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# Guide to the Service & Chants

Welcome to Dinh Quang Buddhist Temple!

Please feel welcome to participate in the ways that best fit your needs:

- You can choose to sit on a cushion on the floor, a chair, or a pew.
- Physical movements may include standing and bowing. Everyone participates at the level of their individual comfort and ability, from full prostrations to a simple nod.
- A service usually includes chanting and meditation, followed by a Dharma teaching, discussion, or activity.
- Most of our chants use one to three tones. When possible, a syllable with *a raised pitch is italicized*, and a lowered pitch is underlined.

Here are some terms you will hear during the service:

**Bodhisattva:** An enlightened being who postpones Buddhahood out of compassion for other beings to assist them on their paths to enlightenment.

**Buddha:** The historical Shakyamuni Gautama Buddha.

**Dharma:** Usually, the teachings of the Buddha and our practice of those teachings. When not capitalized, dharma refers to conditioned phenomena. “Eternal Dharma” refers to ultimate reality.

**Metta:** Often translated as “loving-kindness.” It is the quality of goodwill toward one’s self and others, leading to skillful living and insight. It is one of the four “Divine Abodes” in the Buddha’s teaching.

**Namo:** Variously translated as to offer honor, respect, or homage.

**Sangha:** Traditionally, the community of Buddhist monastics. Broadly, the entire community of practice is included. The Noble Sangha includes all practitioners who have attained any of the four stages of awakening.

**Sutra:** A teaching of the Buddha. The word usually refers to a thread that holds something together and may refer to the early tradition of writing Buddhist scriptures on palm leaves and sewing them together with thread.

*Thank you for joining us, as we cultivate this practice  
that leads to the end of every kind of suffering!*

# MORNING SERVICE

[We form two lines facing each other. The large bell is invited three times. When the small bell is then invited, we bow to each other. We then turn to face the Buddha image. *Please enjoy waiting together for the bell to finish ringing throughout the service.*]

## Offering Incense

[All, spoken]

In gratitude, we offer this incense to all Buddhas  
and Bodhisattvas throughout space and time.  
May it be fragrant as Earth herself, reflecting our  
careful efforts, our wholehearted awareness,  
and the fruit of understanding, slowly ripening.

[Bell]

May we, and all beings,  
be companions of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.  
May we awaken from forgetfulness  
and realize our true home.

[Bell]

For the long-term fortune, welfare, and happiness  
of such benefactors as our mothers,  
fathers, others, and for ourselves,  
We honor the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha  
with these offerings.

[Bell]

## **General Merit Intentions**

[All, sung, 3 times]

May all beings have happiness;  
May they be free from suffering;  
May they find the joy that has never known suffering;  
May they be free from attachment, aversion, and hatred.

[Bell]

## **Special Merit Intentions**

[Leader]

### ***Mindfulness of the Deceased***

Friends, it is time to bring to mind [name(s) of deceased] and to send the energy of loving kindness and compassion to them. Let us enjoy our breathing for a moment, allowing them to be present with us now.

[Bell]

### ***Mindfulness of the Sick and Suffering***

Friends, it is time to bring our loved ones to mind: those to whom we wish to send the healing energy of love and compassion. Let us enjoy our breathing for a moment, offering our spiritual support and peace to [name(s)].

[Bell]

## Paying Homage

[We bow when the small bell is invited. For those making a full prostration, we stand again when the small bell is awakened.]

[Leader]

I bow to the Buddha.

[All]

The one who shows me the way in life. Namō Buddhaya<sup>1</sup>.

[Bell]

[Leader]

I bow to the Dharma.

[All]

The way of understanding and love. Namō Dharmaya.

[Bell]

[Leader]

I bow to the Sangha.

[All]

The community that lives in harmony and awareness.

Namō Sanghaya.

[Bell]

[Be seated.]

## Mantra

Namō tassa bhagavato arahato samma sambuddhassa<sup>2</sup>

[14 times]

[Bell]

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<sup>1</sup> I pay homage to the Buddha/Dharma/Sangha.

<sup>2</sup> Homage to the Blessed, Noble, and Perfectly Enlightened One.

## Sutra Opening Verse

[Leader]

The Dharma is deep and *lovely*.

We now have a chance to see, study, and to practice it.

*We vow to realize its true meaning.*

[Bell]

[The leader announces the sutra(s) we will chant.]

# Karaniya Metta Sutra

(The Buddha's Words on Loving Kindness)<sup>3</sup>

[Leader]

Now let us chant the Buddha's words on loving-kindness.

[All]

This is what should be done  
by one who is *skilled* in goodness,  
and who knows the path of peace:

Let them be able and *upright*,  
straightforward and *gentle* in speech,  
Humble and not conceited, contented, and *easily* satisfied,  
unburdened with duties, and frugal *in* their ways.  
Peaceful and calm, and wise and *skillful*,  
not proud or *demanding* in nature.  
Let them not do the *slightest* thing  
that the wise would *later* reprove.

[Bell]

Wishing: In gladness and in *safety*,  
May all beings *be* at ease.  
Whatever living beings there may be;  
Whether they are *weak* or strong, omitting none,  
The great or the mighty, medium, *short*, or small,  
The seen and the unseen, those living near and *far* away,  
Those born and *to* be born —  
May all beings *be* at ease!

[Bell]

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<sup>3</sup> Translated from the Pali by The Amaravati Sangha  
(<https://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/kn/snp/snp.1.08.amar.html> )



Let none deceive another,  
or despise any being in any state.  
Let none, through anger or ill-will,  
wish *harm* upon another.  
Even as a mother protects with her life  
her child, her *only* child,  
So, with a *boundless* heart,  
should one cherish all *living* beings.  
Radiating kindness over the entire world:  
Spreading upwards to the *skies*,  
and downwards to *the* depths;  
Outwards and unbounded,  
freed from *hatred* and ill-will.

