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Guide to the Service and 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, bowing, and walking. Please participate in whatever way feels appropriate and comfortable to you.
- A service usually includes chanting and meditation, followed by a Dharma teaching, discussion, or activity.
- Most chants use one to three tones. When possible, a syllable with *a raised pitch is italicized*, and a lowered pitch is underlined. For evoking the Bodhisattvas in the evening service, *the first three italicized syllables* are rising and *the last three italicized syllables* are descending tones.

Here are some of the terms you will hear during the service:

Namo: To offer honor, respect, or homage; gratitude and respect together.

Buddha: “Awakened One,” such as the historical Shakyamuni Gautama Buddha, Amitabha Buddha, or Medicine Buddha.

Dharma: Usually, the teachings of the Buddha and our practice of those teachings. When not capitalized, dharma refers to conditioned phenomena.

Sangha: Conventionally, the community of Buddhist monastics. Ideally, the Noble Sangha includes all practitioners who have attained or aspire to Awakening. The four-fold assembly (parisa) includes all who Take Refuge.

Bodhisattva: An Enlightened One (Mahāsattva or great being) dedicated to offering wise compassion to all, in order to assist them on their paths to enlightenment, and those who aspire to this path (bodhisattvas-to-be).

Metta: Often translated as “loving-kindness.” It is the intention and 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.

Sutra: A text recording a teaching of the Buddha. The word usually refers to a thread that holds something together, a reference to the early tradition of writing Buddhist scriptures on palm leaves and sewing them together.

*Thank you for joining us, as we practice together
to transform suffering into wisdom and compassion!*

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, delusion, and hatred.

[Bell]

Special Merit Intentions

[Leader]

Mindfulness of the Deceased

Friends, it is time to bring to mind those who have passed away: our loved ones and ancestors, **especially [name(s) of deceased]**, as well as those who have died due to violence, oppression, and war; accidents and natural disasters; sickness and aging; 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 them, **especially [name(s)]**, as well as to those who suffer due to violence, oppression, and war; accidents and natural disasters; sickness, aging, and the grief of loss.

[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.

Namo Buddhaya¹.

[Bell]

[Leader]

I bow to the Dharma.

[All]

The way of understanding and love.

Namo Dharmaya.

[Bell]

[Leader]

I bow to the Sangha.

[All]

The community that lives in harmony and awareness.

Namo Sanghaya.

[Bell]

[Be seated.]

¹ Homage to the Buddha/Dharma/Sangha. This practice helps us learn “how to take the external refuges and make them internal: learning about the teachings, using them to develop the qualities that the Buddha himself used to attain Awakening, and then realizing the same release from danger that he found in the quality of Deathlessness that we can touch within.” (Ajahn Thanissaro, [“Going for Refuge”](#))

Mantra of Awakening

Namo tassa *bhagavato arahato* samma sambuddhassa²

[14 times]

[Bell]

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.]

² Homage to the Blessed, Noble, and Perfectly Enlightened One.

Karaniya Metta Sutra

(The Buddha's Words on Loving Kindness)³

[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]

³ 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)⁴

[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 foolish⁵ 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,
 living a life of *blameless* conduct —
 this is the *greatest* happiness.

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

⁵ Wisdom arises when we understand and act in accordance with the Four Noble Truths. Foolishness is when we understand and act in accordance with greed, hatred, and delusion.

“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]

Dhammachakkappavattana Sutta

(Setting the Dharma Wheel in Motion)⁶

[Leader:

I have heard that on one occasion the Blessed One was staying near Vārāṇasī in the Deer Park at Isipatana. There he addressed the group of five monks]. [Bell]

[All:]

“There are these two extremes that are not to be indulged in by one who has gone forth:

That which is devoted to sensual pleasure with sensuality - base, vulgar, common, ignoble, unprofitable;

And that which is devoted to self-affliction: painful, ignoble, unprofitable.

Avoiding both of these extremes, the middle way realized by the Tathāgata - producing vision, producing knowledge - leads to stilling, to direct knowledge, to self-awakening, to unbinding.

“And what is the middle way? Precisely this Noble Eightfold Path: Right View, Right Resolve, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, Right Concentration.

This is the middle way realized by the Tathāgata that - producing vision, producing knowledge - leads to stilling, to direct knowledge, to self-awakening, to unbinding.

“Now this is the noble truth of stress:

Birth is stressful, aging is stressful, death is stressful; sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, and despair are stressful; association with the unbeloved is stressful, separation from the loved is stressful, not getting what is wanted is stressful.

In short, the five clinging-aggregates are stressful.

⁶ Abridged from the translation by Ajahn Thanissaro: https://www.dhammadata.org/suttas/SN/SN56_11.html

“And this is the noble truth of the origination of stress:
the craving that makes for further becoming –
accompanied by passion *and* delight,
relishing now here and *now* there:
craving for sensuality, becoming, and non-becoming.

“And this is the noble truth of the cessation of stress:
the remainderless fading and cessation, renunciation,
relinquishment, release, and letting go of that very craving.

“And this is the noble truth of the way of practice
leading to the cessation of stress:
precisely this Noble Eightfold Path.

“Vision arose, insight arose, discernment arose,
knowledge arose, illumination arose within me
with regard to things never heard before:
‘Unprovoked is my release. This is the last birth.
There is now no further becoming.’”

Gratified, the group of five monks delighted
in the Blessed One’s words.

And while this explanation was being given, there arose
to Venerable Kondañña the dustless, stainless Dhamma eye:
‘Whatever is subject to origination is all subject to cessation.’

And when the Blessed One had set the Wheel of Dhamma
in motion, the devas cried out:

‘Near Vārāṇasī, in the Deer Park at Isipatana,
the Blessed One has set in motion the unexcelled
Wheel of Dhamma that cannot be stopped
by contemplative or brahman, or deva, or Māra,
or Brahmā, or anyone at all in the cos-mos.’ [Bell]

Prajnaparamita Sutra

(The Heart of Perfect Understanding)⁷

[Leader]

Maha Prajna Paramita Hridaya Sutra

[All]

Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva⁸, when practicing deeply
the Prajna Paramita, perceived that all five skandhas⁹
are empty and is saved from all suffering and distress.

Shariputra¹⁰, form does not differ from emptiness¹¹;
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 emptiness¹²: no form,
no feelings, perceptions, impulses, consciousness.

No eyes, no ears, no nose, no tongue, no body, no mind;

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.

⁷ 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.

⁸ The Bodhisattva of Compassion, also known as Chenrezig (Tibet), Guanshiyin (China), Kanon (Japan), Gwanseum (Korea), and Quán Thế Âm (Vietnam).

⁹ Our experience of self arises out of these five aggregates (form, feeling, perception, mental formations, and consciousness). Because they are empty of independent existence, clinging to them leads to suffering.

¹⁰ One of Shakyamuni Buddha's closest disciples, well-known for his wisdom and teaching abilities.

¹¹ "All phenomena are empty of a permanent, separate self." - Thich Nhat Hanh

¹² This text does not mean that we never experience these aspects of existence, but that the insight of emptiness allows us to experience and understand them without grasping. When grasping ceases, the cycle of suffering unravels. Each "no" indicates how this samsaric cycle unravels, leading to Awakening.

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,¹³
one dwells in Nirvana.¹⁴

In the three times, all Buddhas depend on Prajna Paramita
and attain Anuttara Samyak Sambodhi.¹⁵

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, Para-sam-ga-te bodhi svaha¹⁶

[3 times] [Bell]

Mantra of the innermost heart of Avalokiteśvara

Om Ma Ni Pad Me Hum¹⁷

[14 times] [Bell]

¹³ "The more we can let go of wrong perceptions, the more freedom we have." - Thich Nhat Hanh

¹⁴ Nirvana is the end of suffering, with the extinction of the three poisons (greed, hatred, and delusion).

¹⁵ "Supreme perfect enlightenment"

¹⁶ "Gone, gone, gone beyond, gone utterly beyond, Enlightenment hail!" It encompasses the sutra's message, the Bodhisattva's insight that "that all five skandhas are empty and is saved from all suffering and distress."

¹⁷ 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). ManiPadma can also be a proper name, Jewel-Lotus One, an invocation of Quan Am Bodhisattva. She received the mantra from Amitabha Buddha. Its six syllables correspond to her tireless commitment to liberate the six realms from all suffering.

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.]

The Three Refuges¹⁸

[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.¹⁹

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]

¹⁸ 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."

¹⁹ In Mahayana Buddhism, bodhicitta ("enlightenment-mind" or "the thought of awakening"), is the mind (citta) that is aimed at awakening (bodhi), cultivating wisdom and compassion and dedicated to liberation of all sentient beings.

Sharing the Merit²⁰

[All, sung, 3 times]

May all beings be well.

May all beings be happy.

May all beings be peaceful.

[Bell]

Closing Mantra

Nam Mô A Di Đà Phật²¹

[15 times] [2 Bells] [Bow]

²⁰ 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.

²¹ 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 Bodhisattvas²²

[Leader: *We evoke your name, Avalokiteshvara²³.*]

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.*

²² 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.

²³ 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, Manjushri²⁴.*]

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]

²⁴ The Bodhisattva associated with Wisdom; his name means "Gentle Glory."

[Leader: *We evoke your name, Samantabhadra*²⁵.]

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*²⁶.]

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.*

²⁵ The Bodhisattva known for his 10 Great Vows and associated with meditation and action. His name means "Universal Worthy."

²⁶ 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.²⁷
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]

Mantra of the Sage of the Shakyas

Namo Shakyamunaye Buddhaya²⁸ [14 times] [Bell]

²⁷ Because the Buddha attained enlightenment (bodhi) while sitting under this fig tree (*Ficus religiosa*), it became a symbol of Buddhist practice and awakening.

²⁸ Homage to Shakyamuni Buddha (the historical Buddha), Siddhartha Gautama. "Shakyamuni" means "Sage of the Shakyas."

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]

Great Compassion Mantra

Namo Avalokiteshvaraya²⁹

[14 times]

[Bell]

²⁹Homage 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 Refuges³⁰

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]

³⁰ 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.

Gatha³¹ 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 afflictions³²,
aware of impermanence,

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

[Bell]

Sharing the Merit³³

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.

[Bell]

Closing Mantra

Nam Mô A Di Đà Phật³⁴ [15 times] [Two bells] [Bow]

³¹ Gathas are short mindfulness poems we use to support our practice in daily life.

³² Unskillful states and actions of body, speech, and mind, summarized as greed, hatred, and delusion.

³³ 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.

