

I beseech you, Blessed Medicine Guru,  
Whose sky-colored, holy body of lapis lazuli

Signifies omniscient wisdom and compassion  
As vast as limitless space,  
Please grant me your blessings.

I beseech you, Blessed Medicine Guru,  
Holding in your right hand the king of medicines  
Symbolizing your vow to help all the pitiful sentient beings  
Plagued by the four hundred and twenty-four diseases,  
Please grant me your blessings.

I beseech you, Blessed Medicine Guru,  
Holding in your left hand a bowl of nectar  
Symbolizing your vow to give the glorious undying nectar of the dharma  
Which eliminates the degenerations of sickness, old age and death,  
Please grant me your blessings.

Instructions for visualization and mantra recitation

(It's traditionally taught that what's called 'self-generation' - where one visualizes oneself as the deity - should only be done by those who have received the initiation of a particular deity, but that 'front generation' - where one visualizes the deity in space above and in front of oneself - can be done by anyone.

In front generation, we visualize (see with the mind's eye) above us, the Buddha or bodhisattva whose practice we are doing, and

Part IV – Prayers from Various Medicine Buddha Sadhanas, and Commentaries

whose mantra we are reciting. It's helpful when doing this recitation and visualization, to see pure light and nectar streaming from the image we hold (that is also made entirely of pure light). These represent, or carry the blessings of the Buddha.

We should also see ourselves, our own body, not in an ordinary way, not as flesh and bone, but as also being made entirely of light.

Many teachers advise, too, that when doing this visualization, we see ourselves in a pure land, and make the visualization as beautiful, peaceful, perfect, and pure as we can. This is helpful.

We can also do the practice without any elaborate or detailed visualization. We can just see light above us while reciting. Or without any visualization at all, we can just recite the mantra.

I –From The Medicine Buddha commentary, by Lama Lodro Rinpoche

‘Transform all the world into a completely perfect and pure land, bringing only pleasure, but without grasping or holding.

‘At the heart of the Medicine Buddha (made entirely of pure light) is the seed syllable ‘Hung’ (also made of pure light energy) (the seed syllable represents his essential quality).

‘The hung is in the center, and the mantra circles this. From the Medicine Buddha’s heart, light goes to the lineage, to the past, present and future Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, Mahasiddhas, Dharma Protectors, and to all who have the healing power. Whoever has the healing power we invoke to help us.

‘This light returns gathering all this energy and power from the Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, Dakas and Dakinis. The light returns and dissolves into the Medicine Buddha in front. This light and these blessings can take the form

Part IV – Prayers from Various Medicine Buddha Sadhanas, and Commentaries

of innumerable Medicine Buddhas, some as big as a mountain, some as small as an atom. They fall like rain. (a rain of miracles) These all dissolve into the Medicine Buddha, making the perception of the Medicine Buddha even more vivid and clear.

‘Then the Medicine Buddha in front sends light into you, which dissolves into you and benefits you in every way that is needed and heals you.

(for those with the empowerment and permission to do the practice in this way – if you choose to: the Medicine Buddha bestows blessings on you, sends light and nectar which dissolves into you as Medicine Buddha (seeing yourself also made entirely of blissful clean clear light energy in the form of Medicine Buddha).

(Perhaps gradually it happens like this – we can see ourselves in this form. It can also be that we alternate seeing ourselves in our ordinary form – still made entirely of light – with this other method of practice. We should do whatever works best at any given time.)

‘Then, for sick people, dying and the dead, for the mentally confused, light goes directly from the Medicine Buddha to that person, and heals them. It doesn’t matter the distance – they are completely healed.

‘That person is the example. We think: the light goes to anyone who has that same problem, who suffers and who needs this. They are all helped, all healed by this.’

II. From the White Tara Commentary, by Geshe Wangdu  
(this applies here as well)

The light rays go throughout all the ten directions, (which actually, literally means all directions), and then that light invokes all the Buddhas and bodhisattvas from the ten directions...

Part IV – Prayers from Various Medicine Buddha Sadhanas, and Commentaries

Light rays radiate into all the directions, and not particularly to all the Buddhas and bodhisattvas, but all throughout the universe, and to the five elements within the universe, the fire, water, wind, earth and space elements, all the five elements, and to what we call all the riches of the kings, all the riches and beauties of the kings and queens in this universe, in fact all the jewels and any beautiful object in the universe is invoked by the light rays emanating from our heart.

And we should imagine that the light rays are extracting all the qualities from the five elements, from all the riches and all the beauties within the universe, and it extracts it and brings forth what we call the essence back into us, in the form of light rays.

An example would be like when a magnet, a powerful magnet is put in the middle, and you have small pieces of iron all around. When the magnet is put amongst those pieces of iron, it suddenly draws in all the small pieces. That would be how we should imagine the essences, all the good qualities, the compassion and the good qualities of all the Buddhas and bodhisattvas, and also the good qualities of the riches and beauties of all the different parts of the universe are extracted and brought to us.

Also at the same time we imagine that the essence of what we call the life force, the essence of merit, and the essence of all the nourishment from all the different sources in the universe are all merging into ourselves...

In fact we are visualizing all the good qualities merging into our own mind. And if this is done with strong faith, in fact it is said that one will certainly receive all the good qualities, of long life, nourishment, and so forth.

I feel that extracting the essence from the five elements is actually a very factual practice. Whenever we get sick, or are unwell in any way it is said that it is because of the five elements being out of balance, or being not sufficient in our bodies. So when we visualize that we are receiving the essence of all five elements, in fact that in itself is the proper way to think of

Part IV – Prayers from Various Medicine Buddha Sadhanas, and Commentaries

how we should be healthy, having the essence of the five elements in balance within ourselves.

So at this point, when we do this visualization, while we are still contemplating the visualization of the light rays going out in all the directions and then invoking all the good qualities, bringing them back and merging them into the syllable, while we are doing this visualization, then at this point we start doing the recitation of the mantra.’

III - From The Healing Buddha’, translated by Lama Zopa Rinpoche

Light rays of the appropriate color emanate from each of the five deities at your heart. Your heart and body are full of blissful light, which completely purifies all disease, spirit harms, and negative actions and their imprints. Beams of five-colored light radiate from all the pores of your body, while nectar flows down from the Healing Buddha’s begging bowl and the vases held by the four goddesses, completely filling your heart and body.

Generate the strong recognition that you have vanquished all disease forever and will never be sick again.

While concentrating single-pointedly on this visualization, recite the short or long Healing Buddha mantra seven, twenty-one, one hundred and eight, or more times.

IV - from The Sadhana of the Medicine Buddha, by H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche (lightly edited)

When we recite the mantra, rays of light emanate from the heart of the Buddha, like a hundred rising suns, curing all the diseases and obscurations

Part IV – Prayers from Various Medicine Buddha Sadhanas, and Commentaries

of beings, and their causes. By the power of this practice may all sufferings and problems be removed.

Recite while concentrating on the rays of light. At the end of the practice, by the power of these rays of light, sufferings are completely removed, like darkness is dispelled by a torch.

The Medicine Buddha mantra is:

Tayata Om Bekandze Bekandze Maha Bekandze  
Radza Samungate Soha

At this point, read pages to be reflected on along with recitation. Or, recite, pause and read, and contemplate these things. Connect with them as much as possible. And then if you wish and if time allows, continue with the practice of recitation.

Part IV – Prayers from Various Medicine Buddha Sadhanas, and Commentaries

(At the end of the recitation of the Medicine Buddha mantra, recite the long Vajrasattva mantra three times, then)

Conclusion I – as taught by Lama Lodro

The Pure lands melt into the beings we have visualized, bringing them happiness; these dissolve into the main Medicine Buddha figure; the Buddha, in the form of clear light dissolves into us (also seen as being made entirely of blissful, pure light); we dissolve this visualization from the top of our heads down and from the bottom of our feet upwards, to our heart-center, where the mantra dissolves into the seed syllable, which is now a point of pure light, shining brightly. This dissolves, like a rainbow dissolving into space. Then we rest evenly, and meditate for a while, clear, awake, and free of concepts.

When thoughts stir again and we emerge from the meditation, we see ourselves in our ordinary form, but with the divine confidence of the Buddha whose practice we have been doing, or with the faith that we have truly been blessed by the Buddhas and bodhisattvas. Then we dedicate the merit.

II- from The Sadhana of the Medicine Buddha, by H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche

At the end of the recitation of mantra, be free of the concept that beings and Buddhas are different. Buddhas and beings all dissolve in emptiness, as water dissolves in water, as space in space.

Remain in the inexpressible state, which is free from thoughts and concepts, mingling with the nature of Buddha's body, speech and mind.

At the end of the practice, when we arise from meditation, free from notions or concepts, share the merit with all beings.

Part V: Six Poems - I

astringent and balm,  
heating and cooling,  
bringing movement,  
and solidity

kindness  
and quiet

these are all within the realm of your knowledge

every variety of flowers and plants,  
fruits  
sacred places  
minerals, animals  
and spirits of different kinds

Traditions – stories of what men and women have done  
and have passed on to us  
to be used, added to  
and given to future generations  
next week, next month,  
next year, and on after that

the timely word  
color  
laughter  
music  
and the harmonies and melodies of  
dream,

## Part V: Six Poems - I – astringent and balm

and clear reason  
the bright day

all are within your kindness and giving

samadhi

austerities and their fruit

right celebration  
and transformation

prayer  
mantra  
visualization  
these you bring

May all share in these blessings

May all beings benefit

## Part V: Six Poems - II

this is what bodhicitta does

At once: with one state of mind:

Comfort the lonely  
ease the pain of the sick  
heal  
clear away confusion  
teach  
nourish, strengthen  
assist in the awakening of inspiration,  
clear, fresh energy

give joy  
create harmony  
assure safety and health into the future time  
for all

actually produce from the body this substance  
‘one touch of its divine sap quenches even the word ‘suffering’’

take away anger, fear  
give calm,  
strengthen constitutions

give life  
help good things to grow, to flower

remove obstacles

## Part V: Six Poems - II - this is what bodhicitta does

proclaim universal integrity and equality

remove poverty at once and give riches

rise up, lift up, give hope

remove feelings of illness, and give health

remove feelings of numbness and give joyous feeling, awakened

teach without words

and with words

you are *this*

you are *also* this

you are much more **this**

than what you believed yourself to be

universal light

accomplishing all purposes

instantly transforming a hell

into a pure land

transforming danger to safety

accomplishing all good things

## Part V: Six Poems - III

## The Blessings of Medicine Buddha

freedom of mind

liberation

peace

self-control

joy, bliss, pure happiness

a clear conscience

happiness, love, generosity

of the present

with the light of a positive future shining within it

beautiful, wholesome states

feeling radiant,  
inspired, joyful

wealth, richness  
true inner wealth

enthusiasm

with increased self-respect,

## Part V: Six Poems – III - The Blessings of Medicine Buddha

dignity,  
sense of self-worth

enrichment

comfort and ease

contentment, satisfaction

happiness, joy,

purity, bliss, and peace

confidence, protection

safety, security

feeling connected  
to teachers,  
family, friends,  
ancestors, benefactors,  
the world

optimism  
being in good spirits  
making one filled with joy and hope

sound, solid  
reliable of character

centeredness  
groundedness

## Part V: Six Poems – III - The Blessings of Medicine Buddha

stable

trustworthy

filled with spiritual value

unifying

bringing integrity

refinement

the elevation of sense

gratitude

increasing awareness

clarity

subtlety

worlds appear

their beneficent influence felt

free flowing breath

energy, comfort

health, healing

personal, interpersonal

familial, intergenerational, and collective

healing the cultural soul

and the soul of the world

## Part V: Six Poems – III - The Blessings of Medicine Buddha

health  
for now, and for the future

fortitude  
resistance

increasing intelligence  
wisdom  
right view  
right values  
joy

purity  
purification  
cleansing  
healing  
pristine cleanliness  
freshness  
value  
beauty

clarity  
freedom and joy

clean clear  
calm, wakeful, blissful

facilitating virtues  
helping all virtues to flourish  
helpful for oneself and for others

enabling us to help others  
in the same way, directly

## Part V: Six Poems – III - The Blessings of Medicine Buddha

and in whatever way is needed

peace, kindness  
gentleness  
supreme gentleness  
suppleness, pliancy

tensile strength, durability  
resilience

love, compassion, mercy  
generosity

satisfaction, contentment, overflowing  
from bliss and fulfillment

## Part V: Six Poems – IV

the power of this mantra is such that all the people in this place where it is spoken are healed, instantly

and all the people they are close to, all of their associations, their family, friends, co-workers are also wordlessly, spontaneously healed

and everyone, from this time on, who comes to this place, and their associations, are healed of their afflictions

this becomes a place of pilgrimage

bones mended, hearts mended  
even people born blind or deaf are given sight, given hearing  
people are washed clean  
new hope is born in this place

they are given health, strength and peace  
and from this time on they have lasting happiness  
(and their family, and their friends,  
and all their associations...)

waters are purified, air is made clean,  
trees are made strong, made to flourish  
such that life-giving fruit appears again on their branches

and everyone who thinks of me at this time, or who sees or hears of me, or any of the people touched by the power of this mantra are right away healed,  
weight is lifted,

## Part V: Six Poems – IV - The Power of this Mantra

ease arrives, lightly,  
welcomed relief, so welcomed, that there are tears  
holy strength and comfort  
and we all pray this forward

how could it be otherwise?

and everywhere this story is heard of, or spoken about,  
everywhere it is dreamed of or imagined,  
people are made well and strong,  
and their families and friends, and everyone they see or even think of,  
and the lands are made healthy and beautiful,  
and animals are made well

the six realms are emptied

and by this grace and power, for generations to come,  
hearing even the name or the story of one touched by this,  
people are healed instantly,  
and their family and friends and everyone they see or know  
wordlessly, spontaneously

fully and completely healed  
all diseases removed,  
without a trace,  
never to return  
health for all  
until even the names of what once gave trouble  
are forgotten...

and from this time forward  
most excellent powers of resistance  
are born and established

## Part V: Six Poems – IV - The Power of this Mantra

from reciting, from hearing  
from this prayer  
given on to everyone  
self, family, friends, loved ones,  
to all people,

to all, without end,  
my praise for this is also without end!  
glory!

## Part V --additional material -- Six Poems -- V

## Praise to All Healers

Praise to all natural born doctors, nurses, midwives,  
helpful friends and strangers, kind mothers, fathers,  
and traditional healers

Praise to all those who work in all the fields of medicine,  
with right intention and with diligence,  
and to those who explore the full range of methods to bring health

I celebrate those having even the thought to benefit  
even in some small way  
I honor those with the intention to relieve even some minor pain  
all the way to those dedicating their lives and working to cure all  
major diseases and their causes

I celebrate the upholding of traditions that heal  
and the conception and actualization of new technologies,  
methods that provide insight into the conditions in the body and aid healing

My deepest respect to those who dedicate their lives to helping others  
to those who research into causes and their resolution to cure illnesses --  
May your aims be swiftly accomplished!  
and my profound respect to those who with their lives produce true  
medicines

## Part V: Six Poems – V - Praise to All Healers

And praise to all medicines *themselves* –  
naturally occurring or compounded  
to all the healing substances of this earth

the pure water, the blessed rain;  
the clean air in the free flowing breath,  
and the wind carrying beautiful scents;

Praise to the sacred fire, to the light and warmth of the sun  
and the sun in all my friends' kind smiles

I bow to the seed, to the root,  
to the bark, branch, green leaf, flowers and fruits,  
and to all the vegetables and grains that sustain and enable our walking each  
day on this earth

O wondrous earth, boundless blessing!

This fertile ground, uncountable plant life, spice, stone, bejeweled,  
iron gold silver beauties

and the valleys, our treasures, fields, ranges that stretch ever onward, forests  
of mysterious welcoming life, breathing for us  
scents that enrich us with each breath and remembrance

streams shining, echoing in us, rivers and treasure-oceans  
our seeing is only a small cup spilling everywhere these miraculous joys  
pearl sea-weeds, strange, long-lived nomads one with the sea  
where the edges of our worlds lightly meet, tho we are also one  
in this vast life

All the beautiful sounds, colors born to our eyes on this day, and scents that  
uplift – these are healing treasures!

## Part V: Six Poems – V - Praise to All Healers

I celebrate this sky outside that wakes and feeds me at the start of each day,  
and throughout the day

cloud wonders and the movement of awakening light  
the movement of light throughout the day  
to dusk, and then the moon and stars that appear  
holding us in their palm

In this world, I fully rejoice in the activities of those so empowered  
who care for others,  
in all the lineages throughout time that have accomplished,  
and are right now engaged in curing with prayer,  
with mantra and visualization,  
with substances,  
and with advice of love and encouragement

I rejoice in the Supreme Healer  
Universal Medicine,  
giving freely and abundantly to all  
the wisdom that is clarifying,  
the warmth contained in even the smallest significant gesture

Peace that endures  
diamond-life  
fresh light for us all

I rejoice in  
the Master of Remedies  
to you I bow with respect  
and gratitude

I rejoice in the hard work and dedication of students and scholars  
To all teachers everywhere who show the way, I bow in profound gratitude –

## Part V: Six Poems – V - Praise to All Healers

everywhere and in all times,  
they are a blessing to us all!

To all that is love  
I celebrate, sing songs of continuous praise  
to all the generosity of spirit that is always giving so much,  
and so joyfully

All the beauty, art, music, and humor;  
I celebrate all the healing dances and songs,  
poetry and words, painting and sculpture,

renewing visions

Here where there is silence, meditative peace,  
insight that liberates totally from suffering and the cause;  
for the ethics, meditation, wisdom, transformation and release

I sing silent songs of celebration

To all the spiritual currents set in motion,  
maintained and increased by people in traditions  
coming from the past, into this present time,  
and especially to my main teacher,  
the one who has helped me the most in this life,  
I bow in gratitude  
and with total devotion

To all the healing angelic forces, I pay homage

And to the Divine Source itself  
I offer every form of honor

## Part V: Six Poems – V - Praise to All Healers

The unseen Protector's hand  
the guardian of beings  
of men, women, and children of every class,  
age, race, time and place

O! The inner vision!

In the purification of faults,  
the freedom from bondage,  
becoming liberated  
the welcoming home after too long an absence,  
I celebrate

Courage born, and a voice;  
faith renewed,  
sensing activities branching in thousands of ways  
from one source,  
this closeness,  
purity, and lasting joy

I rejoice in all that is healing,  
in the truth of all the healers that have ever been,  
are now, or will be in the future!  
Whatever their capacity to cure,  
be it small or be it very great,  
I celebrate fully, whole-heartedly!

To all kind teachers, I bow  
To all solitary practitioners, and healing groups  
I offer my deepest respect and appreciation

All the prayers, today, tonight, I celebrate!  
In the use of every effective means, I rejoice!