[Bell]

Whether standing or walking,  
seated or lying down, free from drowsiness,  
one should sustain this recollection.

This is said to be the sublime abiding.  
By not holding to fixed views,  
the pure-hearted one,  
having clarity of vision,  
being freed from all *sense* desires,  
Is not *born again into* this world.

[Bell]

## Mangala Sutra (The Discourse on Happiness)<sup>4</sup>

[Leader:]

“Many gods and *humans* are eager to know what are the greatest *blessings* which bring about a peaceful and *happy* life.” This is the Buddha’s answer:

[All:]

“Not to be associated with the foolish ones,  
to live in the company of wise people,  
honoring those who are worth honoring —  
this is the *greatest* happiness.”

“To live in a good environment,  
to have planted good seeds,  
and to realize that you are on the right path —  
this is the *greatest* happiness.”

“To have a chance to learn and grow,  
to be skillful in your profession or craft,  
practicing the precepts and loving speech —  
this is the *greatest* happiness.”

“To be able to serve and support your *parents*,  
to cherish your own family,  
to have a vocation that *brings* you joy —  
this is the *greatest* happiness.”

“To live honestly, generous in *giving*,  
to offer support to *relatives* and friends,

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<sup>4</sup> Translated by Thich Nhat Hanh,  
<https://plumvillage.org/library/sutras/discourse-on-happiness/>

living a life of *blameless* conduct —  
this is the *greatest* happiness.

“To avoid unwholesome *actions*,  
to refrain from intoxicants,  
and to be diligent in *doing good* things —  
this is the *greatest* happiness.

“To be humble and polite in *manner*,  
to be grateful and content with a simple life,  
not missing the occasion to *learn* the Dharma —  
this is the *greatest* happiness.

“To persevere and be *open* to change,  
to have regular contact with *monastics*,  
and to fully participate in Dharma *discussions* —  
this is the *greatest* happiness.

“To live diligently and attentively,  
to perceive the Noble Truths,  
and to realize Nirvana —  
this is the *greatest* happiness.

“To live in the world  
with your heart *undisturbed* by the world,  
with all sorrows ended, *dwelling in* peace —  
this is the *greatest* happiness.

“For they who accomplish this,  
unvanquished wherever they go,  
always they are *safe* and happy —  
happiness lives *within* oneself.”

[Bell]

# Prajnaparamita Sutra

(The Heart of Perfect Understanding)<sup>5</sup>

[Leader]

Maha Prajna Paramita Hridaya Sutra

[All]

Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva<sup>6</sup>, when practicing deeply  
the Prajna Paramita, perceived that all five skandhas<sup>7</sup>  
are empty and is saved from all suffering and distress.

Shariputra<sup>8</sup>, form does not differ from emptiness<sup>9</sup>;  
Emptiness does not differ from form.

That which is form is emptiness,  
that which is emptiness is form.

The same is true of feelings, perceptions,  
impulses, consciousness.

Shariputra, all dharmas are marked with emptiness.  
They do not appear or disappear, are not tainted or pure,  
do not increase or decrease.

Therefore, in emptiness: no form,  
no feelings, perceptions, impulses, consciousness.  
No eyes, no ears, no nose, no tongue, no body, no mind;

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<sup>5</sup> Prajñāpāramitā combines the Sanskrit words prajñā (wisdom) and pāramitā (perfection) and is a central concept of Mahāyāna Buddhism and the Bodhisattva path. As demonstrated in this sutra, it is closely related to teachings on emptiness, interbeing, and non-arising.

<sup>6</sup> The Bodhisattva of Compassion, also known as Chenrezig (Tibet), Guanshiyin (China), Kanon (Japan), Gwanseum (Korea), and Quán Thế Âm (Vietnam).

<sup>7</sup> These five aggregates (form, feeling, perception, mental formations, and consciousness) make up a being's personality. Because they are empty of independent existence, clinging to them leads to suffering.

<sup>8</sup> One of Shakyamuni Buddha's closest disciples, well-known for his wisdom and teaching abilities.

<sup>9</sup> "All phenomena are empty of a permanent, separate self." - Thich Nhat Hanh

No color, no sound, no smell, no taste, no touch;  
No object of mind, no realm of eyes and so forth,  
Until no realm of mind consciousness.  
No ignorance and also no extinction of it, and so forth,  
until no old age and death  
and also no extinction of them.

No suffering, no origination, no stopping, no path,  
no cognition, also no attainment  
with nothing to attain.

The Bodhisattva depends on Prajna Paramita  
And the mind is no hindrance.

Without any hindrance no fears exist.  
Far apart from every perverted view,<sup>10</sup>  
one dwells in Nirvana.<sup>11</sup>

In the three times, all Buddhas depend on Prajna Paramita  
and attain Anuttara Samyak Sambodhi.<sup>12</sup>

Therefore, know that Prajna Paramita  
is the great transcendent mantra,  
is the great bright mantra, is the utmost mantra,  
is the supreme mantra,  
Which is able to relieve all suffering and is true, not false.  
So proclaim the Prajna Paramita mantra,  
Proclaim the mantra which says:

Ga-te ga-te para-ga-te, Parasamga-te bodhi svaha<sup>13</sup>

[3 times] [Bell]

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<sup>10</sup> "The more we can let go of wrong perceptions, the more freedom we have." - Thich Nhat Hanh

<sup>11</sup> Nirvana is the end of suffering, with the extinction of the three poisons (greed, hatred, and delusion).