³⁴ 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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The Great Bell Chant

*Invite the bell **seven times, soft tone.***

*Invite the bell **three times, full tone.***

Listen, listen:
 This wonderful sound calls us back to our true home. [bell]
May this sound reach deep,
 even in the darkest places, [bell]
So living beings
 hear it clearly and all suffering in them cease. [bell]
The universal Dharma Door
 is already open. [bell]
The sound of the Rising Tide
 is heard clearly. [bell]
The miracle happens:
 A beautiful child in the heart of a lotus flower. [bell]
One single drop of this
 compassionate water brings back the refreshing spring. [bell]
Listening to the bell,
 the afflictions in me begin to dissolve. [bell]
My mind calm, body relaxed,
 A smile is born on my lips. [bell]
Breathing in, returning,
 the garden of the mind blooms with wisdom. [bell]
The flowers of Peace
 bloom beautifully. [bell, bell]

Continue with mantra chanting, offering a bell with every three repetitions of the mantra or Buddha/Bodhisattva name recitation.

*Invite the bell **seven times, soft tone.***

*Invite the bell **four times, full tone.***

Invoking the Buddha and Bodhisattvas' Names

Om Namó Shakyamunaye Buddhaya

Om Namó Manjushri Bodhisattvaya

Om Namó Samantabhadraya Bodhisattvaya

Om Namó Kshitigarbhaya Bodhisattvaya

Om Namó Avalokiteshvaraya Bodhisattvaya

“Bodhisattvas are awakened beings. We also have our nature of awakening, no less than they, but we have to train ourselves. One way is to practice invoking the names of four great bodhisattvas—Avalokiteshvara (Regarder of the Cries of the World), Manjushri (Great Understanding), Samantabhadra (Universal Goodness), and Kshitigarbha (Earth Store). When we recite their names in a deep, relaxed way, every word can touch our hearts and the hearts of those listening. In the beginning, we still feel separate from these bodhisattvas. But, practicing steadily, we realize that we are Avalokiteshvara, Manjushri, Samantabhadra, and Kshitigarbha. It is not important whether they were historic figures, born in such and such a year or in such and such a place. The key is to realize their qualities within ourselves.”

- [Thich Nhat Hanh](#)



Prostration Practice

Evoking the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas



We stand with palms together. The leader leads us in reciting the name of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. We bow when we hear the temple bell and stand again when the small bell is awakened. We bow three times for each Buddha or Bodhisattva, for a total of 27 prostrations. Please adapt this practice according to your needs.

1. Namó Shakyamunaya Buddhaya
2. Namó Bhaishajya-guru Buddhaya
3. Namó Amitabhaya Buddhaya
4. Namó Maitreya Buddhaya
5. Namó Manjushri Bodhisattvaya
6. Namó Samantabhadraya Bodhisattvaya
7. Namó Avalokiteshvaraya Bodhisattvaya
8. Namó Mahasthmaprapta Bodhisattvaya
9. Namó Kshitigarbhaya Bodhisattvaya

Notes:

1. Prostrations: A prostration is one **method of cultivating mindfulness of the body and training the mind**. As a form of low-intensity cardio exercise, it is a wonderful way to support physical health. As a form of meditation, it is a wonderful way to develop concentration through recollection. In this particular form, the object of meditation is the name of a Buddha or Bodhisattva, with gratitude and respect as the qualities of awareness.

2 Namó: “Homage to,” the **phrase used to direct our attention on an object worthy of respect and gratitude**, and to focus the heart-mind in order to cultivate their wonderful qualities in our lives.

3. Buddha (Vietnamese: Phật) – An **“Awakened One”** who has come to the end of suffering through extinguishing all unskillful states (such as greed, hatred, and delusion), and attained nirvana.

4. Bodhisattva (Vietnamese: Bồ Tát) – An enlightened being who **vows to achieve complete Buddhahood with the liberation of all beings**. Their vows also embody an action or quality that helps practitioners deepen their path.

5. Shakyamuni Buddha (Vietnamese: Thích Ca Mâu Ni Phật): The historical Buddha. Born in Lumbini (now in Nepal) in the 6th or 5th century BCE to rulers of the Shakya clan, he was known as Siddhartha Gautama before his enlightenment. After leaving the palace as a young man, he mastered the spiritual practices of the day and eventually became an ascetic. None of these were sufficient to end suffering. But **Shakyamuni found the Middle Way, set the wheel of the Dharma in motion (embodied in the Four Noble Truths), and established the Sangha**.

6. Bhaishajyaguru Buddha (Vietnamese: Dược Sư Phật,): The Medicine King Buddha made twelve vows, oriented around **personal and collective healing and wholeness**, whether physical, mental, emotional, or social. For example, the seventh vow is: “I vow to relieve all pain and poverty of the very sick and poor. May the sick be cured, the helpless be helped, the poor be assisted.”

7. Amitabha Buddha (Vietnamese: A Di Đà Phật): The principal Buddha of our temple’s **Pure Land tradition**. His name means “Infinite Light” and is often used in Buddha recitation. From [The City of 10,000 Buddhas](#): “Countless eons ago, Bhikshu Dharma Treasury made 48 inconceivable vows before Lokeshvaraja Buddha. He vowed that his Buddhaland will be the most blissful and pure; that all who are born there will advance irreversibly to Buddhahood. Bhikshu Dharma Treasury is now Amitabha Buddha. The lower realms of existence and suffering are not found in [his] pure land.”

8. Maitreya Buddha (Vietnamese: Di lặc Phật) – The future Buddha, who will arise after the Dharma has been forgotten. His name comes from the Sanskrit word for love (maitri) and he is sometimes referred to as **“the face of love,”** inviting us to also develop goodwill for all beings.

9. Manjushri Bodhisattva (Vietnamese: Văn Thù Sư Lợi Bồ Tát) – The Bodhisattva of **wisdom** (prajñā). He usually carries a sword or scepter through which to cut through ignorance.

10. Samantabhadra Bodhisattva (Vietnamese: Phổ Hiền Bồ Tát) – The Bodhisattva of **action and practice**. His ten great vows became the basis of the bodhisattva ideal.

11. Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva (Vietnamese: Quán Thế Âm Bồ Tát) - The Bodhisattva of **compassion**, One who Hears the Cries of the World.

12. Mahasthamaprapta Bodhisattva (Vietnamese: Đại Thế Chí Bồ Tát) – The Bodhisattva of **power**, especially the power of wisdom. His name means “the arrival of great strength.”

13. Kshitigarbha Bodhisattva (Vietnamese: Địa Tạng Vương Bồ Tát) - The Bodhisattva who vowed to achieve Buddhahood when **all hell realms are emptied**.

The Five Earth-Touchings³⁵

[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, bow to the Buddha, and sit down. *Please enjoy waiting together for the bell to finish ringing throughout the service.*]

The Refuge Chant

Leader:

Incense perfumes the atmosphere.

A lotus blooms and the Buddha appears.

The world of suffering and discrimination is filled
with the light of the rising sun.

As the dust of fear and anxiety settles,
with open heart, one-pointed mind,
I turn to the Three Jewels.

[bell]

Reader 1:

The Fully Enlightened One, beautifully seated,
peaceful and smiling,
a living source of understanding and compassion:
To the Buddha I go for refuge.

[bell]

Reader 2:

The path of mindful living,
leading to healing, joy, and enlightenment,
the way of peace:
To the Dharma I go for refuge.

[bell]

³⁵ The following service is edited slightly from the practices of the Plum Village tradition (<https://plumvillage.org/key-practice-texts/the-five-earth-touchings>), following in the spirit and example of the Plum Village Fourfold Sangha and the Arise Sangha (<https://arisesangha.org/resources/touching-the-earth/>).

Reader 3:

The loving and supportive community of practice,
realizing harmony, awareness, and liberation:
To the Sangha I go for refuge.

[bell]

Reader 4:

I am aware that the Three Gems are within my heart.
I vow to realize them,
practicing mindful breathing and smiling,
looking deeply into things.
I vow to understand living beings and their suffering,
to cultivate compassion and loving kindness,
to practice joy and equanimity.

[bell]

Reader 5:

I vow to offer joy to one person in the morning,
to help relieve the grief of one person in the afternoon,
living simply and sanely with few possessions,
keeping my body healthy.
I vow to let go of all worries and anxiety
in order to be light and free.

[bell]

Leader:

I am aware that I am deeply connected
to my ancestors, teachers, friends, and all beings.
I vow to be worthy of their trust, to practice wholeheartedly
so that understanding and compassion will flower,
helping living beings be free from their suffering.
May the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha
support my efforts.

[bell, bell]

[We will now practice the Five Earth-Touchings. We invite everyone to participate at the level of their individual comfort and ability, from full prostrations to a simple nod. For those who are able and wish to do so, please stand.]

The Five Earth-Touchings

Leader:

1. In gratitude, I bow to all generations of ancestors in my blood family. [bell] [touch the earth and remain bowing]

Reader 1:

I see my mother and father, whose blood, flesh, and vitality are circulating in my own veins and nourishing every cell in me. Through them, I see my four grandparents. Their aspirations, experiences, and wisdom have been transmitted from so many generations of ancestors. I carry in me the life, blood, experience, wisdom, happiness, and sorrow of all generations. The suffering and all the elements that need to be transformed, I am practicing to transform. I open my heart, flesh, and bones to receive the energy of insight, love, and experience transmitted to me by all my ancestors. I see my roots in my father, mother, grandfathers, grandmothers, and all my ancestors. I know I am the continuation of this ancestral lineage. I know wherever children and grandchildren are, ancestors are there, also. I understand that even when parents aspire to love and support their children and grandchildren, they are not always able to do so skillfully because of difficulties they themselves encountered. As a continuation of my ancestors, I bow deeply to them. In whatever ways my ancestors tried to build a way of life based on gratitude, joy, confidence, respect, and loving kindness, I allow their energy to flow through me. I ask my ancestors for their support, protection, and strength.

[bell] [stand up]

Leader:

2. In gratitude, I bow to all generations of ancestors in my spiritual family. [bell] [touch the earth and remain bowing]

Reader 2:

I see in myself my teachers, the ones who show me the way of love and understanding, the way to breathe, smile, forgive, and live deeply in the present moment. I see through my teachers all teachers over many generations and traditions, going back to the ones who began my spiritual family thousands of years ago. I see that the energy of my spiritual ancestors and that of many generations of teachers has entered me and is creating peace, joy, understanding, and loving kindness in me. I know that the energy of these teachers has deeply transformed the world. Without the Buddha and all these spiritual ancestors, I would not know the way to practice to bring peace and happiness into my life and into the lives of my family and society. I open my heart and my body to receive the energy of understanding, loving kindness, and protection from the Awakened Ones, their teachings, and the community of practice over many generations. I am their continuation. I gratefully and joyfully receive their infinite source of energy, peace, stability, understanding, and love. I vow to practice to transform the suffering in myself and the world, and to transmit their energy to future generations of practitioners. I also know that my spiritual ancestors had their own difficulties and may not have always been able to transmit the teachings. I vow to practice to heal any harm or confusion, and fulfill the heart of the teachings.