## Part V: Six Poems – V - Praise to All Healers

May I always support your good efforts,  
in every way, and as much as is needed  
for the fulfillment of your aims  
May all obstacles to the fulfillment of the wishes of all healers  
be removed at once

To all those who work to bring about  
true health of body and mind in living beings,  
I bow

And I bow to individual healers everywhere,  
I regard you all with admiration, heart-felt gratitude,  
and with the utmost respect

Here and now I take up fully  
the vows of all healers, those of this time,

and of all times

Just as healers of the past, present and future have this wish,  
now also, so do I

May I remove the sufferings of living beings  
and establish them in pure, lasting happiness  
May I be able to do this perfectly, and May I do this perfectly

Whatever illnesses there are, symptoms and causes  
as quickly as possible may I completely remove them all

Always and everywhere,  
I rejoice in every single degree of lessening  
all the way up to the complete and permanent  
cessation of pain, fever, sorrow, loneliness

## Part V: Six Poems – V - Praise to All Healers

grief and distress of living beings

And I myself will engage in accomplishing these  
this I breathe for them

To the Supreme Redeemers of humankind  
the Great Founders of the world's living spiritual traditions  
to Lord Buddha, to Lord Jesus, and others,  
I bow again and again  
and I pray  
in order to be able to fulfill our purpose here on earth,  
may we *all* receive the glorious rain of your kindness

All these,  
and if there are any sources of healing I left out,  
didn't mention or know about,  
they are all invited here to be honored  
and to join this celebration  
this festival of love

Come all you healers! This is your time!,  
the season of health and well being!,  
the nectar of peace and bliss!

Tears of release spontaneous remission  
I rejoice and cry tears of happiness with the mother and father  
as their child is healed  
I am with them even now!

A lame person walks!  
I shout with them in joy, even now!

An addict loses all craving,

## Part V: Six Poems – V - Praise to All Healers

regains strength and balance  
dignity and beauty,  
I am with them,  
we are walking into that open field together  
brimming with delight

The blind see! The deaf mute hears and speaks!  
Wonder!

A slow person, and the thick and arrogant too  
gain full wisdom  
O blessing!

Every single chronic disease dispelled!  
Forever gone!  
Fear vanquished!

Death overcome!  
Confusion cleared away  
no more to return

Every life given back

I celebrate!  
and O the gratitude each time!  
shining forests

For this, in this moment and from this point forward, always,  
I am with them all

In this present time  
all this I gather into myself,  
into my heart of hearts

## Part V: Six Poems – V - Praise to All Healers

and I sing out with joy:

May all the incredibly pure  
noble works of healers everywhere  
effectively flourish forever!

May all completely pure positive intentions  
bear their excellent fruit swiftly and perfectly  
so that even the words 'illness', or 'disease'  
are never heard again in this, or in any other world!

May joy reign in the hearts of all

The ground calls the cloud and rain  
the rain cloud calls the ground  
I am coming to rain on you  
hear my praise  
be fed and brightened by it

Hungry people call for food  
and food calls to those that are hungry  
runs swiftly to those that are hungry  
saying  
here – take me, eat me

let me be strength for your limbs  
and light for your eyes and intellect;  
color for your cheeks  
and comfort, strength and delight for your heart

By all that is good,  
by all the virtue created here,  
naturally existing,

## Part V: Six Poems – V - Praise to All Healers

and in the Sources of virtue,  
Right now and forevermore  
May all beings enjoy every level of pure happiness

May all have good health,  
a sound mind and body

May every noble realization increase,  
and may the supreme state be attained by all!

(meditate quietly at this point; then dedicate the merit)

## Part V: Six Poems – VI

Help them first

Lords, Masters, Great Benefactors

I know there are people today  
who are much worse off than I

help them first

There are those having their limbs pulled off  
eyes pulled out  
there are those being raped, bombed,  
living in terror  
trapped in sexual slavery

I am not one of them today  
help them first

There are those stricken with grave diseases  
terrible

I am not one of them  
help them first

There are those exhausting themselves totally  
praying with all their might  
that a loved one be spared

## Part V: Six Poems – VI - Help them first

I am not one of them today  
and so help them first, I pray

There are those with no one  
with no education

and no means to get out of suffering

I have a little means sometimes, to ease the pain  
and to restore some small hope

so, help them first, I pray

with this whole world suffering  
and no way out appearing to them

I pray, go to them, help them,  
appear in whatever form they can relate to

I'm not completely blind,  
at least not all of the time

so, help them first, I pray

but my life calls out too  
for being the smallest part of what it should be -  
entangled, wasted, heartbroken,  
crushed,  
with all its' infinite desires and remorse  
isolated, sad...

I would help too but this is how it is-  
I'm trapped, frozen, bound

## Part V: Six Poems – VI - Help them first

I know I don't suffer as many do  
their cries pierce the earth itself  
but your compassion is limitless  
and so I ask  
out of the super-abundance of your compassion and ability

out of the super-abundance of your grace  
that you help me also to heal my life  
and live my full life  
so that I and all the others I know  
can be best cared for by me

Help my sister first  
help my parents first  
help my friends who suffer first

help all those who suffer more than I do first:  
the homeless, the hungry, the destitute, the desperate,  
the addicted  
the benighted, the angry, the terrified and trembling

help all these before me  
but then help me too  
to live the best life I can live

I want to be more than a paralyzed, powerless bystander here,  
tormented by what I see,  
or avoiding it all

I would help too  
and assist, and feed, and encourage

so, for others directly

## Part V: Six Poems – VI - Help them first

and for myself  
and then others indirectly

I pray,  
heal us all

Part V: Essays - I - On Ethics and Healing

On Ethics and Healing

We've all noticed that the mind of a good person has an ethical quality to it. In most of us, this ethical quality is mixed with delusions, or some corruption, in the form of greed, aggression, jealousy, pettiness, and so on.

In a person with some inner development, the moral quality is stronger, and in someone we'd call 'saintly' that ethical quality is there powerfully.

What is here being called ethical, or moral has two sides to it. One is the character of the life itself of a good person, and the other is the expression of ethics as it is taught. This second category of ethics, the outward form, is sometimes called 'precepts', or 'commandments', but they all amount to the same thing. They are guidelines for sane living. Here, 'sane' equates to health, because health on the inside brings peace and health on the outside as well.

On the subject of ethics, and its relationship to health, Lama Zopa Rinpoche says:

"..., one of the most important things you can do is to live a life of moral discipline. Do not deceive yourself by thinking that this is only a religious viewpoint - it is real protection.

For example, if you let your mind go crazy, your life is unprotected. Preventing your mind from going crazy is the way to protect your life. Just see how many problems plague a country where moral discipline is in short supply. The way to protect, or heal, your mind and body is to purify the causes of problems that you have already created, which lie in your mind."

Religious commandments, all by themselves, have gotten something of a bad reputation, as being for hypocrites, or as coming 'from on high' and not from within, and this criticism is at least partly deserved.

## Part V: Essays - I - On Ethics and Healing

As one teacher put it, by the time something is merely a law, it's already too late, the Way has already been lost. And there's truth in that. For ethical teachings to make sense and be a source of strength, these outer guidelines will always need to be brought together with inner education.

Another way though of looking at moral teachings is to consider them to be our inherited wisdom from those who have lived before us. Out of their hard earned experience and out of their compassion, our ancestors have left us guidelines for living well, and for having balance, harmony, happiness and health in our lives. It's for each of us individually to receive such teachings in one form or another, and work out the implications for our own lives.

In Buddhist teachings, there are five Precepts, which are: not to kill, steal, harm sexually, lie or take intoxicants. These can also be expressed positively, as in: protect life; live generously, with wisdom; honor sexuality and relationships; speak truthfully and constructively; and cultivate clarity.

Here are Thich Nhat Hanh's contemporary expression of the Traditional Five Precepts:

### The First Precept

Aware of the suffering caused by the destruction of life, I vow to cultivate compassion and learn ways to protect the lives of people, animals, plants, and minerals. I am determined not to kill, not to let others kill, and not to condone any act of killing in the world, in my thinking, and in my way of life.

### The Second Precept

Aware of the suffering caused by exploitation, social injustice, stealing, and oppression, I vow to cultivate loving kindness and learn ways to work for the well-being of people, animals, plants, and minerals.

## Part V: Essays - I - On Ethics and Healing

I vow to practice generosity by sharing my time, energy, and material resources with those who are in real need. I am determined not to steal and not to possess anything that should belong to others. I will respect the property of others, but I will prevent others from profiting from human suffering or the suffering of other species on Earth.

### The Third Precept

Aware of the suffering caused by sexual misconduct, I vow to cultivate responsibility and learn ways to protect the safety and integrity of individuals, couples, families, and society. I am determined not to engage in sexual relations without love and a long-term commitment. To preserve the happiness of myself and others, I am determined to respect my commitments and the commitments of others. I will do everything in my power to protect children from sexual abuse and to prevent couples and families from being broken by sexual misconduct.

### The Fourth Precept

Aware of the suffering caused by unmindful speech and the inability to listen to others, I vow to cultivate loving speech and deep listening in order to bring joy and happiness to others and relieve others of their suffering. Knowing that words can create happiness or suffering, I vow to learn to speak truthfully, with words that inspire self-confidence, joy, and hope. I am determined not to spread news that I do not know to be certain and not to criticize or condemn things of which I am not sure. I will refrain from uttering words that can cause division or discord, or that can cause the family or the community to break. I will make all efforts to reconcile and resolve all conflicts, however small.

### The Fifth Precept

Aware of the suffering caused by unmindful consumption, I vow to cultivate good health, both physical and mental, for myself, my family, and my

## Part V: Essays - I - On Ethics and Healing

society by practicing mindful eating, drinking, and consuming. I vow to ingest only items that preserve peace, well-being, and joy in my body, in my consciousness, and in the collective body and consciousness of my family and society. I am determined not to use alcohol or any other intoxicant or to ingest foods or other items that contain toxins, such as certain TV programs, magazines, books, films, and conversations. I am aware that to damage my body or my consciousness with these poisons is to betray my ancestors, my parents, my society, and future generations. I will work to transform violence, fear, anger, and confusion in myself and in society by practicing a diet for myself and for society. I understand that a proper diet is crucial for self-transformation and for the transformation of society.

(See also Thich Nhat Hanh's commentary on these precepts, and also his Fourteen Precepts of the Order of Interbeing.)

From what I can tell, keeping precepts cultivates virtue, or positive energy, creates good karma, and protects our life. This can heal our life on a very deep level.

We've all made mistakes, and messes in our lives, and these can be corrected and healed by practicing ethics.

For more information on the purification of faults, their effects and also their causes, see also the essay called A few words on what is called purification in Buddhism.

Guidelines in general are offered are to help us to find the way in our self. An outer teaching, at its best, can help to awaken in our self the sense of what is right. Then that teaching, a like medicine that helps awaken the body's natural healing function, has served its purpose.

Part V: Essays - I - On Ethics and Healing

The Dalai Lama has called ethics:

Medicine to eradicate the misery of delusion, and

An ointment to purify the stains of wrong conduct

In a short treatise on ethics, he quotes one text known as ‘The Great Sutra on Entering into Parinirvana’:

Like the raised victory banner of all Dharmas, moral discipline completely cuts off the paths of all negativities and unfortunate rebirths. Like the medicinal tree, it cures all evil sickness. It is nourishment for those tired and weary on the paths of worldly existence; a weapon for destroying the enemy of delusion. It is a mystic spell which eliminates the poisonous snake of delusion, a bridge for crossing over the waters of evil...”

He also quotes the Saint Tsong Khapa, saying:

Moral discipline is water to clean away the stains of negative actions,  
It is moonlight to cool the heat of delusion,  
Magnificent like Mt. Meru in the midst of sentient beings,  
it is the peaceful force uniting all sentient beings.

We just need to watch our own mind to see how this works. We can see that even just aiming at being kind and ethical right away calms the turbulent emotions, and this immediately makes for better health, at least to some extent.

Thich Nhat Hanh has said that precepts are like the north star - we dedicate and aim to go in that direction and do the best we can.

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Trying our best to live ethically and with wisdom brings a clear conscience, and this then is the basis for even greater health and happiness.

It is because of all the good that can come from it, and because of how much these things are needed in our world today that I praise the precepts as practiced and taught.

Here follows the poem, In Praise of the Precepts

Note: in this piece, one can also substitute the words ethics, ethical sense, morality, discipline, moral guidelines, or any other term with the same meaning.

## Part V: Poem

I bow to the precepts that give life

I bow to the precepts that heal (soothe... pacify...)

I bow to the precepts that protect the mind from suffering

I bow to the precepts that bring peace to self and others

I bow to the precepts that give health

I bow to the precepts that give strength

I bow to the precepts that purify all beings

I bow to the precepts that are the expression of great respect between people

I bow to the precepts that are the expression of reverence for life,

I bow to the precepts that are the expression of this wisdom

I honor the precepts that are the essential character of all good people

I pay homage to the precepts that support meditation

## Part V: Poem – In Praise of the Precepts

I bow to the precepts that tame the mind, and keep it humble

I bow to the precepts that bestow dignity upon self and others

I bow to the precepts that are true wealth

I bow to the precepts whose practice ennobles

whose practice uplifts

whose practice beautifies the world

I bow to the precepts that can bring safety for self and others

I bow to the precepts that can bring freedom from fear to self and others

I bow to the precepts that create the causes for happiness, now and in the future, for self and others

I bow to the precepts whose beneficial influence, even when practiced by just one person, reaches far

I honor the precepts that clarify the mind

Even the worst person, as soon as they turn their mind to the precepts, gains some improvement in their mind

## Part V: Poem – In Praise of the Precepts

I bow to the precepts that are the essential nature of the nectar that relieves  
the sufferings of the six realms the goodness

I bow to the precepts that liberate

I pay homage to the precepts as spoken, written, and practiced

Any person in whom the precepts are strong is an object of refuge, whether  
they be a layperson or ordained

They are a source of safety and strength

Even without speaking, their presence alone comforts, and can heal

I bow to the precepts that are the essential character of all bodhisattvas and  
saints, and all good persons

I bow to the precepts that nourish, and that bring happiness

## Part V: Essays - II

## A few words on what is called purification in Buddhism

You asked about purification a couple of days ago, and it set me thinking. This term is usually used in the Tibetan Tradition, although it is part of all Buddhist traditions. I mentioned the Four Opponent Powers, and I'll be sending you some things by Lama Zopa that I have.

When this comes to mind, I always immediately think that those teachings need some adaptation for Westerners, and I'll try and include a couple of definitions and comments later in this little note.

The question is already there, when we use the word 'purification' – 'What is purified?' In Buddhism, as you know, they talk about the three root causes of suffering, or the three poisons, as greed, anger, and ignorance, with the main cause being ignorance – both as wrong views and as obscured consciousness.

Anger, and everything that stems from it, is purified by love; greed, or attachment is purified by non-desire, by renunciation, by letting go, or by right desires (having wisdom and compassion) and generosity; and ignorance is purified by wisdom.

In the Theravada, the Four Foundations of Mindfulness Sutra begins, 'There is this one way, to the purification of beings, to the alleviation of suffering, to the establishment of Peace, and that is the Four Foundations of Mindfulness' (or words to that effect). Mindfulness, collectedness, and insight practices are what accomplish this.

In the Tibetan Tradition, they have one way of formulating teachings called 'The Ground, Path, and Fruition'.

Part V: Essays – II - A few words on what is called purification in Buddhism

The Aspiration Prayer for the Attainment of Mahamudra, has a verse that says,

The ground of purification is the mind itself,  
 indivisible cognitive clarity and emptiness.  
 That which purifies is the great vajra yoga of mahamudra.  
 What is to be purified are the adventitious,  
 temporary contaminations of confusion,  
 May the fruit of purification, the stainless dharmakaya, be  
 manifest

If we think about it, when we make some change, or improvement, there is something similar, or identical to what I described in the notes on the different levels of mind. For example, we could say that patience purifies impatience, generosity, stinginess, zeal, laziness, and so on. A counter – current can be raised, and can cancel out the old habit energy, or at least lessen it. Maybe sometimes letting something be is best.

If I've learned anything from thinking about the different levels of mind, it's that there is more going on than we see. There is more to us than we see. Like Thay said, mind consciousness is the gardener, and store consciousness is the garden.

He also taught that things can exist in the form of a seed, and in the form of a manifest dharma. When something arises, it isn't that it didn't exist a moment before (especially noticeable if we're talking about habit energies). And when it is not manifest, it isn't that it doesn't exist in us (before purification, which should 'burn the seeds' or, in other language, effect transformation at the base). I think that remembering what we have done in the past, for as long as it is still a part of us in any negative or limiting way, is good.

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Even if we are not suffering from those karmas, we will stay on a more even keel as far as practicing goes. If we think everything is fine, when it isn't yet, that's when trouble comes back around to politely or not so politely remind us.

There are a couple more things I would like to say, and I hope you will forgive me if I am not completely orderly about this. I only write when I can't reference anything else, and these things have been on my mind the last few days. I'm sure most or all of these thoughts will come to light again, if I keep looking. For now though, I'd like to say a couple of words about what are called the Four Opponent Powers. They are usually given (in the order practiced) as Regret, the Basis, the Actual Opponent Practice, and Resolve. These may be my own words for them, you'll have to check, but that's more or less it.

We all know the first Opponent Power, that of Regret, from our own lives. I recently came across a clear expression, by the Dalai Lama, of how this works to purify. He said that when we have strong regret, we will be less likely to commit the same negative action again.

This factor can be cultivated, in a positive way, with a protective purpose in mind. I would add at this point that Westerners need to be very careful here, so regret doesn't become condemnation. (we have a lot of the shadow of Western Traditions in us, certainly) We also sometimes have a powerful tendency to self-hatred, which is a distortion, and that greatly misses the point.

Regret has to be Wisdom-regret, in the sense of affirming something true and wonderful in us, otherwise it can easily slip into beating ourselves up – actually strengthening the wrong views that are the basis of afflictions. We need a lot of love for ourselves, and compassion, I'm sure, for looking at ourselves to be possible, to touch, to know, to hold what we feel is ugly, or

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not worthy, or broken, or selfish. And we do need the wisdom that sees, and affirms, with love, that we are more than this.

Do you remember what I read to you once from Uchiyama Roshi – about repentance and vow. He said, that from the point of view of the conditioned self (seeing we are something more) we can't help but give rise to vow. And that from the point of view of the original self (as a reference point, even if it is just a flash or an intuition) seeing the conditioned self, we can't help but feel regret, and repentance, which also means wanting, aiming to do better. This seems to ease the way, to remember these things. We are both unconditioned, rich, beautiful, original nature, and the conditioned, for worse and better, until we are free of all that.

The second Opponent Power is traditionally given as motivation, or the power of reliance, which is generating a mind of Refuge and Bodhicitta. They give the analogy of using the ground to get up again, once we have fallen. This is the power of reliance. The teaching that follows goes something like this: that there are two kinds of beings that we engage in wrong actions in regards to (wrong thoughts, wrong speech and wrong actions) – enlightened beings, and all others.

We generate devotion to realized beings, and love and compassion for those still caught in wrong views and sufferings.

The category of enlightened beings can include bodhisattvas; those with profound realizations, our mentors, or the Noble Sangha. There are a couple of ways that Tibetan Buddhism speaks about what happens when we have devotion. They say it's like sunlight meeting the snow on a mountain top – this causes the snow (their pure compassion and blessings) to 'melt' and to flow towards us.

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They also say the benevolence of bodhisattvas, and their wish to support us is always there, and that when we turn towards them, they ‘gaze’ upon us. Sometimes I know it happens that even with our wrong views, help breaks through to reach us. The activity of bodhisattvas is inconceivable this way. Most of the time though, I think there is something we can do to facilitate their blessing reaching us. When we have faith and devotion, we can feel their support, we can actualize these graces.