<sup>12</sup> "Supreme perfect enlightenment"

<sup>13</sup> "Gone, gone, gone beyond, gone utterly beyond, Enlightenment hail!"

## Pre-Meditation Mantra

Om Ma Ni Pad Me Hum<sup>14</sup>

[14 times] [Bell]

## Sitting Meditation

To begin:

- Partially close your eyes and relax your body.
- Sit so that you are stable and alert, neither rigid nor slouched. Pay attention to the feeling of being grounded and centered in your body.
- Set an intention, such as “May I be well and free from suffering.”
- Bring a gentle but persistent attention to the natural rhythm and sensation of your breath.
- If your mind wanders, try silently repeating a mantra, a favorite prayer or poem, or a similar phrase as you return to the breath. For example, you may recite, “Present Moment” on the in-breath and “Wonderful Moment” on the out-breath.
- Continue like this as you practice dwelling deeply in the present moment.

[Bell]

[After meditating, take a moment to wake up your body.]

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<sup>14</sup> Om and Hum are common mystical mantras, without conceptual meaning. Mani means jewel; Padme means lotus. The mantra thus unites both wisdom (lotus) and compassion (jewel). Some scholars also translate ManiPadma as a proper name, Jewel-Lotus One, an invocation of Avalokitesvara.

## The Three Refuges<sup>15</sup>

[Leader]

To the Buddha

[All]

I return and rely, vowing that all living beings  
profoundly understand the Great Way  
and bring forth the bodhi mind.<sup>16</sup>

Buddham saranam gacchami.

[Bell]

[Leader]

To the Dharma

[All]

I return and rely, vowing that all living beings  
deeply enter the Sutra Treasures  
and have wisdom like the sea.

Dharmam saranam gacchami.

[Bell]

[Leader]

To the Sangha

[All]

I return and rely, vowing that all living beings  
form together a great assembly,  
in harmony without obstructions.

Sangham saranam gacchami.

[Bell]

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<sup>15</sup> The three refuges are the Buddha, Dharma (the Buddha's teachings), and Sangha (narrowly, the monastic community and broadly, the entire community of practice). "Saranam gacchami" means "I take refuge in."

<sup>16</sup> In Mahayana Buddhism, bodhicitta ("enlightenment-mind" or "the thought of awakening"), is the mind (citta) that is aimed at awakening (bodhi), with wisdom and compassion for the benefit of all sentient beings.

## Sharing the Merit<sup>17</sup>

[All, sung, 3 times]

May all beings be well.  
May all beings be happy.  
May all beings be peaceful.

[Bell]

## Closing Mantra

Namo A Di Da Phat<sup>18</sup>

[15 times] [2 Bells] [Bow]

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<sup>17</sup> By sharing merit, we cultivate gratitude for the opportunity to practice. It is an acknowledgement that we receive these teachings and practices as a gift and share them with others. Similarly, we understand that our wellbeing is bound up together and that we practice not just for ourselves, but for the benefit all beings.

<sup>18</sup> This is the Vietnamese translation of the homage to Amitābha Buddha, literally "Homage to Infinite Light." The "Di" syllable is often pronounced "yi" or "zi". The "Phat" syllable often closes with an "n" sound.



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# Evening Service

## Inviting the Bell

[We form two lines facing each other. The large bell is invited three times. When the small bell is then invited, we bow to each other. We then turn to face the Buddha image, bow, and sit down. *Please enjoy waiting together for the bell to finish ringing throughout the service.*]

## Evoking the Bodhisattvas<sup>19</sup>

[Leader: *We evoke your name, Avalokiteshvara<sup>20</sup>.*]

*All:*

*We aspire to learn your way of listening  
in order to help relieve the suffering in the world.*

*You know how to listen in order to understand.*

*We evoke your name in order to practice listening  
with all our attention and open-heartedness.*

*We will sit and listen without any prejudice.*

*We will sit and listen without judging or reacting.*

*We will sit and listen in order to understand.*

*We will sit and listen so attentively  
that we will be able to hear  
what the other person is saying  
and also what has been left unsaid.*

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<sup>19</sup> In this section, italicized syllables indicate three rising tones at the beginning of a line and three falling tones at the end of a line.

<sup>20</sup> The Bodhisattva of Compassion, Regarder of Sounds, also known as Chenrezig (Tibet), Guanshiyin (China), Kanon (Japan), Gwanseum (Korea), and Quán Thế Âm (Vietnam).

*We know that just by listening deeply  
we already alleviate a great deal of pain  
and suffering in the other person.*

[Bell] [Bow]

[Leader: *We evoke your name, Manjushri<sup>21</sup>.*]

*All:*

*We aspire to learn your way,  
which is to be still and to look deeply  
into the heart of things and into the hearts of people.*

*We will look with all our attention and open-heartedness.  
We will look with unprejudiced eyes.  
We will look without judging or reacting.*

*We will look deeply so that we will be able  
to see and understand the roots of suffering,  
through the impermanent and selfless nature of all that is.*

*We will practice your way of using  
the sword of understanding  
to cut through the bonds of suffering,  
thus freeing ourselves and other species.*

[Bell] [Bow]

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<sup>21</sup> The Bodhisattva associated with Wisdom; his name means "Gentle Glory."

[Leader: *We evoke your name, Samantabhadra*<sup>22</sup>.]

