

Tallahassee Chan Center

Liturgy

May 2024



Tallahassee Chan Center
Liturgy Book

Contents

Acknowledgments	vii
Pronunciation Guide	ix
Introduction	1
Why We Chant	2
Daily Chan Liturgy	9
Great Compassionate Bodhisattva Avolokitesvara	10
Prajñāpāramitā Heart Sūtra.....	10
Mahā Prajñāpāramitā	11
The Three Refuges.....	12
Four Great Vows	13
Transfer of Merit	13
Short Repentance Verse	14
Chan Retreat Liturgy	15
Great Compassionate Bodhisattva Avolokitesvara	16
Prajñāpāramitā Heart Sūtra.....	16
Mahā Prajñāpāramitā	17
Samantabhadra Bodhisattva’s Ten Great Vows.....	18
The Three Refuges.....	19
Four Great Vows	20
Transfer of Merit	20
Meal Offering.....	21
The Five Contemplations	21
Bodhisattva Precepts Liturgy	23
Great Compassionate Bodhisattva Avolokitesvara	24
Prajñāpāramitā Heart Sūtra.....	24
Mahā Prajñāpāramitā	25
Praising the Merit in Receiving the Bodhisattva Precepts.....	26
Four Great Vows	27
The Three Refuges.....	28
Four Indestructible Faiths.....	29
Three Cumulative Pure Precepts.....	29
Ten Virtuous Precepts	29
Ten Inexhaustible Precepts.....	30
Transfer of Merit	30

Property of
Tallahassee Chan Center
1310 North Paul Russell Road
Tallahassee, Florida 32301

© Copyright 2024

Chinese New Year Liturgy	31
Great Compassionate Bodhisattva Avlokitesvara	32
Prajñāpāramitā Heart Sūtra.....	32
Mahā Prajñāpāramitā.....	33
Invoking the Earth God	34
Inviting the Buddhas and the Bodhisattvas	34
Arousing the Bodhi Mind.....	35
Homage to the Three Jewels	36
Repentance and Vows	37
Fire Offering.....	40
Vesak Liturgy	43
Eulogy for Śākyamuni Buddha.....	44
The Verse of Bathing the Buddha	45
Homage to Śākyamuni Buddha	45
Great Compassionate Bodhisattva Avlokitesvara	46
Prajñāpāramitā Heart Sūtra.....	46
Mahā Prajñāpāramitā.....	47
Four Great Vows	48
The Three Refuges.....	48
Transfer of Merit.....	49
Funerary Liturgy	51
Great Compassionate Bodhisattva Avlokitesvara	52
Prajñāpāramitā Heart Sūtra.....	52
Mahā Prajñāpāramitā.....	53
The Three Refuges.....	54
Transfer of Merit.....	55
Gratitude to the Lineage	57
Gratitude Service.....	58
Glossary of Terms	61

Acknowledgments

In the spirit of interconnectedness, we acknowledge the countless hands and hearts that have contributed to the manifestation of this liturgy book. We express our deepest gratitude to the boundless wisdom that flows through the texts selected for this book. We bow with reverence to the lineage of awakened beings who have transmitted the teachings through the ages. Their wisdom illuminates the path and guides sentient beings with unwavering compassion.

We would like to specifically mention several bodhisattvas who were instrumental in producing this book. Gratitude to Noah Bookstein, who edited initial versions of the book and helped coordinate the whole project. We would like to thank Dr. Fran Berry and Sara Khan for helping to oversee this project, for reviewing versions of the book, for providing the texts themselves, and for all the other ways they supported this project and continue to support the sangha. Deep bows to Jim Swift, who skillfully provided further edits to the book so that it could be printed, and for providing the beautiful cover image from his photography collection. Without Jim's compassion, patience, and expertise this process would have been several times more difficult.

Our gratitude goes to Guo Gu, our teacher, whose guidance has been a beacon of light in our lives. His clear, compassionate instruction and unending diligence made this book possible in the first place. From his work as a translator and a writer in many of the texts in this book to his work in guiding our practice and helping us to cultivate the best of our hearts in ways that go beyond words that can be written on a page, we offer deep bows.

Gratitude to the great Master Sheng Yen, founder of the Dharma Drum Lineage, for brilliantly expounding the teachings of the Buddha and bringing them to us in the West.

His wisdom, compassion, and intelligence continue to serve as the inspiration for the activities of the sangha and for the creation of this project and all our other endeavors.

Thanks to the editors, proofreaders, and collaborators who have dedicated their time and expertise to refine and polish these words. Their diligence has been an essential part of bringing this work to fruition. Specifically, gratitude to Ashley Messenger for editing versions of the introductory essay, to Justin Eichenlaub for his work on reviewing the final versions of the text, and to Riley Peterson for the photo of the chanting posture.

Deep bows to the Tallahassee Chan Center sangha, the intended recipients of this book. Our community of fellow practitioners on the Buddha path offers presence, support, and shared aspirations so that we may create a refuge for all sentient beings.

We would also like to thank the Three Jewels of Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha for being lights in the world. May these liturgical expressions serve as a bridge between the conceptual and the ineffable. May the merit generated by this offering contribute to the awakening of all sentient beings.

Pronunciation Guide

Chinese terms are transliterated in Roman letters in this volume using the standard Pinyin system. To get a rough idea of the pronunciation of some of the common letters, please see the simple guide below:

c is pronounced like the English, *ts*

q is pronounced like the English, *ch*

x is pronounced like the English, *hs*

zh is pronounced like the English, *j*

The Pinyin system does not separate conjoined characters with a hyphen. However, when a conjoined word can cause confusion in its pronunciation, an apostrophe is used. For example: *gong'an*. This is to avoid pronouncing the word wrongly as “*gon gan*.”

Sanskrit pronunciation can be quite difficult. Some of the Indian sounds such as the various nasal consonants are indistinguishable for most of us, and the retroflex stops are impossible to tell from dental stops. That said, there are some simple rules that can help us get as close as possible. Since a wrongly pronounced word usually means something different, it is worth making the effort. Diacritics are important to aid pronunciation.

