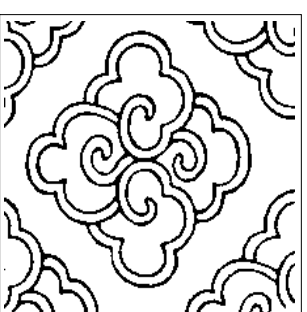


*The Method of Benefiting Sentient Beings at the
Time of Death:*

Giving Breath to the Wretched

by Kusali Dharma Vajra



Translated from the Tibetan by Lama Thubten Zopa Rinpoche



Colophon:

This text entitled *The Method of Benefiting Sentient Beings at the Time of Death, Giving Breath to the Wretched* has been written because, let alone the ordinary beings who are under the control of the present degenerate time, I have seen some who have the pride of being the leader of many transmigrating beings and who, upon reaching the bedside of a sentient being near death, know no other way to help than to put blessed pills in the mouth of that being. Furthermore, I thought that it would benefit some beings if I set down these methods that can be easily practiced by both lower and supreme beings.

This text was written at the very center of Flower Park by Kusali Dharma Vajra and transcribed by Bhikshu Vagindra Shasenwarta.

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All errors are the full responsibility of the editors.

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All of the mantras contained herein are available, together with Tibetan script, as a separate booklet entitled *Powerful Mantras for the Time of Death*. This booklet is part of a collection of prayers and practices to benefit the dying and the dead, called the Hope packet, available from:

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Introduction



I bow down to the guru and to Hayagriva, who are inseparable and whose compassionate power releases all transmigrating beings from the miserable realms. I shall write down the advice that gives benefit to sentient beings at the time of death. This method called *Benefiting Sentient Beings at the Time of Death* is practiced by the yogis of Bhagavan Shri Hayagriva, who work for others motivated completely by love and compassion.

It has two sections:

- The actual body of the method
- The benefits of the method



The Actual Body of the Method



The holy gurus said:

Even for one who has sought to practice virtue throughout his entire life, if, at the time of death, his consciousness transfers while actualizing strong non-virtuous thoughts such as anger and attachment, he will be reborn in a realm of evil transmigrators.

If, however, one who has practiced non-virtue throughout his entire life generates pure virtuous thoughts while his consciousness transfers at the time of death, he will be reborn in a realm of happy transmigrators.

Because the mind just before death is extremely powerful, it greatly increases the tendency of particular previously created karma to ripen first, resulting in rebirth in an appropriate realm. Nonetheless, other virtuous and non-virtuous karma accumulated during one's life will bear fruit at the appropriate time, that is, when all the necessary conditions are present. It never happens that karma that has not been created can be experienced or that karma that has been created can be wasted.

The essence of all methods benefiting sentient beings at the time of death is generating pure virtuous thoughts such as devotion, without allowing non-virtuous thoughts such as anger to arise strongly. Although this method can best be practiced by oneself alone, ordinary beings unable to do so will be benefited if this method is performed for them by a virtuous teacher or good friends.



How one can help

It is exceptionally important for the one near death to avoid seeing objects that cause attachment or anger to arise strongly. This includes such things as material possessions, relatives, persons to whom one is strongly attached, as well as enemies and so forth, for whom one has hatred.

Furthermore, while a person is dying and immediately afterwards as well, it is important to refrain from saying or doing anything that might disturb the dying person's equilibrium. Therefore, within the range of his hearing, one should not talk about such things as the possessions he left behind, and how they are going to be distributed, nor should one make disturbing noises, such as screaming, wailing, or engaging in loud talk.

As it is explained in the teachings, the winds that move the non-virtuous superstitious run through the right channel. Therefore, place the dying person on his right side and block his right nostril with cotton or the like. Then, if possible, place before his eyes holy objects representing the sublime precious ones together with offerings – images of his guru, the mind-bound deities (*vidam*) for which he has devotion, the pure realm of the victorious Amitabha, and so forth.

Eliminate any base motivations that might be present in one's mind such as seeking reputation, material offerings, or respect for oneself. In their place, generate strong love and compassion for this wretched sentient being who is approaching death.

With firm devotion and faith in the qualities of the guru, the sublime precious ones, the holy names of the buddhas, and the holy and profound mantras, say the following slowly and clearly, without mistakes, and with a loud voice [to the dying person]:

Reciting the following, think that clouds of refuge objects come and remain in the space in front.

Without distraction, visualize above your crown your root guru and the mind-bound deities for whom you have devotion. Surrounding this main group, you may also visualize other gurus and buddhas. You should follow my words and make prayers intensely from your heart thinking:

You, the guru and the precious sublime ones, please save me from the fears of this life, the future life, and the intermediate state, and lead me to the blissful supreme pure field.

