

Draft One

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**The Sun Radiating Light of Goodness and Munificence: Laying
Out the Points of Guided Meditations Of the Path of Bliss, A
Treatise on the Path to Enlightenment**

**Equalling the expanse of the space of knowledge (she-ja) in
the three times,
cMagnificent with the sacred light of excellent (rab) wisdom,
From the depths of my heart I bow to my kind master skilled in
spreading out
The delightful lotus of scripture and realization until the end of
the ocean (gya tsho).**

**With the sweet dew of the ear-whispered instructions of the
good intelligence (lo sang)
The host of honeybees sing the melodious song of scripture
(lung) and logic (rigs)
I once again recollect the infinitely vast (gya) ripening and
liberative altruistic deeds
Of the ocean (tsho) of your compassionate magical sport.**

**In the endless ocean of virtuous deeds beyond limit
Your beautiful perfect form of complete sphere
Appear exquisitely from which you sprinkle forth the nectar of
wisdom:
To you, full moon amongst the sage-teachers, my obeisance!**

**Ajita and Manjugosha, the embodiments of compassion and
wisdom, respectively;
And Nagarjuna and Asanga,
The best lamps illuminating the profound and extensive paths
I bow to them and their teaching lineages.**

**Clarifying the sweet clear river course of the Land of Snows,
Which has been polluted by the dirts of misunderstanding,
You became the trailblazer of the unmistakable complete path:
I worship you on my crown, O Glorious Dipankarashrijnana.**

**Through the hundred thousand rays of unprecedented wisdom
You outshine the ten million constellations of sweet talkers**

**O Good Intelligence (lo sang), the renowned sun
When I found confidence in you as the unity of the three
lineages (Manjushri, Avalokiteshvara and Vajrapani):
I bow to you with highest reverence.**

**Not satiated with the well of partiality, you practiced and
experienced
[Page 3] The essence of the ocean of Sutra and Tantra
And journeyed to the deathless level of eternally blissful state:
I bow to you scholar-adept masters and their successors.**

**The primordial wisdom body of all the victorious ones
(buddhas)
Reappearing in their dance of manifestations for the fortunate
beings without discrimination
And leading them to the jewel island of total liberation
I beseech you all, whose kindness is unmatched, to sit in the
centre of my heart!**

**What are, and what are not, the means by which we are led
To this cycle of existence, the city of sea monsters, filled with
the turbulent waves of suffering,
And to quickly cross it to reach the great palace of
omniscience?
This is what the inquisitive wise ones must engage in over and
over again?**

**Therefore, I am very delighted to write a clear suitable text
On the meaning of the scriptures, exegeses as well as their
explanations
In a single synthesis constituting the stages of the path,
The essence of the true experiences of holy lineage masters.**

**So here, the guided instructions on the stages of the path to
enlightenment—which is the main path treaded by all the
victors of the three times, which condenses the essential
meaning of the 84000 scriptures into the paths to be
practiced/experienced by the fortunate ones, and which is the
personal instruction that certainly proves greatly beneficial to
all three types of practitioners: highest, medium and low—is
explained in two parts:**

**How to rely on a teacher, the root of the path, and
Having relied on him, the steps of training the mind.**

The first of these has two parts:

**How to practice while in the nature of meditation session, and
How to practice in-between the sessions**

The first of these two in turn has three sub-divisions:

What to do during the preliminary practice

What to do during the actual practice, and

What to do at the conclusion [of the practices]

Regarding the first, there are six preliminaries:

**First, cleaning your residence and arranging the
representations of body, speech and mind [of holy beings]
With respect to them, in general, whichever activity you
proceed to do, that is hearing, reflecting, meditating and
practicing, it is very essential/important to amend your
motivation. Particularly, when you are carrying out the guided
meditations on the path, it is indispensable that all your
preliminary, actual and concluding practices be impacted by a
sincere motivation imbued with the keys points of the
complete path. So, in order to understand that [Page 3] there
is the traditional practice of emphasizing setting a clear
motivation at this juncture and later. As such at the outset
think like this:**

**I have gained this human life and, having struck fifty or so,
have spent over half of my lifespan until now. Yet, so far I have
only indulged in the activities of this life alone by engaging in
the means of food, clothing, honour, wealth, respect and fame
but nothing of a sincere spiritual practice to help me in the
next lives. So, if I were to die at this juncture, this human life
of leisure and resources would have been spent
meaninglessly. That I have not died yet and have this
opportunity to gain imprint of the graduated path to
enlightenment today must be due to the kindness of the Three
Jewels. As for the future, since unfavourable conditions
abound everywhere there is no certainty when I will die and if I
were to be born in the lower realms of existence there would**

be unbearable suffering there. Not only that but if I were to waste away my rebirth in a higher realm, despite gaining it once or so, and miss the opportunity for Dharma, I would only be enduring suffering and would not see anything special being achieved by me. Therefore, I should do whatever it takes for me to free myself from all the sufferings of cyclic existence. In the same vein, if I became indifferent to my mother sentient beings who are undergoing such long and intense suffering, I would be ungratefully shameless. Hence, I shall intent to achieve the level of Buddhahood for the sake of all sentient beings. For that reason, I shall carry out a sustained practice of the guided meditation on lamrim.

This place/room is where the representations of body, speech and mind are residing and it is the palace where I am going to invoke/invite the merit field; hence I must maintain it clean and attractive in order to honour and respect the Three Jewels. Setting such a clear motivation recite, “Sweep away the dust, sweep away the defilement” and “Everywhere the ground is...” and other passages in your voice while cleaning the room/hall as in the tradition/practice.

While saying these imagine the place as even as the palm of your hand, broad and in the nature of varieties of precious materials, covered in lots of heavenly flowers; spread out with fine powdered gold, silver, pearl and so on; adorned with beautiful lakes and seas above which glides marine birds; surrounded by strings of exquisite jewel trees [Page 4] in the centre of which imagine an insatiable-at-the-sight celestial mansion made of the seven kinds of gems—similar to the design of a pureland with its residents.

Then make this aspiration and wish, “Having purified thus, may mine and others’ two-fold defilement and their remnant imprint be cleansed. May it be the cause [for us] to achieve the extraordinary pure lands at the resultant two-fold Buddha-bodies of Nirmanakaya and Sambhogakaya. Whether you put representations of the holy body, speech and mind anew or already have them on the altar think that the objects of refuge are inseparably with these representations. Thus thinking this way think that you have left imprints in your mind to

accomplish the holy body, speech and mind of the objects of refuge within your own mind-stream.

Second, arranging the uncontrived offerings in an exquisite manner

While reciting the clouds-of-offering dharani formula arrange the offerings according to the practice in lineage and imagine them to become potent with the power to produce pristine bliss within the objects of refuge. Visualise that mass clouds of offerings of the four kinds of water, enjoyment foods, musical instruments, five sense objects, eight auspicious symbols, seven royal emblems and so on emanate from the actually arrayed offerings and they fill up the space before the buddhas and their spiritual children, thereby pleasing them. Pray like this: “Through the power of this offering, may all sentient beings have short-term and long-term inexhaustible joy and happiness.”

Third, taking refuge and arousing bodhichitta while seated in the correct manner on a comfortable cushion

After sitting on a standard throne or seat in a behavior concordant with concentration practice such as the eight-featured posture of Vairocana, when one examines well one’s own mind-stream and finds that thoughts of desire, aversion or ignorance/confusion, for example thought to pursue honour and respect actively arising in one’s mind, then it is an improper motivation. Therefore, whilst exhaling from both nostrils imagine that such bad thoughts/conceptions as well as all non-virtues, impediments and their remnant imprints go out in the form of black smoke [Page 5] and disappear into the empty space.

Whilst inhaling through the right nostril, imagine the merit-fields from whom all the excellent qualities of wisdom, compassion and power of all the masters, the victorious ones and their spiritual offsprings and visualize come in the form of white light and enter your heart and thus you actualise a special virtuous consciousness. While breathing through the left nostril do the same visualization as the previous one. In this way, clear the defiled air through this nine-round of breathing: inhaling through the right nostril and exhaling

through the left three times; inhaling through the left and exhaling through the right three times, and inhaling and exhaling through from both the nostrils three times. Yet, should this not settle/sober your mind then counting the cycle of in- and out-breath twenty-one times will certainly bring it to its natural level (rang mal to 'bab). If your mind is in a neutral or virtuous state then bless it (your mind) by visualizing the excellent qualities of the objects of refuge in the form of light and dissolving it into it (your mind), like before, and think your virtuous thoughts have prospered.

Being mindful of a rough structure of the nature, order and number of whichever meditation objects you are engaged which you have ascertained/determined through your past study and reflection and then make a strong determination to carry out these meditations appropriately/correctly, without straying from them at all cost, with the impact of mindfulness and introspection.

In general, since beginningless time and until now, I have been in the cycle of existence (samsara) and, in particular, have been in the bad existences infinitely, making them my permanent home, while suffering unbearably in them. Apart from that I haven't had the opportunity to meditate on a dharma like this before. Now, at this time, I have found this human body of leisure and resources owing to the power of my masters' kindness and the Three Jewels coupled perfectly with my own karma and prayers; I have met with the teaching of the Buddha; I am taken under the care of my holy virtuous [spiritual] friends who have given me the profound and extensive instructions, [Page 6] and I have the freedom to practice [these teachings]. While this is the situation with me now, if I did not secure a safe haven now with all the might of a human person then I would have to undergo the unbearable sufferings of samsara and lower realms of existence: in fact, as long as I am unable to cut the flow of involuntary birth that is the result of my karmic actions and disturbing emotions, no matter whichever of the six types of existence I am born into, I will be not be beyond the reality of suffering. Just as I suffer [in samsara] other sentient beings also are always stricken with suffering; all of them, without exception, are my own very kind mothers who have nurtured me with immeasurable

kindness over and over again. Hence, no matter what I shall work to achieve buddhahood for the benefit of all sentient beings. Consider this perfect motivation, “For that reason/purpose, I shall reflect on the meditation points of the stages of the path to enlightenment” and while thinking thus clearly visualize the refuge objects like this:

In the space before you directly at the level of your mid-eyebrows visualize a huge and high precious jewel throne supported by eight lions. In the centre of that throne is a small lion-throne on which is a multi-coloured lotus, sun and moon cushions on which is one’s own kind root teacher in the form of the victorious Shakyamuni Buddha, golden in colour, with his crown protrusion (ushinisha), one face and two hands, the right hand in earth-pressing gesture and the left hand in meditation gesture holding an alms bowl filled with nectar. His body is covered with three beautiful dharma saffron robes and it is clear and luminous/transparent in the nature of light adorned with the marks and embellishments. He is sitting in the vajra cross-legged position haloed within the light emanating from his body. Beams of light matching the number of gurus radiate from his heart toward his back, above his body, and on their tips are lion-thrones upon which is the lotus, sun and moon seat on which are sitting the triumphant Vajradhara surrounded by the Blessing Practice Lineage masters such as Tailo, Naro, Dombhi as well as the Near Lineage masters Practice-blessing lineage such as Manjugosha, Umapa and the Venerable Tsonkhapa; they are surrounded by the masters of tantras such as Guhyasamaja, Chakrasamvara, Vajrabhairava, [Page 7] the Sixteen Concentric Drops of Kadam tradition and so on. To my root guru’s right, on the tip of the radiated light rays are seated on a lion-throne with a lotus, sun and moon cushions Lord Maitreya surrounded by the lineage masters of the Extensive Conduct Lineage such as Asanga and his brother (Vasubhandu). To his left, on the tip of the rays of light are seated upon a lion-throne with a lotus, sun and moon cushions Venerable Manjugosha surrounded by the lineage masters of the Profound View Lineage surrounded by Nagarjuna, his spiritual heirs and others. In front of him, on a lion-throne on the tip of the emanated rays of light and upon a lotus, sun and

moon cushion, sits my kind root gurus surrounded by teachers with whom I have direct dharma connection. In-between these groups of masters are seated the entire successive teachers of the respective lineages of empowerments, guided explanations, reading oral transmissions and so on of the canonical teachings.

On the huge throne, in front of the Mighty Sage is Vajrabhairava, to his right is Guhyasamaja, on his left is Chakrasamvara, behind him is Kalachakra, and in the empty space between them are the rest of the assembly of highest yoga deities beside one another. Surrounding them are the deities of Yoga Tantra such as Vajradhatu and Sarvavidya who are surrounded by the deities of Performance Tantra like Vairocana Abhisambodhi outside of which are deities of Action Tantra such as Trisamayavayuha, the buddhas of the three times (past, present and future) such as the thousand buddhas of this fortunate aeon, all the bodhisattvas like the eight close spiritual heirs of the Buddha, the Solitary Realisers like the twelve solitary realisers, Shravakas such as the sixteen elders, Dakas and Dakinis like Thodpai Dumpo and Rabtumma, and the Dharma Protectors with wisdom eyes such as Six-armed Mahakala, Dharmaraja and Vaishravana; in the four quarters are the four Directional Guardian Kings together with their retinues. In front of each of these [masters and deities] is an excellent table on which is their respective mind dharma-jewel appearing in the form of scriptural books light-like and resounding with profound and extensive teachings. Imagine all of them, the principal teacher and the entire retinue, facing you in delighted facial expression.