[bell] [stand up]

Leader:

3. In gratitude, I bow to this land and all the ancestors who have cared for and belonged to it.

[bell] [touch the earth and remain bowing]

Reader 3:

I see that I am whole, protected, and nourished by this land and the living beings who have been here and made life possible for me through all their efforts and care, both known and unknown. I also see those who have worked hard to build schools, hospitals, bridges, and roads. I see those who have worked to protect human rights, to develop science and technology, and to fight for freedom and social justice. I also see the historic suffering arising from centuries of injustice and oppression: of the displacement and attempted genocide of Native peoples; of the enslavement and oppression of African peoples; of the exploitation and deportation of immigrants; and of the marginalization of so many communities based on race, ancestry, gender, sexuality, disability, age, class, and other forms of discrimination. I pour all this suffering on the earth and ask the earth to help me transform it into wisdom and compassion. I feel the energy of this land penetrating my body and soul, supporting and accepting me. I vow to cultivate and maintain this energy and transmit it to future generations. I vow to contribute my part in transforming the violence, hatred, and delusion that still lie deep in the collective consciousness of this society so that future generations will have more safety, joy, and peace. I ask this land for its protection and support.

[bell] [stand up]

Leader:

4. In gratitude and compassion, I bow down and transmit my energy to those I love.

[bell] [touch the earth and remain bowing]

Reader 4:

All the energy I have received I now transmit to my parents, my caregivers, everyone I love and have loved, and all who have suffered and worried because of me and for my sake. I aspire to be mindful in my daily life, to see each moment as an opportunity to cultivate wisdom and compassion. I aspire to practice with others in a way that helps create environments that encourage our full development. I transmit my energy to my parents, my caregivers, my siblings, my beloved ones, my family, my friends, my community, and all beings, so that their pain will be relieved, so they can smile and feel the joy of being alive. I want all of them to be healthy and joyful. I know that their happiness and liberation cannot be separated from my happiness and liberation. I pray that all ancestors in my blood and spiritual families will focus their energies toward each of them, to protect and support them. I know that I am not separate from them. I am one with those I love.

[bell] [stand up]

Leader:

5. In understanding and compassion, I bow down to reconcile myself with all those who have made me suffer.

[bell] [touch the earth and remain bowing]

Reader 5:

I open my heart and send forth my energy of love and understanding to everyone who has caused suffering, including to those who have harmed me and those I love. I know that so many people have themselves undergone a lot of suffering and that their hearts are overloaded with pain, anger, and hatred. I know that, without transformation, anyone who suffers that much will make those around them suffer. I know that so many have been unlucky, never having the chance to be cared for and loved. Life and society have dealt them so many hardships. I know that many have been wronged and abused. I know that many have not been guided in the path of mindful living, accumulating wrong perceptions and harming themselves and others. I pray to honor all our ancestors in our blood and spiritual families to channel to all of us, those who cause suffering and those who suffer, the energy of love and protection, so that our hearts will be able to receive the nectar of love and blossom like a flower. I pray that we all can be transformed to experience the joy of living, so that we come to an end of suffering. I see all this suffering and do not want to hold any greed, hatred, or delusion. I channel my energy of love and understanding to bring about an end of suffering and ask all my ancestors to help.

[bell] [stand up]

[Be seated]

Watering Seeds of Joy

Leader:

My parents, my caregivers, they are in me.
And when I look, I see myself in them.

[bell]

The Buddha, the teachers, they are in me.
And when I look, I see myself in them.

[bell]

Reader 1:

I am a continuation of my parents and my ancestors.
It is my aspiration to preserve and continue to nourish
seeds of goodness, skill, and happiness
which I have inherited.

It is also my desire to recognize the seeds of fear and suffering
I have inherited, and, bit by bit, to transform them.

[bell]

Reader 2:

I am a continuation of the Buddha and my spiritual teachers.
It is my deep aspiration to preserve, nourish, and develop
the seeds of understanding, love, and freedom
which they have transmitted to me.

I resolve to continue
the career of the Buddha and my Ancestral Teachers,
and aspire to realize my awakened nature.

[bell]

Reader 3:

In my daily life, I also want to sow
seeds of love and compassion in my own consciousness
and in the heart of other people.

[bell]

Reader 4:

I am determined not to water
seeds of craving, aversion, and violence
in myself and the other.

[bell]

Reader 5:

I know that by practicing in this way,
we can open a way of communication,
smile and transform some suffering
and increase our happiness.

[bell]

Leader:

Bowing before the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha,
I hold these aspirations in my heart.
Mind and body together,
I gratefully dwell deeply in this present moment.

[bell, bell]

Sitting Meditation

[bell]

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

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 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] [Bow]

Nourishing Happiness

Leader:

Sitting here in this moment, protected by the Sangha,
my happiness is clear and alive.

What a great fortune to have been born a human,
to encounter the Dharma, to be in harmony with others,
and to water the Mind of Love
in this beautiful garden of practice.

[bell]

Reader 1:

The energies of the Sangha and mindfulness trainings
are protecting and helping me not make mistakes
or be swept along in darkness by unwholesome seeds.

With kind spiritual friends, I am on the path of goodness,
illuminated by the light of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.

Although seeds of suffering are still in me
in the form of afflictions and habit energies,
mindfulness is also there, helping me touch
what is most wonderful within and around me.

[bell]

Reader 2:

I can still enjoy mindfulness of the six senses:

my eyes look peacefully upon the clear blue sky,
my ears listen with wonder to the songs of birds,
my nose smells the rich scent of sandalwood,
my tongue tastes food that is a gift of the whole universe,
my posture is grounded, stable, and relaxed,
and my mind is one with my body.

[bell]

Reader 3:

If there were not a World-Honored One,
if there were not the wonderful Dharma,
if there were not a harmonious Sangha,
I would not be so fortunate
to enjoy this Dharma happiness today.

[bell]

Reader 4:

My resources for practice are my own peace and joy.
I vow to cultivate and nourish them with daily mindfulness.
For my ancestors, family, future generations,
and the whole of humanity,
I vow to practice well.

[bell]

Reader 5:

In my society I know that there are countless people suffering,
drowned in sensual pleasure, jealousy, and hatred.
I am determined to take care of my own mental formations,
to learn the art of deep listening and using loving speech
in order to encourage communication and
understanding and to be able to accept and love.

[bell]

Leader:

Practicing the actions of a bodhisattva,
I vow to look with eyes of love
and a heart of understanding.

[bell]

Reader 1:

I vow to listen with a clear mind and ears of compassion,
bringing peace and joy into the lives of others,
to lighten and alleviate the suffering of living beings.

[bell]

Reader 2:

I am aware that ignorance and wrong perceptions
can turn this world into a fiery hell.

[bell]

Reader 3:

I vow to walk always upon the path of transformation,
producing understanding and loving kindness.

I will be able to cultivate a garden of awakening. [bell]

Reader 4:

Although there are birth, sickness, old age, and death,
now that I have a path of practice,

I have nothing more to fear. [bell]

Reader 5:

It is a great happiness to be alive in the Sangha with the practice
of mindfulness trainings and concentration,

to live every moment in stability and freedom,

to take part in the work of relieving others' suffering,

the career of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.

[bell]

Leader:

In each precious moment, filled with deep gratitude.

I bow before the World-Honored One.

May all Buddhas and Bodhisattvas bear witness

to my wholehearted gratitude,

embracing all beings with arms of great compassion.

[bell, bell]

Sharing the Merit

Opening our hearts wide to the Perfect Highest Awakening,
we are resolved:

to attain Great Understanding;
to realize compassion and embody deep love;
to practice diligently, transforming our suffering
and the suffering of all other species.

We vow to share the fruits of this practice
for the happiness of people and all other beings.

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

[bell]

Closing Mantra

Nam Mô A Di Đà Phật (15 times) [bell, bell] [bow]

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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:

We begin by expressing gratitude. This is not to minimize our suffering, but to get in touch with the wonders of life and to generate the energy of kindness and compassion to hold our suffering skillfully. 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. Let us begin anew.]

[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:

We pause together to get in touch with grief, inside or around us, 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. Let us begin anew.]

[Bell]

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:

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. Let us begin anew.]

[Bell]

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:

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. Let us begin anew.]

[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:

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. Let us begin anew.]

[Bell]

Cultivating Metta for All Beings

May I abide in *well-being*, in freedom from affliction³⁶,
in freedom from hostility, in freedom from ill-will,
in freedom from anxiety.

And may I main-tain 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 main-tain well-being in themselves.

May all beings be released from all suffering.

And may they not be *par-ted*
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 re-sults *will be* their home.

All *actions* with intention, be they skillful or *harmful*,
of such acts they will be *the* heirs.

[Bell]

³⁶ Unskillful states and actions of body, speech, and mind, summarized as greed, hatred, and delusion.

Sharing the Merit³⁷

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]

³⁷ Offered by One Earth Sangha, <https://oneearthsangha.org/articles/dedication-of-merit/>.

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Amitabha Buddha Day³⁸

[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]

We offer heartfelt gratitude
to Amitabha, the Buddha of Infinite Light,
whose vow to welcome to the Pure Land
all sentient beings who sincerely and joyfully entrust
themselves to this way of peace and joy,
awakens us from forgetfulness to walk the bodhisattva path.

[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]

³⁸ 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 his Pure Land.

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, delusion, and hatred.

[Bell]

Special Merit Intentions

[Leader]

Mindfulness of the Deceased

Friends, it is time to bring to mind those who have passed away: our loved ones and ancestors, **especially [name(s) of deceased]**, as well as those who have died due to violence, oppression, and war; accidents and natural disasters; sickness and aging; 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 them, **especially [name(s)]**, as well as to those who suffer due to violence, oppression, and war; accidents and natural disasters; sickness, aging, and the grief of loss.

[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 Buddhaya³⁹. [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 of the innermost heart of Avalokiteśvara

Om Ma Ni Pad Me Hum⁴⁰ [14 times] [Bell]

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]

³⁹ I pay homage to the Buddha/Dharma/Sangha.

⁴⁰ 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). ManiPadma can also be a proper name, Jewel-Lotus One, an invocation of Quan Am Bodhisattva. She received the mantra from Amitabha Buddha. Its six syllables correspond to her tireless commitment to liberate the six realms from all suffering.

Prajnaparamita Sutra (The Heart of Perfect Understanding)⁴¹

[Leader]

Maha Prajna Paramita Hridaya Sutra

[All]

Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva⁴², when practicing deeply
the Prajna Paramita, perceived that all five skandhas⁴³
are empty and is saved from all suffering and distress.

Shariputra⁴⁴, form does not differ from emptiness⁴⁵;
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 emptiness⁴⁶: no form,
no feelings, perceptions, impulses, consciousness.

No eyes, no ears, no nose, no tongue, no body, no mind;
No color, no sound, no smell, no taste, no touch;

⁴¹ 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.

⁴² The Bodhisattva of Compassion, also known as Chenrezig (Tibet), Guanshiyin (China), Kanon (Japan), Gwanseum (Korea), and Quán Thế Âm (Vietnam).

