

*Confession of a Bodhisattva's  
Downfalls to the Thirty-  
Five Buddhas  
and General Confession*

*Including Meditation Instructions  
by Lama Zopa Rinpoche*

**FPMT**



Lama Zopa Rinpoche  
Practice Series

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The *Lama Zopa Rinpoche Practice Series* is a special collection of practice materials that serves to present and preserve Rinpoche's lineage of practice, oral instructions, and translations.

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## *Technical Note*

Comments by the compiler or editor are contained in instruction boxes. For example:

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Recite these two verses three times.

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Instructions or advice by Lama Zopa Rinpoche are marked by the symbol ❖. For example:

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❖ Then recite the following verses and meditate on the guru entering your heart.

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## A Guide to Pronouncing Sanskrit

The following points will enable you to easily learn the pronunciation of most transliterated Sanskrit terms and mantras:

1. Ś and Ṣ produce sounds similar to the English “sh” in “shoe.” The difference between the two is where the tongue is positioned in the mouth.
2. C is pronounced similarly to the “ch” in “chap.” CH is similar but is more heavily aspirated.
3. Ṭ, ṬH, Ḍ, ḌH, Ṇ are retroflex letters and have no exact equivalent in English. These sounds are made by curling the tongue towards the front section of the palate. They correspond roughly to the sounds “tra” (Ṭ), aspirated “tra” (ṬH), “dra” (Ḍ), aspirated “dra” (ḌH), and “nra” (Ṇ).
4. All consonants followed by an H are aspirated: KH, GH, CH, JH, TH, DH, PH, BH. Note that TH and ṬH are pronounced like the “t” in “target” and “tr” in “trap” respectively, not like the “th” in “the.” The PH is pronounced like the “p” in “partial,” not like the “ph” in “pharaoh.”
5. Long vowels with a dash above them (Ā, Ī, Ū, Ṛ, and Ṝ) and take approximately double the amount of time to pronounce versus their short counterparts (A, I, U, R, and Ṙ).
6. Ṃ indicates a nasal sound. At the end of a word it is generally pronounced as an “m.” Ḥ indicates an “h”-sounding aspiration. Ṛ is pronounced similar to the “ri” in “cringe.” Ṇ is pronounced similar to the “ng” in “king.”

For more information, please consult the FPMT Translation Services’ *A Guide to Sanskrit Transliteration and Pronunciation*, available online: [https://fpmt.org/wp-content/uploads/education/translation/guide\\_to\\_sanskrit\\_transliteration\\_and\\_pronunciation.pdf](https://fpmt.org/wp-content/uploads/education/translation/guide_to_sanskrit_transliteration_and_pronunciation.pdf)



*The Thirty-Five Buddhas and  
the Seven Medicine Buddhas with Śākyamuni Buddha*

# Confession of a Bodhisattva's Downfalls to the Thirty-Five Buddhas

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The following is an example of a motivation by Lama Zopa Rinpoche for generating regret before doing the practice.

## *Motivation (optional)*

❖ The purpose of my life is to free the numberless sentient beings—who are the source of all my past, present, and future happiness, temporary as well as ultimate, including all the realizations of the path, liberation from saṃsāra, and enlightenment—from all the oceans of saṃsāric suffering, including the causes: delusion and karma. In order to do this, I must achieve full enlightenment. Therefore, I need to actualize the path. Therefore, I need to purify my negative karmas and downfalls.

If I were now born in hell, it would be so unbearable. Even one tiny fire spark on my body is hundreds of thousands of times hotter than the whole entire fire energy in this world. It is so unbearable that experiencing it for even an instant is like suffering for many eons. I have created numberless causes to be born in the hell realms by creating the ten nonvirtuous actions countless times in this and beginningless past lives. I have created numberless causes to be born in the hell realms by breaking the prātimokṣa vow, by breaking the bodhisattva vow, and by breaking the tantra vow countless times in this and beginningless past lives. And I have created numberless causes to be born in the hells by creating the heaviest negative karma in relation to the holy virtuous friends by harming their holy bodies, disobeying their advice, disturbing their holy minds,

having nondevotional thoughts, and giving rise to heresy and anger, which produce the greatest obstacles to achieving realizations and create the greatest suffering.

Every single one of these negative actions has four suffering results: the ripened-aspect result (rebirth in the lower realms), the possessed result (the types of environments I experience when again born a human), the result similar to the cause as an experience, and the worst one, the result similar to the cause as an action, which means that again and again I am forced to create the same negative actions in the future, and so again and again I will have to experience the four suffering results. In this way, saṃsāra has no end.

Not only that, but karma increases, so even a small negative action can have huge suffering results. And karma is definite to be experienced, so every negative action I have created will definitely bring its result, no matter how long it takes, until it is purified. So from one negative karma, I have to experience the result over and over again for so many hundreds of lifetimes. Understanding this, how can I stand to live my life without purifying myself and getting rid of all these negative karmas, just as I would try to get rid of a deadly poison in my body?

Not only that, but I'm going to die and death can come even today, at any moment. Therefore, I must purify all my negative actions right this second. In order to do that, I am going to do these prostrations with *Confession of a Bodhisattva's Downfalls to the Thirty-Five Buddhas*. I'm also going to do this so that I can actualize the path and achieve full enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings.

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### *Visualization (optional)*

❖ In the space in front of you, visualize your guru in the aspect of Śākyamuni Buddha, with Thousand-Armed Chenrezig at his heart. At the heart of Thousand-Armed Chenrezig is the syllable HRĪḤ. Beams of light are emitted from the HRĪḤ, forming six rows in the space below. At the end of each beam is a throne supported by elephants and adorned with pearls. On each throne is seated a buddha.

In the first row are six buddhas, blue in color and in the aspect of Akṣobhya, with the exception of the third buddha—King, Lord of the Nāgas—who has a blue-colored body, but a white head.

In the second row are seven buddhas, white in color and in the aspect of Vairocana.

In the third row are seven buddhas, yellow in color and in the aspect of Ratnasambhava.

In the fourth row are seven buddhas, red in color and in the aspect of Amitābha.

In the fifth row are seven buddhas, green in color and in the aspect of Amoghasiddhi.

These are the Thirty-Five Buddhas. Each one is in the posture of that particular buddha type.