Or else, you may visualise [the masters of the] three lineages [of the teaching: extensive, profound and experiential/practice], or others, [Page 8] with the Mighty Sage (the Buddha) in the centre and your root and lineage teachers surrounding him. Outside them are the meditational deities and so forth as gone above.

Imagine yourself being surrounded by all the sentient beings of the six types of beings with your father and mother in the main

and have a clear idea of the practice of taking refuge in this way:

I and all my mother sentient beings have experienced various miseries since time beginningless in samsara and, particularly, the lower realms of existence. If you could reach the end point [beyond samsara] without cultivating the path but merely by undergoing suffering I should be liberated by now. Since it is difficult to estimate how long I would have to be reborn, it is difficult for me to know the end of suffering and fathom its depth. Therefore, at this time, having found this extraordinary human life which is hard to find but significant, I will work to achieve the highest liberation from all suffering of samsara, that is the state of my Guru-buddha now.

Otherwise, I would have to undergo again all kinds of suffering of samsara, in general, and the three lower realms of existence, in particular. The merit field in front of me has the power to save me from all these miseries because they, in the beginning, cultivated and generated the [excellent] warm-heart (bodhichitta) to serve sentient beings; in the middle, they engaged in the infinitely incredible difficult practices; and, finally, they attained the complete, perfect buddhahood due to which they possess all the qualities/qualifications worthy refuge objects: body adorned with the major and minor marks; melodious speech with sixty-four attributes; and a mind which sees simultaneously and direct knowledge of everything knowable—the multiplicity of phenomenon and their actual way of existence; and a heart moved by great compassion especially towards all samsaric beings. Because I did not trust myself to the Three Supreme [Jewels] in the past they had no way to (or could not) save me. But if I had not made the mistake the Triple Jewels would never have failed me.

[page 9] Therefore, I and all other sentient beings have none other than you, O Three Jewels, to rely on from now until we achieve enlightenment. Hence, whatever our life circumstances (skyid-sdug) may be, good or bad, joyful or miserable, we will solely trust you, O the Three Jewels! You know the best for us! With this sentiment recite fervently, “I seek refuge in my Gurus” as many times as you can. As you

recite it many times over imagine streams of nectar and fivefold light rays pouring on you from the body of your root and lineage gurus which enter your body and mind, and all other sentient beings, thereby cleansing all the negativities and defilements and, particularly, the sinful deeds in connection with your gurus such as injuring their body, disobeying their speech and disturbing his mind; your body turns into clear and luminous light, all your wholesome qualities such as life span, merit and scriptural and experiential knowledges increase and spread. Having thus come under the refuge of the gurus think that you are taken care of by them throughout all your lifetimes and that this creates the right circumstance to be sustained by the nectar of their teachings.

Similarly, recall the earlier visualisations while taking refuge in the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha and imagine nectar streaming down the holy bodies, respectively, of your meditation deity-buddhas, scripture-dharmas, bodhisattvas, shravakas, pratyekabuddha, daka/dakinis and dharma protectors through which the sins committed in connection with the Buddha such as destroying buddha images, Dharma such as abandoning the dharma, and Sangha such as splitting the monastic community are all cleansed. Feel convinced that you are blessed by the respective refuge object thereby coming under their protection.

If you wish to carry this out a little more extensively reflect like this: some simpletons keep singing and playing without any concern for their ship [page 10] even when it is about to capsize in the middle of the ocean. Likewise, in this samsara though our precious human life is nearly drowned by the turbulent waves of the bad realms of existence we are inattentive to it and mistakenly take the fun-loving life (rotted) of this life alone, which is meaningless, to be of lasting benefit. However, if you think carefully there is no way happiness in samsara. However delightful we might consider something in samsara, we only mistake happiness for suffering; we are constantly harrowed by intense suffering. When we leave this body, we must follow our karmas wherever we are born. Regarding our karmas, while we have

encountered spirituality and understand what should and should not be done we have been indulging in various vicious karmas while succeeding in doing very little virtuous actions. So, judging by our doings in this life itself, there is no doubt that we have accumulated boundless vice and moral downfalls while we continuously took birth in the realms-without-leisure in the past.

Therefore, we will take birth in a bad realm due to our vicious karmas. Once we are born there, how could we bear the miseries of hotness, coldness, and other [experiences]? The sources of refuge present before us have the ability to salvage us from these terrifying states because they qualify the four criteria which make someone worthy of a source of refuge: 1) they have free have themselves from all fearful states; 2) they are skilled in freeing others from terrifying states; 3) they are compassionate with beings all impartially, and 4) they serve others' welfare irrespective of whether others have benefitted them or not.

Therefore, if you can trust and take refuge in them, it's impossible for them to fail you. Reflecting that you have submitted yourself to the Three Jewels for refuge until you reach enlightenment, take refuge in them, as you have done before, while entrusting yourself to them thinking, "You know the best to free me from the terrors of samsara and the bad transmigrations."

As it is very important for your practice of taking refuge to be effective, it would be good to go over these two visualisations one after the other so that you are deeply moved and inspired by it. When interested in a shorter version, you could do like this: Use any of the methods of reflecting on the causes/reasons of taking refuge and say this prayer: "I seek refuge in the Teacher, Meditation Deity and the Three Jewels." While reciting that imagine nectar flowing from any one of the refuges (res gcig las ?), from amongst the entire assembly of them, and cleansing your negativities. Then, when you recite the first two lines [of the verse for aspiring refuge and bodhichitta], that is ["In] the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha..."], reflect on the suffering of the mother sentient beings [Page 11]

in the six types of realms and feel sorry for them. And thinking of asking the precious Three Jewels to be the mighty force and kin-and-kith of all these sentient beings in order to save them from the cycle of existence, in general, and the lower realms of existence, in particular. With this attitude imagine nectar showering from the entire merit-field purifies all sentient beings of their negativities, and thereby feel convinced that everybody, oneself and others, has come under the protective refuge [of the Three Jewels].

During the next two lines [of the verse of refuge and bodhichitta, that is “By the collections merit and wisdom from giving and so on / May I become a buddha to benefit all sentient beings.”], contemplate that how these mother sentient beings are swayed karma and disturbing emotions since time beginningless and they are short of happiness while being tormented by suffering and therefore aspire, “How nice if I could, for the benefit of all sentient beings across the expanse of space, attain buddhahood through the force of whatever roots of virtue that may arise from my generosity, morality and meditation. May I attain it! I shall attain it! For that purpose I will train my mind-stream in the stages of the path to enlightenment pertaining to the three types of beings and then engage fearlessly/without feeling discouraged in all the bodhisattva practices like the six perfections, the four means of gathering disciples and so on.” Thus by strongly cultivating the aspiring and engaging bodhichittas think that Guru Shakyamuni is pleased and duplicates himself dissolving into you and thereby you transforms into the form of Munindra (Buddha Shakyamuni) instantaneously. Hold the [divine] pride of being a holy person. Yourself as Munindra rays of light emit from your body touching the entire world of beings and their habits whereby the impurities of the habitats are purified and transformed into the purelands like Sukhavati; the sufferings, the origin of suffering of all the sentient beings as well as their imprints are purified and the sentient beings transform into the body of Munindra. In this way cultivate bodhichitta as if bringing the result into the path.

Regarding the cultivation of the four immeasurables, think like this: that all my mother sentient beings are experiencing

suffering is due to its root, ignorance, which induced attachment and animosity through which we created karma due to which they undergo suffering. Therefore, contemplate as follows:

[Page 12] “How nice it would be if all sentient beings could remain in equanimity free from biased attitude of love and hate! May they remain in it! May I bring them to that state! May I be blessed by the guru-deities to be able to do so!”

“How nice it would be if all sentient beings could have the short-term happiness of the excellent higher rebirth, the long-term happiness of liberation and buddhahood, and all the causes of happiness: taking refuge, the ten virtuous actions, thought of definite emergence, the three trainings, expansive altruistic attitude and the six perfections! May they possess them! May I cause them to have them! May my guru-deities bless me to be able to do that!”

“How nice if all sentient beings could be free from all the bad rebirths and suffering including the coarse and subtle truths of suffering, and all the causes of suffering, that is the sources of suffering including the coarse and subtle origins such as the ten vices and the destructive emotions! May they be free from them! May i free them from those! May the guru-deities bless me to be able to do so!”

“How nice if all sentient beings are do not lack the pure happiness absent of suffering! May they not lack it! May I cause them not to! May my guru-deities bless me so as to be able to do that!”

So, in this way make each of the four immeasurables qualified with the four features and visualise shower of nectar purifying your impediments to realise the four immeasurables and thereby feel convince that all sentient beings, onself and others, attain the four immeasurables.

Regarding the cultivation of special chittodpada (inclusive altruism), think along these lines: “Though these sentient beings, my beloved mothers, desire happiness they never

cultivate the positive karmas which would certainly serve as the cause for their happiness, and in spite of not wanting suffering they indulge in all kinds of vicious behaviour which are the causes of suffering. Therefore, they have no occasion for happiness but are inflicted with intense suffering. So, without gaining the power to save these sentient beings in this life of mine, how can I bear the suffering that torment them for countless aeons? [Page 13] Hence, I shall at any cost achieve the perfect, complete precious enlightenment quickly and swiftly for the sake of my mother sentient beings. And for that purpose I shall proceed to meditate on the guidance teachings on the stages of path to enlightenment on the basis of the swift and profound guru-deity yoga.” Consider doing the meditation many times over and then imagine that the merit-field dissolves from the outside to the centre, finally dissolving into the Might Sage who in turn melts into a ball of light which dissolves at your mid-eyebrow thereby blessing your mind-stream.

Fourth, clearly imagining the merit field

From “In the space before you, directly at the level of your mid-eyebrow... reverberating with the profound and extensive dharma teachings”; outside them in accordance with their karmic share the disciples to be tamed receive water where there is barren dry land; the remote rocky lands have trees; boat and bridges to cross the waters; food and drinks for those suffering hungry; friends for those without near and dear ones; medicines for those stricken with illness; those who have wandered astray have guide; wish-fulfilling gems for the destitute and so on: through these and other inconceivable array of emanations, whichever suit the disciples to be tamed, who move back and forth continuously like the messengers of a king. Especially, wandering beings are being led to the paths of maturation and liberation through the twelve deeds of enlightenment, the twenty-seven enlightened activities and so on.

The crown of all the guru-deities, the principal one and those surrounding him, are marked with white OM syllable, the nature of mirror-like primordial wisdom and Buddha Vairocana; their throat is marked with red AH syllable, the nature of

analytical primordial wisdom and Buddha Amitabha; their heart is marked with blue HUNG, the nature of primordial basic reality wisdom and Buddha Akshobya; their navel is marked with yellow SVA, the nature of primordial equality wisdom and Buddha Ratnasambhava; and their private is marked with green HA syllable, the nature of primordial wisdom of accomplishment and Buddha Amogasiddha. All of these letters are radiating with five-coloured rays of light.

Reflect that the syllable HUNG at the heart of the Guru Lord of Sages emits rays of light into the ten directions thereby inviting the wisdom beings similar to the visualised ones from their natural abode. [Page 14] These wisdom beings dissolve into their corresponding respective pledge beings.

If you are interested in doing it more elaborately, visualise as follows: the HUNG syllables at the heart of each and every merit field emits rays of light which merge into one and then multiplies and invites innumerable merit fields from their natural abode; all these merit fields dissolve into one another and merge into a complete single merit field. This in turn multiplies and a complete set of a merit field dissolves into each deity and thus every deity becomes the embodiment of the entire merit field.

If you would like to do the ritual bathing/ablution:

Visualise a beautiful meadow before you adorned with varieties of bright-coloured flowers everywhere and surrounded by various precious trees. In the centre of it is a beautiful bath chamber made of various precious gems with three-layer golden canopy and cubical with four doors in front of each of which is bath pool with a floor spread with gold dust and having three steps each of which serve to go in and out of the pool. Each pool is filled with water wafting with fragrant ingredients and clearly visualising the bathing chamber filled with lion-thrones commensurate with the number of the deities in the merit field say, "In this very fragrant bath chamber...", and so on while imagining that the deities hang their clothes and ornaments, etc. on their respective branches of the precious trees and take their seats in the bath chamber. As you and all other sentient beings take the scented water from

the pools with jewel pots and give them bath imagine all their defilements as they appear to the unenlightened beings are cleansed and engender in them extraordinary primordial wisdom of bliss and emptiness. Say any relevant verses while doing so.

Also, while saying, “With the fragrant towels I wipe their body...” dry their bodies; saying, “Everywhere in the trichilocosm...”, offer fragrant ointments (dri zhim po’i byug pa ‘bul); saying, “This thin, soft and light...” and “Victorious Ones...major and minor marks...” imagine offering the three religious robes of monastics to the Nirmanakayas, upper and lowers garments and [Page 15] jewel ornaments to the Sambhogakayas, and tiger skin skirt and bone ornaments to the wrathful deities. While saying, “For me and other sentient beings...” imagine the merit fields sitting on their individual thrones while the bath chambers disappear. When your are in a hurry you can do without offering bath.

Fifth: the seven-limbed practice encompassing the essence of the collection [of merit and wisdom] and purification [of negativities]

Prostration:

Suppose you are alone and you actually make prostrations, first recite thrice the mantra for multiplying thousand times [the merit of] prostration and say these lines: “Embodiment of all the buddhas...”; “[The eyes to see] all the vast excellent scriptures...”; “The essence of compassion and kindness...”; “All the numerous...” and “I praise...” While saying these verses prostrate any number of time as appropriate and in the proper manner.

