Bodhisattva Vow Ceremony

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Preceptor: Dzongsar Jamyang Khyentse Rinpoche

To the buddhas, those thus gone,
And to the sacred Law, immaculate, supreme, and rare,
And to the Buddha’s offspring, oceans of good qualities,
That I might gain this precious attitude, I make a perfect offering.

I offer every fruit and flower
And every kind of healing medicine;
And all the precious things the world affords,
With all pure waters of refreshment;

Every mountain, rich and filled with jewels;
All sweet and lonely forest groves;
The trees of heaven, garlanded with blossom,
And branches heavy, laden with their fruit;

The perfumed fragrance of the realms of gods and men;
All incense, wishing trees, and trees of gems;
All crops that grow without the tiller’s care
And every sumptuous object worthy to be offered;

Lakes and meres adorned with lotuses,
All plaintive with the sweet-voiced cries of water birds
And lovely to the eyes, and all things wild and free,
Stretching to the boundless limits of the sky;

I hold them all before my mind, and to the supreme buddhas
And their heirs will make a perfect gift of them.
O, think of me with love, compassionate lords;
Sacred objects of my prayers, accept these offerings.

For I am empty-handed, destitute of merit,
I have no other wealth. But you, protectors,
You whose thoughts are for the good of others,
In your great power, accept this for my sake.

The buddhas and their bodhisattva children—
I offer them myself throughout my lives.
Supreme courageous ones, accept me totally.
For with devotion I will be your servant.
For if you will accept me, I will be
A benefit to all, and freed from fear.
I’ll go beyond the evils of my past,
And ever after turn my face from them.

A bathing chamber excellently fragrant,
With floors of crystal, radiant and clear,
With graceful pillars shimmering with gems,
All hung about with glistening canopies of pearls—

There the blissful buddhas and their heirs
I’ll bathe with many a precious vase,
Abrid with water, sweet and pleasant,
All to frequent strains of melody and song.

With cloths of unexampled quality,
With peerless, perfumed towels I will dry them
And offer splendid scented clothes,
Well dyed and of surpassing excellence.

With different garments, light and supple,
And a hundred beautiful adornments,
I will grace sublime Samantabhadra,
Mañjugosha, Lokeshvara, and their kin.

And with a sumptuous fragrance that
Pervades a thousand million worlds,
I will anoint the bodies of the buddhas,
Light and gleaming bright, like pure and burnished gold.

I will place before the Buddha, perfect object of my worship,
Flowers like the lotus and the mandāravā,
Utpala, and other scented blossoms,
Worked and twined in lovely scented garlands.

I will offer swelling clouds of incense,
Whose ambient perfume ravishes the mind,
And various foods and every kind of drink,
All delicacies worthy of the gods.

I will offer precious lamps,
All perfectly contrived as golden lotuses,
A bed of flower petals scattering
Upon the level, incense-sprinkled ground.
I will offer palaces immense and resonant with song,
All decked with precious pearls and pendant gems,
Gleaming treasures fit to ornament the amplitude of space:
All this I offer to the loving bodhisattvas.

Precious parasols adorned with golden shafts
And bordered all around with jeweled fringes,
Upright, well-proportioned, pleasing to the eye,
Again, all this I give to all the buddhas.

May the multitude of other offerings,
Accompanied by music sweet to hear,
Be made in great successive clouds,
To soothe the sufferings of living beings.

May rains of flowers, every precious thing,
Fall down in an unceasing stream
Upon the jewels of sacred dharma,
The triple gem and all supporters for offering.

Prostrations

Just as Mañjughosha, gentle and melodious,
Made offerings to all the conquerors,
Likewise I will make oblation
To the buddhas and their bodhisattva children.

I will offer prayers by every way and means
To these vast oceans of good qualities.
May clouds of tuneful praise
Ascend unceasingly before them.

To buddhas of the past, the present, and all future time,
And to the doctrine and sublime assembly,
With bodies many as the grains of dust
Upon the ground, I will prostrate and bow.

To shrines and all supports
Of bodhicitta I bow down:
All abbots who transmit the vows, all learned masters,
And all noble ones who practice dharma
Folding one’s hands and kneeling on one’s right knee:

**Preparation**

*Begin by saying the seven branches, in whatever version, long or short, is suitable.*

| With complete faith I bow                        |
| To all the victorious ones and their sons       |
| Who abide in the ten directions and three times. |
| I offer flowers, incense, light,                |
| Perfume, food, music, and many other things,    |
| Both in substance and with my imagination.     |
| I ask the noble assemblage to accept them.     |
| I confess all evil actions that I have done,   |
| Influenced by the defilements,                 |
| From time without beginning until now:         |
| The five that ripen immediately,               |
| The ten non-virtuous acts, and many others.    |
| I rejoice in the merit of whatever virtue      |
| Shrāvakas, pratyekabuddhas,                    |
| Bodhisattvas, and ordinary people              |
| Gather throughout the three times.             |
| I pray for the wheel of the dharma to be turned,|
| The teachings of the mahāyana and hīnayāna,    |
| In ways suitable for the different aptitudes   |
| And motivations present in sentient beings.    |
| I ask the buddhas not to pass into nirvāṇa,    |
| But, with great compassion and                 |
| Until samsāra is completely empty,            |
| To look after all sentient beings              |
| Who drown in this ocean of sorrow.             |
| May whatever merit I have accumulated          |
| Become a seed for the enlightenment of all beings.|
| Without delay, may I become                    |
| A splendid leader for sentient beings.         |

**Main Practice**

To all the Buddhas dwelling in the three times and ten directions,
To the mahābodhisattvas on the ten levels,
And to the great teachers, vajra holders, I pray – think of me:
First say the refuge prayer three times:

Until I attain the essence of enlightenment
I take refuge in all the buddhas;
In the dharma and the assembly of bodhisattvas
I likewise also take refuge.

Now take the bodhisattva vow three times as follows:

Just as the sugatas of the past
Developed the mind that aspires to enlightenment,
And successively practised the stages
Of the bodhisattva’s training,

Similarly, for the benefit of all beings,
I shall generate bodhichitta,
And likewise also shall I
Gradually follow that training.

Conclusion

Meditate with joy:

Now my life has borne fruit;
Having attained a fortunate human existence,
Today I am born into the family of the buddhas,
Now I have become a child of the buddhas.

Now, at all costs, I must act
In accord with that family,
I must not do anything that will defile
This noble and faultless race.

Just like a blind man
Finding a jewel, somehow, in a pile of rubbish,
Likewise, through some coincidence,
The enlightened mind has been born in me.

Today in the presence of all the protectors
I summon all beings as guests to the state of the sugatas
And, in the meanwhile, to happiness!
May celestial beings, asuras and all others be joyful!

May the precious bodhichitta take birth
In those in whom it has not taken birth.
And where it has taken birth may it not degenerate,  
But grow more and more.

May beings never separate from the enlightened mind  
And always engage in the activities of a bodhisattva;  
May they be cared for by the buddhas  
And give up the actions of Māra.

May the bodhisattvas accomplish  
All they have intended for the sake of beings;  
Whatever the protectors have intended for them,  
May sentient beings receive it.

May all sentient beings be happy,  
May all the lower realms be emptied forever,  
And may the bodhisattvas on the ten levels  
Have all their wishes fulfilled.¹

¹ Except for the Seven-branch Offering, this liturgy was extracted from The Way of the Bodhisattva translated by the Padmakara Translation Group.