Vowels:

a is pronounced like the English, *u* in *cut*

ā is pronounced like the English, *father*

i is pronounced like the English, *bit*

ī is pronounced like the English, *beet*

u is pronounced like the English, *put* or *foot*

ū is pronounced like the English, *brute*
e is pronounced like the English, *bay* (but sometimes as in *bed*)
ai is pronounced like the English, *sigh*
o is pronounced like the English, *hope*
au is pronounced like the English, *sound*
r is pronounced like the English, *risk*
m̄ is pronounced like the French, *bon*
h softly echoes the preceding vowel

Consonants:

Consonants are the same as in English, except for:

v is pronounced like a *w*
ś as in *shame*
sh (= *ʃ*) as in *dish*
c always soft as in *church*
ñ and *ṇ* have a nasal quality
ñ̃ as in *canyon*

The *h* in aspirated consonants (*kh, gh, ch, jh, th, dh, ph, bh*)
is pronounced like the *th* in *hothouse*, not as in *theatre*.

Retroflex consonants (with a dot underneath) are similar to
English, but the tongue is further back in the mouth on the
alveolar ridge.

Introduction

Why We Chant

Chanting is a central Buddhist practice and serves several functions.

First, it can be a form of prayer where the teachings of the Buddha are selected for devotion, celebration, memorization, and learning. Common scriptures that Chinese Buddhist practitioners chant include the *Heart Sūtra*, the *Diamond Sūtra*, the *Amitabha Sūtra*, and the *Lotus Sūtra*, because they convey core Mahāyāna teachings on buddhahood.

Chanting can also be a way to regulate and harmonize the practitioner's body, mind, and energy, especially during intensive meditation retreats. Because we engage in long hours of sitting, energy or *qi* can become stilted and blocked. When energy becomes stagnant, meditators need to move the body. In this sense, it is like walking meditation. But chanting mobilizes the internal body. The vocalization of chanting uses the air passing through the vocal cords to circulate and vibrate energy through different parts of the body. When the body is relaxed in chanting, the energy travels harmoniously and opens up blockages inside the body.

Moreover, chanting is a practice of oneness. People usually either focus on their own voice and amplify it or passively listen without contributing to the group. With chanting, either approach would defeat the whole purpose of the practice. Instead, we can practice oneness with the external environment. Rather than focusing on ourselves and what we say in the midst of chanting, our voice can be a part of the ocean of sounds with everyone else's voice. In this way, we chant with body, mind, sound, and environment as a unity.

In the oneness of chanting, the teachings in the liturgy can be assimilated non-conceptually. We may be chanting about the emptiness of form, non-duality, and how all things are created by the mind, but we are not thinking about the words or ruminating on the meaning of the chant. Instead, we allow our minds to open and let the teachings resonate within us in an embodied way, absorbing the teaching at deeper levels of consciousness.

Ocean Wave Style

The form of Chinese Buddhist chanting is called “Melody of Oceanic Waves,” because the process resembles the flow of tides coming in and out. The sound of the chant may be done in different vocal ranges and octaves, and chanters take a breath at different intervals; yet the voices merge into one another, as long as the general melody and rhythm are maintained. As one tide ripples into another tide, a different tide is rippling into another seamlessly. These ripples of tides—or melodies—blend into each other continuously, like waves upon waves. Just as there are no fixed waves in the ocean, there is also no fixed way of chanting the melody.

This approach is unique. In other Buddhist traditions, the sound of chanting usually falls in the same vocal range; Japanese chanting, for example, is generally a lower monotonous vocal range. This wavy chanting style stems from the blending of different regional dialects in China. As monastics traveled from temple to temple, coming and going from different provinces, they introduced different dialects and vocal ranges into the same liturgy. Some of the dialects were so distinct that they

sounded like different languages. It would be like Southern cowboys singing with others from Boston and Brooklyn. While the liturgy and the basic melody is the same, as is the rhythm and pace, there may be variation in the articulation of words, vocal ranges, and octave. Cohesion is supported by the dharma musical instruments that orchestrate the rhythm and beat of the chanting. The rhythm of the chanting instrument follows syllables and vowels. “Bodhisattva,” for example, has four syllables (Bo-di-sat-va), and thus the pace of the chanting would be guided with four strikes of the instrument.

When done right, all of the different voices are harmonized into a single flow following the same rhythm or beat. The chanting leader’s melody and octave serves as a baseline, and others can either replicate it or bring the vocal range to a different octave. Your voice is one among the waves of other voices. The melodies of the whole assembly will naturally blend into one another as long as people are not chanting faster or slower than the chanting leader.

Also, when we chant, we focus on everyone else’s voice. This is very important because it ensures we are not chanting faster or slower than the whole assembly; it also trains us to be in tune with everyone. Even though we’re listening to others’ voices, we are not purposefully suppressing our own chanting. Nor are we *not* chanting, *only* listening. We ourselves are chanting, but we are blending our voice with everyone else’s voice. When we do this, we will always be in accord with the pace, rhythm, and melodies of the chanting; we will know when the chanting leader is changing breaths, so we don’t change breaths at the same interval and create a gap in the melody. This practice gives rise to the Melody of

Oceanic Waves of the chanting.

If the melody is foreign to you, it is okay to chant in a monotonous voice. That too is one wave in the melody of the ocean. The chanting leader and others will come in and out with a wavy, melodic voice. It is like the dynamics of a rock band. There could be various sounds, like bass, drums, guitar, and piano. They can all play together, as long as they are unified by the same rhythm and pace.

The Approach to Chanting

We start and end chanting sessions with three prostrations to an altar with a buddha image, as a simple focal point. (It’s okay if you don’t have an altar when you chant at home, but you can begin with prostrations. And if you practice at home without dharma musical instruments, you can just chant along with the audio files. The audio files will give you the rhythm and beat so you can become familiar with them.)

First, when we chant, we should relax and settle the bodily weight downwards, just as we do when we meditate. When we have a lot of wandering thoughts, the center of bodily weight is at the head region. We can get headaches and all kinds of problems from this. But when we are completely relaxed and grounded, with the sense of bodily weight lower in the body, the mind becomes clear. Our vocal cords can also relax, which helps with the chanting. When we are familiar with relaxing, bodily energy will naturally go to the center of the body: the *dantian*.