Prostrate to all the buddhas and bodhisattvas of the ten directions and three time (past, present and future) who are present in the merit field, and to all the representations/symbols of [enlightened] body, speech and mind in the universe, to the limits of space, while imagining your body manifesting into a hundred, a thousand bodies and so on—however many you can possibly bear to imagine in your mind—and imagine singing the qualities of the three secrets

(inconceivable body, speech, and mind) in your melodious voice.

Think and recollect (dran te) the excellent qualities of the objects of refuge—how they developed the altruistic heart (bodhichitta) in the beginning, how they gathered [merit and wisdom] while on the path of a trainee, and how now they have attained (mnga' thsul) the inconceivable qualities of body, speech, mind together with their enlightened deeds—and be enthused with a joyful heart; feel confident that they will never fail you should you regard them as your refuges; and through the force of these virtues engender admiring faith by wishing if you could also actualise these qualities before long. By cultivating these three kinds of faith single-pointedly do your mental prostrations. Reckon that all the sentient beings surrounding you have likewise prostrated [to the objects of refuge] with their three doors (body, speech and mind).

In a Sarvasivada text quoted in *A Compendium of Practices* (Shikshasamuccaya) [by Shantideva] it says:

When you prostrate to the stupas (mchhod rten; objects of worship) containing hairs and nails [of the Enlightened Ones], whatever areas of earth your body cover beneath—from the surface down to the golden base of the universe measuring a depth of 84,000 yojnas (leagues; dpag tshad)—[Page16] it is said that you will enjoy ruling a thousand times over the kingdom of a Chakravartin Universal Monarch equal to the number of sand particles covering that distance. So, reflect on such benefits [of prostration] and feel joy.

If your imagination can cope with (blos lcogs na) it then imagine that all the buddhas and bodhisattvas, together with their spontaneously fulfilled (lhun dup tu dzog pa) pure realms (zhing khams), are present within the space of a single atom and that such atoms fill the entire space; you manifest an equal number of bodies before them and make prostrations with your three doors (b/s/mind).

When making offering, say “Sublime flowers...” and the Clouds of Offering Mantra and think of the actually arranged offerings

you already have on the altar and also imagine the seven kinds of offerings mentioned in the Prayer of Samantabhadra—flowers, cymbals, ointment, supreme parasol, lamp, incense and clothes; the usual offerings which are mentally imagined and which fill the entire space—the two kinds of water, enjoyment materials, music, the five sense objects, the seven royal emblems and so on; as mentioned in Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds—jewel mountains/hills, flowers, forest, evergreen trees, clean rivers, harvest, lotus lakes, sunlight and moonlight and so on—all the necessary materials in the universe which have no ownership. By visualising and offering these things to the objects of refuge imagine that they have accepted them and thereby special pure blissful experiences are produced in their mind-stream.

In the centre of a thousand-petalled lotus you are Samantabhadra and the one thousand Samantabhadras surrounding you on the thousand petals are you emanations. Each of the Samantabhadras are holding a precious gem between their folded hands which manifest an unimaginable mass of clouds of offering filling the vast expansive pure realms which satisfy the victorious ones with the undefiled blissful experiences. Doing such visualisation is the means by which the beginner practitioners make Samantabhadra offering. If you are interested to do it elaborately, then do it by reflecting on the benefits of making offering in general, and specific offerings, as mentioned in the sutras, “The victorious ones in the universe are well and happy...” As we pray, “By the truth of the Three Supreme Jewels...”, [Page 17] it is better to think like this: through the blessings of the victorious one and their spiritual children and through the power of truth of unsullied reality sphere may the offerings become greater than what I have visualise, that is may they turn out to be like the clouds of offering miraculously emanated by the bodhisattva Samantabhadra.

While confessing negative karmas, think in this way: the negative karmas and moral downfalls I have committed and accumulated since time without beginning are like a great emperor’s treasury, and considering them one by one even a single negative karma like severing life, for example, it’s

almost like I have only committed this vice since time immemorial, and there are many such instances. Also, in this life alone I have taken a great many vows such as the three vows while keeping not a single one of them in my mind. Therefore, if I ceased breathing without purifying these negativities I am sure I have no alternative but to go to hell. Had I died yesterday, I would now be crying in anguish and groaning (sdug sngal gyi cho nge lhang lhang 'debs bzhin pa) amid red blazing flame of the seething fire in an iron house of hell and I would be helpless. But the fact that I am still alive is certainly thanks to the Triratna, (the buddhist trinity: Buddhas, the Teaching, and the spiritual community).

So, today, with strong regret before my infallible refuges (the Triratna), I acknowledge (thol) and confess (bshags) all the vices--the ten non-virtuous actions, which are naturally reprehensible, and the wrongdoings and moral downfalls of breaking the three vows [of pratimoksha, bodhisattva and tantra], which are reprehensible by proscription—that is all the evils which obstruct my higher rebirth and liberation but cause me samsara and lower rebirth just as they are clearly seen by the victorious ones. Please bless me to completely cleanse all those vices and moral downfalls without any traces. I will not commit such evil in the future even at the cost of my life. Therefore, due to the power of truth of kindness of the victorious ones and their spiritual children may I be able to sever any remaining vices and moral downfalls from this moment onwards.

[Page 18] By the force of this practice of confession may all the vices and defilements, as well as their remnant imprints, of all my mother sentient beings be cleansed without a trace; it would be good to have all the four counter measures complete for such a practice of atonement. Sometimes remind yourself of the detailed karmic processes, which will be explained in the section on karmic fruition, of how each of the negative actions and moral downfalls bear their fruits in the form of the ripened effect, the effects similar to the act committed, effects similar to the experience at the causal time, and the effects manifesting in the environmental, all of which we undergo either in the lower or the upper forms of life

in the realms of existence. Then think, “What certainty do I have that I will not die within the next month or the next year, and experience such suffering whilst being unable to bear them? At such a time I would not find the means to free myself from such terrible experiences even if I search for them. Therefore, I should consider that I would do something to definitely purify the vices and moral downfalls now when I know how to apply the antidotes, the four opponent forces, and practice confession as explained above.”

The recitation of the lines from the Samantabhadra Aspiration are same for the rest of the limbs (of the seven-limb practice) and if you like say Confession of Downfalls and other prayers and rituals. If your prayer recitation is too long during the actual meditation session you might not have time to reflect on the later practices and visualisations. Thus, you should probably do ‘the practice of applying the antidote’ recommended in *A Compendium of Practices* during the breaks between the meditation sessions.

Rejoice

Think that it is very good that some beginner [practitioners], despite being tightly bound by the ropes of three poisons, are still able to feel disenchanted with [the pleasures of] this life and pursue a [good] rebirth and, therefore, practice taking refuge and judging what karmas to adopt or discard correctly, and so forth, and that they are fortunate to engage in the means for high status [of birth] properly; that the Hearers and Solitary Realisers being spurred on by the thought of definite emergence (from the bondage of samsara) work on the path to liberation and totally overcome the bondage of afflictive emotions, with which we are accustomed since time immemorial, and since they do not have to go through rebirth in the future they have forever overcome all kinds of suffering such as sickness, ageing and death which ensue from [involuntary] birth; all the buddhas and bodhisattvas, including the Transcendent Triumphant One (Buddha Shakyamuni), Maitreya, Manjushri, Nagarjuna, Asanga down through to our indirect and direct masters, were compelled by their impartial compassion [Page 19] with which they solely thought of helping all sentient beings and carried out the very difficult

tasks of forsaking their own heads, hands, legs and so forth—practices which are beyond thought and words and which do not occur even in dream to ordinary beings even for selfish reasons—and as soon as they attained the highest ambrosial enlightenment they brought sentient beings to maturation and liberation. This is indeed amazing!

Thus ponder, “Leave alone all those who are actually engaging in the difficult austere practices like these. I am fortunate to hear and then be able to rejoice even in a fraction of such liberative accounts!”

Even now many renunciants/monastics study and think over the great scriptures while some others practice in recluses to integrate their knowledge into their mind-stream. Recollect those and think, “Though we are at such a degenerate time today, these people are creating very special imprints of study, reflection and meditation. They surely will experience extraordinarily excellent results similar in function to these actions!” Recall even the little/small practices done by the householders, e.g. doing prostrations, making offering, uttering recitations and prayers, and reflect that the Buddha’s Sutra Discourses mention that even a slight root virtue aimed at the buddhas will never be exhausted, and thus as these people are not feeble in good karma it is worth rejoicing their [good deeds]. This is because as we, who claim to be Mahayanists, have pledged to lead all sentient beings to every kind of happiness, it goes without saying that we should feel especially glad in our heart that the sentient beings themselves are doing virtuous practices without endeavour on my part. As for myself, thanks to my gurus I am certainly fortunate to be able to first enter the right gateway by becoming a monastic in the teaching of the Conqueror (the Buddha), find a small door of critical analysis into the [philosophical] texts and leave an imprint of the entire path without letting my mind turn extroverted, which is the purpose of my study. Still, [Page 20]strive to aspire to be able to focus all your effort into this kind of wholesome practice at the end of your life and rejoice without any arrogance that this may be so for you. If you feel glad just once for the good deeds of someone who is on equal level to you in their mental

development, it is said you will gain equal merit to that person. Therefore, it would be good to consider the beneficial qualities of how, with little effort, you can accrue huge virtues, and how you can increase your virtues by rejoicing in your own virtuous practices.

Requesting to turn the wheel of dharma (give teaching)

If there is risk of appearing somewhat glamorous in the eyes of others, then actually arrange nine heaps [of ingredients] on a mandala structure: in the centre and the [cardinal and intermediate] directions symbolising an eight-spoked dharma wheel. Mentally visualise yourself miraculously manifesting as Maha Brahma holding a thousand-spoked golden wheel and entreating, “O you, our sources of refuge! Because you intent to benefit sentient beings all the time you display varieties of deeds in whatever way they are suitable to discipline beings. But the supreme means by which to serve others is solely giving teachings. Therefore, in order to bring all kinds of happiness and benefit to these transmigrators, please turn the wheel of the profound and vast dharma, in whatever way they suit the individual disciples.” Having supplicated this way, imagine your request has been accepted and a rain of profound and vast dharma is immediately showered in the myriad of worlds across the universe in accordance with the mental predispositions of the disciples thereby performing the deeds of attracting those not gathered, maturing those attracted, liberating those ripened, and making those liberated reach the culmination of the path [of enlightenment].

Requesting not to go pass away

Upon the mandala [base structure] make five heaps, in the centre and the four directions, and imagine them as a multi-coloured crossed vajra adorning a lion-throne. Along with that [imagine] your’s and others’ body, wealth and resources, and the mass of virtues accrued throughout the three times [i.e. past, present and future] and offer them up [to your gurus] for them to live long (OR steadfast OR forever?) and plead like this, “All the deeds you enacted—from the initial cultivation of bodhichitta to culmination in buddhahood—[Page 21] are all meant solely to benefit sentient beings. Therefore, please remain steadfast in all the various physical forms you have

displayed in accordance with what suits the sentient beings in whichever ways until all the short-term and long-term desired goals of these sentient beings are fulfilled; please live forever without withdrawing your physical manifestations for aeons equal to the number of particles equal to the myriad fields of world systems.” Having prayed thus from the depths of your heart visualise that the fields of positive energy (the visualised gurus and deities) have gladly accepted your request.

If you like, you may also recall the benefits of entreating [to give teaching] and beseeching [not to pass away].

Dedication [of the above six practices]

Whatever roots of virtue I and others have gained, and would gain, throughout the three times (past present and future) including the above six limbs, may they not be wasted by wrong view, anger, and so forth, and may they not become cause for inferior effect/results like mundane gains, esteem and fame which are adverse to enlightenment. But I offer them as aid for the fields-of-merit (gurus and deities) to fulfill what they have been aiming for many aeons, that is, to lead all sentient beings to buddhahood. Due to this may all sentient beings across the expanse of space achieve the short-term and ultimate joy and happiness/wellbeing which knows no end. For that purpose, may I be able to attain the highest enlightenment. Because of dedicating for complete enlightenment feel convinced that all the sources of refuge bless [your virtues] are never wasted and become cause solely for the highest enlightenment.

If you like reflect how the practice of dedication makes your roots of virtue increase and become endless by extending the logic of mustard seeds analogy.