On the other hand we can also block our own receptivity, through disrespect, and not only for this one time. Karma is like this, it’s future possible long term effect is what we should be more concerned about, rather than just the one instance of – being deprived, or whatever. Same is true for the positive karmas – if we think beyond the immediate effect, then that’s really seeing more of why we should value creating good conditions in ourselves, and in the world.

So, faith and devotion are so important. They purify the effect, and the cause of our past wrong actions towards realized beings, and sow the seeds for our having a beautiful connection with holy beings in the future.

Regarding our motivation towards all others, those caught in samsara, I think it was Buddhadasa who gave a teaching where he said that on all non virtues, all the wrong actions that we do come from selfishness. Maybe in my own language I can think of this changing my point of view towards others. Instead of wanting something from them, when I just want to help as much as I can, everything seems to be much clarified. And simpler. Not so many problems either.

There is something about giving rise to the wish to benefit others that awakens our better nature, our emerging self in the most positive sense. Even if we don’t feel it completely sometimes, even if it is mixed in with so much that also has a loud voice in us (wantings, or anger, or regrets; fears),

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still drawing on what is positive in us increases that, gradually. It affirms what is more true, to live out the life of this real self. Our true nature is loving kindness and compassion. When we can align with this, healing and change happens. Nothing is left out.

Where will we get the power to practice? Sometimes it comes from wanting to be free ourselves of suffering, and the future sufferings we may experience. This is natural in us, as long as we have these causes, we're going to want to purify them (they're going to want to purify themselves).

Then, when we start to see and to feel the connection between our own ability, or inability, to help others we care for, with an ever increasing love, then the motivation to purify and the purification itself becomes that much stronger. We are not just doing this for ourselves (what we conceived of before as a separate self) or for this one time.

In practical terms, when we think about our limiting actions that brought us suffering and that harmed or neglected others, this is certainly changed in us, and purified, by cultivating the mind of compassion and dedication towards others, of bodhicitta.

The third Opponent Force, the power of the actual opponent, is, like I said in the notes on the different levels, about producing a counter current. With the motivation to change and improve ourselves, any positive action or method of meditation can be used. I think it was Lama Lodro here in San Francisco who said that positive actions can outweigh the negative, that the positive overcomes the negative, always. This implies time, of course, and effort, but it is great to know this is possible.

In speaking about applying different methods to remedy afflictions, or negative habits, Thrangu Rinpoche said the following:

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‘Taming or fixing the mind means abandoning the kleshas, the mental afflictions. Everyone’s mind has two aspects, one pure, and the other impure, and the impure aspect is called klesha. If you abandon kleshas, then all of your actions of body and speech will automatically become Dharmic, or pure. As long as you have not abandoned them, then no matter how good your actions of body and speech may appear, you will never be happy.

‘Abandoning kleshas is the aim of Dharma, but for this to succeed, it is necessary that the remedy, the practice, actually encounter the kleshas. In order for this to occur, you need to take an honest look at your own mind. You need to see which klesha is your biggest problem. For some people, it is anger; for others it is jealousy, or attachment, or bewilderment, or pride.

‘When you have discovered which klesha is the strongest, you dedicate your practice to its amelioration... Dedicate all your practice, whether is it the visualization of deities, the recitation of mantras, or the practice of meditation, to the eradication of the problem. Directing your practice in this focused way will weaken and eventually eradicate the problem.’

Some teachings speak of generating a strong, clear motivation – or aim – at the beginning, and then dedicating, or directing the positive energy created to the accomplishment of our purposes at the end. In the context of the Four Opponent Powers, the Actual Opponent force, the application of practice itself, is done with full awareness of what we are doing, and why, and then without distraction (or as close to that as we can get).

So, with positive regret for our wrong actions (1), and with devotion and compassion (2), here are some of the methods (3) traditionally given (in the Lam Rim) to purify karma:

reading profound texts

meditating on emptiness

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reciting particular mantras

making holy objects such as statues, stupas, and scriptures

making offerings to the Guru-Triple Gem

and reciting the powerful Buddhas - holy names.

I remember that Chagdud Tulku said ethics and calm meditation were like pushing the pause button on a tape recorder – while those things may temporarily stop the karmas and negative emotions, as soon as the ‘finger’ of our effort is let up, they can start up again. He then goes on to compare wisdom practice to erasing the tape altogether.

Connecting with a Tradition, and with forms, and devotional practices, are purifying on many levels, no doubt. They can also be a support for the development of wisdom. All the teachings seem to point in this direction though – that ultimately it is wisdom that purifies.

We can watch in ourselves how deep some practice of purification is going. Is it effecting upper levels only so far? Or is it changing things on deeper levels? This is something only we can know for ourselves, watching our own experience.

I wanted to mention also that, sometimes it’s good to be ‘hot’, as in passionate about these things, and sometimes it’s better to be ‘cool’ – quiet, calm. See for yourself what works.

I know many Westerners want to be on ‘hot’ setting when talking about purification, as they really feel so bad about what they have done, or really feel, with some new level of awareness, how far off their previous thoughts

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and actions were. But this likely to keep things on a relatively superficial level. Really, I think it's important to understand all this, or else I wouldn't say it. See for yourself what works. By all means do experiment with different approaches.

The Fourth Opponent Power is usually given as resolve, as in a promise not to repeat the particular wrong action we were purifying. This, it's taught, can be a short term aim, or for the rest of our life (or for all our lives, if we like to think that way).

For me, it doesn't work to say anything more than I'll do my best, which I know sounds much watered down, but it is realistic. Sometimes a big wave can come up, and wash away everything, so with compassion towards myself, I just aim to do my best no matter what.

It may help sometimes to take a temporary vow, instead of thinking, 'I'll never get angry again and raise my voice', or 'I'll never touch another drink', it can be more work-able to set our aim for something we think we can manage, like a week or a month or more. This way we can gain a foothold, and build on that success.

I also like how it feels to take the last part of the opponent powers, the resolve, and making it part of a greater resolve, which is the vow to help others as much as I can. This seems to me to include all the particulars, and to bring that one stream into a larger current in me.

I seem to remember someone said the only real measure of for how long, or how much we should engage in practices to remove old tendencies is total purification. I try not to 'declare victory'. If 'a victory' is to be declared at all, let it declare itself. Otherwise it just seems to be me setting myself up. I think of what Buddhadasa said when asked if he suffered (meaning if he was a liberated being). He said, well, I haven't suffered for a while, but you can never be too sure. (i.e., keep practicing...)

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In the Nyingma, they say that when the obscurations are removed, our positive qualities naturally shine forth.

We are very fortunate to know this much, and to have the opportunity to practice, and share whatever is good with others.

## Part V: Essays - III

Two reasons for the inclusion of the following essay in this collection

While the subject of wisdom is worthy of extensive study all by itself, I can think of two reasons for including the following essay in a collection such as this. The first is that, in Buddhism, the cause of suffering is put forth as ignorance. This is not just general unawareness or a lack of information, but it refers specifically about the wrong views we habitually hold about ourselves and others, and about the world we live in.

The way it's traced out in Traditional Buddhist teachings on health and healing, is that wrong views, or ego-grasping leads to the range of difficult emotions, and these lead to imbalances in our mind and body, sometimes manifesting as illness. When we are healthy mentally and emotionally, on the other hand, this produces benefit on a physical level as well.

Although my aim with this collection is to present a range of practices that make use of the richness and healing qualities we have available to us, for the sake of completeness alone, this article has a place here. For those who are interested, Lama Zopa has an entire book, called 'Ultimate Healing' where he discusses in depth the relationship between Wisdom, in the Buddhist sense, and health.

In the article on ethics and the one on purification, I note that for healing and purification to go deep we need to get to root causes. This is where wisdom study and practice comes in, because it concerns the deeply held ideas we have of ourselves, and the effect of those ideas on our whole lives. True health is very much the issue here. As I noted in the preface, all of Buddhist teachings can be considered to have a healing function.

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The second reason for including an essay on Wisdom practice here is that, in order to practice tantra effectively, we need to move at least to some extent beyond our habitual ordinary view. This is necessary not only so that we can believe in what we are doing and apply ourselves, but it is needed also so that we can access the resources we all have within us.

#### The bridge between the Mahayana and the Vajrayana

Although it is not usually expressed as I'm going to say it, I think there's a reason to speak explicitly about the natural bridge that exists between the Mahayana view and vajrayana view and meditation.

When a person sees through the ego, or sees that they are much more than they usually conceive of themselves as, the experience can be one of light, warmth, and richness. We could say they have a glimpse of the view, a truer experience, one that is more reliable. This happens when other elements, other than merely changing one's concept, are present. (I go into this in more detail in the article).

There is a bridge linking the Mahayana Buddhist practice, of moving beyond ordinary, common ego grasping, and the vajrayana practice of mantra and visualization practice, and that bridge is what is referred to as Buddha Nature. When a person arrives at this from the study of various texts, and in his or her meditation, that can be the basis for all the various expressions of this fundamental nature. After all, where else can we get the energy, power or qualities that the different bodhisattva-divinities represent, other than from a source that contains all these potentials. Such is Buddha Nature.

If you've followed the material this far, perhaps all these ideas will be perfectly clear. This is my hope at least. There is nothing here that I've merely made up – it all be expressed before by great Lamas such as

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Lama Yeshe in An Introduction to Tantra, and Tulku Urgyen, in Rainbow Painting.

May all beings receive everything they need for true health and happiness.  
May they have peace and joy  
right views and great appreciation  
for themselves, and others and this world we all share

## Part V: Essays - III

### An Introduction to Buddhist Wisdom Teachings

#### Namo Manjushri

Each Buddhist tradition has its own Wisdom teachings, which are different ways of pointing to the truth. In their own way each tradition encourages people to find truth in themselves.

In terms of what the different teachings have in common, we can say that they all serve the same purpose, which is to help people become free from suffering. We can say that without exception they all have this function. This is the reason for Buddhist teachings in general, and for the Wisdom teachings in particular.

In addition, all Wisdom teachings take place in relation to other disciplines, and to the whole of our life itself. This is important to know. Wisdom teachings will make sense, and their true worth appreciated, depending on how much a person practices, and how well their context is understood.

So then, instead of giving a historical overview of the development of language and ideas, I thought it would be useful simply to write a few pages on the methods of Wisdom teachings, mentioning a few of the points they have in common and placing them in context, showing their great value to us all. May it be of benefit.

Here are the first things a person should know about Wisdom teachings:

Up until the point of Wisdom practice, all of the other methods a person may use, such as ethics and calming meditation, are only a temporary means to pacify suffering. These other methods support and lead a person to wisdom,

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however, it is Wisdom alone that goes directly to the cause of suffering, which is ignorance.

For a person practicing as taught, the method of Wisdom is able to end the struggle and conflict of dealing with suffering just on a superficial, emotional level. This can be exhausting, and what's more it's not enough.

Wisdom also removes the fear that is a part of only having provisional methods to use. While these are necessary supports, somewhere we know that more is needed.

Even early on in learning we can sense that the method of Wisdom is sufficient. Because it deals with the cause and not just with the result of suffering, we can sense that Wisdom can put a complete stop to the cycle of repeated dissatisfaction that is samsara. This the best possible news.

It is Wisdom that gives 'the gift of fearlessness'. This is a gift we can give ourselves.

As long as a person continues to cultivate, they can reasonably expect a lessening of wrong view and afflictive emotion. As the Buddha taught, Wisdom is the actual means by which we can purify ourselves. Just knowing this brings another type of calm; it brings faith, and more energy to study and to practice until the result is achieved.

Wisdom begins with awareness. Then we can notice that when we practice mindfulness it can be something more than just the mere registering of phenomena. There can also be more *knowing*. Mindfulness can be of the nature of *discernment*, or *clear comprehension*, and it is this type of awakened intelligence that we should use, both in our daily activities, and in any practice we may do.

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This discernment we develop is helpful to us not only in maintaining good ethics and in meditation, it is also the most useful quality in cultivating Wisdom. The reason is that the very essence of Wisdom is discrimination-telling what is what, or telling the true from the false, cutting through illusions. It's for this reason that it's taught that in meditation we should try to 'further and sharpen this bright awareness'. This means no spacing out, or trance-like quality. In fact, we go in the other direction: be awake ; be alert; be present; develop discriminating mind.

In a clear, bright mind of discriminating awareness, no delusion or cause of suffering can grow. This is our protection. This mind is without projections, or imaginings, and it breaks down the remainder of past thought on deeper and deeper levels of mind. We become freer as a result.

More specifically then, what is Wisdom as expressed in Buddhist teaching, and how are we to develop that in ourselves?

Wisdom, as the Perfection of Wisdom, is both relative, seeing what will benefit in a particular situation, and also being established in the truth state, in this moment being clear, without the least trace of wrong view.

The Wisdom taught by the Buddha is the realization of ego-lessness, and non-duality. Having this liberating insight is also sometimes called the experience of 'emptiness'. You might ask, 'Empty of what?'. The answer is empty of ego, or of an 'I'. As one teacher put it though, ego-lessness shouldn't be taken to mean that the ego exists and then we get rid of it; instead it means that we see the ego never did exist in the way we once believed.

When we search into our own body and mind for what we call 'I', or for what we are called by name, we find that what we usually hold to be an 'I', or a 'me' is a fiction, a concept. We have mistaken the ego to be what we,

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ourselves, actually are, and what other people actually are. There are many levels to this.

The 'I'-grasping ignorance manifests especially strongly when experiencing either anger or attachment. However, that person you conceive of when you think of an ordinary, limited, permanent person- that person doesn't exist. That is a mistaken consciousness, and it is precisely this imaginary ego-grasping that is the root of all problems.

As Dudjum Rinpoche said, that which has kept us in samsara (the cycle of repeated dissatisfaction) is the grasping and the grasped. This is the cause of the emotional afflictions. Such ego-grasping is also called 'self-grasping ignorance', or 'dual-grasping ignorance'. Ultimately, this has no basis.

As an experiment, right now, tell me, what you imagine- is it real or not real? Of course you can say that it is real in a sense because it produces effects, (like when a person mistakes a rope for a snake), but ultimately we know that it is not real. This is what is meant by there being different modes of existence, or different levels of mind or of truth.

There is a way the ego does exist, but it is different from what we have in our mind. We have thought up a mundane, permanent, independent 'self', and taken hold of it as real. This is wrong view.

Any time we fixate on things, ourselves or others, as existing in a particular way, we are hallucinating. (This is sometimes called 'reification'.) Actually, as we can find out for ourselves, anywhere there is life there is an unfathomable depth of being.

If we are attentive though, sometimes we can notice how we project our imaginings instead onto what is here, and mistakenly believe them to be

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true. This tendency, and the remainder of having done this in the past influence our perception more than we may know. And it is this mistaken understanding and the effects of taking what is made up by our own mind as being ultimately true, that is changed on every level by Wisdom practice.

With introspection and study we find that the way we experience is very much related to language, to our naming of things, or to what is called 'labeling'.

The Indian sage Dharmakirti is quoted therefore as saying:

'By means of understanding the conventional level of truth, and ascertaining the manner in which mental labels and conceptualization affect the perceptual process, one perceives the final mode of the actual presence of phenomena. As it is the gateway to the deeper meaning of things, the wise practice in this manner.'

With careful attention reaching insight, we can see that what was taken hold of is not, and never has been true. At the same time, and this is an important point, we can see something else- we can see what is real, stable and lasting- that which is our own true nature, just as it is.

It's taught that our discriminating wisdom completely and absolutely destroys the ignorance of ego-grasping, the cause of suffering. We bring the light of illumination, and with greater strength of comprehension, we cut through the seemingly concrete sense of 'self'-existence.

One of the meanings of the images of destruction in mythology and iconography in fact, is just this total destruction of the ignorance of ego-grasping. They refer to that transformation of experience.

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How are we to approach having this experience for ourselves?  
What are the methods?

Upon investigation we find that, along with unawareness, one of the things that perpetuates self-grasping is self-cherishing, or the attachment to 'one's' own pleasure. So we can see why the practices of morality and compassion are recommended from the beginning, to first pacify the gross manifestations of ego. Then we can go further through meditation.

There are different ways of approaching the cultivation of wisdom. One is through analysis, as mentioned above. We look carefully for what we are called by name, for what we specifically conceive of as 'I' throughout our body, sensations, mental formations (also called 'tendencies'), and consciousness.

To uproot the ego-clinging delusion, the cause of samsara, it's been said that it won't do to have only some sort of vague idea of the 'I' that we take hold of as being who we are. Instead it's essential that, moment by moment, we have as clear a perception as possible of the image or feeling of the 'I', or of who we consider ourselves to be. Then we can benefit from sharp analytical investigation. (Keep your mind clear. Keep your knowing sharp.)

When we grasp a 'self', the idea that we have is of a fixed, permanent identity. When we think about this though, right away we can tell it's not accurate. In this way we find that the recognition of impermanence can help with the realization of emptiness. Definitely this is a clue.

Bhikku Khantipalo wrote, 'Intensively examine every dharma, (form, sensations, perceptions, mental formations, consciousness), every momentary experience as it arises and passes away for any sign of (what we conceive of) as 'self'.'

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After investigation, and seeing that there's nothing to find, no such 'I' at all there in the five aggregates, then don't look any further- you've already found what's to be found, just rest your mind with that, familiarize yourself with that recognition.

Beginning with ourselves in this way, what we find also holds true for others- we can recognize that they too are not merely what we conceive.

When we see that the image we hold (in ourselves, or that we project) is without a factual basis, then it has to disappear, or at least the misidentification will lessen, gradually fade, and eventually vanish altogether, taking with it the accompanying emotional afflictions.

The subject and objects of attachment are actually non-existent; Seeing this purifies attachment. And the subject and our objects of anger are essentially non-existent; (imaginary)- seeing this fully purifies anger. Just so, the three poisons of attachment, anger and ignorance are cut at their very root by this one practice of Wisdom.

When we see illusions as illusions they lose their power over us. This is the essential point of practice. Bokar Rinpoche compares this function of insight as being like seeing a stuffed tiger for what it is, and completely losing any fear we might have had.

The way to make the above method effective is to practice alternating samatha and vipassana (calm and insight) meditation, reviewing the points of analysis, and then to combine the two.

There is a line in 'Heartwood of the Bodhi Tree', by Buddhahasa Bhikku, that 'Nothing whatsoever should be grasped as 'I' or 'mine'. We can also say, 'Don't grasp anything created by the mind as being real.' And, not even the

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'emptiness' of the 'I' should be grasped. These are good to remember and meditate on.

Here's a verse:

Meditate one-pointedly on the absence of constructs  
 as your own true nature  
 Right meditation on emptiness destroys  
 mistaken thought forms, swiftly and easily,  
 like taking a hatchet to balsa wood

(or, as one teacher said, 'like a snowflake in a furnace')

As mentioned earlier, the method of negation, of saying 'not this, not this' does lead also to something affirmative, in the words of the Diamond Sutra, something 'ungraspable and non-deceptive'. After analysis we can familiarize ourselves with that state (of bliss, and freedom).

Swami Sivananda said, 'After destroying all false imaginings become That which remains.' (without grasping, and without concepts).

In addition to the method of analysis and familiarizing ourselves with what is found after analysis, there is another way to the realization of our nature, and it is through a more intuitive approach. There are times in practicing meditation when mindfulness, as stability and clear comprehension, opens up and becomes Awareness, or Wisdom, a self-knowing state. All paths and practices are contained in this state.

