BENEFITING BEINGS AS VAST AS SPACE THROUGH THE
CHENREZIG MEDITATION AND MENTAL RECITATION
OF THE SACRED MANTRA OF CHENREZIG, THE
COMPASSIONATE ONE

Introduction and translation by Geshe Dakpa Topgyal.
The Chenrezig practice has been effectively engaged in for thousands of years.
This essential version was composed by the Second Panchen Lama, Sönam Choklang (1438-1505).
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INTRODUCTION

In Sanskrit the word for compassion is karuna, and the word for love is metta. In general, compassion and love form the indispensable seed or root of Buddha's teachings, and in particular, they are the life-force of the Mahayana path to enlightenment. It is not possible to attain full enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings through any other means or path unless you first diligently put effort into developing love and compassion in your heart and mind.

Among the various types of Yidams or Deities that are helpful to your spiritual practice and its growth, the Yidam Arya Chenrezig (Avalokiteshvara in Sanskrit) is the best one for developing love and compassion. All Buddhas and Bodhisattva praise and recommend using Arya Chenrezig for generating love and compassion, as they consider him the most effective and powerful for this purpose.

It is important to realize that in this moment you have obtained a precious human life, with free will and the opportunity to act from your own choice. You also have found the precious teachings of Buddha Shakyamuni, and you have met a precious teacher, whose work is no different from Buddha's deeds in terms of his teaching and spiritual instructions on the path to enlightenment. All of these qualities are rare and difficult to encounter, and possessing them enables you to reach enlightenment within this single lifetime.

According to Buddhism, it is also extremely difficult and extremely rare to again obtain a precious human rebirth. Therefore, it is important to realize that in this lifetime you have already met with all the essential internal and external causes and conditions to attain enlightenment for the benefit of all the confused sentient beings who are constantly tormented by samsaric pain and suffering. You must take advantage of this precious opportunity, as you have no certainty that you will obtain a precious human rebirth again. You should generate a strong intention to reach enlightenment for the benefit of others and then realize the importance of developing love and compassion within your heart and mind by engaging in the Yidam Arya Chenrezig Sadhana.

This practice utilizes Yidam Arya Chenrezig, who is the embodiment of compassion of all the Buddhas of the past, present, and future. Like Arya Chenrezig you must fully develop love and compassion towards all sentient beings with no exception. Without doing so, the Mahayana path to enlightenment will not arise in your mental continuum no matter how deeply you understand Mahayana paths and bhumis.

Therefore, you must first make an effort to train your mind in love and compassion through the process of making your mind familiar with the actual feeling of love and compassion. Love and compassion here do not mean merely a nice feeling towards others. Love and compassion are much more than this, and they must be deliberately cultivated through meditation. Love is a sincere and spontaneous wish that all others experience true happiness and its causes and compassion is a sincere and spontaneous wish that others are free from suffering and its causes.

Love and compassion are some of the best and finest positive qualities of the
human mind and heart. They are the root of all goodness, peace, happiness, and harmony from the individual to the global level. As a human being, it is your moral responsibility to train your mind in true love and compassion towards all forms of life without exception.

This practice booklet contains the Yidam Arya Chenrezig Saddhana in a clear and concise form in order to make it easier to practice in a short sitting session. In this confused time, we need a spiritual life and a compassionate mind to diffuse the hatred and violence in the world, and to bring about peace, happiness, and harmony. This practice will help you achieve this state of mind.

By developing true love and compassion the Chenrezig practice will also help you obtain a peaceful death and therefore a higher fortunate rebirth. You will experience less confusion, frightening hallucinations and struggle less in the process of finding a new life in the bardo state. Desirous attachment and clinging to this life and to your material wealth are the primary causes for getting lost in the darkness of confusion and the terrifying hallucinations in the bardo state. By engaging in the Chenrezig sadhana (practice) you will become familiar with an image of Chenrezig and the sound of his six syllable mantra which can spontaneously arise in your mind even at the final stage of death. This will help to free yourself from the fear, confusion, terrifying hallucinations, and disturbing thoughts and emotions that arise while you are in the gradual process of an ordinary death. Ninety-nine percent of living beings experience these disturbing thoughts and emotions while dying. Going through the death process with these thoughts will ensure that they will be experienced more intensely by you in the bardo state.