*All:*

*We aspire to practice your vow to act  
with the eyes and heart of compassion,  
to bring joy to one person in the morning  
and to ease the pain of one person in the afternoon.*

*We know that the happiness of others is our own happiness,  
and we aspire to practice joy on the path of service.*

*We know that every word, every look, every action,  
and every smile can bring happiness to others.*

*We know that if we practice wholeheartedly,  
we ourselves may become  
an inexhaustible source of peace and joy  
for our loved ones and for all species.      [Bell] [Bow]*

[Leader: *We evoke your name Ksitigarbha*<sup>23</sup>.]

*All:*

*We aspire to learn your way so as to be present  
where there is darkness, suffering,  
oppression and despair,  
so that we may bring light, hope, relief,  
and liberation to those places.*

*We are determined not to forget about or abandon  
those who are in desperate situations.*

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<sup>22</sup> The Bodhisattva known for his 10 Great Vows and associated with meditation and action. His name means “Universal Worthy.”

<sup>23</sup> The Bodhisattva who vowed to bring liberation to all hell realms. His name means “Earth Treasury” or “Earth Store”; he is called Jizo in Japan.

*We shall do our best to establish contact with them  
when they cannot find a way out of their suffering,  
those whose cries for help, justice, equality  
and human rights are not being heard.*

*We know that hell can be found in many places on Earth.  
We will do our best not to contribute  
to creating more hells on Earth,  
and to help transform the hells that already exist.*

*We shall practice in order to realize the qualities  
of perseverance and stability,  
so that, like the Earth, we can always be  
supportive and faithful to those in need. [Bell] [Bow]*

## **Evening Chant**

[Leader:

With posture upright and *stable*,

I sit at the foot of the Bodhi Tree.<sup>24</sup>

Body, speech and mind are one in stillness;

there is no more thought of right and wrong.

*Mind* and body dwell in perfect mindfulness.

I rediscover my original nature,

leaving the shore of illusion behind.

Noble *Sangha*, diligently bring

your mind into meditation.]

[Bell]

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<sup>24</sup> Because the Buddha attained enlightenment (bodhi) while sitting under this fig tree (Ficus religiosa), it became a symbol of Buddhist practice and awakening.

## **Pre-Meditation Mantra**

Namo Shakyamunaye Buddhaya<sup>25</sup> [14 times] [Bell]

## **Sitting Meditation**

To begin:

- Partially close your eyes and relax your body.
- Sit so you are stable and alert, neither rigid nor slouched. Pay attention for a feeling of being grounded and centered in your body.
- Set an intention, such as “May I be well and free from suffering.”
- Bring a gentle but persistent attention to the natural rhythm and sensation of your breath.
- If your mind wanders, try silently repeating a mantra, a favorite prayer or poem, or a similar phrase as you return to the breath. For example, you may recite, “Present Moment” on the in-breath and “Wonderful Moment” on the out-breath.
- Continue like this as you practice dwelling deeply in the present moment.

[Bell]

## **Mantra to Avalokiteshvara**

Namo Avalokiteshvaraya<sup>26</sup> [14 times] [Bell]

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<sup>25</sup> Homage to Shakyamuni Buddha (the historical Buddha).

<sup>26</sup> Homage to Avalokiteshvara, the Bodhisattva of compassion.

## **Recitation of the Five Mindfulness Trainings**

*We typically recite these Trainings during our Day of Mindfulness.*

[Leader: It is now time to recite the Five Mindfulness Trainings. Sangha family, please listen. The Five Mindfulness Trainings are the basis for a happy life. They have the capacity to protect life and to make it beautiful and worth living. They are also the door that opens to enlightenment and liberation. Please listen to each mindfulness training and answer “yes” silently every time you see that you have made an effort to study, practice and observe the mindfulness training being read.]

### **The First Mindfulness Training**

Aware of the suffering caused by the destruction of life, I am committed to cultivating compassion and learning ways to protect the lives of people, animals, plants, and minerals. I am determined not to kill, not to let others kill, and not to support any act of killing in the world, in my thinking, and in my way of life.

[Venerable: This is the first of the Five Mindfulness Trainings. Have you made an effort to study and practice it during the past month?]

[Bell]

## **The Second Mindfulness Training**

Aware of suffering caused by exploitation, social injustice, stealing and oppression, I am committed to cultivating loving kindness and learning ways to work for the well-being of people, animals, plants, and minerals. I will practice generosity by sharing my time, energy, and material resources with those who are in real need. I am determined not to steal and not to possess anything that should belong to others. I will respect the property of others, but I will prevent others from profiting from human suffering or the suffering of other species on Earth.

[Venerable: This is the second of the Five Mindfulness Trainings. Have you made an effort to study and practice it during the past month?]

[Bell]

## **The Third Mindfulness Training**

Aware of the suffering caused by sexual misconduct, I am committed to cultivating responsibility and learning ways to protect the safety and integrity of individuals, couples, families, and society. I am determined not to engage in sexual relations without love and a long-term commitment. To preserve the happiness of myself and others, I am determined to respect my commitments and the commitments of others. I will do everything in my power to protect children from sexual abuse and to prevent couples and families from being broken by sexual misconduct.



[Venerable: This is the third of the Five Mindfulness Trainings. Have you made an effort to study and practice it during the past month?]

[Bell]

### **The Fourth Mindfulness Training**

Aware of the suffering caused by unmindful speech and the inability to listen to others, I am committed to cultivating loving speech and deep listening in order to bring joy and happiness to others and relieve others of their suffering. Knowing that words can create happiness or suffering, I am determined to speak truthfully, with words that inspire self-confidence, joy, and hope. I will not spread news that I do not know to be certain and will not criticize or condemn things of which I am not sure. I will refrain from uttering words that can cause division or discord, or that can cause the family or the community to break. I am determined to make all efforts to reconcile and resolve all conflicts, however small.