Sixth, offering mandala to pray to fulfill one’s objectives: With regard to the details about the material, size, and shape of the mandala structure, how cow products (ba-byung) and fragrant substances are applied to it, the ingredients for heaps [created on the mandala structure], the number of heaps and how they are created, etc. you should train your ears to the correct words-of-mouth instructions that are passed down in

the tradition, and study the authentic documented texts of guidance. The twenty-three heap mandala offering has authentic source in tantra and has been practiced by many scholar-adepts. But I will go through the well-known practice of mandala offering with thirty-seven heaps which goes like this: [Page 22] first, hold the mandala structure (the base) with grains in your two hands. Whilst wiping the mandala [base] with your right wrist (lag ngar) area imagine that ground of the realm (zhing) you wish to offer is cleared of all defects like mud, swamps, rocks, burnt stumps, bushes and so on so that it becomes even like the palms of the hands and in the nature of precious gems. For beginners like us though we cannot conceive (bear in our mind) a universe with its four continents in place of the mandala structure, it is very important for us to clearly visualise the respective forms of mountains, the continents and so forth when you place the related heaps [of the mandala]. Therefore, while saying “Om vajrabhumi...” etc., as the words indicate, you should visualise ‘the golden base of the mandala’; the ‘iron fence’ surrounding the mountains and the continents; ‘In the centre is the Majestic Mountain’ (ri’i gyalpo), the nature of which is the four ‘precious gems’ (rin-po-che) and which is one hundred and sixteen thousand leagues (Tib.: dpag tshad; Skt.: yojna) high, of which eighty thousand leagues are submerged in water; on top of [Mt. Meru] are the entire (byings) Heavenly Realm of Thirty-three (sum-chu tsa sum) and the Beautiful-to-Behold City in the centre of which is [Shakra’s] Palace of Total Victory around which are Heavily Laden Earth Piercing Banyan Tree (yongs-‘du sa-brtol) and The Divine Courtyard of Good Dharma (chos-bzang lha-yi ‘dun-sa) and others with their numerous special resources. On the four tapered/offset stages (bang-rim) of Mt. Meru there are many heavenly abodes of the Four Kinds of Great [Directional Guardian] Kings. Yoke Wood Bearer (Nyashingzin), the innermost golden range is half as tall as Mt. Meru above water while the other ranges are progressively shorter as we move outward and they resemble measuring pots one stuck inside the other. In-between these ranges are the Seven Playful Rollicking Oceans in which live the wealthy naga kings. Outside of those ranges are the great oceans, the crescent moon-like eastern continent of Majestic Body [Videha] whose ground and sky are white in colour, its people are soft and

gentle-natured and are with fair look and with good figure; the Earth (Jambudvīpa) is triangular, and blue in colour, beautified by many sacred places of spiritual achievements; Gaucharya is round and red in colour having immeasurable resources/wealth; Kuru is four-sided, yellow in colour and its people have good figure while their wealth and resources equal the wealth of gods. Visualise that each of these islands have two sub-islands and each has its own principal resource: the Precious Mount, the Jambubriksha Tree, [Page 23] a herd of Wish-granting Cows and the Uncultivated Crop field. In the [eight cardinal and intermediate] directions place the seven royal objects and the great treasure vase, and eight [offering] goddesses such as the Dancing Goddess. And all these, too, not just one each but imagine them filling up the earth and sky in the all the eight [cardinal and] intermediate directions. Place the Sun and the Moon in the East and West, respectively, and the Parasol and Victory Banner in the South and North, respectively. Visualise this entire field as the pure land replete with all the excellent attributes, both external world and internal beings.

When you put the last heap visualise the body, wealth and the collection of virtues, of oneself and all others sentient beings, which you have created over the three times (past, present and future) in the form of clouds of Samantabhadra offerings filling up the entire earth and space. Offer these up to the sources of refuge to request them for the fulfillment of three great purposes (don-chenpo-sum) quickly and easily. Imagine they have gladly accepted your offering and then display their emanations to tame the sentient beings according to what suits them.

Initially, visualise one complete set of field with Mt. Sumeru, the four continents and the rest. When familiar with that then multiple it into ten, a hundred, a thousand fields, and so on, and then visualise/imagine offering such complete sets of field to each and every merit-field. Learn how to count the three-thousand world systems (tong-sum) and the third ocean of vast continuum world systems (rabjam gyatso'i rgyud sum-pa) and make your wish to offer such world systems too. If it is within your mind's capacity to do so, then recall the benefits—the

symbolisms of the seven royal emblems, the [mandala offering] including the practice of six perfections, and so on.

Moreover, when you wish to do a short/concise visualisation, it is okay to offer a seven-heap [mandala].

Then, say this twice:

My excellent precious root guru

Please sit on my crown, upon a lotus and moon [cushion]

And taking care of me with great kindness

Please bestow the feats of body, speech and mind.

While saying the last line for the first time, imagine your root guru—who is in front of the Might Sage (Buddha Shakyamuni) and who looks the same as you behold him in person/real life—gladly duplicating himself, comes down, sits on your crown on a lotus-and-moon cushion upon a lion throne—he faces the same direction as yourself; with his two hands folded together (in the fashion of a lotus bud), and to introduce you, he pleads on your behalf:

“O you [sources of refuge]! [Page 24] Please affectionately think of this son (child) of mine and bless him [(or her)] to develop the special realisations of the stages of the path to enlightenment.”

You, too, should make such request, and do the same later as well. When repeating (the fourth line above) for the second time, imagine your root guru on your crown duplicating and dissolving into you and blessing your mind-stream whereby you should feel that you have become a suitable vessel for the growth of special realisation of the path to enlightenment in you.

Then say this verse twice:

Your body is created through billions of excellent positive virtues;

Your speech fulfills the hopes of all the infinite transmigrators;

Your mind-heart understands every bit of knowledge precisely:

I supplicate you, O Lion of Shakyas, our spiritual liberator!

The first time you recite the above lines imagine a stream of nectar flowing from the bodies of your teachers, in general, and the body of the Might Sage (the Buddha) which clears the obstacles to realise the experiences of the profound and vast paths. When you recite these line the second time, imagine a duplicate emerging from the Buddha dissolving into you, and think the profound and extensive paths develop in you.

**Maitreya, Asanga, Vasubhandu, Vimuktisena,
Mchog sde, Vinitasena, Kirtisena,
Haribhadra, the two Kusalis, and Serlingpa (Suvarnavipi, the
man from the Gold Island):**

I supplicate you, the lineage [lamas] of the extensive path!

As you say the last line two times, imagine [at the first recitation] with a stream of nectar flowing from the lineage masters of the extensive path of practice wash away all the obstacles to the extensive path and [when you recite the last line the second time] imagine replicas of each of the lineage masters of the practice lineage dissolving into you and imagine you have become a suitable vessel (right receptacle) for the realisations of extensive path to grow in you.

Apply the same logic/procedure to the following verses and have clear visualisation of purification process with the flow of nectar:

**Manjushri and Nagarjuna, who destroyed both the sides—
existence and nonexistence,
Chandrakirti and the senior Vidyakokila,
To you the Noble father and his spiritual sons who sustained
the thought of the Buddha,
The lineage of the profound view, I supplicate!**

And,

**Vajradhara, the Great Compassionate Sugata,
Tilopa and Naropa, who found the supreme siddhi,
Excellent sublime Dombipada and Atisha:
I supplicate you, the blessing lineage of practice!**

**[Page 25] I supplicate my direct and lineage teachers
the series of Kadam [master] who had the Seven Divinities and
Dharmas,
Especially, the Second Conqueror, the patriarch and his
spiritual sons, and others
Who thoroughly illuminated the perfectly good path.**

**While saying these stanzas visualise the showering of nectar
from all the masters, direct and indirect path, of the three
lineages—the lineages of the profound view, extensive deed,
and the blessing lineage of practice—and do the purification
practice. As you fervently pray three times, “Please bless me
so that all my wrongful thoughts, from the disrespectful
feelings towards my spiritual teachers up to the graspings at
the two objectified ‘selfves’, may quickly cease in me,” feel
convinced that all the antitheses to your path are overcome
with the nectar streaming from the bodies of all the fields of
merit.**

**Likewise, as you pray, “Please bless me that I may quickly and
easily develop all the realisations of the path, from seeing my
virtuous spiritual teachers as real buddhas up to the unified
state [of Vajradhara]”, imagine a duplicate of each of the merit
field emerge and dissolve into you through which you develop
all the realisations of the complete path within your mind-
stream.**

**Similarly, as you pray, “Please bless me that all the outer and
inner circumstantial obstacles may be eliminated,” imagine all
the Dharma Protectors, in general and, specially Mahakala,
Dharmaraja, Kubera and others emanate wrathful deities from
their bodies and speak to you in their own delightful voice,
“Child of the noble lineage, I will clear all your obstacles and I
will provide all the favourable conditions to you”. As they say
that all the outer, inner and secret obstacles are turned
traceless with their hosts of weapons and forces of fire; as the
wrathful emanations dissolve in you feel proudly confident that
you have become victorious over all the adverse forces.**

When considering to emphasise only the Six Preliminary Practices (jor-wa'i chos drug) and not carry out the visualisations for the actual [meditation] practices, if you do a brief reflective screening-through meditation (shar-gom) of the graduated path based on The Foundation of Good Qualities (TFOGQ, by Je Tsongkhapa) you would have a complete practice of the entire path within a single session of your practice. Therefore, Seeking Blessings In Heaps (jin-lan spungs-zhus, another name for TFOGQ) [Page 26] is certainly needed.

You must observe of the actual practices, too, but when you lack time for many liturgies, I have heard from the mouth of my master, the Great Vajradhara that you may do the above short supplications, as such I have given it here as per the latter version ('dir phyi ma'i dbang du byas so).

As to how to visualise the purification practice and others through the flow of nectar within the context of [the liturgy] Opening the Door of the Best Path (lam mchog go-'byed), they are clearly given in the great guides from teachings notes and so forth. So, I have not taken the pain to write them here fearing it would be too much.

Dissolution of the merit field

Lightrays are emitted from the Hung [syllable] at the heart of your Guru Munindra (Master Mighty Sage) striking all the myriad peaceful and wrathful beings [surrounding him], who then melt into the nature of light and dissolves one into the other: from the Dharma Protectors into the Dakas and Dakinis, to the Shravakas, to the Pratyekabuddhas, to the bodhisattvas, to the buddhas, who then dissolve into the assembly of deities of Action Tantra to Performance Tantra [deities] to Yoga Tantra deities, and the assembly of deities of the Highest Yoga Tantra; and they dissolve into the gurus of our own tradition who in turn dissolve in this manner: the master of the extensive conduct lineage into Maitreya, the profound view lineage into Manjugosha, and the blessing

lineage of practice into Vajradhara; those with whom you have direct dharma connection dissolve into your root guru.

Have a clear visualisation of the five assemblies, the principal guru with the other four around him for a little while and then visualise Maitreya and Manjugosha dissolving into the right and left side, respectively, of the Might Sage Munindra, while your root guru dissolves into his heart, and Vajradhara descends on the crown, passes through and lands at the heart of Munindra residing there as the Wisdom Being (Jnanasattva); the lion thrones [of those beings] dissolve into the Lion Throne of Munindra. Bear the divine pride feeling “I am a fortunate being who is able to seeing a real Mighty Sage himself as Vajradhara” (“...the true/real Munindra Vajradhara”). Also, imagine the Munindra dissolving into your kind root teacher seated on your crown, who then transforms into the triple beings, the Guru, Munindra, and Vajradhara, sitting on a lion throne, upon the lotus, sun and moon cushion. Then offer the seven limbs while saying, “I respectfully bow with my three doors...” and so on, and mandala (cosmic configuration) while reciting “This ground...”. That, too, not only repeating the words but also to have a clear visualisation, [Page 27] in all instances of such practice is very important.

Single-pointed supplication

Do the practice as given in the Path of Bliss [by Panchen Lobsang Choekyi Gyaltzen] in these line: “The embodied nature of the four Buddha-kayas...” and “The embodiment of all the sources of refuge...” Or else, in short, utter the following verse:

**You are the combined nature of all the sources of refuge—
Gurus, Ishtadevas, Triratna, and others.**

O my Saviour! I rely upon you, none other. (O my Saviour! I put my hope in none other than you! //You are my hope, and none other!)

I supplicate you, please bless my mind-stream.

As you say this verse many times over, supplicate single-pointedly from the depths of your heart acknowledging that in spite of the difficulty in developing the realisation of path in this life, due to your mind being predisposed to the afflictive emotions since time without beginning, yet as it is found in the words of the victorious [buddha] himself that if you pray to your teacher all the ordinary and highest attainments can be achieved easily, and how can such [statement] be deceptive/misleading/fail to you! Therefore, from this time until I achieve [the great] enlightenment feel determined to rely only your kind root guru who is the embodiment of all the sublime Three Jewels and, never ever look for any other refuge more than they are [for you]. As such pray to be hooked by their compassion and be blessed to realise the profound and vast paths without strife. So, do this resolute supplication from the depths of your heart.

As there is a tradition of including [the meditations on] the advantages of relying on, and the disadvantages of not relying on, a virtuous friend (spiritual teacher), so reflect on this: the fact that I and all my mother sentient beings have been undergoing various intense and enduring sufferings by taking birth in this cycle of existence is the consequence of improper reliance, both in thought and action, on my spiritual teachers: since time beginningless, most of the time we have wandered in the three bad realms and, when we were occasionally born in the fortunate realms (bde-'gro), we were born in places without leisure such as where there are no buddhas and remote places where we lack the opportunity to meet spiritual teachers; even if we may have a life of freedom and riches and meet with the holy protectors/guardians, due to our ineffective reliance on [those gurus] we suffer due to sickness and harmful spirits, and after death [Page 28] we would have to experience unimaginable suffering in the unfortunate realms for endless/infinite aeons owing to which we seems are left unable to set out on the path of freedom.