In the final row are the Seven Medicine Buddhas.

Think that each one of these buddhas is the embodiment of all the Buddhas, Dharma, Saṅgha, and all statues, stūpas, and scriptures of the three times and ten directions, whose essence is the guru. Have complete faith that each one has the power to purify all your negative karmas and obscurations collected from beginningless rebirths.

Now, imagine that you emanate numberless bodies and that, as you prostrate, all these bodies prostrate along with you in all directions, covering every atom of the earth.

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## Preliminary Holy Name Mantras

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❖ Recite the following holy name mantras while prostrating to increase the power of prostrations. They can be recited very quickly. One recitation does not need to correspond with one prostration.

To multiply every prostration by ten million, prostrate while reciting Buddha Rinchen Gyaltsen's holy name in Tibetan and mantra three times either one after the other or as a pair.<sup>1</sup>

---

CHOM DÄN DÄ DE ZHIN SHEG PA DRA CHOM PA YANG DAG PAR DZOG  
PÄI SANG GYÄ RIN CHHEN GYÄL TSHÄN LA CHHAG TSHÄL LO (3x)

**To Bhagavān, Tathāgata, Arhat, Perfectly Complete Buddha,  
Precious Victory Banner, I prostrate.** (3x)

OM NAMO BHAGAVATE RATNA KETU RĀJĀYA /  
TATHĀGATĀYA ARHATE SAMYAK SAMBUDDHĀYA / TADYATHĀ /  
OM RATNE RATNE MAHĀRATNE RATNA VIJAYE SVĀHĀ (3x)

---

❖ To multiply every prostration by one thousand, prostrate while reciting:

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OM NAMO MAÑJUŚRIYE / NAMAḤ SUŚRIYE / NAMA  
UTTAMAŚRIYE SVĀHĀ<sup>2</sup> (3x)

---

❖ Prostrate while reciting Guru Śākyamuni Buddha's holy name in Tibetan and the mantra as a pair. According to the Kangyur, each recitation of Guru Śākyamuni Buddha's holy name purifies eighty thousand billion eons of negative karmas.

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LA MA TÖN PA CHOM DÄN DÄ DE ZHIN SHEG PA DRA CHOM PA  
YANG DAG PAR DZOG PÄI SANG GYÄ PÄL GYÄL WA SHA KYA THUB  
PA LA CHHAG TSHÄL LO

**To Guru, Teacher, Bhagavān, Tathāgata, Arhat, Perfectly  
Complete Buddha, Glorious Conqueror Śākyamuni, I prostrate.**

OM NAMO DAŚADIK TRIKĀLA SARVA RATNA TRAYĀYA /  
 NAMAḤ<sup>3</sup> PRADAKṢĀ SUPRADAKṢĀ SARVA PĀPAM  
 VIŚODHANI SVĀHĀ (4 or 5x)

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❖ Reciting the above mantra has five very important benefits: (1) Each prostration or circumambulation you do becomes the same as having prostrated to or circumambulated all the Three Rare Sublime Ones—Buddha, Dharma, and Saṅgha—and all the other holy objects—statues, stūpas, scriptures, and so forth—of the ten directions and the three times. (2) All your negative karmas collected from beginningless rebirths are purified. (3) You will quickly achieve full enlightenment. (4) You will not be harmed by enemies and interferers. (5) You will be free from diseases and spirit harm.

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### *Confession of Downfalls (Tung shag)*

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❖ It is not necessary to recite the following homage:

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NA MO JANG CHHUB SEM PĀI TUNG WA SHAG PA

**Homage to the Confession of a Bodhisattva's Downfalls.**

### *Taking Refuge*

DAG [say your name] ZHE GYI WA

DÜ TAG TU LA MA LA KYAB SU CHHI O

ŠANG GYĀ LA KYAB SU CHHI O

CHHÖ LA KYAB SU CHHI O

GEN DÜN LA KYAB SU CHHI O (1x)

**I, [say your name], throughout all times,**

**Take refuge in the Guru.**

**I take refuge in the Buddha.**

**I take refuge in the Dharma.**

**I take refuge in the Saṅgha. (1x)**

## *Prostrations to the Thirty-Five Buddhas*

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Repeat each buddha's name aloud as many times as you can with each prostration. It is the recitation of the name of each buddha that brings the purification, so there is a big difference between reciting it just a few times or many times. Even if you do the recitation by listening to a recording, still recite the name yourself as much as you can.

As a daily practice, if you can, do three sets of prostrations to the Thirty-Five Buddhas. Otherwise, do one or two sets. At the end, recite the names of the Seven Medicine Buddhas while prostrating one time to each one.

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[LA MA] TÖN PA CHOM DÄN DÄ DE ZHIN SHEG PA DRA CHOM PA  
YANG DAG PAR DZOG PÄI SANG GYÄ PÄL GYÄL WA SHA KYA THUB PA  
LA CHHAG TSHÄL LO

**To [Guru,] Teacher, Bhagavān, Tathāgata, Arhat, Perfectly Complete Buddha, Glorious Conqueror Śākyamuni, I prostrate.**

DE ZHIN SHEG PA DOR JE NYING PÖ RAB TU JOM PA LA CHHAG TSHÄL LO

**To Tathāgata Thoroughly Destroying with Vajra Essence, I prostrate.**

DE ZHIN SHEG PA RIN CHHEN Ö THRÖ LA CHHAG TSHÄL LO

**To Tathāgata Radiant Jewel, I prostrate.**

DE ZHIN SHEG PA LU WANG GI GYÄL PO LA CHHAG TSHÄL LO

**To Tathāgata King, Lord of the Nāgas, I prostrate.**

DE ZHIN SHEG PA PA WÖI DE LA CHHAG TSHÄL LO

**To Tathāgata Army of Heroes, I prostrate.**

DE ZHIN SHEG PA PÄL GYE LA CHHAG TSHÄL LO

**To Tathāgata Delighted Hero, I prostrate.<sup>4</sup>**

DE ZHIN SHEG PA RIN CHHEN ME LA CHHAG TSHÄL LO

**To Tathāgata Jewel Fire, I prostrate.**

DE ZHIN SHEG PA RIN CHHEN DA Ö LA CHHAG TSHÄL LO  
**To Tathāgata Jewel Moonlight, I prostrate.**