I go for refuge, until I am enlightened, to the Buddha, Dharmā, and Sangha. By the virtue of giving and the other perfections, may I



quickly attain enlightenment for the sake of all kind mother sentient beings.

Assemblies of the root and lineage gurus of the three times, mind-bound deities, three precious sublime ones, hearers, sky-goers, and Dharmā protectors – you who are the originators of all perfections, happiness, and goodness, with your compassion please come and remain here.

Then, if one wishes and there is time, offer the elaborate seven-limb prayer (see the appendix). Then, making these requests intently from your heart, say:

I make requests to the kind gurus who are the actual embodiments of the Buddha, the originator of the eighty-four thousand teachings for gods and men and the most outstanding among all the noble ones. Also, to you who are Chenrezig, great treasure of compassion not aimed at true existence, and Manjushri, master of flawless wisdom, O Tsong Khapa, crown jewel of the sages of the Snow Land, at your feet, Lozang Dragpa, I request:

Please guide this sentient being, this wretched guideless object of compassion from the fear of this life, the future life, and the intermediate state.

Glorious ones of knowledge, Guhyasamāja, Heruka, Yamantaka, Kalachakra, Hevajra, Mahachakra, and so forth, you multitude of mind-bound deities:

Please guide this sentient being, this wretched, guideless object of compassion from the fear of this life, the future life, and the intermediate state.

To the highest founder, the precious Buddha; the highest guidance, the precious and holy Dharmā; the highest leaders, the precious Sangha; to the objects of refuge, the three precious sublime ones, to you I make this request:

Please guide this sentient being, this wretched, guideless object of compassion from the fear of this life, the future life, and the intermediate state.

To Manjushri, Vajrapani, Avalokiteshvara, Kshitigarbha, Sarvanivarana-Viskambini, Khagarbha, Maitreya, and Samantabhadra, to you, the eight closest great sons, I make this request:



Please guide this sentient being, this wretched, guideless object of compassion, from the fear of this life, the future life, and the intermediate state.

To you multitude of sky-goers of the three realms, who are powerful with foreknowledge and psychic ability, who reside in the supreme holy place called Enjoying in Space and protect practitioners as you would your children, to you I make this request:

Please guide this sentient being, this wretched, guideless object of compassion from the fear of this life, the future life, and the intermediate state.

To the quick helper Mahakala, to oath-bound Kalarupa, to the magnificent and glorious Mahakali, to the great king Namtöse, to the Mahakala with four faces whose crown is adorned with a crow's head, and so forth, to you protectors of transcendental wisdom, I make this request:

Please guide this sentient being, this wretched, guideless object of compassion, from the fear of this life, the future life, and the intermediate state.

You, the holy ones, the never-betraying refuge, the time has come to generate most strongly your compassionate blessing power and be the savior-helper of this sentient being, this wretched, protectorless object of compassion.

Please bestow blessings to pacify tortures and suffering.

Please bestow blessings to pacify non-virtues and deluded views.

Please bestow blessings to generate powerful virtuous thoughts.

Please bestow blessings to remember the guru's advice.

When the change of the elements brings the four enemies and the three fearful visions, when the various indefinite signs appear, please bestow blessings to be reborn in the pure realm by means of the inner, outer, and secret yogas.

Please bestow blessings to be reborn with the supreme body, practicing secret mantra in the pure realm Kachö, or to complete the realizations of the two gradual paths and quickly to achieve the three kayas by practicing the three trainings with this body.

If there are particular gurus and mindbound deities for whom the [or she] has devotion, then it is good to say their prayers and so forth.



Then, with a loud and clear voice, recite the following verses of homage three or seven times or as many times as you can depending on how much time you have:

To Buddha Having the Jewel Ushnisha

To the bhagavan, tathagata, arhat, the perfectly completed Buddha Having a Jewel Ushnisha, I prostrate.

Chom dân dä de zhin sheg pa dra chom pa yang dag par dzog päi
sang gyä rin chen tsug tor chän la chhag tshäl lo

To Shakyamuni Buddha

To the bhagavan, tathagata, arhat, perfectly completed buddha, glorious conqueror Shakyamuni Buddha, I prostrate.

Chom dân dä de zhin sheg pa dra chom pa yang dag par dzog päi
sang gyä päi gyäl wa sha kya thub pa la chhag tshäl lo

To the seven Medicine Buddhas

To bhagavan, tathagata, arhat, perfectly completed buddha, Medicine Guru, King of Lapis Lazuli Light, I prostrate.