This highly disturbing state of mind is extremely bad for your future rebirth because it will cause you to be reborn in the lower realms of existence in an extremely poor and adverse living environment. There the levels of pain and suffering and the causes and conditions for suffering are 100 times higher than with a fortunate rebirth. So, dying with a calm and peaceful state of mind is a very critical and important factor for a good rebirth in the future.

I sincerely and deeply encourage you to practice true love and compassion for your own happiness, and to protect our human world from hatred and violence. Our human world will not be destroyed by any other beings except humans. So, make compassion your religion and a path to peace and happiness for you and all forms of living beings.

WHO IS ARYA CHENREZIG?

Chenrezig is the Tibetan name for Avalokiteshvara. He is known as the Buddha of Compassion because he is considered the embodiment of compassion of all the Buddhas of the three times and ten directions. He is said to have been born in the following way.

One day as Buddha Shakyamuni sat in deep meditation he radiated a pure white lotus-like light that reached the pure land of the Buddha Amitabha and
dissolved into Amitabha's heart. Afterward, this same white light reoccurred in the Buddha Amitabha's heart and became a lake of nectar filled with various types of lotuses. Among the lotuses in the lake, one was exceptionally large, bright, and radiant. Arya Chenrezig was born from that lotus with very distinct physical characteristics and complete in the nature of compassion.

Buddha Amitabha took a deep sense of joy and delight in the birth of Chenrezig and praised him highly with encouraging words in support of his compassionate determination to serve all sentient beings until they reach full enlightenment. By saying *OM MANI PADME HŪM* (pronounced like "hung") along with its detailed spiritual meaning, he predicted that this mantra would be helpful for ripening the minds of sentient beings and for generating compassion in their hearts and minds. At that very moment thousands of Buddhas gathered at the spot and profoundly praised and supported Chenrezig's determination with their prayers and blessings.

Arya Chenrezig then kneeled down before the thousands of Buddhas and openly reaffirmed his commitment by renewing his promise to release all sentient beings from the ocean of samsara and lead them to the everlasting happiness of enlightenment. He also promised:

May I never have the intention of seeking my own state of peace and abiding in it until all sentient beings are released from the pain and suffering of samsara.

At the end Arya Chenrezig made the declaration of truth before the eyes of all the Buddhas:

Should I ever lose my hope and my determination to first release all sentient beings from samsara and instead seek my own enlightenment, may my head burst into ten pieces and may my body into a thousand.

After working hard to help and guide sentient beings towards the attainment of enlightenment, Chenrezig became completely exhausted and very weak and fragile. So he went for rest and rejuvenation to the *Dru zin reewo*, a special mountain located at the south of our physical world. When he returned and again began to serve sentient beings, he suddenly realized how hard it was to tame the sentient beings' deluded minds, and how difficult it was to satisfy them. Regardless of how much he had their interest in mind, he would receive complaints and negative comments. As a result, Chenreyzig felt sad and depressed and decided to give up his compassion toward all sentient beings and to begin to seek his own personal enlightenment.

At this very moment, because of his promise and declaration of truth, his head burst into ten pieces and his body into a thousand. However, Amitabha Buddha appeared suddenly and put all of the pieces of Chenrezig's head and body together again saying:

Oh my son, do not worry or feel sad. The ten pieces of your head will be
blessed to turn into eleven faces, and the thousands of pieces of your body will be blessed to turn into a thousand arms and a thousand eyes. You will regain your courage, determination and compassion to serve all sentient beings until they reach enlightenment.

Chenrezig with a thousand arms, a thousand eyes, and eleven faces came into existence. Since then Amitabha Buddha became the primary supporter and assistant in the spiritual work of Chenrezig.

