

*The Inseparability of the Spiritual Master
and Avalokiteshvara:
A Source of All Powerful Attainments
(Avalokiteshvara Guru Yoga)*



*By Tenzin Gyatso,
His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama*

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Practice Requirements:

Anyone may perform this practice.

The Inseparability of the Spiritual Master and Avalokiteshvara:

A Source of All Powerful Attainments

Introduction

To my spiritual master Avalokiteshvara,
The full-moon-like essence of the buddhas' vast compassion
And the radiant white nectar of their all-inspiring strength,
I pay my deep respect.
I shall now disseminate to all other beings the standard practice
of this profound yoga.

The root of every inspiration and powerful attainment (siddhi) lies solely with the spiritual master (lama or guru). As such he has been praised in both sutras and tantras¹ more than once. He is of fundamental importance because the basis for achieving everlasting happiness is requesting him to teach the undistorted path. Thinking of him as being inseparable from the specific meditational deity with whom you feel a special affinity, you should visualize the two as one.

The vitality of the Mahayana tradition comes from compassion, love, and the altruistic aspiration to attain enlightenment (bodhichitta) in order to effectively help all creatures become free from their suffering. Moreover, the importance of compassion is emphasized throughout all stages of development. Therefore, if you wish to combine Avalokiteshvara, the meditational deity

of compassion, with your own root guru, first gather fine offerings in a suitable place. Sitting on a comfortable seat in an especially virtuous state of mind, take refuge, generate an enlightened motive of the awakening mind, and meditate on the four immeasurable thoughts.

Preliminaries

I. Refuge

NAMO GURUBHYAH In the spiritual masters, I take refuge;
NAMO BUDDHAYA In the Awakened One, I take refuge;
NAMO DHARMAYA In his Truth, I take refuge;
NAMO SANGHAYA In the Spiritual Community, I take refuge. (3x)

II. Generating Bodhichitta

In the Supreme Awakened One, his Truth,
and the Spiritual Community,
I seek refuge until becoming enlightened.
By the merit from practicing giving and other perfections,
May I accomplish full awakening for the benefit of all. (3x)

III. The Four Immeasurable Thoughts

May all sentient beings possess happiness and the cause
of happiness.
May all sentient beings be parted from suffering and the cause
of suffering.
May all sentient beings never be parted from the happiness
that has no suffering.
May all sentient beings abide in equanimity without attachment
or aversion for near or far. (3x)

Recite these prayers three times each.

The Actual Practice

I. Purification

May the surface of the earth in every direction
 Be stainless and pure, without roughness or fault,
 As smooth as the palm of a child's soft hand
 And as naturally polished as lapis lazuli.²

May the material offerings of gods³ and humans,
 Both those set before me and those visualized
 Like a cloud of the peerless offerings of Samantabhadra,⁴
 Pervade and encompass the vastness of space.

OM NAMO BHAGAVATE VAJRA SARA PRAMARDANE
 TATHAGATAYA / ARHATE SAMYAK SAMBUDDHAYA /
 TADYATHA / OM VAJRE VAJRE / MAHA VAJRE / MAHA TEJA
 VAJRE / MAHA VIDYA VAJRE / MAHA BODHICHITTA VAJRE /
 MAHA BODHI MANDO PASAM KRAMANA VAJRE / SARVA
 KARMA AVARANA VISHO DHANA VAJRE SVAHA (3x)

Recite this purification mantra three times.

By the force of the truth of the Three Jewels of refuge,
 By the firm inspiration from all bodhisattvas and buddhas,
 By the power of the buddhas who have fully completed
 their collections of both good merit and insight,
 By the might of the void, inconceivable and pure,
 May all of these offerings be hereby transformed into their
 actual nature of voidness.

In this way bless the surroundings and the articles of offering.

II. Visualization

In the space of the dharmakaya⁵ of great spontaneous bliss,
In the midst of billowing clouds of magnificent offerings,
Upon a sparkling, jeweled throne supported by eight snow lions,⁶
On a seat composed of a lotus in bloom, the sun and the moon,⁷
Sits supreme exalted Avalokiteshvara, great treasure of compassion,
Assuming the form of a monk wearing saffron-colored robes.

O my Vajradhara master, kind in all three ways,⁸
 holy Losang Tenzin Gyatso,
Endowed with a glowing fair complexion and a radiant smiling face,
Your right hand at your heart in a gesture expounding Dharma
Holds the stem of one white lotus that supports a book and sword;⁹
Your left hand resting in meditative pose holds
 a thousand-spoked wheel.¹⁰
You are clothed in the three saffron robes of a monk,¹¹
And are crowned with the pointed, golden hat of a pandit.¹²
Your aggregates, sensory spheres, senses, and objects,
 as well as your limbs,
Are a mandala complete with the five buddhas
 and their consorts,¹³
Male and female bodhisattvas and the wrathful protectors.