According to all Chinese and East Asian religions, the central axis of one’s energy is called the *dantian* or “elixir field.” It is basically the energy center of the human body. It

is located down in the torso, a few inches below the navel. When chanting, our focus is down at this area, as if our voice comes from there. This is the second point.

Third, it is important to keep the throat relaxed. If we use our throat to chant, we may lose our voice. A voice that comes from the *dantian* will tend to be deeper and more resilient. So, instead of using our throat voice, we use the *dantian* to chant. We don't have to be contrived about this. It's simple. Just relax the throat and body, be grounded, and place your awareness at the *dantian* as we chant. Then, the sound will come from there.

Fourth, sit in a posture conducive to chanting. Instead of sitting in a cross-legged posture, we generally encourage people to sit in the horse-riding straddle posture for chanting. Hold the Liturgy Book in both hands, as shown in the photo on the right. This allows the abdomen and diaphragm to fully relax. If our upper body is arched in any way, we will have difficulty accessing the *dantian*. The cushions should be high enough so your base and upper body can be erect without much effort. Then the bodily weight can settle down, the stomach can relax, and the throat can open. Don't force the chant; relax and let it flow from the *dantian*. Then, naturally, the flow of your energy will harmonize.



It is also possible to chant while standing. Seated chanting is more stable, but it is easier to access the *dantian* while

standing. Chanting while standing is usually reserved for morning and evening service in traditional monastic settings. This is because in traditional chanting, the morning and evening services are much longer. Some people may not be able to sit through those services, so chanting in those situations is done while standing. In Chan meditation retreats, our chanting is short, so we sit and chant. In either case, the principle is the same: relax the body, relax the throat, allow the energy to sink down, and let the voice flow from the *dantian*.

Fifth, chanting is participatory. It is a wonderful occasion to embody selfless activity. We empty ourselves by not focusing on our own voice in the chant, and at the same time connect with everyone else's voice while we chant. Be in tune with everyone and with the unison of chanting. You can be simultaneously empty and engaged. The more familiar you are with the group, the more you will know when to take a breath. If everyone were to take a breath at the same time, then there would be a break in the chanting and in the voicing of the syllables of the text. There would be silences, and words of the scripture would be skipped. The teachings in the scripture should be continuous and flowing. Therefore, be aware of everyone's voice and take a breath while someone else is continuing to chant so that when you join in again, someone else can take a breath. The leader usually never takes a breath at the end of the sentence, because that's the most common part where others take a breath.

It's important to remember not to engage in conceptual thinking or reflection on the teaching. When you chant, "form is emptiness," you don't think about why. You can reflect on why when you're not chanting. The wisdom of Chan is not

INTRODUCTION

mediated by intellectual understanding. In Chan, chanting is a direct way to harmonize the body and mind, to embody the oneness of the wisdom teachings and yourself. By relaxing, grounding, and connecting with everyone who is chanting, we drop the self and unite with everything else. We naturally learn to integrate the correct views of buddhadharma: selfless yet engaged.

Guo Gu
December 2023
Tallahassee Chan Center

Daily Chan Liturgy

Great Compassionate Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara
(Precentor intones first two words)

Na mo da bei guan shi yin pu sa

Prajñāpāramitā Heart Sūtra



When the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara
was coursing in the deep *prajñāpāramitā*,
he perceived that all five *skandhas* are empty,
thereby transcending all sufferings.

Śāriputra, form is not other than emptiness
and emptiness not other than form.
Form is precisely emptiness
and emptiness precisely form.

So also are sensation, perception, volition, and
consciousness.

Śāriputra, this voidness of all dharmas
is not born, not destroyed,
not impure, not pure, does not increase or decrease.

In voidness there is no form,
and no sensation, perception,
volition or consciousness;
no eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, mind;
no sight, sound, smell, taste, touch, thought;
there is no realm of the eye,
all the way up to no realm of mental cognition.

There is no ignorance
and there is no ending of ignorance,
through to no aging and death
and no ending of aging and death.
There is no suffering, no cause of suffering,
no cessation of suffering, and no path.

There is no wisdom or any attainment.
With nothing to attain,
bodhisattvas relying on *prajñāpāramitā*
have no obstructions in their minds.
Having no obstructions, there is no fear
and departing far from confusion and imagining,
they reach ultimate *nirvāṇa*.

All past, present and future buddhas,
relying on *prajñāpāramitā*,
attain *anuttarā samyak sambodhi*.
Therefore, know that *prajñāpāramitā* is the great
mantra of power,
the great mantra of wisdom, the supreme mantra,
the unequaled mantra,
which is able to remove all sufferings.
It is real and not false.

Therefore, recite the mantra of *prajñāpāramitā*:
Gate gate pāragate pārasaṃgate bodhi svāhā!

Mahā Prajñāpāramitā



Mo he bo re bo luo mi duo (3x)

The Three Refuges

I take refuge in the Buddha,
and I wish all sentient beings,
will awaken to the great Path,
and make the supreme resolution.

I take refuge in the Dharma,
and I wish all sentient beings,
will penetrate the sūtras,
their wisdom as deep as the ocean.

I take refuge in the Sangha,
and I wish all sentient beings,
will be brought together
in great harmony,
without any obstructions at all.

(Precentor recites the first word)

Zi gui yi fo dang yuan zhong sheng
Ti jie da dao fa wu shang xin (bow)

Zi gui yi fa dang yuan zhong sheng
Shen ru jing zang zhi hui ru hai (bow)

Zi gui yi seng dang yuan zhong sheng
Tong li da zhong yi qie wu ai (bow)

Four Great Vows

I vow to deliver innumerable sentient beings.
I vow to cut off endless vexations.
I vow to master limitless approaches to Dharma.
I vow to attain supreme buddhahood.

(Precentor recites the first word)

Zhong sheng wu bian shi yuan du
Fan nao wu jin shi yuan duan
Fa men wu liang shi yuan xue
Fo dao wu shang shi yuan cheng

Transfer of Merit

We pray:
For the flourishing of buddhadharma,
for peace in the world,
for the joy and contentment of all people,
for the freedom and ease of body and mind.
May sentient beings depart from suffering.
May the vows of the donors be fulfilled.

Short Repentance Verse



All bad karma from greed, hatred, and ignorance,
since time without beginning,
arising out of body, speech, and mind,
I now repent before the buddhas.