If we correctly relied [on our spiritual teachers] whatever spiritual practices we undertake such as doing our studies, reflection and meditation, we would be successful in them and, in the future, we would be under the guidance of qualified

teachers; as a result of compatible act of [such karmas] we would be able to rely well on the teachers and by practicing the points of their instructions we would achieve buddhahood before long. There is no doubt we would draw all these short- and long-term benefits [of relying of our teachers correctly] which are beyond word and thought. Therefore, as you make the supplication, “May the guru-deities bless us so that I and all my mother sentient beings are able to rely on our teachers correctly, both in thought and action”, imagine [the following]: Streams of the five kinds of nectar with light flow from the bodies of the guru-deities on your crown which dissolve into the body and mind of you and all sentient beings cleansing your negative karmas and defilements, in general, and, particularly, cleansing all the sins, defilements, sicknesses and evil elements which hinder your correct reliance of the spiritual teachers; and thus your bodies turn into nature of light, clear and luminous. All of you gain excellent qualities of life, spiritual merit and scriptural knowledge and experiential realisation, particularly, developing in your mind-stream the special insights (rtogs pa) which empower you to correctly devote yourselves, both in thought and deed, to your spiritual teachers.

In terms of the actual practice, there are two:

Reliance in thought, and

Reliance through action

Within the first (s through thought) there are two:

Cultivating faith, the root [of the path], and

Respecting by recalling the kindness [of the gurus]

The former, (cultivating faith, the root [of the path]), has two parts, of which the first is:

How to cultivate [the mind] to see the guru as a buddha:

Visualise all your gurus with whom you have direct dharma connection—those you have heard a single stanza and more—emanating [Page 29] from the heart the Guru Munindra (Shakyamuni Buddha) and sitting in the sky before you. While

**observing them ponder that it is said in the Dual Analysis
[Tantra of Hevajra]:
In the times to come,
I will myself be in the physical form of teacher.**

**And, in the Vajra Tent [Tantra], it says:
You, who is known as Vajrasattva,
You assume the form of a teacher;
Aiming to benefit sentient beings,
You reside in an ordinary form.**

**Also,
During the last five-hundred [year phase]
I will assume the form of a teacher.
Think in your mind it is me
And show your respect.**

So, know that the Victorious Vajradhara himself prophesised that in the future there will come a time known as ‘the last five-hundred years’, which is when the dharma is at its lowest ebb and a time intensely rife with the five degenerations; and at such a time [Vajradhara has said that since the disciples-to-be would be very unfortunate, if he manifested in the form of a Supreme Emanation Buddha those beings will have no access him. So, he told they should not be disappointed since he would serve the interest of others in a form which would be suitably accessible to the sentient beings themselves and, therefore, they should perceive the person who appears to them as their teacher is Vajradhara himself and should be respectful to him. Accordingly, feel that all our teachers are Vajradhara’s display of ordinary beings in the form of teachers for us who have no karmic fortune to see a real buddha in order to take us under his care and guidance.

Since a single guru appearing in ordinary form cannot display all the enlightened deeds, [Vajradhara] has shown in many different forms of guru: manifesting as a guru for reading alphabet [Vajradhara] teaches us reading by spelling out the letters and compound reading and so on; manifesting as Precept Master and Assistants [Vajradhara] gives us rabjung precepts and ordaining us as shramaneras and bhikshus; by

manifesting as Vajra Master [Vajradhara] confers upon us the empowerments of the different sets of Tantra; and by manifesting as our holy teachers [Vajradhara] gives us profound explanations of the great treatises (or classic texts), guided teachings on the stages of the path to enlightenment. Thus [Vajradhara] leads us to the practice of the complete path.

[Page 30] This may be illustrated by the manner in which Arya Avalokiteshvara displayed in numerous forms, in order to tame/discipline the beings of the Snowland, such as these: first, he procreated the human race (mi'i gro-ba spel) [in Tibet]; then, by assuming kingship he proscribed the sixteen moral principles for human beings, and by assuming the form of translators and teachers he disseminated the precious teaching of the conqueror (Buddha Shakyamuni) through the translation of the dharma.

There are other sources which indicate that Bhagwan Buddha (bcom ldan 'das) manifesting in the form of teachers. When the complete and perfect buddha was giving a teaching to his retinue of many [disciples] on the Very High Hill in the south [of India] (lho chog kyi ri shin tu thowa) when he was about to pass away, the Bhagawan knew the thought/concern of the bodhisattva Meaningful to Behold who felt in his heart that "After the Buddha passes away we would have [no one to] teach us", and the buddha told him this:

O/Hey, Meaningful To Behold! (Tib.: *mthong-ba don-yod*; Skt.: *Darshan Siddhartha*)

**In the times to come in the future
I will appear in the form of precept masters (upadhyaya);
I will abide/remain in the body of teachers.**

Qualm: the buddhas are freed from the four rivers of birth, ageing, sickness and death but the spiritual teachers (gewai shenyen) are not freed from them. So, can they serve transmigrators in the body/form of teachers?

In order to clear such qualms it is stated [in the same sutra]:

O/Hey, Meaningful To Behold!

In order to make the sentient beings mature

I shall appear being born, ageing,

Sick and dying as well!

So, as found extensively in these lines and others, feel that the Bhagawan manifests in the form of spiritual teachers in order to help sentient beings. Otherwise, the buddhas would not have taken us under their care. Yet, the fact that we have become monastics and come across the dharma signifies we are care for and guided by the buddhas. The Buddha himself has said he would assume ordinary forms. Therefore, how can mere ordinary appearance be a proof of not being a buddha? How can a lowly ignorant person like me have the good fortune to actually see all the inconceivable secrets, the excellent qualities, of a buddha? Nevertheless, just going by the qualities that are commonly accessible to us [the spiritual teachers] have extraordinary qualifications: they are much learned, [page 31] are steeped in practice, are chaste, and have little craving for material things and so on; and judging by the way [the teachers] serve us disciples they must have been intentionally manifested by the Buddha for our sake. Therefore pray, “O guru-deity, bless me and all other sentient beings to be able to see all our spiritual teachers as real Munindra Vajradhara.” Having thus prayed visualise streams of nectar flowing from the body of guru-deity on your crown, which enters our body and purifies all our sins and defilements, particularly, those hindering us from seeing the guru-deity as a real buddha and all us of sentient beings gain the good qualities such as longevity, spiritual merit and so on, in general, and, specifically, we gain the positive quality of firm faith to see the spiritual teachers as Munindra Vajradhara.

As to how you should stop conceiving faults [in the spiritual teachers]:

You may have the qualm: the buddhas have eliminated all their faults and attained all positive qualities but my teachers have many faults like having ireful mind, being lusty about material gains, and having little knowledge, which are all driven by the three inner [mental] poisons. Therefore, [I believe] they cannot be buddhas.

Response: That is only appearance of your own misperceptions into those faults as it is found in sutras that, in the past, people like Lekkar (*find Skt. name*) and Devadutta created immense negative karmas due to their impure perception of the Buddha and because of which they, in spite of actually seeing him in person, found the Buddha to be a conglomerate of faults/all faults rolled into one (skyon gyi gong-bu). Though the Buddha did not exhibit/display those faults they still perceived them in him due to their own mental illusion. So, judging by that it is quite certain that, since they are consciously/intentionally manifested/transfigured in ordinary forms, the faults seen in my teachers are apparent aspects. Moreover, if it is mentioned that even beings who have achieved high realisations could have wrong impressions [of their spiritual teachers]—for example, Asanga, who had attained the third bodhisattva ground, seeing Bhattaraka Maitreya as [an infested] bitch; Maitripa seeing Shabaripa, the master lord of meditators, indulging in inappropriate things like killing swines/hedgehogs; [page 32] Naropa seeing Tailopa roasting fishes alive; Tsembupa (Darjipada, Tailor), a novice monk, seeing [the female deity] Vajra Varahi (Diamond Sow) as a leprous old lady; and Buddhajnana seeing Manjushri-mitra as an old householder lady ploughing her field—then for someone like me whose afflictive emotions have not diminished and who is replete with bondages, I am fundamentally bound to have all kinds of illusions (rang-sems 'khrul ba'i snang-ba sna-tshogs gzhir bcas).

Even when under the influence of some temporary conditions if we get illusions like seeing a yellow conch, which is incommensurate with the reality that is a white conch, when you look at it while you afflicted by jaundice; the snow mountain appearing as a blue mountain to a faulty sensory perception; trees appearing to move by when travelling in a boat, and so on, then while my mind-stream is influenced by afflictive emotions since time immemorial it is probable that I could have the illusion that my gurus have faults even when they do not have them.

Therefore, all the faults that I perceive [in my gurus] appear to me not because they have those faults in reality but rather it must be analogous to seeing falling hairs for someone with a certain blurred eyesight even when there are no hairs falling. Given the immensity of the veils of our karmas and destructive emotions it is quite astonishing to see our gurus as humans and even listen to the teachings; what if we saw them as dogs and donkeys? It is said that when some hell beings suffer intensely and when buddhas, unable to bear them due to their compassion, go near them they do not see the buddhas with all their physical marks and signs [of an excellent being] because of being obscured by their negative karmas, rather they see frightful hell guards and suffer further. From this we may infer that under the spell of some powerful karmic obscurations there are certainly cases of seeing gurus as donkeys. Therefore, whether the gurus appear high or low, good or bad, is not because they are such in reality but because of the disciples' having purified their spiritual defilements or not and whether they have accumulated spiritual merits or not. For example, the very guru who appears to us as an ordinary person now [page 33] would be seen as a supreme emanation body [of a buddha] when we achieve the continuous dharma concentration on the path of accumulation, and as complete enjoyment body when we attain the first bodhisattva ground.

Furthermore, if whatever fault of a guru appearing to you must be true just as it appears then you must accept that whatever impression dawns on your mind must necessarily be unmistaken. For you cannot claim that you may be mistaken about other things but that it is impossible for you to be wrong about the positive attributes or faults of your gurus. That you cannot be unmistaken about whatever appears to you is evidenced by the numerous illusions we have: sometimes we feel close to some people who wish to deceive, but are ostensibly helpful, to us; we mistake exhortations from those who dig our mistakes to be retaliatory voices (ko long gyi gtam)—so, not all your appearances ensure reality; even while seeing directly with our eyes there is the appearance of true existence of the visual object, and mirage appears to be water.

Even if the buddhas exhibit as actual buddhas we would not be able to see them and apart from displaying the ordinary aspect *ipso facto* like us (rang dang skal ba mnyam pa) there is no other way they could take us ordinary beings under their care and, hence, we should feel grateful to them for showing in the ordinary form. If the buddhas could even manifest as devils, the lame, and so forth as long as it is beneficial to sentient beings, then what need to mention that they can show in the body of an ordinary spiritual teacher? This is so, as it is said in the *Sutra on the Meeting of the Father and the Son* (Pitaputradarshansutra):

**In the guise of Shakra and Brahma,
And at times, in the guise of devils,
They serve the interests of sentient beings.
But the worldlings do not realise it.**

**In female guise they enact deeds;
And they even exist in the animal realm.
Though unlustful, they appear desirous;
Though not ferocious, they appear fierce;**

**Without ignorance, yet they appear ignorant;
Though not mad, they appear crazy;
Though not lame, they assume lameness;
Through all these kinds of manifestation
They tame the sentient beings.**

So, my gurus only appear ordinary from the viewpoint of my turgid eyes but in reality they are emanations of buddhas. [page 34] Therefore, “May myself and all mother sentient beings never have misconceptions about our spiritual virtuous teachers even for moment; may we be blessed by our guru-deity to easily have a great faith in them to see whatever they do as good.” Having prayed thus think that ‘..from the guru-deity on my crown...purifies all the misconceptions, along with their imprints, about our teachers are cleansed, and that all of us easily develop great faith [in the guru-deity] which sees everything they do as perfect.’

Second, developing respect by recollecting the kindness [of the guru-deity]

Focus your mind on your gurus before you and ponder “These spiritual teachers are very kind to me: this precious human life I have now would not have happened without a cause and thus it has come about through the causes comprising moral ethics and others; even this morality we would not have known how to keep it without a teacher. Therefore, it is thanks to having observed well the morality of restraining the ten non-virtuous actions, just as our teachers instructed us in the past, that we have now gained this human life. Even though I may have gained a human life, in my childhood I did not know anything apart from merely crying and sucking milk; without knowing a letter I would not be able to read a word of the Words of the Buddha and its Exegeses, leave alone contemplating their meaning and so my teacher for reading taught me reading the alphabet, reading words by spelling out the component letters, reading each word separately and so on. Even if I may be literate if I had not gone-forth (to become a monastic), I would be distracted by the numerous household works such as involuntary indulgence in negative actions of killing and others for the sake of my children and spouse, and I would be tending the field and cattle, and hence miss out on practicing the dharma. Thanks to my ordination precept master I could enter the dharma door, feel well and happy for the time being, and steep myself in study, reflection and mediation practices day and night, round the clock. If I do not study, leave aside analysing the difficult points of the Buddha’s Scripture, I would not know even the coarse practices of what to avoid or adopted. But because I have received much explanation of texts and guided experiential teachings [page 35] from my spiritual teachers, I have found a small window of analysis (dpyod pai sgo chung zad) into what [practices] are to be adopted and what discarded. If I do not integrate what I have studied into my being (mind-stream) but turn my mind outward, at the time of death it would be fruitless but I would only have regrets.

Nonetheless, thanks to my gurus I presume I have directed my mind to practice [of the dharma]. Though I may be arrogant about doing practice, all my effort would be insignificant if I am deceived by mistaking certain subtle focussed mind (sems-

'dzins phra-mo re la) for some supreme view and meditation. Yet, it is thanks to the kindness of my guru vajradhara that I am able to leave some imprint of the profound path which is totally free from all errors and complete with all the essential points of the teaching.

