



PRAYERS AND ACTIVITIES

PHILIPPINE PALYUL CHANG CHUB DHARGYELING
DHARMA CENTER



Prayer Setting

The foundation of Buddhism, and Buddhist prayer, is discipline. Our main obstacle is the restless mind. Therefore, discipline during prayer is not to please the Buddha. The beneficiary of the ceremony's discipline is us and our minds. There is a saying of the Four Straights. "Straight body, straight nerve channels, straight internal winds, straight mind."

- Main Rinpoche, Khenpo or Lama - the *Dorje Loppön* or Vajra Master. Leads the prayer and the assembly. When we visualize the Buddha of a prayer, we visualize the Dorje Loppön as the main Buddha of the prayer.
- *um-dze*, the chant master
- *chö-pon*, performs the rituals in front of the shrine on behalf of the assembly
- In a complete monk assembly, at least 8 monks are present to play all the traditional musical instruments.
- The offered substances - accurate, clean and complete
- Proper hand gestures (mudras) are also crucial. These are some of the outer factors of a successful prayer ceremony.

Inner factors:

- the Three Sublimes: Keeping the Bodhicitta (at the start of the prayer), visualization (in the middle), dedication and aspiration (at the end).

When inner and outer factors are done properly, the merit generated by the prayer is great.

At the least, our motivation should be good. If our motivation is very grand, however small our offering is, the result will be grand.



Mantra

or *Ngak* in Tibetan, is a name of a Buddha. The Buddha and the Buddha's name are one and the same. The mantras are extremely blessed due to this. Mantra is the heart of the prayer. Hence, mantra recitation is the most important part of the prayer.

It is said, "one *complete* mantra chanted is equivalent to 100 incomplete mantra chanted". This means that the most crucial aspect of mantra is not the speed or quantity. Every mantra chanted should be chanted slowly, clearly and completely, with full faith and sincerity.

When chanting, try your best not to speak any common words, cough, yawn or burp in between mantras. If you have done any of these in the middle of counting your mala beads, it is advisable to start from the first bead again.

Generally, any Tibetan Buddhist prayer runs in this order:

1. taking refuge , generating bodhicitta 
2. visualizing the main Buddha of the prayer and the seven-branch offering
3. invitation, invocation of the Buddha, requesting and offering
4. chanting the mantra
5. more elaborate offerings, praise, self-visualization as the Buddha, and dissolution
6. requesting for blessings, wish-fulfilment
7. dedication of merit, aspiration and auspicious prayers

(The actual arrangement and length depend on the prayer)

Guru Rinpoche Puja

This is a famous prayer called *Rinzin Dupa*, meaning 'The Gathering of the Awareness Holders'. An 'Awareness Holder' or Rinzin is a practitioner who has directly seen his or her Enlightened mind. Since Guru Rinpoche received all the teachings of the eight Rinzins of ancient India, he is very special.

Guru Rinpoche is the most excellent Vajrayana practitioner. The benefits of supplicating to Guru Rinpoche are uncountable.

Rinzin Jigme Lingpa (1729 - 1798) revealed this prayer. There is a short Mahakala prayer afterwards which is a side prayer. Here, we are asking Mahakala, the Dharma Protector, to protect this prayer once again, to protect us and to preserve our practice of this prayer.

Dzambhala Puja

Black Dzambhala is an Enlightened manifestation - his dark blue color is Buddha Akshobya, the Dharmakaya Buddha. Holding the skullcup and the mongoose represents that he possesses the Sambhogakaya. Standing up with one foot in front represents that he possesses the Nirmanakaya, ready to help beings.

He bestows external and internal wealth and fortune, so that besides worldly wealth, the practitioner also gradually develops the internal qualities of the Enlightened mind within her.

Short Tsok Offering

The traditional Tsok offering is very long, detailed and grand. Ours is only a very short offering to bless these offerings and to symbolize the grand Tsok offering.

The long Tsok offering is a method for accumulating great merit through offering and confessing our downfalls. Usually, we confess to ask for forgiveness for failing to practice these prayers regularly, forgetting and breaking our commitments, and so on. The offering part is to satisfy the noble minds of the Buddhas.

About the Prayers (Puja)

Green Tara Puja

The Green Tara prayer was written by Terton Chokgyur Lingpa. Tara is a completely enlightened Buddha who had promised to appear in the form of a female Bodhisattva for the benefit of all beings. Her primary activity is to protect us from the eight fears. These are external fears and internal fears that threaten our progress towards Enlightenment.

There are innumerable manifestations of Tara. The most famous ones are Green Tara and White Tara.

Medicine Buddha Puja

The Medicine Buddha prayer was revealed by Terton Migyur Dorje, the founder of the Namchoe cycle of teachings. The words found in this prayer are directly spoken by the Medicine Buddha to Terton Migyur Dorje.