Chom dân dä de zhin sheg pa dra chom pa yang dag par dzog päi
sang gyä men gyi lha bäi dur yä ö kyi gyäl po la chhag tshäl lo

To bhagavan, tathagata, arhat, perfectly completed buddha, Renowned Glorious King of Excellent Signs, I prostrate.

Chom dân dä de zhin sheg pa dra chom pa yang dag par dzog päi
sang gyä tsen leg pa yong drag päi gyäl po la chhag tshäl lo

To bhagavan, tathagata, arhat, perfectly completed buddha, King of Melodious Sound, Brilliant Radiance of Skill, Adorned with Jewels, Moon, and Lotus, I prostrate.

Chom dân dä de zhin sheg pa dra chom pa yang dag par dzog päi
sang gyä rin po chhe dang da wa dang pä mä räb tu gyän pa khä pa
zi ji dra yang kyi gyäl po la chhag tshäl lo

To bhagavan, tathagata, arhat, perfectly completed buddha, Stainless Excellent Gold, Illuminating Jewel Who Accomplishes All Conduct, I prostrate.

Chom dân dä de zhin sheg pa dra chom pa yang dag par dzog päi
sang gyä ser zang dri me rin chhen nang tül zhug drub pa la chhag
tshäl lo



To bhagavan, tathagata, arhat, perfectly completed buddha, Glorious Supreme One Free from Sorrow, I prostrate.

Chom dän dä de zhin sheg pa dra chom pa yang dag par dzog päi
sang gyä nya ngän me chhog päi la chhag tshäl lo

To bhagavan, tathagata, arhat, perfectly completed buddha, Melodious Ocean of Proclaimed Dharma, I prostrate.

Chom dän dä de zhin sheg pa dra chom pa yang dag par dzog päi
sang gyä chhö drag gya tshö yang la chhag tshäl lo

To bhagavan, tathagata, arhat, perfectly completed buddha, Clearly Knowing by the Play of Supreme Wisdom of an Ocean of Dharma, I prostrate.

Chom dän dä de zhin sheg pa dra chom pa yang dag par dzog päi
sang gyä chhö gya tsho chhog gi lö nam par röi pä ngön par khvän
pa la chhag tshäl lo

To Buddha Mitrugya

To bhagavan, tathagata, arhat, perfectly completed buddha Mitrugya, I prostrate.

Chom dän dä de zhin sheg pa dra chom pa yang dag par dzog päi
sang gyä mi trug pa la chhag tshäl lo

To Buddha Anitayus

To bhagavan, tathagata, arhat, perfectly completed buddha Anitayus, I prostrate.

Chom dän dä de zhin sheg pa dra chom pa yang dag par dzog päi
sang gyä ö pag tu me pa la chhag tshäl lo

To Buddha Maitreya

To bhagavan, tathagata, arhat, perfectly completed buddha Maitreya, I prostrate.

Chom dän dä de zhin sheg pa dra chom pa yang dag par dzog päi
sang gyä jann pa gön po la chhag tshäl lo

At this point, recite the holy names of the thirty-five buddhas of confession (see the FPMT practice booklet, The Bodhisattva's Confession of Moral Downfalls).



Then, from the five divisions of mantra, recite the root wisdom mantra [of Künrig] for purifying the negative karma that results in the evil-gone realms:

OM NAMO BHAGAVATE / SARVA DURGATE PARI SHODHANI
RAJAYA / TATHAGATAYA / ARHATE SAMYAKSAM BUDDHAYA /
TADYATHA / OM SHODHANI / SHODHANI / SARVA PAPAM
BISHODHANI / SHUDHE BISHUDHE / SARVA KARMA AVARANA
BISHODHANI SVAHA

Then recite the mantra [of Mitrugya] purifying the karmic obscurations:

NAMO RATNA TRAYAYA / OM KAMKANI KAMKANI ROCHANI
ROCHANI TROTANI TROTANI TRASANI TRASANI PRATHANA
PRATHANA SARVA KARMA PARAM PARA NI ME SARVA SATTV
NANCHA SVAHA

It is good to recite Tsugtor Namyäma's long mantra if you can. If not, recite the short one:

OM BHRUM SVAHA / OM AMRITA AYUR DA DAI SVAHA

Also recite the long mantra of Buddha Tsugtor Drime [Stainless Pinnacle], but if that is not possible, recite the short one:

OM NAMA TREYA DHVIKANAM / SARVA TATHAGATA HRI DAYA
GARBE JVALA JVALA / DHARMA DHATU GARBE / SAMBHARA
MAMA AH YU SAMSHODHAYA MAMA SARVA PAPAM / SARVA
TATHAGATA SAMANTOSHNI SHA BIMALE BISHUDDHE / HUM
HUM HUM HUM / AM BAM SAM JASVAHA