*Chan
Retreat
Liturgy*

Great Compassionate Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara
(Precentor intones first two words)

Na mo da bei guan shi yin pu sa

Prajñāpāramitā Heart Sūtra



When the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara
 was coursing in the deep *prajñāpāramitā*,
 he perceived that all five *skandhas* are empty,
 thereby transcending all sufferings.

Śāriputra, form is not other than emptiness
 and emptiness not other than form.

Form is precisely emptiness
 and emptiness precisely form.

So also are sensation, perception, volition, and
 consciousness.

Śāriputra, this voidness of all dharmas
 is not born, not destroyed,
 not impure, not pure, does not increase or decrease.

In voidness there is no form,
 and no sensation, perception,
 volition or consciousness;
 no eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, mind;
 no sight, sound, smell, taste, touch, thought;
 there is no realm of the eye,
 all the way up to no realm of mental cognition.

There is no ignorance

and there is no ending of ignorance,
 through to no aging and death
 and no ending of aging and death.
 There is no suffering, no cause of suffering,
 no cessation of suffering, and no path.

There is no wisdom or any attainment.
 With nothing to attain,
 bodhisattvas relying on *prajñāpāramitā*
 have no obstructions in their minds.
 Having no obstructions, there is no fear
 and departing far from confusion and imagining,
 they reach ultimate *nirvāṇa*.

All past, present and future buddhas,
 relying on *prajñāpāramitā*,
 attain *anuttarā samyak sambodhi*.
 Therefore, know that *prajñāpāramitā* is the great
 mantra of power,
 the great mantra of wisdom, the supreme mantra,
 the unequaled mantra,
 which is able to remove all sufferings.
 It is real and not false.

Therefore, recite the mantra of *prajñāpāramitā*:
Gate gate pāragate pārasaṃgate bodhi svāhā!

Mahā Prajñāpāramitā



Mo he bo re bo luo mi duo (3x)

Samantabhadra Bodhisattva's Ten Great Vows

The first, to worship and respect all buddhas.

The second, to praise the Tathāgatas.

The third, to cultivate the giving of offerings.

The fourth, to repent all karmic obstructions.

The fifth, to rejoice in the merits of others.

The sixth, to request the turning
of the Dharma wheel.

The seventh, to request that
the buddhas dwell in the world.

The eighth, to always follow the buddhas in study.

The ninth, to always harmonize with sentient beings.

The tenth, to transfer all merits to all others.

All buddhas of the past, present,
and future in all quarters.

All bodhisattva mahāsattvas.

Mahāprajñāpāramitā.

The Three Refuges

I take refuge in the Buddha,
and I wish all sentient beings,
will awaken to the great Path,
and make the supreme resolution.

I take refuge in the Dharma,
and I wish all sentient beings,
will penetrate the sūtras,
their wisdom as deep as the ocean.

I take refuge in the Sangha,
and I wish all sentient beings,
will be brought together
in great harmony,
without any obstructions at all.

(Precentor recites the first word)

<i>Zi gui yi fo</i>	<i>dang yuan zhong sheng</i>
<i>Ti jie da dao</i>	<i>fa wu shang xin (bow)</i>

<i>Zi gui yi fa</i>	<i>dang yuan zhong sheng</i>
<i>Shen ru jing zang</i>	<i>zhi hui ru hai (bow)</i>

<i>Zi gui yi seng</i>	<i>dang yuan zhong sheng</i>
<i>Tong li da zhong</i>	<i>yi qie wu ai (bow)</i>

Four Great Vows

I vow to deliver innumerable sentient beings.
 I vow to cut off endless vexations.
 I vow to master limitless approaches to Dharma.
 I vow to attain supreme buddhahood.

(Precentor recites the first word)

*Zhong sheng wu bian shi yuan du
 Fan nao wu jin shi yuan duan
 Fa men wu liang shi yuan xue
 Fo dao wu shang shi yuan cheng*

Transfer of Merit

We pray:
 For the flourishing of buddhadharma,
 for peace in the world,
 for the joy and contentment of all people,
 for the freedom and ease of body and mind.
 May sentient beings depart from suffering.
 May the vows of the donors be fulfilled.

Meal Offering

We make offerings to the buddhas
 We make offerings to the Dharma.
 We make offerings to the Sangha.
 We make offerings to all sentient beings.

I vow to deliver innumerable sentient beings.
 I vow to cut off endless vexations.
 I vow to master limitless approaches to Dharma.
 I vow to attain supreme buddhahood.

With this offering, we wish that all sentient beings
 accomplish liberation and fulfill all buddhadharma.

The Five Contemplations

Considering how much merit has brought me this food,
 I reflect on where this food came from.

Measuring my own virtue and practice,
 Is it worthy of receiving this offering?

Protecting the mind from mistakes, abandoning greed,
 hatred, and ignorance is essential.

Correctly considering this food as salutary medicine,
 it will prevent this body from withering away.

Now, I receive this food for the sake of
 accomplishing the buddha path.

*Bodhisattva
Precepts
Liturgy*

Great Compassionate Bodhisattva Avolokitesvara
(Precentor intones first two words)

Na mo da bei guan shi yin pu sa

Prajñāpāramitā Heart Sūtra



When the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara
was coursing in the deep *prajñāpāramitā*,
he perceived that all five *skandhas* are empty,
thereby transcending all sufferings.

Śāriputra, form is not other than emptiness
and emptiness not other than form.
Form is precisely emptiness
and emptiness precisely form.

So also are sensation, perception, volition, and
consciousness.

Śāriputra, this voidness of all dharmas
is not born, not destroyed,
not impure, not pure, does not increase or decrease.

In voidness there is no form,
and no sensation, perception,
volition or consciousness;
no eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, mind;
no sight, sound, smell, taste, touch, thought;
there is no realm of the eye,
all the way up to no realm of mental cognition.

There is no ignorance
and there is no ending of ignorance,

through to no aging and death
and no ending of aging and death.
There is no suffering, no cause of suffering,
no cessation of suffering, and no path.

There is no wisdom or any attainment.
With nothing to attain,
bodhisattvas relying on *prajñāpāramitā*
have no obstructions in their minds.
Having no obstructions, there is no fear
and departing far from confusion and imagining,
they reach ultimate *nirvāṇa*.