DE ZHIN SHEG PA THONG WA DÖN YÖ LA CHHAG TSHÄL LO  
**To Tathāgata Meaningful to See, I prostrate.**

DE ZHIN SHEG PA RIN CHHEN DA WA LA CHHAG TSHÄL LO  
**To Tathāgata Jewel Moon, I prostrate.**

DE ZHIN SHEG PA DRI MA ME PA LA CHHAG TSHÄL LO  
**To Tathāgata Stainless One, I prostrate.**

DE ZHIN SHEG PA PÄL JIN LA CHHAG TSHÄL LO  
**To Tathāgata Bestowed with Courage, I prostrate.<sup>5</sup>**

DE ZHIN SHEG PA TSHANG PA LA CHHAG TSHÄL LO  
**To Tathāgata Pure One, I prostrate.**

DE ZHIN SHEG PA TSHANG PÄ JIN LA CHHAG TSHÄL LO  
**To Tathāgata Bestowed with Purity, I prostrate.**

DE ZHIN SHEG PA CHHU LHA LA CHHAG TSHÄL LO  
**To Tathāgata Water God, I prostrate.**

DE ZHIN SHEG PA CHHU LHÄI LHA LA CHHAG TSHÄL LO  
**To Tathāgata Deity of the Water God, I prostrate.**

DE ZHIN SHEG PA PÄL ZANG LA CHHAG TSHÄL LO  
**To Tathāgata Glorious Goodness, I prostrate.**

DE ZHIN SHEG PA TSÄN DÄN PÄL LA CHHAG TSHÄL LO  
**To Tathāgata Glorious Sandalwood, I prostrate.**

DE ZHIN SHEG PA ZI JI THA YÄ LA CHHAG TSHÄL LO  
**To Tathāgata Infinite Splendor, I prostrate.**

DE ZHIN SHEG PA Ö PÄL LA CHHAG TSHÄL LO  
**To Tathāgata Glorious Light, I prostrate.**

DE ZHIN SHEG PA NYA NGÄN ME PÄI PÄL LA CHHAG TSHÄL LO  
**To Tathāgata Sorrowless Glory, I prostrate.**

DE ZHIN SHEG PA SE ME KYI BU LA CHHAG TSHÄL LO

**To Tathāgata Son of Noncraving, I prostrate.**

DE ZHIN SHEG PA ME TOG PÄL LA CHHAG TSHÄL LO

**To Tathāgata Glorious Flower, I prostrate.**

DE ZHIN SHEG PA TSHANG PÄI Ö ZER NAM PAR RÖL PÄ NGÖN PAR  
KHYEN PA LA CHHAG TSHÄL LO

**To Tathāgata Pure Light Rays Clearly Knowing by Play,  
I prostrate.**

DE ZHIN SHEG PA PÄ MÄI Ö ZER NAM PAR RÖL PÄ NGÖN PAR KHYEN  
PA LA CHHAG TSHÄL LO

**To Tathāgata Lotus Light Rays Clearly Knowing by Play,  
I prostrate.**

DE ZHIN SHEG PA NOR PÄL LA CHHAG TSHÄL LO

**To Tathāgata Glorious Wealth, I prostrate.**

DE ZHIN SHEG PA DRÄN PÄI PÄL LA CHHAG TSHÄL LO

**To Tathāgata Glorious Mindfulness, I prostrate.**

DE ZHIN SHEG PA TSHÄN PÄL SHIN TU YONG DRAG LA CHHAG TSHÄL LO

**To Tathāgata Glorious Name Widely Renowned, I prostrate.**

DE ZHIN SHEG PA WANG PÖI TOG GI GYÄL TSHÄN GYI GYÄL PO LA  
CHHAG TSHÄL LO

**To Tathāgata King Holding the Victory Banner of Foremost  
Power, I prostrate.**

DE ZHIN SHEG PA SHIN TU NAM PAR NÖN PÄI PÄL LA CHHAG TSHÄL LO

**To Tathāgata Glorious One Totally Subduing, I prostrate.**

DE ZHIN SHEG PA YÜL LÄ SHIN TU NAM PAR GYÄL WA LA CHHAG  
TSHÄL LO

**To Tathāgata Utterly Victorious in Battle, I prostrate.**

DE ZHIN SHEG PA NAM PAR NÖN PÄ SHEG PÄI PÄL LA CHHAG TSHÄL LO

**To Tathāgata Glorious Transcendence Through Subduing,  
I prostrate.**

DE ZHIN SHEG PA KÜN NÄ NANG WA KÖ PÄI PÄL LA CHHAG TSHÄL LO  
**To Tathāgata Glorious Manifestations Illuminating All,  
 I prostrate.**

DE ZHIN SHEG PA RIN CHHEN PÄ MÄI NAM PAR NÖN PA LA CHAG  
 TSHÄL LO  
**To Tathāgata All-Subduing Jewel Lotus, I prostrate.**

DE ZHIN SHEG PA DRA CHOM PA YANG DAG PAR DZOG PÄI SANG  
 GYÄ RIN PO CHHE DANG PÄ MA LA RAB TU ZHUG PA RI WANG GI  
 GYÄL PO LA CHHAG TSHÄL LO  
**To Tathāgata, Arhat, Perfectly Complete Buddha, King of the  
 Lord of Mountains Firmly Seated on Jewel and Lotus,  
 I prostrate.**

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❖ If you have degenerated your *samaya* with your guru, you can recite the name of the last buddha three times with each set of prostrations. You can also repeat the name many times, like a mantra, when you are not doing prostrations.