Encircled by a halo of five brilliant colors,¹⁴
My master is seated in full vajra posture.
Sending forth a network of cloud-like self-emanations
To tame the minds of all sentient beings.

Within his heart sits Avalokiteshvara, a wisdom-being,¹⁵
With one face and four arms.
His upper two hands are placed together,
His lower two hands hold a crystal rosary and white lotus.¹⁶
He is adorned with jeweled ornaments and heavenly raiment.

Over his left shoulder an antelope skin is draped,¹⁷
 And cross-legged he is seated on a silver moon and lotus.¹⁸
 The white syllable HRIH, a concentration-being at his heart,
 Emits brilliant colored light in all the ten directions.

On my master's brow is a white OM,
 Within his throat, a red AH,
 At his heart, a blue HUM
 From which many lights shine out in myriad directions, Inviting the
 Three Jewels of Refuge to dissolve into him,
 Transforming him into the collected essence of the objects of refuge.

In this manner visualize the spiritual master.

III. The Seven-Limb Prayer

Prostrating

Your liberating body is fully adorned with all the signs
 of a buddha;¹⁹
 Your melodious speech, complete with all sixty rhythms,
 flows without hesitation;
 Your vast, profound mind filled with wisdom and compassion
 is beyond all conception;
 I prostrate to the wheel of these three secret adornments
 of your body, speech, and mind.

Offering

Material offerings of my own and those of others,
 The actual objects and those that I visualize,
 Body and wealth, and all virtues amassed throughout
 the three times,
 I offer to you upon visualized oceans of clouds
 like Samantabhadra's offerings.

Confessing

My mind being oppressed by the stifling darkness of ignorance,
I have done many wrongs against reason and vows.
Whatever mistakes I have made in the past,
With a deep sense of regret I pledge never to repeat them,
And without reservation I confess everything to you.

Rejoicing

From the depths of my heart,
I rejoice in the enlightening deeds of the sublime masters
And in the virtuous actions past, present, and future
Performed by myself and all others as well,
And by ordinary and exalted beings of the three
sacred traditions.²⁰

Requesting

I request you to awaken every living being
From the sleep of ordinary and instinctive defilements
With the divine music of the Dharma's pure truth,
Resounding with the melody of profoundness and peace
And in accordance with the dispositions of your various disciples.

Entreating

I entreat you to firmly establish your feet upon the indestructible
Vajra throne
In the indissoluble state of E-VAM,²¹
Until every sentient being gains the calm breath of joy
in the state of final realization,
Unfettered by the extremes of worldliness or tranquil liberation.

Dedicating

I dedicate fully my virtuous actions of all the three times,
 So that I may receive continuous care from a master
 And attain full enlightenment for the benefit of all
 Through accomplishing my prayers, the supreme deed
 of Samantabhadra.

IV. The Mandala Offering

By the virtue of offering to you, assembly of buddhas visualized
 before me,
 This mandala built on a base, resplendent with flowers,
 saffron water, and incense,
 Adorned with Mount Meru and the four continents, as well
 as the sun and the moon,
 May all sentient beings share in its boundless effects.

This offering I make of a precious jeweled mandala,
 Together with other pure offerings and wealth
 And the virtues we have collected throughout the three times
 With our body, speech and mind.

O my masters, my yidams,²² and the Three Precious Jewels,
 I offer all to you with unwavering faith.
 Accepting these out of your boundless compassion,
 Send forth to me waves of your inspiring strength.

OM IDAM GURU RATNA MANDALAKAM NIRYATAYAMI

Thus make the offering of the mandala together with the seven-
 limb prayer.

V. The Blessing by the Master

From the HRIH in the heart of Avalokiteshvara,
Seated in the heart of my venerable master,
Flow streams of nectar and rays of five colors
Penetrating the crown of my head,
Eliminating all obscurations and endowing me with both
Common and exclusive powerful attainments.

OM AH GURU VAJRADHARA VAGINDRA SUMATI SHASANA
DHARA SAMUDRA SHRI BHADRA SARVA SIDDHI HUM HUM

Recite the mantra of the spiritual master as many times as possible.