All past, present and future buddhas,
relying on *prajñāpāramitā*,
attain *anuttarā samyak sambodhi*.
Therefore, know that *prajñāpāramitā* is the great
mantra of power,
the great mantra of wisdom, the supreme mantra,
the unequalled mantra,
which is able to remove all sufferings.
It is real and not false.

Therefore, recite the mantra of *prajñāpāramitā*:
Gate gate pāragate pārasaṃgate bodhi svāhā!

Mahā Prajñāpāramitā



Mo he bo re bo luo mi duo (3x)

***Praising the Merit in
Receiving the Bodhisattva Precepts***



Disciples of the Buddha,
the Ten Inexhaustible Precepts you have taken
will empower you to overcome
the four categories of demonic forces,
the *skandhas*, the vexations,
death, and heavenly *māras*,
and to transcend the three realms of existence.
Their power will continue from life to life.
*The Sūtra of the Garland of the Bodhisattva's
Original Deeds* states,
“It is better to have precepts
than to have no precepts at all.
Those who have precepts to break
are bodhisattvas;
those without are not.”
The same *sūtra* also states,
“After having taken the bodhisattva precepts,
you will not lose the essence of the precepts within,
even if you break them.”
Bodhisattvas should feel remorse
when they have violated a precept,
and always engage in the practice of repentance.
If a bodhisattva breaks a major precept,
the precepts should be taken again.
Wholeheartedly guard
the pure essence of the bodhisattva precepts.
Understand that they have unsurpassable qualities.

They are the storehouse
of immeasurable, limitless merit and virtue.
They can generate the
highest wholesome joy in your consciousness.
They can guide all sentient beings
away from harmful actions.
They encompass all precepts
and all wholesome dharmas.
They are able to benefit all sentient beings.
Therefore, with utmost sincerity,
I beseech the Three Holy Ones,
Śākyamuni Buddha, Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva, and
Maitreya Bodhisattva, to validate that the
Bodhisattva Three Cumulative Pure Precepts,
the Ten Virtuous Precepts,
and the Ten Inexhaustible Precepts
can universally amass
all unexcelled merit and virtue.

Four Great Vows



I vow to deliver innumerable sentient beings.
I vow to cut off endless vexations.
I vow to master limitless approaches to Dharma.
I vow to attain supreme buddhahood.

*Zhong sheng wu bian shi yuan du
Fan nao wu jin shi yuan duan
Fa men wu liang shi yuan xue
Fo dao wu shang shi yuan cheng*

The Three Refuges

I take refuge in the Buddha,
and I wish all sentient beings,
will awaken to the great Path,
and make the supreme resolution.

I take refuge in the Dharma,
and I wish all sentient beings,
will penetrate the sūtras,
their wisdom as deep as the ocean.

I take refuge in the Sangha,
and I wish all sentient beings,
will be brought together
in great harmony,
without any obstructions at all.

(Precentor recites the first word)

Zi gui yi fo dang yuan zhong sheng
Ti jie da dao fa wu shang xin (bow)

Zi gui yi fa dang yuan zhong sheng
Shen ru jing zang zhi hui ru hai (bow)

Zi gui yi seng dang yuan zhong sheng
Tong li da zhong yi qie wu ai (bow)

Four Indestructible Faiths

Faith in the Buddha;
Faith in the Dharma;
Faith in the Sangha;
Faith in the Vinaya.

Three Cumulative Pure Precepts

I vow to uphold all pure precepts,
not to ignore a single precept.
I vow to cultivate all virtuous deeds,
not to overlook a single virtue.
I vow to deliver all sentient beings,
not to forsake a single sentient being.

Ten Virtuous Precepts

Through my body, I vow not to kill.
Through my body, I vow not to steal.
Through my body, I vow not to have sexual misconduct.
Through my speech, I vow not to lie.
Through my speech, I vow not to engage in
frivolous chatter.
Through my speech, I vow not to have divisive words.
Through my speech, I vow not to use harsh language.
Through my mind, I vow not to have craving.
Through my mind, I vow not to have aversion.
Through my mind, I vow not to entertain erroneous
views.

Ten Inexhaustible Precepts



I vow not to kill, not to steal,
not to engage in sexual misconduct, not to lie,
not to take, encourage, or give intoxicants to others,
not to speak of the flaws of bodhisattvas,
not to praise myself and disparage others,
not to be stingy, not to be angry,
and not to slander the Three Jewels.

Transfer of Merit



The merit of receiving the precepts is most precious,
I hereby transfer all the limitless merits:
May the character of human beings be uplifted.
May the earth be transformed into a buddha land.
May the Three Jewels—
the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha—
forever dwell in the world.
May all beings practice the three learnings
of precepts, meditation, and wisdom.
May all beings in the three realms of existence
fulfill the immeasurable adornments
of merit and wisdom.

*Chinese
New Year
Liturgy*

Great Compassionate Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara
(Precentor intones first two words)

Na mo da bei guan shi yin pu sa

Prajñāpāramitā Heart Sūtra



When the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara
was coursing in the deep *prajñāpāramitā*,
he perceived that all five *skandhas* are empty,
thereby transcending all sufferings.

Śāriputra, form is not other than emptiness
and emptiness not other than form.

Form is precisely emptiness
and emptiness precisely form.

So also are sensation, perception, volition, and
consciousness.

Śāriputra, this voidness of all dharmas
is not born, not destroyed,
not impure, not pure, does not increase or decrease.

In voidness there is no form,
and no sensation, perception,
volition or consciousness;
no eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, mind;
no sight, sound, smell, taste, touch, thought;
there is no realm of the eye,
all the way up to no realm of mental cognition.

There is no ignorance

and there is no ending of ignorance,
through to no aging and death
and no ending of aging and death.
There is no suffering, no cause of suffering,
no cessation of suffering, and no path.

There is no wisdom or any attainment.
With nothing to attain,
bodhisattvas relying on *prajñāpāramitā*
have no obstructions in their minds.
Having no obstructions, there is no fear
and departing far from confusion and imagining,
they reach ultimate *nirvāṇa*.