⁴³ Our experience of self arises out of these five aggregates (form, feeling, perception, mental formations, and consciousness). Because they are empty of independent existence, clinging to them leads to suffering.

⁴⁴ One of Shakyamuni Buddha's closest disciples, well-known for his wisdom and teaching abilities.

⁴⁵ "All phenomena are empty of a permanent, separate self." - Thich Nhat Hanh

⁴⁶ This text does not mean that we never experience these aspects of existence, but that the insight of emptiness allows us to experience and understand them without grasping. When grasping ceases, the cycle of suffering unravels. Each "no" indicates how this samsaric cycle unravels, leading to Awakening.

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,⁴⁷
one dwells in Nirvana.⁴⁸

In the three times, all Buddhas depend on Prajna Paramita
and attain Anuttara Samyak Sambodhi.⁴⁹

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, Para-sam-ga-te bodhi svaha⁵⁰

[3 times] [Bell]

⁴⁷ "The more we can let go of wrong perceptions, the more freedom we have." - Thich Nhat Hanh

⁴⁸ Nirvana is the end of suffering, with the extinction of the three poisons (greed, hatred, and delusion).

⁴⁹ "Supreme perfect enlightenment"

⁵⁰ "Gone, gone, gone beyond, gone utterly beyond, Enlightenment hail!" It encompasses the sutra's message, the Bodhisattva's insight that "that all five skandhas are empty and is saved from all suffering and distress."

Evoking the Buddha of Infinite Light⁵¹

[Leader: *We evoke your name Amitabhaya Buddhaya.*]

All:

*We are determined to truly bring forth
the great aspiration to be born in the Pure Land,
to practice in order to realize the qualities
of boundless light and limitless life.*

*We also know that the Pure Land can be found
in the heart of the present moment.*

*We shall recite your name and practice wholeheartedly
with a mind that is one-pointed and not dispersed,
so that we may abide in meditative concentration,
dwelling already in the Buddha-field of Amitabha.*

*We know that everyone born in Sukhavati⁵²
has the capacity of non-regression
and will attain Buddhahood.*

*The number of these bodhisattvas is infinite,
it may only be expressed by the term limitless.*

*We shall practice to also attain this fruit
of the highest awakening
and transmit to all beings countless Dharma doors.*

[Bell] [Bow]

⁵¹ Adapted from the *Discourse on the Land of Great Happiness* (the *Sukhāvātī-Vyūha Sutra*), trans. by the Most Venerable Thich Nhat Hanh. Available at: <https://plumvillage.org/library/sutras/discourse-on-the-land-of-great-happiness>.

⁵² "The land of great happiness where the Buddha Amitabha dwells. An ideal place to practice the path of liberation."
(via Plum Village)

From the Fundamental Vows of Amitabha Buddha⁵³

Leader:

Now let us recite the vows of *Amitabha*⁵⁴. [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.⁵⁵

12. If, when we attain buddhahood, my light should be limited, may we not attain perfect enlightenment.

⁵³ These 12 (of 48) vows are taken 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.

⁵⁴ Amitabha is the foremost Buddha of the Western Pure Land. Before enlightenment, he was a king who renounced his kingdom and became a monk (then 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.

⁵⁵ Each vow describes a wonderful attribute of the Pure Land. If the condition is not met, then the vow is not yet fulfilled.

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]
[Please stand.]

[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]

Sitting Meditation, as time allows
[Bell]

The Three Refuges

[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.

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]

Sharing the Merit

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

May all beings be peaceful.

[three times]

[Bell]

Nam Mô A Di Đà Phật

[15 times] [2 Bells]

Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva Day⁵⁶

[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]

We offer heartfelt gratitude
for the great Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara,
whose vow to practice so that all beings cultivate boundless love,
taste the freedom of not harming anyone,
and know the joy of freedom from all suffering,
awakens us from forgetfulness to walk the bodhisattva path.

[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]

⁵⁶ Traditionally, three days in the lunar calendar are set aside to celebrate the Bodhisattva of Compassion, recognizing their birth, enlightenment, and renunciation. We are happy and grateful to join this tradition, connecting to our deepest aspirations to cultivate wisdom and compassion.

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, delusion, and hatred.

[Bell]

Special Merit Intentions

[Leader]

Mindfulness of the Deceased

Friends, it is time to bring to mind those who have passed away: our loved ones and ancestors, **especially [name(s) of deceased]**, as well as those who have died due to violence, oppression, and war; accidents and natural disasters; sickness and aging; 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 them, **especially [name(s)]**, as well as to those who suffer due to violence, oppression, and war; accidents and natural disasters; sickness, aging, and the grief of loss.

[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 Buddhaya⁵⁷. [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]

[Please be seated.]

Mantra of Awakening

Namō tassa *bhagavato arahato* samma sambuddhassa⁵⁸

[14 times]

[Bell]

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]

⁵⁷ I pay homage to the Buddha/Dharma/Sangha.

⁵⁸ Homage to the Blessed, Noble, and Perfectly Enlightened One.

Prajnaparamita Sutra (The Heart of Perfect Understanding)⁵⁹

[Leader]

Maha Prajna Paramita Hridaya Sutra

[All]

Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva⁶⁰, when practicing deeply
the Prajna Paramita, perceived that all five skandhas⁶¹
are empty and is saved from all suffering and distress.

Shariputra⁶², form does not differ from emptiness⁶³;
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 emptiness⁶⁴: no form,
no feelings, perceptions, impulses, consciousness.

No eyes, no ears, no nose, no tongue, no body, no mind;

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.

⁵⁹ 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.

⁶⁰ The Bodhisattva of Compassion, also known as Chenrezig (Tibet), Guanshiyin (China), Kanon (Japan), Gwanseum (Korea), and Quán Thế Âm (Vietnam).

⁶¹ Our experience of self arises out of these five aggregates (form, feeling, perception, mental formations, and consciousness). Because they are empty of independent existence, clinging to them leads to suffering.

⁶² One of Shakyamuni Buddha's closest disciples, well-known for his wisdom and teaching abilities.

⁶³ "All phenomena are empty of a permanent, separate self." - Thich Nhat Hanh

⁶⁴ This text does not mean that we never experience these aspects of existence, but that the insight of emptiness allows us to experience and understand them without grasping. When grasping ceases, the cycle of suffering unravels. Each "no" indicates how this samsaric cycle unravels, leading to Awakening.

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,⁶⁵
one dwells in Nirvana.⁶⁶

In the three times, all Buddhas depend on Prajna Paramita
and attain Anuttara Samyak Sambodhi.⁶⁷

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 paraga-te, Parasamga-te bodhi svaha⁶⁸

[3 times] [Bell]

⁶⁵ "The more we can let go of wrong perceptions, the more freedom we have." - Thich Nhat Hanh

⁶⁶ Nirvana is the end of suffering, with the extinction of the three poisons (greed, hatred, and delusion).

⁶⁷ "Supreme perfect enlightenment"

⁶⁸ "Gone, gone, gone beyond, gone utterly beyond, Enlightenment hail!" It encompasses the sutra's message, the Bodhisattva's insight that "that all five skandhas are empty and is saved from all suffering and distress."

Evoking the Bodhisattva of Compassion

[Leader: *We evoke your name, Avalokiteshvara*⁶⁹.]⁷⁰

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]

Great Compassion Mantra

Namo Avalo-kitesh-varaya [14 times] [Bell]

⁶⁹ "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*)

⁷⁰ 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 Gateway⁷¹

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.

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.

⁷¹ Michio Shinozaki; Brook Ziporyn; David Earhart. *The Threefold Lotus Sutra: A Modern Translation for Contemporary Readers* (pp. 353-363). Kosei Publishing Co. Many of the Bodhisattva's names, such as Kuan Yin and Quan Am, are translations of the phrase, "The One who Perceives the Sounds of the World," a reference to skillfully understand the suffering in the world.

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.⁷² . . .

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.

⁷² These examples demonstrate the power of compassion using extreme situations familiar to the original hearers. We are invited to reflect on how no situation or person is beyond the reach of this wise compassion.

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 innermost heart of Avalokiteśvara

Om Ma Ni Pad Me Hum⁷³ [14 times] [Bell]

[Bell]

Sitting Meditation, as time allows [Bell]

*Stand; those who want to and are able to practice prostrations
are welcome to do so as we recite the compassionate vows
found on the following pages.*

⁷³ 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). ManiPadma can also be a proper name, Jewel-Lotus One, an invocation of Quan Am Bodhisattva. She received the mantra from Amitabha Buddha. Its six syllables correspond to her tireless commitment to liberate the six realms from all suffering.

Twelve Aspiration Vows of Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara⁷⁴

[The leader will chant the vow and we all respond.]

1) I vow to cultivate loving-kindness and compassion,
to cherish and protect life,
and promote well-being and happiness for all living things.

All: Namó Avalo-kitesh-varaya Bodhi-sattvaya **[Bow]**

2) I vow to appreciate all living beings
and understand their suffering,
and through this deep connection bring joy and happiness to all.

All: Namó Avalo-kitesh-varaya Bodhi-sattvaya **[Bow]**

3) I vow to let go of attachment
to anger, worries, anxieties, and complaints,
so I can live freely, happily, and peacefully with everyone.

All: Namó Avalo-kitesh-varaya Bodhi-sattvaya **[Bow]**

4) I vow to live in harmony and at peace
with friends, family, and all beings.

All: Namó Avalo-kitesh-varaya Bodhi-sattvaya **[Bow]**

5) I vow to listen with compassion and an open mind
in order to understand what the other person is saying.

I will listen without prejudice and judgment,
and in an open and receiving posture of acceptance.

I will not say things that are cruel, unkind, or hurtful.

All: Namó Avalo-kitesh-varaya Bodhi-sattvaya **[Bow]**

⁷⁴ Translated by An Tran: <https://www.lionsroar.com/venerating-avalokitesvara-bodhisattva-by-engaging-the-world/>

6) I vow to practice mindful breathing, letting go of attachments and resting in equanimity. Each sound of the bell profoundly resonates with my deeper awakening.

Through deeply listening, all sound becomes the voice of love and wisdom.

All: Namó Avaló-kitesh-varaya Bodhi-sattvaya **[Bow]**

7) May the sick be healed. May the old be well taken care of, and may those who have passed away be reborn in the Pure Land.

All: Namó Avaló-kitesh-varaya Bodhi-sattvaya **[Bow]**

8) May the poor be fed. May all turn away from wrongdoing. May all in captivity be free, all disabled be healed, all addicts rehabilitated, and all murderers give up their arms.

All: Namó Avaló-kitesh-varaya Bodhi-sattvaya **[Bow]**

9) May all beings cultivate boundless love. Let no one do harm to anyone.

Let no one put the life of anyone in danger, and let no one, out of anger, ill will, or for any other reason wish anyone harm.

