

The King of Aspiration Prayers (English) Lotsawa House

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The King of Aspiration Prayers: Samantabhadra's "Aspiration to Good Actions" (Zangchö Mönlam) from the Gaṇḍavyūha chapter of the Avataṃsaka sūtra

In the language of India: Ārya-Bhadracaryā-Praṇidhāna-Rāja

In the language of Tibet: *Pakpa Zangpo Chöpé Mönlam gyi Gyalpo*

In the English language: *The King of Aspiration Prayers: Samantabhadra's "Aspiration To Good Actions"*

The Translators' Homage

Homage to Mañjushri, the youthful!

1. The Seven Preliminaries for Purifying the Mind

1.1. Prostration

[1] To all the buddhas, the lions of the human race,
In all directions of the universe, through past and present and future:
To every single one of you, I bow in homage;
Devotion fills my body, speech and mind.

[2] Through the power of this prayer, aspiring to Good Action,
All the victorious ones appear, vivid here before my mind
And I multiply my body as many times as atoms in the universe,
Each one bowing in prostration to all the buddhas.

1.2. Offering

[3] In every atom preside as many buddhas as there are atoms,
And around them, all their bodhisattva heirs:
And so I imagine them filling
Completely the entire space of reality.

[4] Saluting them with an endless ocean of praise,
With the sounds of an ocean of different melodies
I sing of the buddhas' noble qualities,
And praise all those who have gone to perfect bliss.

[5] To every buddha, I make offerings:
Of the loveliest flowers, of beautiful garlands,
Of music and perfumed ointments, the best of parasols,
The brightest lamps and finest incense.

[6] To every buddha, I make offerings:
Exquisite garments and the most fragrant scents,
Powdered incense, heaped as high as Mount Meru,
Arranged in perfect symmetry.

[7] Then the vast and unsurpassable offerings—
Inspired by my devotion to all the buddhas, and
Moved by the power of my faith in Good Actions—
I prostrate and offer to all you victorious ones.

1.3. Confession

[8] Whatever negative acts I have committed,
While driven by desire, hatred and ignorance,
With my body, my speech and also with my mind,
Before you, I confess and purify each and every one.

1.4. Rejoicing

[9] With a heart full of delight, I rejoice at all the merits
Of buddhas and bodhisattvas,
Pratyekabuddhas, those in training and the arhats beyond training,
And every living being, throughout the entire universe.

1.5. Imploring the Buddhas to Turn the Wheel of Dharma

[10] You who are like beacons of light shining through the worlds,
Who passed through the stages of enlightenment, to attain buddhahood, freedom from all
attachment,
I exhort you: all of you protectors,
Turn the unsurpassable wheel of Dharma.

1.6. Requesting the Buddhas not to Enter Nirvana

[11] Joining my palms together, I pray
To you who intend to pass into nirvana,
Remain, for aeons as many as the atoms in this world,
And bring well-being and happiness to all living beings.

1.7. Dedication

[12] What little virtue I have gathered through my homage,
Through offering, confession, and rejoicing,
Through exhortation and prayer—all of it
I dedicate to the enlightenment of all beings!

2. The Actual Aspiration

2.1. Aspiration for Purity of Attitude

[13] Let offerings be made to buddhas of the past,
And all who now dwell throughout the ten directions of this universe!
Let all who are yet to come swiftly fulfil their wishes
And attain the stages of enlightenment and buddhahood!

[14] Let as many worlds as there are in all the ten directions
Transform into realms that are vast and utterly pure,
Filled with buddhas who have sat before the mighty bodhi tree,
Around them all their bodhisattva sons and daughters!

[15] Let as many sentient beings as there are in all the ten directions
Live always and forever in happiness and health!
Let all beings meet the Dharma
That befits them best! And so may all they hope for be fulfilled!

2.2. Aspiration Never to Forget Bodhichitta

[16] As I practise the training for enlightenment,
May I recall all my previous births,
And in my successive lives, through death and through rebirth,
May I always renounce the worldly life!

[17] Training in the footsteps of all the victorious buddhas,
May I bring Good Actions to perfection,
And my moral conduct be taintless and pure,
Never lapsing, and always free from fault!

[18] In the language of the gods, nāgas, and yakṣas,
In the language of demons and of humans too,
In however many kinds of speech there may be—
I shall proclaim the Dharma in the language of all!

[19] Taming my mind, and striving in the paramitas,
I will never forget the bodhichitta;
May all my harmful actions and the obscurations they cause
Be completely purified, every single one!

2.3. Aspiration to be Free from Defilements

[20] May I be freed from karma, harmful emotions, and the work of negativity,
And act for all beings in the world,

Just like the lotus flower to which mud and water cannot cling,
Or sun and moon that course unhindered through the sky.