Then recite Buddha Padma Tsugtor's mantra:

OM PÄDMO USHNISHA BIMALE HUM PHAT

These are the principal mantras. Other mantras are: "Secret Relics," "The One Hundred Thousand Ornament Enlightenment," and the "Heart Dependence Mantra." It is said that reciting these mantras has great benefit. Therefore, now recite these three mantras:

OM SARVA TATHAGATOSHNI SHA DHATU MUDRANI / SARVA
TATHAGATA DHARMA DHATU BIBHUSHITE ADHISHTHITE HURU
HURU HUM HUM SVAHA
OM SARVA TATHAGATA BYAVAIOKITE SVAHA / JAYA JAYA SVAHA
OM DHURU DHURU JAYA MUKHE SVAHA
OM YE DHARMA HETU PRABHAVA HETUN TESHAN
TATHAGATO HYAVADAT TESHAN CHA YO NIRODDHA EVAM VADI
MAHA SHRAMANA YE SVAHA



Then recite the Mantra of Maitreya Buddha's Promise:

NAMO RATNA TRAYAYA / NAMO BHAGAVATE SHAKYAMUNITE /
TATHAGATAYA / ARHATE SAMYAKSAM BUDDHAYA / TADYATHA /
OM AJITE AJITE APARAJITE / AJITANCHAYA HARA HARA MATRI
AVALOKITE KARA KARA MAHA SAMAYA SIDDHI BHARA BHARA
MAHA BODHI MANDA BIJA SMARA SMARA AHISMA KAM SAMAYA
BODHI BODHI MAHA BODHI SVAHA

The heart mantra is:

OM MOHI MOHI MAHA MOHI SVAHA

The closer heart mantra is:

OM MUNI MUNI SMARASVAHA

At this point, recite in his ear other blessed mantras that pacify negative karma, such as the mantra of the eleven-face Avalokiteshvara. At the end of the mantra recitation, for those already dead, one may say the following prayer:

You who have passed from life, all your obscurations and negative karma
SHINTM (pacified) KURUYE (all) SVAHA (be).

It is extremely beneficial to recite the mantras with this short prayer adjoined and then blow on water and wash the body with it. Also blow on dust, yellow mustard seeds, and black sesame seeds and throw these on the body. Also, write out the mantras and place them on the crown or in the grave with the body.

To effect the transference of consciousness when the breath stops, grind the transferring element such as increasing relic pills of holy beings, bones of holy gurus, dust from burned conch shells (small type), or magnetic iron, mix this with honey, and place it on the crown.

In the case of someone who died days ago you should hook the consciousness back into the body by saying three times:

Namo. By the power of the true order of the Buddha, the true order of the Dharma, the true order of the Sangha, the true order of the secret mantra and wisdom mantra, and in particular by the power of the unbetraying dependent origination and the truth of the unchangeable nature, may the consciousness of...(say the name)..., who has passed from life, be hooked here instantly from wherever it is, be it at the peak of samsara, in the lower realms, in one of the eighteen hell realms or at any point between these, under, above or on the earth.



Then say:

Hey! Hey! You ... (say the name)..., who have passed from life, listen! You have left the body of this life and all your elements are gradually absorbing. During this time, various fears occur to the mind. These are illusory visions caused by the absorptions of your elements.

So, without letting yourself be controlled by fear of these visions, meditate like this: In the very center of your body, the central channel is the size of a bamboo arrow, reaching from the navel up to and just passing through the crown. Inside this channel at the heart, visualize your mind as a white drop in the nature of light, about the size of a lentil and poised to spring upward.

When you have completed these visualizations, then, from the pure realm of Dewachen, the savior Amitabha, inseparable from the root guru, and all his entourage descend under the control of their immeasurable compassion, and are seated, pleased with you, on the aperture of your crown.

Invoke Amitabha and offer the following seven-limb prayer:

Respectfully, I prostrate with my three doors.
I offer all the actually performed and mentally transformed offerings,
without exception.

I confess all the negative karma and downfalls.

I rejoice in all virtues.

I request you to turn the wheel of the extensive and the profound Dharma.
I beseech you to abide firmly without passing away.

I dedicate the virtue to the supreme enlightenment.

Then, touch one of the person's cheeks with your hand and, in a very sweet tone, advise him for her! like this:

Hey! Hey! You fortunate son [or daughter] of the essence. The end of birth is death. There is no difference between old and young. This means that now the time of your death has come, you need the Dharma that I, a human, have explained well. You must hold it right inside your heart, without mental distraction.