I could not be there during the times of all those scholar-saints who appeared in the past: from the peerless Mighty Sage (the Buddha), to Nagarjuna, Asanga, the Elder [Atisha], Dromtonpa, the Foremost master [Je Tsongkhapa] and his spiritual heirs, and so forth. Presently, I do not have the fortune/opportunity to see the face and hear the voice of the buddhas as numerous as the atoms (rdul) of the Ganga who reside the pure realms in the ten directions. At such a time, that [my gurus] kindly give me the pith instructions of the steps of the path to enlightenment, the quintessence of the gist of all the scriptures which if I could put into practice it is beyond doubt that I would be able to achieve the short-term goal of higher rebirth and the ultimate goal of omniscience, whichever I pursued. Therefore, these spiritual teachers in ordinary aspects are kinder to me than all the buddhas of the three times (past, present and future). In the words of former Kadam [masters]:

“The complete enjoyment body buddhas are our good friends when there is no need for a founder teacher. At present when we are miserable it is these gurus, who appear as ordinary beings, who are hugely kind to us.”

As said here, my gurus have not only given me the spiritual teachings but they have also taught me the etiquettes of life: the manners of eating, dressing, walking, and sitting just like a good father bringing up his child/son, and thus getting rid of all the unfavourable conditions and providing all the favourable conditions; when I am become arrogant, he mellows me down; when I feel low-spirited, he uplift my spirit; thus he has gradually led me to the practice of the complete teaching [of the Buddha]. As such initially, as a lay person, I was [as stupid] as a donkey [page 36] but now, comparatively, I could be counted amongst those who understand what practices are to adopt or reject. As it is my gurus who led [me], this donkey, to have a rank amongst humans, I cannot repay their kindness

to me. We find in sutras that in the past when the Bhagawan (Shakyamuni Buddha) was training on the path he stuck one thousand lamps on his body, pierced one thousand iron nails into his own body, and made his skin paper, his blood ink, and his bones pen, each for a single verse of the dharma; and the Elder [Atisha] and Drom [Tonpa], Naropa, Marpa and Milarepa, and such, most all past holy beings, underwent incredible hardships beyond measure for the sake of dharma. However, for me without enduring any hardship on my part, my spiritual teachers have gladly offered me the transmissions of all three [aspects of the teaching], i.e., tantric empowerments, guided instructions and oral transmissions, analogous to a father handing the family inheritance to his son and, hence, their kindness to me is inconceivable/incredible.

In short, if I closely check the personality of my conceited family members at home, and friends and acquaintances of my age, who think they are better off than me, mostly they only live a life of sin, misery and bad reputation while not having the good fortune of doing even a single virtuous act. But as for me, having entered the dharma by becoming a monastic that fact that my body is draped in the three monastic robes, with my voice I explain the meaning of the scriptures, and mentally I sustain the practice of the complete path [of the dharma], and thus could live the saintly life in mountain hermitages is due to the kindness of my gurus. This seems easily recognisable, if I think through it. If it is regarded very kind in the world when someone saves you from a small harm/damage or when someone provides you small amounts of food and clothing, then the kindness of [someone] giving you the essential instructions, which would help eliminate all the gross and subtle sufferings of cyclic existence (or samsara) while bestowing the highest enduring bliss [of omniscience], how can even a fraction it be paid back even if I offer up of all my body, life and resources for aeons? So, supplicate, “May the mind-streams of me and all my mother sentient beings be blessed so that, by recalling their kindness, we may feel immense respect for our spiritual teachers without difficulty. [Page 37] Having prayed this way think, “..the guru-deity on my crown... all the negative thoughts of disrespect, together with their imprints, with regard to my spiritual

teachers...immense respect from recalling the guru's kindness..."

Second, how to rely through action (check page 11 of this translation)

Generally, it should be understood that offering materials and giving respect and honour are related to the post-meditation sessions while [the offering of] doing practice as instructed [by the gurus] are needed during all practices of virtue, both in meditation sessions and post-meditation sessions. However, in giving the visualised guided instructions contemplate this: "I will offer up any material thing I have, without a sense of lose, to my spiritual teachers, who are real buddhas; if I could serve and honour physically or verbally I would do so happily and gleefully. And, particularly, based on the purity three vows (pratimoksha, bodhisattva and tantra), I will put into practice the essential points of the path within a complete structure of the path through the cultivation of unified critical analysis and focussed meditation, and thereby I shall please my gurus with the offering of practice which accord with their teachings. Please, guru-deity, bless me to be successful in doing." Having prayed thus, imagine: "...on my crown... ..obstructing my reliance (devotion) to gurus through action... ..the realisations enabling me to act in accordance with whatever instructions the gurus give..."

Third, What to do at the conclusion [of the practices]: (look page 2)

Visualise the gurus sitting before you, with whom you have direct dharma connection, dissolve into your guru, Munindra, seated on your crown. Focussing your mind on him recite this three or seven times: "I bow to my guru Shakyamuni, the victorious one, make offering to and take refuge in him." As you supplicate in this way with intense faith and devotion (mos gus drag-po), visualise the guru-deity on your crown dissolving into you and thereby you instantly transform into Munindra. Lightrays are emitted from your body, yourself as Munindra, touch the sentient beings surrounding you whereby they are led to the rank of Munindra. Visualise that at everyone's heart, I and others who clearly appear as Munindras, is a moon [page 38] disc with a white [letter] Ah

marked by a yellow *Hung* syllable, and around it [letter *Ah*] is *Om mune (muni) mune (muni) maha munaye svaha*. Visualise this mantra and recite it as many times as you can.

Through this virtue may
I accomplish guru buddha
And may all wanderers, excepting none,
Attain that level as well.

And,

All virtues, including this one, related to the three times...

When saying these lines dedicate that by the force of combining together all the virtues you have created in the three times, i.e. in the past and future, including your reflection and visualisation of the entire path during this session, may you achieve buddhahood for the benefit of all sentient beings across the expanse of space; that, in the meantime, you may not be born in the non-leisurely abodes throughout your lifetimes but gain only excellent rebirth with all the leisure and resources complete. May qualified spiritual teachers take you under their care without separation so that you can devote yourself to them in thought and deed. Having become monastics in the teaching of the Buddha may you be able to observe your vows purely just as you protect your eyeballs. May you be able to insatiably succeed in your study and reflection of the vast array of scriptures of sutra and tantra.

May I have the good fortune to single-pointedly steep myself in perfectly practicing, whatever [dharma] I have studied to subdue my mind, by subsuming it within the framework of the complete path body. In whatever dharma work I venture to carry out, may I not face external and internal obstacles but meet with the favourable conditions as I wish. In short, may I fulfill just what is aspired by the buddhas and bodhisattvas of the three times.

By the wondrous blessings of the buddhas and their children,

**By the truth of the undecieving principle of dependent origination,
And by the mighty force of my sincere dedication,
May I fulfill my genuine aspirations.**

Utter this kind of power of truth by fervently dedicating whatever you aspire, whether short- or long-term, without leaving them merely in hollow words or give a lip service. [page 39] Beginning with this concluding part, check, in reversal order, whether you have fulfilled your prayers as projected initially as your intention or not. If you have, feel delighted. If not, feel intense remorse and vow not to repeat such [mistakes] in the future.

Pg 54...gnyis pa thun tshams...Second, How to practice in-between the sessions: (look page 2)

It is repeatedly reminding yourself of the aspects of [meditation] focuses of the actual [practice/sitting] sessions, without letting your mind wander rampantly; reading the Most Excellent Word (gsung rab) as well as its exegeses which teach you how to rely on (and devote to) your spiritual teachers; putting effort in the many ways of accruing [merit] and the riddance of [negativities]; showing restraint while observing the moral precepts you have accepted; being conscientious about your three doors (body, voice and mind) with [the help of] mindfulness and alert vigilance; moderation of the amount of food [taken]; enthusiastic about meditation practice without sleeping while knowing what to do when going to sleep; and putting effort in the correct practices related with bathing and taking food. Since, having learned them thoroughly, it is very important to put them into practice, you must learn them from the *Great [Treatises] of the Stages of the Path [to Enlightenment]*, and *Smaller [Treatises] of the Stages of the Path [to Enlightenment]*.

**Second, having relied on him, the steps of training the mind: (look page 1) This has two parts:
Inspiring to take the essence in the life of leisure and resources, and
How to take the essence [in life]**

**The former has two [sub-divisions]:
The nature of the session, and
The break in-between [the sessions]**

**Regarding the first, the first has three parts to it:
The preparation,
The actual practice, and
The conclusion/end**

The first (preparation):

Regarding this, the single-pointedly supplication (see page 10 onwards) is the same as before. Then, “I and all my mother sentient beings are born in samsara and suffer long and intensely. This is due to not having developed the special realisations of the great significance of and the difficulty of finding a life of leisure and resources (an optimum rebirth/life). So far, while wandering in samsara, we may probably have had very rare occasion of finding such an optimum life. But, at that time, because we could not motivate ourselves to the follow the dharma by recalling the difficulty of finding an optimum life and engaged only in evil deeds [page 40], we wasted that human life for nothing and, as a consequence, we suffered long and intense miseries in the lower realms and even now, as it is, our afflictive emotions have not decreased and we indulge in creating negative karmas. So, if we could drive ourselves to take the essence from this optimum life, over and over again, by considering the significance of and the difficulty of finding it, we will certainly accomplish the everlasting goal through our single-pointed strenuous effort in the practice [of the dharma]. {[An alternative translation: So, if we had driven ourselves, over and over again, to take the essence from (to make meaningful) that optimum life by considering the significance of and the difficulty of finding such a life, we would definitely have accomplished the everlasting goal through our single-pointed strenuous effort in the practice [of the dharma].”

“Therefore, may the guru-deities bless me and all my mother sentient beings to develop the extraordinary realisation of the meaningfulness of and the difficulty of finding an optimum life.” By supplicating thus, imagine that nectar...from the body of the guru-deity on your crown... purifies all the sins and

defilements, particularly, those sins and obscurations hindering our development of the realisations of the significance of and difficulty of finding an optimum life...and we gain qualities of longevity, merit, and scriptural and experiential knowledges, particularly, the realisations of the realisations of the significance of and difficulty of finding a life of freedom and resources.

The actual [meditation] has three part: (look above, pg.16)

Identifying the freedom and resources

Considering its great significance, and

Considering the difficulty of finding it

Regarding the first (Identifying the Leisure and Resources), reflect on it like this while visualising the guru-deity on your crown:

Today, had I been born amongst the three lower realms of existence or the long-life deities—as a hell being or a hungry ghost I would not be fortunate to practice the Dharma since they are mostly tormented by miseries that are difficult to bear; as we witness with our direct perception (obviously) that our cattle cannot be taught even a single word of the Dharma, the animals are daft/stupid and cannot be suitable vessels for (receptive to) the Dharma; amongst the long-life deities, some of them stop thinking (their thoughts are blank) for many great aeons and cannot turn their mind to virtuous practices, while others do not turn their mind to the Dharma because of constant indulgence in sensual objects. Therefore, in order to practice dharma one must be free from those [life forms] and gain a human life (mi lus; literally, human body) which, by some stroke of luck, I have gained now. A mere human life, even barbarians born in the borderland regions may [page 41] have found but no sound of dharma rings in their ears. In order to practice the Dharma you should be born in a central land: although in our country/land (Ijong) we do not have the four sangha members complete but since we have here the scriptural and realisational teachings flourishing and undiminished, which is like the essence of being a central land, we qualify this criteria as well.

Although the fool, dumb, deaf and blind are also born in a central land, if they are ignorant about even the trivial tasks of this life, how can they effectuate/realise (sgrub) the everlasting goal! To practice a religion one should not be foolish and dumb but have the eyes, ears and so on intact, and this I fulfill. Merely having the senses intact is what even Tirthikas fulfill but since their mind-stream is influenced by wrong views they use this qualification for creating grave sins such as denigrating the Three Jewels and the cause of karma. To practice the Dharma one must not be a holder of wrong view or someone who has committed the irreversible karmic limit; as I do not say that the Buddha, the Dharma and Sangha are false, I am not a holder of such a wrong view and as I have not committed a karma which bring immediate retribution, I have not committed the irreversible karmic limit. So, I qualify these two criteria. This is something most householders would have but they do not have faith in the right objects because of which they have no chance of studying the Excellent Scriptures and take the ethical vows and observe them. Instead, distracted by the numerous household chores the only thing they must leave aside becomes the dharma. In order to practice the dharma one must have conviction in the teachings of the conqueror, that is the teachings of scripture and realisation, and I qualify it.

Moreover, to practice the dharma, at least a semblance (je thuen) of the external resources is indispensable. If the Buddha had not appeared in this world we would not even question whether the next life exists and we would have no means of practicing the dharma. However, the Bhagawan (Buddha Shakyamuni) enacted the deed of attaining enlightenment at Vajrasana (Diamond Throne) [in Bodhgaya]. Whereas in some pure realms it is said that the buddhas appear yet do not give teachings but for serving sentient beings with their body, and pass away. If this were the case with us, then we cannot practice the dharma but for us the Bhagawan (Buddha Shakyamuni) did turn the vast and profound wheel of dharma [page 42]. Whereas there are buddhas who become enlightened in the morning but pass away post midday, due to their past prayers, so that their teachings do not last long—this is not beneficial/effective. However, the duration of the

teaching of the King of Shakyas (Shakymuni Buddha), which is said to be five hundred times ten, has still not come to its end. Few holy beings still live, who make the practice, of the keys of the complete teaching, their essence in life and thus become our worthy role models. Therefore, there are those who follow the abiding dharma.