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One instruction by Tilopa says,

'Don't think about the past,  
Don't imagine anything about the future,  
Don't analyze anything in the present,  
Don't contemplate,  
Don't concentrate,  
Don't meditate.

Leave your mind in its natural state.'

Let go of the past. Let go of the future. Let go of the present. What's left?

Rest your mind in a state of natural ease, without grasping or holding anything, and with your mind very clear and aware, very sharp and precise. Familiarize yourself with that.

Knowing emptiness in this way is also called 'knowing the true nature of mind'. This experience is also called 'the view'.

Sometimes we hear, 'Dissolve your concepts completely', or 'Allow your concepts to dissolve'. It's taught that, 'The view is there upon the dissolution of the conceptual mind'.

As far as the method of meditation here, Tulku Urygen Rinpoche describes it like this:

'Try now in your meditation practice not to maintain anything whatsoever. We should be free not only from the surface and underlying thoughts, but also from the deep seated thought constructs as well, which are what conceptualize the meditation state.

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'We need to become used to the natural dissolving of thought through training. By allowing the expression of thought activity to naturally subside, again and again, the moments of genuine rigpa (non-dual awareness, self-existing wakefulness) automatically and naturally begin to last longer.

'Do not create or construct anything whatsoever. Leave your present wakefulness, which is the buddha nature itself, totally unmodified. Do not try to correct or alter anything. Leave it free, as it naturally is.

'The first point, then, is deliberate mindfulness. The next moment is seeing your nature. At that time you should allow for an ongoing state of naturalness.

'All the different speculations should be dropped completely. In the moment of seeing, allow for a continuity free from thought. Simply rest freely in that.

'Realizing the view, authentically and totally, melts away the obscurations of karma and disturbing emotions, and this allows the qualities of original wakefulness to unfold.'

(These lines are selected from the book 'Rainbow Painting'.)

As we can see, the meditation on emptiness either explicitly or implicitly negates limited concepts of 'self', 'other', and the world. We can take up whichever method for cultivating insight we prefer, whatever works for us. Whatever our approach, however, we will need both of these elements- of stability, or continuity, and discriminating awareness.

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In this process that we are engaged in, of cultivating Wisdom, it's also traditionally been taught that it helps us a lot to be in the presence of those who have awakened a deep realization. As there are layers of mind, there is much depth and subtlety that can be known sympathetically. It helps us to hear their voices, to see their pictures, to hear their words, or to think of them. (I think of Nisargadatta Maharaj, Ramana Maharshi, Swami Sivananda, Bokar Rinpoche, Lama Yeshe, the Dalai Lama, the Karmapa, Thich Nhat Hanh, Hazarat Inayat Kahn, Kenpo Palden Sherab Rinpoche, Tulku Urgyen Rinpoche... These are illumined beings.)

You can think of the excellent qualities of any teacher with whom you have an affinity. To be in their presence is referred to as 'satsang', or 'association with the wise'. Association with the wise is association with wisdom itself. We can benefit a lot from this.

We should also clearly understand the need for our own continued application, and our own development toward deeper, more effective practice. 'Practicing correctly is your own responsibility.' Up until now we may have 'practiced' self-grasping, or 'I' grasping for a long time. We may have done it day and night, but this has all been delusion.

If all it took to be without wrong view was to have it explained once, then the practice would be very easy. But what happens is that thoughts that are the product of past thought and experience arise in us like a wave, and again there is wrong view, some negative experience or afflictive emotion.

Even when these negative experiences are not that noticeable, the potential for them can still be there, waiting to be triggered. A discerning mind will see if it is so. For example, we can find within ourselves the subtle sense of 'attachment (or anger) without an object'. This is the awareness of a tendency. Wisdom practice progressively destroys wrong view and afflictive emotion, both in their manifest and latent forms. As it is taught in the Pali scriptures, we should practice to the point of 'forsaking the

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substratum of existence' of delusion. With stronger and more profound realization, and continued practice, we can reach the stage where realization is complete.

Because of the fact that ego-grasping goes deep, we need to generate a mind that is able to counteract this ignorance on every level - otherwise we will have left the cause of suffering intact. The opposite of the most subtle mind that grasps the existence of 'self' is the most subtle mind that perceives the non-existence (or emptiness) of this. This is what we need to cultivate. There is no doubt that we need to cultivate subtlety and strength of realization.

In addition, we need to engage with consistency in the practice, so that we don't undo the good results we've achieved in the more formal sessions. Here, an 'on and off' practice won't do. It won't work. It's been said that delusions don't need our help- they happen automatically, but that freedom from wrong view and afflictive emotion needs our continued practice of mindfulness and discernment.

It's important therefore that we try to cultivate discriminating wisdom both in meditation and in the course of our daily lives. When there is ego-grasping we should first be aware when this is happening. (We can think: 'Here is an illusion of 'self'') Then we should practice 'cutting through', or seeing through, and being without self-grasping. (Imaginations disappear. Don't traffic in fictions!)

(Note: this may be easier to do with ego-grasping that is neutral in terms of its feeling quality- without the attendant emotional afflictions such as attachment or anger. Then we can gradually build up our strength of mind.)

Although selfishness and 'I' grasping ignorance are sometimes deeply ingrained tendencies, and although they may take quite a bit of application

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on our part to change, still this is something that is possible for us to accomplish. Through meditation we can resolve what Lama Thubten Yeshe called 'the organic problem of ego'. We should know this is possible, and that it is something most worthwhile- it is the way to our own liberation from suffering, and to our being able to help others.

In 'Ceaseless Echoes Of The Great Silence', Palden Sherab Rinpoche says the following about the importance of continued right contemplation: 'We must deepen our understanding by contemplating thoroughly what we have read and heard. This stage of wisdom arrived at through contemplation is very clear and certain: it is called certainty wisdom. It is very important to reach the level of certainty wisdom in all the areas of our lives. Otherwise we will be allowing our minds to rest in states of subtle confusion, denying ourselves the success and fulfillment of lessons truly learned.

'When we contemplate successfully, we do not simply accept what has been taught. We use our intellect to analyze over and over again, until we feel certain that our projections, exaggerations, and fantasies have been eliminated. We are trying to discover exactly what is; to do this, we must constantly refer to what we have learned about the absolute nature, keeping our minds clear of the extremes of nihilism and externalism.'

It's worth mentioning here a number of the factors that are necessary for the continued functioning of wisdom to be possible. We should each do our best to maintain these supports for having a correct insight practice. We are so much more than ego; not small, not separate, nothing mundane here. A person is something precious; inconceivable, 'ungraspable and non-deceptive'. To know this, however, and to meditate with this recognition, we need freshness of mind, and to have much good, appreciative, affectionate energy; we need to have cleared away a lot of the remainders of negative thought and feeling; and we need, to some extent, to have developed

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stability of mind, and sharp, clear awareness. This means accumulating merit, doing purification practice, and a lot of quiet meditation.

Then in all our studies we have to be careful to avoid either of the two extremes- on the one hand, that of taking the ego to be real, or on the other, that of denying what is here. If we deny what is here (because 'it's all empty') we would neglect karma, and if we assert too strongly what we perceive as being all there is, that is delusion, the root cause of suffering, and cyclic existence. The way to remedy both extremes is to have both a good heart and understanding.

Mercy, or loving-kindness keeps our karma right, and understanding, or wisdom keeps us from grasping too absolutely at appearances. Our wisdom and compassion should always be together.

For some people, the path of having love for all is itself a way to the intuition of Truth. Whatever method we choose though for the cultivation of wisdom, it is our having this quality, of loving kindness, that provides clarity, a sense of richness, and a ripening warmth in our lives. On any path of Wisdom, the development of love, then, is something necessary for each of us, for our full development. Love is there from the beginning, and it should develop as a matter of course.

There are many levels to the cultivation of Prajna, or Wisdom, and all along the way the unfolding of our understanding naturally leads to having more kindness, compassion and generosity. It has to be this way because our nature is this, and because we can see more of the worth of living beings. We can also see the mistakes of mind that people make that lead to suffering, and how much of it is unnecessary.

Out of our own freedom then we can have empathy, and this together with our own capacity to help brings a sense of responsibility towards other people. Since the way we share what we know is primarily through our own

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practice, we'll want to realize further and give of ourselves, in line with the wish, 'May all be free from suffering and the causes of suffering', ' May all be free from self-clinging.'

The development of compassionate wisdom is, then, the main point of one's own study and practice. It is the basis for our service.

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From a letter- on wisdom and compassion:

I just wanted to mention one thing you repeated in your short note- about what Goenka said about compassion developing naturally as a result of vipassana or insight- I think that, in all fairness, sometimes it happens like this, and sometimes not (otherwise all Arhats would be Bodhisattvas, and that's not yet the case).

Actually, this 'wisdom leading to compassion' is the approach in the Zen tradition, as well as in the Theravada, and also, to some extent, it is the approach taken by the lineages in Tibetan Buddhism that emphasize wisdom practice more first, on the way to a full, complete realization.

(Just a note here: The Tibetan word 'San-gye', 'Buddha', translates to 'completely purified- and fully developed', meaning that all faults have been removed (which is the cessation without remainder), and all positive qualities are brought forth, *actualized*.)

So, to get back to my point- if it is so that sometimes liberation, the freedom of mind, leads to the full development of love and compassion, and sometimes not, then why not? Why does it sometimes happen and sometimes not? This is so important for us to consider as individuals, and so important for our world, really.

And here's the best answer I can come up with so far- First, there are different temperaments, so that in any one system or approach one person will flourish fully, accomplishing all the different aspects of development, while another person may need other instruction, and to engage in other practices to achieve the same thing.

Then, I've found the following teaching very useful to explain what is happening in any case. In the Tibetan tradition, they speak of 'the two obscurations' that keep us from seeing the truth of what is here. The first

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type is what they call the 'conceptual obscurations', or the 'obscurations of conceptual thought' (wrong views). These are corrected, or cleared away by samatha and vipassana- the quieting of the mind and cultivation of the strength of discernment- discriminating between the true and the false. The Theravada, Zen, and Tibetan traditions that practice non-conceptual meditation clear away this type of obscuration, the obscuration of conceptual thought, very effectively.

But what happens, quite often as it turns out, - it's the characteristic possible sidetrack to this approach- is that the other type of obscuration, called 'the obscuration of afflictive emotions' (kilesa nivvana) is not always fully removed. Sometimes I've been calling these 'the qualitative obscurations'. And the all too common result is that people end up with a partial experience of the view of emptiness, or egolessness, one with the wrong concepts cleared away- but it is a cold, dark, meaningless, nihilistic experience, one that is lacking in the sense of worth, of the beauty and richness of what is here.

The emotional obscurations are cleared away by the development of all the qualities that we associate with the good heart: the development of love and compassion, gentleness, patience, forgiveness, humility, honesty, gratitude, joy, generosity... These change the quality of the mind so that when the conceptual obscurations are removed as well, the experience is warm; the mind is bright, appreciative, and loving; and the feeling is one of richness, of the great value of life.

The no-self teachings of the Buddha are further expressed in the Prajnaparamita Sutras, and the Middle Way is a further explanation of those teachings. The term 'Middle Way' refers to 'being free of the two extremes', the extreme of eternalism (ego-grasping), and the extreme of nihilism. According to Middle Way philosophy, all the mistakes that people can have regarding the View fall into one of these two categories.

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Right View is accomplished by removing the two obscurations, conceptual and emotional, together with their seeds. So the development of love and the positive qualities of the heart are definitely an essential aspect of vipassana, or wisdom practice, seeing things fully as they actually are. Whether we arrive at this indirectly, or through our engaging in methods that directly cultivate both discernment and kindness, the need is there for everyone to have these elements present. That said, we should each practice what suits us best, and accomplishes a full result.

## Part V: Essays - IV

## A selection from Buddhism and Prayer

Here are two selections that have touched me, that describe how prayer can work in Buddhism:

The first is from Thich Nhat Hanh, from his book, *The Energy of Prayer*:

‘In Vietnam, we also have a custom of praying to spirits, those who have died and become holy souls. We also pray to our ancestors and to our parents who have passed away. We pray because we believe firmly that when we are in touch with these people, we receive energy from them that will help us...

Through my own prayer I have discovered that it is as helpful to pray to the living as it is to pray to those who have passed away. The happiness and lucidity of those around us can also add energy to our prayers. Within our circle of friends and family, there are those whom we see as solid, as an inspiration. Thinking of these people can bring more energy into our bodies...

In difficult moments, if our mind is conditioned in the direction of someone in whom we have faith, then we can have more energy to overcome life’s uncertainties.’

The second selection is from the Christian teacher, Ron Roth, from his book, *The Healing Power of Prayer*. In it he says:

‘When you pronounce a name with love, any name, you make a connection with it. I can look at a picture of my mother and call upon her name and feel an immediate connection. Now, you might say that’s just a memory or affection, but I would disagree. With love, we call our beloved’s name and it seems to release an energy in our beloved as it does in us...’

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When we look at the history of religions in different cultures, it seems that prayer is a universal activity. People everywhere use prayer to express grief, yearning, aspiration, and for the transmission of the energy of compassion.

In all religions and cultures, prayer gives true voice to our deep regrets and to our aspirations.... and depending on the inner state of a person, prayer can be a form of spiritual activity, springing from that deep part of ourself, or inspired by what is most true in us, to act in this world...

Different religions' cosmology comes into play here, of course, but the impulse, the motivation to receive benefit, to reach for truth or to express our real life is everywhere the same... if there is a work-able world view, then prayer can function for a person.

This last year I've come to feel that prayer is the expression of our fundamental nature in response to the world. We pray because we have to. This is who we are.

One definition I came across recently called prayer 'a heart wish'. To me, this is saying that, whether or not we use words, our prayer is an action of some type. It is the direction of our life. If we think about things, then something in us moves. We respond. Contemplation leads naturally to prayer.

Of course, there are- always and everywhere - relatively enlightened or unenlightened levels of prayer. The 'relatively unenlightened' would be praying selfishly, whereas the (step by step) relatively enlightened prayer has more understanding of who we are and what we need.

The simple wish, , 'May you be happy' can mean many things in the mind of people, and I think if we are sensitive we can have some feeling for what people are talking about when they wish us well...

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I imagine a passing a person on the sandy road in a beach town - he lives there, and is deeply tanned... he has a mixed drink in one hand, a pina colada with plenty of ice, let's say, and a fat mystery novel in the other... if this person were to wish me happiness, I think it would be his idea of what that means... like, 'May you get a good tan today and not get sunburnt, may you get comfortably numb from delicious fruity drinks on the beach, may your mystery novel have some good twists to it.... may you sleep blissfully in the sun, wake up and find your way home before nightfall, then do the same thing again tomorrow...'

When we wish another well, we have something in our mind that this means. For a person who has studied and practiced meditation, or prayer, and has found some wonderful things, this, naturally, is what we have in mind when we have a wish for another.

May you have happiness - this is perhaps the root Buddhist prayer, and in it is what is meant by happiness as known when meditation is studied and practiced.

May you have happiness  
 May you be healthy  
 May you be peaceful

In addition to such things as happiness and harmony in our relationships, or for stability and success in our careers, in Buddhism we find many prayers also to accomplish what the Buddhas and Saints intend for us. It is their wish, expressed in their teachings and great encouragement, for us to cut the root of confusion in our lives and put an end to suffering, so that we can act with wisdom and compassion in this world.

Specifically Buddhist prayer can be identified in this way. It always has this function. It helps a person to develop his or her mind, his or her good heart.

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Or, it is an expression of a positive motivation regarding the needs of this world.

Prayer is used to purify and uplift the mind. It moves towards enlightenment, and outwards from the realization of compassion.

There is another way that prayer can be considered Buddhist, and that is when we make use of the language of a Tradition and are able to draw on the power of that Tradition or transmit something of its energy.

It is perhaps here that Buddhist prayers have their widest application. Over the course of a person's life, all manner of guidance or assistance will be sought, all manner of appeal made. And since the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas intend only good for us, if we are connected, somehow we will get what we need. It may not come in the form we would wish, or as fast as we want, but certainly there is benefit, there is comfort, healing and support.

If we study other world religions we will certainly see similarities to the kinds of prayers offered here. There is a universal aspect to many of these prayers. A Tradition will always have these two aspects to it – one is the all important ultimate dimension, beyond tradition, that empowers all traditions.

Rabia has a poem in which she says:

In my soul  
there is a temple, a shrine,

a mosque, a church

where I kneel.

Prayer should bring us to an altar  
where no walls or names exist.

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This aspect ‘beyond names and forms’ is what unifies and lets us know our kinship with others of other places and Faiths. And it is this ultimate dimension that gives life to a tradition.

It’s much like when the roots of a tree go down deep into the earth and reach water, and that life nourishes the whole tree. Then all the branches, of a tree, or a tradition, and leaves, and flowers and fruit will certainly flourish.

The second aspect of Tradition comes from the fact that in our relative world there is something unique about the qualities and energies of the different Buddhist Traditions that have come to us from different cultures and times.

Both of these aspects are vital. If not for the first, a tradition or a practice might have no power, no effect. And if we are not aware of the second – that of the different energetic qualities of traditions, and that we exist and receive them on all these different levels, then we could find ourselves meeting an appropriate teaching for us, but perhaps from a lineage that does not suit us personally. There is no need for this. Where some small adjustment can be made (i.e. getting that teaching through another lineage) then we can more fully receive the benefit that can come from connecting with a teaching and tradition.

Language is a powerful and endlessly diverse mystery, and so, if we want to find what we connect with on a deeper level, we should hear things expressed in different ways, by different teachers. The main thing is to find what works for us personally. This is very much in keeping with the Buddhist principle of testing the teachings and then sharing the good we find with others.

## Part V: Essays - V

## On the Nature of Vow, and the Bodhisattva Vow

‘Vow’ is an interesting word, a rich word. It has connotations of a depth of commitment; and of something solemn, and serious; a deep dedication that calls up our resources and aims them in a single direction.

This word can also be a mirror – as in - What is your vow?  
People can ‘vow’ to do all sorts of things, as a reflection of who they are, what they believe, what they hold to be of ultimate importance, for example, young people vowing to become a millionaire before the age of 30, or vowing to lose weight, or to never again subject themselves to a destructive relationship.

Then there are those people who don’t feel any real commitment to anything other than their own happiness (and of course conflict with others has to come from that). Some people don’t feel any dedication to something larger than themselves, but one way or another, this is something we all need. We are all related, so even looking at it from the point of view of our own happiness, we do need some positive motivation regarding others, and the world we live in.

## Vow galvanizes our aim

Taking a positive motivation one step further, we come to vow. Whereas being inclined to help is a great thing, vow has more focus, and more power. Forming our intention then helps us to see clearly what is getting in the way of our aims, and helps us to clear away those obstacles. It affirms that we know our place in the world, and it breathes fresh life into us. Vow calls up energy we never knew we had, and strengthens us.

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Vow is not fanaticism

The only thing that can possibly keep vow from becoming fanaticism, is reason. What we commit ourselves to should be the result of a great deal of reflection. When instead there is a small amount of reason, and a whole lot of emotion, the results are something tyrannical, unbalanced and destructive – witness all the great evils in history and you'll see, they all had a fanatic ideology at their base.

