

Meditation on Chenrezig, the Bodhisattva of Great Compassion



Traditional Tibetan Refuge Prayer

SANG GYE CHHÖ DANG TS'HOK KYI CHHOK NAM LA
JANG CHHUP BAR DU DAK NI KYAP SU CHHI
DAK GI JIN SOK GYI PAY SÖ NAM KYI
DRO LA P'HEN CHHIR SANG GYE DRUP PAR SHOK

Until I reach enlightenment, I take refuge in all the Buddhas
And in the Dharma and all the noble Sangha.
By the merit of accomplishing the six perfections
May I achieve buddhahood for the benefit of all sentient beings.

*This sadhana given by Catherine Rathbun
to practitioners of Friends of the Heart*

layout by Franca Leeson

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May all beings be happy!*

Having prepared properly for meditation, first one should take refuge in the traditional form of the Refuge Tree, with faith in the teachers and all those who have gone before, and a great yearning for shelter in the midst of samsara. One should believe this refuge can be obtained.

Refuge Prayer

Repeat the following refuge prayer three times, either in Tibetan or in English:

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The Bodhisattva Vow

Until I reach enlightenment, I take refuge in all the Buddhas
And in the Dharma and all the noble Sangha.
By the merit of accomplishing the six perfections
May I achieve buddhahood for the benefit of all sentient beings.

The traditional seven-branch prayer contains the following seven elements:

1. *Refuge (homage, prostration)*
2. *Offering*
3. *Confession*
4. *Rejoicing in merit*
5. *Request teachers to teach (turn the wheel of the dharma)*
6. *Request teachers to remain (i.e. not pass into nirvana)*
7. *Dedication of merit*

Then one should think as follows:

May all beings, my mothers,
through the great wholesomeness of this practice,
be freed from suffering.
For the sake of all sentience,
may I come to the realization of that great compassion which is
inseparable from the activity that stirs to the depth of samsara.
It is for this purpose that I am practicing this meditation.

Seven Branch Prayer

To the sublime one, the mighty Chenrezig, to the buddhas and their children, who reside in the ten directions and in the three times, I pay homage with complete sincerity.

The ten unvirtuous deeds are:

1. *Killing*
2. *Stealing*
3. *Sexual misconduct*
4. *Lying*
5. *Slandering others*
6. *Using harsh words*
7. *Gossiping idly*
8. *Cultivating greedy thoughts*
9. *Cultivating malicious thoughts*
10. *Clinging to wrong views*

The "five sins of limitless consequence" or "five inexpressible actions" are thought to result in immediate rebirth in the hell realms. They include killing one's father, mother, or spiritual teacher, causing injury to the awakened, or causing division in the sangha.

I offer flowers, incense, butter-lamps, perfume, food, music, and other real and imaginary offerings, and beseech the noble assembly to accept them.

I confess all the unskillful actions done from beginningless time until now, that were caused by the power of conflicting emotions – the ten unvirtuous deeds and the five sins of limitless consequence.

I rejoice in the spiritual merit of whatever virtue has been gathered by the shravakas, pratyekabuddhas, bodhisattvas, and ordinary beings, throughout the three times.

I pray that, in accordance with the wishes and the aptitude of beings, the dharma wheel of teachings common to both mahayana and hinayana be turned.

I beseech the buddhas not to pass into nirvana as long as samsara is not emptied, but to look with compassion upon sentient beings who wallow in the ocean of suffering.

May whatever merit I have accumulated be the cause for the enlightenment of beings. May I quickly become a splendid leader of beings.

Visualization of Chenrezig

Now, turning awareness within, contemplate the essential emptiness of one's being, seeing the space rather than the molecules of form from the top of the head to the soles of the feet. All feelings, sounds, thoughts are like the wind blowing in space: emptiness moving on emptiness. One can repeat the mantra

SVABHAVA = literally "own-nature", the universal root essence

SHUDDHA, SHUDDHO = pure

SARVA = all, completely

DHARMA = here this word refers to "phenomena"

OM SVABHAVA SHUDDHA SARVA DHARMA SVABHAVA SHUDDHO HAM

...three times while visualizing the hollow body.