VI. The Prayer of the Graduated Path

Bestow on me your blessings to be devoted to my master
With the purest thoughts and actions, gaining confidence that you,
O compassionate holy master, are the basis of temporary
and everlasting bliss,
For you elucidate the true path free from all deception
And embody the totality of refuges past number.

Bestow on me your blessings to live a life of Dharma
Undistracted by the illusory preoccupations of this life,
For well I know that these pleasures and endowments
Can never be surpassed by countless treasures of vast wealth,
And that this precious form once attained cannot endure,
For at any moment of time it may easily be destroyed.

Bestow on me your blessings to cease actions of non-virtue
And accomplish wholesome deeds, by being always mindful
Of the causes and effects from kind and harmful acts,
While revering the Three Precious Jewels as the ultimate source
of refuge

And most trustworthy protection from the unendurable fears
of unfortunate rebirth states.

Bestow on me your blessings to practice the three
higher trainings,²³
Motivated by firm renunciation gained from the clear
comprehension
That even the prosperity of the lord of the devas²⁴
Is merely a deception, like a siren's alluring spell.

Bestow on me your blessings to master the oceans of practice,
Cultivating immediately the supreme enlightened motivation,
By reflecting on the predicament of all mother sentient beings,
Who have nourished me with kindness from beginningless time
And now are tortured while ensnared within one extreme or other,
Either on the wheel of suffering or in tranquil liberation.

Bestow on me your blessings to generate the yoga
Combining mental quiescence with penetrative insight
In which the hundred-thousand-fold splendor of voidness,
forever free from both extremes,²⁵
Reflects without obstruction in the clear mirror
of the immutable meditation.

Bestow on me your blessings to observe in strict accordance
All the vows and words of honor that form the root
of powerful attainments,
Having entered through the gate of the extremely profound tantra
By the kindness of my all-proficient master.

Bestow on me your blessings to attain within this lifetime
The blissful mahamudra of the union of body and wisdom,²⁶
Through severing completely my all-creating karmic energy
With wisdom's sharp sword of the non-duality of bliss
and emptiness.²⁷

Having made requests in this way for the development in your mindstream of the entire paths of sutra and tantra, and thus having done a glance meditation on them, now recite the six-syllable mantra in connection with the merging of the spiritual master into your heart.

VII. The Merging of the Spiritual Master

My supreme master, requested in this way,
Now blissfully descends through the crown of my head
And dissolves in the indestructible point
At the center of my eight-petaled heart.²⁸
Now my master re-emerges on a moon and lotus.
In his heart sits Avalokiteshvara, within whose heart is
the letter HRIH
Encircled by a rosary of the six-syllable mantra, the source
from which streams of nectar flow,
Eliminating all obstacles and every disease
And expanding my knowledge of the scriptural and insight
teachings of the Buddha.
Thus, I receive the entire blessings of the victorious ones
and their children,
And radiant lights again shine forth
To cleanse away defects from all beings and their environment.
In this way I attain the supreme yogic state,
Transforming every appearance, sound, and thought
Into the three secret ways of the exalted ones.²⁹

After completing the above, recite the six-syllable mantra, OM MANI PADME HUM, as many times as possible. Upon conclusion, recite once the hundred-syllable mantra of Vajrasattva.

OM VAJRASATTVA SAMAYAM ANUPALAYA / VAJRASATTVA
 TVENOPATISHTA / DRIDHO ME BHAVA / SUTOSHYO ME
 BHAVA / SUPOSHYO ME BHAVA / ANURAKTO ME BHAVA /
 SARVASIDDHIM ME PRAYACHA / SARVAKARMA SUCHA
 ME CHITTAM SHRIYAM KURU HUM / HA HA HA HA HOH
 BHAGAVAN SARVA TATHAGATA VAJRA MA ME MUNCHA /
 VAJRA BHAVA MAHASAMAYASATTVA AH HUM PHAT

VIII. Dédication

In the glorious hundred-thousand-fold radiance of the youthful
 moon of wholesome practice,
 From the blue jasmine garden of Victorious Treasure Mind's
 method of truth,³⁰
 May the seeds of explanation and accomplishment germinate
 and flower across this vast earth;
 May the ensuing auspiciousness beautify everything until the limit
 of the universe.³¹

By flying high above the three realms,³²
 The never-vanishing great jeweled banner of religious
 and secular rule,³³
 Laden with millions of virtues and perfect accomplishments:
 May myriad wishes for benefit and bliss pour down.

Having banished afar the dark weight of this era's degeneration
 Across the extent of the earth sapphire held by a celestial maiden,
 May all living creatures overflow with spontaneous gaiety and joy
 In the significant encompassing brilliance of happiness and bliss.