Son [or daughter], don't be attached to this body. Don't be attached to material enjoyments. Don't be attached to home and country. Don't be attached to your close relatives and dear ones. For if you are attached you will be reborn as preta. If you are not attached you will go to a blissful realm.



The end of collection is dispersion. The end of stockpiling is loss. The end of meeting is separation, and the end of birth is death.

You, the son [or daughter], have reached the time of death, but you are not the only one who dies. Everyone has such a nature. You need not suffer thinking about death, for no one is more joyful or happy than you.

Above your crown, on sun and moon discs, is seated the savior Amitabha Buddha, who is inseparable from your kind root guru. When you transmute, all hindrances are annihilated by remembering him. Now, in order to gain the path of transference of the consciousness to a pure realm, make this request from the very center of your heart:

Visualize the following request as coming from the one who has passed from life.

I request you, savior Amitabha Buddha, who are the essence of the unbetraying three precious sublime ones, who are the hero releasing beings from the fear of the evil-gone realms and who are the supreme ferryman, ferrying all to the pure field.

I request you to guide me from the fear of Yama.

I request you to release me from the treacherous path of the fearful intermediate stage.

I request you to lead me to the supreme blissful realm.

I have none other in whom to put my hopes. Please guide me with your compassion.

Visualize that, because of this intense request from the depths of one's heart, from the heart of the savior hook-like beams descend, enter the aperture in the person's crown, strike his consciousness, which is visualized in the form of a white drop, and draw it up. While you are thinking this way, intently draw up the downward wind and make many times a hiccupping sound. Because of this, the drop rises up through the central channel, passes out through the aperture in the crown, enters the guru's secret place, and gradually absorbs into his heart. Due to this, guru Amitabha goes to the blissful realm of Dewachen, like a well-aimed shot.

Think that the person intently pulled up the downward wind. At the same time, making many hiccupping sounds, pull up firmly the hair at the center of the crown. Then think that the savior Amitabha left for the blissful realm, and concentrate a while on this point.

Then say this prayer:

May he be born from an extremely beautiful holy lotus in the happy, pure mandala of the victorious one.

May the prediction of his enlightenment be actually given, and may



this one, who has passed from life, be received by Amitabha, Buddha of Infinite Light.

As quickly as he is joined to the next life, may he enter the pistol, the essence of the lotus in the pure and blissful realm. May this prayer quickly be achieved through the power of truth of Shakyamuni Buddha, the leader, Amitabha, the undefeatable, Maitreya, Manjushri, Vajrapani, owner of the secret, those passed into bliss, those surrounding, and through the power of unbetraying dependent origination.

Also recite prayers such as Sangha.



The Benefits of the Method



Reciting the gurus' holy names in the ear of the sentient being about to die and causing him to recall them is the best method of transference.

The tantra requested by Pungsang states:

For a dying being, to recall his guru for one second is the best among all methods of transference. That capable being will be fully enlightened.

There is great need to make him recall his guru, and in particular to make him generate devotion for his guru and for the mind-bound deities with whom he has a connection.

It says in the text *Pä bunn ngöñ po*:

The one to whom one devotes oneself subdues.

If one hears the holy name of Buddha Rinchen Tsugtor Chän (Having a Jewel Ushnishä), one does not fall into the evil-gone realms. The son of the leader of the traders called Kyibu Chubeb recited aloud this buddha's holy name within earshot of ten thousand fish and the fish were born as gods.

It is stated in the teachings of Buddha Ser Ö Dampa (Body Radiating Gold):

Reciting Guru Shakyamuni Buddha's holy name purifies the negative karma of eighty-thousand eons and merely hearing the holy name once, one will not turn away from the path to the highest, fully accomplished enlightenment.

It is said in the *Sutra of Sublime Precious Clouds* (*Kön chog trin gyi do*):



Just by hearing the name of the conqueror, the Medicine Buddha, one is not reborn in the evil-gone realms.

It is said in the sutra called *Beams of Lapis Lazuli* (*Bäiduryä ö kyi do*):

For those who hear the holy names of these tathagatas there is no opportunity to travel to the realms of the evil transmigrators.