It is said that Chenrezig, the Compassionate Bodhisattva, appeared from the white field force of a HRI should when the buddhas of all times called on him to help sentient beings.

From the emptiness, a shimmer of energy above one's head forms into a lotus in full bloom, radiant and beautiful.

In the centre of this lotus

there appears a moon-disc, lying flat, and radiating moon-coloured light.

The light swirls above the moon-disc, and forms into the Tibetan letter HRI.

The image shows the Tibetan letter 'HRI' in a stylized, calligraphic font. The letter is composed of several strokes, with a prominent vertical stroke on the left and a circular element on the right.

HRI

Rainbow light, appearing white, radiates out from the HRI in all directions as an offering to all the buddhas throughout time and space.

The light returns, converging upon the HRI, carrying with it the blessings of all the buddhas.

The HRI can be visualized as shining white light which emanates rainbow light. Rainbow light is of five colours: white, red, yellow, green and blue – and appears as white.

Again there is a pulsation of light, moving out to all the universe, bathing all manifestation.

When this light returns, all the seeds of karma, the desires for action, are purified. All disease, unwholesomeness, pain, and obscurations are empty, void of meaning, and one's self and all others are freed from suffering and established in happiness.

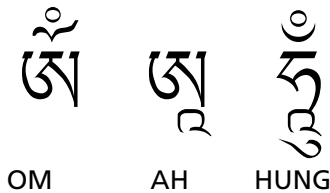
Then the HRI dissolves into light and this light coalesces into the form of the four-armed Chenrezig, who is the essence of all refuge.

He sits in the cross-legged or vajra position,
upon the white moon-disc and the lotus.
His body is radiant, the colour of newly-fallen snow in bright
sunlight, and rainbow light shines from him.

He is holding a jewel between two of his four hands,
positioned at his heart centre in an attitude of prayer.
The second right hand is holding a crystal rosary,
and the second left hand is holding the stem of a white lotus,
the blossom of which is near his left ear.

He is clothed in the finest of silk garments, embroidered in gold.
His body is adorned with a superbly jeweled crown,
beautiful earrings, necklaces, bracelets, anklets,
and a belt with small tinkling bells hanging from it.
The golden-brown skin of an antelope drapes his left shoulder.

Part of his hair is bound up in a knot on his head,
while the rest falls freely over his shoulders.
Above the crown of his head sits a small figure of the Buddha
Amitabha, the Buddha of Boundless Light, in nirmanakaya form.



Chenrezig's back is supported by a full moon without stain.
The three jewels OM AH HUNG reside in Chenrezig, and he emerges
as the unity, the complete fusion of these three, plus all forms of
refuge there might be throughout beginningless samsara.

He is looking with greatly compassionate eyes,
smiling lovingly at me and at all beings.
He is always watching over each and every sentient being,
with a heart filled with loving-kindness, immutable in his care.

Prayer to Chenrezig

*Now, with great sincerity and personal integrity, concentrating with
reverence on the Chenrezig, one prays to him. .*

JO WO KYÖN GYI MA GÖ KU DOK KAR
DZOG SANG GYE KYI U LA GYEN
T'HUK JEY CHEN GYI DRO LA ZIG
CHEN RE ZIG LA CHHAK TS'HAL LO

*As you are praying, think that so too are
all sentient beings. All manifestation is
united together in prayer to Chenrezig*

Lord, not veiled by fault, your body white,
Your head a perfect Buddha crowns in light,
You gaze on all with your compassion great,
To Chenrezig I reverently prostrate.

I pray to you, Lama Chenrezig.
 I pray to you, Yidam Chenrezig.
 I pray to you, Perfect Noble Chenrezig.
 I pray to you, Lord Protector Chenrezig.
 I pray to you, Lord of Love Chenrezig.

Great compassionate victor, please hold us with your compassion!
 For the numberless beings who wander endlessly in samsara,
 experiencing unbearable suffering,
 there is no other refuge than you!
 Protector, please bestow the blessings to obtain omniscient
 buddhahood.