In short, O protector, by the power of your affectionate care,
 May I never be parted from you throughout the rosaries of my lives.
 May I proceed directly, with an ease beyond effort,
 Unto the great city of unification, the all-powerful
 cosmic state itself.³⁴

Having offered prayers of dedication in this way, also recite others such as the “Yearning Prayer of Samantabhadra’s Activity” or “The Prayer of the Virtuous Beginning, Middle, and End.”³⁵ Upon conclusion recite the following prayer.

Conclusion

By the force of the immaculate compassion of the victorious ones
and their sons,

May everything adverse be banished for eternity throughout
the universe.

May all favorable omens become increasingly auspicious,
And may whatever is of virtue in the round of this existence
or in tranquil liberation

Flourish and grow brighter like a new moon waxing full.

Notes:

1. The sutras are teachings of Buddha dealing with general subjects while the tantras concern esoteric matters.
2. Lapis lazuli is a semiprecious gem, deep blue in color, and usually highly polished.
3. Gods are those beings who abide in the celestial realms, the rebirth state with the least suffering within the cycle of existence (samsara).
4. Samantabhadra is one of the eight bodhisattvas of the Mahayana lineage. He is famed for the extensiveness of his offerings made to the buddhas of the ten directions. Bodhisattva literally means “courageously minded one striving for enlightenment.” A bodhisattva courageously endures any hardship to overcome ignorance and the momentum of previous unskillful actions in order to attain full enlightenment for the benefit of all other beings.
5. The dharmakaya is the truth body of a fully enlightened being. It is the final accomplishment of all practices and results from an accumulation of meditational insight.
6. Four of the eight snow lions look upward, providing protection from interferences from above. Four gaze downward, protecting from interferences from below.
7. The lotus, rising through the mire of a swamp, symbolizes the purity of the bodhisattva who rises above the bonds of cyclic existence, uncontaminated by the confusion of the world. The moon symbolizes the conventional enlightened motivation of bodhichitta: the altruistic aspiration to attain buddhahood for the sake of others. The sun symbolizes the ultimate wisdom of bodhichitta: the direct cognition of voidness, the true mode of existence.
8. “Vajradhara master” is a name given to a tantric master, indicating that he is considered inseparable from Buddha Vajradhara (Tib. *Dorje Chang*, Holder of the Vajra), the tantric emanation of Buddha Shakyamuni. The vajra is a symbol of strength and unity. He is kind in three ways by giving the empowerment to practice the deity yoga of tantra, the oral transmission that remains unbroken from the Enlightened One himself, and the oral explanation of the tantric procedures based on his own experience.
9. The white lotus symbolizes the pure nature of the discriminating wisdom of penetrative insight into voidness. The knowledge of this is symbolized by the book of scripture resting on the lotus together with the flaming sword of total awareness that cuts through the root of ignorance. The scripture is one of the perfection of wisdom (*prajnaparamita*) sutras.
10. The thousand-spoked wheel signifies the turning of the wheel of truth (*dharmachakra*), the teachings of the Buddha.

11. The three robes stand for the three higher trainings in ethics, meditative stabilization, and discriminating wisdom.
12. The golden hat of a pandit symbolizes pure morality. Its point stands for penetrative wisdom. A pandit is a master of the five major branches of knowledge: art, medicine, grammar, reasoning, and the inner, or Buddhist, sciences.
13. Meditation on the five buddhas, or conquerors (*jina*), is visualized in tantric practice to purify the five aggregates (*skandha*) and to transform the five defilements of greed, hatred, self-importance, jealousy, and ignorance into the five wisdoms. The five aggregates are form, feeling, recognition, compositional factors, and consciousness. The five wisdoms are of voidness, equality, individuality, accomplishment, and the mirror-like wisdom.
14. The five colors are red, blue, yellow, green, and white. They are associated with the five conquerors.
15. A wisdom-being (*yeshe sempa*) is the actual implied being in one's visualization of a deity. Initially, in visualization, one conceptually creates a mentally manifested being (*damtsig sempa*) out of a relaxed but controlled imaginative concentration. This creation eventually merges with the wisdom-being when one's vision of the deity becomes non-conceptual.
16. The beads on the crystal rosary held by Avalokiteshvara symbolize sentient beings. The action of turning the beads indicates that he is drawing them out of their misery in cyclic existence and leading them into the state beyond sorrow (*nirvana*). The white lotus symbolizes his pure state of mind.
17. The antelope is known to be very kind and considerate toward its offspring and is therefore a symbol for bodhichitta, the cultivation of a kind and compassionate attitude toward others.
18. The moon stands for the method by which one follows the spiritual path and engages in the conduct of the bodhisattvas. The lotus symbolizes the discriminating wisdom of insight into voidness.
19. There are thirty-two major and eighty minor signs that indicate the attainments of an enlightened being.
20. The three sacred traditions of Buddhism are the vehicles of the shravakas, pratyekabuddhas, and bodhisattvas.
21. E-VAM is a Sanskrit seed syllable meaning "thus." It symbolizes the unity of the positive and negative aspects of cosmic energy which, in terms of the momentum from the past and the potentiality of the future, are unified in the present.
22. The yidam is the meditational deity with whom one identifies when practicing tantric deity yoga. This should only be done after having received an empowerment from a fully qualified tantric master.
23. The three higher trainings are ethics (*shila*), meditative concentration (*samadhi*), and discriminating wisdom (*prajna*).