Ideally, the vows we make should be based on illumined reason, the kind that is the product of deep and careful thought, and reasoning that can stand up to investigation and questioning.

I've heard a traditional teaching about the place of reason that says, if something is true (or worthwhile) then the more you look into it, the more apparent that truth becomes; and if something is not true, (like seeing a rope at night in the dark and thinking it is a snake) that wrong idea will gradually fade away.

If we are really dedicated to something worthwhile, thinking about it will only increase the energy we have to carry out our aim. This is how it should be.

Vow can only come from oneself

When we look within our own heart and hold the question: what should I do with my life in this world? in time, an answer will come that will be our own. Such a sense of direction and commitment can't be given to us. Although such things as outer ceremonies and readings can strengthen our sense of direction and can help our courage to grow, the initial impulse can't come to us from the outside. It has to be 'self-born'. We can say that vow is the flower of self knowledge. The advantage to this is that a clear decision we make about our life is truly our own. It can't be given, and no one can take it from us. Once we've had some experience of it, whatever clear sense

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of purpose we've had can be a reference point. Then, when things get uncertain, as they are bound to sometimes, we can, once more, orient ourselves to that.

Not easy

In all of us there is something called 'habit energy'. By itself, habit is a neutral thing – it can work either for or against our wishes. If we're talking about actualizing our ideal though, almost certainly there are going to be things inside us and in the outside world that feel like they oppose our aims. This is natural and nothing to be afraid of or shy away from. In fact, we can say the river (our intention) flows by itself, but the path to actualizing this aim is made up of gradually removing the obstacles.

If we have clear aims, then naturally we will know what to do and what not to do. It's like there is then a perception that opens up that leads us to knowing what is most necessary at any time.

Vow strengthens us, clearing the way, first in our own thinking, and then in its outward expression; based on reason, it holds up where trust alone can get lost. Thinking on those things that are really worth committing to will prove to us their worth over and over. The more we stay with it, the better it becomes – the clearer our vision and the more abundant our courage. There is a kind of peace and strength to vows that is nourishing. We all need something of this kind of foresight, knowing the value of our goals. This is what helps when, over the long periods of time, no apparent result can be seen. We don't give up. We know what we have set ourselves to do is worth every effort we can give to it.

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### Steady

When we know from inside what truly matters to us, it makes for stability in our character. Like a tree with deep roots, we'll be much less at the mercy of outside forces, like income level, or what is current in our culture, or other people's opinions.

Vow functions to make our own priorities appear clearly to our mind. More and more, when we have a strong sense of our personal vows, we will find we have things in a perspective that makes sense to us. Little things won't bother us as much, and we will appreciate the big, important things, and at least aim to give them the care and attention they deserve.

### The words are not the thing itself

Repeated words, as in a liturgy, all by themselves are not vow. If they are gone through mindlessly, they don't help much, if at all.

The ideal with words is when writing and reading, and then reflecting on our truest aims can help us to touch that force in our lives that moves us forward. This can certainly help to increase that power in our lives. We should be clear though, that the words are not the thing itself (that's where idolatry comes from – regarding something that is essentially inside us as being separate from our own nature).

When we are able to increase the clarity, depth and power of feeling of dedication to our ideal, that can help to pacify and eventually transform the elements in our lives that obstruct what we aim for.

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Will all the hypocrites in the room please raise their hand?

Vows are like a mirror. We can, and should feel uncomfortable when we realize we have fallen short of our ideal. This feeling of discomfort is actually a good thing. Until we have worked through all of our psychology, we will have inconsistencies between our best thought and our behavior. Some people would use the harsh term 'hypocrite', but this only applies if we are not honest, with ourselves primarily, about where we diverge. We need a whole lot of compassion for ourselves, for our suffering and struggle, and we need awareness. Then our vows can gradually help us to live whole, integrated lives.

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### The Bodhisattva Vow

The more freedom we have from suffering, the more available we are to be aware of and respond to the needs of others. You can't expect someone who is suffering to try to help anyone except himself. But if even a little freedom is gained, with it comes some ability and naturally greater responsibility.

One analogy I have is, when a parent leaves the children at home, and the older sibling can see and reach the food on the shelf, when the younger ones cannot. That older brother or sister, because they can see and reach the soup or cereal, has a responsibility to help feed his brothers and sisters. It is that way naturally.

If the mother were to come home and the kids had not been fed, she'd rightly blame the older child if he didn't do what he could have.

When I think of my family, friends, and myself, I know we each have difficulties to work through, and that sometimes we are not available for each other. Thankfully, at least most of the time I have some people who are available to offer their support.

There is a way of orienting ourselves to the world that many people over time have found to be greatly life-affirming. Based on the insight that we are all related as family, it is the intention to help others as much as possible. Included in that is freeing ourselves from whatever would keep us from doing that. In traditional language, this is called 'the Bodhisattva Vow' (bodhisattva, literally 'awakening being').

There are ceremonies for taking the Bodhisattva vow, but the true vow comes from our own heart. When we have this motivation, it is a breakthrough (no matter how many times it happens). It's the dawning of a new awareness.

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Finding the Bodhisattva vow in ourselves, re-affirming and strengthening that can give a person much courage and energy for their whole life. It clarifies everything, and helps us to have a feeling for our place in this world.

When we hear the cries of the world, we must be engaged -  
Mahayana Buddhism

The term ‘Maha-yana’ in Mahayana Buddhism means ‘Great Vehicle’, and this refers to the aim, to work for the benefit of all.

Being Buddhist in origin, the Bodhisattva vow includes the thought of enlightenment. In this Tradition, the cause of our many problems is seen as ignorance, and the remedy is wisdom, or insight, which taken to its furthest point, is enlightenment. The vow is then taken to cultivate the highest wisdom, and to lead each and every one to that same state. Quite the expression of love, compassion and understanding of what we all need!

The Bodhisattva vow has as it’s goal for people, freedom from suffering, and not just the result of suffering, but its causes as well; and the happiness of all, and not just in a temporary way, but lasting happiness. This all comes from the mind. A Buddhist, therefore, is dedicated to finding freedom himself or herself, and sharing that with all others. When it comes to passing along teachings, our own understanding is the vital factor in any communication.

Yes, but how much can one person do for another?

It has been asked many times – how much can one person do for another? What is this about someone vowing to do something so significant for another? While it is true that ultimately every person has to understand the

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causes of health and happiness for himself or herself, there is so much that can be done for another. I only have to think of what others have given me for this thought to become real to me.

We all need support and encouragement; freedom from fear and hunger; we all need to have medicine available, and enough warm clothes. Most of all, we need love and clear teachings, in the form of good human examples, and in some language we can relate to.

These are very great things, and the Bodhisattva vow is the intention to give all these things, all needful things, to all beings, our family.

Here is one traditional verse from the Indian Saint, Shantideva, that expresses the compassionate motivation at the heart of the Bodhisattva vow:

As long as diseases afflict living beings,  
 May I be the doctor, the medicine,  
 and also the nurse who restores them to health

May I fall as rain to increase  
 the harvests that feed living beings  
 and in times of dire famine,  
 may I myself be food and drink

In one sense, to say that vow is the flower of our self knowledge is to say that vow shows how deep a persons' knowledge is. If there is no deep knowledge, then there is no deep vow either. The vow of a Bodhisattva though, is based on something broad and deep. It is based on universal love and compassion, our real nature.

It is possible to feel that, not only do we and our family and friends want and deserve happiness and freedom from suffering, but everyone, really wants these things. In that we are equal.

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When we aim to benefit even one other person, something in us wakes up. When we extend that and aim to feed, comfort and care for our group, family and friends, then that much more in us wakes up. And when we extend that even further, it's possible to feel something universal in oneself, working for the good of all.

Sometimes we are able to glimpse this universal nature, and then again we are taken up with the particulars of our life, but the shining basis, which is our compassionate nature, remains the same. There is always something universal, beyond any one form or action or life span, that supports and sustains us, and is the source of all our vows. Perhaps this is why Lama Yeshe said that when we have bodhi-citta (the thought to benefit all others in the best possible ways) we take on a more universal character.

‘When you have this kind of motivation,’ Lama Lodro says, ‘it makes whatever practice you do very powerful.’ We are saying very clearly and strongly with our life and practice, ‘May all beings be free of suffering!’ ‘May all beings be happy!’

### How to increase compassion

All contemplation has one thing in common, as shown by its etymology, and that is that we are giving time and attention to a particular subject. Usually the feeling of compassion is associated with a sense of sadness, heaviness or sorrow, and that kind of feeling can't be sustained for long. There are associations of suffering, and the feeling perhaps that looking at these things too long will actually weaken us. This is because we don't know how to go about thinking about suffering. It's important that we go about this in the right way if we want workable results.

When we are able to successfully contemplate a subject like suffering, and increase our compassion, it is because we do it slowly, and carefully. To do it well, we should reflect and then stop and refresh ourselves and assimilate

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what we've been thinking about. Then the effect is strengthening. Our determination to help only increases; our clarity and sense of priorities is made sharper; and our delight in doing something useful also increases.

In actual practice

Forming the idea of a dedication before practice, setting ones motivation is like saying, 'I will cultivate this crop for this purpose, for this person or these people'. Then we cultivate – plant the seed, let the sun shine, water, pull the weeds, and finally, harvest. Then, in our thoughts, when we dedicate at the end of a practice, again we are saying, 'This belongs to this person, or these people'. 'May it accomplish this benefit'.

Now, I know this can't be proven to you unless you are a person with highly developed extra sensory perception, but I do believe that, when we have a clear idea of communicating some benefit,

that positive energy is transmitted instantly. This is the basis for the concept of absent healing. Most of us live ordinary lives, I know, but I thought I should mention it. It really does feel this way sometimes, and it changes the way I think of the practice itself.

When we have others in mind, a universal aim, even eventually, then we don't feel like the harvest of benefit is ours alone. We also gain, naturally, but the it feels like the result is bigger, much bigger than just our own gain. We can live in a state of big generosity. Then, when we actually do meet the person or people we have been practicing for, it's easy, natural, to 'give over', or extent to them what we have produced, whatever peace or clarity, or light, health or strength. We share these things in whatever way they can receive them. We can feel, 'Here, this belongs to you...' aah...

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Now, about this ‘all beings’ business...

As soon as we try to practice like this, it’s immediately clear that some people or situations are easier to practice for, and some more difficult (or impossible). We should take special note of who we have a problem with, and make special efforts to dedicate our practice to them until we wear away that resistance.

### Puppies and kittens

I told one friend about the traditional way of cultivating loving kindness, starting with ourselves, then a loved one, then going on to a neutral person, and only then practicing towards those that are difficult for us. When he heard this, he said, ‘Easy like puppies and kittens!’ Yeah, I said, that’s exactly the principle: start with what is easy and go from there.

When learning the Theravada Metta (cultivation of loving kindness) practice, I remember becoming really interested for a time in watching for what they called the ‘neutral’ category of people. These are people we neither feel positive, or for whatever reason, averse towards. The aim is to start seeing these people as people, having them register for us, as human beings.

Gradually, in every Buddhist approach to developing the good heart we all have, the aim is to become more and more inclusive, and impartial in our kindness and compassion.

I think of teachers and sages who seem to have accomplished this impartiality of love. It looks like they treat everyone they meet with the same kindness and compassion. This is a high and wonderful aim, more than worth whatever effort we make in that direction. It’s the basis for great things.

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Dharma centers' red flashing lights and whooping si-reens

If we go to a center where they chant, 'saving all beings', but the people there won't give you the time of day, or even look you in the eye, you should know something is seriously wrong. The people there, and especially the teachers, have completely missed the point. A practice center should be a place of mutual support. Vibrant, warm and alive, it should be a place where people can feel safe, and where inner disciplines can flourish.

Speaking realistically for a change

The Bodhisattva vow is something we will naturally need to bring to mind again and again. Almost all of us will, at times, only be able to focus on our own struggle. At times this is only right and appropriate, but as long as we live in a world with others, this intention, to help as much as we can, is the most useful to have, and the most fulfilling.

We may be able to express only a small part of that aim, but the motivation itself is something noble, generative, healing, strengthening, illuminating and enlivening.

We never give up

One Tibetan Lama here in San Francisco, Lama Lodro described the depth of dedication of the Bodhisattva, saying:

'A Bodhisattva would go to be born one million times in hell to help one sentient being. One million times he would go, and not complain- he would enjoy that, actually. Beings need help, and he enjoys helping. That's the Bodhisattva motivation.'

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Another verse by Shantideva says:

For as long as space endures,  
and for as long as living beings remain,  
until then may I too abide  
to dispel the misery of the world

All my lives

I know that many Westerners, like myself, don't see past and future lives – literally being born back then, in that place, and in the future in some other place. What then to do with the idea of past and future when it comes to vow? For me, it continues to be helpful to think beyond this one life span – however we conceive of ourselves. This works in terms of the Bodhisattva vow. We can aim to dedicate ourselves to things that we feel can help now, and will be helpful in the long term.

Here is an analogy: If we see that there is a river close to where some houses are, and that each year the river comes a little closer, it would be right to solve the problem now, while we can. If we don't, then it may not be this generation, but eventually the houses of our children or our children's children could be washed away. This kind of thinking ahead puts our own lives in a far truer context than we usually think in. More meaning is evident in our own lives now, also, when we think this way, the present in relation to the next generations.

Good seeds

We can also think of our lives as a chance to plant good seeds. Of course a tree takes years or decades to grow and become shelter, and bear fruit, but the work of planting and nourishing has great worth. If we think of the wonderful things we have inherited from past generations, teachings, art,

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institutions, we can feel gratitude, and this can also help us to live in a way that is dedicated to those we share this life with, and to future generations. May they have great trees and clean water, and everything they need for happy lives!

Thinking ahead also makes the problems of this one life easier. We are related to the past and future generations, and we all have our part to do. Our part is not the work of the past – they had their own work; and our part is not the task of the next generation – they will have their own work. We've inherited riches, but also a world of suffering, greed and confusion. Doing our part is a very great thing – the most important thing for any of us.

What's in a name?

By any name, doing our part, to me, is doing the work, which is another name for fulfilling the Bodhisattva vow. When we know our human capacities for freedom, health and clarity, and when we know something of the extent of confusion and unnecessary suffering, then naturally we will find ways to work effectively.

We may work with a group, or alone. It may be with a few close friends, or in association with Traditions and lineages that hold the same vows. However it works out, knowing our potential, and how much need there still is- these two make up our response to the world. The response to life of a person awake to this much is the Bodhisattva vow, whatever name we give it. It is the vow to serve. Here is joy, strength, freedom, fire to warm, wind, earth, and delicious water too; food, music, gifts to give, and peace.

When it comes to birth, death and rebirth, they say an ordinary person is controlled by karma, habit energy, and delusion, whereas a person who is free of these is controlled by compassion. He or she has no choice but to work for others.

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### The heart of the heart

The human heart was made to love. That is its' fulfillment, and that is the shining sun of its enduring nature that we can know in our lives each day. However much we are able to help today, having the highest aim, to help one another as much as we can, this greatly simplifies our complex, worried lives, and makes them so much easier, a delight, really. This one great aim can give to us all, strength and spiritual health. It is this that gives life to our life.

### Bodhicitta, the thought to benefit, equalizes the eight worldly dharmas

There is nothing more practical than working with our emotions, and our mind in our daily life. Whether we want to meet them or not, these factors, mind, feelings, and our responses to life are always there, and they can be changed in a positive direction. Having a strong clear intention in our life meets these factors head on. They say that the energy of the Bodhisattva vow 'equalizes', levels flat, and frees us from the eight worldly dharmas. These are the four pairs that people spend so much time and energy chasing or avoiding: material gain and loss, physical pleasure and pain, praise and criticism, and good reputation or bad reputation (or recognition).

What this means is that, when the factor of living our lives to benefit all others as much as we can is strong in us, then we don't get caught by these things. They don't limit us or obstruct us or disturb our mind in any way. Even just having this aim with our life, there are already real freedoms that come with it.

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This is the only thing that tips the balance

In the 8<sup>th</sup> century, Shantideva wrote:

Just as a flash of lightning on a dark, cloudy night  
for an instant brightly illuminates all,  
likewise in this world, through the might of Buddha,  
a wholesome thought rarely and briefly appears.

Hence virtue is perpetually feeble,  
the great strength of evil being extremely intense,  
and except for a Fully Awakening Mind  
by what other virtue will it be overcome?

and

This intention to benefit all beings,  
which does not arise in others even for their own sake,  
is an extraordinary jewel of the mind,  
and its birth, an unprecedented wonder...

To which I say, all these centuries later, a hearty ‘a-men brother!’  
In these verses, the ‘Fully Awakening Mind’ is the thought of universal  
benefit.

When I think of loneliness, death, suffering, all that is tragic in this world,  
inevitable separation from friends and loved ones, cruelty and madness, all  
the absurdity and waste – all of it – this one factor is the only thing I can  
think of that makes life liveable.

This one great vow reveals the capacity we have to help each other. It  
reminds me that there have been in the past, and that there  
are now, people who are working to help others, and aiming to do

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so, and that we can also take up this aim and this work. That, for me, is the glory of being alive. We can actually do something of real value with our lives.

This intention makes it possible to live with an awareness of all the amazing good and all the terrible things, and to live with resolve, commitment and joy.

This is the only thing, really, that gives me the courage to face whatever life may bring. If trembling fear is the feeling of not being capable, then right here is where resourcefulness, and therefore blazing true confidence, and solidity is found. This one aim, this one intention, tips the balance, in favor of life.

Here are a few of my favorite quotes from Lama Yeshe, on bodhicitta:

‘Bodhicitta is not partial. Wherever you go with bodhicitta if you meet people, rich people or poor people, black or white, you are comfortable and you can communicate.’

‘Bodhicitta is the intoxicant that numbs us to pain and fills us with bliss.’

‘Bodhicitta is the cloud that carries the rain of positive energy to nourish growing things.’

‘We need the pure innermost thought of bodhicitta; wherever we go that will take care of us.’

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## Vow

From this point forward,  
and for however long into the future it is needed  
I dedicate myself to the total removal of suffering  
and the causes of suffering  
from the lives of all living beings  
each and every one of them

I dedicate myself fully to their healing and awakening;  
to their having comfort, strength of body, mind, and spirit,  
most excellent nourishment, health, longevity  
every level of protection,  
shelter, food, clothing, medicine, education, joy,  
and wisdom  
I dedicate myself fully to their complete enlightenment

No matter how long it takes  
no matter how difficult it may be  
no matter what it costs

With all my heart and with all my strength,  
I vow to always serve them all  
in every way that is necessary for them  
and in every way that will bring them all true  
and lasting happiness

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## Great River of Compassion

## An Introduction to Mantra - for Westerners

Avalokiteshvara, help me to say this rightly, for all who could benefit from it.

Mantra:

I: A set of sacred syllables, repeated to attain a spiritual benefit

II. (from the Sanskrit.): A 'tool for thinking'. 1. Prescribed syllables (in Sanskrit) to protect the mind (from defilements). They express the essence of specific energies. The recitation of mantras is sometimes done with specific visualizations. 2. Often, Mantra is used as a synonym for Vajra, or Tantra (as in 'Mantrayana' - the path of mantra).

In thinking about writing this introduction, I've tried to bring to mind the most commonly asked questions about mantra practices.