*Pray until you feel moved in your own stream of being, keeping a sense of
 the presence of Chenrezig.*

*Having prayed, from the sacred body of the Most Compassionate One there
 emanates a white/rainbow light. This light comes from the whole body of
 Chenrezig and from the Amitabha Buddha seated on his head, but it is
 especially strong from Chenrezig's heart.*

*Buddha Amitabha is one of the five
 buddhas associated with the double
 dorje mandala: there is one for each
 direction and one for the centre.
 Amitabha is the Buddha of the West,
 who dwells in a paradise called Dewa-
 chen. Amitabha is the lord of the lineage
 of the Chenrezig tantra.*

Immeasurable and inconceivable white light pours from the
 Chenrezig, pervading the entire universe – inner and outer –
 bathing and purifying all creatures and creation.
 The outer realms are made inseparable from Dewachen,
 the Pure Land Paradise of Buddha Amitabha.
 All the beauty – sights, sounds, smells, etc. –
 of joyous nature are there.

Mantra Yoga

One now begins to say the six-syllable mantra



OM MANI PEME HUNG

*...along with all sentient beings, and from this multitude of throats comes
 the sound like the droning of thousands of bees.*

The white/rainbow light continues to pour forth from the Chenrezig.
 It enters the crown of my head (as it is also entering the crowns of
 the heads of every sentient being) and washing through the body,
 permeating my entire being.

As the light fills my being, all unwholesomeness resulting from body,
 speech, and mind activity motivated by ignorance is made whole,
 including the five sins of limitless consequence and the failure to
 uphold the ten marks of sila.

*When the light thoroughly cleanses your being there will be no cause for
 rebirth in the lower realms.*

When the light has completely filled me and all sentient beings, I and all manifestation become inseparable from the body, speech, and mind of the greatly compassionate Chenrezig.

The form of the Chenrezig becomes even more clear and bright: shining, yet empty, like a rainbow.
All manifestation is also a rainbow light, from the smallest particle to the vastness of heaven.
Here there is no differentiation, no naming.
All is jewel-like luminosity so that outer, inner, and Chenrezig become one.

With the removal of obscuration, there remains only rainbow clarity without contrivance.
Form, sound, awareness are inseparable from emptiness.
Sounds are the buzzing of the mantra of Chenrezig.

In my heart centre there forms a six-petalled lotus. In the centre of this is a beautiful white HRI syllable, and on each of the petals there stands one syllable of the mantra:

ॐ
HRI

ॐ · म · नि · पे · मे · हुंग

Realm of the gods

OM MA NI PE ME HUNG

From the OM emanate innumerable OM syllables, which as *white* light shine forth from the heart, spreading in all directions to purify and fill all manifestation with the white light of the perfection of *mental stability*.
This light completely purifies all karmic propensities of *pride*, thus establishing the *Buddha Wisdom of Equanimity*.

Repeat one rosary of the mantra, stressing the OM syllable and visualizing white light moving from your heart to the realm of the gods.

OM MANI PEME HUNG

म

Realm of the titans (asuras)

From the MA emanate innumerable MA syllables, which as *green* light shine forth from the heart, spreading in all directions to purify and fill all manifestation with the green light of the perfection of *patience*.
This light completely purifies all karmic propensities of *envy*, thus establishing *All-Accomplishing Wisdom*.

Repeat one rosary of the mantra, stressing the MA syllable and visualizing green light moving from your heart to the realm of the asuras (jealous gods or titans).

OM MANI PEME HUNG



Realm of the humans

From the NI emanate innumerable NI syllables, which as *yellow* light shine forth from the heart, spreading in all directions to purify and fill all manifestation with the yellow light of the perfection of *morality*, uniting body, speech, mind, merit, and performance. This light completely purifies all karmic propensities of *doubt and desire*, thus transforming samsara into nirvana through *spontaneous nonclinging awareness*.

Repeat one rosary of the mantra, stressing the NI syllable and visualizing yellow light moving from your heart to the realm of the humans.

OM MANI PEME HUNG



Realm of the animals

The mantra is actually spelled, in Tibetan, OM MANI PADME HUNG. However because the Tibetan word for lotus is pema ("pay-ma"), Tibetans tend to pronounce the fourth and fifth syllables as peme (i.e. "pay-may").