All past, present and future buddhas,
relying on *prajñāpāramitā*,
attain *anuttarā samyak sambodhi*.
Therefore, know that *prajñāpāramitā* is the great
mantra of power,
the great mantra of wisdom, the supreme mantra,
the unequaled mantra,
which is able to remove all sufferings.
It is real and not false.

Therefore, recite the mantra of *prajñāpāramitā*:
Gate gate pāragate pārasaṃgate bodhi svāhā!

Mahā Prajñāpāramitā



Mo he bo re bo luo mi duo (3x)

Invoking the Earth God

(The ritual master visualizes the Earth God suddenly emerging from the earth and accepting the blessing of the master.

After the master makes his offerings, the Earth God disappears.

The master then visualizes the wielding of the Vajra toward the direction of the fire altar to create there a Vajra foundation)

Inviting the Buddhas and the Bodhisattvas

I implore you, Honored Ones,
On account of your vows
To descend to this ritual space.
Please have compassion on us
And accept these meager offerings.

Arousing the Bodhi Mind

The root of sentient beings' transmigration in *samsāra* is grasping to self.

Complete emancipation depends on comprehending *śūnyatā*.

The *dharmadhātus* are originally created by the mind.

All are auspicious and wondrous paths to awakening.

I vow to deliver innumerable sentient beings;

I vow to cut off limitless vexations;

I vow to master limitless approaches to Dharma;

I vow to attain buddhahood.

Homage to the Three Jewels*(Do one prostration at the end of each paragraph)*

I take refuge in the Buddha,
and I wish all sentient beings,
will awaken to the great Path,
and make the supreme resolution.

I take refuge in the Dharma,
and I wish all sentient beings,
will penetrate the sūtras,
their wisdom as deep as the ocean.

I take refuge in the Sangha,
and I wish all sentient beings,
will be brought together
in great harmony,
without any obstructions at all.

(Precentor recites the first word)

Zi gui yi fo *dang yuan zhong sheng*
Ti jie da dao *fa wu shang xin (bow)*

Zi gui yi fa *dang yuan zhong sheng*
Shen ru jing zang *zhi hui ru hai (bow)*

Zi gui yi seng *dang yuan zhong sheng*
Tong li da zhong *yi qie wu ai (bow)*

Repentance and Vows

I take refuge in the buddhas, the arhats, the holy
Sangha, and bodhisattvas in world-systems
throughout the ten directions.

From the past through to this life, mental
afflictions have obscured my mind. I have long
been drifting through the realms of life and death.

Obscured by greed, hatred, and ignorance, I have
committed harmful acts, either toward the Buddha,
Dharma, and Sangha, or toward the arhats and
bodhisattvas, or toward parents and venerable ones
and sentient beings with and without virtue.

All harmful acts, either doing them myself,
abetting others, or rejoicing in seeing them done,
through actions of my body, speech, and mind—I
have extensively accumulated negative karma.

With palms joined and a sincere heart, I make
obeisance with head bowed before the buddhas
and bodhisattvas and repent in this manner. Just as
the transgressions that I have committed through
harmful actions are known to the buddhas, I repent
of them all.

In order to remove the sufferings of sentient beings,
with utmost sincerity, I generate bodhi-mind, take
refuge in the Three Jewels, and vow to realize
buddhahood.

(Prostrate)

(Reflect: Arousing thoughts of reverence and taking refuge in this manner, make obeisance with your head on the ground. Then again arouse sincere thoughts and, seeking from the supreme seed the fruit of the ambrosia of liberation, you should rejoice and generate the mind of awakening, and seek the fruit of buddhahood)

(Recite in unison)

I shall eliminate the countless sufferings of sentient beings throughout all world-systems and also rescue them from all evil destinies and liberate them from mental afflictions; they are variously pressed by all modes of sufferings, and so I arouse great compassion and generate the mind of awakening. For sentient beings who are in anguish, I shall become a refuge; for sentient beings without a leader, I shall become their leader; for sentient beings who have lost their way, I shall become their guide; for sentient beings who are afraid, I shall become [a source of] fearlessness; for sentient beings who are in anguish I shall make happy; and for sentient beings who are plagued by mental afflictions, I shall cure their mental afflictions. The merit produced by the sundry good acts that I am now performing, and by my generation of the excellent mind of awakening, I transfer to all sentient beings so that they may realize liberation. The merit produced through the gates of the six paramitas and other merits that I have produced I transfer to all sentient beings so that we may

together arrive at the supreme fruit of buddhahood.

The excellent acts of merit performed by me in the past, present, and future I transfer entirely to all sentient beings so that they may quickly accomplish the path of the buddhas and not engender indolence until they reach awakening. I generate the bodhi-mind, think with pity of sentient beings, and arouse thoughts of great compassion—should someone have sufferings, may I eliminate them!

Fire Offering

(To be done outdoors)

Recite in unison:

To Agni, the fire divinity:
 Illuminate the dark to become bright.
 Drive away all obscurations with this fire!
 Your kind smile sends away the sorrows.
 Please sit on this good abode and admire!

To buddhas and bodhisattvas:
 Empowered by virtue,
 Your wisdom fire eradicates all obstacles!
 I, now, implore you to help this homa!

(While making various offerings of flower, incense, food in this sequence, generate sincerity and recite mentally recite refuge verses. One may conclude with personal vows)

(Once the offering concludes, the master empowers some purified water cupped in his hand and proceeds to sprinkle it over the hearth in a circular motion, repeating this action three times. Upon the completion of the homa, the master once again calls upon Agni to receive the remaining offerings and then dismisses him as prescribed, and proceeds to supplicate him as per the rites of invocation)

Recite in unison:

Luminous, warm, and heartfelt.
 As these smokes ascend and spread,
 so are the grand Dharma activities.
 With the sword of wisdom,
 cut off grasping to notions of self.
 May blessings from the buddhas,
 bodhisattvas, and Agni
 extend throughout the *dharmadhātu*.