[Venerable: This is the fourth of the Five Mindfulness Trainings. Have you made an effort to study and practice it during the past month?]

[Bell]

## **The Fifth Mindfulness Training**

Aware of the suffering caused by unmindful consumption, I am committed to cultivating good health, both physical and mental, for myself, my family, and my society by practicing mindful eating, drinking, and consuming. I will ingest only items that preserve peace, well-being, and joy in my body, in my consciousness and in the collective body and consciousness of my family and society. I am determined not to use alcohol or any other intoxicant or to ingest foods or other items that contain toxins, such as certain TV programs, magazines, books, films, and conversations. I am aware that to damage my body or my consciousness with these poisons is to betray my ancestors, my parents, my society, and future generations. I will work to transform violence, fear, anger, and confusion in myself and in society by practicing a diet for myself and for society. I understand that a proper diet is crucial for self-transformation and for the transformation of society.

[Venerable: This is the fifth of the Five Mindfulness Trainings. Have you made an effort to study and practice it during the past month?]

[Bell]

[Leader:

Sangha family, we have recited the Five Mindfulness Trainings, the foundation of happiness for the individual, the family and society. We should recite them regularly so that our study and practice of the Mindfulness Trainings can deepen day by day.]

[Bell]

## The Three Refuges<sup>27</sup>

I take refuge in the Buddha,  
the one who shows me the way in life.

I take refuge in the Dharma,  
the way of understanding and love.

I take refuge in the Sangha,  
the community that lives in harmony and awareness.

[Bell]

Dwelling in the refuge of Buddha,  
I clearly see the path of light and beauty in the world.

Dwelling in the refuge of Dharma, I learn  
to open many doors on the path of transformation.

Dwelling in the refuge of Sangha,  
shining light that supports me,  
keeping my practice free of obstruction.

[Bell]

Taking refuge in the Buddha in myself, I aspire to help  
all people recognize their own awakened nature,  
realizing the mind of love.

Taking refuge in the Dharma in myself, I aspire to help  
all people fully master the ways of practice  
and walk together on the path of liberation.

Taking refuge in the Sangha in myself, I aspire to help  
all people build fourfold communities, to embrace  
all beings and support their transformation.

[Bell]

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<sup>27</sup> The Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha are also called the Triple Gem. Taking refuge is an expression of our gratitude for the opportunity to learn and practice the Buddha's teachings in community, as well as our commitment to do so diligently.

## **Gatha<sup>28</sup> on Impermanence**

The day is now ending: our lives are shorter.

Now we look carefully: what have we done?

Noble Sangha, with all of our heart,  
let us be diligent.

Noble Sangha, with all of our heart,  
engaging in the practice,

Let us live deeply, free from our afflictions,  
aware of impermanence,

Let us live deeply, so that life does not drift away  
without meaning.

[Bell]

## **Sharing the Merit**

Reciting the teachings, practicing the way of awareness,  
gives rise to benefits without limit.

We vow to share the fruits with all beings.

We vow to offer tribute to parents, teachers,  
friends, and numerous beings  
who give guidance and support along the path.

## **Closing Mantra**

Namo A Di Da Phat<sup>29</sup>      [15 times]    [Two bells]    [Bow]

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<sup>28</sup> Gathas are short mindfulness poems we use to support our practice in daily life.

<sup>29</sup> The Vietnamese translation of the homage to Amitābha Buddha, literally "Homage to Infinite Light." The "Di" syllable is often pronounced "yi" or "zi". The "Phat" syllable often closes with a "n" sound.

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# Beginning Anew

*Adapted from the teachings and practices of Venerable Thich Nhat Hanh*

## Inviting the Bell

Body, speech and mind in perfect oneness,  
I send my heart along with the sound of the bell.  
May the hearers awaken from forgetfulness  
and transcend the path of anxiety and sorrow

[3 Bells]

## Introduction

The Buddha once said, 'If you would honor me, practice what I teach.' When we gather to begin anew, it is an opportunity: to honor and practice deep listening and loving speech; to reconnect with our values and aspirations; to remember our strengths and recognize our failings; and to remember the blessing of forgiving and letting go. We nourish our aspiration and determination to cultivate love and clear-seeing, compassionate presence for the sake of all beings.

[Bell]

## **Taking Refuge**

I bow to the Buddha:  
The one who shows me the way in life. Namo Buddhaya.  
[Bell]

I bow to the Dharma:  
The way of understanding and love. Namo Dharmaya.  
[Bell]

I bow to the Sangha:  
The community that lives in harmony and awareness.  
Namo Sanghaya. [Bell]

## **Watering Flowers**

We know that in our consciousness are innumerable wholesome seeds: seeds of love and understanding, and seeds of peace and joy. But if we neglect to water them, and allow irritation or sorrow to overwhelm them, how can they blossom and grow? Too often, our mind is occupied by the past, or worried about the future. Grasping at permanence, we trample real happiness. With deepening respect and strengthening love, we flower in the presence of Buddha-nature.

[Bell]

[Leader: Let us begin anew.]

[We begin by expressing gratitude and touching the wonders of life. If you have something to say aloud, please express your gratitude simply and directly, so everyone who wants to has a chance to speak, as we recognize, share, and receive joy.] [Bell]

## **Expressing Grief**

When we are hurt, we may store up afflictions and ignorance, which bring aversion and sorrow. There are days when the pain is so great, that we may wish ill on those we perceive as the source of the grief. Every day the suffering increases, making the rift greater. May we practice in a way that can heal ourselves and the community. May our speech reflect the insight we cultivate, so we can heal the grief and act with wisdom.