All: Namó Avaló-kitesh-varaya Bodhi-sattvaya **[Bow]**

10) May I and all beings protect this blue-green earth and keep it beautiful. I commit myself to the transformational work of nurturing and nourishing nature's flowers and fruits, protecting life and the environment, and building a Pure Land on earth.

All: Namó Avaló-kitesh-varaya Bodhi-sattvaya **[Bow]**

11) May afflictions end for all beings so that wisdom can arise
and the fruit of supreme awakening
be fully realized by everyone.

All: Namó Avalokiteśvara Bodhi-sattvaya [Bow]

12) May I and all living beings act with the wonderful power
of a thousand arms and eyes of compassion,
to come and go freely in the Three Worlds.

We aspire to practice with a Bodhisattva's vows.
We commit to being an instrument of the Buddha
in helping to alleviate pain and suffering
in the Ten Directions of the Cosmos.

All: Namó Avalokiteśvara Bodhi-sattvaya [Bow]

Walking Meditation

We walk together three times around the Buddha Hall, chanting:

Nam Mô Bồ Tát Quán Thế Âm

[Be seated; those who are able and wish to do so may kneel.]

Awakening the Source of Love

We pay homage to Avalokiteśvara:

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*.

Namó Avalokiteśvara Bodhi-sattvaya [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 Avalo-kitesh-varaya Bodhi-sattvaya [Bell]

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

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 Avalo-kitesh-varaya Bodhi-sattvaya [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.⁷⁵

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 Avalo-kitesh-varaya Bodhi-sattvaya [Bell, Bow]

The Three Refuges⁷⁶

[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.⁷⁷

Buddham saranam gacchami.

[Bell]

⁷⁵ The power of the single drop is in awakening us to the possibility of cultivating wisdom and compassion. Remembering this, the path opens for us to skillfully respond to suffering.

⁷⁶ 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."

⁷⁷ In Mahayana Buddhism, bodhicitta ("enlightenment-mind" or "the thought of awakening"), is the mind (citta) that is aimed at awakening (bodhi), cultivating wisdom and compassion and dedicated to liberation of all sentient beings.

[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]

Sharing the Merit⁷⁸

[All, sung, 3 times]

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

[Bell]

Closing Mantra

Nam Mô A Di Đà Phật⁷⁹ [15 times] [2 Bells] [Bow]

⁷⁸ 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.

⁷⁹ 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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Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva Day

[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]

We offer heartfelt gratitude
for the great Bodhisattva Ksitigarbha,
whose vow to not rest until the last living being
is brought to the other shore,
and until all of hell is emptied,
awakens us from forgetfulness to walk the bodhisattva path.

[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, delusion, and hatred.

[Bell]

Special Merit Intentions

[Leader]

Mindfulness of the Deceased

Friends, it is time to bring to mind those who have passed away: our loved ones and ancestors, **especially [name(s) of deceased]**, as well as those who have died due to violence, oppression, and war; accidents and natural disasters; sickness and aging; 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 them, **especially [name(s)]**, as well as to those who suffer due to violence, oppression, and war; accidents and natural disasters; sickness, aging, and the grief of loss.

[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 Buddhaya⁸⁰. [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 of Awakening

Namō tassa bhagavato arahato samma sambuddhassa⁸¹

[14 times]

[Bell]

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]

⁸⁰ I pay homage to the Buddha/Dharma/Sangha.

⁸¹ Homage to the Blessed, Noble, and Perfectly Enlightened One.

Prajnaparamita Sutra (The Heart of Perfect Understanding)⁸²

[Leader]

Maha Prajna Paramita Hridaya Sutra

[All]

Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva⁸³, when practicing deeply
the Prajna Paramita, perceived that all five skandhas⁸⁴
are empty and is saved from all suffering and distress.

Shariputra⁸⁵, form does not differ from emptiness⁸⁶;
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 emptiness⁸⁷: no form,
no feelings, perceptions, impulses, consciousness.

No eyes, no ears, no nose, no tongue, no body, no mind;
No color, no sound, no smell, no taste, no touch;

⁸² 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.

⁸³ The Bodhisattva of Compassion, also known as Chenrezig (Tibet), Guanshiyin (China), Kanon (Japan), Gwanseum (Korea), and Quán Thế Âm (Vietnam).

⁸⁴ Our experience of self arises out of these five aggregates (form, feeling, perception, mental formations, and consciousness). Because they are empty of independent existence, clinging to them leads to suffering.

⁸⁵ One of Shakyamuni Buddha's closest disciples, well-known for his wisdom and teaching abilities.

⁸⁶ "All phenomena are empty of a permanent, separate self." - Thich Nhat Hanh

⁸⁷ This text does not mean that we never experience these aspects of existence, but that the insight of emptiness allows us to experience and understand them without grasping. When grasping ceases, the cycle of suffering unravels. Each "no" indicates how this samsaric cycle unravels, leading to Awakening.

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,⁸⁸
one dwells in Nirvana.⁸⁹

In the three times, all Buddhas depend on Prajna Paramita
and attain Anuttara Samyak Sambodhi.⁹⁰

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, Para-sam-ga-te bodhi svaha⁹¹

[3 times] [Bell]

⁸⁸ "The more we can let go of wrong perceptions, the more freedom we have." - Thich Nhat Hanh

⁸⁹ Nirvana is the end of suffering, with the extinction of the three poisons (greed, hatred, and delusion).

⁹⁰ "Supreme perfect enlightenment"

⁹¹ "Gone, gone, gone beyond, gone utterly beyond, Enlightenment hail!" It encompasses the sutra's message, the Bodhisattva's insight that "that all five skandhas are empty and is saved from all suffering and distress."

Evoking the Bodhisattva of Great Aspiration

[Leader: *We evoke your name Ksitigarbha.*]

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.*

*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]*

Walking Meditation (*3 times around the Buddha Hall, chanting*)

Nam Mô Địa Tạng Vương Bồ Tát

The Great Aspiration Vow of Bodhisattva Ksitigarbha⁹²

Those who want to and are able to practice prostrations are welcome to do so as we remember the Bodhisattva's Great Vow.

Leader:

Thus have I heard. The Buddha was in the Trayastrimsa Heaven expounding Dharma for his mother. And buddhas and bodhisattvas of the ten directions assembled there, praising the inconceivable, great wisdom and powers of Sakyamuni Buddha to train beings to come to understand suffering and happiness. And emanation Ksitigarbha Bodhisattvas from all the hells of incalculable worlds also came and assembled in the palace. Because of the spiritual power of the Tathagata, each came with thousands of myriads of millions of beings who had obtained liberation from the karmic paths, each holding incense and flowers as an offering.

All: Namo Ksiti-garbhaya Bodhi-sattvaya [Bell] [Bow]

Leader:

At that time, these emanation Ksitigarbha Bodhisattvas returned together to one form, and weeping from pity and great love, he said to the Buddha, "Through incalculable ages, Buddhas have guided me, so that I am able to attain inconceivable spiritual power and be replete with great wisdom. In innumerable worlds, I guide hundreds of thousands of myriads of millions of people across, causing them to revere and take refuge in the Triple Gem, leave samsara forever, and reach the bliss of nirvana."

All: Namo Ksiti-garbhaya Bodhi-sattvaya [Bell] [Bow]

⁹² Adapted from "Original Vows of Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva Sutra," tr. by Jeanne Tsai (Fo Guang Shan International Translation Center). Available online at: <https://www.fgsitc.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Original-Vows-of-Ksitigarbha-Bodhisattva-Sutra-2023.pdf>.

Leader:

“As long as they do good deeds in Buddhadharma, even if such deeds are as little as a strand of hair, a drop of water, a grain of sand, or a speck of dust, I will gradually guide them across to liberation, causing them to gain great benefits. Therefore, O World-Honored One, please do not be concerned about future living beings who have unwholesome karma.”

All: Namo Ksiti-garbhaya Bodhi-sattvaya [Bell] [Bow]

Leader:

Thus he said three times to the Buddha, “O World-Honored One, please do not be concerned about future living beings who have unwholesome karma. O World-Honored One, please do not be concerned about future living beings who have unwholesome karma.”

All: Namo Ksiti-garbhaya Bodhi-sattvaya [Bell] [Bow]

Leader:

The Buddha praised Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva, saying, “Excellent, excellent! I will help in your aspirations. You will be able to fulfill these profound vows, guiding beings far and wide to the other shore, and immediately attain bodhi.”

All: Namo Ksiti-garbhaya Bodhi-sattvaya [Bell] [Bow]

Leader:

So before the image of Pure Lotus Eyes Tathagata, Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva vowed that, throughout hundreds of thousands of myriads of millions of future ages in all worlds where there are hells, where there are the three lower realms, he would rescue all suffering beings, causing them to leave the lower realms of hells, animals, and hungry ghosts.

All: Namo Ksiti-garbhaya Bodhi-sattvaya [Bell] [Bow]

Leader:

So he is called the Bodhisattva of Great Aspiration, vowing: “Only when the beings who undergo the ripened effects of wrongdoing have all become Buddhas will I myself attain perfect awakening.”

All: Namo Ksiti-garbhaya Bodhi-sattvaya [Bell] [Bow]

Leader:

Fearless and persevering through realms of suffering and darkness, we bow in gratitude to Ksitigarbha, the Bodhisattva of Great Aspiration.

All: Namo Ksiti-garbhaya Bodhi-sattvaya [Bell] [Bow]

[Sitting Meditation, as time allows.]

[Bell]

The Three Refuges

[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.

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]

Sharing the Merit

May all beings be well.

May all beings be happy.

May all beings be peaceful.

[three times]

[Bell]

Nam Mô A Di Đà Phật

[15 times] [2 Bells]

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Medicine Buddha Practice

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. Please enjoy waiting together for the bell to finish ringing throughout the service.]

Offering Incense⁹³

[Leader:

The fragrance of this *incense*

invites the awakened mind

to be truly *present* with us now.

Even as its *fragrance* fills the Buddha Hall,

may the fragrance of the Dharma *fill* our minds,

protecting and *guarding* us from all *wrong* thinking. [bell]

Even as this *incense* collects and unites our senses,

we collect and unite *our* heart-minds:

Precepts, *concentration*, and insight,

all offered on the *wonderful* path:

May we and all *beings* be companions

of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.

May we awaken from *forgetfulness*

and realize *our* true home.]

[bell]

All:

Namo Shakya-munaye Buddhaya

[bell]

Namo Maitreya Buddhaya

[bell]

Namo Bhaishajya-guru Buddhaya]

[bell]

⁹³ Slightly adapted from *Chanting from the Heart: Buddhist Ceremonies and Daily Practices* by Thich Nhat Hanh and the monastics of Plum Village.

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, delusion, and hatred.

[Bell]

Special Merit Intentions

Mindfulness of the Deceased

Friends, it is time to bring to mind those who have passed away: our loved ones and ancestors, **especially [name(s) of deceased]**, as well as those who have died due to violence, oppression, and war; accidents and natural disasters; sickness and aging; 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 them, **especially [name(s)]**, as well as to those who suffer due to violence, oppression, and war; accidents and natural disasters; sickness, aging, and the grief of loss. [bell]

The Refuge Chant⁹⁴

[Leader:

Incense perfumes the atmosphere.