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### *Prostrations to the Seven Medicine Buddhas*

CHOM DÄN DÄ DE ZHIN SHEG PA DRA CHOM PA YANG DAG PAR  
 DZOG PÄI SANG GYÄ TSHÄN LEG PA YONG DRAG PÄL GYI GYÄL PO LA  
 CHHAG TSHÄL LO

**To Bhagavān, Tathāgata, Arhat, Perfectly Complete Buddha,  
 Renowned Glorious King of Excellent Signs, I prostrate.**

CHOM DÄN DÄ DE ZHIN SHEG PA DRA CHOM PA YANG DAG PAR  
 DZOG PÄI SANG GYÄ RIN PO CHHE DANG DA WA DANG PÄ MÄ RAB  
 TU GYÄN PA KHÄ PA ZI JI DRA YANG KYI GYÄL PO LA CHHAG TSHÄL LO

**To Bhagavān, Tathāgata, Arhat, Perfectly Complete Buddha,  
 King of Melodious Sound, Brilliant Radiance of Skill, Adorned  
 with Jewels, Moon, and Lotus, I prostrate.**

CHOM DÄN DÄ DE ZHIN SHEG PA DRA CHOM PA YANG DAG PAR  
DZOG PÄI SANG GYÄ SER ZANG DRI ME RIN CHHEN NANG TÛL ZHUG  
DRUB PA LA CHHAG TSHÄL LO

**To Bhagavān, Tathāgata, Arhat, Perfectly Complete Buddha,  
Stainless Excellent Gold, Illuminating Jewel Who Accomplishes  
All Conduct, I prostrate.**

CHOM DÄN DÄ DE ZHIN SHEG PA DRA CHOM PA YANG DAG PAR  
DZOG PÄI SANG GYÄ NYA NGÄN ME CHHOG PÄL LA CHHAG TSHÄL LO

**To Bhagavān, Tathāgata, Arhat, Perfectly Complete Buddha,  
Glorious Supreme One Free from Sorrow, I prostrate.**

CHOM DÄN DÄ DE ZHIN SHEG PA DRA CHOM PA YANG DAG PAR DZOG  
PÄI SANG GYÄ CHHÖ DRAG GYA TSHÖI YANG LA CHHAG TSHÄL LO

**To Bhagavān, Tathāgata, Arhat, Perfectly Complete Buddha,  
Melodious Ocean of Proclaimed Dharma, I prostrate.**

CHOM DÄN DÄ DE ZHIN SHEG PA DRA CHOM PA YANG DAG PAR  
DZOG PÄI SANG GYÄ CHHÖ GYA TSHO CHHOG GI LÖ NAM PAR RÖL  
PA NGÖN PAR KHYEN PÄI GYÄL PO LA CHHAG TSHÄL LO

**To Bhagavān, Tathāgata, Arhat, Perfectly Complete Buddha,  
King Clearly Knowing by the Play of Supreme Wisdom of  
an Ocean of Dharma, I prostrate.<sup>6</sup>**

CHOM DÄN DÄ DE ZHIN SHEG PA DRA CHOM PA YANG DAG PAR  
DZOG PÄI SANG GYÄ MÄN GYI LA BÄI DUR YÄI Ö KYI GYÄL PO LA  
CHHAG TSHÄL LO

**To Bhagavān, Tathāgata, Arhat, Perfectly Complete Buddha,  
Medicine Guru, King of Vaiḍūrya Light, I prostrate.**

### *Confession Prayer*

DE DAG LA SOG PA CHHOG CHÜI JIG TEN GYI KHAM THAM CHÄ NA  
DE ZHIN SHEG PA DRA CHOM PA YANG DAG PAR DZOG PÄI SANG  
GYÄ CHOM DÄN DÄ GANG JI NYE CHIG ZHUG TE TSHO ZHING ZHE PÄI  
SANG GYÄ CHOM DÄN DÄ DE DAG THAM CHÄ DAG LA GONG SU SÖL



**All you [Thirty-Five Buddhas, Seven Medicine Buddhas,] and the others, as many tathāgata, arhat, perfectly complete buddha *bhagavāns* as there are abiding, living, and residing in all the world systems of the ten directions; all you buddha *bhagavāns*, please pay attention to me.**

DAG GI KYE WA DI DANG / KYE WA TOG MÄI THA MA MA CHHI PA  
NÄ KHOR WA NA KHOR WÄI KYE NÄ THAM CHÄ DU DIG PÄI LÄ GYI  
PA DANG GYI DU TSÄL WA DANG / GYI PA LA JE SU YI RANG WA AM

**In this life and in all the states of rebirth in which I have circled in saṃsāra from beginningless lives, whatever negative actions I have created, made others create, or rejoiced in the creation of;**

CHHÖ TEN GYI KOR RAM / GEN DÜN GYI KOR RAM / CHHOG CHÜI  
GEN DÜN GYI KOR THROG PA DANG / THROG TU CHUG PA DANG /  
THROG PA LA JE SU YI RANG WA AM

**Whatever possessions of holy objects of offering,<sup>7</sup> possessions of the saṅgha, or possessions of the saṅgha of the ten directions that I have appropriated, made others appropriate, or rejoiced in the appropriation of;**

TSHAM MA CHHI PA NGÄI LÄ GYI PA DANG / GYI DU TSÄL WA DANG /  
GYI PA LA JE SU YI RANG WA AM

**Whichever among the five heavy negative karmas without break I have done, caused to be done, or rejoiced in the doing of;**

MI GE WA CHÜI LÄ KYI LAM YANG DAG PAR LANG WA LA ZHUG PA  
DANG / JUG TU TSÄL WA DANG / JUG PA LA JE SU YI RANG WA AM

**Whichever of the ten nonvirtuous paths of action I have engaged in, caused others to engage in, or rejoiced in the engaging of;**

LÄ KYI DRIB PA GANG GI DRIB NÄ DAG SEM CHÄN NYÄL WAR CHHI WA  
AM / DÜ DRÖI KYE NÄ SU CHHI PA AM / YI DAG KYI YÜL DU CHHI WA  
AM / YÜL THA KHOB TU KYE WA AM / LA LOR KYE WA AM / LHA TSHE

RING PO NAM SU KYE WA AM WANG PO MA TSHANG WAR GYUR WA  
AM / TA WA LOG PA DZIN PAR GYUR WA AM / SANG GYÄ JUNG WA LA  
NYE PAR MI GYI PAR GYUR WÄI LÄ KYI DRIB PA

**Whatever I have done, being obscured by these karmas that  
cause me to be born as a sentient being in the hell realm, in the  
animal realm, or in the preta realm; in an irreligious country,  
as a barbarian, or as a long-lived god; with imperfect faculties,  
holding wrong views, or not being pleased with a buddha's  
descent;**