24. Even Indra, the lord of the devas, will one day expend the accumulation of virtuous actions that cause him to hold one of the highest positions within the six realms of cyclic existence, and he too will fall into a lower realm.
25. The two extremes are the beliefs in either true self-existence or nonexistence. The middle way (*madhyamaka*) shows a path that is neither of these.
26. The Great Seal (*mahamudra, chagya chenpo*) of the union of body and wisdom (*yuganaddha, zungjug*) is the unity of the clear light (*prabhasvara, osel*) and the illusory body (*mayakaya, gyulu*). The illusory body is the finest physical body, a combination of energy (*vayu, lung*) and consciousness (*chitta, sem*). The clear light is the wisdom of the non-duality of bliss and voidness.
27. The non-duality of bliss and voidness is the bliss of the direct understanding of voidness.
28. The heart wheel (*chakra*) of the central psychic channel (*nadi*) has eight divisions.
29. The three secret ways of the exalted ones are: (a) viewing all surroundings as a blissful abode (*mandala*) and all beings as manifestations of deities, (b) hearing all sound as mantra, and (c) intuitively knowing everything to be empty of true existence.
30. "Victorious Treasure Mind" is a name given to Mañjushri, the meditational deity embodying discriminating wisdom. His method of truth is the direct cognition of voidness.
31. The limit of the universe is when all beings attain full enlightenment.
32. The three realms are the desire, form, and formless realms.
33. Religious and secular rule refers to the form of government in Tibet prior to 1959.
34. The great city of unification, the all-powerful cosmic state, is buddhahood.
35. *Bhadracharyapranidhana (Zangpo chope monlam)* is the "Yearning Prayer of Samantabhadra's Activity." *Togtama* by Je Tsongkhapa is "The Prayer of the Virtuous Beginning, Middle, and End."
36. Once in Tibet a very devout woman asked her son, who journeyed on trading expeditions to India, to bring back for her a relic of Buddha. Although the son went three times, each time he forgot the promised relic. Not wanting to disappoint his mother again, he picked up a dog's tooth as he was nearing home on his last journey and reverently presented that to her. She was overjoyed and placed the tooth upon the family altar. She then made many devotions to the "holy tooth" and, to the amazement of her son, from the tooth came several true relics.

Original Colophon:

This has been written at the repeated request of the assistant cabinet minister, Mr. Shankawa Gyurme Sonam Tobgyal who, with sincere faith and offerings, asked me to write a simple and complete sadhana of the inseparability of Avalokiteshvara and myself. This devotion contains a short glance meditation on the entire graduated path and the mantras of the master and Avalokiteshvara. Although it is improper for me to write such a devotion about myself, waves of inspiration of the buddhas can be received from ordinary beings just as relics can come from a dog's tooth.³⁶ Therefore, I have composed this with the hope of benefiting a few faithful disciples.

The Buddhist monk

Ngawang Losang Tenzin Gyatso

maintaining the title of Holder of the White Lotus (Avalokiteshvara)

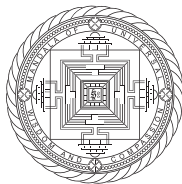
Translator's note:

This sadhana, entitled *The Inseparability of the Spiritual Master and Avalokiteshvara: A Source of all Powerful Attainments*, was composed when His Holiness was nineteen years of age and was first published in Tibet in the Wood Horse Year (1954). This translation was originally made at the wish of Mr. Ang Sim Chai of Malaysia. It is our sincere and deep hope that people, through this practice, will discover a universal means of creating happiness through generating compassion and love for all. May every creature share in its boundless effects.

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Sharpa Tulku

Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition



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