Lama Atisha also said that merely hearing the holy name of a Medicine Buddha removes the suffering of evil transmigration. Other benefits are that one will not leave the path leading to the highest enlightenment, negative karma and obscurations are purified, and one cannot be controlled by maras. Especially those about to experience the heavy ripening aspect of their evil actions of miserliness, pride, jealousy, and of not having followed moral conduct are liberated from suffering and receive perfect happiness by recalling the holy name of a Medicine Buddha after hearing it. Even one already reborn in the evil-gone realms is liberated from them merely by remembering such a holy name. Even for those who have let the practice of moral conduct degenerate in this life, the ripening aspect and so on can be purified by reciting a Medicine Buddha's holy name. It is said to have infinite benefits. It is also said that, in order to be born in the blissful pure land of Dewachen, reciting and hearing the holy names of the Medicine Buddhas is even quicker than reciting and hearing the holy name of Amitabha and praying to him. There are inconceivable benefits in reciting and hearing the holy names of the seven passed into bliss (Medicine Buddhas), as is stated in the *Medicine Buddha Eight Hundred Sutra*.

The benefits of hearing the holy name of Mitrugpa (the Immovable One) are explained in the sutra of *De zhing kö*. The benefits of hearing Amitabha Buddha's holy name are explained extensively in the teaching called *Kön tseg*, in the fifth chapter, entitled "The Beautifully Decorated Amitabha." The amount of writing would be frightening if I were to quote the commentary to the *Confession of Downfalls*, explaining the purification of so many eons of negative karma and obscurations by reciting the holy names of the thirty-five Confession Buddhas. Therefore, try to understand these texts and generate firm faith in them.

There is great benefit in reciting the special blessed mantras such



as those of Kamkani (Mitrugpa), Durgate (Kunrig), Tsugtor Nangyälma (Ushnishaviṅṅa), Tsugtor Drime (Stainless Pinnacle), Pädmo Ushnisha (Wish-Granting Wheel), and so on in the person's ear after calling his name. One may also recite the mantras and then blow on sand, sesame seeds, or water and either throw them on the bones or on the corpse, or wash the corpse with the water before cremation. One can place the written mantras on the corpse's crown before burial. In the text *Mantra Purifying the Karmic Obscurations* it is said:

Even if the object is a wild animal, bird, human, non-human, or spirit, if one possessed by compassion recites this mantra within their hearing at the time of death, they will not transmigrate to the evil-gone realms. Or, if the time of death has already passed, if one recites the mantra one hundred, one thousand, ten thousand, or one hundred thousand times with loving compassion, even if the being was already born in the hell-realms, at this moment he will be released from there. Reciting this mantra and blowing on earth, yellow mustard seeds, sesame seeds or water, and sprinkling it on the bones or corpse, or burning or burying the body after having washed it with the water and placed the written mantra on the crown, gives the result that, even if that being has taken rebirth in the lower realms, within seven days, inevitably, he will be liberated from the lower realms and be reborn in a happy realm – that is, if he doesn't take a good rebirth by the power of his own prayers.

It is stated in the *Tantra Purifying the Evil-Gone Realms*:

In short, to become the leader of the gods is possible. Merely by remembering the names of gurus and buddhas, the sentient being of small fortune is completely liberated from all causes of the evil-gone realms.

This text mentions the root wisdom mantra OM NAMO BHAGAVATE SARVA DURGATE, etc. (see above, p. 11).

Also it is mentioned in the commentary on Nangyälma's mantra:

If one recites this mantra twenty-one times, then blows on yellow mustard seeds and throws them on the bones of the sentient being who has accumulated much negative karma and has died, even if that



sentient being has been reborn as a hell-being, a preta, an animal, in the world of Yama, or in other evil transmigrator realms, because of the power of this mantra he will be liberated from those unfortunate realms.

It is stated in the commentary to the Stainless Buddha's mantra that if one recites the mantra OM NAMA TREYA DHIKANAM, etc. (see above) twenty-one times, then blows on sand and sprinkles it over the grave, those whose bones are touched by the sand, if born in any of the hell-realms, are completely liberated from there and receive an upper rebirth. If they have taken rebirth in an upper realm they receive a rainfall of flowers on their body.

In the text *The Detailed Prayer of Buddha Dönzhaḡ* it is stated:

If one recites OM PÄDMO USHNISHA BIMALE HUM PHAT seven times, then blows on clean sand and throws it over the bones, the burnt corpse or whatever part of any deceased sentient being who has accumulated karma to be reborn in the hells, or of any fully ordained monk who lost his ordination or broke the branches of the precepts, the basic moral conduct, or who had not respected his abbot or his main teacher, immediately after the sand has been strewn on the body, even if that being has become a hell being, preta, cannibal, or raksha, right in that moment the being's life changes and he is reborn in the higher realms, never in the hells.

These are the benefits of reciting the mantras for those who are about to die or who are already dead. Besides these, the benefits of reciting them as daily practice, of writing them down and placing them inside stupas and so forth, have been explained extensively by Buddha. If one wishes to know these, one should see the prayers of the individual deities.