**CHENREZIG AND TIBETANS**

One day when Buddha Shakyamuni was living in the place called "the garden of milk," as he was smiling, the land of Tibet was filled with a radiant white light. When this happened, the Bodhisattva Dripa Nam-sel asked the Buddha about the significance of the light. The Buddha replied that it was a sign that in the future the land of Tibet and the Tibetan people will be under the spiritual care of Chenrezig.

Later, when the Buddha Shakyamuni was about to pass into parinirvana (dissolution of the gross physical body from the eyes of the world), Chenrezig made an earnest request to the Buddha to not pass away so that he could continue to serve and guide sentient beings to enlightenment. The Buddha replied that he did not have any karmically ripened disciples left on this earth. Chenrezig then inquired about the people from the Land of Tibet, noting that they had not yet encountered the Dharma or the path to enlightenment. The Buddha responded that the Tibetans would be Chenrezig’s disciples and that he would have to take care of them. In this way the Buddha Shakyamuni put the Tibetans in the hands of Chenreyzig. This is why there is a special karmic connection between Tibetans and Chenrezig. And why His Holiness the Dalai Lama, who is believed to be a manifestation of Chenrezig, is so loyally revered by Tibetans.

**THE MEANING OF THE SIX SYLLABLE MANTRA**

The practice of reciting the six syllable mantra, OM MANI PADME HŪM (pronounced like “hung”), while visualizing the clear image of Chenrezig is a very effective way to generate compassion in your heart and mind.

One translation of this mantra is: "oh he holding a Lotus and a Jewel in his hands". This means that Chenrezig is one who holds compassion and wisdom.

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1 The Bodhisattva Dripa Nam-sel was one of the eight close disciples of the Buddha Shakyamuni. 1. Manjushri (Jam Pel Yang), 2. Vajrapani (Chak Na Dorjee), 3. Avalokitśvara (Chenreyzig), 4. Ksitigarbha (Sah-yee Nying-po), 5. Sarvanivaravishvakamini (Dripa Nam-sel) 6. Akashagarbha (Namgay Nying-po), 7. Maitriya (Galwa Jampa), 8. Samantabhadra (Kuntu Sangpo).
indivisibly united in his heart.

The six syllables symbolize that the six sentient beings are the basis of purification; that practicing the Six Perfections is the way to purify the body, speech, and mind of all sentient beings; and that the six Buddha families are the actual result of the process of purifying the stains of body, speech, and mind.

The six sentient beings:
1. Hell beings
2. Wandering spirit or ghosts
3. Animals
4. Humans
5. Jealous Demi-Gods
6. Celestial beings or Gods

The six perfections:
1. Giving
2. Ethics
3. Patience
4. Joyful effort
5. Meditation
6. Wisdom or Penetrative insight.

The six Buddha families:
1. Vairocana
2. Akshobhya
3. Ratnasambhava
4. Amitabha
5. Amoghasiddhi
6. Vajradhara.

OM symbolizes the body, speech, and mind of the practitioner which are not purified as well as the body, speech, and mind of the enlightened beings. Om is actually composed of three letters. They are Ah, Au, Ma, which combined form the sound "OM ". Ah symbolizes the body, Au symbolizes speech, Ma symbolizes the mind.

Ma-ni means wish fulfilling Jewel.

Pad-me means the lotus that is unstained by the mud from which it arises.

Hüm (hung) is the seed syllable of the mind. It symbolizes the indivisible union of Method and Wisdom, the direct spiritual cause for the attainment of the Rupa-Kaya and the Dharma-Kaya. The Rupa-kaya and the Dharma-Kaya are the two ultimate perfections of physical and mental states that are beyond all defects and imperfections.
The entire teachings of the Buddha are contained within the meaning of the six syllable mantra of Chenrezig. This is why this mantra is very sacred and effective in generating all types of positive qualities of body, speech, and mind.