2.4. Aspiration to Lead Beings to Happiness

[21] Throughout the reach and range of the entire universe
I shall pacify completely the suffering of all the lower realms,
I shall lead all beings to happiness,
And work for the ultimate benefit of each and every one!

2.5. Aspiration to Wear the Armour of Dedication

[22] I shall bring enlightened action to perfection,
Serve beings so as to suit their needs,
Teach them to accomplish Good Actions,
And continue this, throughout all the aeons to come!

2.6. Aspiration to Accompany other Bodhisattvas

[23] May I always meet and be accompanied by
Those whose actions accord with mine;
And in body, speech and mind as well,
May our actions and aspirations always be one!

2.7. Aspiration to Have Virtuous Teachers and to Please Them

[24] May I always meet spiritual friends
Who long to be of true help to me,
And who teach me the Good Actions;
Never will I disappoint them!

2.8. Aspiration to See the Buddhas and Serve them in Person

[25] May I always behold the buddhas, here before my eyes,
And around them all their bodhisattva sons and daughters.
Without ever tiring, throughout all the aeons to come,
May the offerings I make them be endless and vast!

2.9. Aspiration to Keep the Dharma Thriving

[26] May I maintain the sacred teachings of the buddhas,
And cause enlightened action to appear;
May I train to perfection in Good Actions,
And practise these in every age to come!

2.10. Aspiration to Acquire Inexhaustible Treasure

[27] As I wander through all states of samsaric existence,
May I gather inexhaustible merit and wisdom,
And so become an inexhaustible treasury of noble qualities—

Of skill and discernment, samadhi and liberation!

2.11. Aspiration to the Different Methods for Entering into the “Good Actions”

a) Seeing the Buddhas and their Pure Realms

[28] In a single atom may I see as many pure realms as atoms in the universe:
And in each realm, buddhas beyond all imagining,
Encircled by all their bodhisattva heirs.
Along with them, may I perform the actions of enlightenment!

[29] And so, in each direction, everywhere,
Even on the tip of a hair, may I see an ocean of buddhas—
All to come in past, present and future—in an ocean of pure realms,
And throughout an ocean of aeons, may I enter into enlightened action in each and every one!

b) Listening to the Speech of the Buddhas

[30] Each single word of a buddha’s speech, that voice with its ocean of qualities,
Bears all the purity of the speech of all the buddhas,
Sounds that harmonise with the minds of all living beings:
May I always be engaged with the speech of the buddhas!

c) Hearing the Turning of the Wheels of Dharma

[31] With all the power of my mind, may I hear and realise
The inexhaustible melody of the teachings spoken by
All the buddhas of past, present and future,
As they turn the wheels of Dharma!

d) Entering into All the Aeons

[32] Just as the wisdom of the buddhas penetrates all future aeons,
So may I too know them, instantly,
And in each fraction of an instant may I know
All that will ever be, in past, present and future!

e) Seeing all the Buddhas in One Instant

[33ab] In an instant, may I behold all those who are the lions of the human race—
The buddhas of past, present and future!

f) Entering the Sphere of Activity of the Buddhas

[33cd] May I always be engaged in the buddhas’ way of life and action,
Through the power of liberation, where all is realised as like an illusion!

g) Accomplishing and Entering the Pure Lands

[34] On a single atom, may I actually bring about

The entire array of pure realms of past, of present and future;
And then enter into those pure buddha realms
In each atom, and in each and every direction.

h) Entering into the Presence of the Buddhas

[35] When those who illuminate the world, still to come,
Gradually attain buddhahood, turn the Wheel of Dharma,
And demonstrate the final, profound peace of nirvana:
May I be always in their presence!

2.12. Aspiration to the Power of Enlightenment through Nine Powers

[36] Through the power of swift miracles,
The power of the vehicle, like a doorway,
The power of conduct that possesses all virtuous qualities,
The power of loving kindness, all-pervasive,

[37] The power of merit that is totally virtuous,
The power of wisdom free from attachment, and
The powers of knowledge, skilful means and samadhi,
May I perfectly accomplish the power of enlightenment!

2.13. Aspiration to the Antidotes that Pacify the Obscurations

[38] May I purify the power of karma;
Destroy the power of harmful emotions;
Render negativity utterly powerless;
And perfect the power of Good Actions!

2.14. Aspiration to Enlightened Activities

[39] I shall purify oceans of realms;
Liberate oceans of sentient beings;
Understand oceans of Dharma;
Realise oceans of wisdom;

[40] Perfect oceans of actions;
Fulfil oceans of aspirations;
Serve oceans of buddhas!
And perform these, without ever growing weary, through oceans of aeons!

2.15. Aspiration for Training

a) To Emulate the buddhas

[41] All the buddhas throughout the whole of time,
Attained enlightenment through Good Actions, and
Their prayers and aspirations for enlightened action:

May I fulfil them all completely!

b) To emulate the bodhisattvas: Samantabhadra

[42] The eldest of the sons of all the buddhas
Is called Samantabhadra: 'All-good'—
So that I may act with a skill like his,
I dedicate fully all these merits!