Vesak
Liturgy

Eulogy for Śākyamuni Buddha

As a bodhisattva, he descended from Tuṣita
 And entered the palace of King Śuddhodana.
 Queen Māyā gave birth to this
 golden baby from her right side,
 And the celestial melody pervaded
 throughout the heavens.
 He looked around and took seven steps,
 And pointed to heaven and earth and exclaimed,
 “I alone am the World Honored One.”
 The nine dragons showered the
 Blessed One with ambrosia,
 And the myriad forms all awaken to the truth.
 By directly pointing to the
 wondrous mind of awakening,
 The teachings flourish in all directions.
Mokṣa alone is the eternal truth.
 The wondrous fragrance and
 congregation of lotuses are formed.
 The Dharma may take many forms,
 But they all lead to the path
 of the sublime and quiescence.
 Blessed is Śākyamuni Buddha,
 the most honored one—our revered original teacher!

The Verse of Bathing the Buddha

We now bathe the Tathāgata.
 With pure wisdom,
 he is adorned with merit and virtue.
 May sentient being of the five turbidities
 be free from defilements.
 May they all actualize
 the Tathāgata’s pure *dharmakāya*.

Homage to Śākyamuni Buddha*(Recite in unison multiple times)*

Namo Śākyamuni Buddha

Great Compassionate Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara
(Precentor intones first two words)

Na mo da bei guan shi yin pu sa

Prajñāpāramitā Heart Sūtra



When the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara
was coursing in the deep *prajñāpāramitā*,
he perceived that all five *skandhas* are empty,
thereby transcending all sufferings.

Śāriputra, form is not other than emptiness
and emptiness not other than form.

Form is precisely emptiness
and emptiness precisely form.

So also are sensation, perception, volition, and
consciousness.

Śāriputra, this voidness of all dharmas
is not born, not destroyed,
not impure, not pure, does not increase or decrease.

In voidness there is no form,
and no sensation, perception,
volition or consciousness;
no eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, mind;
no sight, sound, smell, taste, touch, thought;
there is no realm of the eye,
all the way up to no realm of mental cognition.

There is no ignorance

and there is no ending of ignorance,
through to no aging and death
and no ending of aging and death.
There is no suffering, no cause of suffering,
no cessation of suffering, and no path.

There is no wisdom or any attainment.
With nothing to attain,
bodhisattvas relying on *prajñāpāramitā*
have no obstructions in their minds.
Having no obstructions, there is no fear
and departing far from confusion and imagining,
they reach ultimate *nirvāṇa*.

All past, present and future buddhas,
relying on *prajñāpāramitā*,
attain *anuttarā samyak sambodhi*.
Therefore, know that *prajñāpāramitā* is the great
mantra of power,
the great mantra of wisdom, the supreme mantra,
the unequaled mantra,
which is able to remove all sufferings.
It is real and not false.

Therefore, recite the mantra of *prajñāpāramitā*:
Gate gate pāragate pārasaṃgate bodhi svāhā!

Mahā Prajñāpāramitā



Mo he bo re bo luo mi duo (3x)

Four Great Vows

I vow to deliver innumerable sentient beings.
 I vow to cut off endless vexations.
 I vow to master limitless approaches to Dharma.
 I vow to attain supreme buddhahood.

Zhong sheng wu bian shi yuan du
Fan nao wu jin shi yuan duan
Fa men wu liang shi yuan xue
Fo dao wu shang shi yuan cheng

The Three Refuges

I take refuge in the Buddha,
 and I wish all sentient beings,
 will awaken to the great Path,
 and make the supreme resolution.

I take refuge in the Dharma,
 and I wish all sentient beings,
 will penetrate the sūtras,
 their wisdom as deep as the ocean.

I take refuge in the Sangha,
 and I wish all sentient beings,
 will be brought together
 in great harmony,
 without any obstructions at all.

(Precentor recites the first word)

Zi gui yi fo *dang yuan zhong sheng*
Ti jie da dao *fa wu shang xin (bow)*

Zi gui yi fa *dang yuan zhong sheng*
Shen ru jing zang *zhi hui ru hai (bow)*

Zi gui yi seng *dang yuan zhong sheng*
Tong li da zhong *yi qie wu ai (bow)*

Transfer of Merit

We pray:
 For the flourishing of buddhadharma,
 for peace in the world,
 for the joy and contentment of all people,
 for the freedom and ease of body and mind.
 May sentient beings depart from suffering.
 May the vows of the donors be fulfilled.

*Funerary
Liturgy*

Great Compassionate Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara
(Precentor intones first two words)

Na mo da bei guan shi yin pu sa

Prajñāpāramitā Heart Sūtra



When the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara
was coursing in the deep *prajñāpāramitā*,
he perceived that all five *skandhas* are empty,
thereby transcending all sufferings.

Śāriputra, form is not other than emptiness
and emptiness not other than form.

Form is precisely emptiness
and emptiness precisely form.

So also are sensation, perception, volition, and
consciousness.

Śāriputra, this voidness of all dharmas
is not born, not destroyed,
not impure, not pure, does not increase or decrease.

In voidness there is no form,
and no sensation, perception,
volition or consciousness;
no eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, mind;
no sight, sound, smell, taste, touch, thought;
there is no realm of the eye,
all the way up to no realm of mental cognition.

There is no ignorance

and there is no ending of ignorance,
through to no aging and death
and no ending of aging and death.
There is no suffering, no cause of suffering,
no cessation of suffering, and no path.

There is no wisdom or any attainment.
With nothing to attain,
bodhisattvas relying on *prajñāpāramitā*
have no obstructions in their minds.
Having no obstructions, there is no fear
and departing far from confusion and imagining,
they reach ultimate *nirvāṇa*.

All past, present and future buddhas,
relying on *prajñāpāramitā*,
attain *anuttarā samyak sambodhi*.
Therefore, know that *prajñāpāramitā* is the great
mantra of power,
the great mantra of wisdom, the supreme mantra,
the unequaled mantra,
which is able to remove all sufferings.
It is real and not false.

Therefore, recite the mantra of *prajñāpāramitā*:
Gate gate pāragate pārasaṃgate bodhi svāhā!

Mahā Prajñāpāramitā



Mo he bo re bo luo mi duo (3x)

The Three Refuges

I take refuge in the Buddha,
and I wish all sentient beings,
will awaken to the great Path,
and make the supreme resolution.

I take refuge in the Dharma,
and I wish all sentient beings,
will penetrate the sūtras,
their wisdom as deep as the ocean.