GANG LAG PA DE DAG THAM CHÄ SANG GYÄ CHOM DÄN DÄ YE SHE  
SU GYUR PA / CHÄN DU GYUR PA / PANG DU GYUR PA / TSHÄ MAR GYUR  
PA / KHYEN PÄ ZIG PA DE DAG GI CHÄN NGAR THÖL LO / CHHAG SO /  
MI CHHAB BO / MI BE DO / LÄN CHHÄ KYANG CHÖ CHING DOM PAR  
GYI LAG SO

**In the presence of the buddha bhagavāns, who are transcen-  
dental wisdom, who are eyes, who are witnesses, who are  
valid, and who see with omniscient consciousness, I admit and  
confess all these negative actions. I do not conceal them nor  
hide them, and from now on in the future I will abstain and  
refrain from committing them again.**

SANG GYÄ CHOM DÄN DÄ DE DAG THAM CHÄ DAG LA GONG SU  
SÖL / DAG GI KYE WA DI DANG / KYE WA THOG MÄI THA MA MA CHHI  
PA NÄ KHOR WA NA KHOR WÄI KYE NÄ ZHÄN DAG TU

**All buddha bhagavāns, please pay attention to me. In this life  
and in the other states of rebirth in which I have circled in  
saṃsāra from beginningless lives,**

JIN PA THA NA DÜ DRÖI KYE NÄ SU KYE PA LA ZÄ KHAM CHIG TSAM  
TSÄL WÄI GE WÄI TSA WA GANG LAG PA DANG / DAG GI TSHÜL THRIM  
SUNG PÄI GE WÄI TSA WA GANG LAG PA DANG / DAG GI TSHANG PAR  
CHÖ PÄI GE WÄI TSA WA GANG LAG PA DANG

**Whatever roots of virtue I have created by generosity, even  
as little as giving just one mouthful of food to a being born in**

**the animal realm; whatever roots of virtue I have created by guarding morality; whatever roots of virtue I have created by following pure conduct;**

DAG GI SEM CHÄN YONG SU MIN PAR GYI PÄI GE WÄI TSA WA GANG  
LAG PA DANG / DAG GI JANG CHHUB CHHOG TU SEM KYE PÄI GE WÄI  
TSA WA GANG LAG PA DANG / DAG GI LA NA ME PÄI YE SHE KYI GE  
WÄI TSA WA

**Whatever roots of virtue I have created by fully ripening sentient beings; whatever roots of virtue I have created by generating bodhicitta; and whatever roots of virtue I have created by my unsurpassed transcendental wisdom:**

GANG LAG PA DE DAG THAM CHÄ CHIG TU DÜ SHING DUM TE DOM  
NÄ LA NA MA CHHI PA DANG / GONG NA MA CHHI PA DANG /  
GONG MÄI YANG GONG MA / LA MÄI YANG LA MAR YONG SU NGO  
WÄ LA NA ME PA YANG DAG PAR DZOG PÄI JANG CHHUB TU YONG  
SU NGO WAR GYI O

**All these assembled and gathered, then combined together, I fully dedicate to the unsurpassed, the unexcelled, that higher than the high, that superior to the superior. Thus, I completely dedicate to the highest, perfectly complete enlightenment.**

JI TAR DÄ PÄI SANG GYÄ CHOM DÄN DÄ NAM KYI YONG SU NGO  
PA DANG / JI TAR MA JÖN PÄI SANG GYÄ CHOM DÄN DÄ NAM KYI  
YONG SU NGO WAR GYUR WA DANG / JI TAR DA TAR ZHUG PÄI SANG  
GYÄ CHOM DÄN DÄ NAM KYI YONG SU NGO WAR DZÄ PA DE ZHIN DU  
DAG GI KYANG YONG SU NGO WAR GYI O

**Just as the past buddha bhagavāns have fully dedicated, just as the future buddha bhagavāns will fully dedicate, and just as the presently abiding buddha bhagavāns are fully dedicating, like that I too dedicate fully.**

DIG PA THAM CHÄ NI SO SOR SHAG SO / SÖ NAM THAM CHÄ LA NI  
JE SU YI RANG NGO / SANG GYÄ THAM CHÄ LA NI KÜL ZHING SÖL WA  
DEB SO / DAG GI LA NA ME PÄI YE SHE KYI CHHOG DAM PA THOB PAR  
GYUR CHIG

**I confess all negative actions individually. I rejoice in all merits.  
I urge and request all buddhas. May I achieve the supreme,  
holy, and peerless transcendental wisdom.**

MI CHHOG GYÄL WA GANG DAG DA TAR ZHUG PA DANG / GANG  
DAG DÄ PA DAG DANG DE ZHIN GANG MA JÖN / YÖN TÄN NGAG PA  
THA YÄ GYA TSHO DRA KÜN LA / THÄL MO JAR WAR GYI TE KYAB SU  
NYE WAR CHHI O

**To the conquerors, the best of humans, who are living in the  
present time, who have lived in the past, and who will like-  
wise come, all those whose qualities are as vast as an infinite  
ocean, with hands folded, I approach for refuge.**

## General Confession

### *Chí shag*

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❖ After each negative karma, pause to generate very strong regret. Think that you have done it not just once but numberless times from beginningless rebirths. Then, reflect briefly on the emptiness of that negative karma. On alternate days think: (1) it is merely labeled by the mind, (2) it is totally empty from its own side, and (3) it is a hallucination.

