

Prayer of the Virtuous Beginning Middle and End

Tsongkhapa · Tsong Khapa

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The Prayer of the Virtuous Beginning, Middle & End
by Tsong Khapa

L1 : [Preliminaries]

\ #1.

\ May the boundless prayers I have offered with a pure, extraordinary wish be able to free countless beings from cyclic existence be fulfilled as true words by the might of the non-deceptive Three Jewels of Refuge and the powerful sagely masters. (i.e. Refuge, Bodhicitta)

\ #2.

\ In all my lives, one after the next, may I never be born in any rebirth state in which I have reverted to being a miserable creature in an unfortunate realm. But rather, may I always attain a human body with complete liberty and endowments for Dharma study and practice. (i.e. Fear of the three lower realms; wish for the precious human life.)

\ #3.

\ From the moment I am born, may I never be attached to worldly pleasures. But rather, in order to attain Liberation, may I, by my thoughts of renunciation, involve myself with unrelenting joyous effort in seeking to live a pure moral life. (i.e. Renunciation)

\ #4.

\ In order that I might take robes, may none of my circle or possessions cause me any interference. But rather, may all favorable conditions come about as I have wished. (i.e. Life of a monk; moral conduct.)

\ #5.

\ Once I am ordained, then as long as I live may I never be stained by the fault of committing any proscribed or naturally unspeakable negative actions just as I promised before the eyes of my Abbot and Spiritual Master. (i.e. Respecting vows.)

\ #6.

\ By relying on pure moral conduct, may I, for the sake of all my mothers, be able to actualize over countless eons, with the myriad difficulties involved, every profound and vast Mahayana Teaching that exists. (i.e. Choosing the Mahayana path.)

\ #7.

\ May I be continually cared for by a holy Spiritual Master whose mind-stream abounds with good qualities of scriptural knowledge and insight, whose senses are calmed,

who has self-control, a heart of loving-compassion and the courage of mind to accomplish undauntedly the purposes of others. (i.e. The precious Guru)

\ #8.

\ Just as Sadaprarudita devoted himself to Dharmodgata, may I also totally please my holy Spiritual Master unpretentiously with my body, life and all my possessions, thereby never causing him displeasure for even a moment. (i.e. Devotion to the precious guru.)

L1 : [The Mahayana Path]

\ #9.

\ May the meaning of Perfected Discriminating Awareness (i.e. yeshe, primordial awareness) in all its profundity, stilled of extremes and devoid of mentally fabricated modes of existence, be shown to me always as it was taught to Sadaprarudita, unpolluted by the fouling waters of distorted conceptions. (i.e. The real nature of the mind, the Buddhanature, the originary awareness, free from all fabrications and obsessions.)

\ #10.

\ May I never fall under the influence of misleading friends or wrong-minded Gurus who are teachers of either nihilist or eternalist views which transgress the meaning of what Sage Buddha intended. (i.e. The Middle Way, away from all extremes: not accepting, not rejecting. The real nature of everything is beyond all extremes, all views, all dualities; it is inconceivable.)

\ #11.

\ By securing myself to the boat of listening to teachings, thinking about and meditating upon them, and by flying the mainsail of a pure, extraordinary wish, being propelled by the wind of unrelenting joyous effort, may I free all beings from the ocean of cyclic existence. (i.e. Following the path with the right motivation.)

\ #12.

\ However much I might improve my mind by listening to teachings, being especially generous, keeping pure moral discipline and developing analytical discriminating awareness, may I be free to the same extent from all consequent feelings of haughty conceit. (i.e. The danger of developing pride.)

\ #13.

\ Without being quenched, may I hear endless teachings on Buddha's scriptural pronouncements close at the side of a learned master who opens up the exact meaning of these texts by relying on nothing but the force of pure logic. (i.e. Not a matter of blind faith, but pure logic and directly seeing the real nature of the mind and of everything. Removing the ignorance about the real nature of everything. It is by directly seeing dependent origination that we see the emptiness of inherent existence and are free from any attachment to these illusions.)

\ #14.

\ Having analyzed fully and correctly with the four types of reasoning, day and night, the meaning of the teachings I have heard, may I cut off all doubts with the critical awareness I have gained from having thought about the points to be contemplated.

\ #15.

\ When, through an awareness that has come from having thought about the extremely profound ways of the teachings, I have found certain conviction in what they actually mean, may I devote myself to solitude with the joyous effort that severs all entanglements with this life and thereby actualize the insights with proper meditation. (i.e. Once we have a glimpses of the Buddha nature, the primordial awareness, and of the real nature of everything, we should go in solitude and solidify this insight.)

\ #16.