The main purpose of the recitation of this mantra is to make you spiritually close to Chenrezig through the force of faith, devotion, respect, trust, and humility. The recitation of this six syllable mantra is a powerful act to invoke the mind of Chenrezig and as a means to open up your heart and mind in order to generate compassion. In other words, it allows your mind to be soaked, saturated, and moistened with true compassion.

Saturating your mind with true compassion is the first and foremost important spiritual step towards the attainment of enlightenment. This act of invoking the mind of Chenrezig by reciting his mantra of six syllables is very similar to the act of a child calling his or her mother in a very soft and long tone in order to draw her compassionate attention to him or her with the willingness to give the child what he or she needs right away.
I bow and prostrate to all enlightened beings who are germinated from the precious Bodhicitta.

Bodhicitta dispels the causes of an unfortunate lower rebirth, and creates the causes of a fortunate rebirth and path to ultimate happiness.

Bodhicitta also leads to the state of non-aging and non-death.

I prostrate and pay homage to the precious Bodhicitta.
TAKING REFUGE

Dak-sok mar-gyur nam-kay ta-dang nyam-pey sem-chen tam-chey! I, and all mother sentient beings as vast as space,

Du-dhee ney-zung tey jang-chub nying-po la chee-kyi bar-du pal-den la-ma nam-la! Go for refuge to the kind Guru from today until we reach full enlightenment.

Kyab-su chee-wo! Dzok-pey san-gye chom-den dey-nam la kyap-su chee-wo! I go for refuge to the Buddhas, those who have gone beyond the ordinary state and have conquered all the obstructions.

Dam-pey chö-nam la kyab-su chee-wo! I go for refuge to the Supreme Dharmas.

Pak-pey gen-dun nam-la kyab-su chee-wo!! And I go for refuge to the Arya Sanghas, those who have reached higher levels of spiritual realization.

La-ma la kyab-su chee-wo I go for refuge to the Guru
San-gye-la kyab-su chee-wo
I go for refuge to the Buddha

Chö-la kyab-su chee-wo
I go for refuge to the Dharma

Gen-dun la kyab-su chee-wo
I go for refuge to the Sangha

Yi-dam tuk-jey dag-nyee phak-pa Chen-re-zig la kyab-su chee-wo
I go for refuge to the Yidam Arya Chenrezig (who is in the nature of compassion) from the depth of my heart
(Recite 3 times from “La-ma la kyab-su…”)

GENERATING BOHDI CITTA

Sangyay chö-dang tsok-kyee chok-nam la
In the Buddhas, Dharmas, and Sanghas,

Jang-chub bar-du dak-nee kyab-su chee
I take refuge until I am enlightened.

Dak-kee jin-sok gyee-pay su-nam kyee
By the merit of practicing giving and so forth,

Dro-la pen-cheer San-gye drup-par shok.
May I attain enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings.
(Recite 3 times)
THE FOUR IMMEASURABLES

Mar-gyur sem-chem tahm-che de-wa dang de-way gyu-dang den-par gyur-chik
May all mother sentient beings have happiness and the causes of happiness.

Sem-chem tahm-che duk-ngel dang duk-ngel gyi-gyu dang-dral war-gyur chik
May all sentient beings be free from suffering and the causes of suffering.

Sem-chem tahm-che duk-ngel mey-pey de-wa dang mee-dral war-gyur chik
May all sentient beings never be separated from the happiness that is free from suffering.

Sem-chem tahm-che nyeh-ring chag-dhang nji-dang dral-wey tang-nyom la-ney par-gyur chik!!
May all sentient beings abide in equanimity, free from attachment and aversion, which causes me to hold some close and others distant.
(Recite 3 times)

VOLUNTARY COMMITMENT

Kyey-par ma sem-chem tahm-chey kyi don-du nyur-wa nyur-war yang dak-par zog-pee san-gye kyi go-pang chi nge kyang thob-par ja
With a sense of urgency, I must strive for the attainment, as quickly as possible, of a precious jewel like enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings.