The benefits of the Mantra of Maitreya Buddha's Promise are as follows:

Hearing the words of this mantra, reading and reciting it daily, contemplating the meaning, or in the case of birds and wild animals and so forth, merely hearing it, causes one not to be reborn in the lower realms and to become a wheel-turning king for one thousand eons, according to devas' time. Also, one will follow the path of the ten virtuous actions, receive all the enjoyments one seeks and especially, when Maitreya Buddha shows the twelve deeds of a buddha he will lead this sentient being from



poverty. Even if the being is in a hell, Maitreya will definitely find him and give him the prediction of the time of his enlightenment.

This explanation of the benefits of the mantras and the holy names is not metaphorical. One does not need to interpret the meaning – the meaning is exactly as stated. Therefore, be doubtless, for the holy gurus have emphasized the benefits received from devotion and belief.

Manjushri's root tantra *Jam päl tsag gyü* states:

Humans who have devotion will follow a conduct leading to enlightenment. However, those without the necessary qualities, especially devotion, will not follow such a conduct and, in particular, won't achieve realizations in any tantric practice.

The text *Precious Sublime Pile* (*Kön chog tsag pa*) states:

One who has received the teachings of the victorious one and who has wisdom accumulates much more merit than one who has only faith. For achieving the ultimate meaning, devotion is the root.

Therefore, upon hearing, one should eliminate the doubtful mind.

One should practice with firm devotion and belief, thinking: "It is inevitable to receive these benefits as explained because the Buddha's words never betray."

If one generates heresy and doubts about the truthfulness of the benefits and thinks with pride, "I am checking because I am highly intelligent," there is no way to receive the benefits and realizations. Concerning this, the third chapter of the *Yamantaka Tantra* states:

For the wise one who has no doubt about the meaning of the unimaginable nature, realizations are close. For the foolish one who has firm devotion, realizations are also close. However, if one becomes a thick-skulled intellectual disputer vacillating over the truth of the teachings, the realizations are far.

One may wonder, if this is true, then why did Guru Shakyamuni Buddha say:

Fully ordained monks and wise ones, do not practice my teachings only with the reasons of faith. Rather check my words well, as you



would gold, which should first be melted, then cut, and then polished. Only then, practice.

Generally, even with the Buddha's teachings, there is a time to check definitions and metaphors. There are, however, points that are unimaginable and beyond the examination of intellectual dispute. Wishing to become pure through checking with small wisdom is similar to hoping to pass Mount Meru through the eye of a needle. Therefore, make sure you understand that the discovery of the extremely obscure aspects of existence must depend solely on the authoritative scriptural teachings.

Because of this it is said even in the *Sutra of the Medicine Buddha* (*Mänkyi lha bäiduryal*):

'Ananda, do you believe in the explanation of the qualities of the tathagatas?'

'I have no doubts about the Dharma explained by you, noble foedestroyer Shakyamuni Buddha, because the tathagatas never have the least impurity in the actions of body, speech, and mind.'

'The knowledge and the activities of a buddha are difficult to believe, Ananda. Whatever you have belief and devotion in should be seen as being due to the power of the Buddha.'

Recite these profound mantras in the ears not only of humans, but also of animals such as your mount, daily as well as at the time of death. Also recite them over the bones or hairs of dead ones, and even over silk, wool, or the meat that one is enjoying, thinking of the beings who provided the enjoyment; for silk comes from caterpillars, wool from sheep, and so on. I think this is most necessary in order to not incur a debt.

I request intelligent ones to put these practices into action, since they have pure references, are so easy to do, and have great meaning.



Author's Afterword



If the loving compassionate one wishes to benefit the living sentient beings who are about to be eaten by the fearful cannibal of impermanence, he should use this method explained by Buddha.

When the vivid vision of this life suddenly sinks and one finds oneself alone in an unfamiliar and upsetting place, think: "Is there any method other than Dharma that benefits?" Then, before that great fearful one who cannot be delayed arrives, it is worthwhile to strive for the Dharma which is certain to benefit, relying on the guru and the precious sublime ones to be the guides on the path in future lives. By the merit of this work, may I quickly release all mother sentient beings, whose bodies are eaten by impermanence and who are experiencing unbearable sufferings in the limitless ocean of samsara.



Advice from Lama Thubten Zopa Rinpoche



For those incapable of doing these practices the method of benefiting sentient beings at the time of death can be simplified as follows. Recite the following prayers and mantras in the ear of the dying person, or even over old corpses.

To the founder, the endowed transcendent destroyer, the one gone beyond, the foe destroyer, the completely perfected, fully awakened being, the glorious conqueror, the subduer from the Shakya clan, I prostrate, go for refuge, and make offerings. Please grant me your blessings.