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U HU LAG

**Woe is me.**

LA MA DOR JE DZIN PA CHHEN PO LA SOG PA CHHOG CHU NA ZHUG  
PÄI SANG GYÄ DANG JANG CHHUB SEM PA THAM CHÄ DANG / GEN  
DÜN TSÜN PA NAM DAG LA GONG SU SÖL

**Great Guru Vajradhara, all other buddhas and bodhisattvas  
who abide in the ten directions, and all the venerable Saṅgha,  
please pay attention to me.**

DAG [say your name] ZHE GYI WÄ TSHE RAB KHOR WA THOG MA MA  
 CHHI PA NÄ DA TA LA THUG GI BAR DU / NYÖN MONG PA DÖ CHHAG  
 DANG ZHE DANG DANG TI MUG GI WANG GI LÜ NGAG YI SUM GYI  
 GO NÄ

**I, who am named [say your name], circling in cyclic existence  
 from beginningless time until the present, overpowered by  
 delusions such as attachment, hatred, and ignorance, by  
 means of my body, speech, and mind,**

DIG PA MI GE WA CHU GYI PA DANG / TSHAM MA CHHI PA NGA GYI  
 PA DANG / DE DANG NYE WA NGA GYI PA DANG

**Have committed the ten nonvirtuous actions, committed the  
 five heavy negative karmas without break,<sup>8</sup> and committed  
 the five nearing heavy negative karmas without break.<sup>9</sup>**

SO SOR THAR PÄI DOM PA DANG GÄL WA DANG / JANG CHHUB SEM  
 PÄI LAB PA DANG GÄL WA DANG / SANG NGAG KYI DAM TSHIG DANG  
 GÄL WA DANG

**I have transgressed the vow of individual liberation, trans-  
 gressed the vow of bodhisattvas, and transgressed the  
 samaya of Secret Mantra.<sup>10</sup>**

PHA DANG MA LA MA GÜ PA DANG / KHÄN PO DANG LOB PÖN LA  
 MA GÜ PA DANG / DROG TSHANG PA TSHUNG PAR CHÖ PA NAM LA  
 MA GÜ PA DANG

**I have been disrespectful to my parents, disrespectful to my  
 vajra masters and my abbot, and disrespectful to my spiritual  
 friends living in ordination.<sup>11</sup>**

KÖN CHHOG SUM LA NÖ PÄI LÄ GYI PA DANG / DAM PÄI CHHÖ PANG  
 PA DANG / PHAG PÄI GEN DÜN LA KUR PA TAB PA DANG / SEM CHÄN  
 LA NÖ PÄI LÄ GYI PA LA SOG PA

**I have committed actions harmful to the Three Rare Sub-  
 lime Ones, abandoned the holy Dharma,<sup>12</sup> criticized the *ārya*  
 Saṅgha,<sup>13</sup> harmed sentient beings, and so on.**

DIG PA MI GE WÄI TSHOG DAG GI GYI PA DANG / GYI DU TSÄL WA  
DANG / ZHÄN GYI GYI PA LA JE SU YI RANG WA LA SOG PA

**These and many other nonvirtuous negative actions I have done, have caused others to do, have rejoiced in others doing, and so forth.**

DOR NA THO RI DANG THAR PÄI GEG SU GYUR CHING KHOR WA  
DANG NGÄN SONG GI GYUR GYUR PÄI NYE TUNG GI TSHOG CHI CHHI  
PA THAM CHÄ LA MA DOR JE DZIN PA CHHEN PO LA SOG PA CHHOG  
CHU NA ZHUG PÄI SANG GYÄ DANG JANG CHHUB SEM PA THAM CHÄ  
DANG / GEN DÜN TSÜN PA NAM KYI CHÄN NGAR THÖL LO

**In the presence of the great Guru Vajradhara, all the buddhas and bodhisattvas who abide in the ten directions, and the venerable Saṅgha, I admit this entire collection of faults and transgressions that are obstacles to my own higher rebirth and liberation, and causes of cyclic existence and the lower realms.**

MI CHHAB BO / CHHAG SO / CHHIN CHHÄ KYANG DOM PAR GYI LAG  
SO / THÖL ZHING SHAG NA DAG DE WA LA REG PAR NÄ PAR GYUR GYI  
/ MA THÖL MA SHAG NA DE TAR MI GYUR WA LAG SO

**I do not conceal them and I accept them as negative. I promise to refrain from doing these actions again in the future.<sup>14</sup> By confessing and acknowledging them, I will attain and abide in happiness, while by not confessing and acknowledging them, true happiness will not come.**

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### *Visualization (optional)*

❖ Think that through the force of reciting the names of the Thirty-Five Buddhas and the Seven Medicine Buddhas, through the power of their pure prayers and vows, through the power of your regret and the other opponent forces, and through the power of your having done these prostrations, nectars and light rays descend from the holy bodies of the buddhas. All the negative karmas, obscurations, and imprints collected on your mental continuum from beginningless rebirths are completely purified. Generate strong faith that your mind has become completely pure.

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## *Sealing the Purification by Reflecting on Emptiness*

In emptiness, there is no I, the creator of negative karma; no action of creating negative karma; and no negative karma created.

## *Mantra of Pure Morality*

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❖ Recite this mantra seven times slowly or twenty-one times quickly.

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OM AMOGHA ŚĪLA SAṂBHARA SAṂBHARA / BHARA  
BHARA / MAHĀ ŚUDDHA SATVA PADMA VIBHŪṢITA  
BHUJA / DHARA DHARA SAMANTA / AVALOKITE HŪṂ  
PHAṬ SVĀHĀ (7 or 21x)

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Lama Zopa Rinpoche's root guru, His Holiness Trijang Rinpoche, explained that reciting this mantra has three benefits: (1) The negative karmas of breaking vows are purified. (2) It enables you to keep your vows purely. (3) You receive the blessings of the buddhas and bodhisattvas.

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## *Prayer to Keep Pure Morality*

THRIM KYI TSHŪL THRIM KYÖN ME CHING  
TSHŪL THRIM NAM PAR DAG DANG DÄN  
LOM SEM ME PÄI TSHŪL THRIM KYI  
TSHŪL THRIM PHA RÖL CHHIN DZOG SHOG

**By abiding in faultless morality of the Dharma rules,  
Completely pure morality,  
And morality free from conceit,  
May I complete the perfection of morality.**

## Colophons

*Preliminary Holy Name Mantras*: The mantras and the order they should be recited given by Lama Zopa Rinpoche at Kopan Monastery, March 2017. Scribed by Ven. Joan Nicell, FPMT Education Services.