A lotus blooms and the *Buddha* appears.

The world of *suffering* and discrimination

is filled with the light of the rising sun.

As the dust of fear and anxiety settles,

with open heart, one-pointed mind,

we turn to *the* Three Jewels.]

[bell]

All:

The Fully Enlightened One,

beautifully seated, peaceful *and* smiling,

a living source of *understanding* and compassion,

to the Buddha I go *for* refuge.

[bell]

The path of mindful living, leading to *healing*,

joy, and enlightenment, the way of peace,

to the Dharma I go *for* refuge.

[bell]

The loving and supportive community of *practice*,

realizing harmony, awareness, and liberation,

to the Sangha I go *for* refuge.

[bell]

I am aware that the *Three* Gems are *within* my heart.

I vow to realize them,

practicing mindful breathing *and* smiling,

and looking deeply into things.

⁹⁴ Slightly adapted from *Chanting from the Heart: Buddhist Ceremonies and Daily Practices* by Thich Nhat Hanh and the monastics of Plum Village.

I vow to understand living *beings* and their suffering,
to cultivate *compassion* and loving kindness,
to practice joy and equanimity.

[bell]

I vow to offer joy to one person in the *morning*,
to help relieve the grief of one person in the *afternoon*,
living simply and sanely with few possessions,
keeping my *body* healthy.

I vow to let go of all worries and anxiety
in order to be *light* and free.

[bell]

With gratitude to my *parents*, *caregivers*,
teachers, friends, and *all* beings,

I vow to *practice* wholeheartedly
so that understanding and compassion will *flower*,
helping living *beings* be free from their suffering.

May the Buddha, the Dharma, and the *Sangha*
support my efforts.

[bell, bell]

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 Vows of Medicine Buddha⁹⁵

[Leader:

Thus have I heard. One time, while traveling and teaching, the Blessed One arrived at the magnificent city of Vaisali. He sat beneath the Joyful Tree of Music, joined by a great multitude of beings. Manjusri Bodhisattva came before the Buddha, bowing with joined palms, and implored: “World-Honored One, please speak to us about the Buddhas’ names and titles, their great vows, and their wonderful virtues. May all who hear these words become free from karmic obstructions. May these beneficial words make them truly happy.” Upon hearing this request, the World-Honored One praised Manjusri, “Excellent, Manjusri! Out of your deep and heartfelt compassion for sentient beings, you have asked me to speak, to release sentient beings from their entanglements in karmic obstructions and bring peace and joy to all beings. Listen attentively and contemplate carefully what I am going to say.” The Buddha thus began to speak.]

All:

“Twelve great vows evolved from the heart
of the World-Honored Medicine Buddha
as he advanced upon the bodhisattva path,
with the heartfelt wish that all sentient beings
might fulfill their aspirations.”

[bell]

⁹⁵ Adapted from the [Medicine Buddha Sutra](#) by Fo Guang Shan International Translation Center.

[Leader:

1. Upon my enlightenment, my body shall be radiant, shining without measure, boundary, or limitation, lighting up innumerable worlds: adorned with the thirty-two marks of excellence and the eighty noble qualities.

May all beings be likewise brilliant and adorned in body.]

All:

May all beings be equal and at ease.

Namo Bhaishajya-guru Buddhaya [bell]

[Leader:

2. Upon my enlightenment, may my body be as clear as pure crystal, flawless and of serene abiding goodness.

May this body be more brilliant than the sun and moon, able to embrace and awaken even those caught in the depths of gloom.

Thus, shall all beings accomplish their endeavors according to their intentions.]

All:

May all undertakings benefit the masses;

Namo Bhaishajya-guru Buddhaya [bell]

[Leader:

3. Upon my enlightenment, may I enable all beings to live in abundance and joy, eliminating scarcity and want.

This I will accomplish through boundless wisdom and skillful means.]

All:

May panic and terror be kept far away;

Namo Bhaishajya-guru Buddhaya [bell]

[Leader:

4. Upon my enlightenment, may all sentient *beings* choose to follow the peaceful path of *bodhi*, instead of setting upon unskillful ways.

May all who *practice* come to find the great vehicle.]

All:

May all sentient *beings* cultivate the *bodhi* mind;
Namo Bhaishajya-guru Buddhaya [bell]

[Leader:

5. Upon my enlightenment, may beings beyond *number* cultivate the wholesome, practicing the *precepts* and the *bodhisattva* path. And when they fail to practice, may they *be* restored without falling into the suffering realms simply upon *hearing* my name.]

All:

May human-caused *calamities* and natural disasters disappear completely;
Namo Bhaishajya-guru Buddhaya [bell]

[Leader:

6. Upon my enlightenment, I vow to aid all *beings* who suffer any *ill-being*.

Upon hearing my name, may they know well-being in their bodies *and* their minds.]

All:

May all who know *ill-being* have their *suffering* relieved;
Namo Bhaishajya-guru Buddhaya [bell]

[Leader:

7. Upon my enlightenment, may any beings who are tormented by *illness*, who have no hope of *respite* from their suffering,

who are without doctors or medicine,
or who have no family or caregivers to *help* them,
who are homeless or impoverished,
or suffering in any way,
who hears the sound of my name,
be relieved of all *illness* and find
serene contentment in body and mind.
May they be surrounded by family and caregivers,
and may all their needs be abundantly met,
even unto the actualization of Buddhahood.]

All:

May all beings be restored to health;
Namo Bhaishajya-guru Buddhaya [bell]

[*Leader:*

8. Upon my enlightenment, may all who have been harmed
by gender-based discrimination and *violence*,
who aspire to freedom from that oppression,
and who hear the sound of my name,
experience healing, *safety*, and transformation.
May they embody all the characteristics of the true sage,
even unto the attainment of Buddhahood.^{96]}

All:

May all human relations
foster mutual understanding and harmony.
Namo Bhaishajya-guru Buddhaya [bell]

⁹⁶ This paraphrase attempts to bring the spirit of the vow into our community's time and context. This is following the consensus that the vision of a society without gender-based discrimination and violence was expressed as a future with only one gender, as in the original translation: "upon my enlightenment, if there are any women who feel coerced or oppressed by the many disadvantages of the female form and have given rise to the desire to let go of that form, they shall, after hearing my name be transformed into the male form. Accompanying this form are all the characteristics of the true man, even unto the attainment of Buddhahood."

[Leader:

9. Upon my enlightenment, may all who are caught in a thicket of wrong views be led to wisdom, cultivating the Bodhisattva path and quickly realizing Supreme, Perfect Enlightenment.]

All:

May all beings with wrong views turn over a new leaf;
Namo Bhaishajya-guru Buddhaya [bell]

[Leader:

10. Upon my enlightenment, may any being sentenced to flogging, incarceration, torture, execution, or any brutal punishment, be aided by hearing my name.

May any who are insulted, humiliated, or who are in abject misery or oppressed by burning anxiety, suffering in both body and mind, gain release from their suffering and woes.]

All:

May all beings come to know justice, freedom, and peace;
Namo Bhaishajya-guru Buddhaya [bell]

[Leader:

11. Upon my enlightenment, may any beings suffering the agony of hunger and thirst, even who commit wrongdoings to try to survive, be aided by hearing my name.

Satisfied and contented, may they enjoy the wondrous flavor of the Dharma,

knowing true spiritual satisfuction and contentment.]

All:

May all of society live in the joy of having their needs met.

Namo Bhaishajya-guru Buddhaya [bell]

[Leader:

12. Upon my enlightenment, may any beings who suffer due to poverty, unprotected day and night from heat and cold, or from the torment of insects, be aided by hearing my name.

With their needs abundantly met

with clothing, jewelry, ornaments, ointments, and musical entertainment,

may their full enjoyment of these things

evoke their complete satisfuction and contentment.]

All:

May all beings know mutual respect and care.

Namo Bhaishajya-guru Buddhaya [bell]

[Leader:

Manjusri, these are the twelve wonderful vows of the World-Honored Medicine *Buddha* while he was practicing the bodhisattva path.”]

All:

Namo Bhaishajya-guru Buddhaya [bell]

The Great Dharani of Medicine Buddha

[Leader:

“Manjusri, at the time of his enlightenment and due to the strength of his original vows, the Medicine Buddha of Pure Crystal Radiance saw the suffering of numerous sentient beings. Wanting to relieve these beings’ suffering, and for their needs to be abundantly met, he then entered the samadhi called ‘Eliminating the Suffering and Agitation of All Beings.’ As a great light emanated from the crown of the Buddha’s head, he recited a great dharani:]
[bell]

All:

Na-mo Bhagavate Bhaiṣajyaguru Vaiḍūrya Prabharājāya

Tathāgatāya Arahate Samyak Sambuddhāya Tadyathā:

Om Bhaiṣajye Bhaiṣajye Bhaiṣajya Samudgate Svā - hā

[3 times] [bell]

[Leader:

“After he offered the dharani, the earth trembled, radiating great healing, and all sentient beings enjoyed peace of body and mind. Manjusri, if you see anyone suffering, you should, with a devoted heart and mind, help bathe them, cleanse their mouths, and administer food, medicine, or purified water. Relieve their illness and suffering. And if there is something they wish for, by reciting the dharani, may they obtain it. May they enjoy long lives free from illness. And may they be reborn in the realm of the Medicine Buddha, where, without any regression, they may attain supreme enlightenment.”]

[bell]

Evoking the Medicine Buddha⁹⁷

[Leader:

We evoke your name,
great, compassionate *Medicine Buddha*.]

All:

We aspire to practice in order to *understand*
the suffering that fills up the world:
the violence of crime, oppression, and corruption;
the turbulence of politics and the economy;
natural disasters of earth, water, fire, and wind -
losing everything in the blink of an eye;
and the suffering of illness, aging, and death.

The sea of karma is full of passions and delusions,
resulting from greed, anger, and ignorance.
It rolls unceasingly like roaring waves and billows.

We evoke you, great, compassionate *Medicine Buddha*,
so that all beings escape the sea of suffering,
subduing our defilements and resentments.

May all beings obtain your great protection
to live and work in peace and contentment,
enjoying happiness and harmony.

[bell]

[Leader:

We evoke your name,
great, compassionate *Medicine Buddha*.]

⁹⁷ Adapted from "A Prayer to the Medicine Buddha" by Venerable Master Hsing Yun, in the [Medicine Buddha Sutra](#) by Fo Guang Shan International Translation Center.

All:

We evoke your name in order to understand the *suffering*
caused by the collective karma of *all beings*;
all the physical and mental suffering
caused by the passions and delusions of life.

We aspire to heal this *suffering*
by healing the karma of our own *wrongdoings*,
and to establish the Pure Land of the East,
by purifying and transforming our *bodies and minds*.