[Bell]

[Leader: Let us begin anew.]

[We pause together to get in touch with any grief, acknowledging hurts we have experienced or witnessed in the world. If you have something to say aloud, please express your pain simply and directly, so everyone who wants to has a chance to share.]

## **Sharing Anxiety and Fear**

If we chase after a distant happiness, life becomes but a shadow of the reality. If our mind is occupied by the past, or worrying about the future, we cannot let go of our anger or value the precious gifts of life. As month follows month, we can sink in sorrow. We vow to live an awakened life, cultivating a wise compassion that brings justice and peace.

[Bell]



[Leader: Let us begin anew.]

[When we touch our anxieties and fears, we acknowledge those places that need to feel the support of our mindful courage and love. If you have something to say aloud, please speak simply and directly, so everyone who wants to has a chance to share.]

### **Asking for Support**

We dwell in this present moment, to plant our heart's garden with good seeds. We vow to train ourselves in mindfulness and concentration, to make strong foundations of understanding and love. We will learn to engage with the injustices in the world, to care for others, and to bring the roots of joy to many places. We vow to practice diligently, cultivating the fruits of this path.

[Bell]

[Leader: Let us begin anew.]

[Asking for and offering support helps provide pathways to transform our suffering into compassion, understanding, and love in action. If you have something to say aloud, please speak simply and directly, so everyone who wants to has a chance to share.]

[Bell]

## Touching Our Aspirations

From this moment, we aspire to live in ways that support awakening in ourselves and all beings. May we learn the art of true happiness and cultivate compassionate awareness. When we stray into difficulty, may we quickly and courageously strengthen our awareness of the present. May we follow the way of mindfulness, looking and understanding deeply. With love and gratitude, may we continuously begin anew. [Bell]

[Leader: Let us begin anew.]

[Naming our aspirations, we touch the Buddha nature. If you have something to say aloud, please speak simply and directly, so everyone who wants to has a chance to share.] [Bell]

## Cultivating Metta for All Beings

May I abide in *well-being*, in freedom from affliction,  
in freedom from hostility, in freedom from ill-will,  
in freedom from anxiety.

And may I maintain well-being in myself.

May everyone abide in *well-being*,  
in freedom from hostility, in freedom from ill-will,  
in freedom from anxiety.

And may they maintain well-being in themselves.

May all beings be released from all suffering.

And may they not be *parted* from  
the good fortune they have attained.

When they act upon intention, all beings  
are the *owners* of their action and *inherit* its results.  
Their *future* is born from such action,  
*companion* to such action,  
and its results will *be* their home.  
All *actions* with intention, be they skillful or *harmful*,  
of such acts they will be *the* heirs.

[Bell]

### **Sharing the Merit<sup>30</sup>**

May all places be held sacred. May all beings be cherished.  
May all injustices of oppression and devaluation  
be fully righted, remedied and healed.  
May all who are captured by hatred  
be freed to the love that is our birthright.  
May all who are bound by fear  
discover the safety of understanding.  
May all who are weighed down by grief  
be given over to the joy of being.  
May all who are lost in delusion  
find a home on the path of wisdom.  
May all wounds to the Earth  
be lovingly restored to bountiful health.  
May all beings everywhere  
delight in whale-song, birdsong, and blue sky.  
And may all beings abide in peace and well-being,  
awaken, and be free.

[Bell] [Bell]

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<sup>30</sup> Offered by One Earth Sangha, <https://oneearthsangha.org/articles/dedication-of-merit/>.

# Amitabha Day<sup>31</sup>

Leader:

Now let us recite the vows of Amitabha<sup>32</sup>. [Bell]

Leader:

Dharmākara Bodhisattva adopted the pure practices that had led to the *establishment* of the excellent lands of buddhas.

When he had finished this task, he went to the *Buddha* and knelt down *at* his feet.

The Buddha said to him, “You should *proclaim* this. Know that now is the right time.

Encourage and delight the entire assembly.

Hearing this, other bodhisattvas will practice this Dharma and so fulfill their *innumerable* great vows.”

The bhikshu replied,

“Now we will fully *proclaim* my vows.”

All:

1. If, when we attain buddhahood,  
there should be in my land a hell,  
a realm of hungry ghosts, or a realm of animals,  
may we not attain perfect enlightenment.

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<sup>31</sup> Text from *The Three Pure Land Sutras* (BDK English Tripiṭaka Series), translated from the Chinese by Hisao Inagaki (with Harold Stewart), revised 2d edition:

[https://www.bdk.or.jp/document/dgtl-dl/dBET\\_ThreePureLandSutras\\_2003.pdf](https://www.bdk.or.jp/document/dgtl-dl/dBET_ThreePureLandSutras_2003.pdf)

<sup>32</sup> In Pure Land Buddhism, Amitabha is the foremost Buddha. Before enlightenment, he was a king who renounced his kingdom and became a Bodhisattva named Dharmakara (Treasury of Dharma). Under the teachings of Lokeshvaraja Buddha, Dharmakara made 48 great vows for the awakening of all beings. Upon fulfillment of the vows, he attained enlightenment and established a Pure Land.