*Confession of a Bodhisattva's Downfalls to the Thirty-Five Buddhas (Itung shags)*: Translation based on an original translation by Lama Zopa Rinpoche extracted from the booklet entitled *The Bodhisattva's Confession of Moral Downfalls*, Kopan Monastery, Nepal. Originally revised and edited by Vens. Thubten Dondrub, George Churinoff, and Constance Miller, FPMT Education Services, 2000. Additional revisions made according to instructions by Lama Zopa Rinpoche, Mitrugpa Retreat, Milarepa Center, Vermont, USA, August 2002. Additional editing and corrections made by Ven. Gyalten Mindrol, FPMT Education Services, November 2005. Translation of the homage in the *Confession of Downfalls* by Ven. Steve Carlier, November 2005. *Mantra of Pure Morality* and *Prayer to Keep Morality* were added, based on advice given by Lama Zopa Rinpoche, Bendigo, Australia, September–October 2014, by Ven. Joan Nicell and Merry Colony, FPMT Education Services, January 2015. Lightly edited by Ven. Steve Carlier and Ven. Joan Nicell, FPMT Translation Services, 2016.

*General Confession (spyi shags)*: Based on a translation by Glenn H. Mullin, with adjustments by Lama Zopa Rinpoche. Lightly edited by Ven. Sarah Thresher and Kendall Magnussen, FPMT Education Services, January 2003. The line “have been disrespectful to my spiritual friends living in ordination” was changed according to the verbal instruction of Lama Zopa Rinpoche, October 2005. Lightly edited by Ven. Steve Carlier and Ven. Joan Nicell, FPMT Translation Services, January 2015.

Sanskrit terms transliterated by FPMT Education Services, December 2020.



# *Meditation for Prostrations to the Thirty-Five Buddhas*

*By Lama Zopa Rinpoche*

## *Motivation*

Generate the motivation of bodhicitta. As much as possible, generate a strong thought of impermanence-death, which allows your mind to become Dharma. Then, generate compassion toward sentient beings and strong bodhicitta.

## *Visualizing the Objects of Prostration*

A simple visualization is to visualize Guru Śākyamuni Buddha, who in essence is the Guru, Buddha, Dharma, and Saṅgha as well as all the statues, stūpas, and scriptures. Then, prostrate to him thinking that you are prostrating to the Thirty-Five Buddhas. However, the main thing is to prostrate to the Guru-Buddha: Buddha in the aspect of the guru and the guru in the aspect of Buddha. By thinking the guru is in the aspect of Buddha, you quickly receive blessings.

The elaborate visualization is to visualize the *Lama Chopra* merit field. (Or, as His Holiness has said, you can think that all the numberless buddhas and bodhisattvas are there, without following the usual tradition of visualization.)

When visualizing the *Lama Chopra* merit field, the founder of the Buddhadharma, Guru Śākyamuni Buddha, is there in the heart of Lama Lozang Thubwang Dorje Chang,<sup>15</sup> who is in the center of the merit field. In front of him are the direct gurus; to either side

of him are all the indirect lineage lamas of the extensive and profound lineages; and behind him are the lineage lamas of the blessing lineage. Below them are the deities of the four tantric classes: *kriyā* tantra, *carya* tantra, *yoga* tantra, and *mahā anuttarayoga* tantra. Then, below them are the Thousand Buddhas of the Fortunate Eon and the Thirty-Five Buddhas; below them, the bodhisattvas; below them, the hearers and solitary realizers, including the Sixteen Arhats; below them, the *ḍākas* and *ḍākinīs*; and below them, the Dharma protectors. However, they are all one entity: your root guru. All of them are your root guru. The whole merit field is your root guru. This is the elaborate way of visualizing the objects of prostration.

If you have thangkas or statues, you should also think that they are manifestations of your root guru.

### *The Meaning of Touching the Four Places*

When you prostrate, keep your feet together, not separated, but also not like you're doing an army exercise. Fold your hands at your heart with the thumbs tucked between the palms.

The meaning of putting your folded hands on your crown is that it causes you to create the merit to achieve a crown pinnacle (Skt. *uṣṇīṣa*), one of a buddha's thirty-two holy signs and eighty holy exemplifications. According to Kyabje Phabongkha Rinpoche, touching folded hands to the forehead purifies the negative karmas collected with the body from beginningless rebirths. It creates the cause to achieve the holy sign of the clockwise-curved tuft of hair at the center of a buddha's eyebrows, for which unbelievable merit is needed. It also creates the cause to achieve the vajra holy body. Touching folded hands to the throat purifies the negative karmas collected with the speech from beginningless rebirths and creates the cause to achieve the vajra holy speech. Touching folded hands to the heart purifies the negative karmas collected with the mind from beginningless rebirths and creates the cause to achieve the vajra holy mind.

## What to Visualize When Doing Prostrations Slowly

When doing prostrations to the *Lama Chopa* merit field or the Thirty-Five Buddhas or just Guru Śākyamuni Buddha, what you should visualize is:

- When you put your folded hands on your crown: “I’m prostrating to the numberless Buddhas, Dharma, and Saṅgha, which are manifestations of my root guru.”
- When you touch your folded hands to your forehead: “I’m prostrating to the numberless statues, stūpas, and scriptures, which are manifestations of my root guru.”
- When you touch your folded hands to your throat: “I’m prostrating to the numberless Buddhas, Dharma, and Saṅgha, which are manifestations of my root guru.”
- When you touch your folded hands to your heart: “I’m prostrating to the numberless statues, stūpas, and scriptures, which are manifestations of my root guru.”
- Then, when you lie down on the ground, think, “I’m prostrating to the ten-direction Buddhas, Dharma, Saṅgha, statues, stūpas, and scriptures, which are manifestations of my root guru.”

The last thing, as you put your hands over your head, is to think that you are prostrating to all of them. This means that, from your place, wherever you are, you are prostrating to every single holy object that exists in all ten directions. So each time you prostrate, it creates unbelievable merit.

## *What to Visualize When Doing Prostrations Quickly*

The above is what to do when you do prostrations slowly at the beginning of a practice. But when you need to do them quickly in order to finish a certain number, you can't do that. As you begin to bend down, the main thing to think is: "I'm prostrating to the numberless Buddhas, Dharma, and Saṅgha and the numberless statues, stūpas, and scriptures, which are manifestations of my root guru." This is unbelievable—with each prostration you prostrate to every single holy object in the ten directions. Not one is left out, not even the statues in shops or the *tsatsas* in people's homes. By thinking that all these holy objects are the guru, you collect the highest merit and do the greatest purification. Don't stay on the ground for long; you might fall asleep! Then, as you start to bend down again, do the same as before.