\ When, by having listened to the teachings, thought about and meditated upon them, I have developed on my mind-stream the insights of the essential points of the Victorious Buddha's intentions, may I never have any attitudes arise of longing for my own happiness or for the appearances of this lifetime which would just cause me attachment to worldly existence. (i.e. Proper motivation: not gaining Nirvana for self only, but with the Bodhicitta motivation.)

L1 : [The Ten Paramitas]

\ #17.

\ When, with an attitude of detachment from all objects of wealth, I have overcome miserliness, may I first gather beings into my circle by material generosity (1) and then satisfy them completely by teaching the Dharma. (i.e. Transcendent generosity (dana). To win the poor by generosity (1). The perfection of giving is teaching the Dharma.)

\ #18.

\ Having thought well about renunciation, may I always uphold the victory banner of Liberation (2) for which I would never forsake until my attainment of Enlightenment even the most minor moral training I have assumed, though my life be at stake. (i.e. Transcendent discipline (shila). To win the immoral by morality (2).)

\ #19.

\ Whenever I see, hear or recall any beings who would beat, tease or humiliate me, may I be free of anger and in response address myself to their good qualities and thus meditate on patience (3). (i.e. Transcendent patience (kshanti). To win the hateful by means of tolerance (3).)

\ #20.

\ Having completely abandoned the three types of laziness that prevent me from gaining virtues not yet attained and from improving further upon those that I have, I exert joyous effort (4) in virtuous practices. (i.e. Transcendent exertion (virya). To win the lazy by means of effort (4).)

\ #21.

\ Having forsaken the mental quiescent states (5) that would practically propel me into cyclic rebirth by their missing the power of penetrative insight to deflate the extreme of worldly existence and their lacking the moisture of compassion to soften away the extreme of tranquil passivity, may I meditate instead on a joint achievement of all three. (i.e. Transcendent meditation (dhyana). To win the mentally troubled by means of concentration.)

\ #22.

\ Having fully abandoned the endless variety of wrong, distorted views which take as supreme a partial idea of Voidness which the mind has made up from having become

frightened at the true meaning of the profound nature of reality, may I gain the insight (6) that all phenomena are primordially void of inherent, findable existence. (i.e. Transcendent knowledge (prajna). To win the falsely wise by means of true wisdom (6).)

\ #23.

\ May I yoke to the flawless rules of discipline those monks who with a inconsiderate attitude discard the pure moral trainings, never fearing the actions despised by the holy and who, in breaking their precepts, are in fact trainees in virtue in outward appearance alone. (i.e. to show those suffering from the eight adversities how to rise above (transcend) them (7))

\ #24.

\ May I quickly and easily lead to the path praised by the Victorious Buddhas anyone who has missed the right path and is on a distorted, wrong trail, having come under the influence of a wrong-minded Guru or a misleading friend. (i.e. to teach the Mahayana to those of narrow-minded behavior (8))

\ #25.

\ When I have captivated the bold masses of foxes of misinformed speech with my lion-like roar of correct explanation, debate and written exposition, may I then care for them with whatever means might be skilled for their taming and thus uphold the victory banner of the undeclined teachings. (i.e. Using adapted skilful means -- to win those who have not produced the roots of virtue by means of the roots of virtue (9))

\ #26.

\ Each time I am born and can drink of the nectar of the Sage Buddha's words, may I be endowed with a good family, body, wealth, power and wisdom, a long life, no sickness and great happiness so that I might be best equipped to help others (9). (i.e. Precious human life -- to develop living beings without interruption through the four means of unification (10) -- see below "the four means of unification")

L1 : [Methods to develop Bodhicitta]

\ #27.

\ Toward those who continually harbor thoughts of harming my body, life or possessions and also towards those who speak unpleasantly to me, may I especially develop love as if I were their mother.

\ #28.

\ By developing on my mind-stream a pure, extraordinary wish and an Enlightened Motive of Bodhicitta through meditating on cherishing others more than myself, may I thereby confer on those who would harm me the peerless attainment of Enlightenment without any delay.

\ #29.

\ May everyone who sees, hears or recalls these prayers be undaunted in realizing the aim of all the great waves of Bodhisattvas' prayers that they become enlightened. (i.e. Aspirational prayers)

\ #30.

\ By the force of offering these extensive prayers which have come into being by

the power of my pure, extraordinary wish, may I fully complete the perfection of prayer and thereby fulfill the hopes of all living beings. (30) (i.e. Dedication / Aspirational prayer / resolution (8).)

\ This "Prayer of the Virtuous Beginning, Middle and End" has been composed at the holy Drikhung thil Monastery in the Zhotaw District by the itinerant (monk) Lozang dragpa who has heard many teachings.

[End]

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