I know, first off, that most people have no interest in this subject, feeling completely sure (for some reason) that these practices don't work, and that it's a meaningless subject for them to learn anything about.

A second, much smaller group tend in the opposite direction - without trying things, they believe what they hear. They 'take it on faith', or because it sounds reasonable, or because it fits with their world view of what's possible.

Both of these extremes, of tending toward credulity, or a pre-judged disbelief, would have to be set aside, before anything new can be learned,

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especially when it comes to more recondite subjects - where there is a lot that is hidden, or subtle - outside the range of our usual perceptions.

Instead of believing or not believing from the outset, perhaps someone new to this subject could listen to these ideas more as an invitation, to try some of these practices, or to see things in a different way.

I hope in these pages to be able to share some basic information, and to offer as much as I can in the way of warm encouragement to practice.

The effects can really be great, profound and life-altering. They can change what we think of as ourselves, and what we think of as ‘a human being’. As Rumi said, “Human beings are mines...”

We have all these riches inside us. All these potentials. May they manifest effortlessly in whatever way, and as much as necessary for the benefit of living beings.

Imagine if someone told you that you had a pot of gold right around the corner from where you are standing, in your very own backyard. Whether or not you knew this person, it would at least be worth a look. If they even said that you had a single gold coin, most of us would at least look. The usefulness of money is something we can all relate to - ‘no harm in trying’, we’d say. And yet, compared to the claims that are made about the power of mantra, the usefulness of money is limited, almost nothing.

There are other kinds of wealth near at hand that we can have access to and make use of.

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### Our body contains medicine

When we're first introduced to the idea that there are healing properties within our body and mind, that can be contacted and increased, we might be surprised. After all, it goes against everything we've been taught about who we are - and these beliefs can be quite solid.

If someone says to you that your body contains healing properties that can be awakened and increased, it's like being told that there's gold nearby, in your own yard. First, you'd want to know where, and second, how much! Well, the teachings on mantra provide the 'where' - the directions, if you will, to inner treasures.

As far as the 'how much', I'll repeat what tradition teaches, and that is, that it depends on the person and the practice itself what will come about. As always, there is the invitation to practice, to experience and see for yourself, along with the encouragement that these practices could be of great benefit to yourself and others.

If you find you are interested, then please do give these practices a fair try, in terms of time and effort, as it's said, 'to awaken the energy of the mantra'.

### Working from two directions

Let's say you want to cultivate compassion. You may choose to recite the compassion mantra, OM MANI PEME HUM. An experience like this may follow: you can feel peaceful, and have a warm feeling. You may see light like sunlight, rising from within. You may want to share that feeling or express that feeling in some way...

While reciting, you may pause, and say, "may all beings be happy", "may all beings be peaceful...", or make prayers of that nature.

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The feeling then can be somewhat different - as if you are using a different part of the mind to cultivate good-will, love and compassion.

Reciting the mantra, you can have the feeling arising from within, surfacing, as it were, from the depths. And then, praying, or thinking May all beings be happy, from a contemplative level of mind, deeper than ordinary thinking, you may feel this same feeling is both being cultivated or awakened by your prayer, and also changing your surface thought and feeling.

Two explanations for why mantra works at a deeper level

It's taught in both the Indian and Tibetan traditions that the sounds of the syllables of mantra themselves have power. They embody, or express, or *are* the quality that we aim to produce, experience, or cultivate. The sounds *are themselves* the quality we aim to experience, and to make use of to benefit self and others. This is one explanation.

The other explanation is that, through use over generations, mantras have been associated with qualities, or states of consciousness. And when we repeat the syllables of a mantra, we 'tap into' a reservoir of particular life-energy, or power that has been built up over time.

Either way, if it works, that itself is proof enough. We really don't need a theory, though it may clarify some of what goes on. Personally, I feel there is truth in both explanations as to why mantra works.

Often when we read about the use of prayer or mantra, we read extraordinary statements - far from our usual world view. And I must say, in all honesty, that there is something in mantra that is beyond description, and that needs to be mentioned.

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More food for thought - On world view

I recall reading early books about Tibetan Buddhism (the branch of Buddhism where mantra has flourished). They referred to the Tibetan Tradition as “Magical Buddhism”, and in a way they were right. The starting point for much of the prayer, visualization and mantra in the Tibetan Tradition is what can be called a magical world view. A magical world view, wherever it is found:

asserts levels of reality beyond the physical world

and that there can be interaction between the different levels

in a magical world view, thought, or more particularly focused thought, is considered a creative force, a world changing force, to a much greater extent than is commonly believed.

often in a magical world view, spirits (of different types) can be called on for assistance in various matters, and they will come –

ancestors, saints, forms of divine beings, such as angels or bodhisattvas, or saviors

sometimes in a magical world view, the whole world is thought to be alive, sentient

Magic, in it’s most general sense, is changing the outside world by changing something in the inside world. This is often accomplished by ritual, or by prayer, meditation, the use of mantra, or a combination of these.

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Sometimes it's asked, with so many mantras, where should a person begin?

I think of one analogy I heard years ago, that points to an answer, and that at the same time offers an explanation of why a mantra is more suitable for one person, and one not work for them. It goes like this: Imagine a field or a plot of land, and beneath the surface of the earth, at different depths, are different kinds of seeds. The seeds that are closest to the surface are those that will give results first, or the most quickly. This is why gurus, or teachers with insight into a student's nature, their 'field', so to speak, are traditionally the ones who tell the student what mantra to practice.

The theory of karma - past experiences determining one's character and affinities - can be useful for some people, but it's not essential to accept as a prerequisite for practice. Just do some practice and you will see for yourself what mantra brings you what (if any) results.

### The quantitative and qualitative aspects of mantra practice

When we make contact with a tradition through study, recitation, chanting or mantra, we can feel that we connect with a flow of energy to some extent. It may be a subtle feeling, or it can be something stronger, like a steady current. Sometimes it can be quite a forceful experience of energy, of a certain type of life that we are in touch with.

It can be like opening the sluice of a canal. We can feel we have contacted some source of energy, and we can feel it moving in us or through us.

(See 'Imagine an underwater system of channels...' - the short poem that follows this article)

However, if we only talk about a quantitative increase in energy (as if life-energy were just generic force, like water or electricity) that would not be saying enough. It wouldn't fully describe what we meet with and utilize

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when we connect with a tradition or make use of a mantra. We also need to speak of the qualitative aspect of spirit.

Ajaan Lee said this about the worth, or the value and power of certain states:

“Things that are genuine, or pure, even though they may be small, can give rise to enormous results. Just as a piece of genuine paper money - a tiny strip of paper with the state seal - can be put to use in all sorts of ways. But if it's newsprint, even a bushel of it wouldn't be able to buy a thing.

In the same way, a pure mind, even if we can make it pure for only a little while, can give rise to results way in excess of its size.”

And, in speaking about specific qualities, here's how one teacher named Mingyur Rinpoche replied when asked, “What does blessing mean?”

He said, “It is a particular type of power... various medicines have various types of strength, or power. Water has a power to wet things and clean things. Fire has a power to burn. When we put water in a field, it helps to grow flowers or crops. All phenomena have a particular power associated with them... Blessing comes as a particular type of power.” (to accomplish a specific purpose).

For example, when one prays, “Grant me your blessing that uncontrived devotion may arise in me”, What happens is, that one receives that power, the blessing, and one's defilements and obscurations are purified and dispelled. If one gives rise to devotion and faith and supplicates, then one has the blessing connected with arising of faith and devotion.”

Many different practices

There are many different mantras, and many different practices that one can choose. Sometimes these are called ‘yidam‘ or ‘deity’ practices.

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It think it's important to consider clearly here what is meant by the word 'deity' in Buddhism. This is a difficult word for Westerners. We have a 2000 year monotheistic tradition that is in our Western soul. And any term that brings to mind our Western Tradition needs to be considered carefully.

All of the qualities represented by figures in Buddhism are within each of us. Every quality, of love, intelligence, purity, healing power - but usually we don't see ourselves this way.

If our self view were to fluctuate, even a little, we would find that simultaneously the way we view images representing enlightened qualities would change too.

If we see ourselves as ordinary beings, and we experience ourselves as fundamentally without these qualities, then naturally if we think of Buddha's or Bodhisattva's qualities existing at all, they are felt to exist outside of us. (more on that in a moment, but first, a little more on this line of thought)

If there is a change in our self-view, or the way we experience our self-nature, then when we look at these images we can feel that "this quality is there - it is in Tradition and it is in me, as potential perhaps, but in the same way the fully developed flower-and-fruit giving tree is in the seed and the first shoots".

In addition to their being an external, historical aspect, like a reservoir of a particular energy that can be contacted, we can also feel that the image or the idea of what is called 'a deity' represents aspects of our own nature, fully developed.

Perhaps when we are there, when we are the fully expression of some enlightened quality, then we could look at the image, sometimes called 'deity', and, with understanding, say "That is me".

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There may be one place where the Western idea of a deity and the way it is made use of in the Vajrayana overlap, and that is in its external aspect. Names and forms of Buddhas and bodhisattvas can be called on, and they will respond. Not for everyone, and not always, but this is an inherited truth, this has been many peoples experience in many places throughout time. I've had this experience myself on many occasions or else I probably wouldn't be writing this.

Actually, many people have had the experience that mantra and prayer really do work in the ways they are praised - to heal, to harmonize, to clarify. But, again, as we say 'the proof is in the pudding'.

My feeling is that if others, or if even one other person could hear about these things, be inspired to practice, and gain some of this benefit, then my efforts here will have met with success. So I know I at least have to try to speak of these things.

To call on a holy Name, and to feel some response, this is precious, of inconceivable worth. But there is more intended by the practice of mantra and the forms passed down to us to be meditated upon.

We can receive their benefit as needed in our lives. And we are also encouraged to cultivate this understanding, that we all have all these qualities within us. We are encouraged to bring them out as much as we can, and to live and act in this world, in enlightened and enlightening ways, with compassion and wisdom.

### Mahayana

What's called 'Mahayana' in Buddhist traditions refers to a re-orientation towards teachings, self, and others in the world.

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All Buddhist lineages have teachings about love and compassion, but in Mahayana this aspect is placed right in the center. In this way of thought, the needs of all others, inclusively, and compassion for all is emphasized, and then every other practice, such as calm meditation, contemplation on mortality, karma or realizing selflessness, is seen in relation the suffering and confusion of living beings.

All these teachings then take on vast importance. When practiced, they can help us first to help ourselves, freeing, awakening, and increasing our ability to help, and they can directly help others.

When held, and maintained, all these teachings and practices can be seen as being not just for ourselves. And then their potential, to bring happiness and to remove suffering, can be perceived to be as it is - as something enormous, limitless. Seen this way, our appreciation of the value of these teachings can increase enormously in our mind.

These teachings and practices have the potential to benefit self and others. They can open the way to peace, health and every enjoyment, so their value is naturally very great.

What then to say about mantra? In this context, a Mahayanist (whether they think of themselves as Buddhist or not), someone who has bodhicitta heart, the intention to remove as much suffering as possible and to benefit others as much as possible, naturally will look in an unprejudiced way for whatever can help. Naturally, there will be no obstacle to that kind of determination to help.

What joy, then, when someone with these pure, good intentions, finds the study and practice of mantra. Even if this is not for everyone, due to karma and people's affinities, still, who would not be intrigued?

And in the true Buddhist spirit of free inquiry, the way is open, and the warmest invitation is given, to try the practice for oneself, to see if they

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work as described in many places (or possibly too in ways that are even better). Of course, they may not work at all, but for those with an affinity with any of these practices, the results for oneself and for others can be very great.

### Three meanings of the word ‘Buddha’

Here are three possible meanings of the term ‘Buddha’, that can be seen as not contradictory, but complementary, and mutually fulfilling. The three are: The historical Buddha, the universal buddha (all Buddhas and bodhisattvas, enlightened and enlightening beings), and our own buddha nature.

Touching any of these, or furthering our understanding of any one, will add to our appreciation of all three aspects, not as separate, or competing, not as exclusive to each other, but as, each one, inclusive of the others.

The historical Buddha created (creates) all the many expressions - he is not separate from them. The expressions of this universal Buddha nature, as images, events, or teachings, are also not separate from the historical figure, the source, if you like (or any of these could be called the source).

And our buddha nature, knowing that enhances our appreciation of the historical Buddha, and the Buddhas and bodhisattvas. We have this within us.

Each person’s way is unique and needs to be respected as such. Everyone’s practice will be their own, unique path. Different practices will be needed along the way, and the whole range of teachings that people have used and benefited from should be known about, and, indeed, understood.

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### On Mantra and Initiation -

Often before beginning the practice of a mantra, a person will attend a ceremony called an initiation. This is helpful, to introduce a practice, and to further realization, but it is not essential to begin or to receive the benefits of a practice.

If you begin some practice, and get some positive result, then you may like to consider attending an initiation. This can strengthen your practice, and facilitate realization. An experienced Lama can share his or her energy, and connect us to a living lineage of practice, and this can be something really profound.

Some people gladly travel great distances to attend initiations, because of how important they feel these events to be. If you have any interest, and the chance to attend an initiation, by all means do take the opportunity.

You can check with your local Tibetan Buddhist centers for a schedule of events and initiations (also called 'empowerments'). Usually there will be some teachings or commentary along with the ceremony that will explain what will take place and how to practice in detail.

Until that time, however, mantras and practices are available.

It's traditionally taught that what's called 'self-generation' - where one visualizes oneself as the deity - should only be done by those who have received the initiation of a particular deity, but that 'front generation' - where one visualizes the deity in space above and in front of oneself - can be done by anyone.

In front generation, we visualize (see with the mind's eye) above us, the Buddha or bodhisattva whose practice we are doing, and whose mantra we are reciting. It's helpful when doing this recitation and visualization, to see pure light and nectar streaming from the image we hold (that is also made

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entirely of pure light). These represent, or carry the blessings of the Buddha.

We should also see ourselves, our own body, not in an ordinary way, not as flesh and bone, but as also being made entirely of light.

Many teachers advise, too, that when doing this visualization, we see ourselves in a pure land, and make the visualization as beautiful, peaceful, perfect, and pure as we can. This is helpful.

We can also do the practice without any elaborate or detailed visualization. We can just see light above us while reciting. Or without any visualization at all, we can just recite the mantra.

People ask, ‘But isn’t this all just the imagination?’ And the answer is... yes, and... no. It may begin that way, but sometimes something else, something quite wonderful, can ‘kick in’, or enter into the practice. When done properly, by someone with an affinity for a particular practice, we can receive benefits far more than we could ever have merely ‘imagined’. We can tap into something larger than what we usually think of as ourselves, and receive fresh energy and inspiration. We can receive and awaken these different qualities that then can be made use of to benefit self and others.

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

(and may I be the cause of this)

(May I contribute to their freedom from suffering  
as much as I can)

And,

May all beings have happiness and the causes of happiness

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(and may I be the cause of this)

(May I contribute to their happiness  
as much as I can)

May everyone receive, understand and practice well the teachings that will benefit them the most, freeing their minds from suffering and confusion, and may all arrive at peace, fulfillment and joy in this very life.

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Imagine an underwater system of channels  
one channel opens  
and the stream of cool, pure water can be felt moving through  
felt all the way back to its source  
Contacting a spiritual tradition can be this way  
the clean, clear life moving through  
felt in this very place, and known to its origin  
Teachers, practitioners, deities, protector spirits  
virtues faithfully maintained  
and given forward through lives  
We are welcomed by this, our family  
They are eager to assist the awakening life  
the heart becomes very quiet watching this work  
this far reaching, unceasing compassion

They speak behind their words  
move behind the curtains of form  
in silence, shaping  
All of this is given to you, it is immanent  
the life within the life

Part V: Three Medicine Buddha Practice Texts - I

## **The Healing Buddha**

A Practice for the Prevention and Healing of Disease

Translated and composed by Lama Thubten Zopa Rinpoche

### Motivation

No matter what you do, it is essential to generate a positive motivation. Therefore, think as follows:

"The purpose of my life is to free all living beings from all their problems and the causes of these problems, which are in their minds, and to bring all beings peace and happiness, especially the peerless happiness of full enlightenment, which they desperately need. For me to be able to do this, my mind and body must be perfect, pure and healthy. Therefore, to benefit living beings equal to extent of space, I am going to practice this healing meditation."

### Meditation

Visualize yourself in your ordinary body, with your heart at the center of your chest, inverted, pointing upwards. Inside your heart is a white, eight-petalled lotus. At its center is a moon disc, upon which is seated the Healing Buddha in the aspect of the supreme transformation. His holy body is clear and in the nature of dark blue light, and he holds an arura plant in his right hand and a begging bowl in his left.

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In front of the Healing Buddha is the white medicinal goddess, Actualized Wisdom; to his right is the yellow medicinal goddess, Simultaneous Wealth; behind him is the red forest goddess,

Peacock's Throat; to his left is the green tree goddess, Radiant One. Each goddess is in the nature of blissful radiant light and has one face and two arms. An arura plant is in each goddess's right hand, with a vase adorned with various ornaments in the left. The four goddesses sit cross-legged, not in the full vajra position but in the aspect of offering respect to the Healing Buddha.

Then make this request:

O Destroyer, Complete in All Qualities and Gone Beyond (1) and you four medicinal goddesses, please pacify immediately the illnesses that afflict me now and help me avoid all future sickness.

Light rays of the appropriate colour emanate from each of the five deities at your heart. Your heart and body are full of blissful light, which completely purifies all disease, spirit harms, and negative actions and their imprints. Beams of five-coloured light radiate from all the pores of your body, while nectar flows down from the Healing Buddha's begging bowl and the vases held by the four goddesses, completely filling your heart and body. Generate the strong recognition that you have vanquished all disease forever and will never be sick again.

While concentrating single-pointedly on this visualization, recite the short or long Healing Buddha mantra seven, twenty one, one hundred and eight, or more times.

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I - The Healing Buddha

Short Healing Buddha mantra

TAYATHA / OM BEKANDZE BEKANDZE /  
MAHA BEKANDZE RANDZE /  
SAMUNGATE SOHA

Long Healing Buddha mantra

OM NAMO BHAGAWATE BEKANDZE /  
GURU BENDURYA PRABHA RANDZAYA /  
TATHAGATAYA /  
ARHATE SAMYAKSAM BUDDHAYA / TAYATHA /  
OM BEKANDZE BEKANDZE /  
MAHA BEKANDZE RANDZE /  
SAMUNGATE SOHA

If you are sick, after you have finished reciting the mantra, put some saliva on your left palm, rub it with the tip of your right ring finger, place the tip on this finger at the entrance of your right and left nostrils, where the so-called All-Doing King Nerve can be found, and apply the saliva to the afflicted parts of your body. Then recite as many mantras of the Sanskrit vowels and consonants as possible, along with the mantra of the Heart of Dependent Arising.

Sanskrit vowels

OM A AA I II U UU RI RII LI LII E AI O AU  
AM AH SVAHA

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Sanskrit consonants

OM KA KHA GA GHA NGA /  
TSA TSHA DZA DZHA NYA /  
TA THA DA DHA NA/  
TA THA DA DHA NA/  
PA PHA BA BHA MA/  
YA RA LA VA/  
SA SHA SA HA KSHA SVAHA

*The Heart of Dependent Arising*

OM YE DHARMA HETU-PRABHAVA HETUN TESHAN  
TATHAGATO HYA VADAT/  
TESHAN CA YO NIRODHA / EVAM-VADI/  
MAHASRAMANAH YE SVAHA

This practice, a Dharma treasure (terma) of Padma Sambhava, protects you from both the illnesses troubling you now and those you have yet contracted.