[43] To purify my body, my speech and my mind as well,
To purify my actions, and all realms,
May I be the equal of Samantabhadra
In his skill in good dedication!

c) Mañjushri

[44] In order to perform the full virtue of Good Actions,
I shall act according to Mañjushri's prayers of aspiration,
And without ever growing weary, in all the aeons to come,
I shall perfectly fulfil every one of his aims!

2.16. Concluding Aspiration

[45] Let my bodhisattva acts be beyond measure!
Let my enlightened qualities be measureless too!
Keeping to this immeasurable activity,
May I accomplish all the miraculous powers of enlightenment!

Extent of the Aspiration

[46] Sentient beings are as limitless
As the boundless expanse of space;
So shall my prayers of aspiration for them
Be as limitless as their karma and harmful emotions!

3. The Benefits of Making Aspirations

3.1. The Benefits of Making Aspirations in General

[47] Whoever hears this king of dedication prayers,
And yearns for supreme enlightenment,
Who even once arouses faith,
Will gain true merit greater still

[48] Than by offering the victorious buddhas
Infinite pure realms in every directions, all ornamented with jewels,
Or offering them all the highest joys of gods and humans

For as many aeons as there are atoms in those realms.

3.2. The Thirteen Benefits in Detail

[49] Whoever truly makes this Aspiration to Good Actions,
Will never again be born in lower realms;
They will be free from harmful companions, and
Soon behold the Buddha of Boundless Light.

[50] They will acquire all kind of benefits, and live in happiness;
Even in this present life all will go well,
And before long,
They will become just like Samantabhadra.

[51] All negative acts—even the five of immediate retribution—
Whatever they have committed in the grip of ignorance,
Will soon be completely purified,
If they recite this Aspiration to Good Actions.

[52] They will possess perfect wisdom, beauty, and excellent signs,
Be born in a good family, and with a radiant appearance.
Demons and heretics will never harm them,
And all three worlds will honour them with offerings.

[53] They will quickly go beneath the bodhi-tree,
And there, they will sit, to benefit all sentient beings, then
Awaken into enlightenment, turn the wheel of Dharma,
And tame Mara with all his hordes.

3.3. The Benefits in Brief

[54] The full result of keeping, teaching, or reading
This Prayer of Aspiration to Good Actions
Is known to the buddhas alone:
Have no doubt: supreme enlightenment will be yours!

4. Dedication of the Merits of this Meritorious Aspiration

4.1. Dedication that Follows the Bodhisattvas

[55] Just as the bodhisattva Mañjushri attained omniscience,
And Samantabhadra too
All these merits now I dedicate
To train and follow in their footsteps.

4.2. Dedication that Follows the Buddhas

[56] As all the victorious buddhas of past, present and future
Praise dedication as supreme,
So now I dedicate all these roots of virtue
For all beings to perfect Good Actions.

4.3. Dedication towards Actualising the Result

[57] When it is time for me to die,
Let all that obscures me fade away, so
I look on Amitabha, there in person,
And go at once to his pure land of Sukhavati.

[58] In that pure land, may I actualise every single one
Of all these aspirations!
May I fulfil them, each and every one,
And bring help to beings for as long as the universe remains!

4.4. Dedication towards Receiving a Prophecy from the Buddhas

[59] Born there in a beautiful lotus flower,
In that excellent and joyous buddha realm,
May the Buddha Amitabha himself
Grant me the prophecy foretelling my enlightenment!

4.5. Dedication towards Serving Others

[60] Having received the prophecy there,
With my billions of emanations,
Sent out through the power of my mind,
May I bring enormous benefit to sentient beings, in all the ten directions!

5. Conclusion

[61] Through whatever small virtues I have gained
By reciting this "Aspiration to Good Actions",
May the virtuous wishes of all beings' prayers and aspirations
All be instantly accomplished!

[62] Through the true and boundless merit
Attained by dedicating this "Aspiration to Good Actions",
May all those now drowning in the ocean of suffering,
Reach the supreme realm of Amitabha!

[63] May this King of Aspirations bring about

The supreme aim and benefit of all infinite sentient beings;
May they perfect what is described in this holy prayer, uttered by Samantabhadra!
May the lower realms be entirely emptied!

This completes the King of Aspiration Prayers, Samantabhadra's "Aspiration to Good Actions."

Words of Truth to Accomplish Aspirations

By the blessings of the buddhas who have attained the three kayas,
And the unchanging truth of reality
As well as the unwavering aspirations of the Sangha,
May all the aspirations and dedication prayers be fulfilled!

The dharani for the accomplishment of all aspirations

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tadyathā pañcendriyāvabodhanīye svāhā