We shall practice to transform the *afflictions*
of *greed, hatred, and ignorance*,
and to transfer our *good-rooted merits*
to all beings in the *Dharma realms*. [bell]

[Leader:

We evoke your name,
great, compassionate *Medicine Buddha*.]

All:

We aspire to learn your way so that *all beings*
may live freely, with all *their needs met*.
We take you as our model in cultivating
morality, meditative concentration, and wisdom;
We shall practice your great *compassion*
and *respect-inspiring virtues* over the *Dharma realms*,
to fulfill our wishes and to let our *human world*
establish the Pure Land of the East. [bell]

[We will practice sitting meditation as time allows.]

[bell]

Sharing the Merit

By this practice of Medicine Buddha,
may we and all beings
be purified of disease, pain, and suffering;
enjoy wellbeing;
attain complete and perfect enlightenment;
and lead all beings to liberation.

[bell]

Medicine Buddha Name Recitation

Nam Mô Dược Sư Lưu Ly Quang Vương Phật

[14 times] [bell, bell]

Address to Our Ancestors⁹⁸

We, your descendants,
 come with sincere respect before your altar.
We return to our source and ask you, our ancestors,
 to be our witness.
Trees have their roots and water has its source.
We know that you are our roots and we are your continuation.

~ Offer fruit ~

We are determined to receive your cultural and spiritual heritage,
 to conserve and nourish what is good, beautiful, and true in it.
We are also determined to realize the aspirations
 which we inherited from you,
transforming your suffering and opening up for future generations
 the way to a beautiful and meaningful life.

~ Offer flowers ~

We are determined to help build a society
 where all people's voices are heard and needs are met,
 where we care for the earth as the earth cares for us,
and where everyone has a chance to learn to live and love deeply,
 guided by wisdom and compassion.
Please be our protectors and the protectors of future generations,
 so that we have the health, faith, and joy to continue your work.

~ Offer incense ~

Please be witness to our sincerity as we offer fruit, flowers, and tea.

We offer them, and ourselves, with heartfelt sincerity and gratitude.

~ Offer tea ~

~ Offer three bells ~

⁹⁸ Adapted from *Chanting from the Heart* and the Plum Village tradition.

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RITUAL FOR HONORING THE ANCESTORS

[The leader gives incense to the family to hold at their foreheads.]

1. Prajnaparamita Sutra (The Heart of Perfect Understanding)

[Leader: Friends, it is time to bring to mind our ancestors and loved ones[, especially NAMES], 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. Let us gratefully welcome them with offerings of incense, flowers, and food. Seeking liberation for all beings, let us humbly hear and remember the teachings of the numberless Buddhas and Bodhisattvas of the Ten Directions.] [Bell]

All:

Nam Mô Bốn Sư Thích Ca Mâu Ni Phật (4x) [Bell]

[The leader collects the incense and offers it at the altar. The family bows four times]

[Leader:

The Bodhisattva Proclaims the Heart of Perfect Understanding.]

[Bell]

All:

Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva, when practicing deeply the Prajna Paramita, perceived that all five skandhas are empty and is saved from all suffering and distress.

Shariputra, form does not differ from emptiness; 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; 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, one dwells in Nirvana. In the three times, all Buddhas depend on Prajna Paramita and attain Anuttara Samyak Sambodhi. 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 paraga-te, Parasamga-te bodhi svaha
[3x] [Bell]

2. The Original Vow of the Pure Land

[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:] [Bell]

All:

“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.”

[Bell]

[Leader: Now is the first tea offering.]

[The family pours the first tea offering and bows twice.]

3. **The Seven Buddhas' Mantra for Healing Karma** ([YOUTUBE](#))

Ly bà ly bà đế, cầu ha cầu ha đế, Đà ra ni đế,
ni ha ra đế, tỳ lê nễ đế, ma ha dà đế,
chơn lăng càng đế, Ta Bà Ha. (3 times) [Bell]

4. **The Vow of Samatabhadra Bodhisattva**

[Leader: “Inspired by Samantabhadra Bodhisattva’s vow, I bring my heart, wide with deep understanding, with loving faith in the Buddhas of the Three Times, as an offering to the Tathagatas everywhere. With sincerity, I make a humble request of the Buddhas and those who are about to enter nirvana: remain forever in the world, for the benefit and the welfare of all.”] [Bell]

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.*

[Bell]

[Leader: Now is the food offering.]

[The leader gives the food offering to the family. They hold the offering at their forehead while we chant the mantras.]

5. The Transformation of Reality Mantra ([YOUTUBE](#), #5-7)

Nam Mô tát phạ đất tha, nga đa, bà lô chỉ đế, Án,
tam bặt ra tam bặt ra hồng (3x) [Bell]

6. The Nectar of Compassion Mantra

Nam Mô tô rô bà da, đất tha nga đa da,
đất diệt tha Án, tô rô, tô rô,
bát ra tô rô, bát ra tô rô, ta bà ha (3x) [Bell]

7. Universal Offering Mantra

Án, nga nga nẳng tam bà phạ phiệt nhứt ra hồng (3x) [Bell]

[The family places the food offering on the altar and bows twice.]

8. The Great Compassionate Vow of Avolokiteshvara Bodhisattva

[Leader: 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. May all beings cultivate boundless love. Let no one do harm to anyone. Let no one put the life of anyone in danger, and let no one, out of anger, ill will, or for any other reason wish anyone harm. May the sick be healed. May the old be well taken care of, and may those who have passed away be reborn in the Pure Land.] [Bell]

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.*

[Bell]

[Leader: Now is the second tea offering.]

[The family pours the second tea offering and bows twice.]

9. The Great Aspiration Vow of Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva

[Leader: Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva vowed that, throughout the future ages in all worlds where there are the three lower realms, he would rescue all suffering beings, causing them to leave the lower realms of hells, animals, and hungry ghosts. So, he is called the Bodhisattva of Great Aspiration, vowing: "Through incalculable ages, Buddhas have guided me, so that I am able to attain inconceivable spiritual power and be replete with great wisdom. In innumerable worlds, I guide hundreds of thousands of myriads of millions of people across, causing them to revere and take refuge in the Triple Gem, leave samsara forever, and reach the bliss of nirvana. Only when the beings who undergo the ripened effects of wrongdoing have all become Buddhas will I myself attain perfect awakening."]

[Bell]

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.*

[Bell]

[Leader: Now is the third tea offering.]

[The family pours the third tea offering and bows twice.]

10. From The Buddha Speaks the Amitabha Sutra

[Leader: Homage to Amitabha Buddha and the Western Pure Land. Guided by this Infinite Light, I vow to be reborn there and to cultivate the Pure Land of the here and now. I offer sincere homage to Amitabha, the Great Compassionate Buddha of the Western Pure Land.]

[Bell]

All:

Namo Amita-bhaya Buddhaya (14x) [Bell]

Namo Shakya-munaye Buddhaya (3x) [Bell]

Namo Avalo-kitesh-varaya Bodhi-sattvaya (3x). [Bell]

Namo Maha-sthama-prapta Bodhi-sattvaya (3x) [Bell]

Namo Kshiti-garbhaya Bodhi-sattvaya (3x) [Bell]

Namo Thanh-Tịnh Đại-Hải-Chúng Bồ Tát (3x). [Bell]

**11. Eradicating All Karmic Obstacles and Attaining Rebirth
in the Pure Land Mantra ([YOUTUBE](#))**

Nam Mô A di đa bà dạ, đa tha dà đa dạ; đa diệt dạ tha;
A di rị đô bà tỳ; A di rị đô tất đām bà tỳ;
A di rị đô tỳ can lan đế; A di rị đô tỳ can lan đa,
Dà di rị dà dà na; Chỉ đa ca lệ ta bà ha.

(3x) [Bell]

12. Gatha on Impermanence

The day [morning] 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]

13. Dedication of Merit

Remembering the compassionate Buddha Amitabha,
we dedicate the merit of this practice to [NAME],
whose Dharma name was [NAME],
and who passed away on [DATE] at the age of [YEARS OLD].

“To expound the dharma with this body is foremost.
Its virtue returns to the ocean of reality. It is unfathomable.
May we accept it with respect and gratitude.” (Dogen Zenji)

[Bell]

All:

*May the mind become clear and awaken to impermanence,
ripen with understanding, and enjoy the Pure Land.*

*May the living be peaceful and happy
and the deceased be liberated.*

*May all sentient beings be freed from suffering,
diligently perform good deeds,
and soon attain Buddhahood.*

[Bell]

Nam Mô A Di Đà Phật [15x] [Bell]

[The family bows four times.]

[Bell - finishing Bells - 4 bells]

Notes on the RITUAL FOR HONORING THE ANCESTORS

This service is an English version with adaptations of and additions to the Vietnamese ritual. It includes several mantras in Vietnamese that are important in our tradition. This companion offers explanations and commentary to help the English-speaking community understand and participate in the service.

Nam Mô Bổn Sư Thích Ca Mâu Ni Phật: Homage to Shakyamuni Buddha, the historical Buddha.

The numberless Buddhas and Bodhisattvas of the Ten Directions: The Ten Directions are the eight cardinal directions (north, south, east, west, northeast, northwest, southeast, and southwest), plus up and down. There is no place without the possibility of Awakening and without the support of Enlightened Beings. We also evoke the numberless Buddhas and Bodhisattvas to reflect our commitment to practicing for the liberation of numberless beings.

The Sutra of the Heart of Perfect Understanding: “The insight of prajñāpāramitā is the most liberating insight that helps us overcome all pairs of opposites such as birth and death, being and non-being, defilement and immaculacy, increasing and decreasing, subject and object, and so on, and helps us to get in touch with the true nature of no birth/no death, no being/no non-being etc... which is the true nature of all phenomena. This is a state of coolness, peace, and non-fear that can be experienced in this very life, in your own body and in your own five skandhas. It is nirvana. Just as the birds enjoy the sky, and the deer enjoy the meadow, so do the wise enjoy dwelling in nirvana.” (Most Venerable Thich Nhat Hanh)

<https://plumvillage.org/about/thich-nhat-hanh/letters/thich-nhat-hanh-new-heart-sutra-translation>

The Original Vow of the Pure Land: “The Buddha who is the primary focus of devotion in the Pure Land schools ... is a Buddha of the remote past called Amita Buddha. Many aeons ago, the story told by Sakyamuni Buddha goes, there lived a Bodhisattva named Dharmakara, who practiced the meditations of compassion and loving-kindness. In his meditation he saw that all living beings are subject to suffering, to the sorrows of birth, old age, illness and death. Witnessing this suffering aroused in him a great compassion, and out of this compassion he vowed that when he attained Buddhahood he would create a special paradise in the Western region where there would be no more suffering. Through the power of his vow he would enable any living being recollecting his name and calling upon his help to be reborn in the Western paradise. Since the Bodhisattva Dharmakara, after several long aeons of self-cultivation, did attain Perfect Enlightenment and become the Buddha Amita, this means that his Great Vow is now a reality. The paradise has been established and is accessible to all who with a mind of sincere faith take refuge in the compassion and grace of Amita Buddha.