Although these are available to us, if we lacked all the conducive (material) facilities there is no way we can practice the dharma. Yet, we lack nothing of those necessary provisions—the food, clothing, shelter for bed, etc.—for our practice: therefore, the compassionate heart of others is also intact.

In brief, we are not born in those eight places (alt. trans.: we are not born with the eight grounds/factors...) for which we have prayed, “May I not be born...”, and we are born in the ten places (alt. trans.: ...born with the ten grounds/factors...) for which we have prayed, “May I be born...”. Since we have attained this human body with the eighteen features leisure and resources, our past prayers have hit home for us/taken a full circle in us (sngon gyi smon lam gyi steng du slebs: literally, we have arrived at our past prayers). Having heard lots of teachings with explanatory guidance on *lamrim* from the gurus and, given my level [of knowledge], I have comparatively good intellect/wisdom/understanding resulting from listening and reflection. At a time when the conditions such as sickness, age and death, which prevent us from practicing the dharma, have yet not struck us, if we are unable to set out on the journey to everlasting happiness by persevering with all our ability, it would be much greater loss than losing an invaluable wish-fulfilling gem, which has been found but caused to lose without having been used. Therefore, you should pray fervently, “From now on until my death I will try, by all means, to leave as much imprint of the entire path as possible. May the guru-deity bless me so that I could do that.” Thus, invoke your guru’s kindness and meditate. If you like, you may also do the nectar flow purification.

Second, considering its (i.e. the optimum life) great significance (pg 16 above)

While visualising the guru-deity on your crown think as follows: This optimum life is hugely meaningful/significant: in term of the short-term achievements, it affords us to practice these things with ease and comfort: to observe ethical precepts, a cause for achieving an extraordinary body of a human or a deity in the high status [of birth in the cosmos]; [page 43] to extend generosity, a cause for achieving great wealth/possessions; to cultivate patience, a cause for acquiring excellent retinue ('khor phun-sum tshogs-pa; a group of people around you). Also, if you wish for a very special physical basis (or support, i.e. an extraordinary optimum life) which is qualified by either the sevenfold attributes of high status, or the fourfold circle/wheel, or the eightfold ripened effects, we can cultivate the full collection of causes of each of them [in this optimal life]. Besides, even if you wish to go to the pure lands of Tushita, Sukhavati and others, this [life-]basis (of optimal life) allows the creation of the causes for birth in them.

And, whatever powerful root virtues you [wish to] cultivate in connection with the special fields[-of-merit], the supreme Three Jewels, etc., you can do that [in this optimal human life] while maintaining the [ethical] support (i.e. a monastic life) underpinned by the vows of the earlier (novice) or later (full) ordination of pratimoksha and motivated by the desire to attain full enlightenment for the sake of all sentient beings. Therefore, the kind of immense merit one can create in a human life is very difficult for other forms (rten) of transmigrators to do.

Further, as ordinary beings of the higher realms of existence are drunk with meditative concentration all the time and have no possibility of developing disenchantment to samsara, they cannot achieve the freshly developed arya path in that life-form. Except for few who possess imprints from their acquaintance with the path through a series of human births in the past, most of the desire-realm gods are said to be in unpleasurable situations (mi khom pa'i gnas). Hence, human life

is proclaimed the as best physical basis for accomplishing the path of liberation afresh/initially. And from amongst the humans, those of Kuru land are unworthy of precepts and the humans of the other two islands (Videha and Gaucharya) have very strong stupidity and confusion. Hence, the humans of Jambudvipa are extraordinarily superior and if one could make the practice of path of liberation one's essence, without confusing the ethical choice of right and wrong (blang dor), one could make huge strides in this life. *Letter to Disciples* (Shishalekha by Candragomi) mentions that the way the initial powerful precious spirit of enlightenment (bodhichitta), the yardstick of the path of the supreme vehicle, is developed on the basis of human body, it cannot be done in other life-bases. So, this life-basis is definitely the most wonderful life for cultivating Mahayana path. Especially, since in this kind of life—which is womb-born and have the six vital elements—one can become a buddha, in a single lifetime of a degenerate age, by relying on the path of Highest Yoga Tantra, [page 44] such a life is praised as the best life form. As such it is said be an object of admiration/appreciation even for the bodhisattvas in Land of Bliss (Sukhavati).

So, while I have found this excellent life with which I can easily achieve all the short- and long-term goals, if I do not to make it meaningful as much as I could, it would be analogous to a poor person who has arrived in an island of precious gems idling away his time in merriments/entertainments (rtsed 'jo) like song and dance (frolicking in songs and dances) instead of picking gems and then finishing his provisions lives on loaned food and returns home empty-handed. Likewise, while having arrived by chance at the precious island-like optimum human life if you only indulge in the frivolous things of this life like seeking material gains, honour, and fame instead of obtaining even a slight bit of virtue for lasting happiness, which is like the wish-granting gem, whilst exhausting the fruits of virtues gathered in the past by using them up in this life, and collect the loan-like sins through various means, and hence revert again to the old permanent home, the lower realms of existence—hence, what more ghastly deception could there be to oneself than this? Though after having continuously past through the relentless bad states of birth like the three lower

realms of existence, etc., for so long we have now become free from that and gained this good opportune life-basis (dal ba'i rten bzang) just this once, if we now knowingly plunge into the abysmal miserable lower states again by throwing our everlasting goal to the wind despite the critical intellect we have to examine the good and the bad, then it is a sign of mindlessness. Therefore, we will make meaningful whatever fleeting lifespan is left, without wasting it, to the best of our ability. Thus pray, "May the guru-deity bless us to be able to do it." Having thus prayed, imagine, "...in order to develop the extraordinary conviction realising the great significance of the optimal life... ..the special...develops within the mindstream of myself and others..."

Third, considering the difficulty of find [an optimum life], has two part. Of these, the first is the difficulty of find it on account of its causes:

While visualising guru-deity on your crown, think like this: this optimum life [of leisure and resources] is not only significant [page 45] but also very difficult to attain. For most of the humans these days take side of non-virtue and enthusiastically create grave sins but very rarely do they seems to cultivate virtue. Therefore, after their death from here, except for one or two of them, there is no doubt they will most probably be reborn in the lower realms of existence. While our children are unable to learn the dharma (moral principles) even when taught, they are naturally apt at lying and others sins without being taught to do so. From this it seems easy to understand/realise that there are more people who create the causes of rebirth in unfortunate realms. As for oneself, too, on top of the unfathomable (dpag-tu-med-pa) sins accumulated in the past (sdig sngar-bsags), in this life also, due to past habits, what ever non-virtues we indulge are more powerful while we do not endeavour but for a superficial virtue, and we have a very slim chance (fortune, skal ba) to purify the sins amassed in the past and to restrain them in the future because of which we would, immediately after death, have to be born in the unfortunate realms. If for each moment of sin such as an anger towards a bodhisattva, we must remain in the Unrelenting Hell for aeons, then it goes without saying that we would remain in

the lower realms for many aeons by the force of the infinite sins, which were created in our births since time beginningless but which have not yielded their results, nor have they been destroyed by their antidotes, and that are in our mind-stream (continuum, or being).

Once we are born in the lower realms we will be ignorant about cultivating virtues but automatically commit sins continually and hence we will not even hear the name “higher realms”. Therefore, the past Kadam masters have said, “It is much easier to achieve buddhahood in the life-basis of leisure and resources than it is to attain a life-basis of freedom and resources from (escaping) the eight realms-without-respite.” Generally, to attain a mere happy realm one must commit a single pure wholesome deed underpinned by a pure ethical morality. Particularly, to gain a human life with complete freedom and resources, not any cause will do but you need many root causes such as pure morality as foundation, [perfection of] generosity, etc. as support, and impeccable prayers as compliment (mtshams sbyor ba). Given this, it is apparent that amongst ourselves, wherever we look, those cultivating these causes are rare.

The reason for this is: by ‘pure morality’ [page 46] is meant applying mindfulness and introspection in the three doors (body, voice, and mind) constantly, that one does not transgress the boundary of vows pledged and, even when you are occasionally tainted by slight infringement, that you would rectify and restore to their purity so that those downfalls and misdeeds do not remain with you even for a day (i.e. until the first break of the next day). At present, from amongst the tens of thousands of laity and monastics, it is quite doubtful if there are even one or two (a few) who guard their morality in such a manner; as for oneself, there is no vow one has not taken but when one closely takes account of each of the categories of precepts such as the defeat, remainder, and downfalls, one does not feel confident about having kept a single aspect of any precept purely so as to feel at ease with oneself. With regard to the bodhisattva and tantric precepts, if you are unaware of even the individual number of vows, there is no question of protection from their infringement.

With regarding to ‘generosity and other [practices of perfection]’, even the small virtues you pride in are meant either for preventing unwanted situations of [just] this life, or are imitations of others, or merely some fascination for fame. But it seems almost impossible that you do them motivated by the thought to pursue the goal of next rebirths.

As for ‘the impeccable prayers’, it refers to that which is not adulterated by attachment to this life. Yet, we habitually admire the marvellous conditions of this life but have great difficulty appreciating and pursuing the more significant goals of the future lives.

So, we have accumulated sins, the cause for lower realms of existence, until now since time without beginning. We have not created any pure virtue, which would definitely go to cause higher rebirth, yet we expect to attain a human body in the next life. This is an indication of utter foolishness because it is no different from expecting to gather a harvest of barley in the autumn while you have not sowed a single seed of barley, except sowing only the seeds of poison, in the field during springtime.

When a person reaches a forked road and, by a single step, ventures either to the right or left, if he cannot find the other road, even if he looks for it [later]. Likewise, if we could purify the powerful sins created in the past through the four counteracting powers [page 47] and gather the powerful merits with all our might/ability now, then, we would attain, as their ripened effects (rnam smin), the life of gods and humans continuously in the future; as a result of the karma’s parallel act we would be practicing the dharma and thus progress higher and higher with our realisation of the path, and hence, we will not find birth in the lower realms even if we looked for them. Now that we have found this optimal life form if we did not serve its purpose of cultivating even a single perfect wholesome action but commit sins in various ways for the sake of trifling sensual pleasures of this life, then once we are born in the lowers realms of existence, leave alone attaining liberation, we won’t even hear the name ‘higher status of

birth'. Therefore, at this threshold of our journey up or down, while we now have the choice of the long-term goal of happiness or misery, we must not ere in our choice but by all means set out on the journey to lasting happiness/blissful rapture. Pray, "May guru-deity bless us to be able to do so," and do your meditation.

Second, showing the difficulty of finding [the life of freedom and resources] by way of the fruition:

As it is validated by our direct perception, the large number of creatures found on a few horse droppings during the summertime seems unmatched by the population of a country. Therefore, it is easy to know that animals in this world exceed the number of humans. Further, regarding the underwater animals, those in the oceans is as inestimable as the grain-source of chang alcohol. More than that are the hungry ghosts, and the denizens of the hot and cold hells are much greater in number. Even with respect to the human transmigration, the number of humans is less during the Aeon of Light than the Aeon of Darkness, as we clearly know from a Sutra that mentions:

Following this (present aeon), there will pass sixty Aeons of Darkness, aeons without the appearance of the buddhas, and then during the Aeon of Great Fame ten thousand buddhas will appear; following that eighty thousand Dark Aeons will pass and then, during the Star-like Aeon ten thousand buddhas will appear. After that when three hundred Dark Aeons have passed eighty-four thousand buddhas will appear during the Display of Knowledge Aeon.

Even with regard to the Aeon of Light, there are four phases of aeons: evolution, abiding, destruction, and annihilation. The duration of each of these four aeons [page 48] is twenty Intermediate Aeons, and during the period of increase in lifespan in the abiding aeons of the three aeons of evolution, destruction and annihilation, it is impossible for buddhas to appear. Also, when [human] lifespan goes below a hundred years buddhas don't appear. Thus, the times of the existence of the Dharma (bstan pa gnas pa'i dus tshod) is much less than the times of nonexistence of the Dharma (bstan pa mi gnas

pa'i dus tshod). Moreover, we could infer (shes par snang) this from the fact that there is four and a half billion (4,500,000,000) human years between the period when the teaching of our founding Teacher (Shakyamuni Buddha) has disappeared and Victorious Maitreya comes to this world.

Also, regarding how long a teaching [of a buddha] lasts, the time when a buddha appears and lives [in the world] is only a few years, and compared to the places where the teaching has been absent those places where it has spread are very rare. For the big countries like India and Kache (caution: beware of political sensitivity of today's India?) are later filled with difficult non-spiritualists (toned down trans.: kla-klo mi-bsrun-pa) and, therefore, today I cannot see much beyond Tibetan and Mongolian (Hor) nations where the system/tradition of theoretical study and meditation practice (bshad sgrub) [of the Dharma] endures. Even the places where the Dharma has flourished, we know that there are people of different religious traditions from the innumerable barbarian communities that exist in our Domey region. Even within the followers of Buddhism, the monastics are fewer than the householders who have not set on the path of the Dharma door. For example, it is our obvious experience that from a family of ten members only one would join the set forth on the door of the Dharma. Today, as the five degenerations especially abound even most of the monastics tightly grab worldly concerns of this life alone undo death. Therefore, from amongst the hundreds of thousands of monks those whose minds have turned to the Dharma are as rare as the stars in the daytime (next to impossibility?). As such, by any account (sgo gang nas bsams kyang, literally: considered from any angle; or thinking any which way), this [life of] freedom and resources is indeed extremely rare.