Dee chir-du pak-pa Chen-re-zig kyi gyom-dhey la juk-par gye-wo!!
Therefore, I shall engage in the Arya Chenrezig Sadhana Practice.
Four Arm Chenrezig to aid to your visualization
VISUALIZATION OF ARYA CHENREZIG

Visualize Chenrezig on the crown of your head as if the real living Chenrezig is actually there by reciting the following, which will help you generate a clear and complete image of the Four Arm Chenrezig in your mind.

Dak-sok kha-kyab sem-chen gyi! Chi-tsig pey-kar da-wai teng!
On the crown of my head and the heads of all beings as vast as space are a white lotus and moon.

Hri-ley pak-chog Chen-re-zig!
Above this is the syllable " (Hri) which turns into the supreme Arya Chenrezig.

Kar-sel wo-zer nga-den tro!
He is in white and radiates a bright clear light of the five colors.

Dze-dzum tuk-jey chen-gyi zig!
He gazes with compassionate eyes and a lovely smile.

Chag-shee dang-po thel-jar dze!
He has four arms. The first two are folded in a jewel shape resting at his heart.

Wok-nyee shel-treng pey-kar nam!
The lower second right holds a crystal mala that he is pulling towards him, and the lower second left holds a white lotus.

Dhar-dang rin-chen gyen-gyi trey!
He is arrayed in fine silks and jewels.
Ri-dag pak-pey toe-yok sol!
He wears an upper robe of doeskin.

Wö-pak mey-pey ö-gyen chen!
His head ornament is Amitabha Buddha of boundless light.

Shab-nyi dor-je kyil-trung shuk!
He is seated in the full lotus position;

Dri-mey da-war gyab-ten pa!
A stainless moon is his backrest.

Kyab-ney kun-du ngo-wor gyur!!
He is the embodiment of the essence of all the Buddhas.

(While holding the visualization of Chenrezig as clearly as possible, engage in actual and imagined offerings.)

OFFERINGS: THE SEVEN LIMB PRAYER

Pak-pa Chen-re-zig wang-dang! Chok-chu du-sum shuk-pa yee! Gyal-wa se-che tham-che la! Kun-ne dang-wey chag-tsel lo!!
To the Arya Chenrezig, and to all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas who dwell in the ten directions and three times, I bow and prostrate with devotion and trust.
Mey-tok duk-pö mar-me dri! Shal-ze rol-mo la-sok pa! Ngo-jor yi-kyi trul-ne bul!
Pak-pey tsog-kyi shey-su sol!!
I make offerings both actual and imagined of flowers, incense, lights, scented water, food, music and much more. I beseech the exalted assemblage to accept these offerings.

Thog-ma me-ne da-tai bar! Mi-gey chu-dang tsam-mey nga! Sem-ni nyön-mong wang-gyur pey! Dik-pa tham-che shag-par gyi!
I confess all the ten non-virtuous acts, the five immediate retribution acts, and all the other negative acts that I have committed from beginning less time until now under the influence of obscuring passions.

Nyen-tho rang-gyel jang-chub sem! So-so kye-wo la-sok pey! Du-sum gey-wa chisak pey! So-nam la-ni dak-yi rang!
I rejoice in the merit of whatever virtue Shravakas, Pratyekabuddhas, Bodhisattvas and ordinary beings have gathered throughout the three times.

Sem-chen nam-kyi sam-pa dang! Lo-yi je-drak ji-ta war! Che-chung tun-mong tek-pa yi! Chö-kyi kor-lo kor-du sol!!
I pray that the wheel of the Dharma be turned in the form of the greater, lesser and ordinary vehicles so that all sentient beings, regardless of aptitude or motive, may understand.
Kor-wa ji-si ma-tong par! Nya-ngen mi-da thuk-je yi! Duk-ngel gya-tsong jing-wa yi! Sem-chen nam-la zig-su sol!!