12. If, when we attain buddhahood,  
my light should be limited,  
may we not attain perfect enlightenment.
18. If, when we attain buddhahood,  
sentient beings who sincerely and joyfully entrust  
themselves to me, desire to be born in my land,  
and think of me *even* ten times  
should not be born there,  
may we not attain perfect enlightenment.
20. If, when we attain buddhahood,  
sentient beings who, having *heard* my Name,  
concentrate their thoughts on my land, plant roots  
of *virtue*, and sincerely transfer their merits toward  
my land with a desire to *be* born there  
should not eventually fulfill their aspiration,  
may we not attain perfect enlightenment.
25. If, when we attain buddhahood,  
bodhisattvas in my land should not be *able*  
to expound the Dharma with all-knowing *wisdom*,  
may we not attain perfect enlightenment.
29. If, when we attain buddhahood,  
bodhisattvas in my land should not acquire  
eloquence and *wisdom* in upholding sutras  
and reciting and expounding them,  
may we not attain perfect enlightenment.

30. If, when we attain buddhahood,  
the wisdom and eloquence of bodhisattvas  
in my land should be limited,  
may we not attain perfect enlightenment.
31. If, when we attain buddhahood,  
my land should not be resplendent,  
revealing in its light all the immeasurable,  
innumerable, and inconceivable buddha lands  
like images reflected in a clear mirror,  
may we not attain perfect enlightenment.
33. If, when we attain buddhahood,  
sentient beings in the immeasurable and  
inconceivable buddha lands of the ten directions  
who have been touched by my light  
should not feel peace and happiness in their bodies  
and minds surpassing those of humans and devas,  
may we not attain perfect enlightenment.
39. If, when we attain buddhahood,  
humans and devas in my land should not enjoy  
happiness and pleasure comparable to those of  
a monk who has exhausted all the passions,  
may we not attain perfect enlightenment.

44. If, when we attain buddhahood,  
bodhisattvas in the lands of the other directions  
who *hear my* Name should not rejoice so *greatly*  
as to dance and perform the bodhisattva practices  
and should not acquire stores of *merit*,  
may we not attain perfect enlightenment.

48. If, when we attain buddhahood,  
bodhisattvas in the lands of the other directions  
who *hear my* Name should not instantly gain  
the first, the *second*, and the third *insights* into  
the nature of dharmas and firmly abide  
in the truths realized by *all the* buddhas,  
may we not attain perfect enlightenment.

[2 Bells]

[Leader:

To the West of *where we* are, past this world,  
Beyond ten *thousand* kotis of Buddha-fields,  
There is a land of *peace* and joy. There the Buddha,  
the World-Honored One, is called Amitabha.  
The perfect light of his truth body pervades all realms,  
Illuminating the darkness of the world,  
and thus we prostrate ourselves to Amitabha.]

[Bell]

[Leader:

1. To the Buddha of Infinite Light:

of time, spanning the *three* time frames,]

I bow to Amitabha.

[Bell]

[2. To the Buddha of Boundless Light:

of space, pervading the ten directions,]

I bow to Amitabha.

[Bell]

[3. To the Buddha of Unhindered Light:

unimpeded, delivering all sentient beings,]

I bow to Amitabha.

[Bell]

[4. To the Buddha of Incomparable Light:

relative *nature*, ending the causes of suffering,]

I bow to Amitabha.

[Bell]

[5. To the Buddha of the Flame King's Light:

ultimate *nature*, extinguishing the effects of suffering,]

I bow to Amitabha.

[Bell]

[6. To the Buddha of Pure Light:

exterminating greed, achieving purity,]

I bow to Amitabha.

[Bell]

[7. To the Buddha of Joyous Light:

eliminating *hatred*, perfecting forbearance,]

I bow to Amitabha.

[Bell]



[8. To the Buddha of Wisdom Light:  
severing ignorance, realizing wisdom,]  
I bow to Amitabha. [Bell]

[9. To the Buddha of Unceasing Light:  
permanent, perpetual,]  
I bow to Amitabha. [Bell]

[10. To the Buddha of Inconceivable Light:  
unimaginable, beyond conception,]  
I bow to Amitabha. [Bell]

[11. To the Buddha of Ineffable Light:  
inexpressible, beyond words,]  
I bow to Amitabha. [Bell]

[12. To the Buddha of Light  
Surpassing the Sun and the Moon, superlative,]  
I bow to Amitabha. [Bell]

The light of compassion pervades far and wide,  
bestowing peace and joy.  
And so this Buddha is also known as Joyous Light.  
In the places where that light reaches,  
the Dharma is enjoyed,  
Thus we take refuge in Amitabha,  
the great consoler. [2 Bells]

## Avalokiteshvara Day<sup>33</sup>

[Leader: *We evoke your name, Avalokiteshvara<sup>34</sup>.*]<sup>35</sup>

*All:*

*We aspire to learn your way of listening  
in order to help relieve the suffering in the world.  
You know how to listen in order to understand.*

*We evoke your name in order to practice listening  
with all our attention and open-heartedness.*

*We will sit and listen without any prejudice.*

*We will sit and listen without judging or reacting.*

*We will sit and listen in order to understand.*

*We will sit and listen so attentively  
that we will be able to hear  
what the other person is saying  
and also what has been left unsaid.*

*We know that just by listening deeply  
we already alleviate a great deal of pain  
and suffering in the other person.*

[Bell, Bow – 3 Times]

### Great Compassion Mantra

Namo Avalokiteshvaraya

[14 times] [Bell]

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<sup>33</sup> The Bodhisattva of Compassion, also known as Chenrezig (Tibet), Guanshiyin (China), Kanon (Japan), Gwanseum (Korea), and Quán Thế Âm (Vietnam).