At the end, do the dedications that come at the end of the practice of the Thirty-Five Buddhas.

### *Colophon:*

Lama Zopa Rinpoche gave these instructions to Vens. Joan Nicell and Tenzin Tsomo at Root Institute, Bodhgaya, India, January 2017. *Meditation for Prostrations to the Thirty-Five Buddhas* was transcribed by Ven. Tenzin Tsomo, March 2017, and checked against the audio and edited by Ven. Joan Nicell, May 2017. A few words were added by Ven. Joan Nicell from teachings on the same topic given at Light of the Path 2016 in North Carolina, USA, and at Rinchen Jangsem Ling, Triang, Malaysia, in 2016. Edited by Ven. Joan Nicell, FPMT Education Services, January 2018. Lightly edited by Michael Jolliffe, FPMT Education Services, September, 2020, and updated December, 2020.

# Notes

- 1 The holy name can be recited with or without his mantra OM NAMO BHAGAVATE RATNA KETU....
- 2 During a commentary on the *Lama Tsongkhapa Guru Yoga* at Tushita Retreat Centre, Dharamsala, India, March 1986, Lama Zopa Rinpoche taught, “It is said in a teaching that if one does full-length prostrations while reciting the following mantra three times, you receive the same merit of having listened to, reflected on, and meditated on the entire Tripitaka, the Three Baskets, or collections, of Buddha’s teachings. Also, if you do three full-length prostrations with this mantra every day, you will receive the benefit of being able to achieve the right-seeing path—the wisdom directly perceiving emptiness—in this very life. In addition, you will not be afflicted by diseases, nor will you be harmed by spirits and human beings. However, one of the main advantages of doing prostrations with this mantra is that it multiplies each prostration a thousand times.”
- 3 Although both the Dege and Pedurma editions of the Kangyur give MAMA instead of NAMAḤ, Lama Zopa Rinpoche said that NAMAḤ is correct. The mantra is called *Dhāraṇī of Circumambulation of the Ārya Holy Objects of the Rare Sublime Ones* (Skt. *ārya pradakṣā ratnatrayā nāma dhāraṇī*, Tib. *'phags pa dkon mchog gi rten la bskor ba bya ba'i gzungs*).
- 4 The English translation of the name of this buddha as “Delighted Hero” accords with the original Sanskrit *vīranandine* found in *The Three Heaps Sūtra* from the *Ratnakūṭa Sūtra*, whereas the Tibetan appears to have perhaps been changed over time from *dpa' dgyes* (Delighted Hero) to *dpal dgyes* (Delighted Glorious One). The phonetics have been left as “*pāl gye*” to accord with *dpal dgyes*, which is what appears in current versions of the Tibetan text.
- 5 The English translation of the name of this buddha as “Bestowed with Courage” accords with the Tibetan *dpas byin*, which occurs in the Tibetan translation of the *Ratnakūṭa Sūtra* found in the Pedurma and Dege

Kangyurs. It also accords with the Sanskrit *śūradattāya* found in *The Three Heaps Sūtra* from the *Ratnakūṭa Sūtra*. However, in the Peking Kangyur and most Tibetan prayer books, the name of this buddha appears as *dpal sbyin* or *dpal byin* (Glorious Giving). The phonetics have been written as “*päl jin*” to accord with *dpal sbyin* / *dpal byin*, as this is what is commonly recited by Tibetan speakers.

- 6 Some practices that contain the prostrations to the Seven Medicine Buddhas have the word “king” (Tib. *rgyal po*) in the name of this buddha, whereas others do not. Lama Zopa Rinpoche confirmed that “king” should be added to the name, May 2016.
- 7 According to Kyabje Choden Rinpoche, *chhö ten* (Tib. *mchod rten*)—a “basis” (*rten*) of “offering” (*mchod pa*)—refers not just to stūpas but to all holy objects.
- 8 These five heavy negative karmas—killing one’s father, killing one’s mother, killing an arhat, causing disunity among the saṅgha, and causing a buddha to bleed—are called “without break” because if this negative karma is accumulated, then immediately after death, without the “break” of another life, one is reborn in the lowest hot hell, number eight, the most unbearable one, which has the heaviest suffering.
- 9 The five nearing heavy negative karmas without break are committing incest with one’s mother who is an arhat, killing a bodhisattva who is destined to become a buddha in that very life, killing a Hīnayāna ārya other than one abiding in the result of arhatship, stealing the possessions of the saṅgha, and destroying a stūpa or monastery out of hatred.
- 10 According to Lama Zopa Rinpoche, tantric samaya is not just doing a sādhanā, not just reciting words. At the time of a highest yoga tantra initiation, the disciple is put under pledge (Skt. *samaya*). There are many codes of conduct to be upheld. It is not just a question of remembering to recite the sādhanā or mantra commitment of the particular deity into which one has been initiated.
- 11 According to Lama Zopa Rinpoche, this refers to the ordained saṅgha, those living in celibacy. Literally it says, “those who are engaged in behavior similar to perfectness.” This means that by living in ordination, one’s conduct is in harmony with achieving buddhahood. This phrase can also refer to vajra kin—vajra brothers and sisters—those with whom we have taken initiations.
- 12 Abandoning the holy Dharma is very heavy negative karma, worse than having destroyed every single holy object (i.e., statues, stūpas, scriptures, etc.) that exists in the world.

- 13 This is the very heavy negative karma of having criticized an ārya, one who has the wisdom directly perceiving emptiness and has achieved the right-seeing path, the path of meditation, or the path of no-more-learning, whether Hīnayāna or Mahāyāna. It also includes members of the ordained saṅgha.
- 14 Think, “The actions from which I can abstain, I will. The actions from which it is extremely difficult to abstain, I will abstain for one day, or one hour, or one minute, or even one second.” Make a promise that you can actually keep so that it doesn’t become a lie to the merit field. Restraint is the last of the four opponent powers. All four should be complete: reliance, regret, remedy, and restraint.
- 15 Lama Lozang Thubwang Dorje Chang refers to the guru in the aspect of Lama Tsongkhapa with Guru Śākyamuni Buddha at his heart and Vajradhara at the heart of Guru Śākyamuni Buddha.



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