Dedication

Because of all my positive actions of the past, present, and future, which bring happiness, may the ultimate good heart - which cherishes all living beings and is the source of the three-time happiness of myself and others - arise in those minds where it has not yet arisen, and increase in those minds where it already has sprung.

Because of my three-time positive actions and those of all holy beings, whose attitude is the purest, may all the kind father and mother sentient

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beings have happiness. May I alone be the cause of this, and may the three lower realms be empty forever.

May the prayers of all holy beings - those who dedicate their lives to the happiness of others - succeed immediately, and may I alone be the cause of this.

Because of my three-time positive actions and those of all holy beings, may I achieve the peerless happiness of full enlightenment - the state of mind that is free of all error and complete in all positive qualities - and lead all others to that state.

### Colophon

This healing practice was translated by Lama Zopa Rinpoche at Tara Institute, Melbourne, Australia, on September 1, 1991. The Motivational and Dedication have been added to the original text.

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I - The Healing Buddha

Notes

1. An epithet for the Healing Buddha.

Part V: Three Medicine Buddha Practice Texts  
II - The Sadhana of the Medicine Buddha

The Sadhana of the Medicine Buddha, by H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche

All beings are tormented by sufferings in Samsara – externally by physical sickness and internally by emotional disturbances and mental problems. In order to help free others from these sufferings, as well as ourselves, we need to take refuge in the Medicine Buddha.

In order to do the practice of the Medicine Buddha, first take refuge in the Buddha as the ultimate protector, in the Dharma as the path of liberation, and in the Sangha as the companions on the way.

Repeat the Refuge Prayer three times with the image or visualization in front or above.

*Homage! Myself and the limitless sentient beings without exception take refuge in the Medicine Buddha, the Triple Gem. I will liberate all sentient beings equal to the sky, who have been our parents, to the stage of the Medicine Buddha.*

Repeat the Four Boundless Meditations three times.

*May all beings have happiness and the cause of happiness.  
May all beings be free from suffering and the causes of suffering.  
May they never be separated from the Supreme Happiness which is free from suffering  
May all leave attachment to dear ones and aversion to others and live believing in the equality of all who live.*

As we are all the Primordial Buddha, we have the essence of Buddha Nature. Realizing this, *relaxing* in the natural state is the absolute way of taking

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II - The Sadhana of the Medicine Buddha

refuge and generating Bodhicitta (the mind of enlightenment). When doing the practice, be free of subject, object, and action.’

From the voidness, before our mind gets interrupted by other thoughts, we should form the intention to do the practice of the Medicine Buddha. Preparing to welcome the Buddha, we should gather offerings. Imagine all the nice and beautiful things that exist in the form of offerings. Offer these to the Medicine Buddha. Now begin to practice. Consider the place of meditation as a Buddha Field. The landscape is extremely beautiful. All of space is filled with rainbows. There are gods and goddesses holding offerings (sounds, tastes,... objects of the five senses) for the Buddhas.

Visualize a vast throne in the center of the Buddha Field. Upon that is a vast thousand-petalled lotus. Upon the lotus is a moon disc and upon that the Medicine Buddha. The Medicine Buddha is blue in color and is in the lotus posture. His right hand, in the gesture of granting wishes, holds the Arura fruit (Myrobalam).

His left hand, in the gesture of meditation, holds the begging bowl filled with medicinal nectars. He is surrounded by the eight Bodhisattvas, et al. With the major and minor marks of full enlightenment, wearing the three monastic robes, the Medicine Buddha, as an object of concentration, appears in translucent rainbow light.

With the thought of inviting Him from the Buddha Field to become one with our visualization, make offerings with what we have prepared and blessed. Although Buddhas don’t need anything, we make offerings in order to accumulate merit.

Repeat the Seven Branch Offering; recite prayers; do prostrations.

LAMA TONPA CHOMDANDE DESHINSHEGPA  
DRACHOMPA YANGDAGPAR DZOGPAI SANGYE

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MANGYILHA VAIDURYA OD KYI GYALPO  
LA CHAG TSHAL LO CHOD TOD KYAB SU CHIO\*

Repeat as many times as possible.

(\* for the translation of the Invocation and mantra, see the two pages that follow this sadhana)

OM NAMO BHAGAVATE BHAISHAJYE GURU VAIDURYA  
PRABHARAYAYA TATHAGATAYA ARHATE  
SAMYAKSAMBUDDHAYA TADYATHA OM  
BHAISHAJYE BHAISHAJYE MAHA BHAISHAJYE  
RAJA SAMUDGATE SVAHA

or

BHAISHAJYE BHAISHAJYE MAHA BHAISHAJYE  
RAJA SAMUDGATE SVAHA

Phonetic key of Tibetan Pronunciations:

Teyatha Om Baikanze Baikanze Mahabaikanze Radza Samungate Soha

Although all the Buddhas have the same nature, each has a particular power. When we recite the mantra, rays of light emanate from the heart of the Buddha, like a hundred rising suns, curing all the diseases and obscurations of the beings, and even their causes. By the power of this practice may all suffering and problems be removed by the power of the Medicine Buddha.

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II - The Sadhana of the Medicine Buddha

Recite while concentrating on the rays of light. At the end of the practice, by the power of these rays of light, sufferings are completely removed, like darkness is dispelled by a torch.

At the end of the recitation of mantra, be free of the concept that beings and Buddhas are different. Buddhas and beings all dissolve in emptiness, as water dissolves in water, as space in space. Remain in the inexpressible state, which is free from thoughts and concepts, mingling with the nature of Buddha's body, speech and mind.

At the end of the practice, when we arise from meditation, free from notions or concepts, share the merit with all beings.

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II - The Sadhana of the Medicine Buddha

Meaning of the words of the invocation and the mantra  
(as provided by Frederika Fairchild)

LAMA	Guru
TONPA	Teacher, 'One who Knows'
CHOM-DAN-DE	Destroyer of demons
Possessing the Enlightened Qualities, Gone Beyond, Transcending duality	
DESHINSHEGPA	Thus Come, this Gone
DRACHOMPA	Destroyer of the enemy (ego)
YANGDAGPAR DZOGPAI	- Exceedingly pure, Fully Perfected
SANGYE MANGYILHA -	Medicine Buddha
VAIDURYA	Blue Diamond
OD KYI GYALPO	King of Luminosity
LA CHAG TSHAL LO	To you I prostrate,
CHOD TOD	Make offerings, Praise
KYAB SU CHIO	and go for refuge

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II - The Sadhana of the Medicine Buddha

There are two versions of the Medicine Buddha Mantra presented in the root text. The first is more elaborate and the second is more essential. The first mantra is usually recited as a prelude before beginning the second mantra. If you are unfamiliar with tantric practice, it is recommended that you simply recite the second mantra, and do so as many times as possible.

OM NAMO BHAGAVATE BHAISHAJYE GURU VAIDURYA  
PRABHARAYAYA TATHAGATAYA ARHATE  
SAMYAKSAMBUDDHAYA TADYATHA OM  
BHAISHAJYE BHAISHAJYE MAHA BHAISHAJYE  
RAJA SAMUDGATE SVAHA

or

BHAISHAJYE BHAISHAJYE MAHA BHAISHAJYE  
RAJA SAMUDGATE SVAHA

Phonetic key of Tibetan Pronunciations:

Teyatha Om Baikanze Baikanze Mahabaikanze Radza Samungate Soha

Meaning of the Words in the Mantra

OM	Auspicious in the beginning Seed syllable of the Body of all Buddhas
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NAMO	Homage
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BHAGAVATE	Buddha (epithet for)
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BHAISHAJYE	Medicine, Healing
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Part V: Three Medicine Buddha Practice Texts  
II - The Sadhana of the Medicine Buddha

GURU	Guru
VAIDURYA	Lapis Lazuli, blue diamond
PRABHARAYAYA	- King of Light
TATHAGATAYA	Thus Gone
ARHATE	Killed the enemy, ego
SAMYAKSAMBUDHAYA	- Totally Perfected Buddha
TADYATHA	In such a manner as follows
OM	(same as above)
BHAISHAJYE	Medicine, Healing, Cure
BHAISHAJYE	Medicine, Healing, Cure
MAHA BHAISHAJYE	- Great Medicine
RAJA	King
SAMUDGATE	Crossed the Ocean (of Samsara)
SVAHA	Receiving the blessings of all Buddhas

Part V: Three Medicine Buddha Practice Texts  
 III - A Stream of Lapis Lazuli

From the Sky Dharma, which is a Mind Treasure, An Ornament of the Clear Expanse of Mind, Comes a Ritual of Menla Called

A Stream of Lapis Lazuli

Namo. Maha Bekandzeya. If they are available, arrange in front of a Menla thangka as many peaceful offerings as you can, such as a mandala and so forth; in this way the accumulations are completed. If these are not available, it is enough to make mental offerings while imagining the front visualization in the sky—nothing else is needed. Since this is the anuttara, the practitioner need not refrain from meat and alcohol nor perform the rituals of purification, such as taking the blessing of pure water. It is definitely necessary, however, to receive the empowerment and reading transmission for this practice, as it belongs to the anuttara tradition. Since it belongs to the nyingma tradition, the self and frontal visualizations are simultaneously generated; it is not necessary to create them separately. As it is a chanted meditation of the nyingma, your mind should meditate on the meaning of the words.

The supplication:

NAMO BEKENDZE MAHA RADZAYE

You are endowed with an oceanic treasury of qualities and merit;

By the blessing of your inconceivable compassion

You calm the suffering and torment of sentient beings.

I supplicate you, Light of Lapis Lazuli.

Part V: Three Medicine Buddha Practice Texts  
 III - A Stream of Lapis Lazuli

Those bound by very intense greed

Are born in the hungry ghost realm.

If they hear your name, they are said to be born human and take delight in generosity.

I supplicate you, victorious Menla.

Violating morality and abusing others,

Beings are born in the hell realms.

Hearing your name, they are said to be born in the higher realms.

I supplicate you, King of Medicine.

Whoever by repeated dissension and slander

Creates serious schisms and takes life,

Hearing your name, they cannot harm others.

I supplicate you, King of Medicine

Excellent Name, Appearance of Stainless Fine Gold,

Glorious Supreme One Free of Misery, Resounding Dharma Melody,

King of Direct Knowledge, King of Melody,

Part V: Three Medicine Buddha Practice Texts  
III - A Stream of Lapis Lazuli

And King of Shakyas, I supplicate you all.

Manjushri, Kyabdröl, Vajrapani,

Brahma, Indra, the four Kings of the four directions,

The twelve great Yaksha chiefs, and so forth,

I supplicate you, entire and perfect mandala.

The Sutra of the Seven Tathagatas' Aspirations,

And the Sutra of the Medicine Buddha,

The treatise by the great abbot Shantarakshita, and so forth,

I supplicate all the volumes of the genuine dharma,

Bodhisattva Shantarakshita, Trisong Deutsen, and others,

Translators, scholars, kings, ministers, bodhisattvas,

And all genuine lamas of the lineage,

Powerful One of the Dharma, and others, I supplicate you.

Through the blessing of this supplication,

May diverse temporal diseases and dangers of this life be stilled.

Part V: Three Medicine Buddha Practice Texts  
 III - A Stream of Lapis Lazuli

At death, may all fear of the lower realms be calmed.

Grant your blessing that afterwards we are born in Sukhavati.

To the sources of refuge, the three jewels

And the three roots, I go for refuge.

To establish all beings in buddhahood,

I awaken a mind of supreme enlightenment.

From the expanse of primordial purity emanate

Clouds of offerings filling the earth and sky

With mandalas, articles of possessions, and goddesses.

May they never be exhausted. PUD DZA HO.

May all beings be happy and free of suffering.

May their happiness not diminish.

May they abide in equanimity.

OM SOBHAWA SHUDDHA SARWA DHARMA SOBHAWA  
 SHUDDHO HAM

Everything turns into emptiness.

Part V: Three Medicine Buddha Practice Texts  
III - A Stream of Lapis Lazuli

From the depth of emptiness, this triple universe becomes

The exquisite palace, where

On lion thrones, each with a lotus and moon disk on top

Appear deep blue HUNGS, the seed syllable of myself and the main figure visualized in the front,

From which, arises Menla, his body the color of lapis lazuli and radiating light.

He is clothed in the three dharma robes.

His right hand in the mudra of supreme generosity holds an arura.

His left hand in the meditation mudra holds a begging bowl.

With the major and minor marks complete, he sits in the vajra posture.

In particular, on the lotus petals of the front visualization

Are the seven Buddhas, Shakyamuni and the others, and dharma texts.

Around them are the sixteen bodhisattvas,

Around them are the ten protectors of the world,

And the twelve great chiefs with their respective retinues.

The four Great Kings are at the four gates.

From the three syllables in their three places and the HUNG in their hearts,

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 III - A Stream of Lapis Lazuli

Lights radiate, invoking from their own eastern buddha realms, countless  
 Wisdom deities which dissolve into myself and the one visualized in front.

HUNG. The eight Menla companions and all deities without exception  
 I invite here to this place. Kindly rain upon us your great blessings.  
 Bestow the supreme empowerment on those who are worthy and faithful.  
 Dispel false guides and obstacles to long life.

NAMO MAHA BEKENDZE SAPARIWARA BENZA SAMAYADZA  
 DZA  
 BENZE SAMAYA TIKTRA LEN OM HUNG TRAM HRI AH  
 ABHIKENTSA HUNG

HUNG. Flowers, incense, lights, scents,  
 Food, music and so forth;  
 Forms, sounds, smells, tastes, touch, and all dharmas,  
 I offer to the deities.  
 May we perfect the two accumulations.

OM BENZA ARGHAM PADYAM PUPE DHUPE ALOKE GENDHE  
 NEWIDYE SHABDA RUPA SHABDA GENDHE RASA SAPARSHE  
 TRATITSA HUNG

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 III - A Stream of Lapis Lazuli

HUNG. The eight foremost auspicious substances,  
 The best royal white mustard seed, and the others,  
 I offer to the deity.

May the two accumulations be perfected.

MANGALAM ARTHA SIDDHI HUNG

HUNG. The eight foremost auspicious symbols,  
 The peerless royal vase and all others,  
 I offer to the deity.

May sentient beings perfect the two accumulations.

MANGALAM KUMBHA HUNG

HUNG. The foremost desirable qualities, the seven precious articles,  
 The most excellent royal one, the jewel, and the others,  
 I offer to the deity.

May I perfect the two accumulations.

OM MANI RATNA HUNG

HUNG. The foremost of all, Mount Meru

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III - A Stream of Lapis Lazuli

With its four continents and subcontinents

I offer to the deity.

May the two accumulations be perfected.

HUNG. With scented water

I bathe the sugata's body.

Although the deity is flawless,

This creates the auspicious connection for purifying all wrongs and  
obscurations.

OM SARWA TATHAGATA ABIKEKATE SAMAYA SHRIYE HUNG

HUNG. With a scented, soft white cloth

I dry the victor's body.

Though your body is flawless,

This creates the auspicious connection for freedom from suffering.

OM KAYA BISHODHANI HUNG

HUNG. With these beautiful saffron robes

I clothe the victor's body.

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 III - A Stream of Lapis Lazuli

Although your body is never cold,

This creates the auspicious connection for vitality to flourish.

OM BENZA WAYTRA AH HUNG

HUNG. Your body is like a mountain, the color of lapis lazuli.

You dispel the suffering of illness in sentient beings.

Surrounded by a retinue of eight bodhisattvas,

Holder of Medicine, precious deity, I praise and prostrate to you.

Excellent Name, Precious Moon, Fine Gold, Free of Misery,

Resounding Dharma Ocean, Dharma Mind, Shakyamuni,

The genuine dharma, the sixteen bodhisattvas and others,

To the precious three jewels, I offer praise and prostrate.

To Brahma, Indra, the Great Kings, the Protectors of the Ten Directions,

The twelve Yaksha chiefs and all their assistants,

Vidyadharas and rishis of medicine, divine and human,

To the deities of ambrosial medicine, I offer praise and prostrate.

Part V: Three Medicine Buddha Practice Texts  
 III - A Stream of Lapis Lazuli

The HUNG in the heart of the self and front visualizations is surrounded by the mantra garland.

Through radiating many-colored light rays, offerings are made to Menla in the pure realm appearing in the east as the color of lapis lazuli. These lights invoke his mind stream, whence Menla's bodies, large and small, his speech as the mantra garland, his mind as the hand symbols of the arura and the begging bowl filled with amrita, all falling like rain, dissolve into myself and the front visualization.

TAYATA OM BEKENDZE BEKENDZE MAHA BEKENDZE  
 RADZA SAMUDGATE SO HA

Repeat as much as possible and then at the end:

I confess all wrongs and downfalls and dedicate all virtue to awakening.

May there be the auspiciousness of freedom from sickness, harmful spirits, and suffering.

A prayer to return back and dissolution:

The worldly ones return to their own places. BENZA MU.

The jnana and samaya sattvas dissolve into me,

And I dissolve into the expanse of all goodness, primordial purity.

E MA HO.

Part V: Three Medicine Buddha Practice Texts  
III - A Stream of Lapis Lazuli

This ornament that is a mind treasure was compiled from the Sky-Dharma and arranged by Raga Asya. If there are contradictions, I confess them before the deity. Through this virtue, may all sentient beings, once freed from sickness, swiftly attain the level of Menla. Though the sutra rituals have the practice of washing [which is not done here], as this is a higher practice, found at the end of the [supreme] yoga tantra, there is no contradiction.

If you take this as your regular practice, the benefits are the following. If you are ordained, your discipline will be maintained; though there might be an occasion when it is not, having purified this obscuration, you will not fall into the lower realms. Having purified the negative karma of being born as a hell being, a hungry ghost, or an animal, you will not take such a birth. Even if you do, immediately liberated, you will take a felicitous rebirth in a higher realm, and gradually attain awakening. In this life as well, you will easily obtain food and clothing and not be harmed by disease, negative spirits, sorcery, or the punishments of rulers. You will be protected and guarded by Vajrapani, Brahma, the Great Kings of the four directions, and the twelve great Yaksha chiefs each with their 700,000 assistants. You will be freed from all harm: from the eighteen kinds of untimely death, the harm of enemies, carnivorous beasts, and so forth. All your wishes will be fully realized, and so forth. In the two more extensive sutras of Menla, the benefits are said to be inconceivable.

In the great monastic centers, such as Jang Damring Pelkhor Chöde, and their philosophical colleges, where the scholars find fault with most dharma and are difficult to satisfy, only this Menla ritual for prolonging life and clearing away the obscurations of death has spread widely. The ritual to be performed before the Jowo in Lhasa, Tibet's Bodhgaya, and before the Great Awakened One at Samye is this ritual of Menla. You should trust that within any of the new and the ancient transmissions, the sutras and the tantras, nothing is more beneficial than Menla. There are many extensive and concise versions; this one has few words and the full meaning. Since it belongs to anuttara yoga, rituals of purification are not needed. Since the

Part V: Three Medicine Buddha Practice Texts  
III - A Stream of Lapis Lazuli

offerings are mental, it is all right not to offer tormas. Everyone should practice this.