I take refuge in the Sangha,
and I wish all sentient beings,
will be brought together
in great harmony,
without any obstructions at all.

(Precentor recites the first word)

Zi gui yi fo dang yuan zhong sheng
Ti jie da dao fa wu shang xin (bow)

Zi gui yi fa dang yuan zhong sheng
Shen ru jing zang zhi hui ru hai (bow)

Zi gui yi seng dang yuan zhong sheng
Tong li da zhong yi qie wu ai (bow)

Transfer of Merit

We pray:
For the flourishing of buddhadharma,
for peace in the world,
for the joy and contentment of all people,
for the freedom and ease of body and mind.
May sentient beings depart from suffering.
May the vows of the donors be fulfilled.

*Gratitude
to the
Lineage*

Gratitude Service

(Ring the bell to first do a bow down and up and then recite; ring the bell for prostration after reciting each line)

We are grateful to the Buddhas
of the past, present, and future in the ten directions.
We are grateful to the Dharma
of the past, present, and future in the ten directions.
We are grateful to the Sangha
of the past, present, and future in the ten directions.

We are grateful to Śākyamuni Buddha,
our original teacher.
We are grateful to Śāriputra,
the honored one, noted to exhibit great wisdom.
We are grateful to Mahākāśyapa,
the honored one, who practiced great asceticism.
We are grateful to Upāli,
the honored one, noted to be an expert in precepts.
We are grateful to Ānanda, the honored one,
who remembered all the Buddha's words
and transmitted them to others
after the Buddha's passing.

We are grateful to Bodhidharma
who brought Buddhism to China from India
and became the first lineage master of Chan.
We are grateful to Huineng,
the sixth lineage master of Chan.

We are grateful to all the subsequent lineage masters
of China, Vietnam, Korea, Japan, and the West.

We are grateful to those who attended this service.
We are grateful to the teacher of this service.
We are grateful to all sentient beings.

(Now take this time to think of someone or a group of people to whom you wish to transfer the merit of your practice today. It might be someone or some group in a difficult condition or situation, one who may be ill and in need of help. Reflect on this a minute or so and offer them your good wishes and the benefits of your practice today as you prostrate to the sound of the bell. The leader does one more bow to end and then turns to face the participants, thanking them and raising the bell, bowing in respect).

*Glossary
of
Terms*

Agni: The Indic fire deity, a key element in various rituals and ceremonies. Seen as a purifier and a mediator between humans and the divine.

Anuttarā samyak sambodhi: Sanskrit term referring to “supreme, perfect enlightenment.” Represents the highest level of awakening and wisdom.

Arhat: a person who has achieved enlightenment and is considered free from the cycle of birth and death.

Avalokiteśvara: Guanyin in Chinese, Kannon in Japanese. Bodhisattva of compassion.

Bodhi: “Awakening” or “enlightenment.” Signifies the realization achieved by the Buddha.

Bodhisattva: An enlightened being who postpones their own liberation to help all sentient beings attain enlightenment. They embody compassion and wisdom.

Buddha: Refers to one who has achieved awakening. Also refers to the historical Sakyamuni Buddha.

Buddhadharma: The teachings of the historical Buddha, which guides followers on the path to liberation from suffering.

Dantian: Energy centers in the body, often associated with traditional Chinese medicine and martial arts. These are considered reservoirs of vital energy.

Dharma: Refers to the teachings of the Buddha, the truth of existence, and the phenomena that appear within existence.

Dharmakaya: The ultimate nature of reality, the absolute truth, and the essence of the Buddha.

Dharma Wheel: Also known as the Dharmachakra, a symbol

representing the teachings of the Buddha. It has eight or twelve spokes, symbolizing various aspects of the teachings.

Gate gate pāragate pārasaṃgate bodhi svāhā: A mantra from the Heart Sūtra, expresses the journey towards ultimate liberation.

Huineng: The sixth lineage master of Chan Buddhism, is renowned for his role in spreading and shaping Chan Buddhism in China.

Mahākāśyapa: Disciple of the historical Buddha, received the transmission which started the Chan/Zen lineage.

Mahasattva: An advanced or great being on the path to buddhahood, embodying compassion and wisdom, who seeks to help all sentient beings achieve enlightenment.

Mañjuśrī: Bodhisattva associated with wisdom, revered as the embodiment of knowledge and insight.

Maitreya: A future Buddha who is expected to appear in the future to guide humanity toward enlightenment.

Maya: Refers to the illusory nature of the material world and the delusions that bind humans to the cycle of birth and death.

Mokṣa: Also spelled “Moksha,” refers to the liberation from the cycle of birth and death which is the ultimate goal in many Indian religious traditions.

Nirvāṇa: Meaning “cessation,” refers to the state of ultimate liberation from suffering, the three poisons of greed, hatred, and ignorance, as well as the cycle of birth and death in general.

Prajñāpāramitā: Transcendent wisdom of selflessness.

Saṃsāra: The cycle of birth, death, and rebirth from which Buddhists seek to escape.

Śāriputra: One of the principal disciples of the historical Buddha, known for his wisdom and deep understanding of the teachings.

Sangha: Refers to the community of Buddhist monks, nuns, and laypeople who follow the Buddha's teachings. Plays a central role in the practice and preservation of the teachings.

Skandha: Refers to the five aggregates or heaps that make up an individual's existence, including form, sensation, perception, mental formations, and consciousness.

Śūnyatā: Often translated as "emptiness," a key concept referring to the lack of inherent existence in all phenomena.

Śuddhodana: The father of the historical Buddha. He was a king of the Shakya clan.

Sūtra: A sacred text containing the teachings of the historical Buddha.

Tathāgata: Name used by the historical Buddha to refer to himself and other enlightened beings, meaning "one who has thus come and thus gone."

Tuṣita: A heavenly realm in Buddhist cosmology where future buddhas, including Maitreya, are believed to reside before their earthly appearance.

Upāli: One of the principal disciples of the historical Buddha, well-known for his expertise in the monastic rules and regulations.

Vinaya: The code of conduct and monastic rules that govern the behavior of Buddhist monks and nuns.

Vajra: Often referred to as the "thunderbolt" or "diamond." A symbolic weapon representing indestructibility and spiritual power.