“The Western paradise is not, however, the final goal for the Pure Land Buddhist, not even for those who seek rebirth there. Rather, it is an intermediary abode where the most favorable conditions for self-cultivation have been set up and secured. While there are some men who by practicing can reach enlightenment in this world, many find difficult obstacles confronting them along the path. The necessity for work, the attractions of the senses, the threat of illness and infirmity and the gross entanglements of materiality all stand as barriers across our path. In the Western Paradise none of these barriers are present. Everything there is radiant, peaceful and beautiful. No defilements can be found, for all shines with purity. Therefore, the country of Amita Buddha is called

the Pure Land. Those who are reborn into the Pure Land dwell in the midst of lotus flowers. They are always in the presence of Amita Buddha and the assemblies of Bodhisattvas presided over by the Bodhisattva Kwan-Yin, the embodiment of universal compassion. In the midst of these pure conditions it is easy to develop concentration and wisdom and attain Perfect Enlightenment.” (Venerable Thich Thien An) <https://www.urbandharma.org/ibmc/ibmc2/zpzp.html>

The Seven Buddhas' Mantra for Healing Karma: “What is the greatest benefit of this mantra? We eliminate negative karma, bring peace, good fortune, smooth sailing in all endeavors, and create blessings for future lives. ... If recited more than one hundred thousand times, it will become increasingly effective. ... It is from the Mahavairocana Dharani Sutra. At that time, the Blessed One – that is, our Buddha Shakyamuni – at the request of the Dharma Prince Manjushri, spoke the mantra that the Seven Buddhas of the past had recited. ... To eliminate karmic obstacles, the most appropriate thing to do is to recite this mantra.”

<https://phapmontamlinh.com/that-phat-diet-toi-chon-ngon/>

The Seven Buddhas of Antiquity: “In the earliest strata of Pali Buddhist texts, especially in the first four Nikayas, only the following seven Buddhas, The Seven Buddhas of Antiquity (Saptatathāgata), are explicitly mentioned and named. Four of these are from the current kalpa (Pali: kappa, meaning "eon" or "age") called the good eon (bhaddakappa) and three are from past eons.

1. Vipassī (lived ninety-one *kalpas* ago)
2. Sikhī (lived thirty-one *kalpas* ago)
3. Vessabhū (lived thirty-one *kalpas* ago in the same *kalpa* as Sikhī)
4. Kakusandha (the first Buddha of the current good eon)
5. Koṇāgamana (the second Buddha of the current eon)
6. Kassapa (the third Buddha of the current eon)
7. Gautama (the fourth and present Buddha of the current eon)

One sutta called Chakkavatti-Sīhanāda Sutta from an early Buddhist text called the Dīgha Nikaya also mentions that following the Seven Buddhas of Antiquity, a Buddha named Maitreya is predicted to arise in the world.” <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buddhahood>

The Transformation of Reality Mantra: “This is a mantra for transforming food for gods and hungry ghosts, ... recorded in the Sutra of Saving the Hungry Ghost from the Flaming Mouth. When the Buddha was preaching in Kapilavattu, Ananda was sitting in a secluded place practicing meditation. At night, after the third watch, Ananda saw a hungry ghost with a flaming mouth, its body ugly and emaciated, its mouth burning with fire, its throat as thin as a needle, its hair disheveled, its fingernails and teeth long and sharp, looking very frightening. The flaming-mouth ghost told Ananda that in three days he would die and also fall into the realm of hungry ghosts. Ananda, trembling with fear, immediately asked the hungry ghost how to escape suffering. The hungry ghost then instructed Ananda, saying: if one gives alms to countless hungry ghosts and hundreds of thousands of Brahmin sages, and then makes offerings to the Three Jewels to pray for the hungry ghosts to be reborn in heaven, then Ananda will live longer. Ananda quickly went to the Buddha, recounted his encounter with the hungry ghost, and asked for guidance. The Buddha then proclaimed for Ananda the Dharani with immeasurable power, self-mastery, radiant and wondrous strength (the Transformation of Food Mantra).”

<https://phatgiaio.org.vn/tu-dien-phat-hoc-online/bien-thuc-chan-ngon-k30349.html>

The Nectar of Compassion Mantra: “When reciting this mantra, visualize the offered water transforming into the nectar of Dharma, vast as the ocean, unobstructed by anything, permeating this

water, and attaining pure and wondrous bliss! This is the nectar of enlightenment bestowed by the Buddha Wonderful Form Tathagata. When reciting this mantra, one must visualize ... the pure essence of Prajna nectar flowing from the luminous point, permeating the entire Dharma realm and all sentient beings in their karmic paths, quickly freeing them from afflictions and leading them to purity. The Sutra of Offering to Hungry Ghosts says: 'By reciting the mantra ... , all food and drink will turn into a milky, nectar-like color, and the throats of all hungry ghosts will be opened wide, allowing them to eat together equally.'

"The Shurangama Sutra says: 'The nature of form is emptiness, the nature of emptiness is true form.' The sutra further says: 'The nature of water is emptiness, the nature of emptiness is true water, pure and readily available, pervading the entire Dharma realm according to the minds of sentient beings, the limited understanding arising according to their karma.' Now, when the practitioner's wisdom is completely pure, then water and food are also everywhere. This is because, due to the emptiness of the mind, the possession of water and food is also empty. Since emptiness is form, and form is emptiness, emptiness and form are not separate. Therefore, form pervades everywhere, without obstruction. This is the wondrous and inconceivable nature of the Dharma!"

<https://phatgiao.org.vn/than-chu-cam-lo-thuy-chan-ngon-d87432.html>

Universal Offering Mantra: "It is noteworthy that, before the offering of food, beings from the three realms mentioned above all heard the seven Buddhas deliver their teachings, the content of which is recorded in the chanting ritual: 'Make a vow to abandon greed, return to the Three Jewels, and cultivate the Bodhi mind; you will immediately be freed from the realm of darkness and reborn in the Pure Land.' After that, the three realms of the underworld were invited to eat and drink by Venerable Ananda. According to the scriptures, when he was alive, Venerable Ananda personally performed all these tasks: inviting the Buddhas, summoning hungry ghosts and wandering souls to the temple, and offering them food and drink. Finally, two Buddhas ... came to preach the priceless Dharma and the universal offering."

<https://phatgiao.org.vn/y-nghia-sieu-do-bat-do-trong-nghi-thuc-mong-son-thi-thuc-d34597.html>

The transformation referred to here is to multiply a small offering into an infinite feast. The Vietnamese is a phonetic transliteration of the Sanskrit: "Om, gagana sambhava vajra hoh." Om (Án) is the primal, universal sound of the sacred. Gagana (Nga nga nấng) refers to the boundlessness of the sky or the vastness of the cosmos. Sambhava (Tam bà phạ) manifests that vastness. Vajra (Phiệt nhựt ra) is the diamond or thunderbolt, symbolizing the power of the offering and its connection with Awakening. Hoh (Hồng) activates the mantra and embodies the joy of compassionate and wise giving.

From the Buddha Speaks the Amitabha Sutra: "The Amitabha Sutra (Sutra of Contemplation of Infinite Life) tells us the origin of the Pure Land teachings as expounded by Shakyamuni Buddha. Ajatashatru, the prince of Rajagriha, rebelled against his father, King Bimbisara, and imprisoned him; the queen was also confined. Afterward, the queen implored the Buddha to show her a better place, a place free from such calamities. The Buddha then appeared before her and revealed all the Buddha-lands. She chose the land of Amitabha Buddha as the best, and the Buddha taught her how to recite mantras about this land so that she might eventually be reborn there. He taught her his own teachings while also expounding the teachings of Amitabha Buddha.

“The Amitabha Sutra is a sutra praising the merits and virtues of all Buddhas and is protected by them. This sutra conveys very profound content, as taught by Shakyamuni Buddha himself. Recognizing this, Venerable Thich Tri Quang said: ‘Reciting the Buddha's name is not the same as calling out the Buddha's name. ... If we spend all day reciting 'Namo Amitabha Buddha' and calling out the Buddha's name to be reborn in the Pure Land, we will never be reborn there.’ The practice of reciting Amitabha Buddha's name is solely focused on the mind, not on any intermediate means, helping us to attain single-mindedness and unwavering concentration. The Pure Land of Amitabha Buddha is an allegory for beginningless and endless existence. It is also known as the realm of infinite life, infinite light, or the Dharma-realm treasury body.”

<https://phatgiao.org.vn/nghi-thuc-tung-kinh-a-di-da-viet-nghia-chuan-nhat-d40315.html>

The Vietnamese names for these Buddhas (Phật) and Bodhisattvas (Bồ Tát) are:

- Amitabha Buddha: A Di Đà Phật
- Shakyamuni Buddha: Thích Ca Mâu Ni Phật
- Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva: Quán Thế Âm Bồ Tát
- Mahasthamaprapta Bodhisattva: Đại Thế Chí Bồ Tát
- Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva: Địa Tạng Vương Bồ Tát
- Pure, Great Assembly of Bodhisattvas: Thanh Tịnh Đại Hải Chúng Bồ Tát
 - We evoke the numberless Bodhisattvas to evoke the boundless ocean of merit, the Buddha nature, and the commitment to practice for the liberation of all beings.

Eradicating All Karmic Obstacles and Attaining Rebirth in the Pure Land Mantra: “According to the Sutra of the Perfection of Mindfulness of the Buddha, during the degenerate age, the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra, out of compassion for sentient beings, expounded this Dharani to assist sentient beings in quickly attaining rebirth in the Pure Land: ‘At that time, Bodhisattva Samantabhadra said to the Buddha: “Venerable World Honored One! I am currently, out of compassion for sentient beings in the degenerate age. During this time, lifespans are short, virtues decline, chaos increases, and true practitioners are rare. I wish to bestow upon those who recite the Buddha's name this Dharani mantra to protect their souls, eliminate the root of karmic obstacles, purify their minds from afflictions, and help them quickly attain rebirth in the Pure Land. This mantra is called the Dharani for Eliminating All Karmic Obstacles and Attaining Rebirth in the Pure Land.””

<https://loiphatday.org/chu-vang-sanh-co-cong-nang-gi-than-chu-vang-sanh-tieng-viet-phan/>

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Bell & Mokugyo Together

We offer the bell and mokugyo in response to one another at the beginning of many services, usually right after sitting down. The numbers remind us of the Buddha's Teachings, such as the 3 Refuges, 7 Factors of Enlightenment, 6 Paramitas and the Four Noble Truths.

O = Ring Bell

X = Tap Mokugyo



Wake, O O O stop.

X X X X XX X

O X

O X

O X

X XX X

Stop bell.