SHUBHAM DZAYENTU.

Translated under the guidance of Thrangu Rinpoche and Khenpo Karthar Rinpoche by Michele Martin with assistance from Ngodrup Burkhar and reference to translations by Lama Yeshe Gyamtso and Sarah Harding, Woodstock, N.Y., 1984, 1999, Kathmandu, 1999.

Part V: Three Medicine Buddha Practice Texts  
 III - A Stream of Lapis Lazuli

Short Menla Practice

Your body the color of a mountain of lapis lazuli,

You dispel suffering of disease from all sentient beings.

Your retinue of eight bodhisattvas surrounds you—

I praise and pay homage to the Deity Who Holds the Precious Medicine.

TAYATA OM BEKENDZE BEKENDZE MAHA BEKENDZE RADZA  
 SAMUDGATE SO HA

May the many sentient beings who are sick

Quickly be freed from sickness

And may all the sicknesses of beings

Never arise again.

Part V: Three Medicine Buddha Practice Texts  
III - A Stream of Lapis Lazuli

Shorter Menla Practice

To you, Bhagavan, Tathagata, Arhat, perfect and fully

Awakened Menla, king of lapis lazuli light, I offer prostrations.

Part V: Three Medicine Buddha Practice Texts  
III - A Stream of Lapis Lazuli

Bhagavat, who is compassionate equally to all beings,  
The very hearing of whose name pacifies the three lower states,  
Medicine Buddha, who eliminates the illnesses of the three poisons,  
May there be the goodness of the Vaidurya Light.  
May sentient beings, whatever illnesses they suffer,  
Be liberated quickly from those illnesses.  
May all the illnesses of beings, without exception,  
Forever not arise.  
May medicines be effective,  
And may the intentions of the recitations of the secret mantra path be  
accomplished.  
May demonesses, cannibal demons, and so forth  
Attain compassionate mind.

## Part V: Practice Texts

The Practice of White Tara – The Wishfulfilling Wheel

called “Heap of Immortal Essence”, by Kyabje Pabonkha Rinpoche

One begins the practice by first taking refuge and generating Bodhicitta.

SANG GYE CHO DANG SOG KYI CHOG NAM LA  
 JANG CHUB BAR DU DAG NI KYAB SU CHI  
 DAG GI JIN SOG GYI PE SO NAM GYI  
 DRO LA PEN CHIR SANG GYE DRUB PAR SHOG (3 times)

I go for refuge until I am enlightened, to the Buddha, the Dharma, and the supreme assembly. By the virtuous merit that I create by practicing giving and other perfections, may I attain the state of a Buddha, in order to benefit all sentient beings (3 times)

OM SVABAVA SHUDDHA SARVA DHARMA SVABHAVA  
 SHUDDOHO HAM

Everything becomes empty.

From within the emptiness on top of moon disc on a white lotus, my own mind is represented by the syllable TAM.

The utpala lotus with the TAM then transforms into myself as the embodiment of long life granting Goddess – White Tara.

With one face and two hands, (my) right hand is in the mudra of supreme generosity. (my) left hand is holding the stem of an utpala lotus and (I) have seven eyes; a youthful body adorned with the major and minor marks and a moon disc as a backrest.

## Part V: Practice Texts - The White Tara Sadhana

The three points are marked by the three syllables.

From the seed syllable (TAM) light rays radiate inviting the wisdom Goddess (White Tara) and empowering deities.

(White Tara) merges into me becoming non-dual and through the initiation of the empowering deities, my crown is adorned with Amitayus.

From the (syllable) Tam at my heart, light-rays emanate extracting all life and essence of all good qualities of samsara and nirvana which dissolve into my heart.

OM TARA TUTTARE TURE MAMA AYUH PUNEY JNANA  
PUSHTHIM KURU SOHA (21 times)

OM TARA TUTTARE TURE SOHA (as many times as possible)

Recite either the vowel and consonant mantra or the hundred syllable mantra.

OM A AA I II U UU RI RII LI LII E AI O AU AM AH SVAHA  
OM KA KHA GA GHA NGA  
TSA TSHA DZA DZHA NYA  
TA THA DA DHA NA  
TA THA DA DHA NA  
PA PHA BA BHA MA  
YA RA LA VA  
SA SHA SA HA KSHA SVAHA

## Part V: Practice Texts - The White Tara Sadhana

OM PADMASATTVA SAMAYA MANUPALAYA  
 PADMASATTVA DENOPA TITHA DIDO MAY BHAWA  
 SUTOKAYO MAY BHAWA  
 SUPOKAYO MAY BHAWA  
 ANURAKTO MAY BHAWA  
 SARVA SIDDI MAY PAR YA TSA  
 SARVA KARMA SU TSA MAY  
 TSITAM SHRIYAM KURU HUNG  
 HA HA HA HA HOH BHAGAWAN  
 SARVA TATHAGATA  
 PADMA MA MAY MU TSA  
 PADMA BHAWA MAHASAMAYA SATO HUNG PAY

One completes the practice with the dedication:

If I see the signs of untimely death, let me straight away clearly see the form of Mother Tara, the wish fulfilling wheel, and, crushing the might of the Lord of Death, quickly become a deathless vajradhara.

GE-WA DE-YI NYUR-DU DAK  
 LA-MA SANG-GYA DRUP-GYUR NA  
 DRO-WA CHIK-KYANG MA-LU-PA  
 D'E-YI SA LA-GO-PAR-CHOK!

By this virtue may I quickly realize Guru-Buddhahood, and transfer each sentient being into that enlightened state!

J'ANG-CH'UP SEM-CHOK RIN-PO-CH'E  
 MA-KYE-PA-NAM KYE-GYUR-CHIK!  
 KYE-PA NYAM-PA ME-PA-YANG  
 G'ONG-NA G'ONG-D'U P'EL-WAR SHOK!

Part V: Practice Texts - The White Tara Sadhana

May the precious Bodhi-mind, where it is unborn, arise; may that born have no decline, but develop more and more.

Translated by Ven. Geshe Kalsang Wangdu's student and translator Michael Lobsang Yeshe, after Geshe-la granted the White Tara Initiation at Tse Che Ling Center for Tibetan Buddhist Studies in San Francisco on August 16, 1996.

May all holy teachers live long lives and guide us until samsara ends.

## Part V: A list of email addresses

websites and email address that accept prayer requests

<http://www.thedome.org/SeekGodWithUs/NourishSpiritOnline/PrayerRequests/index.html>

<http://guestbooks.christiansunite.com/sign.cgi?holyfire98>

[http://www.nowilaymedowntosleep.org/speak\\_out/prayer\\_requests/prayer\\_request\\_form.cfm](http://www.nowilaymedowntosleep.org/speak_out/prayer_requests/prayer_request_form.cfm)

<http://www.wjtl.com/interact/prayer/>

<http://www.praise1065.com/communicate-prayer.php>

[http://reachamerica.ag.org/prayer\\_request.cfm](http://reachamerica.ag.org/prayer_request.cfm)

<http://guestbooks.netservices.gr/addgb.cgi?name=SSPrayerRequests>

[http://www.gloriadeichurch.org/prayer\\_requests.shtml](http://www.gloriadeichurch.org/prayer_requests.shtml)

<http://www.acs.brockport.edu/~ivcf/prayer.htm>

<http://prayerrequestbox.com/>

[http://www.theursulines.org/prayer\\_requests.htm](http://www.theursulines.org/prayer_requests.htm)

<http://www.mustardseed.com/home/prayerrequest/arf.php?req=1>

<http://www.walsh.edu/prayerrequests.htm>

[http://www.faithconnector.com/demo2/content.cfm?page\\_content=prayer\\_requests\\_include.cfm](http://www.faithconnector.com/demo2/content.cfm?page_content=prayer_requests_include.cfm)

<http://www.cslsr.org/ministries/prayerrequest.htm>

## Part V: A list of email addresses

<http://calvarytabindy.org/page.php?pName=prayer>

[http://www.valleypres.com/ministry/caring/prayer\\_chain.html](http://www.valleypres.com/ministry/caring/prayer_chain.html)

<http://www.fspa.org/spirituality/requests.asp>

[http://www.oksister.com/prayer\\_requests.htm](http://www.oksister.com/prayer_requests.htm)

<http://www.marycrest.org/prayer.htm>

[http://www.yanktonbenedictines.org/prayer\\_request.html](http://www.yanktonbenedictines.org/prayer_request.html)

<http://www.ssnd-sl.org/Default.aspx?tabid=46>

<http://www.ursulinesisters.org/information1.htm>

[http://www.springfieldop.org/prayer\\_requests.aspx](http://www.springfieldop.org/prayer_requests.aspx)

<http://www.assumptionabbey.com/Prayer/Health.html>

<http://www.mountosb.org/prayer.html>

<http://benedictinesisters.org/english/site.php?use=prayerrequest>

<http://www.ssjrochester.org/content.cfm?id=28>

[http://www.csjp.org/olp/contactus\\_prayerrequest.html](http://www.csjp.org/olp/contactus_prayerrequest.html)

[http://www.salesiansisterswest.org/prayer\\_request.html](http://www.salesiansisterswest.org/prayer_request.html)

<http://www.fsmonline.org/wepray/request.php>

[http://www.csj-to.ca/Pray\\_with\\_us/prayer\\_requests.php](http://www.csj-to.ca/Pray_with_us/prayer_requests.php)

[http://www.dailyguideposts.com/Prayer/request\\_prayer.asp](http://www.dailyguideposts.com/Prayer/request_prayer.asp)

## Part V: A list of email addresses

<http://sisters.maryknoll.org/index.php?module=Prayer&func=new>

<http://www.hospitalsisters.org/StFrancisscripts/PrayerRequest.asp>

<http://www.archstl.org/prayer/index.html>

<http://www.smphs.org/maryvale/prayer.htm>

[http://www.nunsopsummit.org/prayer\\_requests.html](http://www.nunsopsummit.org/prayer_requests.html)

<http://www.divineprovidenceweb.org/page/general/prayer-requests.htm>

[http://bonsecoursvocations.org/praywithus/pop\\_prayerrequest.html](http://bonsecoursvocations.org/praywithus/pop_prayerrequest.html)

<http://www.marmion.org/Abbey/prequest.html>

<http://www.zondervan.com/Cultures/en-US/ZCS/prayerrequests.htm>

[http://www.teresians.org/prayer\\_request.htm](http://www.teresians.org/prayer_request.htm)

<http://www.springfieldfranciscans.org/StFrancisscripts/PrayerRequest.asp>

<http://www.scimsisters.org/otherHTM/requests.htm>

<http://www.stjoseph-baden.org/shareourmission.asp>

<http://www.ssjrochester.org/content.cfm?id=23>

[http://www.dominicansisters.com/component/option,com\\_performs/formid,1/Itemid,80/lang,en/](http://www.dominicansisters.com/component/option,com_performs/formid,1/Itemid,80/lang,en/)

<http://www.scnfamily.org/prayerrequest.asp?section=7>

[http://www.sistersofstrita.org/Prayer\\_Requests.asp](http://www.sistersofstrita.org/Prayer_Requests.asp)

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<http://www.sistersoftheholynames.org/oregon/mission/prayer.htm>

<http://www.feliciansisters.org/English/PrayerRequest.cfm>

[http://www.deoanngloria.com/archives/2004/06/prayer\\_requests.html](http://www.deoanngloria.com/archives/2004/06/prayer_requests.html)

<http://www.marymount-hermitage.org/prayerreq.htm>

[http://www.bfranciscan.org/prayer\\_requests.html](http://www.bfranciscan.org/prayer_requests.html)

<http://www.carmelite.com/prayer/prayerbk.php>

<http://www.adorationsisters.org/requests.html>

<http://www.desertnuns.com/prayerrequests.htm>

<http://www.askmotherrose.org/prayer.htm>

[http://www.akrondominicans.org/prayer\\_request.asp](http://www.akrondominicans.org/prayer_request.asp)

[http://www.poorclaresvictoria.org/prayer\\_request.htm](http://www.poorclaresvictoria.org/prayer_request.htm)

<http://campus.udayton.edu/mary//maryintentions.html>

[http://www.sisterssos.com/prayer\\_request.asp](http://www.sisterssos.com/prayer_request.asp)

[http://www.msb.net/prayer\\_requests.htm](http://www.msb.net/prayer_requests.htm)

<http://www.stwalburg.org/form.htm>

<http://www.stjosephmonastery.com/>

<http://www.poorclaresscotland.co.uk/index.html>

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[http://www.sistersofstrita.org/Prayer\\_Requests.asp](http://www.sistersofstrita.org/Prayer_Requests.asp)

<http://www.iotathetaeta.org/id111.html>

<http://www.poorclares.co.uk/docs/contact.html>

[http://christianmomsalliance.com/prayer\\_requests.html](http://christianmomsalliance.com/prayer_requests.html)

<http://www.ssjfl.org/prayerrequest.htm>

<http://www.ssndcanadian.org/prayer.aspx>

<http://www.grey-nuns.org/prayerrequests.aspx>

<http://www.claveriansisters.org.uk/prayerrequest.htm>

<http://www.scholasticafortsmith.org/prayerrequest.html>

e mail address for people and organizations that accept prayer requests

[ligurina@hotmail.com](mailto:ligurina@hotmail.com)

[thelovechurch@yahoo.com](mailto:thelovechurch@yahoo.com)

[mtg@spsmw.org](mailto:mtg@spsmw.org)

[mrmadden@spsmw.org](mailto:mrmadden@spsmw.org)

[ssmith@spsmw.org](mailto:ssmith@spsmw.org)

[provctr@spsmw.org](mailto:provctr@spsmw.org)

[bellgamin@biblebell.org](mailto:bellgamin@biblebell.org)

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[cmo@creighton.edu](mailto:cmo@creighton.edu)

[postmaster@missionstclare.com](mailto:postmaster@missionstclare.com)

[prayerrequests@romancatholicwomenpriests.org](mailto:prayerrequests@romancatholicwomenpriests.org)

[prayers@afp.org](mailto:prayers@afp.org)

[fscf@ucsd.edu](mailto:fscf@ucsd.edu)

[chapel@apu.edu](mailto:chapel@apu.edu)

[CGwebWORKS@aol.com](mailto:CGwebWORKS@aol.com)

[prayer.requests@shaw.ca](mailto:prayer.requests@shaw.ca)

[rand213@bvunet.net](mailto:rand213@bvunet.net)

[ugabsu@charter.net](mailto:ugabsu@charter.net)

[prayerrequests@ndec.org](mailto:prayerrequests@ndec.org)

[jws@christianhealingmin.org](mailto:jws@christianhealingmin.org)

[songwriter@hlom.org](mailto:songwriter@hlom.org)

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[prayer-requests@christdesert.org](mailto:prayer-requests@christdesert.org)

[Prayer@MennoniteMission.net](mailto:Prayer@MennoniteMission.net)

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[verger.giles@btconnect.com](mailto:verger.giles@btconnect.com)

[prayerline@ccr.org.uk](mailto:prayerline@ccr.org.uk)

[stanbrown@kingston.ac.uk](mailto:stanbrown@kingston.ac.uk)

[ken.orth@comcast.net](mailto:ken.orth@comcast.net)

[sue.sechrist@abc-usa.org](mailto:sue.sechrist@abc-usa.org)

[bprice@praywithchrist.org](mailto:bprice@praywithchrist.org)

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[hharwood@pbvmsf.org](mailto:hharwood@pbvmsf.org)

[Prayers@monksonline.org](mailto:Prayers@monksonline.org)

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[preacher@sfaw.org](mailto:preacher@sfaw.org)

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[dwalter@csasisters.org](mailto:dwalter@csasisters.org)

[mlschroeder@csasisters.org](mailto:mlschroeder@csasisters.org)

[mnbrown@csasisters.org](mailto:mnbrown@csasisters.org)

[prayers@liguori.org](mailto:prayers@liguori.org)

[jthurd@sympatico.ca](mailto:jthurd@sympatico.ca)

[tgmpray@yahogroups.com](mailto:tgmpray@yahogroups.com)

[prayerrequest@ggcg.org](mailto:prayerrequest@ggcg.org)

[prayer@trappist.net](mailto:prayer@trappist.net)

[prayer@kubik.org](mailto:prayer@kubik.org)

[doreen@ceai.org](mailto:doreen@ceai.org)

[bcm@cnu.edu](mailto:bcm@cnu.edu)

[prayerrequests@familylifecenter.net](mailto:prayerrequests@familylifecenter.net)

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[theursulines@yahoo.com](mailto:theursulines@yahoo.com)

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[PBVMPrayers@sistersofthepresentation.org](mailto:PBVMPrayers@sistersofthepresentation.org)

[lccsa@milwpc.com](mailto:lccsa@milwpc.com)

[pray4me@franciscan-sfo.org](mailto:pray4me@franciscan-sfo.org)

[prayer-requests@christdesert.org](mailto:prayer-requests@christdesert.org)

[prayerrequest@contemplation.com](mailto:prayerrequest@contemplation.com)

[prayerline@mtmc.edu](mailto:prayerline@mtmc.edu)

[prayers@dubuquepresentations.org](mailto:prayers@dubuquepresentations.org)

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[rbusshaus@mercyrochester.org](mailto:rbusshaus@mercyrochester.org)

[vbataille@marmion.org](mailto:vbataille@marmion.org)

[stmina@stmina.info](mailto:stmina@stmina.info)

[pastoralcare@sosj.org.au](mailto:pastoralcare@sosj.org.au)

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[smwine@hotmail.com](mailto:smwine@hotmail.com)

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## Part V

## Dedication Prayers

## A Dedication Prayer, by Shantideva

May all beings everywhere,  
Plagued by sufferings of body and mind,  
Obtain an ocean of happiness and joy  
By virtue of my merits.

May no living creature suffer,  
Commit evil or ever fall ill.  
May no one be afraid or belittled,  
With a mind weighed down by depression.

May the blind see forms,  
And the deaf hear sounds.  
May those whose bodies are worn with toil  
Be restored on finding repose.

May the naked find clothing,  
The hungry find food.  
May the thirsty find water  
And delicious drinks.

May the poor find wealth,  
Those weak with sorrow find joy.  
May the forlorn find hope,  
Constant happiness and prosperity.

## Part V: Dedication Prayers

May there be timely rains  
And bountiful harvests.  
May all medicines be effective  
And wholesome prayers bear fruit.

May all who are sick and ill  
Quickly be freed from their ailments.

Whatever diseases there are in the world,  
May they never occur again.

May the frightened cease to be afraid  
And those bound be freed.  
May the powerless find power  
And may people think of benefiting each other.

Part V: Dedication Prayers

May all beings be free of suffering  
may they be instantly free of whatever suffering they may have

May they have happiness  
and may that happiness be lasting for them

## Part V: Dedication Prayers

From Shantideva

As long as diseases afflict living beings  
may I be the doctor  
the medicine  
and also the nurse  
who restores them to health

May I fall as rain  
to increase the harvests  
that must feed living beings  
and in times of dire famine  
may I, myself, be food and drink

For as long as space endures,  
and for as long as living beings remain,  
until then, may I too abide,  
to dispel the misery of the world

## Part V: Dedication Prayers

By this virtue  
may all beings be happy and at peace  
and may their hearts be filled with joy