I beseech the Buddhas not to pass into parinirvana until samsara is completely eliminated and to look with compassion on all sentient beings who are drowning in this ocean of samsaric sufferings.

Dak-gi so-nam chi-sak pa! Than-che jang-chub gyur-gyur ney! Ring-por mi-thog dro-wa yi! Dren-ney pal-du dag-gyur chig!!

May whatever merit I have accumulated become a seed for the enlightenment of all beings. Upon reaching enlightenment myself, may I develop, without delay, the qualities of a refuge for all beings.

SUPPLICATION PRAYER

Kyon-kyi ma-go ku-dok kar! Dzok-sang gye-kyi o-la gyen! Tuk-jey chen-gyi dro-la zik! chen-ray zik-la chak-tsel lo!

Not veiled by any fault, white in color, with a perfect Buddha as your head ornament, gazing compassionately on all beings, to you Chenrezig, all seeing one, I prostrate.

Om Mani Padme hum
Om ma-ni pad-me hung

(Recite mantra as times as you can)
DEDICATION

Gey-wa di-yi nyur-du dag!
Through the virtue of this practice,

Chen-re-zig wang drub-gyur ney
May I now quickly attain the state of Chenrezig,

Dro-wa chig-kyang ma-lu pa!
And to this same state, not one left behind,

De-yi sa-la goe-par shog!!
May I come to lead every being to that state.

Tong-len lung-la kyon-pey trul-dek chen
In the powerful practice of mounting, taking and giving upon the breath,

Jam-dang nying-jey hlak-pey sam-pa yi
In developing love, compassion and a special selfless attitude,

Dro-nam si-tso che-ley drol-vey chir
And to release all being from the vast ocean of Samsara,

Jang-chup sem-nyi jong-par jin-gi lob
I seek your (Chenrezig’s) blessings to become adept in supreme bodhicitta.

(Pause briefly)
Jang-chub sem-chok Rin-po-che!
Bodhicitta is precious.

Ma-kye pa-nam kye-gyur chik!
May those who have not engendered it, engender it;

Kye pa nyam pa me pa dang!
May those who have engendered it, not lose it.

Gong-ney gong-du pehl-war shok!!
May it always grow and increase!!

Rang-dön drub-la nam-yang mey-rey shing!
May I never dwell on the desire to fulfill my own interest,

Shen-dön bha-shik drub-la shol-wa dang!
May I solely strive for the benefit of others,

Chen-dang nyon-shey ma-kay zö-pa sok!
May all necessary ways to benefit others such as wisdom eyes, clairvoyance, skillful ways to speak, patience and so forth;

Shen-dön jey-pey kye-nam tsang-war shok!
May I possess all of these benefiting qualities quickly.

(Reflect deeply for a moment)
This booklet contains the Yidam Arya Chenrezig Saddhana composed by the Second Panchen Lama, Lobsang Chökyi Nyima, in a clear and concise form in order to make it easier to practice in a short sitting session. The practice utilizes Yidam Arya Chenrezig, who is the embodiment of compassion of all the Buddhas of the past, present, and future. It is considered to be the most effective way to develop true love and compassion. Like Arya Chenrezig you must fully develop love and compassion towards all sentient beings with no exception. Love and compassion are some of the best and finest positive qualities of the human mind and heart. They are the root of all goodness, peace, happiness, and harmony from the individual to the global level.

Geshe Dakpa Topgyal, a Tibetan Buddhist monk, was born in the Western region of Tibet, and fled to India at the age of six. He entered Drepung Monastery at the age of ten and received his Geshe degree (Doctorate of Religion and Philosophy) twenty-two years later in 1994. Before coming to the United States, he taught in Europe for several years. He has been the resident monk of the Charleston Tibetan Society in Charleston, South Carolina since 1996. Geshe Dakpa Topgyal is a skillful and experienced teacher who holds the distinction of having both a thorough knowledge of Buddhism and an excellent command of the English language.