From the PE emanate innumerable PE syllables, which as *sky-blue* light shine forth from the heart, spreading in all directions to purify and fill all manifestation with the sky-blue light of the perfection of *diligence*. This light completely purifies all karmic propensities of *ignorance*, thus establishing the *Buddha Wisdom of Dharmadhatu*.

Repeat one rosary of the mantra, stressing the PE syllable and visualizing sky-blue light moving from your heart to the realm of the animals.

OM MANI PEME HUNG



Realm of the hungry ghosts (pretas)

From the ME emanate innumerable ME syllables, which as *red* light shine forth from the heart, spreading in all directions to purify and fill all manifestation with the red light of the perfection of *generosity*. This light completely purifies all karmic propensities of *attachment*, thus establishing the *Buddha Wisdom of Discrimination*.

Repeat one rosary of the mantra, stressing the ME syllable and visualizing red light moving from your heart to the realm of the pretas (hungry ghosts).

OM MANI PEME HUNG

ཨུཎི།

Realm of the hell-beings

From the HUNG emanate innumerable HUNG syllables, which as *blue-black* light shine forth from the heart, spreading in all directions to purify and fill all manifestation with the blue-black light of the perfection of *wisdom*. This light completely purifies all karmic propensities of *anger* that grasps at duality, thus establishing *Mirror-Like Wisdom*.

Repeat one rosary of the mantra, stressing the HUNG syllable and visualizing blue-black light moving from your heart to the realm of the hell-beings.

OM MANI PEME HUNG

The six kinds of light return to the HRI syllable in my heart, which shines with a diamond white light from the centre of the lotus.

As the light returns, it is absorbed into the HRI and is purified.

One finishes a rosary, accompanied with this visualization, and then ceases to say the mantra.

All the purified outer realms are now absorbed as light into the rainbow body of the Chenrezig above my head.

Then Chenrezig is absorbed as light through the crown of my head, merging with me.

My body now dissolves, becoming light that is absorbed into the lotus and mantra in my heart.

The six petals and the mantra are absorbed into the HRI of diamond-white clarity.

The HRI begins to shrink and dissolve simultaneously, until only a dot is left.

The dot dissolves.

Rest in the essential natural emptiness, united with the mind of the Supreme One, free from viewing and viewed, inseparable from emptiness, having abandoned all concepts, without concern for duality, deity or mantra.

ཨོཾ་མ་ཎི་པཌེ་ཨུཎི།

ཨུཎི།
HRI

In a flash, the form of Chenrezig appears.
(Whatever reappears is the face of Chenrezig.)

All manifestation is the body of Chenrezig.
All sound is the sound of the six-syllable mantra.
All activity of mind is the essential emptiness of dharmakaya.
I will carry this thought with me throughout my daily life.

Dedication

Then, considering the lack of clarity and the confusion that still remains, one should consciously state the sharing of the wholesomeness of this practice with all sentient beings, and make the vow that one will continue to strive for purity of knowledge and compassion, for the sake of all beings.

Through this virtue, may I quickly achieve the realization of mighty Chenrezig and may I bring every single being to that same state.

Long Life Prayer for the Lama

Long life prayers for the lama — usually much longer and more elaborate than this one — are always an integral part of Tibetan dharma practice and must be performed at the end of every session.

May the lama live long,
May her good health increase,
May her dharma activity flourish.

Conclude the meditation by doing a brief review of the session, clearly remembering the practice without doubt or skepticism.

Appendix: The Six Realms and Associated Factors

Syllable	OM	MA	NI	PE	ME	HUM
Colour	White	Green	Yellow	Sky-blue	Red	Blue-black
Perfection	Mental stability	Patience	Morality	Diligence	Generosity	Wisdom
Karmic Propensity	Pride	Envy	Doubt and Desire	Ignorance	Attachment	Anger
Buddha Wisdom	Equanimity	All-Accomplishing Wisdom	Non-clinging awareness	Dharmakaya	Discrimination	Mirror-like wisdom
Realm	Gods	Asuras (jealous gods or titans)	Humans	Animals	Pretas (hungry ghosts)	Hells
What Chenrezig carries in this realm	Melodious lute	Flaming sword	Staff and bowl	Book	Bowls of food and jewels	Mirror