Tön pa chom dân dä de zhin sheg pa dra chom pa yang dag par dzog päi sang gyä päl gyäl wa sha kya thub pa la chhag tshäl lo kyab su chhi wo chhö do jin gyi lab tu söi

To the endowed transcendent destroyer, the one gone beyond, the foe destroyer, the completely perfected, fully awakened being Having a Jewel Ushnisha, I prostrate.

Chom dân dä de zhin sheg pa dra chom pa yang dag par dzog päi sang gyä rin chhen tsug tor chän la chhag tshäl lo

The Compassionate Buddha's mantra:

OM MANI PÄDME HUM

The wish-granting wheel mantra, saving beings from the lower realms:

OM PÄDMO USHNISHA BIMALE HUM PHAT

Milarepa's mantra, granting rebirth in his pure realm Ngongva:

OM AH GURU HASA VAJRA SARVA SIDDHI PHALA HUM



Appendix



The Elaborate Seven-Limb Prayer

To all those who have in the past, are presently, and who will in the future travel the path to perfection, those lions of men whose ever many they may be in all the realms of the universe, to each and every one of them I bow down with body, speech, and mind.

By the powers of aspiration and prayer of Samantabhadra, all of the conquerors appear in the fields of my mental perception, and I bow down to all of them with as many bodies as there are atoms in the buddha-fields.

On each of these atoms there are again as many buddhas as there are atoms in the universe, each sitting in the midst of a vast assembly of bodhisattvas; in this way realizing all to be free from intrinsic reality, I wish for the entirety of the universe to be thus completely filled with buddhas.

I praise the manifold sublime qualities of each of the conquerors with an ocean of songs of adulation praising to the highest of all the tathagatas. But just like a bottomless vast ocean, I can never exhaust the description of their virtues.

The finest flowers, the most precious rosaries, musical instruments, anointments, and the most excellent royal umbrellas, the finest lamps, and precious incense, I offer to all those conquerors.

The finest vestments and most excellent perfumes, a mountain of the most exalted victuals equal in size to Sumera, all arranged in a most



special and elegant way, I offer to all those conquerors.

Whatever offering objects exist that are peerless and vast, I offer to each and every conqueror by the power of my faith in the deeds of Samantabhadra. I make this obeisance and these offerings to each of the conquerors.

Desire and lust, hatred and anger, ignorance and delusion, through the influence of these things I have committed sins of body, speech, and mind. I now confess each and every one of these sins that I have ever committed.

In the virtues of all conquerors in the ten directions, sons of buddhas, pratyekabuddhas, those on the stages of learning and of no more learning, and in the good actions of living beings I wholeheartedly rejoice.

To those who are the lights of the worlds in the ten directions, who have attained enlightenment gradually without attachment to buddhahood, I entreat all of these protectors to turn the peerless wheel of Dharma.

To those who have come to the point of exhibiting their nirvana, I pray with palms pressed together that they may remain for as many eons as there are atoms in all the buddha-fields, for the benefit and happiness of all beings.

Bowing down, making offerings, confessing sins, rejoicing in the virtues of others, entreating, and praying, whatever small virtue I have produced from these practices, I dedicate it all to the ultimate enlightenment.



Dedication



If any merits have been created by those who contributed to this publication, we dedicate these to the long lives of our precious gurus, Lama Thubten Zopa Rinpoche and Lama Tenzin Osel Rinpoche. May all their enlightened wishes be immediately fulfilled, and may all living beings quickly reach ultimate happiness.

Care of Dharma Books



Dharma books contain the teachings of the Buddha; they have the power to protect against lower rebirth and to point the way to liberation. Therefore, they should be treated with respect – kept off the floor and places where people sit or walk – and not stepped over. They should be covered or protected for transporting and kept in a high, clean place separate from more mundane materials. Other objects should not be placed on top of Dharma books and materials. Licking the fingers to turn pages is considered bad form as well as negative karma. If it is necessary to dispose of written Dharma materials, they should be burned rather than thrown in the trash. When burning Dharma texts, it is taught to first recite a prayer or mantra, such as OM, AH, HUM. Then, you can visualize the letters of the texts (to be burned) absorbing into the AH and the AH absorbing into you, transmitting their wisdom to your mindstream. After that, as you continue to recite OM, AH, HUM, you can burn the texts.

Lama Zopa Rinpoche has recommended that photos or images of holy beings, deities, or other holy objects not be burned. Instead, they should be placed with respect in a stupa, tree, or other high, clean place. It has been suggested to put them into a small structure like a bird house and then seal the house. In this way, the holy images do not end up on the ground.



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