

Morning Session: Opening Prayers

Turning the Mind Away from Samsara

Death comes without warning!
It may come today,
Parting me from all that is familiar
And all those I love.

Now is the time to think
Of what heart connections mean.
Now is the time to think
Of what goes beyond birth and death.

Now is the time to discover
And learn to trust
The Openness, Clarity and Sensitivity of my being,
The Indestructible Heart Essence of all beings.

I have today to prepare.
Worldly attachments are useless,
As are anger and delusion.
Now is the time to let them go
And rest relaxed in my own true nature.

What use am I to others
If I am no use to myself?
How can I liberate them
If I cannot liberate myself?

May I and all beings be happy
And have the causes of happiness.
May I and all beings be free from suffering
And the causes of suffering.
May I and all beings have the happiness of complete Awakening
That will never diminish or fail.
Thus may we abide in boundless equanimity,
Unruffled by attachment and aversion
And with equal love for all beings.

Here we pause for a few minutes to reflect on the meaning of these verses which were written by Lama Shenpen Hookham while staying in retreat at Pen Y Bwlch in 2000.

In Praise of the Three Jewels

Namo Buddha,
Self-awakened, who is peace beginningless,
Without middle, without end,
Having awoken, wakening the unawakened,
Revealing the eternal fearless path.
Holder of the Vajra Sword,
The Wisdom and Compassion that breaks the wall of doubt
Concealed in the dark confusion of wrong views.
You are the only one who cuts the shoots of suffering at their source.

Namo Dharma,
Sun, which is not non-existent nor exists,
It is not both, nor is it other than these two,
Impossible to analyse, escaping all description
And realized by the self alone;
It is peace.
Namo to this light of stainless wisdom whose rays banish darkness,
The fault arising from attachment to the various sense desires.

Namo Sangha,
Because their mind is by nature Clarity,
They have seen the kleshas are essenceless,
And thus they have correctly penetrated the phenomenal world
As non-self, which is peace.
Their all-pervading intelligence is unveiled,
And sees Buddha everywhere,
With eyes of wisdom beholding the infinity of pure being.

The Homage

NAMO GURUBHYAH	(Homage to the Guru)	
NAMO BUDDHAYA	(Homage to the Buddha)	
NAMO DHARMAYA	(Homage to the Dharma)	
NAMO SAMGHAYA	(Homage to the Sangha)	x 3

Going for Refuge

LAMA LA CHAPSU CHE O	(I take Refuge in the Guru)	
SANJAY LA CHAPSU CHE O	(I take Refuge in the Buddha)	
CHO LA CHAPSU CHE O	(I take Refuge in the Dharma)	
GENDUN LA CHAPSU CHE O	(I take Refuge in the Sangha)	x 3

Rousing Bodichitta

(The English translation is recited once, then the Tibetan is chanted three times)

May the heart's awareness
Awaken in the unawakened.
Where it has begun to stir, may it never fade
And may it awaken fully. x 1

CHANG CHUP SEMNI RINPOCHE
MA CHE PANAM CHE JUR CHIG
CHEPA NYAMPA MAYPA TANG
GONGNAY GONGDHU PELWA SHO x 3

Refuge

We go for Refuge to all the Buddhas
So that all sentient beings may realize Buddhahood. x 3

The Heart Sutra

Thus have I heard.

Once the Blessed One was dwelling in Rajghir, at Vulture Peak Mountain, together with a great gathering of the sangha of monks and a great gathering of the sangha of bodhisattvas. At that time the Blessed One entered the samadhi that expresses the Dharma called 'profound illumination', and at the same time noble Avalokiteshvara, the Bodhisattva Mahasattva, while practising the profound Prajnaparamita, saw in this way: he saw the five skandhas to be empty of self-nature.

Then, through the power of the Buddha, venerable Shariputra said to noble Avalokiteshvara, the Bodhisattva Mahasattva, "How should a son or daughter of noble family train, who wishes to practise the profound Prajnaparamita?" Addressed in this way, noble Avalokiteshvara, the Bodhisattva Mahasattva said to venerable Shariputra, "O Shariputra, a son or daughter of noble family who wishes to practise the profound Prajnaparamita should see in this way: seeing the five skandhas to be empty of self-nature.

Form is emptiness; emptiness also is form. Emptiness is no other than form; form is no other than emptiness. In the same way, feeling, perception, formations and consciousness are emptiness. Thus Shariputra, all dharmas are emptiness. There are no characteristics. There is no birth and no cessation. There is no impurity and no purity. There is no decrease and no increase.

Therefore, Shariputra, in emptiness, there is no form, no feeling, no perception, no formations, no consciousness; no eye, no ear, no nose, no tongue, no body, no mind; no appearance, no sound, no smell, no taste, no touch, no dharmas; no eye dhatu up to no mind dhatu, no dhatu of dharmas, no mind consciousness dhatu; no ignorance, no end of ignorance up to no old age and death, no end of old age and death; no suffering, no origin of suffering, no cessation of suffering, no path, no wisdom, no attainment, and no nonattainment.

Therefore, Shariputra, since the bodhisattvas have no attainment, they abide by means of Prajnaparamita. Since there is no obscuration of mind, there is no fear. They transcend falsity and attain complete Nirvana. All the Buddhas of the three times, by means of Prajnaparamita, fully awaken to unsurpassable, true, complete Enlightenment.

Therefore, the great mantra of Prajnaparamita, the mantra of great insight, the unsurpassed mantra, the unequalled mantra, the mantra that calms all suffering should be known as truth, since there is no deception. The Prajnaparamita mantra is said in this way:

OM GATE GATE PARAGATE PARASAMGATE BODHI SVAHA

Thus, Shariputra, the Bodhisattva Mahasattva should train in the profound Prajnaparamita.”

Then the Blessed One arose from that samadhi and praised noble Avalokiteshvara, the Bodhisattva Mahasattva, saying, “Good, good, O son of noble family; thus it is, O son of noble family, thus it is. One should practise the profound Prajnaparamita just as you have taught and all the Tathagatas will rejoice.”

When the Blessed One had said this, venerable Shariputra and noble Avalokiteshvara, the Bodhisattva Mahasattva, that whole assembly and the world with its gods, humans, asuras and gandharvas rejoiced, and praised the words of the Blessed One.

Lotsawa Bikshu Rinchen De translated this text into Tibetan with the Indian pandita Vimalamitra. It was edited by the great editor-Lotsawas Gelo, Namkha, and others. This Tibetan text was copied from the fresco in Gegye Chemaling at the glorious Samye vihara. It has been translated into English by the Nalanda Translation Committee, with reference to several Sanskrit editions, with several small amendments made by Lama Shenpen Hookham.

Morning Session: Closing Prayers

Meditator's Verse

(The omzay recites this alone ten minutes before the end of the session)

Here there is nothing to remove and nothing to add.

The one who sees the Truth of Being as it is, by seeing the Truth, is liberated.

Dedication of Punya

(Five minutes before the end of the session)

We dedicate this punya to the Enlightenment of all sentient beings. May all sentient beings realize complete and perfect Awakening.

Rousing Bodichitta

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And may it awaken fully.

x 1

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GONGNAY GONGDHU PELWA SHO

x 3

Guru Yoga

All appearances are appearance-emptiness, the enlightened form of the guru.
All sounds resound as sound and emptiness, the supreme speech of the guru.
All thoughts and memories are clarity-emptiness, the guru's supreme enlightened mind.
You are from stopping and creating free - guru, please think of me.
Guru of equality, please think of me.

Spoken by Dechen Rangdrol, San Diego, California, December 22, 2003. Translated by Ari Goldfield.