<sup>34</sup> “Avalokiteshvara is the part of each of us that has the capacity to listen deeply to others and make use of our insights and understanding to relieve their suffering.”  
(*Chanting from the Heart*)

<sup>35</sup> In this section, italicized syllables indicate rising tones at the beginning of a line and falling tones at the end of a line.

***From The Bodhisattva Regarder of the Sounds  
of the World as Universal Gateway***<sup>36</sup>

Leader:

The Bodhisattva Inexhaustible Mind  
asked his question in verse:

“World-Honored One,  
replete with all wondrous attributes,  
Let me now ask you once more,  
For what reason is this buddha child named  
Regarder of the Sounds of the World?”  
The Honored One, replete with all wondrous attributes,  
answered Inexhaustible Mind in verse:

All:

“Listen to the deeds of this Regarder of Sounds,  
Who well responds to cries from every quarter.  
Her vast oath runs deep as the sea  
And is inconceivable throughout many kalpas.  
She has served many thousands of millions of buddhas  
And made a great pure vow,  
Which I will briefly describe for you.

Hearing her name, seeing her physical form,  
And calling her to mind is never in vain,  
For she is able to eliminate the sufferings of existence.

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<sup>36</sup> Michio Shinozaki; Brook Ziporyn; David Earhart. *The Threefold Lotus Sutra: A Modern Translation for Contemporary Readers* (pp. 353-363). Kosei Publishing Co.

For example, those intent on doing harm  
Might throw you into a pit of raging fire.  
By calling to mind the power of the Regarder of Sounds,  
The pit of fire will turn into a pool of water.  
You might be washed away in a great ocean  
And imperiled by dragons, fishes, and demons.  
By calling to mind the power of the Regarder of Sounds,  
You will not be drowned in the waves. . . .

When living beings are beset by woes  
And burdened by countless pains,  
The wondrous wisdom power of the Regarder of Sounds  
Can free them from the sufferings of the world.  
She is in full command of transcendent powers,  
Having fully mastered the skillful means of wisdom.

In the lands of the ten directions,  
There is no place she does not manifest herself.  
All the evil states of existence,  
Those of hells, of hungry spirits, and of beasts,  
And the sufferings of birth, aging, illness, and death,  
She gradually brings to an end.

Her true regard, pure regard,  
Vastly wise regard,  
Merciful regard, and compassionate regard  
Are always emulated and ever revered.

She is a pure, unclouded beacon of light,  
A sun of wisdom destroying all darkness,  
A subduer of the winds and flames of misfortune,  
And a light shining everywhere in the world.  
Her body is the precept of mercy that roars like thunder.  
Her mind is wondrous compassion that  
expands like a great cloud.  
Together they pour forth the sweet dew of Dharma rain  
That quenches the flames of delusion. . . .

Wondrous voice, world-regarding voice,  
Brahma voice, and voice of the rolling tide—  
Hers is a voice unsurpassed in the world.  
Therefore, she should constantly be called to mind.  
Never have a moment of doubt  
About the Regarder of the Sounds of the World,  
A pure sage who can provide a reliable refuge  
From suffering, distress, danger, and death.  
Endowed with every virtue,  
She beholds living beings with eyes of compassion.  
Her blessings are an ocean, vast and immeasurable.  
Therefore, with heads bowed, revere her.”

[Bell]

## **Mantra of the Jewel-Lotus One**

Om Ma Ni Pad Me Hum<sup>37</sup>

[14 times] [Bell]

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<sup>37</sup> Om and Hum are common mystical mantras, without conceptual meaning. Mani means jewel; Padme means lotus. The mantra thus unites both wisdom (lotus) and

## Awakening the Source of Love

We pay homage to Avalokiteshvara:

to your great vow always to be there *for* all beings,  
to your capacity to look deeply at the world  
with *compassionate* eyes,  
to listen deeply to understand and to relieve *suffering*,  
and with your holy *willow* branch,  
to sprinkle the nectar of compassion,  
cleansing our minds from all impurities.

Namo Avalokiteshvaraya Bodhisattvaya [Bell]

May we practice in such a way that  
we see the true nature of *emptiness*.

May we overcome all obstacles and  
soon reach the shore of *awakening*.

May we uproot ignorance and transform anger *and* hatred.

May we practice deep listening and *loving* speech.

May we live mindfully and with clarity,  
realizing meditative concentration.

May we advance on the path,  
Abiding peacefully in the ground of *reality*.

Namo Avalokiteshvaraya Bodhisattvaya [Bell]

May we practice in such a way that we bring an end  
to violence, *oppression*, and war.

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compassion (jewel). Some scholars also translate ManiPadma as a proper name, Jewel-Lotus One, an invocation of Avalokitesvara.

May we bring compassionate nectar and medicine  
To the places of sickness and suffering.

May we walk together to the realm of the hungry ghosts,  
bringing the Dharma food of understanding and love.

May we cool the heat of afflictions in the realm of hell.

May we remove hatred and anger in places of conflict,  
and help the source of love to flow again.

Namo Avalokiteshvaraya Bodhisattvaya

[Bell]

### **Praising the Bodhisattva of Compassion**

From the depths of understanding,  
a flower of great eloquence blooms:

The Bodhisattva stands majestically upon the waves  
of birth and death, free from all afflictions.

The nectar of compassion is seen  
on the willow branch held by the Bodhisattva.

A single drop of this nectar is enough to bring life  
to the Ten Directions of the Cosmos.

May all afflictions of this world disappear totally  
and may this place of practice be transformed  
by the Bodhisattva's nectar of compassion.

Homage to the Bodhisattva Who Refreshes the Earth.

Namo Avalokiteshvaraya Bodhisattvaya

[Bell, Bell - Bow]