Having found this kind of excellent life-basis if one endeavours only in the means to achieve the pleasures, and avoid pains, of this life without critically thinking and probing into the future life and beyond, then one has turned out not so different from the animals in this and future lives. For instance, the bearded old dog (khyi rgan rgya-bo) lives wiggling its tail when given a handful of food and baring its fangs when hit with a stick. [page 49] Apart from that it is not concerned about the

future. Similarly, if you exist in the world creating only bad karmas through obsession with the four such as gain, and aversion to the four such as loss [—in short, the eight worldly concerns—] but are inattentive to the future, then you are the same as the dog. As the bearded old dog dies without having created virtue it is undergoes suffering in the lower realms and nothing else, you, too, will be born in the lower realms of existence immediately after death since you have not created a single pure virtue but accumulated much sin reprehensible by nature and by proscription. Therefore, you would be like the dog at death also. As such, while having met with the external condition of the virtuous spiritual teachers, the internal condition of the freedom and resources, and while being able to discriminate between right and wrongdoings (blang dor shes pa), it is a very huge loss for you if you have to go to the lower realms of existence without fulfilling the purpose of this life by being able to remember having cultivated virtue even for year! Had you died and born in a unrelenting existence in the past month or year, there would be nothing you can do about it. But you are very fortunate that you have not died but have the opportunity to practice the Dharma now and, therefore, from now on whatever little remaining lifespan you have during these later years of your life you should spend it cultivating the complete path [to buddhahood] leaving all the frivolous chores of this life. Hence pray, “..to be able to do so...” “In order to develop the very special certainty about the realisation of the difficulty of gaining the life of freedom and resources...” “..the special conviction...” The conclusion is the same as the previous one. Between the sessions, as explained before, read scriptures and their commentaries giving instructions regarding freedom and resources, and so forth.

Third, how to make it meaningful has three parts:
Training the mind in the path shared with the beings of small capacity
Training the mind in the path shared with the beings of intermediate capacity
Training the mind in the path of the beings of big capacity

The first has two parts:

Generating the determination [page 50] to pursue birth in the next world and

Showing the methods for well-being in the next life

Of these two, the first has two parts:

Reflecting on death by acknowledging that one will not live in this world for long, and

Reflecting on the pains and pleasures of the two types of beings (transmigration) thinking (feeling concerned about) how the next life would be

Regarding the first (Reflecting on death by acknowledging that one will not live in this world for long): from here down, as it is mentioned that except for the special emphasis given on the unique visualisations of the actual sessions related to the objects of meditation, all the rest of the practices in the preliminary, actual meditation and conclusion, and how to practice during in-between session [in each section], all of that should be done as explained before. Therefore, the structural outlines from this point down are not repeated.

Following the single-pointed supplication (see page 9 above) think like this:

The reason why I, and all my mother sentient beings, have been undergoing various intense and protracted suffering in this cycle of existence is because of not recalling (being mindful of) impermanence and death. For in all our past lives we had most likely passed only through inopportune realms [of birth] where we had no time to practice the Dharma. Even when we found some physical life basis suitable for practicing the Dharma we had been deceived by the thought of permanence in life thinking, “I will not die yet”, due to which we only thought about the activities of those current lives but did not even think to consider future lives. Even when we put effort in the Dharma we were doing so ostensibly pursuing it wishing scholarly credibility and fame for the sake of arguing over a few books; or pursue the recitation of some fierce/violent mantras to calm the harmful acts of evil spirits and ghosts; or to amass a number of empowerments and subsequent permission to practice Tantra with the aim of gathering more disciples; or we covet the title of a great

meditator and practice the Dharma confining ourselves to sealed-off caves. Since they were aimed only for gains in this life, whatever virtuous practices we did they had very little effect. Planning to live a full life till the end of our life we were obsessed with material gains, honour and fame in this life, hated those that came in our way and became ignorant and confused about the shortcomings of those disturbing emotions. When we achieved some good results of our efforts we were full of ourselves and we constantly experienced strong afflictive emotions such as peer jealous competitive feeling, and under the influence of these emotions we did our best to do sin and cause downfalls of morality such as creating the ten non-virtuous karmas. Consequently, we frequently have been wandering endlessly in the unfortunate realms of existence immediately after dying in those existences.

Even now, in this life, the reason why we do not accomplish the Dharma, despite all the inner and outer conducive factors, is because of being enslaved by this clinging to permanence of life. Therefore, it is clear to me that taking sides with the thought, “I will not die [as yet]” is the gateway to all our troubles and problems. If you bear the correct attitude to death, then you will see that you will soon be separated from everything—your body, wealth, family and friends which will cause you to feel disillusioned by all three things of this life alone, i.e. well-being, happiness and fame and utterly feel disdained with them as if a stack of hay were placed before you. Therefore, you won’t do anything which has to do with superficial pleasures of this life but will engage in as great a merit as possible through practices like taking refuge, keeping morality, giving charity and so on for the sake of the future lives; you will purify all the sins accumulated in the past through the four counteracting forces so that you will not be confused about attaining a life of freedom and riches and definitely proceed through the levels happiness throughout. Hence, being rightly mindful of death is the gateway of all excellent virtues. This is what the bodhisattva Potowa seems to have in his mind to when he said, “Not being mindful of death, whatever you hear, reflect and meditate on all of them will be oriented towards your livelihood in this life and not turn

into a spiritual practice. But if you become genuinely mindful of death everything you do will turn into a spiritual practice. “Therefore, may Guru-Deity bless me and everyone else to have the right mindfulness of death in our mind-streams...” Having prayed thus, think, “[May...] Especially, [may...] the obstacles to the realisation of mindfulness of death... I and all others sentient beings develop the special realisation of the mindfulness of death.”

The actual meditation has three parts:

Thinking that death is inevitable

Thinking that the time of death is uncertain

Thinking that at the time of death nothing but spirituality will help

The first of these has three sub-sections, and the first of them, thinking that the Lord [page 51] of Death will certainly come and that it cannot be averted by any condition/means is:

While visualising the Guru-Deity on your crown reflect like this: “This life-basis of freedom and riches which is difficult to find yet greatly significant, which I have found once this time will not last long but will break down. For whatever corporeal life I may be born into, that like ultimately cannot escape death. For instance, we find mention in sutras few accounts of how all the past buddhas, who exceeded even the number of particles of the ocean waters, have appeared one after the other, ripened and liberated their disciples and, finally, past away. And when our Teacher, the Bhagawan [Buddha], was about to pass away in order to inspire those beings who cling to permanence of life, the noble Shariputra together with 80,000 arhats, Maugalyayan together with 70,000 arhats, and Prajapati together with 500 arhats passed away, all simultaneously with their respective entourage. After the Bhagawan went to Kushinagar and sat at two *sala* trees and led the medicant Subhadra to arhatship, he passed away immediately thereafter feeling it unbearable to witness the death of the Bhagawan. When Rahula felt unable to witness the passing away of the Teacher (Buddha Shakyamuni) and went to numerous buddhas by miraculously travelling across many different worlds those buddhas persistently urged him to

return to the Teacher which he did and then received his final testament. Ananda lamented, ‘When the light of the universe sets what should tell people? Should I say he went to Kapilavastu, or Rajagriha? Or, what?’ and he fell unconscious. When he became conscious again the Bhagawan gave him lots of future prophecies and together with that entrusted him the teaching. Then the Bhagawan removed his upper robe and said, “Bhikshus/Monks, look at me! It is rare to find the sight of Tathagata. All composite things are impermanent. This is the last word [Page 52] of the Tathagata.” Having spoken this he assumed passing away. It is said that at that time since 180,000 arhats passed away, only 500 arhats were left during the first council for anthologising the words of the Buddha.

Likewise, the Religion History and Life Stories mention the numerous scholar-adepts, such as the Seven Successor Custodians of the Buddha’s Teaching, the Six Ornaments and Two Sublimes, and kings and ministers who appeared in the Noble Land (Aryavarta, India); and the many pandita-translators as well as scholar-adepts such as the Ancestral Dharma Kings, the Abbot and the Master, the Spiritual Father Atisha and his disciple Drom, the Trio of Mar-Mi-Dak (Marpa, Milarepa & Dakpo Lhaje), the 5 Patriachs of Sakya, and the Omniscient King and his disciples, and so on. All of these [historical personalities] would seem real now if we leave them without analysis but if carefully checked none of them are alive, except for their legacies. In other words, until now there is no one in the world who was seen or heard of living without dying after taking birth. If even the buddhas, who have found vajra-body, and the Arhats, who have overcome birth and death, do assume passing away, what need to mention that this kind of body of flesh and blood covered with skin will disintegrate? Therefore, while I have no confidence why I should not fear death, yet I do not even question, “Will I die?” No doubt this is because I am deceived by the demon of grasping at permanence. Wherever I go there is no place which is immune to death; hence, death will certainly come to me. For example, when Phagkyepo waged a war and killed the Shakyas, the Blessed Buddha had concealed some of the Shakyan children within Mt. Sumeru and others in the celestial mansions of the Sun and the Moon, and so forth. But later

when he saw them, all of them had died. So, our life is like that.

Whether in the past, present, or future, there is no difference—we are all crushed by Death: past is as I just mentioned; regarding the present, today over a thousand people [page 54] might gather at a Lama's teaching but in sixty to seventy years' time not a single one of them will be alive, their skeletons would be scattered in the dust. Names of few famous people may be called and their works recounted for some time to come but after a while even their names will be forgotten. These illustrate that all the people living today, young and old, without any exception, will be dead in a hundred year's time from now. It is the same for future as well. Therefore, how can I alone live without dying?

When death comes, if it could be averted through certain conditions, then it may be possible of for me to die. However, it cannot be averted by any condition. How? A fast runner cannot run away from it: even the sages with the fivefold clairvoyance, who could travel in the sky, cannot run away to a place of deathlessness when death strikes them. It cannot be averted by force/power: a lion may be able to terrify all other animals, or cause a scratching on the elephant's head with its claws; yet when death comes it loses its power and must pass away from life. Though a Chakravartin King may have immense power, wealth and countless wise expert ministers but when his lifespan ends he cannot elude death—he must go leaving his kingdom behind. Mantras and medicines cannot avert it: it is said that when the time comes death cannot be overcome even with the medicine given by Doctor Kumara or the protection given by Vajrapani. Thus, as it is natural that birth has its end in death, nobody can escape it. Whereas if I had done a sincere pure act of virtue, I would not have to fear death when it befalls me, yet, leave alone the lasting goal, so far I don't even recall having done an impeccable virtuous deed that would become the root cause of a fortunate rebirth [in the future] [page 55]. So, if I were to die this very moment I would certainly be impelled into an unfortunate rebirth. Hence, I will anyway do some religious practice that would help me when I breathe my last and my

body becomes a corpse, whereby my consciousness follows another karma and passes through a horrible narrow path. Pray, “May guru-deity bless me to be able to do so,” and do your meditation.

Life has no additional scoops but factors that constantly diminish my lifespan: Most of my life is gone and I do not know how much of it still remains. Even if I lived the longest lifespan today, that is seventy or eighty years, which is regarded living a full lifespan, it finishes quickly: we breathe 21,600 times during a full cycle of day but after one breathe, we come down to 21,599. Reflecting on it, as our lifespan shortens with each breath, there is no moment our lifespan does not deplete at all. Likewise, when 30 days are finished with each passing day a month goes by; a year passes by when 12 months have gone with each passing month; and with each passing year when five or six 12-year cycle are completed, our lifespan is exhausted and we reach the time of death. But for the lifespan propelled by our past karma there is no additional lifespan added at all; hence, death is certain and nothing else. This seems comparable to the certain exhaustion of a pool of water when its bottom leaks and we cut the source of its water upstream. The more time it takes one to overcome enemies while looking after the relations, and to accumulate food and wealth, the closer the agent of these actions approaches death. When building a new house, the longer it takes to finish it, the owner moves to death without a respite. Thus, the owner though will have not much time to enjoy the house, not knowing it he or she conceits accomplishing a great purpose. This is indeed very foolish! [page 56] Likewise, whatever work we do, or are doing, such as eating, drinking; moving, resting, sleeping, sitting, and so on, as our lifespan ebbs out there is not a moment when we are not approaching death: it is mentioned that since our conception in the mother’s womb we have not rested even for a moment but move towards the next world, as if galloping away. This is true indeed, if we reflect on it! Since we are led towards the Lord of Death by the Messengers of sickness and ageing we are labelled as “living” we cannot take joy in being able to live alive while thinking that we are going to remain in this life without passing from it. This is analogous to a captive who is taken to an execution

place by butchers—every step of the way leading to the execution place s/he cannot feel joy even for a moment as s/he comes closer and closer to death. The Lotus Holder Kalsang Gyatso says:

From birth we are helpless, unable to remain still even for a moment,

We gallop towards Yamaraja, Lord of Death.

Though “living”, we journey on the highway of death;

How sad this situation akin to a criminal being led to the execution place!