Praying to the Medicine Buddha is powerful. He is best associated with healing the many faults and negative Karma that we have done. This includes the negative thoughts, words and actions done in this life and in numerous past lives.

Smoke Puja (Riwo Sangchö)

Smoke Prayer, called *Riwo Sangchö*, was revealed by Terton Lhatsun Namkha Jigme of Sikkim as a Terma. Traditionally, we conduct a Smoke Puja so that we can offer the smoke to the four classes of beings - the Buddhas and the Bodhisattvas, the Dharma protectors, all sentient beings in Samsara, and to those we have Karmic debts.

By burning and offering the smoke from Smoke Puja, the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas are satisfied, and our Karmic debts to those sentient beings are paid.

Avalokiteshvara Puja

This Great Bodhisattva is the embodiment of the compassion of all the Buddhas of the past, present and future. When the minds of all Buddhas and Bodhisattvas arise as a sound, they arise as Chenrezig's speech. The six syllables of his mantra - Om Mani Peme Hung - clears the limitless suffering of the beings of the six realms.

This is written by the yogi Thangtong Gyalpo (1361 - 1485).

Manjushri Puja

Manjushri is the Bodhisattva of Wisdom because in many Sutras, he was the one who expounded the Dharma in detail on behalf of Buddha Shakyamuni to his thousands of students.

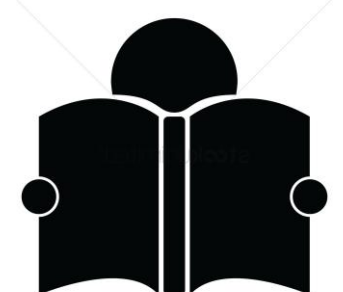
This prayer text was written by the great Mipham Rinpoche (1846 - 1912), as part of the longer text, *Damchö Pema Karpo*. The seven syllable mantra of Manjushri is the king of all mantras. By reciting it, it purifies all negative Karmas of speech.

Shakyamuni Buddha Puja

Shakyamuni Buddha is the nearest Buddha to us humans. He expounded so many great teachings out of compassion for us. By praying to him, we ask his blessing to make us understand the essence of all his teachings - Liberation from suffering.

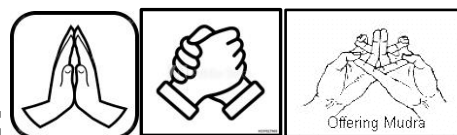
This prayer is composed by the great Mipham Rinpoche. The longer *Praise* inside this prayer was written by Arya Nagarjuna and the shorter *Praise* was written by Loppon Pawo.

For unfamiliar concepts and meanings here, read our Temple Guidebook. You may also ask our head monk!



BEFORE THE PRAYER:

1. Arrange flower offerings in front of the shrine (if you brought flowers for offering)
2. Get a copy of the prayer text at the corner table of the Main Prayer Hall. Put cellphone on silent mode
3. Prepare the *angpaos* (money offering) if you wish to offer (to the head monk only or to all monks is fine)
4. When the assembly of monks enter the hall, all attendees bow 3 times in front of the shrine together
5. When the head monk has seated, all attendees bow 3 times toward him
6. All attendees take their seats. You may seat anywhere vacant
7. Short explanation of the prayer or teaching given by the head monk (sometimes)



DURING ACTUAL PRAYER:

1. Fold hands during sections in the prayer book with the symbols:
Sections such as: Taking Refuge, supplication, prostrations, seven-branch offering, requesting for wish-fulfilment, aspiration prayer and some others
Clasp Hands to make a promise during sections such as Taking the Bodhisattva vow
2. A monk will walk in front to offer incense during the Incense Offering section. You may stay seated
3. Rice Throwing - mandala offering (during Green Tara prayer)
 - a) Place a handful of rice grains on the right palm just before reciting the Mandala offering
 - b) Do the *mudra* (hand gesture) of the Mandala offering
 - c) When all the offering lines have been chanted, throw the rice in the right palm upwards higher than the head and towards the shrine
4. Preparation of Tsok offerings (during mantra recitation section)
 - a) a few lay members will go to the front table. They will arrange the Tsok offerings on the table. You do not have to do anything here (Just recite the mantra properly during this period)
5. Blessing of Tsok offerings - A monk sprinkles *vajra water* on the bags of Tsok offerings to be distributed to all attendees
6. Distribution of Tsok offerings - A lay person will give you one Tsok bag of offerings

AFTER THE PRAYER:

1. Fall in line to receive blessing. Kneel in front of the head monk. He will give blessing.
2. You may distribute your *angpaos* by placing it on each monk's tables. (This is only voluntary. You may only give to the head monk, if you wish. Half of this money will go to the temple's upkeep. Half will go to the monk for his personal needs like travelling, pilgrimage, own materials)
3. You can help the monks clean up by keeping the cushions and chairs.
4. Bring home and enjoy your Tsok offering with your family. See you in next week's prayer!